

*PILGRIMS PROGRESS JULY 2010*  
*PILGRIM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH*  
*2802 COMMERCIAL AVENUE, ANACORTES, WA 98221*  
*360-293-5675 [WWW.PILGRIMUCCSKAGIT.ORG](http://WWW.PILGRIMUCCSKAGIT.ORG)*  
*REVEREND SALLY BALMER, PASTOR AND TEACHER*



Deception Pass State Park – © Marcia Neu 2010

### Message from Sally

*“Volumes have been written about it but the small, unassuming text itself is almost bound to be disappointing to a culture that likes things to sound impressive and to look slick.”*  
--author Joan Chittister, on The Rule of Benedict

The irony is that Benedict’s ordinary, sixth-century “rule”, written to assist a community’s ongoing formation, would spawn some 1400 communities across the globe today. At once flexible and reflective of its times, I am convinced the intentional naming and discipline of spiritual “basics for the path” are the seeds of its power and attraction. “People tend to forget the way of Christianity as a ‘path’” the professor noted during a recent Benedictine retreat/class in which I participated. He was quoting Brian McLaren, who is well known for his articulate work in the “emerging church” movement.

A path. Not static beliefs or dogma but something closer to what the author of the book of Acts was expressing in calling those first christians people of “the Way.” (9.2). What comes to mind? I consider the power in simple (not to be equated with always “easy”) practices: covenant, gathering, prayer, study, service. For example.

As a congregation involved in a process of discerning how best to live into our future, the dynamics of a “path” pushes us into choosing and naming and yes, even discipline. In this I consider again Jim Collins’ *hedgehog concept*. Unlike the fox, the hedgehog is less concerned with flash or the need to prove anything. The hedgehog moves slowly, deliberately, discerning what works against “the company” and concentrating on what is done best. The *best*, by the way, is some mix of three “whats”: what people care

passionately about, what they can be best at "in the world", and what are the driving resources (time, money, gifts).

My own sense is that while some may see us as a "small unassuming text"--like the rule of Benedict-- our power does and will lie in discerning and living into our *path* of being a faith community. Not an "idea" of faith or church; my experience is that sometimes I can get so hung up on the idea or content of something that I get stuck in my "head." Sigh. Which means I miss the power of a "practice" and its transformative dialectic with "thinking."

In the weeks and months ahead we will share more--whether in small groups or at other times--of our experiences of faith that may well affect our thinking/beliefs--and vice-versa. Which in turn affects our practices, *our path*. (Note: if you are interested in any kind of small group-- once a month book group or more of a "practice" type, you can sign up on Sunday or let me know). In the meantime, our Sunday *practice* includes:

July 4: It's our national holiday and a new book on "being wrong" connects...

July 11: Rev. Barbara Gilday is guest preacher

July 18: After a class on Celtic Spirituality, a look at its gifts for us today

July 25: Faith-practice paths (note: this *may* include chanting a psalm!)

Walking--running, strolling, wandering--"the path" with you--

Yours in God's encouragement,  
Sally

Words from Our Moderator

The month of June has been a very busy one for Janet and me. On the 11th I went to our UCC camp in Idaho, N-Sid-Sen, for a conference leadership retreat. If you ever get the chance to go to N-Sid-Sen be sure to take advantage of the opportunity. No TV, Internet or cell phones. Just the lake and the woods. Randy Crowe, who is the camp manager, always takes care of us and makes us welcome. On the 15th Janet and I left for Tennessee to visit our oldest son and his family. We were there for two weeks and the temperature each day was over 95 degrees F with the humidity not too high. Everything went fine until Janet decided to do some gardening. She ran into some poison ivy and it got all over both of her arms. We had no idea what poison ivy was or what it looked like. Needless to say she is in a whole lot of pain and misery.

I hope you all have seen that the flags are again flying from our flagpole. Thanks to Jim Gleeson, we have replaced the flag ropes with steel cables. Jim found the cables at a garage sale he just happened to stop at. There must be some reason why he just happened to stop. Anyway, after some thinking about how to restring the cables, I saw a lift truck putting up banners for the city of Anacortes. After talking to the owner he said "no problem". If you look carefully at the cables you will see that they are now secured ten feet above the ground by a bolted clamp. If anybody wants to get the flags down again they will need a ladder, a pair of bolt cutters and a socket set. Lets hope it does not happen again.

Your church council will be looking at the church budget during this month's meeting. Of particular interest will be what we pay our pastor. The church has not changed Sally's compensation since she was called some five years ago. As usual, all are welcome to attend any church council meeting.

--Tom Miller, Moderator

## Upcoming Events

### Upcoming Sunday Guest Ministers

The Reverend Barbara Gilday will be our guest speaker at the July 13 service.

## Children's Program

After the Children's service in June about hands, we have been exploring the wonder of our senses. On Father's Day we explored taste by making strawberry jam for Dads.

We'll be feeling, hearing, seeing & smelling in July--doing many of our experiments outside to enjoy the garden & the sunshine.

### Welcome Diba!

Starting July 18, our wonderful assistant Diba Samadani will be with us on Sunday.

## News from Pilgrim

The Long-Range Planning Committee has completed the developing of questions to ask folks in the congregation regarding their analysis of and hopes for our church. We have also assigned members of our committee to call on you in the next couple of months. So expect a contact before too long.

--Bill Malcomson, for the Committee (Lynn Christofersen, Bob Schofield, Anna Torgersen, Roger Ridgway, Bob Carey and Nancy Chapman).

## Pilgrim Community News

### All are invited to a baby shower!

For: Sarah Ratliff and Chris Burgess

Date: Monday, July 5

Time: 1:00 pm

Place: 1340 Western Dr., Oak Harbor (their place)

RSVP: 515-480-1285 or [hartliff@msn.com](mailto:hartliff@msn.com)

Registered at Target and BabiesRUs

July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010

We set aside this day it seems  
to celebrate our way of life,  
not to ask ourselves what do burgers on the grill  
and beers in the ice tub  
have to do with freedom anyway?

Camping, sailing, driving, eating, resting,  
race cars and soccer on TV  
are all about what to us?  
Do we remember what we fought for  
so we could go safely to the beach or back yard?

Do we think about fireworks which represent  
death to the enemy and life to the ones with  
bigger bombs, more warriors, best boats and the most bullets?

Do we recall with passion the killing?  
Do we thank God for killing the British  
and at our hands driving them from their homes and jobs  
on this, their soil at the time?  
Do we really think it was about tea in Boston harbor?

No. It was not about freedom then for the masses.  
It was about commerce, businessmen. My family sported both bleeding  
Patriots and Tories whose homes were burned, and lives given.  
What have we done with this freedom we won?

Are any in America going hungry, unclothed, unsheltered this 4th?  
It isn't quite palatable to use this time  
to remember them so much that our fun is affected.  
So, take only five minutes to

look at the flag and ask what is my responsibility  
as I begin this 235th year of freedom?  
Look at your loved ones and ask  
if they know to what they owe the blessings they enjoy.  
Seems little enough to give ourselves  
perhaps a newly awakening perspective.

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## Local Community News

### Cindy Minkler to perform at Pilgrim: Friday evening, July 23

A much-appreciated pianist at Lummi UCC (and also in Christmas programs Tom Hunter would lead in Bellingham), Cindy has asked to put on a concert at Pilgrim later this month. Stay posted for the time. For more information, you can read and hear her at these links: <http://www.youtube.com/SiouxPianist>; [www.myspace.com/cindyminkler](http://www.myspace.com/cindyminkler); <http://www.neighborhood-kids.com/Activities/General/2437.aspx>

### The Homeless Connect Project.

Rice Bowl Ministries is looking for help in putting together toiletry bags to be distributed. I suggested that the Anacortes Group could probably work with them since they are located in Anacortes. They will need supplies and help to put them together and possibly storage space until the distribution.

The Project also needs volunteers to help on September 1 during the distribution (10-5). They would like to have them early for training and scheduling. They are not yet listed, but will be soon listed on 1-800-Volunteer.org. I can make a list in the meantime. <http://www.1-800-volunteer.org/1800Vol/skagit/vcindex.do>

--Patti Santangelo

### Annual Skagit PFLAG Picnic and Barbeque

Sunday, August 15, 2010, 2:00 PM – All are invited!

Picture this: wonderful food, great people, country setting, celebration, music, games (not required but encouraged).

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 transport).

Call or email for more information: 360 856 4676 or [kreim@earthlink.net](mailto:kreim@earthlink.net)

<http://www.pflagskagit.org/>

Candidates' Forum, Tuesday, July 13 at 7:00 pm at the USW Union Hall, 902 5th Street at Q Avenue.

The first group will be the Democratic candidates for U.S. Representative for our 2nd Congressional District. Unfortunately, Rep. Rick Larsen cannot attend, as he has to take a vote in Washington, D.C. that day, but his Political Director, Brooke Davis, is expected to represent him. His two Democratic challengers, Diana McGinnes and Larry Kalb, will speak, followed by a moderated question/comment period.

The second group will be the Democratic candidates for State Representative of our 40th Legislative District, Position #1. This is an open seat, being vacated by the retiring Rep. Dave Quall. The candidates are Thomas Boucher, Kris Lytton, Tom Pasma, and Justin Van Dyk. A second moderated question/comment period will follow their remarks.

--Patti Santangelo

## News from the UCC

### Emergency Fund USA

Hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, ice storms, chemical spills - disasters occur regularly in the United States and Puerto Rico. Often these disasters escape media attention. Gifts to the Emergency USA Fund enable the UCC to go the "extra mile" in responding to hidden disasters.

If you wish to designate your gift to Emergency USA for a specific disaster, please write the name of the disaster (i.e. Gulf Oil Spill, Midwest Floods, Spring Storms) in the "Comments" box below. Visit: <http://www.ucc.org/gulf-oil-spill/> for more information.

### Anti-racism workshop set

Melanie Morrison of Allies for Change and Diane Schmitz of Seattle University will lead a workshop on "Doing Our Own Work" from 7 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 8 to 1 p.m., Friday, Aug. 13 at Harmony Hill Retreat Center in Union, Wash. Participants will learn to be anti-racist allies to bring institutional change on racism and white privilege. For information, call 989-855-2277 or see [www.alliesforchange.org/calendar.html](http://www.alliesforchange.org/calendar.html).

### NW Women's Retreat planned

The ninth annual Northwest Women's Retreat on the theme, "Come to the Oasis: Our Affirmation of Spirit, Inspiration and Soul," will be Nov. 5 to 7 at Kah-Nee-Ta resort in Warm Springs, Ore. Keynoter Carolyn Scott Kortge is author of *The Spirited Walker: Fitness Walking for Clarity, Balance and Spiritual Connection*.

### Evening walk

From the heartfelt green abundance  
and lacy caps on invisible heads  
all along the road, cow parsnip  
keeps company with the starlight  
of buttercups, dancing like sparks,  
lighting my path back home

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