

PILGRIMS PROGRESS AUGUST, 2009

PILGRIM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

2802 COMMERCIAL AVENUE, ANACORTES, WA 98221

360-293-5675 WWW.PILGRIMUCCSKAGIT.ORG

REV. SALLY BALMER, M.DIV PASTOR AND TEACHER

Clouds, blue sky, wild roses

grace a reflecting lily pad pool.

Above white clouds the roses climb

in beauty's calm, relished within

the hum of wild bees and the dry wing

rattle of engaging dragonflies.

I discover once again how Earth

teaches us to recognize ourselves.

John Caddy for www.morning-earth.org

EDITOR'S NOTE

Our booth at Shipwreck Day raised \$1047.00 for our voucher fund. Thank you to everyone who donated "stuff" to sell. It really helped the cause! Many contributed time and effort. Most especially I would like to recognize Nelle Jacobson who essentially took the helm and got it all together. As usual, Tom and Janet Miller were there for the entire day, setting up, rearranging, hauling and selling. These three can always be counted on to participate. A whole bunch of the money raised was due to the heroic effort of Malcolm who took all the parts of 30 chairs which were lying around in the loft of the church, cleaned and reassembled them and made parts that were missing. Dick Jacobson, Patti Santangelo, Roger Ridgway, Jim Gleeson, Sally, Nancy Chapman—all helped out during the day at the booth. If I've forgotten anyone, I'm sorry.

A MESSAGE FROM SALLY

We are all working on something we started. Days, weeks, months, years ago, we began that home project, planted a garden, turned a new leaf, started a book. . . or a family. And we're still "working"—and sometimes, we could just as well say that something is "working" with us.

During my recent summer course in Vancouver on **Contemplative Retreat Design**, I felt that "mutuality" of engagement. In the insight and inspiration of class time and reading, a fresh enthusiasm emerged for this manner--contemplative retreats--of engaging the Sacred. Thank you, Pilgrim-ers, for the privilege of Continuing Education. Suffice it to say I am currently exploring options for a day-long Pilgrim retreat in September or October.

This month I'll continue some of these leanings and learnings. Using the lectionary and poetry, we'll take glances at "the contemplative" on the **Sundays** I am here: August 2nd (musings about "*bread of heaven*"), the 16th (Solomon becomes king and asks for--not a thriving economy, rather--*wisdom*), and the 23rd (a favorite psalm--84--on *longing*). I'll be away on a bit of vacation at the end of the month.

Other happenings:

*My 13-inch television really won't do justice to any **BBC Planet Earth** DVD, so all are invited to check out the wonder on our bigger screen (54") on **Wednesday August 19th, at 6:30** in our sanctuary.

*"Project Porchlight" has contacted us regarding their handing out of free CFL lightbulbs in the neighborhood. Want to help for a couple of hours? See more info elsewhere in this newsletter. You can sign up online or through the church.

*Now that our Cornerstone Fund line of credit has been approved, the **Renovation Committee** is working to make our building "work." Nancy Chapman is ably chairing this endeavor.

*Finally, we've all heard the phrase "God doesn't make junk." No kidding. Thanks to Nelle Jacobson for initiating and overseeing Shipwreck Days (of our not-necessarily-junk) to a total of over \$1,000 for our **benevolence voucher fund**.

In so many ways, we contribute, are working "on" and "with" and. . . never alone. Together, in Spirit, I am grateful for the gladness, and signs, of the good fruition of "work" ever in our midst.

Sally

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR MODERATOR, BILL

As you know, the congregation voted to apply to the Cornerstone Fund of the UCC for a \$75,000 line of credit to be used toward the renovation of our building. The Fund approved our application and we are now sending them the follow-up information they requested. Your Renovation Committee (Nancy Chapman, chair, Kyle Davis, Marcia Neu, Tom Miller, and myself, ex officio) has met. We received the report of the inspector. He suggests, and we concurred, that the top renovation priority would be the removing of the stucco on the outside of the building, adding shielding, and replacement of siding plus wood trim, and the painting of the exterior after that work was done. The building is actually basically in very good shape. We are now asking three local contractors to submit bids for this work. When we receive the bids, we will look at them and then make recommendations to the Church Council regarding next steps. The Council will then develop a recommendation for the congregation. If you have any questions about the renovation discussions, please contact the chair, Nancy Chapman.

Bill Malcomson, for the Renovation Committee

NOTICE TO ALL OF US

If you have signed up for hospitality on any given Sunday, and see that any supplies such as coffee, lemonade, napkins, plates, etc. need replenishing, please let me know. I try and check quite often, but sometimes there are things that get used up between Sundays. Thanks.

Janet Miller

Conference Office Address Update:

Our Pacific Northwest United Church of Christ Conference office moved on April 1st, and mail is being forwarded

slowly and is not especially reliable. Please update your directory information to:

PNC-UCC

325 N. 125th St.

Seattle, WA 98133

An Invitation from Project Porchlight:

Project Porchlight is a non profit that partners with Puget Sound Energy to distribute free energy saving light bulbs in the Puget Sound area.

In the coming months, we will be distributing 275,000 FREE energy-saving compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs to residents in PSE’s residential electric service area all over the Puget Sound. That will amount to a reduction in pollution equal to taking 2,700 cars off the road!

We are reaching out to communities all over the northern Puget Sound region, and one of our first stops is Anacortes. This is a great opportunity for your church to be a shining face in the community-- helping your neighbors save money and energy!

There are two events we'll be holding in Anacortes::

1. Door-to-door blitzes. Everybody gets a t-shirt and and we do a short training, and send the group out in pairs throughout the neighborhood, helping to pass out free energy saving light bulbs in the community! It only takes 2 hours, and it's a lot of fun!

Dates: Sat. August 15, 2:00-4:00 p.m. at Storvik Park

2. Rock the Bulb event put on by PSE at the Anacortes Ace Hardware. It's a fun, carnival-like atmosphere where community members can bring in 10 incandescent bulbs and trade them for 10 free CFLs! We need at least 12 volunteers to run booths, registration tables, etc. each day (chairs are provided). These are a lot of fun, everyone gets a t-shirt and free lunch! This would be a perfect group event!

Dates: Sat. and Sun. August 22-23, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. . at the Anacortes Ace Hardware

Does one of these dates work for you? You can bring your families and friends too!

***To SIGN UP, go to www.projectporchlight.org

. . . or find a sign-up form at the church, and specify when you are available.

Dear Allies,

The North Sound Alliance meeting scheduled for tomorrow (Monday, July 27) has been cancelled due to summer schedules. We will meet as usual in August to update everyone on all that has been happening this summer. Much has been accomplished and there is more to come. **The top priorities for moving our work forward are for each of you to:** 1) actively recruit for the Fall Leadership Institute (October 17 & 24, Bellingham) and 2) to secure your institutional leader's participation in the Leaders' Caucuses on September 17th (11am-1pm). Flyers for the Leaders' Caucus in Skagit and Snohomish are attached. Please plan to report at the August meeting, and be prepared to take quotas for the Leadership Institute recruiting. Thanks to all of you who are making broad-based community organizing a reality in northwest Washington! As usual, call Christie (360-424-1999) or Stoney (360-428-7929) with questions.

Pilgrimage for Comprehensive Immigration Reform Starting on Saturday, August 1st, a group of parishioners from Assumption parish in Bellingham will begin a two-week Pilgrimage from their church to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detention Center in Tacoma. The group is walking to pray for comprehensive immigration reform. Join the group for an hour, a day, or for the entire walk. **Find out more about the walk, including the schedule,** at <http://whatcom.blogs.com>

A Grace Malcomson poem for the newsletter

Playful Me
Warmth and love surrounds my face,
Fun filling inside me.
Lying down amongst the fresh flowers and grass,
Having an adventure,
Am I.
Rolling down the twisting hill,
The sky is around me.
The dirt somehow makes the world feel whole,
Getting kissed by the frost,
Is me.
The clouds don't budge from the sky,
I stand, then sit on the dew.
Thinking about the meaning of life,
And here living *my* life,
Am I.

Swaddling sacredness

What bounds do we on sacred set
as we around it trace
by image, word and ritual
constraints of time and space?
So giv'n are we to create form
in all that we perceive,
we shape perceptions to accord
with that we would believe.
It's not a fault that we are thus;
the fault's when we maintain
that what we see and what we think
can sacredness contain.
Can we conceive the limitless
with minds to limits tuned,
or shall we be content with just
a sacredness cartooned?

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I express appreciation to the Reverend Doctor William Malcomson for his helpful comments on early versions of this writing. The responsibility for the result is mine. DHP

Dear School Volunteers and Friends,

I am writing to ask for your help at this year's 'Ready To Learn' Fair on Saturday, August 29 from 10-2 p.m. We need volunteers to help at the following stations: Clothing , School Supplies, Hygiene, Haircuts (crowd control), Lice Checks (we'll train you), School District and Community Resource Station (we'll train you), Registration (requires patience and paperwork), Barbecue (helping keep tables clear, etc.), Books, Socks/Underwear, etc. If you can't come early, but could come to help us tear down from 2-3:30 p.m., that would be just as helpful.

Volunteer Benefits: Complimentary Lunch (usually from Gere-a-Deli), meet fellow do-gooders like yourself and interact with lots of happy children and parents.

If you can't help the day of the Fair, but could help us with event setup, we'll be doing that on Friday, August 28 from 9-12 noon. (If you could do both ALL the better.) We need muscles on the 28th as we have LOTS of 6-foot and 8-foot heavy tables (pressboard...) that need to be taken from the storage room and brought into the Commons and the back hallway.

Volunteer Benefits: Complimentary Lunch (pizza and drinks), meet fellow do-gooders like yourself and a warm feeling knowing how many children will be getting great school supplies, haircuts, clothing, etc. just in time for the new school year.

If you can help on ONE or BOTH days, would you please email me back? (I'm on vacation July 20-28, so if you don't hear from me until after that, please know that that's why!) Let me know if you have a work station preference. If you can't help at all but have a family member or friend who might be available, please share this email and my email address. Last year, we served 256 children and with economy not seeing much improvement, we anticipate an even bigger crowd this year. Thank you so much for your consideration! Jayne 293-1234 PLEASE IGNORE IF YOU'RE ALREADY SIGNED UP TO HELP...

Jayne Branch
Anacortes School District
Volunteer Coordinator/Resource Development
2200 M Avenue
Anacortes, WA 98221

You are invited!

Annual Skagit PFLAG Picnic and Barbeque
Sunday, August 16, 2009
2:00 PM

Picture this: wonderful food, great people, country setting, celebration, music, games (not required but allowed). Bring a salad, vegetable, or dessert to share and your favorite beverage. Salmon, table ware, bread provided. Vegetarian dishes are wonderful. Bring your friends and family. Wear your country shoes, a hat or sunscreen and some insect repellent. (Maybe a chair if you have one easy to transport).
Call or email for more information: 360 856 4676 or kreim@earthlink.net
<http://www.pflagaskagit.org/>

This event is at the home of Kathy & Robert Reim
Directions to Skagit PFLAG barbeque on August 16, 2009 23262 Meadow View Lane Sedro-Woolley , WA 98284 h 360 856-4676

Take I-5 exit 236 at Bow Hill Road and go east. Cross Old 99 onto Prairie Road . Continue 7 miles. It is a winding road and changes directions several times-stay on the main roadway. Enjoy the scenery. It seems like a long way Turn left at Upper Samish Road (north) and turn left at the first gravel road (Meadow View). Our house is cream colored with a blue metal roof on the left. Parking is available along the road or in the driveway. If you find yourself at Highway Nine (Samish Elementary School), you have gone too far. We are about 35 minutes from Bellingham and 45 minutes from Anacortes. (a nice route is to turn at Farm to Market and come through Edison).

We hope you can be here. If possible, please let us know so we can have salmon for everyone who would like some...

Hugs, Kathy & Robert & Skagit PFLAG

ALSO FROM PFLAG

Hello, Everyone:

Robert and I got home from Bellingham about 8:00 PM where we stood with four others who were protesting the gathering of referendum 71 signatures at Wal-Mart. We were there for about 75 minutes. The signature gatherer was from Seattle and was paid \$1.00 per signature. He reminded me three times that I was depriving his children of food by my presence. He wasn't ugly but very frustrated. We estimate that only about a dozen people signed during that time.

His talking points:

1. This legislation was passed without "our" permission by legislators who did it to get votes and money.
2. The sign said Stop Same Sex Marriage even though this is Domestic Partnership legislation.
3. The paperwork they have printed says that public schools will have to teach children k-12 about homosexuality.
4. He said this legislation will cost Washington taxpayers millions of dollars and tie up the courts with divorce

My thoughts:

1. We need to let our legislators know immediately that this is the approach being taken by this campaign. What a slap in their faces.
2. They have printed the forms they are using and there are no legal requirements that the language reflect anything accurate about the legislation. It doesn't. People don't know this. (That might be a law that needs to be passed.)
3. The Prop 8 campaign used this as their major hook. It is very effective- even when not true.
4. He never explained this but didn't have to-it just appeals to some people.

Don't Put a Period on Health Care: God is Still Speaking

A Pastoral Letter to Members of the United Church of Christ

"Health care is not only a basic human right but a human need. As people of faith we believe that it is a moral imperative to transform health care so that it is inclusive, accessible, affordable and accountable. We call on our churches to actively work towards the creation of a national health care system and to affirm the moral and justice imperatives of equal access for all people. Just one month ago, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopted a Resolution entitled [An Urgent Call For Advocacy in Support of Healthcare For All, as in H.R. 676](#).

As a denomination we believe that a Single-Payer plan is what is needed to truly have universal coverage which is our moral and justice imperative. We acknowledge that it will probably not be the health care proposal of choice. However, we must support a strong public plan option that provides meaningful access to all.

As people of faith we are called to make a better world possible. During the month of August the UCC will begin a special campaign for health care reform.

Join the [Justice and Peace Action Network](#) to receive weekly emails on how to engage in this debate or follow the steps below.

1. Contact your lawmakers TODAY and tell them that you are a member of the United Church of Christ. Let them know that any health care proposal must include:

- Coverage for all persons
- Access regardless of ability to pay
- A full set of benefits
- A choice of physicians and other providers
- Elimination of racial and ethnic and other health care disparities
- Waiver of pre-existing condition exclusions without any age limits
- A public option

You can reach the Capitol Switchboard (Toll Free) at **888.797.8717**.

[Home: Justice and Witness Ministries](#)

On June 18th, Representative Maxine Waters introduced the [Stop VULTURE Funds Act \(H.R. 2932\)](#), a bill in the House of Representatives that would prevent “vulture funds” from making excessive profit at the expense of poor countries in U.S. courts.

Stop companies from profiteering off the debt of impoverished countries. Ask congress to support the Stop Vultures Act.

A ‘Vulture fund’ is a tool used by corporations seeking to make profit by buying the debts of impoverished countries or companies for pennies on the dollar, then suing the debt holders in U.S. or European courts for up to ten times the purchase price. The resulting financial losses by heavily indebted countries often put further strain on social programs and negate positive gains from debt cancellation.

Just last week the British government announced its intention to pass legislation that would stop Vulture Fund profiteering from poor country debt in UK courts. Similar legislation needs to be passed in the U.S.

[Home: Justice and Witness Ministries](#)

Current hate crime statutes offer **no federal protection** against bias motivated crimes rooted in **sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and disability**. The [Matthew Shepard Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act](#) would include these categories and permit federal authorities to help investigate and prosecute cases when local authorities are unable or unwilling to do so. With technical assistance and training, local law enforcement will be prepared to combat these acts of violence that intimidate the community by using brutality against a few individuals to incite fear among many.

After much struggle to move this legislation forward, the Senate was able to attach the *Leahy/Collins/Kennedy/Snowe hate crime amendment (The Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act)* to the FY 2010 Department of Defense Authorization bill (S. 1391) this week. After months of struggle, we finally have an opportunity to ensure protection for all people and all communities against bias motivated crimes!

The bill is not perfect. Harmful amendments were included in the Senate version, including an amendment to expand use of the death penalty in instances of hate crimes. We have more work to do to improve this legislation, but the end is in sight!

Tell Congress that Hate Crimes prevention is important to you! Urge your representative to pass the Mathew Shepard Act without the death penalty provision!