



The Viewpoint

News From the Forest Grove United
Church of Christ

August 2020

Loaves and Fishes Abound: We are thriving in unexpected ways during challenging times!

“Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.”

-Matthew 14:19-20

Dear church friends,

When I started out as your new pastor just over four months ago and we immediately had to start functioning as a “virtual church,” I don’t think any of us fully imagined how we would do it! We all shared the same questions because the circumstances of a global pandemic were new to us all! How will we worship? How will we stay connected? How will ministries continue? Will it be possible to continue to financially support the life and ministry of our beloved church?

We recently heard the gospel account of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes during one of our recent worship services. The disciples thought it impossible to feed the crowds with a few loaves of bread. Their expectations were dashed when they put their faith in the wisdom of the Holy Spirit that moves us to share and support each other and gives us abundant life.

Relying on that same Spirit, we have been blessed. We are seeing our church and our ministries together continue to flourish in ways we could not have expected. The Finance & Property team would like to thank each of you for reflecting the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in all the ways you have, continuing to support the life and ministry of this church by sharing your time, your gifts, and your financial offerings. Together we are continuing to provide care to each other and our community in so many ways. Our worship services, learning community, prayer and social connections, ministry teams, outreach, and educational opportunities all continue to remain active on-line. We are also maintaining our church’s financial health and stability in the midst of these times thanks to your beautiful and heartfelt sharing.

Every week, during our on-line worship services, I have invited the congregation to keep up with pledges and offerings by sending in checks to the church or by signing up for on-line giving. You have risen to the occasion and because of your generosity we can say that pledges for this

year are current and even more people have signed up for automatic giving. That really helps! Thank you! We have so much to celebrate. We have been able to make our first and second quarter payment to Central Pacific Conference to support our church's wider mission.

On behalf of the congregation, I want to offer a big special thank you to Ralph Vasey who worked hard to make sure we received funds from the CARES grant/Payroll protection program. These funds have made it possible for us to not restrict the hours of our staff and have allowed our ministries to flourish even during these economically challenging times. The loan we received will be forgiven based on the parameters of the program.

On behalf of us all, I would also like to thank the finance and property team for continuing to closely observe our endowment funds. The F&P team remains active in updating our investment and endowment policies in ways that will ensure responsible and wise investment of our church's financial resources. Thank you so much to everyone.

I believe we will continue to be amazed by all that's possible with God as we continue to live in this Holy Spirit of abundant generosity and sharing.

Sincerely in Christ, Rev. Brendan Curran

"A note about my schedule," from Pastor Brendan:

Dear church friends,



When I first started at the beginning of March, I was taking Friday and Saturdays off. When the Coronavirus pandemic hit, and we began filming worship on Saturdays, my schedule changed, and I began taking Fridays and Sundays as my days off. We initially thought that change would be temporary but that is not the case. In order to be able to take two consecutive days off, my schedule has shifted once more. I want to thank the church for accommodating this change. My new schedule will be Tues.- Sat. office hours 9-5. I will be taking Sunday/Monday as my days off. Please know that I am always on-call for pastoral care emergencies at all times. The best way to reach me is by calling or texting my cell phone. 401-318-2447.

Thank you very much, Brendan

Would you like to participate in worship?

We continue to miss our congregation's presence and participation in worship, and your involvement would be so appreciated at this time! You are encouraged to record videos of yourselves delivering children's messages, giving the invitation to offering, reading the scripture passage, or providing special music (singing or instrumental). If you're called to enrich our worship services in this way, please contact Elena, Kristy or Pastor Brendan for more information and to coordinate for the coming Sunday.



Option for participation in worship—

Since we're now in Phase 1, we are offering the opportunity for people to come in to church during the week (Mondays and Tuesdays only) for Kristy to record scripture readings, music etc. If this option appeals to you, please let us know so we can coordinate timing. Otherwise, just send your recording(s) to Kristy by Wednesday mornings at 10AM, so she can edit these into our worship service (kristy@fgucc.org). Thank you!

Online Worship Service Information—

Our church provides the link to our on-line worship service every week on our official church website, our official church Facebook page, as well as in a weekly e-mail with the worship bulletin. You should be able to watch this on-line service on your phone, your computer, or also your TV if you have a TV capable of accessing the internet. If you would like to watch the service on your TV but don't know how that works, please let Elena know and we will connect you with someone who can help you!

Ongoing Events for FGUCC member engagement and participation!

Come Gather for First Word!

All are welcome to come participate in First Word with Kristy at the church.

On **Monday, August 10th, 10 AM**, Kristy will be leading a brief meditation moment.* It is a way for people to gather, meditate and reflect on a spiritual message to prepare them for the week.

Coffee, tea and water will be provided. We will plan on meeting outside, weather permitting. Please remember that masks will be worn and appropriate physical distancing will be put into place.



* Please RSVP with Elena at the church office. Limited space is available.

Book Study: **“The Cross and the Lynching Tree,” by James Cone.**

James Cone was widely regarded as one of the most influential theologians in America. Inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, he was Bill and Judith Moyers Distinguished Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Theological Seminary, NY. “The Cross and the Lynching Tree,” explores themes of African-American spirituality, ending anti-black racism, and how God turns death into liberation. The congregation is invited to participate in this timely study.

Book Study check-in times: For those who cannot attend the weekly Wednesday meetings but would like to discuss the book, we will meet in fellowship hall on Tuesday, **Aug. 11th from 7-8pm. and Tuesday Sept. 15th from 7-8pm.** Please reserve your spot with Elena if you would like to come in-person. There will also be an opportunity to join these check-ins via zoom.

Prayer Group/Prayer Flag Project



Come make prayer flags with Pastor Brendan! This small creative prayer group meeting is an opportunity for us to connect with each other in person and share our prayers with each other and our extended community using a creative medium. We will gather and decorate beautiful pieces of fabric with our prayers to hang them around the church and in our community so our prayers can be seen and felt. Prayer flag making supplies and instructions will be provided by our world renowned crafters and seamstresses. You only need to bring your warm hearts, hopes, and prayers. All are welcome! **Please remember to reserve your spot with Elena in advance.**

Prayer Group/Prayer Flag Making Dates: Wed. August 19th, 6:30-8:30, Wed. Sept. 16th, 6:30-8:30.

Social Justice Movie Nights

The outreach team invites the congregation and the extended community to participate in a movie discussion series on the topic of tactical non-violent strategy. Movie nights will involve a brief movie showing followed by a discussion. The methods and practices of non-violence can be applied to everything from our daily lives to the work of overthrowing oppressive systems! Movie nights will be on the second Wednesday of every month. All are welcome to participate in this timely movie/discussion series. (If you can't make it by 5pm, it's okay to come in late!) Spaces are limited. **Please reserve your seat with Elena.**



Dates/Times:

Wed. Aug. 12th: "A Force More Powerful: Part 2"

Wed. Sept. 9th: "How to start a revolution."

Movie summaries:

A Force More Powerful is a documentary series on one of the 20th century's most important and least-known stories: how nonviolent power overcame oppression and authoritarian rule. It includes six cases of movements, and each case is approximately 30 minutes long.

How to Start a Revolution is a BAFTA Award-winning British documentary film about Nobel Peace Prize nominee and political theorist Gene Sharp, described as the world's foremost scholar on nonviolent revolution. The 2011 film describes Sharp's ideas, and their influence on popular uprisings around the world.

Black Lives Matter Peaceful Protests in Forest Grove

Every Thursday from 4-6PM there's a Black Lives Matter protest by the big flag pole in Forest Grove. Stephanie Lind participates most weeks from 5:30-6:00PM. Everyone wears masks and there's lots of space to spread out, and she feels pretty safe. Stephanie welcomes others to join her weekly or whenever you can go. Bring your own sign and mask. For more information, please let us know.



And Now For Something Completely Different! A Virtual Auction!

“I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” –Isaiah 43:19

Dear Church,

God is always doing something new, and this year, we are doing something new for our auction! Every year, our annual auction provides joy, fellowship, and connection. It also raises the funds we need to thrive as a church and support other groups and organizations in our community doing good work. It's with joyful excitement to see how God will continue to help us flourish in new and unexpected ways in these changing times that we announce our, “virtual auction.” That's right! Our 2020 auction will indeed happen on-line, and the dates will be **November 21, 22 and 23!** This is going to be completely new and different but we know that when we try new things, the God who is always doing something new is moving with us!



Our Auction planning team needs your help. Please respond to these four questions!

- 1.) **What talents do you have to help with the creation of the auction (especially all you techy people! You know who you are!)**
- 2.) **What kinds of items would you like to see auctioned off this year? For example, are you interested in trips to exotic lands if the trips have a 2-year expiration date?**
- 3.) **What bigger items do you have that you would like to donate to the auction?**
- 4.) **What suggestions do you have for a fund-an-item?**

Please send your responses to these questions to Bonnie (chiroqueen704@msn.com) or Elena (elena@fgucc.org). We look forward to receiving input from the congregation and the community as we plan this virtual auction with joyful anticipation and hopeful expectation!

Peace and blessings,

Pastor Brendan and the Auction Committee - Bonnie, Deva, Elena and Sheila

Welcome Garden for 2020



This is our current report for the Welcome Garden for 2020: In the **SITDOWN BOX** we have tomatoes, strawberries, zucchini and spaghetti squash and a cucumber plant growing. The **WHEELCHAIR BOX** has Kale and Chives (ready to pick!) Better boy tomatoes, along with yellow and spaghetti squash, and poblano ancho pepper is also underway. The **STANDUP BOX** has green beans and kale ready to pick!!! Also, a cucumber plant is growing along with squash and tomato plants. The **WALKER BOX** (aka The Herb Box) has thyme, rosemary, sage and mint available! Please visit the Welcome Garden if you are at the church to check out what is available, pick what you need, and do some weeding if you have a moment!

Sanctuary Choir Update

I guess FGUCC Sanctuary Choir has a new name for this “virtual time” – we have become FGUCC ZOOM CHOIR. On Thursday evenings between 7:00 and 8:00 instead of tuning up our voices in the Choir Room we tune-in to Zoom. We greet each other with a smile and hello and are genuinely happy to be together, even if it is not in person. We visit casually about events of the week and then we each have a chance to respond to the topic of the week (such as “tell us about your first choral music experience” or “would you rather visit the zoo, a museum or the library). Then we do some singing with our microphone turned off, which is not the way to hear a choir!



But this is an opportunity to learn about each other in ways we otherwise don't take the time for. We now know that Gwen is an avid hiker, Carol likes to bake cookies and Jane discovered a recipe for “crockpot” yogurt. BJ was happy to get to see her grandkids, Jerry spent time at Olallie Lake with his grandchildren, Susan is excited about the expected birth of another grandchild and Pat taught her granddaughters camp songs at “Camp Truax,” Betsy appreciates her neighbors, especially the little girl who brings her flowers, Myra looks forward to returning to golf, Maggie is learning to knit and Paul J is working a lot in his yard. Paul M is happy to be able to return to playing the organ in our sanctuary, Joannah is adding organ to her musical skills, Sarah -as president of OMTA- led a successful convention-virtually and John enjoyed watching tadpoles develop in his pond. Laura is grateful to Kristy, Elena, Sarah and Joannah for making ZOOM Choir possible.

Due to the aerosols we produce when singing, we will not be able to sing in a group until a widely available vaccine is developed. We miss being a choir that you can hear and see. We miss the experience of making something beautiful together. We miss being part of our worship at FGUCC. We miss all of you and look forward to making that joyful noise together. Until that time –

Yours truly—in harmony, Laura Frye

Worship Ministry Team Update

Members of the Worship Ministry Team met in June and July to review ways we can support Brendan and you our congregation in worship. We discussed music for worship including hymns, the organ project, communion, flowers and art in the sanctuary, welcome packets, fellowship time as it relates to virtual gatherings, and reports to and from executive board.

Members of the team include Laura Frye, Sarah Ball, Rod Burrus, Terri Wyborny, Sue Armentrout and ad-hoc Pastor Brendan Curran. Presently, we meet – socially distanced and wearing masks – in the Fellowship Room on the first Tuesday of the month at 1:00 PM. If you are interested in joining this ministry team, please contact Laura Frye at 503-550-1709, or Elena Parker at 503-357-9121.

Joys, Concerns & Prayer Requests

Congratulations to Kristy and Amelia!

Prayers of thanksgiving and joy for Kristy and Amelia as they celebrate their love and joy upon their marriage on July 14th at Wallowa Lake.



Thanks have been received:

I would like to thank all the wonderful members of our church family who have sent cards, brought dinners and groceries, driven to doctors' appointments and brought us love during our time of need. We love you all very much!

Marcia and Jobina

New and ongoing Prayer Concerns—

- **Sympathy**—Our hearts go out in deepest sympathy to Carlene Krueger upon the death of her husband, Herb on Monday, July 13. Please keep Carlene and her family in your prayers during this difficult time.
- **Sympathy**—Our hearts go out in sympathy to Alice Hoskins upon the death of her brother, Jim.
- **Sympathy**—Our hearts go out in deepest sympathy to Celeste Goulding upon the death of her fiancé, Zac Oldes on Thursday, July 16. Please keep Celeste in your prayers during this very difficult time.
- Please keep Sharon Roso, Bette Prickett's sister, in your prayers as she is now in hospice care.
- Please keep Carol and Ralph Brown in your prayers for healing as Carol is recovering in rehab from recent back surgery.
- Please remember Christine and Richard Kidd as Christine continues to recover from recent surgery for breast cancer.
- Please keep Stephanie and Paul Edwards in your prayers as Stephanie continues to recover from knee replacement surgery.
- Please remember Bette Prickett as she continues recovery from arm/shoulder surgery.
- Please keep Marcia Bickford in your prayers for healing as she continues recovery from recent surgery.
- Please keep Windi Withycombe in your prayers for healing as she recovers from recent surgery.

Continued Prayers—Prayers of healing and comfort for all who have ongoing concerns, including Els Abma, Winnie Beu, Carol Benner, Marcia Bickford, Bob Browning, Ann and Russ Dondero, Paul and Stephanie Edwards, Lillian Gimre, Sue & Max Groszmann, Alice Hoskins, Lois and Dick Johnston, Carlene Krueger, Jobina Lacock, Jean & Bob Nixon, Yvonne Stacey, Holly & Sherri Vann and their family, Tom Wallsteed, Betty Wedell, and any other friends and family of our church, not named here.

Fund-raiser for Shadi and the Hispanic Church—Thank you so much to everyone who contributed to raise \$500 dollars to cover the cost of Shadi's guitar that was stolen during the church break-in in early May.

Sharing prayers in worship—If you would like your personal prayer concerns shared with the community during our on-line worship service on Sunday mornings, please submit them to Brendan via email at brendan@fgucc.org by Friday at 6pm with the title "prayer request" in the subject line. You can also text him prayer requests at 401-318-2447 by Friday at the same time.

How to get on the prayer chain—Are you or someone you know in need of extra prayer support? Our church has a confidential prayer chain ministry. If you'd like to be added to this prayer chain, please contact the church office or Sandy Mueller at fguccpray@gmail.com. Thank you!

Prayer Shawl Knitting Schedule—Please join us for knitting this month via Zoom on **Wednesdays, August 5 and 19 from 2-4PM**. The link to Zoom will be sent to everyone in the prayer shawl knitting group via email. If you'd like to participate, please call or email Elena (elena@fgucc.org and 503.357.9121). You can also contact Susan Shepard for more information at 503.867.5956. The Prayer Shawls are such a wonderful gift—A gift from the heart that touches the hearts of others.

Prayer Shawls—Do you need a prayer shawl? Please call Elena in the church office to make a request at 503-357-9121 or elena@fgucc.org.

Best wishes to all of you celebrating birthdays in August!

1—Kristin Ludwig
2—Winnie Beu
2—Phoebe Edwards-Leeper
4—Pamelajean Myers
5—Zoe Bichsel
6—Carol Benner
6—Rob Foster
10—Elaine Bohlmeyer



14—Stephanie Edwards
23—Eric Murphy
25—Brandi Frye
26—BJ Jones
26—Naomi Frye
30—Nathan Lawrence
31—Caia Bowen

Celebrating
175
Years

“Is Our History Only the Good?”

Of course our history is not only the good, for two reasons:

1. Our history involves people, who are by nature human, and
2. We view stories of yesterdays from perspectives of today. The same will apply tomorrow.

So, here is a partial list of the troubled waters we’ve maneuvered our FGUCC boat through:

- We know Harvey and Emeline did not receive sponsorship for their mission West, and we know they ended up serving not those they intended to, but the very people they had left behind in the east. Actually, Harvey almost returned to the States **before** our church was founded because while at East Tualatin Plains, a wedding party involved alcohol and ... dancing! Harvey wrote it was **‘too heavy a burden’ to bear.**
- The years 1848-59 were so difficult, it’s a miracle we got beyond the long cabin. There was a vote on whether or not to retain Harvey as pastor. There were intense rivalries between Catholic and Protestant missionaries; and some objected so to the use of tobacco amongst faculty at Tualatin Academy, and they laid plans to start another school! A T Smith was censured. Wm. Geiger was excommunicated. Rev. Thomas Condon found his first job was to heal a rift that had divided the congregation into Congregationalists and Presbyterians. And so it continued.
- In 1861, Harvey’s widow Emeline brought charges against the church and ‘shepherds of the church. In return, the church council declared her mentally deranged.
- From 1875 to 1890, pastors arrived and exited as if through revolving doors, none lasting two years.
- In 1930 the Great Depression hit and the church entered a period of financial difficulty that nearly led to its closure. Rev. Stook resigned and Rev. C S Ward, who took his place, left eight months later, finding the church showed **‘too little spirit of sacrifice ... and a lack of cordiality to each other and to visitors.’**
- Through the ages we have debated over money issues, or how to manage our resources. We’ve disagreed over hymns and language and how to say the Lord’s Prayer. Some years ago, when I was filling in for then church secretary Dorothy Schlegel, I typed up the Lord’s Prayer with the phrase **‘forgive us our sing.’** Oops!
- I was Learning Community Superintendent from about 1980-2000, and during that time had to have “teacher training moments” when: 1. Each third grader came out of class with a paper plate, ketchup and balloon representing the head of John the Baptist, 2. A fifth grader was standing in the hall because ‘teacher said I was being disruptive,’ and 3. High school teachers taught ‘God will answer your every prayer, give you absolutely anything you want, **if you pray correctly!**”

- In 2008, five families objected to the calling of Rev. Jennifer Yocum; two because she is gay, three because she is female. They stood up and said, ‘How could the church possibly be led by a woman?’ YES, 2008 ... not that long ago!

It is not always easy to listen to a still-speaking God, and it is often difficult to know how to apply that voice to practice. As we look back upon our 175 years, I find it important to acknowledge the troubled waters we’ve traversed, give credit to the bridges we’ve built, and to accept the fact that history will continue to be written, and rewritten, as we draw the circle of God’s love wide, and wider still.

Sandy Freeman

Native American Medicine Drum Making Playshop

Saturday, August 22nd from 10:30AM – 5:00PM



Beautiful outdoor sacred space at Willow’s home, Newberg. Bring your own box lunch, water bottle and mask. Access to restroom provided. All materials and supplies are included, and a shamanic journey to connect with the animal will be part of the process

Registration with prepayment is required; Willow must receive payment no later than August 3rd (check preferred). Cost: ranges from \$230 - \$260 (depending on size and type of animal hide)

Space is limited to 8 participants; contact Willow now to reserve your spot. For registration and location information, please contact Willow at Willowmoonsong108@gmail.com

Please contact Jeane Canon if you have any questions: JeaneCanon@yahoo.com or 503-997-7228

Pledges and Contributions

Thank you all for continuing to keep your pledges current during this time. If you normally make contributions or pay your pledge by check, please continue using this method. (Mail checks to FGUCC at P.O. Box 265, Forest Grove, OR 97116.)



We continue to encourage members to explore the possibility of electronic giving through Vanco, a convenient and secure electronic giving and payment solution. We can set up donations to be debited automatically from either a checking or savings account. You can find the authorization form on our website (www.fgucc.org), or contact Elena to send the form to you. For more information, please call Elena at 503-357-9121 or (503) 357-6960 or email (elena@fgucc.org). Thank you for your generosity and support!

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