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The Communicator

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The Communicator

All the (Church) News That's Fit to Print
Eagle Harbor Congregational Church, UCC
July-August, 2018

The Peace of Wild Things

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come to the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

—Wendell Berry



Rest and Resist

It's one of those weeks when I just feel pummeled by a cascade of what I consider bad news—traumatized children separated from parents, a ban on travel from several largely Muslim countries, weakening laws that protect people from discrimination, an oil train derailed in a flooded river, the prospect of cuts to poverty-reducing food assistance programs to pay for a tax cut, Et Cetera, Et Cetera, Et Cetera. It reminds me of a time I stood for a moment or two under a smallish waterfall; the frigid water pounding my skull filled all my senses and quickly gave me a headache. I stepped away from that, but stepping away from a cascade of chilling news doesn't seem feasible.

It is certainly tempting to just tune out, drop out in some fashion. Cease to be interested in the fortunes of the nation and the world. I'm tired.

A blogger I admire, John Pavlovitz, wrote a column in 2017 which re-

surfaced in my Facebook feed this week. It's titled *"Hateful People Are Exhausting."* He goes down a list of outrages to which he wanted to respond faithfully, but could hardly find the energy. Pavlovitz acknowledges how draining it is to deal with hateful messages and hateful people, to respond to a cascade of gleeful pugnacity. But he encourages the faithful to stick with the program of love and justice:

Like the vast majority of this country, I want it to be the place where equality, diversity, and decency find sanctuary, and though I am fully committed to the aspiration, I am feeling the cumulative weariness sustained from a small but fierce portion of the population (including far too much of its leadership) whose narrative about the world depends upon acrimony for so much of it. I know that I'm not alone in this emotional depletion and physical fatigue. (cont. on pg. 3)

"Living Water" From a Hose—Another Service Opportunity

The Bainbridge Island Land Trust has inquired about whether we might be able to help keep plants alive again this summer at the Agate Passage Preserve, should the weather become very dry. If you would like to help nurture this beautiful island treasure by occasionally watering vulnerable plants, let Jennifer in the office know, and she will connect you with the folks managing volunteers.



David Oclander

How would you/please describe the evolution of your Christian faith so far?

In my early days I would describe my start in faith as one marked by grace, salvation and hope. This was also where building my foundations in faith were critical, especially later when I met challenges and questioned my faith. A few years into my faith journey I had grown cold in my faith and was seeking other pleasure, excitement, and personal gain. While I frantically looked for answers to this, I was also confronted with the unconditional love and faith of my mom who patiently prayed for me and lead by example so I would one day return to Christ and the real answers I was looking for. Finally, when I met Amy and we began our family, we both recognized that without something in our lives that would ground us, we would both struggle. This latest period has been marked by grace and gratitude. While I still struggle with many personal flaws, Christ has allowed me to forgive and be forgiven. Christ has taken away my shame and allowed me to continually grow as a husband, father, leader, and friend.

Why should we pass on the Christian faith/why is Christianity (as you understand and practice it) relevant today? Our world is inspired by personal gain, self serving, and immediate gratification. The example of Christ is just the opposite. Chasing what the world wants is like trying to fill a cup with no bottom. Pursuing a life with Christ plugs this hole in a way that allows me and others around me to drink and be fulfilled. The only way I can see us breaking this cycle of hate, self-righteousness, and selfishness is through humbly seeking the grace and selflessness that Christ calls for.

How would/do you describe EHCC to someone who doesn't attend our church? I would describe EHCC as a grace-filled, kind and accepting home. It's a place where people can be their authentic selves and make connection with other authentic people. It is also a place that nourishes the soul with teaching that is grace-filled and honest.



Picnic time with Dawson, Evan, Amy & David Oclander

Focus on Faith:

What brought you to church (initially; not specifically to EHCC)? I went through a period of rebelling and seeking independence when I was in my teens. During that period, my Dad was also seeking answers to several of his ghosts. My dad found his answers after a friend introduced him to the forgiveness and grace of Christ. My dad then patiently waited for me hit bottom in my rebellion. When I did, he introduced Christ in the same loving and grace filled way he had come to Christ. We were both baptized together.

Tell us about a specific time when participating in church was especially meaningful (not necessarily a time at EHCC). After I left Battalion Command with the 82nd Airborne Division, I moved with my family to Washington DC so I could serve on the Joint Staff in the Pentagon. Amy and I were actively looking for a new church in our new home and we found this at New Hope Community Church in Lorton, VA. At the new church some of the men encouraged me to attend their Wednesday AM fellowship group. When I finally attended it was one of the most encouraging and challenging periods of my life. The men in the group really made me think about what my purpose was and how I was living that purpose. They challenged me to think of this purpose through the lens of Christ's calling rather than my own goals. It was during this time that I made the decision to retire and pursue a career in service to youth, first through education and now in serving at-risk youth at Starbucks. The church also had a profound impact on my entire family. It was at New Hope that I also got to experience Amy and my oldest son, Matthew, get baptized.

What makes your on-going relationship with church meaningful or worthwhile/how has participation at EHCC positively affected your life? Church in general has been a place that has always allowed me to look in the mirror to see my honest self. My on-going learning and growth at church is really important to me as I continue to learn how to be a good man, a good dad, and learn how to love myself and others. EHCC has continued to expand my understanding of God's wisdom. I love being in a church lead by a female pastor for the first time in my life. I love seeing how Amy responds to having a female church leader. We always walk out of EHCC having learned something new, embraced a new perspective, and feeling uplifted.

But the people consumed with hatred will not consume me, and they will not change my heart toward the world. They will not derail my path or alter my convictions. I will be a person of love here or I will die trying.

If you find that you are similarly weary today, be encouraged. Rest and resist and fight to remain loving. Hateful people are

exhausting—so refuse to become one of them.

Jesus regularly withdrew into quiet places for prayer, for communion with God. We all need to find our ways to renew our spirits when we feel exhausted.

But let's stay in the struggle and encourage one another not to get weary

—Peace, Dee

Hungry Readers Book Group

We have selected the book we will be discussing on **September 17 at noon** in our fellowship hall: **Unapologetic: Why, Despite Everything, Christianity Can Still Make Surprising Emotional Sense** by Francis Spufford.

Here's the Amazon blurb on this delightful read: "Francis Spufford's Unapologetic is a wonderfully pugnacious defense of Christianity. Refuting critics such as Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and the "new atheist" crowd, Spufford, a former atheist and Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, argues that Christianity is recognizable, drawing on the deep and deeply ordinary vocabulary of human feeling, satisfying those who believe in it by offering a ruthlessly realistic account of the grown-up dignity of Christian experience.

"Fans of C. S. Lewis, N. T. Wright, Marilynne Robinson, Mary Karr, Diana Butler Bass, Rob Bell, and James Martin will appreciate Spufford's crisp, lively, and abashedly defiant thesis.

"Unapologetic is a book for believers who are fed up with being patronized, for non-believers curious about how faith can possibly work in the twenty-first century, and for anyone who feels there is something indefinably wrong, literalistic, anti-imaginative and intolerant about the way the atheist case is now being made."

Get your copy from the library, or borrow or buy one, and we'll discuss it in September.



**PUGET SOUND
RESTORATION FUND**

Caring Coins is the loose change (or bills/checks designated for Caring Coins) you put in the offering plates on Sunday mornings during worship. Each month we choose a different recipient for that collection. **Thank you for your generosity!**

July Caring Coins: Puget Sound Restoration Fund

Founded in 1997, PSRF works collaboratively to restore marine habitat, water quality, and native species in Puget Sound through tangible on-the-ground projects. Their work to rebuild the populations of oysters, abalone and kelp are key to maintaining ecosystem health and represent iconic food resources that have supported human health along this coast for thousands of years,

Current efforts to rebuild the Olympia oyster populations and restore native oyster habitat at 19 priority locations in Puget Sound has generated a groundswell of activity with tribes, industry, government, researchers and community groups.

We can support PSRF efforts to Restore, Renew and Recover a healthy ecosystem with our Caring Coins this month. Your generosity is appreciated.

**Wednesday Evening Bible Study and Potluck at Battle Point Park
July 11-August 15**

It's that time of year when our regularly scheduled Wednesday Bible study gets festive and meets at the large picnic shelter at Battle Point Park for finger food potluck, Bible discussion, and free concerts! **Join us at 6:00pm** (note time change) with some



food to share and your Bible (we're still reading the fierce prophet Jeremiah). If you would like to go to the music afterward, bring something to sit upon and we'll wander over toward the stage for an antidote to lament and judgement. (If you don't see our group in the picnic shelter because it's full of other folks, look around the nearby picnic tables. We'll likely be the only ones who are carting Scripture and cheese.)

Caring Coins



EVERY STUDENT COUNTS!

**Project
Backpack**



August Caring Coins: Project Backpack

Through community matching, partnerships and sponsorships Project Backpack at Helpline House has assisted close to 3,00 students since it began in 2000. This program not only provides backpacks and supplies at the start of the school year, but continues to assist with other important education-related expenses throughout the year such as:

- High school fees and graduation expenses
- Fees for student enrichment, i.e. camp, music lessons, etc
- Daycare assistance, especially summer programs
- Reduces the burden of school expenses on already tight budgets

This year's drive begins August 1st and continues through August 25th. We are "neighbors helping neighbors" with our financial support. (Make checks payable to EHCC with PBP in memo line) Thanks for your generosity!!

Please Keep in Your Prayers:

Sharon Burris, Benjy Cunningham,
Anna Edmonds, Peggy Houck,
Tom Jorza, Joan Pratt, Marian Rees

Prayer Chain

Call any one of us with your prayer requests and concerns:

Linda Swolgaard, 842-3338
Ann Lovejoy, 842-0108
Jennifer Merrill, 780-6937
Tonya Keaton, 852-4817
Eileen Nicol, 842-1245
Dianne Speers, 855-9446