



The Viewpoint

News From the Forest Grove United
Church of Christ

September 2020

Savoring These Moments,

“Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet God feeds them... Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.”

-Matthew 6:26-29

Dear Church,

As I write to you in late August, I hope that we are all savoring the beauty of these last days of summer, the simple beauty of each moment, and the many ordinary blessings that each day brings to us. The world turns and the seasons change and soon we will move into the busy-ness of the Fall. Soon we will gather together on-line for our annual “Welcome Back Sunday,” that will kick off a new church calendar year. So much remains routine, yet so much will be different. Many kids will return to school but stay home at the same time. Some are starting high school and college but in ways they did not expect. People continue to manage work, social, and family life under circumstances we could not have imagined. As a church, we continue to adapt how we serve one another and the community. It is easy and natural in these times for our minds to be filled with all different kinds of questions about the future as we live into new ways of being in community together and navigate the challenges of these times. Our faith reminds us to not forget to enjoy life fully in the present moment especially in times that might invite worry. Even as we deal with various forms of uncertainty, I hope we also remember to allow the present moment to be our home.

Jesus reminds us that borrowing trouble won't add time onto our life span. In our pursuit of heavenly realms, he invites us to think of ourselves as being like the birds of the air and flowers in the field. He teaches us that we can touch the realm of heaven when we allow ourselves to live fully in the present moment and open our eyes to the simple blessings that are always available to us there. He reminds us we don't have enough time to not appreciate the simple blessings of each day and each other. We don't have enough time to miss going on walks with our grandparents or our kids or to take for granted the many mundane miracles of every day. We don't have time to not notice the beauty of the birds of the air or the lilies of the field or to worry too much about future events or outcomes of which we are not sure. We only have time to arrive fully for the preciousness of life, for each other, and for God right now. Life is only available to

us right here in the present moment. Our religious study group is currently engaging a comparative religious study. We are reading, “Living Buddha, Living Christ,” by Thich Nhat Hanh. In the book, Thich Nhat Hanh writes,

“The kingdom of God is available to you in the here and the now. But the question is whether you are available to the kingdom. Our practice is to make ourselves ready for the kingdom so that it can manifest in the here and the now.”

We are so blessed to have spiritual community to help us remind each other to make ourselves “ready for the kingdom,” so it can manifest in the here and now. Let’s remember to live fully in each moment and relish these beautiful summer days. I am so grateful to see all the ways we continue to show up for each other and for the blessings of our shared life together as the church.

In Christ, Pastor 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—

During Phase 1 we continue to offer 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!

Pastor Brendan

Ongoing events for your engagement and participation!

Come Gather for First Word!

All are welcome to come participate in First Word with Kristy at the church. On **Mondays at 10 AM**, Kristy is 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. We will continue to plan on meeting outside, weather permitting. Coffee, tea and water will be provided. Please remember that masks will be worn and appropriate physical distancing will be put into place.



*** Space is limited, so be sure to please RSVP with Elena at the church office.**

It's time for Gathering Sunday!

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth." -Psalm 100



We have much to celebrate as we rally together again (even while staying home) to kick off the beginning of another church calendar year! Sadly, we still cannot be together in person and hear each other singing, but we can still make a "joyful noise" of praise with each other! Sometime before Friday, September 11 you will be receiving a "noise-maker" as a gift for you to honk during our Gathering Sunday worship on September 13th. We will collectively make a joyful noise" to celebrate our life together with each other and with God! Honk if you

Love God! Honk if you Love our Community! Honk if you love your neighbors! Let's kick off the year with a joyful noise!

Pastor Brendan Curran

September 19th: Blessing for Education

Come join us **Saturday, September 19** for a blessing of education. At noon on that Saturday Pastor Brendan will lead a short blessing for the school year, educators, students, parents and all involved in education. We will be meeting at the Bell Tower outside the church, maintaining appropriate physical distance and wearing masks. See you there!

September 20th: Learning Community Kick Off

Sunday, September 20th, 11-Noon all parents/guardians and youth/children are invited to the Learning Community Kick Off. At the church families will have the opportunity to meet their teachers and collect materials. We will be meeting outside, appropriately physically distant and wearing masks. If you are unable to attend there will be a Zoom opportunity to learn about the upcoming year.

Be on the lookout for more details from Kristy soon.

Women's Spirituality Gathering

Our Annual planning meeting for the Women's Spirituality Group will look a little different this year. We will meet outside for a picnic in our church courtyard on **Wednesday, September 16, 6:00 PM**. Please join us for this fun social picnic event to share thoughts and ideas for the coming year. Please bring your own picnic and chair (or plan to sit on the bricks). The Forest Grove Farmer's Market will have food for take-out, or you could consider supporting Pizza Schmizza, Miget's Island Grill or any of our local eating establishments. If you are unable to come but would still like to share your ideas, please send them to sheilaharter@hotmail.com or 4melissatimm@gmail.com. Thank you!

Sheila and Melissa, Leaders

Prayer Group/Prayer Flag Project



Come make prayer flags with Pastor Brendan on **Wednesday September 16 from 6:30-8:30 PM**. 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.**

Social Justice Movie Night

The outreach team invites the congregation and the extended community to participate in our final movie of the discussion series on the topic of tactical non-violent strategy. This movie night 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!



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.**

Date/Time:

Wednesday, September 9th: "How to start a revolution."

Movie summary:

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.

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 20, 21 and 22!** 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 and Sheila

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.) You can sign up for electronic giving with Vanco, which is a very simple option and setup, and fees are very low (let us know if you'd like more information), or you can use PayPal on our church's website at www.fgucc.org, (PayPal charges fees to process. If you have questions or need more information, please contact Elena at elena@fgucc.org or (503) 357-6960. Thank you for your generosity and support!



Joys, Concerns & Prayer Requests



- Sympathy—Our hearts go out in deepest sympathy to Tom Epler and his family upon the death of Tom's father, Bob Epler, on Friday, August 28. Please keep the Epler family in your prayers during this time.
- Sympathy—Our hearts go out in deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Dorothy Cooper as she died on Friday, August 21. Please keep the Cooper family in your prayers during this time.
- Sympathy—Our hearts go out in deepest sympathy to Lois Johnston and the entire Johnston family upon the death of Dick Johnston on Thursday, August 13. Please keep the Johnston family in your prayers during this time.
- Please remember Dick and Stephanie Lind as Dick was diagnosed recently with prostate cancer so they are navigating that journey. It was caught early, is small and contained, so they are thankful for that.
- Please keep Sharon Roso, Bette Prickett's sister, in your prayers as she is in hospice care.
- Please keep Carol and Ralph Brown in your prayers for healing as Carol is now recovering at home after a few weeks in rehab following two back surgeries.
- 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 recovery from knee replacement surgery several months ago.
- Please remember Bette Prickett as she continues to recover from arm/shoulder surgery.
- Please keep Marcia Bickford in your prayers for healing as she recovers 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 Johnston, Carlene Krueger, Jobina Lacock, Jean & Bob Nixon, Yvonne Stacey, Holly & Sherri Vann and their family, Tom Wallsted, Betty Wedell, and any other friends and family of our church, not named here.

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



Please join us for knitting this month via Zoom on **Wednesdays, September 2 and 16 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 September!

5—Mary Mullen
8—Betty Wedell
8—Bev Maughan
11—Pete Truax
13—Sandy Freeman
13—Deva Harris
16—Kaitlin Thursam
17—Stephanie Lind
20—Laura Frye
21—Julian Garfias
24—Carl Heisler
26—Parker Ramirez
27—Bill Alexander
28—Windi Withycombe
30—Deena Barrett
30—Steve Whisler



Celebrating
175
Years

How we became the Forest Grove United Church of Christ (FGUCC) - 1957.

The full story of how our congregational church became the Forest Grove United Church of Christ could be a long-term, project. The national website suggested I read Barbara Brown Zikmund's *Hidden Histories in the United Church of Christ*. Helen Lewis loaned me both volumes! Here is an abridged version:

Immigrants from Germany and Switzerland established many Evangelical & Reformed (E & R) churches in America. The Reformed tradition centered in Pennsylvania with a broadly Calvinist theology; the Evangelical formed in Missouri with a broadly Reformed and Lutheran theology. Both the Reformed and the Evangelical put a lot of effort in establishing health and welfare institutions, such as hospitals, orphanages, nursing homes.. Both did services in German for many generations. By 1934 they were so Americanized, that they adopted a statement of unity.

In 1957 the E & R joined with the Council of Congregational Churches to form the UCC; and in 1961, when the UCC constitution was ratified, about 40% had E & R backgrounds, 60% congregational. Our national website puts it this way:

On Tuesday, June 25, 1957, at Cleveland, Ohio, the Evangelical and Reformed Church, 23 years old, passionate in its impulse to unity, committed to "liberty of conscience inherent in the Gospel," and the Congregational Christian Churches, 26 years old, a fellowship of biblical people under a mutual covenant for responsible freedom in Christ, joined together as the United Church of Christ. The new church embodied the essence of both parents, a complement of freedom with order, of the English and European Reformations with the American Awakenings, of separatism with 20th-century ecumenism, of Presbyterian with congregational polities, of neo-orthodox with liberal theologies. Two million members joined hands.

What did we gain by this union? Boards for Homeland Ministries, World Ministries, Pension Boards and the United Church Foundation. We gained organization filtering through General Synod, the Office of Communication, Office for Church in Society, and Office for Church Life and Leadership. These provide resources and a voice through councils on: racial justice, development, women in church and society, history, ecumenism and higher education.

Lettering on the outside of our chapel is a reminder of our past.

Lettering on the outside of our sanctuary tells who we are today.

The sign on Main Street, to be dedicated September 20, will speak to our future as we draw the circle of God's love wide, wider still.

Sandy Freeman

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