



may

The Link 2020



Dear Friends,

In 2002, when I was a seminary student, I stood in front of a class of fellow future ministers and showed them a website where a person could take communion online. "This is how we are going to take communion in the future," I posited, "because so many different factors from aging to climate change will make it harder to leave home, but we will want to continue to be connected to each other and this is one way." My classmates, as I remember it, did not actually BOO at the idea of online communion, but they certainly scoffed. "It's not COMMUNION," one of them said, "unless we are in the same room together."

I thought of them the first week of April, when we gathered around our screens to share communion together. It's not the same as it was, for sure, and yet through the old words and rituals shared in a new way, I felt connected to each of you who gathered. It was a joy to imagine you with the bread and the cup. It reminded me that there are many ways to gather as God's people—but the important thing is to gather.

These are strange days, and there is so much that is unsettled and unsettling. Many of us are grieving or overwhelmed or a bit of both. And yet, it's a blessing to know that technology allows us to gather anyway in new and unfamiliar (and yet somehow familiar too) ways. I look forward to seeing your faces at some or all of these gatherings. But we don't want to be an all-technology church. That's why we're sending the Link by old fashioned post office this month. We wanted you to get a piece of mail to cheer you, to let you know you are loved and remembered, and to be a physical reminder of all the ways there are to stay connected during these times. I look forward to hearing from you! Whether it's by zoom call, text, phone call, or US mail, stay in touch.

Many blessings, Jennifer

Vancouver
United Church
of Christ



Join us for services on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/vanucc/>
www.vanucc.org—info@vanucc.org

The office is currently closed

Pastor: Rev. Jennifer Garrison Brownell
Jennifer@vanucc.org

Building Coordinator: Leslie Chapman
Leslie@vanucc.org

Office Admin: Elizabeth Spannring
Elizabeth@vanucc.org

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

From Your Stewardship Team

The coronavirus pandemic has caused a lot of disruption. Many in our congregation and wider community are facing the possibility, or reality, of unemployment and other stress. Demand for social services is skyrocketing. Also because of the pandemic, the Federal government is providing stimulus checks of \$1200 to each adult. While some of us will use this money for basic needs, others have enough financial assets to use some, or all, of the money to help others. If you are able, you can treat this stimulus payment as a windfall; an opportunity to put stewardship into practice. Below is an illustration that can guide you. As you can see, there are many ways to invest financially to help others and to help you make God's kingdom on earth a reality:

The many ways you continue to support our church community is what makes you PRICELESS.

Your stewardship team: Richard Trefren, Jan Foulke, Gary Roberts, and Sandy Mathis

Stimulus Check (Windfall)		\$1,200
Possible Responses:		
Double tithe to Van UCC and/or to a designated fund such as cooking for the homeless	20%	\$240
Martha's Pantry, FISH, or other food bank	20%	\$240
Share, Open House Ministries, Safe Park (@GoConnect.org), or other local homeless services	20%	\$240
Charity or cause of your choice	20%	\$240
A need or gift for yourself	20%	\$240
Total	100%	\$1,200



Shape Your Future. The 2020 Census is more than a population count. It's an opportunity to shape your community's future.

Through your social media channels, your voice can make a difference. Your faith, your community, and the census.

<https://www.2020census.gov/>

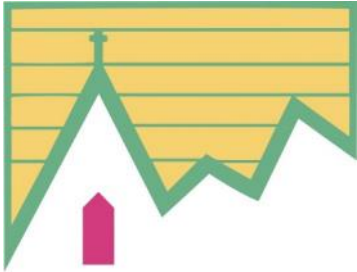
What is the 2020 Census?

The census is a count of every person who lives in the United States and its territories. It happens every 10 years. It includes a few simple questions about things like age, sex, and the number of people who live in your home. The 2020 Census will collect the same data as the 2010 Census.

Why am I hearing about the 2020 Census from my house of worship? The U.S. Census Bureau is partnering with faith-based institutions to promote the 2020 Census. These institutions volunteered to help because they understand how important a complete count is for their congregants and community. They are trusted voices in their communities and are critical to conveying the importance of the 2020 Census. In addition, faith communities often serve the same people that use many of the federal programs that receive funding based on census data. These programs include those that address poverty, hunger, homelessness, child care, emergency services, and public safety.

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

Update from your Financial Secretary



Church FINANCES

Firstly, I want to thank all of you who have been able to continue submitting donations to the church. This has allowed us to continue paying our staff and our expenses. With our inability to gather

together, your financial team began planning to enhance ways to give to the church. We are now announcing our first electronic giving option, with Vanco, our e-giving partner. This option is available on the church's website at www.vanucc.org, where you can click on the red donate button. You are taken to the church's donation webpage where you are asked to create an account. The site will retain this information for the next time you login. You have the option of donating by credit card or from your checking/savings account. You can set up a one-time donation or a reoccurring donation. If using a credit card, there is the option of paying to offset the cost of the processing fee (2.75%). We encourage you to do this to minimize expenses for the church. We will always accept checks mailed to the church if you wish to continue giving in that manner. We will soon be introducing two additional electronic giving options: Donate from the Vanco GivePlus App and donate via Vanco GivePlus text. Stay tuned.

Our hope is that by offering electronic giving we can make supporting our church's mission easier, not only for our members and friends but for our community. If you have any questions, contact me at 360-787-8832 or at finsec@vanucc.org. Jan Foulke, Fin. Secretary

Property & Finance Update

Your Property & Finance team has been developing a priority list for building/grounds maintenance and improvements. Below is our list of items that need attention now or in the not too distant future, many of which cannot be covered by the building maintenance line item in our operating budget and thus will require special funding.

Here is our list:

- Paint exterior of sanctuary where paint is bubbling and peeling
- Replace siding on the Centennial wing and paint new siding
- Install a push bar in the fence gate at the west end of the sanctuary for emergency egress. Right now this gate is chained shut.
- Reroof the flat roof on the original building (over Narthex, Nettie Fries, and old bathrooms)
- Install interior security cameras
- Replace curbing in the parking lot and resurface the lot
- Implement a master key system for the building
- Install the memorial bricks at a prominent location outside the building, perhaps on the concrete wall at the top of the steps
- Install additional gravel to improve the upper parking lot

Chuck Foulke, Chair



MODERATOR NOTES FROM JEANIE—MAY 2020



Holland Bulb Farm tulip fields, in Woodland, a place of great joy for me.

Our whole lives are changing. Many of us look for ways to stay positive while physically distancing ourselves from friends and family. Many as well struggle to adapt their work and family interactions while schools/businesses are closed but they are still working, with some struggling to keep the rest of us safe.

I applaud all of us for making the best of this crisis, and as Jennifer has encouraged us to do: be gentle with ourselves and each other. There is no roadmap, no “right way” to handle our emotions, just as there is no “right way” to handle our grief. We are blessed because we do have faith that we will be survivors, we will learn from our experiences, just as we did when we faced the future after our arson caused building fire.

I am so very grateful for Jennifer’s leadership, Eric Pykonen’s devotion and expertise to provide us with a video worship service each week, the creativity of Christopher, Sterling, LEAP, and members as lay worship leaders, the workings of our financial team to keep our bills paid, Jan and Chuck Foulke, John Greenauer for managing our building and grounds, for Leslie and Elizabeth for keeping communications going, and Martha’s Pantry for responding to the those with basic needs in our

community. I am so thankful to be a part of such a loving community for coming together to support each other through our Circles of Care and beyond.

Our Council has been communicating through calls, emails, and Zoom meetings. Our needs may be different now, but we still need leadership and each other, maybe more than ever. Please keep us posted as to any concerns that you may have or suggestions that you would like considered.

I offer this list of daily questions that have kept me grounded during these uncertain times. Above all, pray for each other and our world. We have much to love and live for.

Blessed and Blessings all, Jeanie
Jean Beary Stolle, jtstolle@comcast.net

Daily Check List

- What am I grateful for today?
- Who am I checking in on and interacting with today?
- What beauty or art am I creating or appreciating today?
- How am I moving my body today for exercise?
- Have I been outside in nature yet today?
- What expectations of normal am I letting go of today, and what am I doing instead.

Vancouver United Church of Christ Report on our Church Visioning Retreat 2/29/2020

To our membership: The following is a summary compiled by Richard Trefren and reviewed by Pastor Jennifer and myself as well as discussed at our April Zoom Council Meeting. It is a compilation of the work and priorities discussed at our "All Church Retreat" on February 29, previous to our physical distancing regulations. We are hopeful that we will be able to implement these thoughtful considerations as we move forward to our congregation's "new normal". Please read this document and send me any of your questions, comments or ideas. Thank you! Blessings, Jeanie, Council Moderator

On Saturday February 29, 2020, about 35 people from the congregation met to think, wonder and pray together about our church's vision for the future. This group's work centered around the image of our congregation as a living tree: how we are nourished by our roots, what we are like currently (our branches and our leaves) and what we want our future to be like (the fruit we bear, the buds we would like to propagate, and the pruning that might be called for). As we moved through the day, our often repeated prayer in song was "Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me." This was a lively and responsive group that generated many ideas and dreams.

Within the group, there was a clear sense that we value and celebrate our diversity, and that we envision ourselves as continually increasing that diversity and inclusiveness in culture, race, age, gender expression, ability and wealth. There was a strong commitment to increasing the clarity and thoroughness of our congregation's internal communication. There was also a strong sense of celebration and joy in our hope for the future and in our congregation's responsiveness to the leadership of our core volunteers.

The ideas and dreams that were expressed at the retreat centered around four areas of the life of our church: The Importance of the Arts in the life of our congregation, Reaching out to the Larger Community Around us, our Work for Social and Environmental Justice, and Envisioning the Future of our Congregation. Here is a digest of the ideas from the retreat. If you would like a copy of the full list of ideas that were generated, please contact Richard Trefren (trefren@comcast.net, 360-883-8812).

The Importance of the Arts: People attending expressed appreciation for our music program and its leaders, for the sanctuary and its flexible décor, for the art wall and its changing displays, and for the continuing use of blank space to heighten peaceful reflection. There was hope for increased care of our grounds, growth in our prayer shawl ministry, an increase in liturgical dance, and even more emphasis on arts and culture.

Reaching out to the Larger Community: There was a strong sense that the community around us values our presence, and that others see us as living our Christian values. People feel that it is important for us to increase our engagement in the larger community in two ways: working with other congregations to accomplish common goals, and growing our involvement in our local neighborhood through organizing community events and opening our doors for community gatherings.

Working for Social and Environmental Justice: Much appreciation was expressed for our Cooking for the Homeless project and for the support our members provide for a diverse group of important causes. There was a strong sense that we can strengthen our work for justice by establishing strong ongoing funding for our cooking for the homeless project and growing that effort, by increasing our advocacy for action around climate change (growing our "Green Team"), by strengthening our partnership with Martha's Pantry through increased involvement of members of our congregation, and by broadening our understanding and effectiveness as a congregation through increasing our involvement with diverse groups.

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

How Can You Help the Climate?

Our church now has a “Green Team” headed by Pat Sutherland. Anyone is welcome to join.

Before the church closed due to the coronavirus, we met and decided to include climate change in the Green Team agenda. Church members Don and Alona Steinke have been working hard on this issue. You can receive Don’s newsletter by emailing him at crvancouverusa@gmail.com.

While you are self-isolating, there are things you can do to help the climate. Here are three suggestions.

1. Write letters to the Columbian asking the City Council to adopt a greenhouse emission target. Here is an example letter which Don wrote—<https://www.columbian.com/news/2020/mar/14/letter-city-should-take-stand-for-climate/>.

The Columbian has a limit of 200 words for letters. Include your address and daytime phone number. They will print only the city. Avoid facts unless you provide a source document. Send letters to: The Columbian letters@columbian.com

2. Sign the following petition and post on Facebook also: <https://act.sierraclub.org/actions/Washington?actionId=AR0244418>. The petition will be forwarded to the council when the time is right.

3. Make your comments known to the City Council. Public comments will be taken remotely. Here is the link to the City Council meetings: <https://www.cityofvancouver.us/citycouncil/page/city-council-meetings>

Don and Alona thank you. The climate thanks you. Join the Green Team by emailing Pat Sutherland at pesuther@msn.com. Nancy Fite, Green Team member



In June 1977, Reps. Frank Horton of New York and Norman Y. Mineta of California introduced a House resolution to proclaim the first ten days of May as Asian-Pacific American Heritage week. The following month, Senators Daniel K. Inouye and Spark Matsunaga from Hawaii introduced a similar bill in the Senate. Both were passed and on October 5, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed a Joint Resolution designating the annual celebration.

In 1990, President George H. W. Bush signed a bill passed by Congress to extend the week-long celebration to a month-long celebration. In 1992, the official designation of May as Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month was signed into law.

To know a people, know their stories.

Celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month with a special PBS collection of stories that explores the history, traditions and culture of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States <https://www.pbs.org/specials/asian-pacific-american-heritage-month/>

Celebrate! Where Asia meets America <https://www.si.edu/feature/celebrate-asia>

Join in paying tribute to the generations of Asian and Pacific Islanders who have enriched America’s history and are instrumental in its future success. <https://asianpacificheritage.gov/>

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

Dear Friends,

Please join me in prayer for the family of Jim Crossman. After a short illness, Jim passed from this earthly life on Saturday. Bev and their children were able to be with him in his last days.

There will be a family service at the Evergreen Columbarium in the days ahead. This coming Sunday during worship we will remember Jim, and we will plan a celebration of life for the entire community when we are able to gather together.

In this time of grief, we rejoice in the good news that whether we live or whether we die, we belong to Christ, who is Lord of both the living and the dead. I'm grateful also that our community remains a source of strength and encouragement as we navigate these unusual days.

Many blessings, Pastor Jennifer



Strengthen The Church Offering



ucc.org/stc



May Special Offering—UCC STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH

Each day, visions and dreams are created in the hearts of many in the United Church of Christ. Through the Strengthen the Church offering, they can become a reality. As God calls our congregations to be “church” in new ways, your gift will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches, and develop spiritual life in our youth and young adults. Because of this offering, many more will hear the good news that “God is still speaking.”

Please make your check (or on-line payment) out to our church and put “Strengthen the church” in the memo line. Your offerings are directed to our Central Pacific Conference, Local Church Ministries, and to national new programs.

OPPORTUNITIES TO GATHER



Hello Church Family. I hope everyone is doing well under these very unusual times. I have heard from so many of you saying that you miss seeing the faces of friends and wonder how they are spending their time at home. So, we have decided to try and change things. I am asking to have everyone who is willing to please email me a photo or photos showing how and what you are doing. We will put them together and set it to music and share with our church family. Please email me at leslie@vanucc.org or text to me at 360-910-0020. Thank you. Leslie Chapman

All of these meetings are via Zoom. Check the church website at vanucc.org for links.

Grief Group - Monday, May 11, 3-4:30 pm

If you are grieving this time you are not alone. Maybe you are grieving illness or loss. You might be grieving the change and isolation. Or, this generally unsettled time may be bringing up other emotions and losses that you thought you laid to rest years or even decades before. Kaye Kipp, a counselor and VA volunteer along with pastor Jennifer will lead us in a conversation about acknowledging and moving through the grief we may be experiencing now.

If there is interest, this may be an ongoing group.

Email jennifer@vanucc.org with questions or ideas.

Theology Happy Hour - every Tuesday at 4:30-5:30 pm

Theology just means "thinking about God," so lets gather to do that. We'll watch a short video (usually less than 15 minutes) that gets us thinking about what God is up to in these chaotic times, then have time for questions and conversation. And it's happy hour, so come to your computer with the beverage of your choice! During the month of May, we'll be exploring a series called "In This Together: Loving Our Way Forward" with Brian McClaren from theworkofthepeople.com

Drop in office hour with Pastor Jennifer - every Wednesday 11 am till noon

Pastoral care requests, informal conversation and check in. All ages welcome!

Healing Prayer Circle - every Wednesday 6:30-7:00 pm

Wonder Awhile - 11 am till noon

Story, activity and conversation. Geared for ages 6-11, but all ages are welcome to check in, especially those interested in Godly Play.

Zoom in Coffee Hour - 11 am till noon

Informal conversation

Livestreaming on Facebook

Sunday - worship live stream every Sunday at 10 am

via facebook.com/vanucc/live

Every week day - Two minute prayer live stream

Posted mid-to-late-afternoon







MAY BIRTHDAYS

May 1	Kristin Martindale	May 21	Laela Brittain
May 5	Isaac Martin	May 24	Jessica Murchison
May 6	Janet Melton	May 25	Ruby Frank
May 7	Alona Steinke	May 27	Franklin Koffel
May 13	Stephanie Pykonen	May 29	Kathy Woolley
May 16	Desi Nelson	May 30	Beverly Crossman
May 17	Todd Murchison	May 30	Jean Beary Stollens
May 19	Carole Elizabeth	May 31	Boean Marquardt

Special Concerns

Joan Barber
The family of Jim Crossman
Carole Elizabeth
Wayne Fletcher
Brenda Gaston

Steve Hitchens
Janet Hunter
Jerry Mathis
The family of Jean Matthews
Connie Oppel

Karen Owen
Carol Pendergraft
Gary Roberts
Sue Rush
Kathy Woolley

Self-Soothing Practices in Times of Physical Distancing



Visualize God's healing light entering into the crown of your head and flowing and moving through your whole body and out your toes.



Take a hot bath with a fragrance you enjoy.



Wrap a blanket around you and visualize/meditate about God giving you a hug and nurturing touch.



Spend some time safely outside, breathing in fresh air.



If you have a pet, cuddle.



Enjoy a cup of hot tea or cocoa, sipping it slowly, savoring the flavor.



Read Psalm 121 and be aware of God's loving presence



FaceTime or skype with loved ones and friends.



Listen to your favorite relaxing music.



Text or call a friend or loved one.

Hello Friend!

On the following page is *The Vancouver Epistles**

Physical distancing is hard, but we can still stay connected!

You can use this template to send a letter to
a friend in the church,
a family member or neighbor.

*Don't panic at this churchy sounding word. Epistles are just letters!

Hello Friend!

When I think of you, I am grateful for...



I am praying for you that...

Please pray for me...

Today I did...



With lots of love,
