A Note from Pastor Casey

The moment Nov 1st arrives, my Facebook feed will be filled with friends’ posts of daily gratitude. It has become a social media annual tradition: every November, people share one thing per day that they are grateful for leading up to Thanksgiving.

A year ago, my daughter’s first teeth emerged just in time for Thanksgiving dinner, and she’s been growing so fast ever since. And yet, her speedy growth and intense curiosity has necessitated me slowing down to match her pace as she explores the world. This fall, I have been discovering joy, beauty, and gratitude through the eyes of my daughter: Isn’t that red leaf pretty? Look at that massive orange pumpkin! Is that a slug slimy? See how the raindrops make ripples in the puddles? Every new discovery she makes encourages me to discover the world all over again too. And what a gift that is—to walk slowly through this world, noticing the little details that God designed and sustains.

A few weeks ago, I needed to slip out of the chapel quickly to get into the sanctuary and one of our faithful ushers, Jim Russell, held open a side door for me that I had never noticed before. A few days later, I was looking for a dry erase marker during the Preaching Preview bible study and someone suggested I look in the closet of the Lounge, which I swear hadn’t been there before. Somehow, I have walked the halls of this church for a year and I’m still discovering new things. Perhaps you too move quickly through familiar spaces and have overlooked a few surprises.

Whatever your November days have in store, I invite you to try to walk through them slowly. Notice something small every day and give thanks to God for its role in Creation...even the everyday, mundane things like wet dirt and pinecones. Write about it on Facebook or in a journal if you wish; share your discoveries with family and friends; or just ponder them in your own quiet heart.

A Note from Celeste Devaney

Have you ever noticed that gratitude and mindfulness seem to go hand in hand? They are both only experienced in the intentional present, and I’ve been working at improving them in myself. I find it a bit daunting, when there is so much planning to do for the weeks and months ahead. Thanksgiving is right around the corner, and Advent just beyond that, followed by Christmas, New Year, etc. There’s always something that draws me away from the present moment.

But that present moment is one I want to fill with gratitude. I start my day thanking God for the many blessings in my life. When I take a break from work, I walk around the church and give thanks for everyone who comes through our doors. When I’m finished with my day, I breathe in silence and say thank you for all that I experienced. We are greatly blessed. We need to be greatly thankful.
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Cover Photo: World Communion Sunday.
Photo: Japanese Maple located outside the main entrance.
“We seek a world where all are welcome, and differences are celebrated...I find it encouraging that so many churches in our community work to advance the radical welcome and love of God in Jesus Christ through being the Ministry of Reconciliation and building up the Beloved Community where all will be one.”

-Bob Sittig, Diverse Harmony Board President
I’ve been worshiping at Bothell UMC for over 11 years. I’ve seen our church continuing to find exciting, new ways to be present in many different communities around us. The National Coming Out Day Concert that took place in our Sanctuary on Sunday, October 13, was one of the most memorable experiences I’ve encountered in my time here. Diverse Harmony, the nation’s first queer-straight alliance youth choir, based in Seattle, joined music groups from our church to present a concert embracing love, support, encouragement, and acceptance through the joy of music and dance. Breaking down walls. Building bridges. Belonging, survival, trusting through doubt. And circles wide enough for all. Those are the themes that radiated through the music and message.

The singers of Diverse Harmony blessed those in attendance through their songs, but also through their bravery. Many of these youth have no interest being in a church setting, much less one in Bothell. And National Coming Out Day is very personal to many in their communities. The dozen in the choir were there in confidence and trust of their director and each other. They bravely stood offering their gifts and identities in their most real forms. I’m hopeful that the positive experience for them and for our church gives us more momentum for these types of collaborations and celebrations.

Raffle prizes, donated from local businesses, were given out mid-concert by the Reconciling Ministries and PFLAG teams. Donations from the concert, exceeding $700, were graciously given to Diverse Harmony, to support their mission and work. Thank you to all who attended, donated, and supported this sensitive outreach opportunity. I look forward to all the new ways our church will continue to be Christ in the Community, trusting God’s guidance to spaces we can’t imagine.

"Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still..."
What do you get when you combine kiddos in costumes, creative and caring volunteers, a sensory room for those who need a little less trick with their treat, Bothell’s very own Beca’s Brew, some friends from the Woodland Park Zoo, an awesome photo booth, bouncey houses and Zero and Somebody the clowns? You get this year’s Rock the Knock! This annual event is coordinated by the Children’s Ministry team and many groups volunteered to host a themed room.

It was an amazing sight wandering the church, witnessing God at work. Watching little eyes light up with anticipation as they walked through the doors! The opportunity to touch a tortoise from Woodland Park Zoo! Tasting the yummy popcorn while watching a classic family Halloween movie! People talking and connecting! Listening to families laughing and making memories! The candy and treats seemed to take a back seat to families enjoying all the activities together.

My favorite memory of this year’s Rock the Knock community outreach event was witnessing our church community coming together and Being Christ in the Community!
683 PEOPLE FROM THE COMMUNITY JOINED FOR THE HALLOWEEN FUN

Photos by: Eric Trott and Chi & Brian Cornell.
USA Today reported in mid-October that the median home price in the San Francisco area was $1.4M (compared to $580K in Seattle). Middle-class families are being driven out of the Bay Area, and often out of state. Left behind are the very rich, the very poor, and communities struggling to maintain balance and vibrancy.

As I read, I thought back 25 years, when my boss told me, “If you want to see the future of Seattle, look at San Francisco. It always seems to be 10 years ahead of us.” Over the years, I’ve found her observation holds up. While our little hamlet’s explosive growth is miniature compared to San Francisco and Silicon Valley, if we desire to maintain the vibrancy and welcoming nature that is a Bothell trademark, we must ask ourselves,

“What are we prepared to do?” If we acknowledge our calling to become Christ in this community, then what will we do about it?

The challenge might be daunting, but to me, the opportunity is clear and surprisingly easy, thanks to our thoughtful Bothell UMC forefathers and foremothers: we must create homes that are affordable for people of all income levels and a community that is equally as welcoming and loving.

How is a challenge that significant also surprisingly easy? Because when our church Barb Bailey and members of the Bothell Urban team meet to address, research, and respond to questions that came up during the focus sessions in September. FAQs and additional information can be found on the bulletin board, in the office, or within periodic emails.
moved from downtown Bothell to its current location in the 1950s, the congregation purchased the whole block! Bothell UMC expanded in many ways over the decades, yet the West portion of the block sits fallow, waiting for its chance to make a difference.

Why not carry out the expansion our parents and grandparents envisioned, albeit in a way they probably couldn’t foresee? We can sell the empty land to the west of the parking lot and turn it into middle-class, single-family housing. The sale proceeds can then be used to create affordable multi-family housing downtown. We can create a vibrant, welcoming ministry our community craves. In addition, there’s the opportunity to serve the community through a downtown ministry component that could increase access to social services, job training, or straightforward community-building.

A recent Sunday Roots worship service (9am) closed with the hymn “A Man Owned a Vineyard.” The ending of the last verse stuck in my head as I pondered the future of Bothell Urban: “God, you give what is yours, more than what we deserve. May we reach out in love where you call us to serve. May we who have witnessed your grace gladly share your justice and love with your world everywhere.”

In coming weeks and months, the Governing Board and the whole congregation will be asked to make thoughtful – prayerful– decisions about the Bothell Urban ministry. I’d ask you to think deeply about where Bothell UMC should go. If you need more information, ask members of the Bothell Urban team, or the Governing Board. An exciting future awaits!

When I shared our Bothell Urban vision with pastors and lay people at a recent national United Methodist Church conference, their response came back in unison: you are so fortunate to have such resources available to you.
Fall Dinner Reflections
Written By Claudia Green

On October 4th I seated myself at a round table in the Fellowship Hall with happy anticipation. It turned out that I knew all my table mates but one, the visiting mother of a Bothell UMC member, whom I got to know a bit over the course of the evening. This night was going to be special: Pastor Lara Bolger would be our guest speaker for the 2019 Fall Dinner, hosted by Bothell UMC’s United Methodist Women. It has been seven years since Pastor Lara left Bothell UMC to serve at Redmond UMC, but she remembered her former congregants and greeted us, as old friends do.

Pastor Lara's talk, 'Food for the Soul,' was derived from the collected writings of several United Methodist clergy who address the topics of 'hope and transformation' in demographic areas referred to as the 'None Zone,' where church-going isn't common, such as in the State of Washington. Pastor Lara read quotes to us from the book 'Filling the Void: Voices from the None Zone.' She read, asked questions, and created space for us to reflect and respond.

What I took away from the evening was an experience of vibrant fellowship.

We were a roomful of women sharing a special meal together, thoughtfully attended-to by a waitstaff of Bothell UMC gentlemen. If it is true that it is often the case that women tend to take the initiative in bringing their families and friends to church, then this type of fellowship becomes an especially important way for a church to reach out to other communities in the None Zone. When the women of a congregation are truly fed in body, mind and spirit, they tend to want to share it with others who might also benefit. In our case, we were fed in body by Chef Sheri Vahey’s incredible meal; we were fed through fellowship by stimulating conversations with table mates we didn't know well; and we were fed by our guest speaker who invited us to meditate, review and question topics brought up by her talk this year. It was a very enjoyable and memorable evening. The future of our own church is shaped tremendously by the nurturing it does for its members and attendees, and in this case, women experienced 'food for the soul' wholeheartedly.
There are days when it’s hard to be thankful. I’ve had days when I know it’s not right to be ungrateful or wish such-and-such hadn’t happened. God-where-are-you, why-did-this-happen, I-can’t-be-grateful kind of days. But I have learned a few practices that help me turn burdens to blessings.

**DON’T FIGHT IT.**

Whatever just happened – it happened. You have the choice to figure out how to spend your energy. When I realize that I can’t change what happened, but I can change how I respond, I remember to be grateful. Even for a minor car accident, if it’s your first one you can be grateful for that. If it’s your second one, you can be grateful that you have experience!

**THIS WON’T MATTER NEXT WEEK.**

This might be my favorite mood changer when something happens, and sometimes these things become a great story! I lost my eyeglasses on an international flight. I was so mad at the time and struggled while navigating through airports until arriving home. I was not in a very grateful mood, and not a great traveling companion. I could have been in a better mood that whole time, and a better traveling companion, if I had used this tip!

**BUT THIS!**

When I feel burdened by something, ungrateful for busy days, bad traffic, inconvenient weather, whatever it may be – I can say “BUT...Sabbath is coming!” or “Tonight I won’t be in traffic” or “I have a warm & dry coat!” I hope you can all find something in your life that balances out the things you struggle to be grateful for!

There are circumstances in life where burdens are too difficult for these three tips, times when not even God would expect you to be thankful and would weep with you. A deeper healing process to work through grief is necessary for those. But for those little daily life moments that we let affect our moods, a little gratitude really changes everything!
In September, I had the opportunity to travel with a delegation from the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference to the Leadership Institute hosted by the Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas. For three days, Eric Trott (Governing Board Incoming Chair) and I were with close to 3,000 other United Methodists from across the United States listening and learning about this moment in our denomination’s story and wondering what’s next for the United Methodist Church.

Here’s the simple answer: nobody knows.

In May 2020, delegates from around the globe will gather in Minneapolis, MN, at General Conference, the highest decision-making body of our denomination. Until then, Bothell United Methodist Church will continue to live into the identity and purpose that God has for us. We will continue welcoming people, especially our LGBTQIA+ siblings, and participate in God’s ministry of declaring all people to be of sacred worth. And, we will wait. After General Conference makes its decisions about the future of the church, annual conferences and local churches will also need to make decisions. But until we know what decisions are made in Minneapolis, there are too many scenarios to speculate, and it becomes too easy to get paralyzed into inaction when God is calling us to be active in Kingdom-building work right now.

With that said, I did want to share a few reflections from the trip itself:

• Often, when United Methodists gather at conferences like this one, it feels like a big family reunion, and this trip was no exception. It was such a blessing to reconnect with friends and colleagues, some I had not seen in ten years, and to share how God has been at work since those first days of our calling into ministry. I am grateful for God’s faithfulness in my life and in all of our lives and for the opportunity to share that with others.

• I am grateful for the reminder of The United Methodist Church’s rich legacy. Together, we named some of our institutional and systemic sins—like racism and the segregated Central Conferences and the shame of not ordaining women until 1956—and we named the ways we have lived into the celebration of diversity. On a personal note, I was grateful to see a picture of Bishop Roy Nichols during a presentation on the work of racial reconciliation in our denomination. Bishop Nichols was the first African American Bishop elected in The United Methodist Church in 1968, and he was serving the church that I was serving prior to coming to Bothell—Salem United Methodist Church in Harlem, New York.

• I am grateful for Kansas City barbeque.

• On the last day, those present from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska had an opportunity to gather together. We introduced ourselves and began the hard work of discerning some paths forward for our denomination in our region. That work, in and of itself, was rewarding, but...
afterwards, when we had prayed and were preparing to leave, a woman walked up to me and asked if I was the Pastor of Bothell United Methodist Church. When I responded that I was one of them, she clasped both of my hands and said, “I just want to thank you”. Apparently, our church supported this small church, North Star United Methodist Church, in Nikiski, Alaska, by sending Bibles and other supplies for their ministry. I am grateful for the connectionalism that is The United Methodist Church and for the legacy of our church in supporting ministries and communities around the world.

I’m reminded of the story in 2 Chronicles 5, when Solomon had finished the work of rebuilding the temple. The text tells us that when he had finished, he had the Ark of the Lord’s Covenant brought to the temple and in verse 13, the story continues:

“The trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the LORD and sang: ‘He is good; his love endures forever.’”

No one knows the future of the United Methodist Church; in fact, no one can guarantee tomorrow for you and for me. But still, we pause to give thanks and to be grateful for God’s faithfulness, for truly God is good and God’s love has endured and will endure forever!

Our family has always loved Saint Francis of Assisi. Years ago, when we attended a Catholic church, St. Francis’ feast day was our favorite because it celebrated God in nature all around us. We were thrilled when Bothell UMC began this tradition and we have always loved bringing our pets to the Blessing of the Animals worship service in October. But when our daughter Clarise got her service dog Salute, it took on extra-special meaning.

Salute has been a life-changer for Clarise. We received him from Canine Companions for Independence, and he has helped lift our entire family by assisting Clarise. Salute exudes love through the special relationship he has with her. He helps Clarise get out in the world so her life is connected with her community. He helps her access health care, shop for herself, and move confidently through her world.

We brought Salute to the Blessing of the Animals this year to remind us that God’s love is all around us in nature—in the trees and in our animals. (I’m not convinced this applies to snakes, but maybe.) Clarise and Salute share a unique bond of mutual support and love that deserves to be blessed, so we are grateful to be able to receive a blessing through Bothell UMC. Although Salute doesn’t take communion in church, dog treats in an outdoor worship service are a pretty good alternative.
Have you ever wondered about the impact of your acts of generosity? We know part of giving is an act of trust and we don’t always have the opportunity to see the fruits of what we sow. Here is a story of the harvest that was enjoyed within the Youth Group because of the trust, generosity, and support of the church. Genny Benson, a 9th grader at Inglemoor, shares her mission trip story along with her experience of how this generosity has affected her relationship with God and the church.

As my first mission trip, this year’s mission trip was significant to me (big thank you to Paul Vahey for personally inviting me). It gave me a chance to connect with the other youth, especially the ones I’ve never talked to before. It even helped me build friendships among the Edmonds UMC and Marysville UMC youth groups. As a result of being a part of this mission trip, it also gave me the confidence to attend Sunday school and other youth group activities regularly now. I’m really glad I received the opportunity to join a really fun and exhilarating mission trip!

Mission trips aren’t usually low-priced, which is why fundraisers are involved to raise money for a cause such as, well, mission trips. The two fundraisers we included were the take-and-bake pies we made for July 4th and the Kids’ Night Out. It was important that people contributed to the fundraisers because it allowed people, like me, to go without the financial burden. Along with the mission trip, we were also able to offset the cost of updating the youth room. It improved from the floor, the setup, to the abundant numbers of snacks and Italian sodas we have in the room. The impact the youth room update has on my experience of Sunday school and youth group sets a shift in perspective. With the room updated, I am looking forward to making good memories and growing a stronger relationship with God in the coming year. Thank you for your generosity.
Calendar Highlights:

Financial GPS
Wednesdays, November 6, 13, and 20 | 7pm | Lounge

All Church Fall Cleanup
Saturday, November 9 | 9am

Interfaith Gratitude Concert
Sunday, November 10 | 6-8pm | First Lutheran Church of Bothell

New Members Class & Dessert
Sunday, November 10 | 6pm | Clergy Office

Thanksgiving Dinner with Pastor Casey
Thursday, November 28 | 1pm | Fellowship Hall
RSVP to pastorcasey@bothellumc.org

All Church Conference
Includes election of leaders and the Bothell Urban votes for members. Lunch Provided.
Sunday, December 1 | 12pm | Fellowship Hall

International Cooking Group: Cookies
Friday, December 6 | 6pm | Fellowship Hall
RSVP to celeste@bothellumc.org

New Members Class & Dessert
Sunday, December 8 | 6pm | Clergy Office

FOR THE FULL CALENDAR GO TO: bothellumc.org/calendar

Advent Highlights:

Family Christmas Caroling
Saturday, December 7 | Begins at 5pm | Fellowship Hall

Fun with Frosty
Saturday, December 14 | 1-3pm | Fellowship Hall

The Longest Night WORSHIP SERVICE
Wednesday, December 18 | 7pm | Chapel

Christmas Concert
Sunday, December 22 | 2pm | Sanctuary

Youth Christmas Party
Ugly Sweaters, Sweets, and Stories of the Nativity
Sunday, December 22 | 6-8pm | Youth Room

Christmas Eve Services 3 TIMES
Tuesday, December 24
3pm | Service features the Wings Ensemble, an interactive Nativity story, and the Prayground for children.
7pm | Service features the Roots Chancel Choir, brass, and handbells. The children will enjoy a Birthday Party for Jesus.
11pm | Service features the River Chant Choir, contemplative music, and candlelight.
I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

- Psalm 9:1

The Witness is a bi-monthly publication. Want to submit a story or photo for consideration? Email Pastor Casey Banks at pastorcasey@bothellumc.org

SUNDAY WORSHIP TIMES
8am | River (contemplative in the chapel)
9am | River (traditional in the sanctuary)
10:30am | Wings (contemporary in the sanctuary)