



The Messenger

March 2015



Christ's Church Methodist & Presbyterian United & Falls City United Methodist Church

Pastor's Ponderings

"If you can't bear the cross, then you can't wear the crown." Is that an appropriate motto for Christians, especially during Lent?

I suppose it depends upon whether or not we follow Jesus because we are expecting a reward someday. And Jesus intimated that those who are persecuted for his sake will have a great reward in heaven.

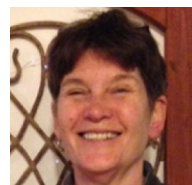
During Lent, many of us do inner and outer work: returning to God is a work of the heart. Doing acts of justice and loving-kindness is outer work. And they inform each other.

One of the great stories about returning to God is Jesus' parable about the prodigal son (some would say that the father was really the prodigal one!). The younger brother had asked for his share of inheritance *before the father had even died*. Talk about intolerable. It's a wonder that he wasn't disinherited and kicked out of the family for something so audacious. But the father actually gave this rebellious child an inheritance, which the son managed to waste on wine, women, and song. He finally ended up feeding pigs on somebody's farm. You know the rest...the son went back to beg that father to put him to work on the father's farm; he knows that he has given up the right to be considered a son any more. But the father rejoices in the son's return, and throws a party, because his son, once lost, is now found. The family is whole again.

Except it wasn't. The older brother could not stand the idea that his loser of a brother was now getting a reward for making so many mistakes. The older brother, the "good" son, who always did what was right, always helped

Becky

(continued on page 3)



REGULAR WEEKLY EVENTS

SUNDAY

- 9:00am **Fellowship** (FC Friendship Room)
 9:20am **Worship** (FC Sanctuary)
 10:00am **Prayer & Meditation** (CCMP Prayer Studio)
 11:00am **Worship** (CCMP Sanctuary)
 12:10am **Fellowship** (CCMP Upper Room)

TUESDAY

- 7:00pm **Boy Scouts** (CCMP Basement Hall)
 7:00pm **Committees** (CCMP Library)
 7:00pm **Spanish Church** (CCMP Sanctuary)

WEDNESDAY

- 8:00am **Lectionary Discussion Group** (Independence Grill)
 5:30pm **Joy Bells Practice** (CCMP Sanctuary)
 6:30pm **Choir Practice** (CCMP Sanctuary)
 7:30pm **Lenten Study** Feb 18-Mar 25 (Independence, J. Yeager's)

THURSDAY

- 5:30pm **Valley Zen Circle** (CCMP Basement)
 7:00pm **Thursday Book Study** (ON HOLD; for Lent)

FRIDAY

- 6:30pm **Arts & Crafts with Sherry** (Monmouth, S. Pittam)

SATURDAY

- 9:00am **Adventist Church** (9:00am-8:00pm, CCMP)

MONTHLY EVENTS

- Mar. 3 **Peace, Justice, and Mission Team Meeting**, 1st Tuesday (7:00pm, CCMP Library)
 Mar. 4 **Horizons Bible Study Group**, 1st Wednesday (1:00pm, Heron Pointe, Small Dining Room)
 Mar. 7 **Polk Community Free Clinic**, 1st Saturday (7:30am)
 Mar. 8 **Daylight**
 Mar. 10 **James2 Dinner**, 2nd Tue. (5:00pm, FC Friendship Room)
 Mar. 11 **Stewardship Team** for CCMP (7:30pm, CCMP Library)
 Mar. 12 **Board Meeting, FC**, Feb & Mar, Thu (7:00pm, FC Friendship Rm)
 Mar. 13 **Worship Team**, CCMP (2-4pm, CCMP Library)
 Mar. 17 **Board Meeting**, CCMP 3rd Tue (7:30pm, CCMP Library)
 Mar. 19 **Board Meeting**, Western Compass Campus Ministry, 3rd Thur. (10:00am, CCMP Library)
 Mar. 26 **Lunch Bunch** 4th Thursday (11:40am, FC Friendship Rm.)
 Mar. 28 **Polk Community Free Clinic**, 4th Saturday (7:30am)
 Mar. 25 **Submission Due Date** for February Newsletter
 Mar. 24 **Stephen Ministry**, 4th Tue CCMP (5:15pm, San Antonio's)
 Mar. 24 **James2 Dinner**, 4th Tue. (5:00pm, FC Friendship Room)
 Mar. 29 **5th Sunday** (25 bags of hope, 50 crisis hygiene kits)
 Mar. 29 **Palm Sunday**
 Mar 29-Apr 5 **Holy Week** ending on April 5, Easter Sunday

Christ's Church (CCMP)

Methodist & Presbyterian
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 Monmouth, OR 97361

www.christschurchmonmouth.org

Televised on: WIMPEG

Channel 18
(Currently WIMPEG is having technical difficulties, so keep checking here for the new schedule.)

Falls City UMC (FC)

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**Welcome! No matter
 who you are, or where
 you are on life's
 journey . . .
 you are welcome here.**



- Mar. 11 Jesse Whitehead
 Mar. 13 Ruth Sonnenschein
 Mar. 20 Richard Davis
 Mar. 21 Jo Ann King
 Mar. 31 Linda Scheirman

*(We want to list your birthday, too.
 Thanks – and Happy Birthday!)*

Pastor's Ponderings (continued from page one)

the father, never strayed... the older brother would not go in to the party. He stood outside, spitting mad. Even when his father went out to convince him to come in, the older brother would have none of it. "You never even gave me a goat for a party, and now you kill the fatted calf for that *[we can't print that here]?*"

The banquet is going on, yet the older brother misses out, resentful that the father is rewarding the wrong son, and wondering why he had wasted all his life doing what his father asked.

But the father was not handing out rewards. The father was celebrating that a son whom he figured was dead under a bridge somewhere was back in his arms. He assumed that the older brother would also be overjoyed at the turn of events. "Come, let's celebrate! I never thought I'd see this day. I was sure he was dead, and he's home safe. Let's be family again!"

Now who needs to return to God? If we are bearing our cross so that we'll get jewels in the crown, tit for tat, a transaction like any other, we are bound to be devastated by God's gracious economy. God's math is different. It's not about reward; it's about relationship. God's mercy trumps fairness, and God writes the rules. Do justice. Love mercy. Walk humbly. Carry your cross. Return to God.



Come to the party, and God will be delighted! But don't expect a crown. I just don't think God works that way.

See you at the Welcome Table.

Becky

**This month's fill-in Bible Verse** (answers on last page)

So do not fear, _____; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. (NIV)



Neighborhood Block Party

Our Summer Neighborhood Block Party is coming sooner than we think!

It's not too early to be thinking about how to make our Neighborhood Block Party even more successful this coming year.

Save July 30th for this event!!! And help plan! This is a great way to reach out to people – and to have fun while doing it!

What additional activities can we set up for our neighbors and their kids? Want to give a magic or puppet show? Interested in demonstrating how to make some Arts & Crafts? Who or what else can we invite to participate as a vendor? What businesses or agencies might be interested in participating? Put on your thinking caps and let the office know about your ideas.



April Spaghetti Feed & Auction on April 17

Actually it may be rotini instead of spaghetti; the cooks say it's easier to cook for a crowd.

Cancer continues to be the dreaded "C" word. We don't like to talk about, we almost immediately wonder when are they going to die when we hear they have cancer.



The fight against cancer has drastically changed over the years, in part to research, in part to better lifestyle through education and in part to better treatment options. Relay for Life, a 24-hour walking relay, is a major supporter of funding and support of families dealing with cancer.

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This year the Relay for Life of Polk County is the last weekend of May. Christ's

Church again is supporting a team called Footprints, which you can join to walk, to donate or to just plain stand behind and say, "You, go, cancer survivors, you, go!" Google Relay for Life of Polk County to sign up or donate, or contact Denvy Saxowsky (541-223-4462, saxowsky@gmail.com) if you have questions.

But back to the spaghetti. Several teams are working together, joining with Footprints to raise money with a spaghetti dinner and auction. There will be tables of silent auction items and an outcry auction later in the evening. This all happens on Friday, April 17, with the feed and silent auction starting at 5:00 and the outcry auction with Mike Ainsworth at 7:00.

The teams are looking for desirable items to auction, persons who wish to eat spaghetti and also sell tickets in the weeks before the event. Tickets for the feed are available for a \$5 or more donation with a maximum of \$20 for immediate families. Contact the church office with you auction items or to buy tickets. Did we mention there will be live music during the feed with Kay Graven and before the auction with Kevin and his newly formed trio. If nothing else, it will be an enjoyable family night out.

And continue to pray for those fighting cancer.



Hospitality Week

Hospitality Week February 2015

On the second day of Hospitality Week, Carol, one of the staff at Salem Interfaith Hospitality Network, said that typically they ask the families how things are going at the church. She went on to say that in their short time with Salem IHN, this [Christ's Church] was the best. The families are treated with serious interest and concern. The families felt like they were treated like people instead of "one of them" which was a feeling at some other churches.

It was sound like bragging and if this weren't "preaching to the choir" it may be. But this is what was said – more than once – that they felt genuinely supported and cared for. Christ's Church was witness to caring people walking the talk of caring for the least of these. They also thought the breakfast were well planned considering that they had to grab-and-run to get on the van which picked them up at 6:10 AM most mornings.

Sixty-nine different individuals representing 18 churches, wards or organizations volunteered time, hospitality,

and food during the week of February 15 – 22, 2015. For eight days, Sunday to Sunday, Christ's Church became a home for three families without homes, scores of volunteers ranging from high school to college students to mothers and fathers and grandparents became family. Half of the volunteers during this week participated for the first time and many offered to come back again.

What makes a home? What makes a family? A dry place to sleep with a clean rug under ones' feet. A listening ear and an ace bandage for an aching knee. Yes, that and more but mostly love, the love Jesus showed us and taught us.

If you missed the chance to warm your heart with two babies, five young sisters and an energetic boy, consider our next Hospitality Week in early September. It only takes a couple hours to witness the love of God in action.



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Spring is Coming!

We could still benefit from donations of large flowerpots. There are about 6-8 plants around the church that are growing and starting to green. Their roots could greatly benefit from a re-potting.

Needed: Ushers and Servers

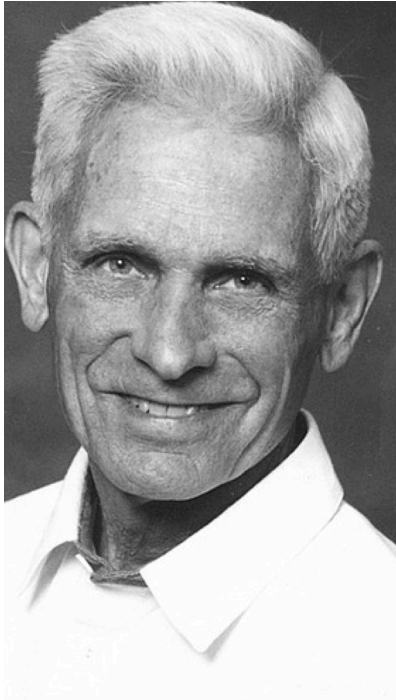
Do you want to have a more active part in worship? Perhaps by serving communion? Are you interested in being an usher, greeting people, and handing out bulletins, getting to know people's names better, and welcoming newcomers? Would you like to assist in collecting offerings and bringing communion elements forward? All in the service of God and others?

Remember, you are invited! Speak with Diane McBurnett to find out more. Diane will support you and give you pointers on carrying out your duties and schedule you.



The Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference will be held June 11-13, 2015 in the Salem Convention Center. The theme is on "Restoring the Sacred Circle," learning about and conversing with our own "First People" in the Northwest. Watch for times – you may want to be involved.

Unofficial synopsis of February 17 Board Meeting



Responses were received from several people regarding remaining on the membership rolls. Removed from our rolls by death were Carolyn Morris and Roger Kershner. Removed at their request are: Darcy Adsit, Ben Losher, and Jana, Brian, Andrew, and Alex Stockner.

Reports were received from the Treasurer, Pastor, Lay Leader, and Stewardship, Education, Worship, and Peace, Justice, and Mission Teams and the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.

Staff, Board Members, and others are active in denominational trainings and meetings.

The Board appreciated its recent retreat and would like a follow-up gathering in about three months.

Annual Staff evaluations are being completed.

More detailed Board Minutes will be posted outside the office after they have been approved at the following Board Meeting.

Check out this opportunity of a trip of a lifetime!

A Biblical Tour of the Holy Land with Pastor David Pederson, of Dallas Trinity Lutheran Church, and instructor Dr. Monte Luker. 14 days of biblical study. This study trip to Israel and Palestine is planned for **November 6, 2015-November 19, 2015**

Contact Pastor Becky (503) 838-1724 or Pastor Dave (503) 623-2233



Our church actively supports the **Ella Curin Food Bank** by contributing food and other items. This month pint or quart size jars, that can be sterilized and used to distribute food, are needed. The food focus for March is canned fruits and vegetables. What is more important is knowing how vital

Here's an excerpt from Oregon Food Bank website describing the needs:

"Long-term unemployment, persistent underemployment and the high cost of food, gas, utilities and rent are forcing more and more people to seek emergency food. The need for emergency food is unprecedented.

In Remembrance

Roger Kershner

December 2, 1928 -
February 11, 2015

See Roger's Dallas Itemizer-Observer obituary at:

<http://www.polkio.com/obituaries/2015/feb/25/roger-kershner/>

Your capacity to love is unlimited.

Love is like a flame. You can light one person's candle, or you can light 100 -- your flame will continue to burn brightly. And the world looks more beautiful the more candles you help to light up.

From "25 Truths About Life We All Need to Remember"

On Prayer

by Linda Grund-Clampit

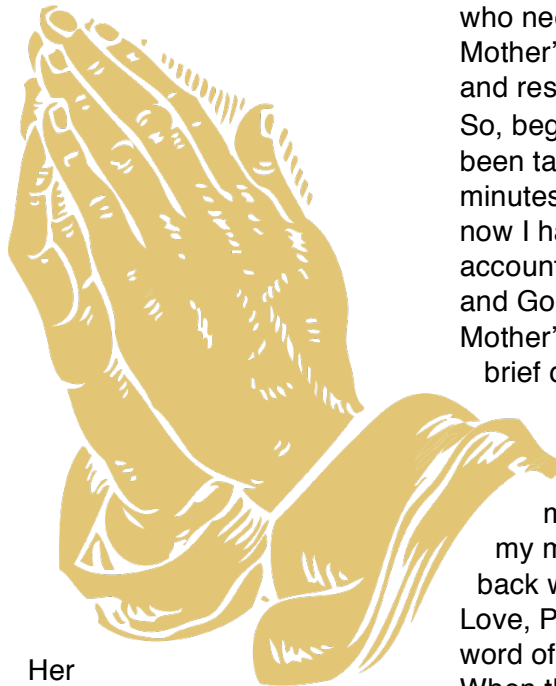
Some of you know that I have been participating in an experience called the Two Year Academy for Spiritual Formation since August 2013. This April I will attend the 8th and last session of the two year experience. This is a multi-faceted experience and someday I'll share more about that, but one of the core experiences is that of silence and prayer.

We have an hour of silence after each lecture (morning and afternoon) and we have a good deal of silence in our worship experiences, of which there are three a day. Some of my fellow students are practitioners of Centering Prayer, where one sits in a meditative state for 20 minutes or so, once or twice a day.

One of my goals has been to bring some of that silence and prayer life back into my "normal" life at home in between sessions at the retreat center. It has been a challenge! As all of you know, there is just so much **to do** – and not enough time to do it in. Most of us are do-ers and have many responsibilities. I tend to conclude that I don't have time to just sit for 15-20 minutes, as I rush through my day.

But something has shifted. During the seventh session of the Academy this past January, I was sitting in the back of the chapel in a stance of quiet and receptive prayer.

And an image was given to me of what it was I was doing. In the image I am a child, a toddler, who is busy about my play and activities. I'm all over the house . . . busy, busy, busy. In this image God is my mother. She, too, is at work, but her work is to create and sustain this home that I live in. Perhaps she is cooking or cleaning or sewing or arranging the beautiful spaces.



Her work is different than mine in that everything she is doing is for my benefit. She is the constant, loving creator of my whole world — and I'm not even aware of it most of the time. But when I stop for a time of quiet and receptive prayer, it is as though I have come to my mother to rest in her lap. I am tired from all my busy-ness. I am frazzled from all the frustrations of my play. I have sought her out — and God is that mother who is never too busy to pick me up

and cradle me in her arms and just let me rest.

The shift is that this prayer time is not just another item to cross off my "to do" list, and one that slips in priority because no one else is depending upon it. This prayer time is a gift offered to me by my loving Mother. And the shift is that I must humble myself to receive it. I must understand myself to be as a little child, weak and foolish, who needs some time in her Mother's lap to get centered and rest up for the day ahead. So, beginning in Lent, I have been taking that 15-20 minutes every morning (and now I have you to hold me accountable as well as myself and God!) to just sit in my Mother's lap. I begin with a

brief devotional reading, set my phone alarm for 15 minutes, take 3 deep breaths, close my eyes and relax. If my mind wanders, I bring it back with a word: Rest, Love, Peace . . . whatever the word of the day seems to be. When the alarm sounds (I have it set to be "harp," so nothing jarring!), I say the Lord's Prayer, review those for whom I want to lift up prayers of intercession and close with the Doxology.

If I am tempted to skip it because I have more important things to do and time is short, I remind myself: You are just a little child. Humble yourself and receive this good gift from your Mother. All will be well.

I invite you to rest in God's loving lap.



Because February is a short month, and because plans for Holy Week Services are still coming together, please be sure to check your weekly church bulletin on Mail Chimp email, closer to the end of March for details.

Lots will be happening following this Lenten Season, starting with Palm Sunday on the 29th. It is a time to look forward to.

Best,
Joy

The rest of this month's fill-in the blanks Bible Verse:

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God." Isaiah 41:10 (NIV)

The Gift of Disagreement based on Matthew 15:10-28

We can look almost anywhere in the world and see the consequences of one of our greatest failures as human beings—our inability to disagree. Yes, that is what I meant to say. We are suffering today not so much from our inability to *agree* as our inability to, peacefully and respectfully, *disagree*. Opposing opinions threaten us. We feel judged and disrespected when others do not align with us, and instead of considering their views with an open mind, we set out to prove how wrong they are. Our local, national and international governments, our religious and civic bodies, all give evidence of this pervasive inability to disagree in good spirit. It takes humility to hear each other, let alone work with each other, while seeing things differently. What are we afraid of—that we might learn something new, and have to change

A woman comes to Jesus seeking a crumb of mercy for her daughter. She is a nobody among nobodies. The disciples want to send her away, and Jesus himself compares her to a dog scrounging for scraps under the table. Yet she is remembered still today, not because she and Jesus hit it off so splendidly, but because she dares to disagree creatively. She is put down and spoken to dismissively, but she does not let this deter her. She has a vision bigger than the evidence at hand. She has her own sense of God's wide, wild mercy, and she recognizes this mercy within Jesus. If he is not yet ready to stand with her, so be it. She is ready to stand with him.

This is what it means to disagree with an open mind. We hold in our hearts our sense of what is right, and we also hold those who oppose us. We refuse to accept the same old worn out stories, and we also refuse to blame. We know the old bigotries and hatreds have harmed us all, and that we of opposing opinions are not the real enemy. We also know that keeping quiet is no longer an option. When she asks Jesus to heal her daughter, her beloved, her future, he says no. Can you believe it? What happens next makes all the difference. Does she erupt against him? Does she remain quietly agreeable? Or does she find a third way, allowing her expanded vision to stretch his? From this woman we see what a living relationship with Jesus and each other can look like. We see the healing mercy that can come from disagreement.

By: [Kayla McClurg in Passage by Passage: A Gospel Journey](#)