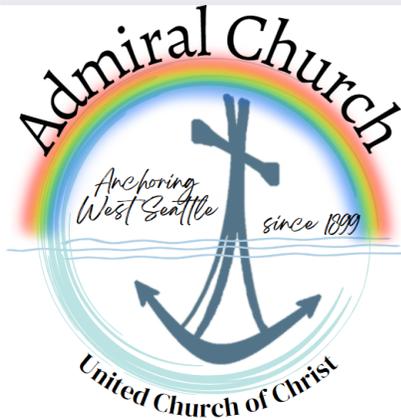


THE TIDINGS

Wherever you are on life's journey life's journey, you are welcome here.

The Hard Work of Accepting Good Enough



After the sermon talkback the first Sunday in Lent, I walked away wondering even more about what “good enough” even means for our lives today. Kate Bowler’s book of devotions consistently emphasizes the temptation to see ourselves as perfectibility projects and to see every setback as a setup for linear progression. Our culture is saturated with the “bigger, better, more” paradigm, so much so that many of us have internalized it as normal and natural. Even when it is stealing our joy. Even when it is killing us. I’m not sure that dominant American culture has room in it for a concept of “good enough” that isn’t about trickery or exploitation. Our relationship with Jesus seems like it should offer an antidote, so why so often doesn’t it? It has everything to do with how we think about God.

Anything to do with “God” has an air of perfection in it, doesn’t it? If something is going to be worthy of God’s attention, it better be spotless, blameless, pure and selfless. Otherwise, how could the very definition of perfection find value in it? This fits neatly with the concept of God as omniscient Judge who can discern even the slightest impurity in our offerings, condemning all who are not “good enough”. This way of thinking about God has two major problems: 1) it produces alternating attitudes of despair and self-righteousness rather than love and generosity, and 2) it is demonstrably inconsistent with the revelation of God’s will that is found everywhere in God’s creation.

Self-Righteousness and Despair

When our goal is “purity and perfection”, the question of “by what standard?” usually enters the equation. Ask any scientist, and they will tell you that purity is measured in degrees, not absolutes (99.99% pure gold is not 100%, but it’s pretty close). We create a standard that we deem “pure enough” and apply it to our own work and the work of others. If our standard is too rigorous, we will constantly fall short (ex: never thinking an unkind thought). If our standard is too low, so many people will meet it that our claim to “purity” won’t set us apart (ex: not being intentionally racist or sexist). Setting a high standard we can meet creates a venue from which to judge the inadequacy of others who don’t meet our standard. The result here is an obsession over our standard and our relative position to it rather than our relationships with God and others.

Demonstrably Inconsistent with God’s Will

Purity is more of a laboratory experiment than a reality in the universe. Humans are the ones “producing purity” in a world of intermingling and cross-pollination. If God’s creation is indicative of God’s will, then clearly God desires complexity, nuance, gray areas, and contextual adaptations. Yes there are boundaries on God’s earth, and each one is itself a site and source of great diversity (where the ocean

meets the land, where the forest meets the meadow, etc.). Purity is a demonstration of control, of dominance over the forces of attraction and combination.

There is a call in Scripture to “be holy” (**qadosh in Hebrew, hagios in Greek**) and these words literally mean “to be set apart”. The question is whether that “set apart-ness” is because of a thing’s purity, or because it is intended for a special purpose. Here we arrive at the crux of the problem of “good enough”. Is God asking you to prepare the perfect offering, the perfect dinner party, the perfect community event or worship service? Or is God asking you to set something aside to serve God’s purposes? Are we measuring our worthiness by the outcomes of our actions, or by our willingness to act? A “good enough” effort is an effort made in the service of love. It is an effort “set apart”, a holy behavior that seeks after the heart of God (which is Love).

The hard work of accepting “good enough” is actually the hard work of rejecting the outcome-defines-the-worth model we are so habituated to under capitalism. God is abundantly wasteful by industry standards, spreading seed on the rocky soil and the fertile dirt alike. It is in the spreading of the seeds, the intention to bring forth life, that God asks of us. The seed has a life of its own, and what grows is none of our business. Our business is to be sowers of the seeds of love and affirmation, sowers of the fruit of Christ.

In Peace and with Seeds of Love,
Pastor Andrew



MARCH



UPCOMING CHURCH EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

(Please add to your calendar.)

- Good Enough: Living a Life of Imperfection.
Sunday Mornings 8:30 in the Lounge (March 5, 12, 19, 26, & Apr. 2)
Friday Evenings 7:00 at Anita and Peggy's house (March 3, 10, 17, 24, & 31). All are welcome!
- **Games. Games, Games is back!!!** March 4th from 2:00-5:00. Grab a bag of snacks and come join the fun!
- **POT(luck)POURRI** March 19th 6:00 - 8:00-ish Potluck followed by Basket Weaving with Kaila Russel

Sermons, Scriptures and Anthems (Oh My!)

March 5

Blessed are the Curious
John 3: 1 -17

"God So Loved the World"

March 12

Blessed are Those Who Suffer
Romans 5: 1 - 11

"Amazing Grace" (tune House of the Rising Sun)

March 19

Blessed are Those Who Feel Alone

Psalms 23

"I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"

March 26

Blessed are Those Who Mourn
John 11: 1 - 45

"We Are Not Alone"



Looking Ahead

April 2 - 10:30am Palm Sunday Service

April 2 - First Sundays Potluck and Fellowship Brunch

April 6 - 7:00pm Maundy Thursday Service at Alki

April 7 - 7:00pm Good Friday Service at Admiral

April 9 - 6:30am Sunrise Service at Alki Beach

April 9 - 10:30am Easter Sunday Service

April 16 - 6:00pm Meal and Mission

TRANSPORTATION MINISTRY

The Transportation Ministry is an effort to ensure that everyone who wants to attend can attend. If you would like a ride to any of the events listed in the March and April church events and activities please contact Peggy Rich joyinthemorning1130@gmail.com or call (206)460-3021 and she will arrange your transportation to and from these planned events. We want you to be able to attend any church activity that interests you!





POT(luck)POURRI

Potluck Supper Followed by a Creative Multi-generational Activity



Sunday March 19th
Basket Weaving with Kaila
6:00 - 8:00
Admiral Church

The community is welcome!

No weaving experience necessary, just come with willing hands.

POT(luck)POURRI

POT(luck)POURRI is a new multi-generational activity and fellowship event at Admiral. It will be held on the third Sunday of the month alternating with Meal and Mission.

Each session we will have a potluck followed by an activity that people of all ages can participate in and enjoy that uses their wonderfully created bodies and minds. In March we are pleased to have Kaila Russell with us to teach us how to weave baskets. Admiral neighbors are welcome to this event, so bring your friends! We'll all have a good time! You're invited. Please, RSVP to Uta or Anita by March 16th. This session is limited to 20 people.)

MEAL AND MISSION, March and April

Interested in doing some real, hands-on mission work? This is your opportunity!

During the next month-and-a-half we will be collecting donations to address Medical Equity. Most of us have access to and can afford the medications we need, but many people can't. This project is one in which we can do something about that disparity. By donating the medicines and medical equipment and supplies that are not useful to us, we can make it possible for others who are less fortunate to have what they need to improve their quality of life.

During March and April we will be gathering medications, as well as, medical supplies and equipment that you, your friends and neighbors have around your houses. We encourage you to seek out others in your neighborhoods who would also benefit from cleaning out their medicine cabinets, garages and basements. Bring your donations to the church and place them in or near the Blue Meal and Mission Cart during church office hours 1:00 - 4:00 on Tuesday through Thursday or bring them to church on Sunday.

Don't worry about the condition, whether it has been used, if someone would use it! Just bring it to the church before 6:00 on April 16th and we will make those decisions based on the criteria of the eight non-profit groups to which we are donating. The items that do not meet the criteria for these groups will be disposed of safely at state approved medical disposal or hazardous waste sites.

Of course, cash donations and donations of mailing costs are also welcome!

Then join us for a potluck dinner on April 16th, then roll up your sleeves to sort and pack up all of the donations for delivery to help those in need. Based on the response the last time we did this type of collection, we will need a lot of help!

PUT IT ON YOUR CALENDAR - MEAL AND MISSION, SUNDAY APRIL 16th, 6:00!

Peggy Rich, M&M Committee

Donations Needed

For Meals and Mission - March and April

- prescription medications
- over-the-counter medications
- empty medication bottles
- bubble, bingo or blister packs (even if some of them are used)
- inhalers, syringes with liquid inside, etc.
- insulin
- diabetic supplies (monitors, strips, tests, equipment, etc.)
- glasses
- hearing aids
- medical equipment (bath seats, crutches, walkers, etc.)
- medical supplies (bandages, bandaids, tubing, syringes, etc.)
- pet medications
- cell phones

Admiral Zoom



ZOOM BINGO!

Tuesday, March 21 at 7:00pm

All are welcome! If you have played before you know how much fun it is! If you haven't joined us before, give it a try! It is a great social time with friends!

You will need a new set of BINGO cards this month. If you are a regular we will send you Bingo Cards automatically. If you would like to join for the first time or haven't been playing for a while, please email me before March 10th to let me know that you would like to play (joyinthemorning1130@gmail.com). Then watch for your Bingo Cards in the mail. We will be using the first 5 Bingo cards in the stack in March.

Then on March 21 at 6:45 grab your Bingo cards, a dauber or other marker and log into the church's Fellowship Room in the Member Portal on the Website and join us!

March's theme is "Spring Flowers". Prizes will be provided by church members for the winner of each game, the door prize and the "biggest loser" prize.

Costumes and jokes to tell between games are welcome!



GAMES, GAMES, GAMES

1, 2, 3, let's go! March 4th!

1st Saturday of every month
2pm start
3 hours or so of games

Bring some snacks and/or games/cards to share. I'll bring some of both, especially games. Meet in the lounge. All are welcome. Invite a friend or two if you like. We can always play more than one game at a time.



Laura Sutkus

OUTREACH

Keep bringing egg cartons for the West Seattle Food Bank. Your used egg cartons help them distribute the eggs that they receive in bulk to needy families in the area.



Paper or Plastic? The West Seattle Food Bank needs bags with handles for people to carry their food home in and to deliver food to shut ins. They are asking for our help. Save your grocery bags, bring them to church and they will be delivery to the food bank.

CONNECTING WITH THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST CONFERENCE

The Fig Tree is the Pacific Northwest Conference's newsletter. The most recent edition shared some of the land acknowledgements used by various UCC churches. These are a sampling:

Ferndale UCC

Let us begin our gathering here by acknowledging that the very Cosmos is sacred. For it is saturated with the One in whom we live and move and have our being. The very cosmos is the first and final cathedral. As such, all lands and all waterways are sacred.

For most of us gathered here, we reside on the sacred lands and waterways of the Lummi Nation and the Nooksack Tribe who have partnered and cared for these sacred lands and waterways since time immemorial. We pause to give our deepest respect and gratitude to for their enduring care and protection of these lands and waterways.

We also pause to acknowledge the harms that church has placed upon our indigenous siblings—harms done in the name of God when we the church have not followed God's longing for us—the longing to living deep Shalom with ourselves, our neighbors and the world around us.

We pause to express our heartfelt repentance for the harms done—both in our action and our in-action.

We pause to express our deepest respect and gratitude for our indigenous neighbors: the Lummi Nation and the Nooksack Tribe.

As new technology allows us to become a community spread throughout the world, if you live in another part of the United States or another country, I invite you to find out who first lived on the land and waterways you are living on, and who helped to build it into the community you know it as today.

May we each commit to working alongside our neighbors to partner and care for the very cathedral, the very Cosmos we call home. In doing so, may we honor one another, and the one in whose image we are made.

“Let us center ourselves in silence and breathe deeply as we prepare to worship the beauty and goodness of the Divine.

“...No matter who you are, no matter where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here. Amen.

Bellingham UCC

Today as we gather, we acknowledge the traditional owners of the land where we meet. Since time immemorial the Coast Salish People have been the stewards of this land. The Lhaq'temish, or Lummi People and members of the Nooksack tribe cared for this land and the creatures of land and sea for many generations before the arrival of settlers. We recognize the elders and members of these tribes to have great wisdom for the care of the land, the creatures, and the climate. We pay our respects to elders past and present whose wisdom inspires our gathering. We offer our gratitude for those whose homeland we now inhabit.

Suquamish UCC

As we begin our worship, let us take a moment to acknowledge with gratitude the land on which we gather.

We acknowledge that many of us are located and currently reside on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, the People of the Clear Salt Waters, whose ancestors have lived here from time immemorial, preserving the land and waters that we have benefitted from.

Today we express our deepest respect and gratitude for all indigenous friends and neighbors living today, particularly for the Suquamish Tribe and the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, for their enduring care and protection of our shared lands and waterways, and for healing and preserving this place for future generations.

Eagle Harbor UCC

We begin worship today by acknowledging that the land on which we live and worship is the ancestral home of the Puget Sound Coast Salish people, specifically the Suquamish tribe. We acknowledge the harm brought about by land being taken from indigenous peoples generations ago, hurt that lingers today. We seek healing.

As we learn to respect the cultural heritage of the Suquamish people, we re-commit ourselves to our shared responsibilities to their homelands where we all reside today. May the pouring of this saltwater serve as a reminder of our solidarity with the Suquamish people, the people of the clear saltwater.

University UCC

We gather as guests of the Duwamish people on their traditional land that touches the shared waters of other Coast Salish tribes. We understand that their identity and richness of culture are deeply connected with the mountains, valleys, waterways and shorelines that surround us all.

We commit to learning about the Duwamish, other indigenous cultures, and historical and ongoing oppression of indigenous peoples. We strive to nurture our relationship with indigenous peoples, especially our neighbors, by joining their efforts to work for social justice and to care for this land.

Illinois churches forgive almost \$6 million in medical debt statewide by [Connie Larkman](#) | published on Feb 23, 2023

The United Church of Christ continues to assist people struggling to get out from under medical debt. The latest effort touched more than 6,500 families in Illinois. They recently have received letters learning that their medical debt has been abolished, courtesy of the churches of the [Illinois Conference UCC](#).

Thirty three churches and 36 individuals funded the Conference's primary buy of \$41,707 — which wiped out almost \$6 million in debt for households in 78 of Illinois' 102 counties. The donations were sent through the National Setting to UCC partner, [RIP Medical Debt](#), a non-profit which buys up debt on the secondary market for pennies on the dollar. An additional contribution of \$5,000 sent independently by [St. Pauls UCC](#) in Chicago helped fund a buy in RIP Medical Debt's "[A Nation that Cares](#)" campaign.

The Conference fundraising campaign took place over the course of 10 weeks in late 2021, just before the UCC wrapped up a two-year collaborative effort that has eliminated more than \$124 million in medical debt across the country.

Organizers pointed out that the first buy and the last buy in the United Church of Christ campaign to abolish medical debt came out of the Illinois Conference.

"The Illinois Conference was excited to be part of the first buy with RIP," said Illinois Conference Minister, the Rev. Molly Carlson, referring to the buy in late 2019. "However, only a few of our churches were part of that initial effort. We decided to run a second, 10-week campaign to invite and challenge all of our churches to participate."

Small church, top donor

[Open Table UCC](#) in Ottawa, Ill., was one of the churches that opted in. The small congregation of 30-35 worshippers was one of the top donors in the latest Illinois Conference campaign.

"Open Table is mission-focused in its activities and finances," said the Rev. Jennifer Amy-Dressler, the church's part-time pastor. "Each month we have a Mission of the Month, which includes [One Great Hour of Sharing](#), [Strengthen the Church](#), [Neighbors in Need](#) and the [Christmas Fund](#)."

"Knowing how great an impact our dollars could make certainly stirred excitement. And who hasn't faced some level of struggle with medical bills, or has family members who have? So the cause resonated.

"Medical Debt Relief was one of our highest Missions of the Month ever, totaling over \$3,000," she continued, noting that a substantial gift "came from an individual who asked good questions about how the process worked. For personal reasons, this mission spoke to his values and his heart, and he responded accordingly."

The congregation, which usually focuses on raising funds for community partners like the women's shelter or the food bank the other eight months, homed in on medical debt.

"I wasn't sure if the congregation would get on board for something that impacts our area but in a more diffuse way," Amy-Dressler said. "But the scope and impact of the whole ¹Conference and UCC medical debt relief was so great that it was too good an opportunity to pass up.

Millions in debt forgiven

RIP Medical Debt, in a series of three buys, used the Illinois Conference donations to forgive as much debt as possible in the state — the last wrapping up in December 2022.

The UCC has teamed up with RIP more than a dozen times since 2019 and is the non-profit's largest faith-based partner. Here are some of the denomination's largest buys:

- UCC churches in Chicago kicked off the medical debt buy initiative in late 2019, in collaboration with the Illinois Conference and the denomination's national ministries. That first buy abolished **\$5.3 million** in debt for 5,888 families on the city's South Side.
- The collaborative efforts continued in 2020, with the [Deaconess Foundation](#) and several congregations in St. Louis abolishing **\$12.9 million**; with nine churches in California's East Bay area eliminating **\$7.4 million**; 122 churches and individuals in the [Southern New England Conference](#) wiped out **\$26 million**; and 20 churches in the [Kansas-Oklahoma Conference](#) forgave **\$5.2 million**.
- In April 2021, eight UCC congregations in the Washington, D.C., area teamed up with the National Setting and the [Potomac Association](#) of the [Central Atlantic Conference](#) to abolish more than **\$9 million** in medical debt in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and West Virginia, changing the lives of more than 7,800 families.
- In June 2021, the National Setting sent \$15,000, money from [First Congregational United Church of Christ](#), Lake Worth, Fla., and from a Giving Tuesday 2019 campaign, to wipe out more than **\$1.3 million** in medical debt for 815 families in Florida, Louisiana and Texas.
- In July 2021, eleven churches of the [Southwest Conference](#) abolished **\$3.6 million** in debt in eight Arizona counties, benefiting an additional 1,559 families.
- In December 2021, 20 churches of the UCC's St. Louis-based [Missouri Mid-South Conference](#), plus one national ministry, abolished **\$3.9 million** in debt in Arkansas and Tennessee.
- On Feb. 13, 2022, [First Congregational UCC](#) in Appleton, Wis., announced that its members' 2021 gifts of just over \$17,000 — brought up to a total of \$20,000 by a contribution from the national UCC — **had abolished more than \$866,000 in medical debt for 657 West Virginia families**.
- The UCC National Setting followed that with a Feb. 14, 2022, announcement of a \$200,000 buy, funded by Giving Tuesday gifts, that **abolished \$33 million in debt** for 10,757 households in Ohio.
- In July 2022, by churches in College Station, Texas, and Charlottesville, Va., wiped out more than **\$13.6 million** in medical debt for 13,115 families.

This list is far from complete. Other UCC congregations around the country have independently staged their own campaigns, adding

As Amy-Dressler said, "It's good to be reminded of the difference even a small church can make in people's lives, and how being in covenant with our Conference and denomination makes it possible."

Starting in April 2



Communion celebrates a meal of spiritual sustenance, but it also is a gathering of Jesus' friends. Starting on April 2, Palm Sunday, and on each Communion Sunday we will gather with our church friends and family to enjoy a meal together after church. Bring your favorite dish or an experimental recipe and share it! No sign up, no hassle. If we have 12 different kinds of baked beans, it will be alright. If you forget to bring anything come anyway - there is always more than enough for everyone at an Admiral potluck! Enjoy a purely social time with good friends and good food!

“FAT SUNDAY” WOWS ‘EM!

Admiral’s “Fat Sunday” jazz concert and Mardi Gras feast on Sunday 19 was such a HUGE success, we are now calling it our “First Annual”! The Tobi Stone Jazz Quartet gave a fantastic performance to start off the celebration, with cool jazz ranging from popular faves to scintillating original compositions. WOW! Then we moved into the Lounge for a feast of jambalaya, catfish, Caesar salad and King Cake, in the New Orleans style. YUM! Fifty three delighted guests enjoyed this very special afternoon.

Special thanks to Admiral’s own Tobi Stone and her marvelous musicians! Thanks to Peggy and Anita for the jambalaya, to Laura Cook for frying up the catfish, to Laura Sutkus for the salad and to Anne Muller for the fabulous King Cake! (Kathy Heinemann found the baby, by the way...)

Missed it? Mark your calendar for next year!

You’re Invited to a Music Northwest concert!



*Soul
Music*

**MUSIC NORTHWEST CONCERT
MARCH 5th at 3:00pm at Admiral
Church**

Miriam Shames, cello
Jane Harty, piano

*Music of Brahms, Faure,
Glazunov and more!*

Tickets can be purchased at:
<https://musicnorthwest.org/products-page/concerts/>

Faith Journey Team

You won't want to miss the opportunity to participate in our Lenten small groups this month. We are hoping to deepen the congregation's engagement with one another and with Kate Bowler's book *Good Enough*, which will be guiding our worship. There are five Friday evening sessions at 7:00 PM in the Lincoln Park-area home of Peggy Rich and Anita Shaffer, with a live-streamed interactive Zoom option. (The link can be found under EVENTS as well as the MEMBER PORTAL on our website.) If you can't make it to all five meetings, don't worry. Each session can stand alone, and even if you haven't purchased the book or read ahead of time, you can still join in. If Friday evenings don't work for you, you can join Pastor Andrew at the church early Sunday mornings at 8:30 AM..

And now's the time to start creating your own playlist to share your favorite "songs that reveal Christ" (but would be considered "secular") for May's "Sneaky Jesus Music" series. You'll also have the opportunity to discover *new* music for your faith journey. Reach out to Pastor Andrew or myself for more information or if you need some assistance in this project. 2023 Small Groups/Discipleship Series "Sneaky Jesus Music" for sharing with others your favorite "songs that reveal Christ" (without explicitly doing so.)

JAMES BIX SOUTH, FAITH JOURNEY LEAD

Lily's Poetry Corner

Sun soaked wound
 My lips are lined in bruised shades
 Petaled in rosy sodden rot
 I remain tender to the world
 Burning as a sun soaked wound
 Drinking in the day with childlike hunger
 I cry at the beauty
 Of rays that graze into
 One another
 Gracing Parts of light I could never touch
 I will always Feel the aching awe
 In the naïve blindness of My needing clutch

**Worship Service
every Sunday @ 10:30
www.admiralchurch.org**



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