

THE CIRCUIT RIDER

Snoqualmie United Methodist Church

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2023

SAVE THE DATES

Thursday, January 12 –
6:30pm – SUMC - Worship
Team meeting

Wednesday, January 18, 6 pm
– Fellowship Hall – All
Church Potluck and Meeting

Sunday, January 29 – 9:30
am – Fifth Sunday Combined
Potluck Breakfast and
Worship (note changed
worship time)

Sundays, 10:45-11:45 am,
SUMC Library – Ecclesiastes
class

Wednesdays, 6-7 pm, SUMC
– Lectionary study

PASTOR'S MUSINGS

Friends,

I've been thinking... about what feeds me in worship. Well, not just me, but all of us. As the person in charge of designing a worship experience where people leave feeling fed, it's a huge responsibility. As I look back over my life, I realize that there are times when I've needed different things to feel fed. For instance, when I was a teen, I felt the power of the Holy Spirit in worship when we sang a lot of songs. I'm talking at least 6 or more that got me up on my feet and moving, then brought me down into a quieter more contemplative mood, then brought me back to my feet. When I was in my twenties, I really needed more meditative worship, where we focused on prayer. In my thirties, I needed a combination of being challenged to go out and do more along with understanding the biblical context that each story brought me. In my forties, I'm needing something more like a revival feel, hearing the stories of my fellow believers, rousing music, laying on of hands in prayer, and more physical connection with creation. Through each phase of my spiritual journey, the one constant has been my need for connection with my fellow believers. I want to feel close to one another when we worship. Not just an emotional closeness, but a physical closeness. I've noticed that desire has become more intense with the pandemic. There's nothing like making you want something more than being told you cannot have it, right? I'm talking about all this because I want



to know what you need when you walk into the sanctuary on Sunday morning. Are you being fed? Do you leave worship feeling filled, feeling loved, feeling connected? If not, why not? Do you need more formality and tradition? Do you need more stirring music or contemplative music? Do you need to hear one another's stories more? I'm asking because we are in a place to work together to design a worship encounter that we want and one that we want others to go through. I'm inviting you to attend our worship team meetings over the next three months. They will be on the 2nd Thursday of the month in the room next to my office at 6:30 PM. All are welcome to attend and give their input. Let's see where the Holy Spirit leads us!

Blessings,

Pastor Carrie



COMMUNION HELPERS NEEDED

A recent conversation with Jacque Lindstrand revealed a truism that I'm routinely humbled by: everything when viewed from the outside looks considerably simpler than it actually is. An example of this is the care with which she has prepared our communion elements and table over the past few years.

Avoiding gluten is not simply a matter of finding a bakery that makes gluten-free loaves of bread. Given how COVID has changed how we present the symbolic body of Christ, - small toothpick-pierced cubes of bread – and given the strict gluten free regimen that those with celiac disease must adhere to, our gluten free communion bread must also be cut on a bread board that is not used for other kinds of bread. With a clean knife of course, and clean, gloved hands.

The reverence and care that Jacque has taken to make sure there are no barriers to participating in our communion reminds me of “keeping kosher” that my relatives tell me means “sanctifying what we eat”.

Jacque is now looking for 2 to 3 people who would like to work with her for the next month or two after which she will hand over her reins. If several people learn the process it will be easy to create a yearly schedule that accommodates everyone's calendar. If you have an interest in learning how to prepare our communion table, you can reach Jacque at (253) 943-3726.

- *Reri MacLean*

INTERFAITH ADVOCACY DAY FEBRUARY 9

Faith Action Network is an interfaith statewide partnership striving for a just, compassionate, and sustainable world through community building, education, and courageous public action. The group is planning an in-person Interfaith Advocacy Day in Olympia on Thursday February 9 from 9 am to 3 pm. On Interfaith Advocacy Day, you will be able to:

- Join workshops that will break down the issues on FAN's 2023 Legislative Agenda.
- Learn how to most effectively advocate in today's legislature.
- Meet with advocates from your legislative district to prepare for your legislative visits.
- Meet with your legislator! Once you register, FAN will set up an appointment for you and others from your district.
- Lunch will be provided.

You can register for this free event by going to this link:

<https://fanwa.ourpowerbase.net/civicism/event/info?reset=1&id=247>



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ALL MEANS ALL: INTRODUCING TOPHER

My friend Topher is a trans man who transitioned from female ten years ago, in his early forties. Topher was pleased to be interviewed. “Though attitudes and treatment of trans individuals have changed for the better since my childhood,” he said, “I still experience discrimination.”

It’s particularly difficult for him when people ask him intrusive/personal questions about his body. He’s anxious when visiting doctors, as they often focus on his transition when treating him for things like a sinus infection. He’s uncomfortable when people insist on using wrong pronouns and refuse to recognize him as a man, and when they give him the ‘cold shoulder’ and won’t look at or speak to him. He has been afraid of violence when he attends gay rights events, and he fears violence if he shows public affection to his partner.

Jewish by heritage, Topher has done a lot of reading and soul-searching around LGBTQ2+ issues. “While Reform Judaism is welcoming,” he said, “it has probably pushed me away some. In the community I was in, there weren’t many gay/bi people and I don’t know of any trans people. So, it felt a bit isolating even though there was support.”

Though encouraged by young people’s increasing acceptance, Topher is aware of the inevitable backlash that comes with change, and believes that people who are open to change and acceptance will need to put in extra effort to keep everyone moving in the right direction. He will soon be moving to a more conservative state to be with his partner and is wary of the anti-LGBTQ2+ sentiment there.

Topher is most at ease when people accept him as he is and when people ask him respectful questions, like which pronouns he prefers. His final statement in our conversation was, “Mostly, I want heterosexual people to know that we’re just people. Our differences are not our defining aspects. We work, love, recreate, love, pay bills, just like everyone else. Most people have probably had “normal” interactions with a LGBTQ2+ individual and don’t even know it. Also, we are not obligated to educate you or to share personal information. If we’re telling you about our identity or gender orientation, please take it as a gift. It’s an act of trust and a need to be true to ourselves.”

Topher is much loved in our community. We will miss him when he moves, but we’re happy that he’s found James, the love of his life, and that he’s staying true to his courageous, delightful self.

- Carol Morrison

UPCOMING WORSHIP AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



5th Sunday Joint Worship

SUMC will host the breakfast and worship this month on the fifth Sunday, January 29, 2023. A potluck breakfast will take place at 9:30 am, with worship following at 10:30 am (note the changed time). Classes this week will also have a changed time, starting at 11:45 am.

Photo by Karolann Whetsell

Bible Plan: Bible Project – Karolann Whetsell will be doing a year Bible Study that can be done on the phone, computer, or iPad beginning January 1. Questions to 918-978-3274 or click the link.

<https://bible.com/p/55464796/d3f686a20bc7427e1fd07494b8859c9d>

Lectionary Study – Pastor Carrie is offering an introduction to Bible Study Wednesday Evenings from 6-7 PM in the room next to her office. Bring a Bible & journal for notes. Class begins January 11, 2023

Ecclesiastes: Ancient Existentialism and Contemporary Christian Theology - Ed Morrison will lead an inquiry into this book of Hebrew Wisdom Literature for four Sundays beginning January 8th following worship: 10:45-11:45 in the library. Please let Ed (grzyhackl@comcast.net) know if you plan to attend.



Ed states:

I am looking forward to sharing an exploration of Ecclesiastes and Existentialism with you. Both have enhanced my Christian faith and I hope that this time will do that for you as well.

We will do a cursory look at this book from the historical literary critical framework, but that won't be our focus. Our primary goal will be to engage the theological/philosophical message the Teacher is expressing here and how it applies to us now.

You are welcome to attend this class whether or not you do any "homework," but to enhance our experience I suggest that before our first class you read Ecclesiastes for an overall impression of what point Keholeth, the Teacher, is trying to make to his readers. Don't get too hung up on details yet. As you read, jot down single words which describe what is stirred up in you. (e.g.: anger, delight, frustration, tears, joy.) Come up with your top five and bring those to class.

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

Coffee Hour



Photos by Reri MacLean

Greening of the Church



Photos by Reri MacLean



Advent



Photo by Reri MacLean

Ecclesiastes Class

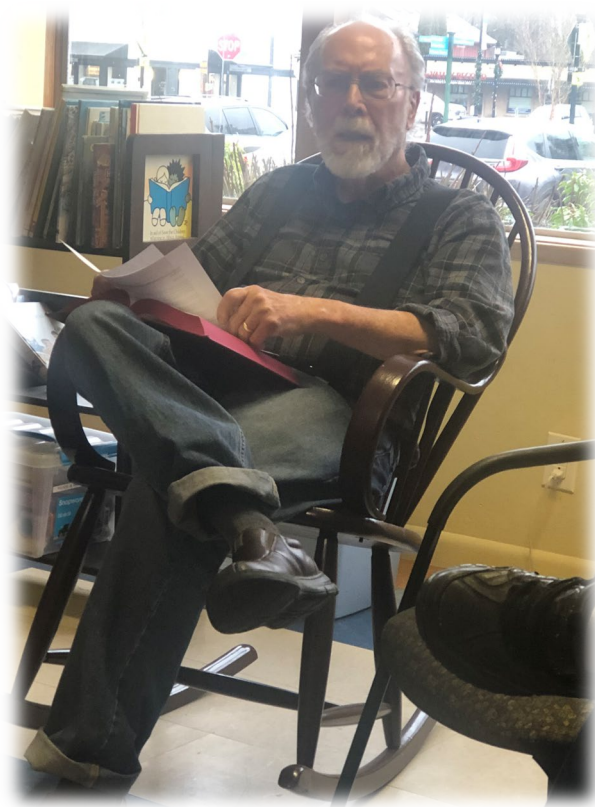


Photo by Karolann Whetsell



COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

If you have any suggestions or ideas for me for future issues, please let me know!

Thanks, Toddie Downs (toddiedowns@yahoo.com)

Contact Us

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