

# The Link

March 2019

## LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR



Dear Friends,  
One of my communities of support is an online group of pastors and bloggers called the Revgalblogpals and from them I have

learned the tradition of star words. Each year on Epiphany (the January 6th celebration of the Magi's visit to the Holy Child), a challenging or inspiring word to guide us into the new year is selected at random for each Revgal who requests one.

January was not an easy month at my house, as I have shared with some of you. Our dishwasher broke right around Christmas. Then we were visited by a persistent family of rodents who took up residence in a hard to access spot under the utility room. The washing machine was moved to locate them, but it was re-connected incorrectly and flooded the utility room. Then the dryer conked out, the backyard fence fell down, both Jeff's wheelchair and accessible van broke and required visits to two different far-flung mechanics, one of our dogs tore out a toenail, we all got colds and the jury duty notice I had

Worship: Sundays 10 AM  
Office Hours  
Monday thru Thursday: 10 AM—2 PM



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## LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR CONTINUED

deferred at Christmas-time came due. In the meantime, I was struggling to meet a challenging writing deadline and trying to be, as you know, a pastor.

All of these are firmly in the category of first world problems, but by the end of the month I was feeling like January was a pretty long year! When I finally got around to requesting my Revgalblogpals star word, it was the middle of February and the word that came was "pardon." Truthfully, it did not seem very inspiring, and I could not figure out what "pardon" had to do with all that I had been (not very successfully, it seemed to me) juggling. Why couldn't I have chosen "resilience" or "endurance" or another strong word?

The  Grace  
of  God is  
with  you!

The more I thought about it, though, the more I realized that pardon flows from forgiveness, forgiveness flows from grace and grace is the ocean we are swimming in. Even when life is feeling particularly grace-less, as it was for me during the first part of the year.

As we round the corner of the church year into Lent, forty days of prayer and preparation before Holy Week, it occurs to me that after a challenging season (or in the middle of one) maybe pardon is just what is needed. So, rather than gritting my teeth and demanding more

energy from God, my Lenten practice this year is to follow "pardon" into these days. My prayer is not to be able to run faster or be stronger, but to notice Christ's grace and forgiveness as often and as gently as I can.

How about you? Where has the new year brought you so far? What word or practice do you need to carry you into Lent? Let me know and many blessings,

Pastor Jennifer

PS: Lent begins on March 6, with Ash Wednesday, a day of repentance. Please join us for a soup supper at 6 pm and a short worship service at 6:30. I look forward to entering this season with you.

 LENT *Lent* LENT *Lent*

## MISSION AND OUTREACH

### Mission & Outreach March Special Offering: ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING



We sometimes think that “imagination” means something escapist or illusory. Yet, imagination is not something unreal or fake. No, it is essential to God’s hope for creation. And God imagines a world where all are safe, all are loved, all are fed.

When we use our imaginations in the way that God does, we can begin to envision – and work for! – a world where no child goes unfed, un-housed, or unloved; where no one ever fears abuse or violence; where clean water

is not a dream but a reality for all; where small farmers do their work with dignity and are paid a fair wage for their labors; where agricultural practices enrich and renew the land rather than deplete it; where survivors of natural disasters have the resources they need, now and for years to come; where vulnerable immigrants are welcomed in Christ’s name.

Can YOU imagine these things? Through your gifts to **One Great Hour of Sharing** what we can imagine becomes ever more a reality for more and more people. Please give generously! “More Than You Can Imagine...”

**To give: simply make your check out to our church and write “OGHS” in the memo line. You may give any Sunday in March**

### Cans Help Zambia Students

Your cans and bottles make a difference in Zambia because through Good Samaritan Ministries/Zambia the money is used to buy student desks. This is a ministry our church supports/ Aluminum cans, Water bottles, beer bottle and other bottles are redeemable and the money adds up. Please rinse them, do not crush cans, and give them to Dave Slocum or Nancy Fite at church or take them to Dave’s vet office at 808 NE Minnehaha ST, Vancouver, WA 98665. Any questions, call Nancy Fite at 360.696.0380. Thanks!



## OASIS GROUPS

### OASIS: Joy Journeys and Beyond

In December, I began taking photos of our congregation for our new directory and then in January, I led an intentional community gathering called a "Joy Journey". When I scheduled both these events, I had no idea how the two aspects of my work here at the church would coincide in thought provoking ways.

Over and over, when I showed people their photos, their comments were less than favorable. People were unhappy about wrinkles or stray hairs or chin(s). And yet, I didn't see nearly as many wrinkles or funny hairstyles or double chins as they did. I was reminded that we rarely see our own beauty because we are too busy looking for our flaws.

Then, on January 6, after I took a few more photographs, I joined several people who were curious about what a Joy Journey was. After we shared how we define "joy," I told the people that the purpose of our joy journey was not to fix one another but to give witness to one another's soul exactly as they are today.

When we acknowledge another person, exactly as they are in that moment, we are able to make things better that cannot be made right. And within our intentional community we were able to find people who would choose to see us, witness our lives, and connect with us.



The membership ministry is encouraging us to gather together in various intentional communities through the various OASIS groups here at the church. By doing so, we are able to connect, support, and acknowledge one another – exactly as they are today; perhaps not as they see themselves, but as the beautiful souls we see when we gather together. An oasis is not just a green area in a desert. An oasis is also a place of refuge and relief – precisely what we can offer one another as we live, learn, and grow together as members of the Vancouver United Church of Christ. My joy journey is not over even if we no longer are meeting. Instead, I have new friends to journey alongside of me! Blessings, Kristina Martin

The words "spread joy" are written in a black, cursive script. The text is centered over a bright yellow starburst or sunburst graphic that has a soft, glowing effect.

## OASIS GROUPS

### Mary Jo Ebel Circle



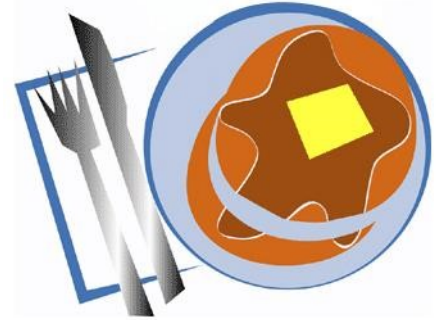
We met at the home of Connie Oppel on Wednesday, Feb. 20. We welcomed our Chair, Beverly Crossman, back after her surgery; and also, welcomed Patti Jones and learned about her work at the Washougal Humane Society. We had a good turn-out and a wonderful time enjoying dessert together. Hopefully, more of you "girls" will decide to join us at Clawson Corner from 1-3 pm Wed, March 20. Joanie Nelson will be the hostess, and Dori Creamer, who works for the Forestry Department will be our speaker. Come, get acquainted, and learn more about members hobbies and passions. Call Beverly (360) 694-3837; Joanie (360) 254-5419; or Connie (360) 567-5528 for details.

### Prayer Shawl Group



The Prayer Shawl Group meets on the second Thursday of each month at 10 am in Clawson Corner. All knitters and crocheters are welcome to join us. Contact Joanie Nelson for more info.

The Breakfast Group meets at 9:30 AM every 2nd Saturday at the Peachtree Restaurant and Pie House at 6600 NE Hwy 99, Vancouver, WA, 98665. The next breakfast will be March 9.



### Day Time Game Group

Have you wanted to learn Sequence, Mexican train, Five Crowns, Rummicube, or 9's? Then we have the club for you! I'll have all these games and more. Join the hosts Norma Lee Priel, and Virginia Ebersole in a 1 pm start time in the sanctuary for an afternoon of laughs and fellowship together. All are welcome!



The OASIS Writers Group will meet on



March 10 and March 24 in the Conference Room following worship. There will be no meetings during April.

## CONGREGATION NEWS

Ours is a generous congregation. Here are two more ways you can contribute to the well-being of our community.

### Contributions to Support Cooking for the Homeless

Members of our congregation have made inquiries about how they might financially support the efforts of the new Oasis group, *Cooking for the Homeless*. This group gathers in the church kitchen to prepare meals for the local homeless to be distributed by David Slocum and Judy Enders as part of their personal ministry.

You may make a contribution to help offset the cost of the ingredients by writing a check to the church with "Cooking for the Homeless" in the memo line. If you prefer to contribute cash, please also make this designation.



### Contributions to Support Carole Elizabeth & Ezra

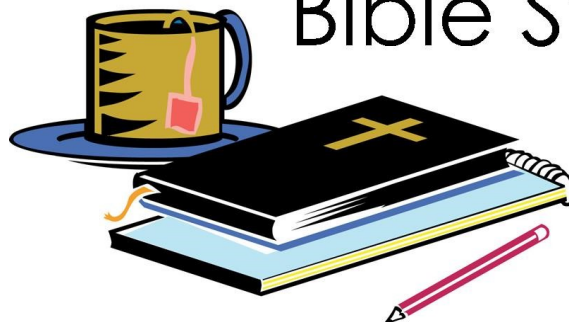
Carole Elizabeth has procured and is training a service dog, Ezra, to help keep her safe by detecting problems with her blood sugar level. Contributions to support Carole and Ezra should be made directly to Carole, not to the church. They can be sent to her at 9208 NE Hwy 99 #107-440; Vancouver, WA 98665.

For those wishing to make anonymous contributions, John Fite will accept your donations and make sure they get to Carole. Submitted by Jeff Osborn.

Please join us for 45 minutes of prayer and conversation about the scriptures we will be featuring in the upcoming worship services. We will be using a method based on an African study technique. Bring a bag lunch if you'd like. Coffee and tea available.

Every Wednesday at 12 noon, continuing until Easter!

## Lunchtime Bible Study



## Home Sharing Program Being Explored



Faith Partners for Housing is in discussions with Metro HomeShare to explore the possibility of expanding the PDX home sharing program to Clark County.

Portland Metro HomeShare has a long and respected history of helping home owners and renters who are struggling with high rents to help one another. The home owner can receive financial help to cover taxes or mortgage payments, while people struggling with increasing rents can lower their rental payments, and have a safe place to live. The homeowner and potential renter decide if they are compatible and background checks are done to insure everyone's safety. In addition, the parties draw up their own personalized agreement with assistance from Metro HomeShare staff. Sometimes these agreements exchange services, such as gardening or transportation to the doctor, for rent.

The biggest need for the program is to find Home Providers. If the program grows into Clark County, you might consider becoming a Home Provider and share your home with someone who is compatible.

## Cooking For the Homeless



Thank you to our dedicated group of cooks who have gathered together six times since January 14 to prepare meals for the homeless in our community. We have prepared enough food to serve about 650 meals so far and we even included dessert to go with the meal. Please join the fun, and savor the good feeling you get from helping our community. We meet the first and third Wednesday evenings from 6:30 pm until 8:30 pm and also the second and fourth Monday of the month from 10 am until noon.

## YOUTH NEWS

### March Calendar

March 7—Sr Youth, grades 8-12

ART OUT Godspell 2012 at Clark College 7:30 pm

Cost \$10. RSVP by February 29

March 17—All Ages. Service Project

After church until 1:30 pm. Volunteer at Martha's Pantry. Bring a bag lunch.

Meet in the Multiage room.

March 23-24—All ages

Overnight at church. Including field trip to rock gym. Approximate cost \$50.

Funds available if needed, please contact Pastor Jennifer if money is an object.

### Photos From Martha's Panty Service Day





## A THOUSAND CRANES

**MAKING ORIGAMI CRANES**—We are looking for people who can make origami cranes that will be hung from the center ring in the sanctuary after Easter. We would like all sizes and colors and hope to have at least a thousand cranes. If you would like to help with this project, but don't know how to make origami cranes, there will be a future class taught by Elizabeth Spannring, our church secretary. If you have any questions please contact Claudia Martin.

### MEANING OF THE ORIGAMI CRANE

The Japanese word, "origami" is a combination of two words in Japanese: "ori" which means "to fold" and "kami" which means "paper". It is believed that Japanese origami began in the 6th century and because of the high costs of paper, origami was only used for religious ceremonial purposes.



ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF DAVID NAMISATO, ©2011

In Japan, the crane is a mystical creature and is believed to live for a thousand years. As a result, in the Japanese, Chinese and Korean culture, the crane represents good fortune and longevity. The Japanese refer to the crane as the "bird of happiness". The wings of the crane were believed to carry souls up to paradise. Mothers who pray for the protection of the crane's wings for their children will recite the prayer:

*"O flock of heavenly cranes  
cover my child with your wings."*

Traditionally, it was believed that if one folded 1000 origami cranes, one's wish would come true. It has also become a symbol of hope and healing during challenging times. As a result, it has become popular to fold 1000 cranes (in Japanese, called "senbazuru"). The cranes are strung together on strings – usually 25 strings of 40 cranes each – and given as gifts.

A famous story about senbazuru is that of Sadako Sasaki (see "*Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*" by Eleanor Coerr [1977]). Sadako was a little girl who was exposed to radiation as an infant when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Although she survived the bomb, she was diagnosed with leukemia by the age of 12. She decided to fold 1000 cranes, hoping that her wish to live would come true. Unfortunately, she only was able to fold 644 cranes before she passed away. Her classmates then continued to fold cranes in her honour and she was buried with a wreath of 1000 cranes to honour her dream. There is now a statue of Sadako in Hiroshima Peace Park – a little girl standing with her hand outstretched, holding a paper crane. Every year, thousands of wreaths of senbazuru are draped over her statue.

## AROUND TOWN

### Christopher Schindler Recital—(Rescheduled)

Sunday, March 3, 3 pm

Vancouver UCC Sanctuary

Admission: \*free-will offering

\*\$10 suggested



#### Program

Mozart—Sonata in C major, K.309

Beethoven—Sonata in E major, Op 109

Liszt—Mephisto Waltz No. 1z

Debussy—Etude no. 10;  
Clair de lune, L'Isle joyeuse

The Contemporary Challenge of Easter with Dr. John Dominic Crossan April 5-6, 2019.

Renowned Biblical scholar, author and lecturer, Dr. John Dominic Crossan is coming to Southminster Presbyterian Church, Beaverton, OR.

**Session #1**, Friday 7:30–9:00 pm—Lecture: Jesus Execution in the Gospel of Mark

**Session #2**, Saturday 9:00–10:30 am—Lecture: Six Questions on Jesus Resurrection

**Session #3**, Saturday 11:00 am–12:30pm—Panel Discussion: Putting Easter into Action  
(Dr. Crossan with local religious leaders.)

**Session #4**, Saturday 2:00–3:30 pm

**Lecture:** *The Evolutionary Challenge of Jesus Universal Resurrection*

Learn more about Dr. Crossan and *Resurrecting Easter*:

<https://www.harperone.com/resurrectingeaster/>

<https://www.facebook.com/OfficialJohnDominicCrossan/>

Information and Tickets: <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3740109>





# March

## BIRTHDAYS

|                    |                  |                    |                   |
|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| March 4 . . . . .  | Eric Pykonen     | March 16 . . . . . | Willow Wilson     |
| March 4 . . . . .  | Patricia Yates   | March 21 . . . . . | Connie Oppel      |
| March 6. . . . .   | Cameron Pykonen  | March 21 . . . . . | Alice Rowe        |
| March 8 . . . . .  | Christi Brittain | March 23 . . . . . | Ed Frank          |
| March 8. . . . .   | Irma Slocum      | March 26 . . . . . | Sharie Lewis      |
| March 9 . . . . .  | Garrett Ralph    | March 26 . . . . . | Nita Calvert      |
| March 11 . . . . . | Patty Ralph      | March 28 . . . . . | Dorothea Johnson  |
| March 15 . . . . . | Emma Schnabel    | March 30 . . . . . | Kathleen Williams |



### **Bach in the Subways**

Dr. Schindler will bring Bach in the Subways to Vancouver UCC on Saturday, March 23. He will play music of J.S. Bach on piano and organ from 2-5 pm in the sanctuary. The format will be informal - attend as much of the afternoon performance as you like. Admission is free.

Bach in the Subways began in 2010 as an act of musical giving by a single musician in New York City. By 2015, it had grown into a global movement that takes place around the time of J.S. Bach's birthday on March 21.

[https://bachinthesubways.org/listen/?search\\_city=Vancouver&search\\_date=&search\\_keyword=&lang=#map-wrapper](https://bachinthesubways.org/listen/?search_city=Vancouver&search_date=&search_keyword=&lang=#map-wrapper)



**Wednesday, March 6**

Ash Wednesday  
Worship Service, Soup Supper

**Sunday, March 10**

Daylight Savings Time Begins

**Sunday, March 17**

St. Patrick's Day

**Sunday, March 20**

First Day of Spring!

***Special Concerns***

Joan Blair  
Michelle Esposito  
Steve Hitchens

Dorothea Johnson  
Marilyn & Bob New  
Karen Owen