A Note from Pastor Joe

Lead Pastor

There’s a great scene in the wonderful movie, Remember the Titans, which follows the T.C. Williams High School football team during the 1971 season. T.C. Williams High School, located in Alexandria, Virginia, was the first desegregated high school in the United States, and the movie tells the story of that journey. After a particularly convincing victory, some of the players on the team go to celebrate. Some of the players are Black and some are white, and as they are walking down the street, one of the white players suggests that they go into one of the restaurants. The Black players say no, basically naming it as a racist restaurant, but the white player convinces them.

As they enter, the restaurant owner tells them that the restaurant is full, even though there clearly are seats available, and when pushed, he says, “This is my establishment. I reserve the right to refuse service to anybody. Now, if ya’ll want something to eat, you can take these boys out back and pick it up from the kitchen.”

I can still remember when I watched this movie for the first time how much this scene affected me. I was angry for the Black players, angry at the history of racism that was portrayed, angry at the realities of overt racism even today. But I never caught the next bit of the scene.

You see, after the players get out of the restaurant, the following interaction happens.

The Black player (Petey) says to the white player who suggested the restaurant (Ronnie): What did I tell you, man?

Ronnie responds: I didn’t know man.

Petey responds: I told you! What do you mean you didn’t know? Did you think I was joking with you?

Another player jumps in and says: Petey, he didn’t know.

And Petey responds: He don’t want to know.

The incidents of these past few months, in particular the continued murdering of Black people by police officers, have brought to the forefront conversations about race; and for that, I am thankful. But too often, we allow our conversations to be just that - conversations without actions. It’s easy to identify blatant racism and to talk about how that is wrong; it’s a different thing completely to want to know how racism exists and manifests itself today, how we are complicit in those systems of racism, and how to make tangible changes in our lives to combat racism.

I want to know and I hope you do, too. In the coming days and weeks, you will hear about ways that I, with your staff and your leadership, are working to make ourselves better, and we will be offering ways to learn together and engage in this work from being non-racist to anti-racist. It’s no longer enough to think that one is non-racist; we must actively and with intention speak out against racism and break down the systems that allow it to exist.

Author Ijeoma Oluo writes, “The beauty of anti-racism is that you don’t have to pretend to be free of racism to be anti-racist. Anti-racism is the commitment to fight racism wherever you find it, including in yourself. And it’s the only way forward.”

May we boldly move forward, then, towards God’s preferred future, towards the Beloved Community, and commit to doing the hard work so that all would be welcomed and all would belong, exactly as God created us to be.
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Cover Photo & Table of Contents Photo: Members of Bothell joined the Black Lives Matter March on June 20, 2020 that went from the church to Bothell Landing. This march was led by Northshore School District alumni & students and called upon the School District and provide a space of better racial equality through curriculum, staffing, and expanding conversations.
GOVERNING BOARD

Statement on Racism

Bothell United Methodist Church’s welcome statement affirms that God’s grace and peace are freely given to everyone, and yet there are places in our country, our communities, and even our own church, where people do not experience this in their daily lives. This has been made more known in recent days with the killing of Black individuals – Manuel Ellis, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks – and many more in the long history of brutal and inhumane treatment of Black people in the United States. We lament these deaths and condemn these killings, simply declaring that Black Lives Matter.

Systemic violence against Black and Indigenous communities has been deeply rooted for centuries on this land and in this nation, and every institution is complicit in upholding violent systems, even Bothell United Methodist Church. We, both individually and collectively as members of the Governing Board of this church, pray for the day that no statements like this need to be made, and until then, we...

- Confess our complicity in racist systems and name our own racism and biases—both those we are aware of and those that are so ingrained in our traditions and relationships as to make them invisible to ourselves;
- Confess that we have not loved our neighbors with our whole hearts; and
- Vow to uphold our United Methodist baptismal vows to renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of our sin.

Additionally, as the Governing Board of Bothell United Methodist Church, tasked with listening to the movement of the Spirit and leading our community, we commit to...

- Learning together by reading anti-racism resources that have been amplified by local Black activists. We will start by reading So You Want to Talk about Race by Ijeoma Oluo and discussing its contents at our regular meetings;
- Leading our congregation in the hard work of understanding and identifying bias, prejudice and racism through shared learning and witnessing;
- Establishing a task force to focus on these issues and lead us in further exploration of the ways we are flawed and of how we can move forward.
- Internally examining white supremacy and anti-blackness in our own thoughts and actions by determining specific ways we have been complicit in these sins, both individually and as a church;
- Dismantling white supremacy, racism, and bias in all their forms, within the purpose, vision and practices of our church.

We will keep striving for the day when Bothell United Methodist Church will do no harm while doing all the good we can. May God strengthen us on our journey as we move towards justice and love in our church, our community, and beyond.

Adopted 25 June 2020
During times of community stress and trauma, there are many ways we can look for healing. Many of us participate by holding signs of protest, by writing our elected officials, by re-tweeting good memes, by lamenting and confessing our participation as perpetrators, by praying for change within ourselves and within our world, and by looking for places to be active in our community in service to others.

Pastor Anja Helmon of Northlake Lutheran and I thought we could offer a memorial and a vigil for the community. The vigil would need to be held in a manner that wouldn't require people to gather, due to COVID-19 health concerns.

The names of more than twenty-two Black people who were killed while unarmed were printed on signs. The signs were then laminated and posted on stakes in a two mile at-your-own-pace vigil on the Burke Gilman Trail. These names have been honored by hundreds of people with poems, rocks, flowers, people kneeling, standing, meditating, and praying. We thought that we would advertise this event and would need to monitor the signs occasionally.

What happened next surprised us.

Within 24 hours, many of the signs were broken and vandalized.

But that's not the end: A local woman heard about it and called for volunteers to regularly maintain the signs. She gathered monetary donations so that more signs could be laminated, and more stakes purchased. This group of volunteers goes out daily, puts signs back up and adds more. Regular trail walkers and riders have thanked the group for this important memorial, and some have even taken ownership of protecting the signs, openly defending the importance of this remembrance to naysayers. Participants have educated themselves by researching the circumstances of each person named.

For Pride month, they took it one step further and made sure to add names of Trans or Queer Black people who have been killed while unarmed.

What began as a quiet opportunity for individuals to spend time remembering victims grew to have more meaning than even that. It has become a place of community support, a source for education and a place where volunteers were moved to action for anti-racist activities. This is how those victims can be truly honored.
It was the first week of moving to an exclusively online worship and something beautiful happened. Something that may have been a mistake, but its consequence was heaven-bringing, and it was an accident.

Months before COVID-19 were words in our minds, the Bothell UMC AV Team decided to begin online streaming at the end of February, just two weeks before the transition to exclusively online gatherings.

We never anticipated it would be this important.

It was March 8 (that was seventeen weeks ago if you’re reading this on our publishing date), and for many of our congregants it was the first time they’d watched a video on Facebook Live. It was in this uncharted territory that buttons were hit and before we knew it, five people started their own watch parties; sharing the video through their profile, enabling it to be seen by their own friends. Friends who are out of state, friends who are out of country, friends who live a block away from church, friends who identify as Christian, and friends who may have been hurt by Christianity and may have seen a different way of doing church.

I don’t know if these five people already considered themselves evangelists, but what they did was just that. I must admit, since I grew up in the south, when I think of evangelism, I wrestle with the word; knowing how it has been used to harm. It is a word whose Greek origin I must continue to reclaim: “Good Messenger.” I hope we can all get behind being ‘messengers of good.’

When it comes to sharing a video or picture that is faith based, I am an expert at getting caught up in weighing the pros and cons of how it will be seen or understood by my friends (whether they identify as Christian or not), and find myself thinking that sharing something on my profile - like a worship service - would be impossible.

It was beautiful that these five people did my ‘impossible’ without even thinking about it. Their actions, whether intended or not, were simple and became a chance to share with others our church and faith that is full of love, justice, and service.

The video-shareings may have been accidents on March 8, but I hope that you will find yourself clicking share and becoming an evangelist in a new way in this season of online community...even if it’s an accident. It is my prayer that you may be bold, and that in all your shares, your friend-list not only knows your love for God and neighbor, but that those friends experience God in new ways.
Emma and Josh heard that something happened in their town. A Black man was shot by the police.

"Why did the police shoot that man?"

"Can police go to jail?"

Something Happened in Our Town follows two families — one white, one Black — as they discuss a police shooting of a Black man in their community. The story aims to answer children's questions about such traumatic events, and to help children identify and counter racial injustice in their own lives.

Includes an extensive Note to Parents and Caregivers with guidelines for discussing race and racism with children, child-friendly definitions, and sample dialogues. Ages 5-8

Widespread reporting on aspects of white supremacy—from police brutality to the mass incarceration of Black Americans—has put a media spotlight on racism in our society. Still, it is a difficult subject to talk about. How do you tell your roommate her jokes are racist? Why did your sister-in-law take umbrage when you asked to touch her hair—and how do you make it right? How do you explain white privilege to your white, privileged friend?

In So You Want to Talk About Race, Ijeoma Oluo guides readers of all races through subjects ranging from intersectionality and affirmative action to “model minorities” in an attempt to make the seemingly impossible possible: honest conversations about race and racism, and how they infect almost every aspect of American life.

Special notes: Ijeoma Oluo is a local Shoreline, WA resident. This is also the book that staff & Governing Board are going through.

Published from 1936 to 1966, the Green Book was hailed as the “Black travel guide to America.” At that time, it was very dangerous and difficult for African-Americans to travel because Black travelers couldn’t eat, sleep, or buy gas at most white-owned businesses. The Green Book listed hotels, restaurants, gas stations, and other businesses that were safe for Black travelers. It was a resourceful and innovative solution to a horrific problem. It took courage to be listed in the Green Book, and Overground Railroad celebrates the stories of those who put their names in the book and stood up against segregation. It shows the history of the Green Book, how we arrived at our present historical moment, and how far we still have to go when it comes to race relations in America.

Take your first steps with Antiracist Baby! Or rather, follow Antiracist Baby's nine easy steps for building a more equitable world.

With bold art and thoughtful yet playful text, Antiracist Baby introduces the youngest readers and the grown-ups in their lives to the concept and power of antiracism. Providing the language necessary to begin critical conversations at the earliest age, Antiracist Baby is the perfect gift for readers of all ages dedicated to forming a just society. Ages 4-6

(Continued on Page 10)
Be an Ally!
Written By Lynne Pearson

ALLY: one who is associated with another as a helper: a person or group that provides assistance and support in an ongoing effort, activity, or struggle. (Merriam Webster dictionary)

Lately we have been inundated by posts, blogs, articles, and talk shows about the importance of being an ally, both now and during less turbulent times. But what does an ally look like?

According to Sobia Ali-Faisal, co-founder and Pakistani member of BIPOC USHR (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour United for Strength, Home, and Relationships) “being an ally demands three qualities: OPENNESS, HUMILITY, AND A WILLINGNESS TO ENDURE DISCOMFORT. While joining protests is an important part of being an ally, for these gestures to be meaningful, non-black allies need to make sure the events and protests they attend in solidarity are organized and led by Black members of the community.1

Staying informed is key. It’s important to SEEK INFORMATION FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES. “For more of a slow-burn, consistent education, consider supplementing your news consumption with Code Switch, a news podcast through the lens of race and identity.”2

Allies step out of the limelight and ASSUME SUPPORTING ROLES. According to Illuminatives.org, it is important to “step out of the leadership role and play a supporting role to Native peoples. Instead of leading the conversation, advising the group, fixing the problem or facilitating the solution, listen and support the Native Americans leading the conversation.”3

Being an advocate is part of being an ally. The Human Rights Campaign suggests “FIND OUT if your employer has an equal rights policy. If not, encourage the organization’s leadership to adopt one.”

PFLAG is an organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people, their parents and families, and allies. Graeme Geib is the leader of the group that meets at Bothell UMC. He suggested that to be an ally, one should seek first to understand, to listen. It is important to understand where allies are needed and where they are not. They should wait to be invited, not invite themselves. Because, allies may not be the best persons to fill a role. In their “guide to being a straight ally,” PFLAG states: “ALLIES ARE PEOPLE WHO KNOW THAT SUPPORT COMES IN MANY FORMS. It can mean something super-public (think covering yourself in rainbow glitter and heading to a Pride celebration with a sign reading, “PROUD ALLY”*). But it can also mean expressing support in more personal ways through the language we use, conversations we choose to have, and signals that we send. True allies know that all aspects of allyship are important, effective, and should be valued equally.” (guide to being a straight ally)5

These resources are free and easily available. It is up to persons seeking to be allies to do the work, to seek out the information themselves, and not place a burden on those they seek to support by asking them for information. They have already done the work of creating the resources.

1 cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-what-it-means-to-be-an-ally-1.5594973
2 self.com/story/white-ally-resources
4 hrc.org/resources/straight-guide-to-lgbt-americans
When you think of being uncomfortable, what comes to mind? Do you think of yourself or others? Do you think of stories you have experienced about individuals who survived horrific events? Do you think about Jesus, and his disciples? Or are you like me, and you would rather think about almost anything else? There are many words that could define our experiences of 2020, but the one I know we have collectively experienced is, discomfort. From the fires that consumed Australia, to a global pandemic, to our country’s cascading display of grief and rage over the continued violence against Black bodies and other people of color, this year has pulled and stretched us beyond our comfort zones.

If you were brought up in the church or have been a part of a church community for a long time, you are likely familiar with how radical the teachings of Jesus are. We love how Jesus taught us to radically love others. We can really get behind the Jesus who embraces children, heals the sick, or turns water into wine. However, we have a much more difficult time sitting with the Jesus who taught us to embrace discomfort.

When we study the life of Jesus, we can clearly see that he was constantly being challenged, not only by those who persecuted him, but by those who claimed to love him. We all tend to read our Bible stories with lots of assumptions and implicit bias. One of mine was believing that Jesus was somehow impervious to all the oppression and abuse he was experiencing. I was unable and maybe unwilling to see the radical and purposeful choices Jesus was making. He shows us how to choose discomfort. Through the story of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, we see how much agony he is in as he understands that his time has come. He shows us how to accept discomfort. Then we walk with Jesus as he experiences the worst of humanity, until his painful death on the cross.

If the story ended there, it would be difficult to see the point of all the pain and discomfort that Jesus endured. Fortunately for us Jesus had another lesson to teach us. When we choose to lean into the uncomfortable spaces of our lives, and accept the difficult journey ahead of us, in the end we will experience new life and liberation. That is good news.

Many people in our communities are struggling to see a path forward. Many of us are burdened with fear, shame, and guilt. The choice and acceptance of our discomfort is radical healing work. As Christians, we are lucky to have an example in Jesus for how to walk this path. My hope as we all experience this time of radical discomfort is that we will remember the promise of liberation to follow. May this knowledge give us the strength and insight to navigate the changes needed in our church community and the world.
At the not-so tender age of 8, Aslan Tudor arrived in North Dakota to help stop a pipeline. A few months later he returned—and saw the whole world watching. Read about his inspiring experiences in the Oceti Sakowin Camp at Standing Rock. Learn about what exactly happened there, and why. Be inspired by Aslan’s story of the daily life of Standing Rock’s young water protectors. Mni Wiconi … Water is Life.

Seventh grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a prestigious private school known for its academics, where Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade. As he makes the daily trip from his Washington Heights apartment to the upscale Riverdale Academy Day School, Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds—and not really fitting into either one. Can Jordan learn to navigate his new school culture while keeping his neighborhood friends and staying true to himself? Ages 10-13

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed.

Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil’s name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr.
Learning How to Find Closure
Written By Jen Morley

I was asked, as a teacher, “How does one say goodbye and find closure at the end of this school year when typical goodbye rituals are not allowed during COVID-19?”

As a mathematics teacher at a local middle school, I am attempting goodbyes, I guess, in dwindling Zoom classes where student faces and sometimes just typed names are contained in little dark boxes, where students sometimes are already in other states and sometimes, I suspect, not yet out of bed. Later this week, I will be waving, masked and gloved, to students lucky enough to have someone to drive them through the school zone at a scheduled time.

Finding closure, however, letting go is a different matter. Usually my middle school classes have a special last day celebrating Mistakes, Messes, and Miracles. It is an honest looking back, laughing, and an excited looking forward. It is closure and transition. This June, I have to believe that this year, this growing and learning, and my love of each student, goes with them without that clear last day, without formal celebration, without my proud smile and handshake, without my seeing.

2 Corinthians 5:7

FOR WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT.

It happens all the time in life. Between what we painfully cannot control and what we visibly can, there is a lot that we influence without ever knowing for sure how that influence played out. And yet it does. I am reminded of that every time I am spontaneously grabbed and hugged by a young adult who looks vaguely like a student I taught from a decade and 3,000 students ago.

This year all of us have opportunities to be the hand of God in our world. We have fewer opportunities to see, to know for sure, how it all helped or ended; we are lacking closure. We have to let it go like a bottle in the ocean. But it’s message will carry forward and come ashore somewhere, someday.
I remember when Joann and I were expecting Asher, I would read books and try to learn as much information as I could about what it would be like to be a dad, to raise a child, to adjust to all the changes that life would throw at us when he would come into the world. One night, we were at a cousin’s house and they were talking about the struggles that their children were going through. They were talking about sleep regression and developmental stages and navigating life with two working parents. Not wanting to feel left out, I immediately jumped into the conversation, sharing all of the knowledge that I had learned about parenting from all the books that I had read or skimmed. As I was finishing giving unsolicited advice to this mom of three, my cousin looked at me and said - everyone has a theory until they have their own kid.

I sometimes wonder if that’s how we might approach our relationship with God? Theologian Barbara Brown Taylor once wrote: “in an age of information overload... the last thing any of us needs is more information about God. We need the practice of incarnation, by which God saves the lives of those whose intellectual assent has turned them dry as dust, who have run frighteningly low on the bread of life, who are dying to know more God in their bodies. Not more about God. More God.”

I think that’s often the case - we strive to learn more about God, and yet, we struggle with talking about how God is made real to us; we struggle with articulating the relationship we have with God. This doesn’t mean that we have to have it all perfect, or know everything; but I wonder what it would be like for each of us to be able to share who God is... to me.

This summer, we have embarked on a journey together called God is... a Summer Series of Sharing Stories, inviting people in our community to give witness to who God is in their own lives. We have seen how God meets us where we are, and that our reading of Scripture and our tradition and our knowledge and our experiences all continue to shape how we understand God to be, and continuing on, we will talk about some Scripture and hear directly from the people around us. Our hope and our prayer is that through this series, we will all grow in our relationship with God and continue to grow as faithful disciples as we live into our purpose of Becoming Christ in the Community!

What I’ve Learned:
A Farewell Reflection
Written By Pastor Casey Banks, Associate Pastor

When I first came to Bothell, I could not have predicted how much I would learn from the people and ministries that make up the heart of Bothell UMC. There’s an endless list of lessons and best-practices I will take with me into my future ministries; here are just a few of the highlights:

MULTISENSORY EXPERIENCES Our bodies experience the world through 5 senses and we can worship more fully when our whole bodies are engaged. I learned so much from watching the Children’s Ministry and the Wonderfully Made ministries as they offered a Prayground with streamers & crafts, baskets with fidgets and noise-reducing headphones, and a quiet room during the Halloween fun at Rock the Knock.

BOLD VISION It was a joy to watch the Bothell Urban Team present a bold vision of risk-taking ministry that was birthed from listening deeply to the community’s needs. I was inspired by the team’s conviction that the church’s existing assets were meant to be shared with the community, even if that meant creatively shifting them downtown to be more useful.

CONSENSUS BUILDING For years, I’ve been disappointed in the denomination’s inability to escape our own bureaucratic red tape caused by conducting church business according to Robert’s Rules of Order. Currently, some annual conferences are exploring better decision-making methods that allow for more voices to be heard with less of the winners-and-losers dynamics of yes-or-no voting. Bothell UMC’s Governing Board uses a consensus-building process where members rank their level of support for a proposal on a scale of 1 to 5. Decisions receiving all 4’s and 5’s get approved. Anything less gets further conversation with the expectation that dissenting voices participate in revising the proposals. For me, this model is the closest thing I have seen to what John Wesley, Methodism’s founder, called “holy conferencing.”

PEOPLE ARE BRILLIANT When I first began teaching the Preaching Preview bible study class that took place on Wednesday mornings, I created discussion guide handouts. They were nice, but I discovered they weren’t necessary. The group’s curiosity and questions could fill hours of conversation! And more than once, their insights significantly shaped my sermons. I am grateful for the brilliance of so many at Bothell UMC.

Thank you for allowing me to do ministry alongside you. May the Lord continue to bless you as you continue to work towards Becoming Christ in the Community!

Pastor Casey now serves as Lead Pastor at First United Methodist Church of Newberg in Oregon
“Let us keep looking to Jesus. He is the one who started this journey of faith.”

Hebrews 12:2

Join for the new worship service
30-MINUTE CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP
WEDNESDAYS AT 7pm

Remaining Summer dates: July 15 & August 19 via Zoom & Facebook Live

Not sure what to expect?
Stream last month’s at facebook.com/bothellumc

Kids Camp VBS: ON THE GO 2020

Get ready for a “Kids Camp on the Go” experience happening on Wednesdays from July 29-August 26! These 5 fun-packed days are designed to help us dive deeper into our faith by putting the FOCUS on God and God’s amazing plan for us!

Your 4-year-old to rising 6th grader will have a BLAST as they discover how to trust in what they can’t see because of what they CAN see. We celebrate the gifts of kids of ALL abilities! We will work with your family to find supports to meet your unique needs.

Invite your friends and neighbors to BE PART of this summer’s Kids Camp fun by sharing the link with them!

Register to reserve your Kids Camp kit! Each on-the-go kit costs $15.
Scholarships are available – email Nicole Dibble for more information. Nicole@bothellumc.org

EACH KIDS CAMP ON-THE-GO KIT INCLUDES
AWESOME ACTIVITIES • INTERACTIVE PROJECT SUPPLIES TO EXPLORE EACH WEEK’S THEME • A FOCUS T-SHIRT & 3D GLASSES (WHILE SUPPLIES LAST) • LINKS TO FOCUS KIDS CAMP MUSIC ON SPOTIFY & AMAZON MUSIC • FUN WAYS TO CONNECT ON ZOOM & SOCIAL MEDIA • EXCITING ONLINE VIDEOS • LESSONS ON HOW TO FOCUS ON GOD

REGISTRATION ENDS JULY 15, 2020

learn more at bothellumc.org/kids-camp
E-news
Get weekly updates on Friday with the latest details on events and ministry updates for the whole church.

Specific Ministry Emails are also available for Children, Youth, Community Engagement, Music, United Methodist Women, and United Methodist Men.

Sign up at bothellumc.org/email

Calendar
With “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” measures in place, the best way to stay up-to-date on events is by making sure you are subscribed to E-news.

As we return to in-person gatherings, you can find our calendar on our website.

Learn more at bothellumc.org/calendar

Website
Find important links for #StillConnected, updates, and ministry details.

Find us at bothellumc.org

Follow Us
Find us on Facebook & Instagram. /bothellumc
"God has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

MICAH 6:8 (NRSV)

Becoming Christ in the Community
Transformed people. Transformed relationships. Transformed conditions.

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The Witness is a bi-monthly publication. Want to submit a story or photo for consideration? Email Drew Hogan at drew@bothellumc.org