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The Nativity

Among the oxen (like an ox I'm slow)
 I see a glory in the stable grow
 Which, with the ox's dullness
 might at length
 Give me an ox's strength.

Among the asses (stubborn I as they)
 I see my Saviour where I looked
 for hay;
 So may my beastlike folly learn
 at least
 The patience of a beast.

Among the sheep (I like a sheep
 have strayed)
 I watch the manger where my
 Lord is laid;
 Oh that my baa-ing nature would
 win thence
 Some woolly innocence!

C. S. Lewis

This issue's cover art is the Advent banner created for Washington Nation Cathedral by Nancy Chinn, part of a set celebrating the liturgical year.

The artist reflects on Advent as a time of "anticipation and prayer for the promise of a Messiah, and uncertainty about what that will mean to us in this time. So we wonder and yearn for the unfolding of this mystery."

The swooping blue and purple tones evoke the mingling of divine and mortal held within the Incarnation.

Welcome to the first issue of *Good News*, CKPC's new, yet familiar, newsletter!

You read here the culmination of many hours hard work by your fellow congregation members, all with the intent of making our church community a little stronger and a little more accessible.

Whereas the weekly bulletin is the place where you may find announcements and word of upcoming events, *Good News* is where you can turn to find trip reports, words of encouragement, theological articles, art, the latest news about our congregation and denomination.

It seems fitting that we should start our volume cycle right as we are beginning a new liturgical cycle. With Thanksgiving now behind us and Christmas coming ever closer, we are in the midst of the season of Advent, the start of the Church calendar. Advent is a time of high expectations, as we rejoice in the coming of Emmanuel, God with us in the holy new-born Jesus, and as we look for what new beginnings He might be working in our lives today. This issue's cover art and color scheme have been chosen to join in this time of holy expectation and preparation.

It is my great hope that over time this newsletter will both inform and inspire you as we join together in the community of God's body here on earth: the Church.

Kiran Spees,
editor



Letters from Lee

Quarterly thoughts from the senior pastor

It's hard to believe that my one year anniversary is here! Time has gone by very quickly and in some ways it feels like I'm still the new guy. Yet over these past 12 months I feel I've gotten to know CKPC, its history and how we together can strengthen our presence and mission to Kitsap County. Below are some of my thoughts on the church in general and the implications they have for us at CKPC.

The Purpose of the Church

First, it's easy to think of the church as an end in itself: its programs and facility are there meet certain felt needs that we all have, from social (to see our friends) to educational (help raise our kids) to even religious (give us assurance that God is in charge). These needs are real, to be sure, and the church should address them. But if meeting these kinds of needs is all we expect out of our church (and if getting them met all we expect from ourselves), our church will become more like a religious club than anything else.

A more biblical model would have the church as a training facility. A place that exists to equip its members for a certain kind of mission. This mission, of course, is to bring Christ to the world. Unless you happen to live in a cave (and if you do, we haven't met yet so please introduce yourself) you live in "the world" and have innumerable daily interactions with people who need to know God and the purpose He has for their lives (this includes your family, too). This is where you and I come in. We are the ones given the mission to share this good news and to lead them into what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Again, the church is never an end in itself but prepares us for something much greater.

A congregation that embodies this attitude will be a very different kind of place. It will be a place that is electric with the energy and urgency of this mission; it will be a place that asks the simple question about everything it does, "how does this prepare us for what God has called us to do?" It will be a place where individuals take responsibility for this mission and seek to live it out wherever they go. It will be a different kind of place.

The Way Forward

So, if equipping is the essential work for any church we have to be careful about trying to re-invent it with some new program or campaign. Instead, our work is to understand the means God has already given us to grow as disciples (i.e., the tools for living the spiritual life: worship, prayer, study, mission, authentic relationships, evangelism) and then to put our effort into strengthening these means both in ourselves and our congregation.



School is a good parallel example of how this works. All schools teach math, science and history. You want to send your kids to a school that has developed its ability teach these well because you know the impact it will have on your children. Merely providing classes in these subject areas is no guarantee that they will affect the kind of growth your kids need. There is something more.

Part of that 'something' might have to do with, say, a more up-to-date math curriculum. If so, this is the easy part. Much more significantly, it will be the high standards of the teachers themselves and the culture of excellence they've created that makes the real difference. They will have dedicated themselves to being strong in the ways of teaching and classroom leadership. It's this commitment to excellence that you'll feel when you walk through the door; it will be reflected in a hundred small ways as teachers and administrators do ordinary things in an extraordinary ways. I suspect that you'd be suspicious of a school that set aside this way of thinking for something "new" that promised big results without hard work.

The church is the same way. While we'll have to make decisions about the specifics of our programs, their basic shape will probably remain the same. There will always be worship services, Bible studies, retreats, and children's programs. We will always be called to pray, study and carry one another's burdens. Some things will never change. The question for us is, are we strong in these? Are we, as spiritual leaders, growing in our ability to impact others through these God-given means? Do we have a church culture that takes itself seriously and, therefore, reflects the importance of the Gospel in everything it does? This is the central commitment that faces every congregation, including CKPC. Many are called but few are chosen.

Well, there's some insight into what I think it means to be the church. Some of the phrases that I've used summarize this: *Simple Excellence* (or quality over quantity), *Less is More* (kind of the same idea), *Disciples Making Disciples* (this is the greatest fruit of our Christian life) and *People over Program* (begin with mature, enthusiastic people and you'll get a good program, but not the other way around). From here, let me share with you a sense of what I see for CKPC in the near future and some areas that I think deserve our special attention. These musings are by no means exhaustive; there is much more to CKPC than what I can comment on here.

Sunday Morning

This will always be the most important single thing the church does. Sunday worship is crucial in that prepares us to engage meaningfully with God and others the remainder of our week. You've seen some changes recently with new worship times and formats. The ongoing work here is to always keep before us quality, energy and spirit-led creativity.

Core Adult Programs

Outside of Sunday morning there are several programs that I feel every congregation must develop. Again, these reflect the means God has given us to mature and growing Christians will be engaged in these activities whether or

not they're part of a formal church program. We make them into a program simply to make it easier for people to get involved.

- **Small Groups**
- **Education and Leadership Development**
- **Mission and Outreach**

While other events and programs will certainly happen, these three need to be at the top of the list. The vision of the Gospel is that you and I actually become different people as we engage the practices (means) that God has given us to grow. Like the original disciples, our attitudes, values and habits transform over time as we walk with Christ. I believe all this begins by engaging God in worship followed by a disciplined life centered around these practices. Experience has shown that these programs are the most effective in enabling people to engage and grow in their Christian life.

Administrative Excellence

This is an area that often goes overlooked in a congregation, and yet it's an important part of a strong church. Administration is the connective tissue of any organization and has several dimensions. First, it's about communications. Is information clear, up-to-date and easy to find? Are printed materials compelling and accurate? Is the website up-to-date and easy to navigate? Is the way information is displayed cluttered or clear? It's through its these channels that a congregation communicates its mission, what discipleship means, and how one goes about getting involved.

Administrative excellence is expressed in other ways as well. Is there good communication and coordination between different groups in the church? Is it clear how to get an event approved and on the calendar? Is it clear who the point person is for a church program? Obviously, if this part of our corporate life isn't in good order then many people won't find what we have to offer. You've seen some changes in this area already with the updating of the narthex and display boards. We're also beginning an update of the website and we're gradually updating and/or creating materials that reflect the many opportunities at CKPC.

Family Ministry

There might be no more challenging phase of life than parenting, especially when the kids are young. With parenthood's many demands on time, it's difficult to find ways to stay connected with your church family. "Family ministry" here simply means that we pay special attention to the practical needs of the parents themselves and create ways to meet these needs as we build the programs mentioned above (i.e., small groups, education and mission opportunities). The goal is to create a support network for moms and dads that goes beyond simply being involved in the children's program on Sunday morning. Furthermore, youth and children's ministry are a big part of ministering to families and we'll continue to hone our programs here.

Staff

With the announcement that our associate pastor position is ending this spring, the importance of volunteer leadership becomes even greater. While CKPC has always relied on its many volunteers we'll need a higher level of coordination to cover those functions normally handled by a staff person. As I see it, CKPC is in a wonderful position to build for the future and beginning this winter, your Session will be creating a staffing plan that will prepare us to bring on new staff for when resources are available.

Financial Stewardship

This has to be an emphasis for all congregations. The first reason is that it's one of the most important spiritual issues of our lives. How we steward our financial resources reflects very deep attitudes and priorities within us. God wants us to be free from worry about 'worldly things' and the first step is committing to an attitude of open-handed stewardship. The second reason this needs to be an emphasis is practical: the financial realities of running a church. This includes staff, programs, and maintenance. As we all know, CKPC has had to make significant cuts over the past few years. The good news is that we've reached a point of stability this past year and so can begin to look to the future. My challenge to all of us is to take both dimensions of this issue seriously and let God guide you to a place where he would have you to be.

Personal Discipleship

This is what makes it all happen. Simply put, do we take responsibility for our growth as disciples of Jesus Christ and is the fruit obvious? Are we growing in joy and do we share this with others? Are we growing in our understanding of our faith and the ability to articulate it to others? Could we personally disciple someone, leading them in a closer walk with Christ? Are we more disciplined and directed in all areas of our lives, living out what God called us to be? Are we more generous with our stuff and free from worry? Do we seek to be a force of grace in the world around us, speaking the truth in love, showing compassion, and being a friend? The list could go on, but in the end, there is nothing the church or anyone else can do if you and I don't first take personal responsibility for our own spiritual life .

Everything I have said up to now is pointless without each of us taking this kind of responsibility for ourselves and our spiritual health. We can have the most organized and well run church on the planet and yet if we aren't growing in our walk with Christ it's all for nothing.

My hope is that all that has been said up to this point facilitates this growth. It makes available to us the means through which God has given us to grow. The responsibility now lies with us to accept the path of discipleship for ourselves as a gift from our Creator, that we may become like his Son, Jesus Christ, knowing what it means to live the life he's made us for.



Mission Report: New Orleans, Louisiana by Pam Murphy

Exciting places like Hawaii, California, or Colorado are where most college kids spend their Spring Breaks but I got to go to a place much more enriched with culture, diversity, devastation, and joy. I am a student at Whitworth University in Spokane and I spent my Spring Break in Lake Charles Louisiana. Our alternative breaks committee plans a service learning trip every year to provide a way for students to engage in the critical issues of our society and this year's trip was focused on disaster relief in Louisiana.

During high school I went on four CKPC mission trips which gave me the motivation to sign up for this trip. This was a very different experience, however. It was a fast decision: I heard about the trip in late January and we boarded the plane on March 20th. The trip was student led and we were completely responsible for every step. We called ourselves the WU Trippers and the twelve of us went WU Trippin down to Louisiana.

I had never been to the South before and experiencing that culture was exciting. Coming from Spokane, where we were having a very cold winter, to Louisiana, where it was 70 degrees, was wonderful in itself. After flying all day and driving much of the night, we got to Lake Charles at 4:00am Sunday morning and saw the neighborhood that afternoon. At first I was disappointed; we had traveled across the country and it didn't look like there was any need. Then we turned the corner, and the reason that we came became clear. Our job was to help rebuild homes, families, and hope after the four devastating hurricanes that had struck in the past five years.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) housed us at the First Presbyterian Church of Lake Charles. The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) was the organization that placed us at Ms. Wilson's house. She lived in DeQuincy, LA, about a 45 minute drive from Lake Charles. Ms. Wilson's house had water damage, and hadn't been lived in since Hurricane Rita in 2005. Large parts of her house needed to be completely replaced, so our team took on the role of replacing the ceiling along with a few other jobs around the house.

We spent Monday through Friday working on her house, learning about each other and the skills that we had—and the skills that we wished we had. Our group tore down the old ceiling tiles, put up new ones, installed paneling, and replaced plumbing in the kitchen and bathroom. We put down linoleum tiles in the bathroom, and replaced light fixtures. When it was time to go the house still needed work, but it was livable.

Our group built strong relationships among ourselves as well as with Ms. Wil-



son, who was a French speaking black American, and her family (she had 12 grown children), and when it came time to say goodbye she made us a delicious Cajun meal, told us that she had been blessed, and we left. Our plan was to spend Saturday in New Orleans. I honestly didn't want to go; there was more work that we could have done on the house and I didn't want to gallivant around town.

It turned out that spending the day in New Orleans was one of the most meaningful parts of the trip. The first thing we did was drive through the Ninth Ward. This experience made the whole trip real to me. After Katrina, rescue crews searched every house. Many of the houses still bore the markings from that process. As each house was searched, a large "X" was spray painted on side of the house. The sections of the "X" were used to show the results of the search: the date on top and the crew number on the left. In the right section was the number of people found alive, and on the bottom was how many dead. Most of the houses that we saw had zeros on both the bottom on the right but then, most of the houses with bigger numbers in those spots had already painted over their X's. We were looking at a town that was half recovering and half abandoned. We drove by a school where the reader board still announced "registration for 2005" and the number on the bottom of the "X" was 21.

On this trip we made close friends, ate new foods, put our feet in the Gulf, and saw gators, but the main thing that I learned was this: Short term missions have an impact on both the giver and the receiver, but the mission isn't always being there in the moment and helping: it's going and coming back, it's the sharing that you do before and after the trip.

While we were in Louisiana we wrote a blog. There are pictures and other postings, if you want to check it out, at wutrippin.blogspot.com

Always

Pam Murphy



Mission and Outreach Board

opportunity and update

Opportunity to serve at Project Connect 2011

The CKPC Mission and Outreach Board is pleased to support the Kitsap Continuum of Care Coalition by offering Project Connect 2011 as an opportunity for our congregation members to demonstrate God's love to the most vulnerable amongst our local community members. The Kitsap Continuum of Care Coalition draws participation from nonprofit organizations, faith-based groups, and other entities whose primary purpose is to provide shelter, housing, and a network of vital supportive services for individuals and families who are low-income, homeless, or at risk of losing their housing. These service providers will gather on January 26th, 2011 at the Sheridan Park Community Center near Harrison Medical Center for the 3rd Annual Project Connect. This event will provide our most vulnerable community members access to many service providers at one location. In addition to housing, shelter and support services, they will be able to obtain a hot meal, medical, vision, and child development screening, teeth cleaning, immunizations, haircuts, clothing, bus and shower tokens, and many other necessities.

CKPC has become an official sponsor for Project Connect 2011 by providing a \$500 donation from the Mission & Outreach budget toward the services/provisions outlined above. The total cost of the event (including in-kind donations) is projected to be approximately \$22,000. As an event sponsor, CKPC's logo will be included on promotional and publicity related materials for the event. In addition, CKPC has pledged support prior to and participation at the event as well. There are several opportunities for CKPC members to participate and support this important community event:

- **Assist with the distribution of 200 posters and flyers around the community.** Flyers will be posted at social service and government agencies, schools, community bulletin boards, convenience stores, and other applicable locations.
- **Provide wash-cloths for inclusion in 300 hygiene kits that will be distributed at the event.** (collected at CKPC through Sunday, November 28) Other local churches and community groups are providing different items for insertion in the hygiene kits, and all groups will be identified on a label placed on each kit. Adults with severe disabilities who receive vocational skills training at Peninsula Services will assemble the hygiene kits after all the items are gathered.
- **Serve as a host/hostess during the Project Connect event** on January 26th to direct community members toward specific services. Training will be provided in early January. Details will be announced when available.
- **Participate in the annual Point-in-Time Homeless Count.** This is an unfunded requirement, mandated by the State Legislature, to identify those who need assistance with housing and other basic needs. It helps to plan for adequate

and appropriate housing, develop strategies to address the community's homeless needs, and link homeless individuals and families with housing and other services. Project Connect is held in conjunction with the annual Point-in-Time Homeless Count and upon arrival at the event guests will be asked to provide needed data for homeless count computations. Additional volunteers are needed to conduct the Point-in-Time Homeless Count at other locations throughout the county.

- **Pray for the individuals and families who will be served by this event and for those providing services.**

It is the goal of the CKPC Mission & Outreach Board that every CKPC member and attendee will find an opportunity to take part in this important community-wide project through prayer, in-kind donations, and/or hands-on participation. Please sign up for one of these support activities at the desk in the narthex.

For further information, please contact Donna Pledger at (360) 394-1902 or pledgers@aol.com. Thank you for your anticipated prayers and support.

Central Kitsap Presbyterian Church, 8 years faithful to the ministry of feeding supper to homeless men in Kitsap County.

Twenty five men and two supervisors at Benedict house homeless men's shelter in Bremerton enjoyed spaghetti, tuna casserole, mac and cheese as well as some other very creative meals such as Pork Tenderloin Madison with Dijon Sauce and Rosemary & Sundried Tomato Polenta; London Broil; baked potatoes with ham, cheese, and broccoli toppings; BBQ ribs; garlic chicken, to name just a few.

This ministry, not by just a few dedicated people, has involved over 300 different people from our church since 2003 when CKPC was one of the founding churches. This year, in April and October, 40 different people represented CKPC serving 15 meals. Ten of these folks served twice and for eleven of them it was the first time. Highlighting this experience, several have already asked to serve again next April.

What makes this ministry so special? It is not just cooking a meal. It is sharing a gift of personal favorite home cooked recipes with single men who have not had a lot of this in their lives recently. It is especially treasured by many of them when we also take our families to share the meal in what is the men's home. And for us, it is a great chance to bring other people in discipleship to help serve.



Seen Around

Mt Rainier

Climbing



Bells of the Shepherd at Cafe Wednesday





Harvest Party

From the archives

Report on the 2010 General Assembly

by Barb Murphey

Every two years Pastors and Elders are commissioned by each of the 173 PC(USA) presbyteries to come together and make decisions for the denomination. CKPC is one of the 55 congregations that make up the Seattle Presbytery, which sent six commissioners to the 219th General Assembly, held in Minneapolis, MN July 3-10. 712 commissioners were present and they debated and voted on a long list of issues. This article will focus on three of the proposed amendments to the constitution. These three are seen as controversial by groups within the denomination who are working for renewal.

Background: Presbyterians are governed by a constitution with two volumes: (1) the *Book of Confessions*, and (2) the *Book of Order*. [These books can be accessed on-line (and downloaded for free) at <http://oga.pcusa.org/constitution.htm>] When General Assembly votes on changes to any part of the constitution those amendments are proposed changes and must be approved by the presbyteries before they are included. Book of Order amendments require approval by a simple majority of the presbyteries (87 of the 173 presbyteries), Book of Confession changes require approval by 2/3 of the presbyteries (116 of 173). Presbyteries are being asked to vote on the amendments by June 2011. The full text of all proposed amendments, including these three, is available at the web-site linked above.

1. Probably the most controversial proposed change to the Book of Order is Amendment 10-A which reads as follows:

Shall G-6.0106b be amended by striking the current text and inserting new text in its place as follows [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added is shown as italic]?

~~“b. Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Standards for ordained service reflect the church’s desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life (G-1.0000). The governing body responsible for ordination and/or installation (G.14.0240; G-14.0450) shall examine each candidate’s calling, gifts, preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of office. The examination shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the candidate’s ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003). Governing bodies~~



shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates.”

This is the fifth time that the GA has sent a change to this paragraph to the presbyteries. Each time many pages are written urging a “no” vote and each time, so far, the change has been defeated. Carmen Fowler, writing for the Presbyterian Coalition, has summarized the differences between the current text and the proposed text:

Responsibility shifts from individual to judiciary: Currently, it is the individual called to office in the church who is held to the standard of a life lived “in obedience to the Scriptures and in conformity to” the church’s confessional standards. If amended, the individual would be free from all express standards and instead, the governing body would become responsible for applying standards to individual candidates.

Local option replaces national standard: Currently all sessions, in relationship to elders and deacons, and all presbyteries, in relationship Ministers of Word and Sacrament, share one national standard. If amended, literally everyone would be free to do what is right in their own eyes.

Guidance replaces obedience: Currently, the express standard is that each and every ordained officer in the PCUSA “lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church.” If amended, language of “obedience” and “conformity” is replaced with “guided by.”

The Rev. Mary Naegeli, minister at large in San Francisco Presbytery also writes to defend the current text. She states:

The standards unify us with the Church around the world and throughout history. In every generation and throughout the world, church leaders and theologians have consistently and repeatedly affirmed the biblical teaching and the church’s historic witness that God’s design is for sexual intimacy to be confined to the marriage of a man and a woman. Scripture, our Confessions and the historic witness of the church have been clear that God’s gift of sexual expression is to be limited to marriage. The current wording of G-6.0106b in the Book of Order makes explicit what has been understood at all times and in every place in the Christian Church.

2. A much larger change is Amendment 10-1 which replaces the entire “Form of Government” section of the Book of Order with two documents: “Foundations of Presbyterian Polity” and a new “Form of Government” that’s become known as nFOG. Carol Shanholtzer, an elder from Minneapolis, MN, writing for “Theology Matters” sums up her warning about passing this amendment:

It is difficult to overstate the significance of replacing the entire Form of Government with the completely rewritten material being presented to the presbyteries. The contents have not simply been consolidated, but rather have been substantively changed in such basic ways as to mandate unlimited inclusiveness, establish a hierarchical rather a connectional relationship between governing bodies, and place virtually all of the interpretive history of

the Book of Order in jeopardy. The significance of adding a fourth section, Foundations of Presbyterian Polity, on interpretation of the other three sections of the Book of Order cannot be known in advance of adopting the document. (A link to her complete analysis is provided below)

3. The third proposed amendment is to add the Confession of Belhar to *The Book of Confessions*. As stated above this action requires approval by two-thirds of the presbyteries. The Belhar Confession is named after the town in South Africa where the confession was drafted. The Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa adopted it in 1986 to denounce the sin of apartheid. Many find reasons to vote “no” on this amendment. Some based less on the Confession itself but the potential uses that some see for it. Others stress that we know very little about this confession, and that the church needs much more time to study it to determine if it helps us to preach, teach, and counsel. Before we vote we must ask: will it advance the knowledge of the Faith in the disciple and help the elders to order the faithfulness of the congregation?

Did they do anything right? Yes; most notable are two changes regarding marriage that were not approved: 1. a recommendation to amend the Directory for Worship in the *Book of Order* that would change marriage from “a man and a woman” to “two people.” And 2. a recommendation to adopt an Authoritative Interpretation (AI) of the Constitution that would allow PC(USA) ministers to perform (or choose not to perform) “marriages” between persons of the same gender if they had obtained a marriage license, and would allow sessions to permit (or choose not to permit) use of church facilities for such ceremonies. If such an AI had been approved, it would have taken effect immediately without presbytery approval. Thus, this General Assembly retained the biblical and historic teaching on marriage.

Is there anything you can do? YES--1. Educate yourself about these amendments by reading the materials provided by the Office of the General Assembly and the resources linked below and by asking questions of your pastors and elders. 2. Encourage our Session to send our full complement of commissioners to each Presbytery meeting and participate in this discussion. 3. Pray for the elders and pastors of our church, Seattle presbytery, and the rest of the presbyteries to understand these issues and to seek the mind of Christ when they vote.

<http://oga.pcusa.org/ga219/pdf/aib-2010-forprint.pdf> 2010 Assembly in Brief: a downloadable booklet prepared by the Office of the General Assembly.

<http://www.presbycoalition.org/219th%20GA%20summary%20Coalition.pdf> Some Important Actions of the 219th General Assembly, 2010 A Resource from The Presbyterian Coalition

<http://www.theologymatters.com/Packet101016.pdf> Resources provided by The Presbyterian Renewal Network

<http://www.theologymatters.com/TM100915.pdf> Sept/Oct issue of Theology Matters which is published by Presbyterians for Faith, Family and Ministry P.O. Box 3940 Fredericksburg, VA 22402

Session Update

After much prayerful deliberation, Session decided to let the Designated Associate Pastor position expire at the end of it's term in April, 2011. If you have not received the letters sent out by Session and the Mabanglos, please request one from the office.

In [month], we were able to renegotiate the mortgage on the church building to [details]

The nominating committee is working to fill an elder and several deacon positions.

Our building is getting a face-lift. Painting has been going on both inside and out. New communication boards are being assemble to better distribute information to the congregation.



Advent Reflections

by Bill Kettenring

The friendly neighborhood newsletter editor asked me to write something theological about Advent. But first I want to tell you about my cousin who came to visit us recently.

She's really my mother's cousin. But she is closer to my sister and me in age. She lived in California where we vacationed during Christmas break. From where I stood, she was the one with the golden hair and the perfect family and she was really good at thinking up stuff to do. There was the time we... Never mind.

It's been more than 30 years since we really had a good talk. Since we "grew up," we've only chatted at family celebrations a few times and at her father's memorial service. Snippets. Reminiscences. Laughter. Pleasantries.

But this week we had more time. Our conversations were a range from instant rapport; picking up right where we left off, to cautious word choices until we picked out and confirmed each other's politics, religious ideas, and each other's sense of humor. We met her partner, heard about her job, her life. We probably talked too much about ours. Looking into her face, I caught features and mannerisms of long-gone relatives I miss terribly. Of course, the week was much too short.

None of us are where we thought we'd be when we set out 35, 40 years ago. We discovered we both had unrealistic images of each other's families. There was more going on in all our lives than either of us realized. But, oh, the good things we missed. I feel it's imperative that she should know my children and they must know her in order to complete the family story.

It was a surprising experience with such deep implications for me.

So it is with Advent. Advent means "coming." The Christians' use of the word is specifically about the coming of Jesus at his birth and at his second coming

still in the future. The concept is about a promise made and a promise fulfilled. God has chosen us. God will choose to be with us. Advent is another way to make the point of Emmanuel, which is to say "God is with us." At the center of the Christian faith is this reality: God is near, within our reach. We are not alone.

Now, when I was a boy, the Christmas story was pretty simple really. It was all about giving, to me. Giving to me. Well, it was also about Mary in a blue drape and Joseph with a beard and a baby in a manger. And a road trip to Bethlehem. And a road trip to California. And my aunts made an awesome Christmas dinner. And there was playing with my cousins.

Now the Christmas story seems deeper, with implications that are at the same time much broader and much more personal. Think about just a few of the subtleties. For example, consider what it must have been to be Mary moving back to Nazareth. I wonder if there were rumors. I wonder if Jesus heard the stories. How and when did Jesus have "the talk" with Joseph? I wonder if that influenced Jesus' attitude toward religious folk who "know it all" and who have such sure opinions about other people. How does that change who I might invite to Christmas dinner, to regular dinners. And who I might invite to do church with me.

And Jesus' second coming. Will he be pleased with his church? Will he understand what we've been thinking of him, what we've been going through? Will we recognize him? Will we be part of his story? Will he be part of ours? Will our children know him?

The answer begins with Advent and the central truth that Jesus came, Jesus is coming, Jesus is with us even to the end of the age.



New Members

This Fall we had four new members join CKPC. Here is just a little bit about each of them. Make sure to say hi when you see them around, and get to know them better.



**Ardith
Swartz**

Ardith is happy to be living in Bremerton near her family, especially to see her 3 year old granddaughter growing

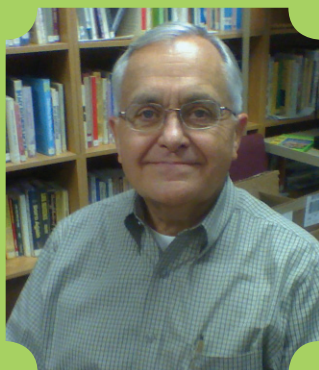
up. She moved here from Tenino where she worked as a school librarian and was an elder at her church. She is a member of the Lion's Club and participates in Act 3 here at the church.



**Elaine
Heller**

Elaine, a life-long Presbyterian, comes to us from the beautiful state of Colorado. There she and her husband

raised two great sons, one of whom she now has a home with in Silverdale. Elaine has a heart for womens ministries and looks forward to joining her sisters in Christ in Bible study and fellowship... would any of you ladies be willing to give her a lift to a Bible study?



**Bill
Enger**

Although retired from his position as a business manager at Puget Sound Energy, Bill continues to be an active

member of the community through many organizations including the Bremerton Kiwanis. He enjoys traveling with his wife Maxine, both by land and by sea (you'll have to ask him about that). When he has the time he also loves to read.



**Maxine
Enger**

Maxine recently married Bill Enger and moved here from her long time home of Issaquah.

For many years she worked as a Geriatrics Nurse in and about Seattle. She is an avid quilter and is delighted to work with CKPC's Comfort Crafters to make beautiful, comforting art for those in need.

