Every week, I spend anywhere between thirty minutes to an hour checking in with a friend from college. We connect about our families, our work, how we’re handling the COVID pandemic, how we are personally becoming more anti-racist....

And this friend, I’m sure because he loves me, has an incredibly annoying way of ending each conversation by asking me how my health is. I hate it when he does that, but if I’m honest, I need it. As much as I don’t want to admit it, I need him to care and to ask about my health so that I care, so that I’m reminded to care.

So, as someone who loves you (yes you reading this Witness), let me ask, how is your spiritual health?

The reality is that everything around us is in need of a new rhythm – the ways we learn, the ways we work, the ways we interact with each other, the ways we worship, the ways we gather in community.

Already, I’m thinking about Advent and Christmas, and your staff is starting to navigate the realities that we will not be gathered in person to prepare for and to celebrate the birth of Christ.

On one hand, EVERYTHING will be different. And on the other hand, so much will be the same.

Do you know that there are only four chapters of the Gospels that describe the nativity? Four chapters in all of the Scriptures heard year after year. There’s only so much one can say about the shepherds and an angel that says “Hark!”

And yet, year after year, we do go back to that same story – the same one that inspired hope, peace, joy, and love in generations past; the same one that will inspire us in this otherwise unpredictable year; the same one that will inspire the generations in years to come.

So while everything changes around us, I wonder if we might put some intentional work into our spiritual health. Perhaps, there is something grounding in the same old hope, peace, joy, and love. Perhaps we can find it together.
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“Methodists, as followers of Jesus, have always been concerned with how society functions. And we have always been deeply invested in how our communities are formed. We understand that to be a community, we must care about the souls of one another, the bodies of one another, and the systems we use to order our society.”

Reverend Katie Ladd
in her sermon to Bothell UMC, September 27, 2020

This year, Bianca Geib, a first-year student at University of Massachusetts – Amherst, will cast her first electoral ballot. She chatted with me about voting.

Q: How do you feel about voting for your first time?
A: I’m happy. This is a big deal to me. I wasn’t able to vote in the last election. Voting is a way I can do something. I can make my opinion known in a concrete way.

Q: Do you feel that your vote matters?
A: Yes. Every vote matters. Voting is part of our country’s foundational rights. There are people in parts of the world, and parts of this country who don’t have the ability to vote, therefore it is important for those who can to do so.

Q: How do you deal with persons who vote differently than you do?
A: In my extended family, we have differing viewpoints. With family, it’s a little more important to get along, so I let it go. With others, most of the time I won’t engage, unless the situation makes sense. I’ll ask why they think and vote certain ways. I try to be nice. But who you vote for can carry over into actions and personal beliefs. I may choose not to have those persons as friends.

Be sure to vote. Share with others why you vote and continue the conversation of Faith and Politics as an act of "Becoming Christ in the Community."
For Halloween in 2020, our annual Rock the Knock, an indoor trick or treating event was out. Instead, we would have a CARnival! 50+ volunteers made it possible from filling treat bags, donating candy and toys and that day, hosting a route in the church lot with decorations & booths. Everyone came masked and drove through the booths playing contact-less games and kids got treat bags. Special thanks to Beca’s Brew for hosting a free apple cider booth!

"I had imagined it would be more like a “Trunk or Treat” with a few families heading up to the church to hand out candy from their cars —I should have known better. This church community goes all-out for its young congregants! It was amazing to see how many people were involved to make it happen. People of all ages (in great costumes!) telling jokes, sharing riddles and games, and passing out candy treats. We spent an hour of our day there, but the rest of the day, we heard, “I had a great day!” repeatedly! —Katrina Riippa

"I was worried about Halloween. It is my son’s favorite holiday, and usually we go to several events. This year, the sadness of so many things being canceled was wearing on him. So for us, the CARnival felt like a warm hug. It was clear that a lot of careful planning, creativity, and hard work went into putting it together. A real outpouring of love and hope. And judging by the long line of cars at the event, we weren’t the only ones craving that sense of community, and just some silly fun." —Lindsay Allen

"As a young family that lives next door, we look forward to the events the church holds and had fun at the CARnival! When we entered, we had no expectations and the first booth- Freeze Dance- got us ready and dancing! It felt good to have a bit of normal back, we celebrated with our neighbors! We love the message of Becoming Christ in the Community and we feel Bothell UMC does this in all events and this, was another example." —Sherry Nadeau
My older sister and I grew up with a large Madrona tree in our backyard. There is a photo of her and I up in a branch, and I recently asked about her memory of that day. Suffice it to say, she would call that photo “Fun Climbing with My Little Sister.” My title for that photo might be something more like “Terrified Little Girl Tries to Keep Up with Her Big Sister.” This is shared history, we were both there, we both climbed the same tree. Her memory of it is much different than mine.

I was thinking about Thanksgiving and our cultural expression of what happened on that very first day. What would the story be from the Wampanoag Indians and how do they remember that day?

The story I absorbed for the holiday of Thanksgiving was that the Indians and the Pilgrims shared a friendly feast which obviously consisted of turkey, mashed potatoes, and gravy, and there was something called a cornucopia for a centerpiece.

Turns out History.com and Britannica.com explain it a little differently. More importantly though, the Wampanoag explain it even more differently. No surprise there.

We do get to make a choice though. I have evolved my reasons for loving Thanksgiving beyond a legend of a large feast, even beyond my penchant for mashed potatoes and gravy. Regardless of the legend, the truth, the other truth and all the traditions surrounding this holiday, there is a choice for us to make in our observance.
For me, this holiday is my favorite because it’s become a time to be grateful. It isn’t surrounded by months of commercials and marketing, there are no expectations for expensive gifts or photocards sent to large mailing lists. It is a time to gather loved ones and be grateful.

What about this year, when gathering isn’t safe for everyone?

When we gather with family, we know we are a part of God’s larger family, and the ancestors who went before us. Some suggestions for celebrating this year are to remember the traditions and legends of its initiation and re-create what it means to you now.

• Take a moment to research how Thanksgiving started, you may be surprised how many alterations this holiday has gone through over the years.

• However you gather this year, tell shared stories and learn from one another how your memories differ for the same event.

• If a large turkey doesn’t work this year because you are gathering with fewer people, consider the “harvest” elements of the holiday and make those foods the highlight of your feast!

• The origin of the holiday did begin with a meeting of two cultures; reach out to a neighbor who is from a different culture and share a time of gratitude with them. Bring them something from your culture, learn about theirs.

• Embrace the idea of “Thanks-giving” and spend some time thinking about those times, people, and places you are thankful for.

May your harvest be plenty, your table full of grace, and your life overflow with an abundance of gratitude.
ALL YOU CAN

John Eldredge
SERIES INTRO

Each fall the church turns to a generosity series to consider the ways in which we live generous lives. This year, especially, we are turning to our Methodist identity, as we consider the words of Methodist founder, John Wesley:

*Make All You Can • Save All You Can • Give All You Can*

How is it that we make money? Is it ethical? If our budgets are moral documents, what does it say about what we as individuals and society care about? How can we give gifts of our financial resources and of our time? As the church explores the three phrases in the coming weeks, you can read more and respond to the generosity series at bothellumc.org/give

Written by Sherry Balauag

Consistent with John Wesley's sermon series “The Use of Money,” money is a gift that should not be viewed as a source of evil. *The problem with wealth does not lie with money, but with how those who have it, use it.* How we make, save, and use our money is what matters. *As Christians, the answer lies in how we make it, save it, and use it in a way that glorifies God.*

I am blessed with a vocation which allows me to earn money; enough for my needs and to help support my family. But like any other job, mine is not easy. Typical of a day in primary care are long hours, endless documentation, clinical management, and high-levels of stress. Being married with three young children, it is a struggle to balance the needs of my family with the job I have dreamed of since I was young.

Wesley taught, “Make all you can without hurting your soul, your body or your neighbor.”

A few years ago, I had to take a step back, leaving my employed job to take care of my children. As I am very passionate in my call to serve and help others, I prayed; later realizing I could still practice my profession and be of help to others and my community without compromising time with my family.

(continued on page 10)
Diving into the Direct Primary Care practice model, I am able to offer an affordable primary care service to people who cannot afford expensive health insurance and I am able to provide access when needed.

Despite not making as much as I used to, we are blessed with my husband’s job to support our family. We continue to give back to the church as we believe in Bothell UMC’s mission in our community. In my family, we believe that as long as we are “making all we can” in ways that glorify God, we feel abundant and content.

2

SAVE ALL YOU CAN

Written By Jerry Smedes

According to John Wesley, once we have gained all we can, we should also save all we can. Wesley was not talking about accumulating and hoarding resources—he compared such practices to “throwing your money into the sea.” Instead, he challenges us to be prudent with our spending and saving as an investment in the future.

This is indeed a challenge, as we are bombarded with messages to buy more and more, which drives us to accumulate more and more resources to take advantage of overnight Amazon delivery, 2-for-1 sales and “things” that give us comfort in uncertain times.

"Save all you can" is a call to a simplified lifestyle, a warning against extravagance and self-gratification. Are we willing to simplify our living so that others may simply live?

Stewardship involves what we are willing to do without as surely as it involves what we are willing to acquire. So the question is, what are we saving FOR? James 5:1-3 shows us that saving money is useful, but we are meant to save with a PURPOSE. What you do with the money, time and resources you accumulate is important.

"Come now, you rich people, weep and wail for the miseries that are coming to you. Your riches have rotted, and your clothes are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you, and it will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure for the last days."

JAMES 5:1-3 (NRSV)

Saving for our physical comfort, for future security, to help raise children and pass on resources to later generations are all important goals, but we must search our motives to see if we are really saving only to be able to buy nice things for personal gratification, or if we are hoarding resources mindless of the needs of others in the community and the world. If we are prudent in our spending, we can meet our own needs and still be able to devote more resources to Giving to others.
God is looking for a good saver with the heart of a giver. God gives us these gifts so we can perform an important function within the body of Christ by sharing them with others. When God blesses us, the blessing is not for our keeping. We become stewards of the blessing and it becomes our responsibility to share with others, not to stand guard over it like some sort of treasure.

3 GIVE ALL YOU CAN

Written By Sue Porter

When I was growing up, there were three things I was taught never to talk about: someone’s age, someone’s weight, and money. So, it came as a shock to me when, as a newlywed attending our first church, the young pastor announced that he was going to spend the next three Sundays talking about money. Are you kidding me? I told my husband that we should just skip those Sundays. Who wants to hear about money and why the church needs it? Wasn’t the church supposed to make you feel good? We were barely able to make ends meet, so why go and feel guilty because we couldn’t give much? The church probably wouldn’t miss our paltry offering anyway.

Wasn’t the church supposed to make you feel good? We were barely able to make ends meet, so why go and feel guilty because we couldn’t give much? The church probably wouldn’t miss our paltry offering anyway.

We did attend church those Sundays, however, and I learned three truths from those sermons, as well as other stewardship sermons over the years:

1. Generosity is our response to God’s love. Everything in this world comes from God and we give back only a small portion of the blessings God provides. We can also give time and talent, but sometimes money is the best, and only, thing we can give. Any amount helps.

2. Giving is part of our discipleship. It is a spiritual practice that has helped me be more disciplined about money and how I spend it. I feel gratified when I can help others.

3. People appreciate knowing and understanding how money is used, and why it’s important in doing God’s work.

Yes, God certainly changed my view on church and money. At Bothell United Methodist Church, we are proud to share that your generosity directly supports its ministries, such as mission, Children’s Church, Bothell Youth, Bothell Community Kitchen, the music program, small groups, support groups like AA and Domestic Violence Support groups, Guardians of the Earth, and Reconciling Ministries. Your generosity pays the staff, maintains the building, and provides the technology for our virtual worship.

You are generous people and seek to do God’s work during this pandemic. In these strange times, there are some who cannot give and we understand. Thank you, thank you to everyone for your generosity in the past, and in the coming year. Who knows what God has in store as we continue to work toward “Becoming Christ in the Community.”
SPOTLIGHT

A Tale of Two Ministries

With COVID changing how serving the community looks, we turn to ministry leaders Claudia Haskins and Jim O’Farrell to share about the ministries they are involved in.

Bothell Community Kitchen
Written By Claudia Haskins

I remember feeling a little apprehensive on my first day at the Bothell Community Kitchen back in 2012. Preparing a lasagna dish for my family of five? No problem. Feeding a crowd of sixty? Not so sure. I had three goals that afternoon: get to know some of the members of my new church, not burn down the kitchen, and not cut off a finger (mine or anyone else’s). Heck, I managed to achieve all three goals. Thus began my wonderful journey with BCK.

My name is Claudia Haskins and I’m part of the BCK coordinating team that includes Barb Bailey, Barbara Wong, Marsha & Gary Stueckle, and Pastor Kristin Joyner. We’ve been responsible for making sure there is a hot and hearty meal available every Sunday evening at 5pm. All are welcome and it’s free. Some of our diners join us because it’s the only good meal they can count on for the week, some attend because they’re lonely, while others simply want a warm inviting place to enjoy good food and catch up with their friends.

I was fortunate to know the founders of BCK, when I began volunteering. They were strong believers that as members of the community, we are all connected and that sharing compassion and fellowship is just as important as sharing a meal.

I have come to care deeply for the Bothell Community Kitchen over the years. I love the friendly banter in the kitchen and the wonderful aroma of the food as our cooks skillfully prepare the meal. I enjoy the adrenaline rush as we race to get the food out to the serving-line on time. My heart is warmed by the friendly faces of the servers as they greet our guests and fill their plates. And I love hearing the “Mmmmm, looks great” from those receiving the food. I’m touched that a number of our diners get up from the table after finishing their meal so they can clear the plates of others. And I am thankful that we usually have enough food for seconds and take-home. I thoroughly enjoy the live music of our talented musicians and I marvel at the speed and efficiency of the cleanup crew as they return our kitchen to the pristine state it was in before the meal prep. But the most touching of all is when I see the line between volunteer and guest disappear and we simply become a group of people who make an effort to connect with one another. That is when I see God’s presence. To me this is the embodiment of being Christ in the community.

It was a sad day in March when we made the decision to temporarily close BCK because of COVID-19. Weeks later when it was apparent that it would be months before we could open up again, we rolled up our sleeves and gathered the food from our freezer and pantry and donated it to the Northshore Senior Center in Bothell to be used for their to-go lunches and their food pantry.

We are looking forward to resuming BCK when it’s safe to do so and we would love for you to join us!
Over the last few years, my friends and colleagues at Bothell UMC have been able to "lean in" by volunteering with organizations that are the 'front lines' for providing affordable housing for all classes of people in need of shelter - ranging from the homeless battling cold evenings to stay alive to nurses, fire fighters, teachers (read that as essential workers) who cannot afford to buy a home within an hour's drive of their place of employment!

One example of this is the Habitat for Humanity Interfaith Build where Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Christians work together building homes for those in need of affordable housing - you will be proud to note that Bothell UMC has been represented every year for the last five years both in the build (even this year with the COVID situation) and in the planning. Additionally, a lot of great Bothell UMC people have helped build tents with floors as well as food pantry shelters for our sister congregation at Riverton Park (East Tukwila).

The vibe of working with people using your head, hands, and your heart is truly the big reward here - and of course, the positive feedback from those who will use those shelters is humbling. Frankly, this is "church" for me in the sense that we are "Taking it to the Streets" and my take is that this is truly "Becoming Christ in the Community."

So, if you are interested in this type of activity - email me (jamesofarrell@hotmail.com) and I will keep you posted on the latest goings on. As we begin to overcome this pandemic, I am sure more of these activities will become available and we can always use those extra pair of hands.

Claudia Haskins and Jim O'Farrell are the recipients of the Bothell United Methodist Women's Special Mission recognition awards for 2020. These awards have been given annually to various people for 63 years by Bothell UMW in recognition of their work to help women, children, and youth.

Looking at & living into our purpose & goal

PART II

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 1, 15, & 29 ON ZOOM | 5-6:30pm

This new three-part series will dive deeper inviting each of us into more dialogue and conversation with each other as we move towards becoming anti-racist as individuals and as a community!

Read more about this and get recaps on Part I online at bothellumc.org/anti-racist
"One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple."

Psalm 27:4

In our community, we have experienced loss. From COVID-19 and other causes, our friends and family have passed on from this world to glory eternal. And there was beauty — in the prayers and phone calls, in the gatherings to celebrate life masked and physically apart and in the decisions to not gather yet, in the promise of resurrection... there was beauty.

And in those times of joy and celebration, there was beauty — in the welcoming of infants into this world and the promise of love and nurturing, in the moments of children, youth, and parents recognizing sacred worth in God through baptism, in the union of two stories and two journeys converging and moving forward as one, in the commitments of new members to walk on this journey with us ... there was beauty.

I wonder if you have been actively seeking to behold beauty during this time?

Perhaps that’s part of our purpose as we are Becoming Christ in the Community... to remind our broken world to behold the beauty.

May we look forward to life after COVID with hope — and in the meantime, love God, love each other, and wear a mask!
An Advent for Dreamers
Written By Jeremy Matheis, Director of Music

Psalm 126 opens with: “When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.”

What does it look like to live as those who dream? The prophets, the Psalmists, John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, the shepherds, and the Magi — they were all “those who dream.” They listened for, discovered, and responded to God’s dreams for the world. In Advent, we step into the mystery and wonder of God’s dreams and pray they shape our reality.

This year more than ever, we dream to see God’s reality for us in our world as the beloved KINdom here on earth. Those who dreamed before us also longed for God’s promises and reality to be realized here on earth just as we do today.

I remember always entering the season of Advent as a child with great excitement and wonder, and every year it is a time I look forward to with great anticipation. And that IS the purpose of Advent; to anticipate Christ, to prepare to witness and experience God’s dream for us.

I invite you to dream with me and our beloved community at Bothell United Methodist Church, as we listen to discover and understand God’s dreams for us. Stay tuned for details on when and how you can get involved, that we might all dream, together.

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To carry a dream
Is to plant trees in old age,
To be a part of a church,
That is human and frayed.

To carry a dream is foolish and wild.
It’s the faith of a child,
Wishing on stars.

But to carry a dream is also hopeful and wise
The faith of our elders,
Saying God will provide.

... May they say
We are foolish and unwise,
And may we continue to dream;
May hope keep us alive

—Sarah Are, from “To Carry a Dream”

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ADVENT CALENDAR

Advent Sunday Services
Beginning November 29.

Advent Study (Tuesdays of Advent at 6pm)
Tuesdays of Advent at 6pm. Begins December 1.

Beacon Service
Wednesday, December 16 at 7pm on Facebook Live

Music Department Concert
Sunday, December 20 at 2pm

Longest Night Service
Monday, December 21 at 7pm on Facebook Live

Christmas Eve Services
7pm & Candle light (TIME TBD)

Stay tuned for additional Advent and Christmas for families, children, youth, and adults.
“I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.”

PSALM 9:1

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

www.bothellumc.org
18515 92nd Ave NE, Bothell, WA 98011
425-486-7132

ONLINE WORSHIP TIMES
9am (Blended Service with monthly communion)

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