



GROWING DEEPER IN FAITH
REACHING WIDER IN LOVE
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SNOHOMISH

The Light | February | 2025

Pastor's Corner

"Just as the Father has loved me, I have loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love."

Jesus words captured in John 15:9-10a

I am looking forward to getting to know all of you, serve with you and discover more of what Jesus is inviting us to experience in this passage.

We can intellectually know God loves us and still respond obediently like we have been given a list of things we need to do and then work really hard to not let God down. But God is not a demanding taskmaster or a distant deity whose approval we need to gain. God's love for us was established before creation and definitively declared through the cross.

Read again how Jesus describes the goal of obedience in this passage from John 15. Obedience to Jesus' commands is meant to help us experience and remain in God's love. Jesus is inviting us to let God love us into becoming people of love.[i]

The English word "obedience" comes from the Latin word ob-audire, which means to listen with great attentiveness[ii]. If we don't take time to listen, we can miss hearing God's loving, transforming words to us. This type of listening takes faithful effort; great attentiveness. Our consumer oriented, productivity inclined, digitally focused culture makes a lot of noise which distracts our attention. We can also think this prayerful listening is only possible for a few saints like Mother Teresa or Billy Graham. But Jesus said these words to a group of ordinary, imperfect people who in many ways were not unlike you and me.

In the days ahead how might we listen with great attentiveness to what God has for us individually and collectively? How might we interact with our family, neighbors and people at work with this attentiveness to God who is actively loving us and them?

This past August our daughter Danica was married to her husband Ryan. The weekend was a wonderful celebration of God's faithful love throughout our lives. The family and friends who joined us were people who had helped us stay attentive to God during the exhausting days of early childhood and through the angst of teenage years. They were part of a larger faithful community that encouraged us to listen amidst all the distractions of life. The wedding was a joyous celebration that increased our desire to keep listening with great attentiveness and increasingly remain in God's love.

Jesus next words indicate that this type of celebration is exactly what God desires for us. In John 15:11 He says, "I have told you this so that you will have the same joy that I have. I also want your joy to be complete." My wife Tori and I look forward to celebrating with you how God will make our joy more complete as we continue to let God love us into becoming a people of love.

Tom Dabazinskas

Interim Pastor



With Deepest Gratitude to the Congregation:

We are overwhelmed by the celebration of the conclusion of our 25 years of ministry alongside you. The day was extraordinary and heartwarming in every way, surpassing anything we could have ever imagined.

We want to especially thank Michael and Philomene Prihoda for coordinating the events of the day alongside an incredible team – and for each one of you who said, "Yes!" to helping plan a day filled with so many wonderful surprises! We appreciate Nate Fox and his culinary students from Monroe High School for skillfully preparing a delicious meal. Thank you to each one of you who lovingly prepared each element from the beautiful table decor to the music prepared in secret.

We were deeply touched by the original compositions in music and word which were crafted in our honor by Hanna Cho and Heather Shropshire. We are grateful to them and to Howard Stoess, Tia Nieuwsma and Mary Beth Kurtenbach for their creative arrangements along with the many musicians who executed them with vocals and instrumentals. The beautiful quilt which was a collaborative effort across the country was an amazing gift of love from the Prayers and Squares Ministry Team. And thank you for the many ways in which so many of you expressed your appreciation and support through your presence, your cards, emails, and texts, and through your financial expressions of love. In the morning worship, when so many of you placed your hands upon us for a prayer of blessing as Jon Bishop prayed, we experienced the Spirit affirming again the rich blessing it has been to serve you these 25 years as partners in faith.

We want you to know that our sons, Daniel and Andrew, and their wives, Esther and Jamile (who participated virtually), join us in expressing their appreciation for your over-the-top kind of send-off that has had all our spirits soaring and this day will be long remembered as one of the best days of our lives.

It has been a great privilege to serve this congregation together with you over the span of these many years. We have walked with you through times of great sorrow and celebrations of great joy, and we've had the gratification of experiencing the Spirit at work in all of us as we have sought to extend Christ's love in this community and our world. You have helped us make a positive impact upon this world through your hands-on engagement in mission and generosity, and we will cherish recalling all that God has done through our partnership with you in the years to come.



We are excited for you as you will soon welcome your new interim pastor, Tom Dabasinskas, who we are confident will lead you well. He is a gifted pastor, and you are in good hands. Added to this, you have the extra blessing of Talea Blasko coming on board to work with our youth and children. You are poised to do very well over this interim period.

Please know that we love you immensely, and we will continue to pray for you in the spirit of Ephesians 3:14–21:

"For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

Together in Christ's love for you, we offer our deepest gratitude,

Charlie and Ann



It is with a mixture of emotions that we say goodbye to Charlie and Ann as our pastors. We are going to feel their absence as we adjust to not having them shepherd us through our congregational trials, but we are also excited for them to get some time to decompress, breathe and play with that ADORABLE grandbaby. They have been such a vital force in the life of our congregation for just short of 25 years now and we thank them for their dedication and service to our church community. Their wisdom and guidance have been a true blessing. They are our friends, mentors and family--Their absence in our lives will be felt.

I personally will miss them deeply. They have been such an important part of so many of my family's BIG moments. When I think of my mother's passing, the baptism of my children, and our wedding I can't recall these events without Charlie and Ann being included in the recollection. They have been there to celebrate and mourn life with me.

I will always hold dear the sweet way Ann would listen attentively to concerns and give profound advice about how to proceed. And Charlie's easy laugh will continue to echo through the church halls. They are very special people.

We love you Charlie and Ann. Thank you!

On behalf of Session and the whole congregation,

Marlie Bilbruck
Elder



Dear Church Family,

Thank you so much for the beautiful, delicious, thoughtful celebration of our time together. I am so touched by the meaningful gifts, cards, yummy cookies, and the charming bee balloons! Y'all sure know how to make a person feel loved.

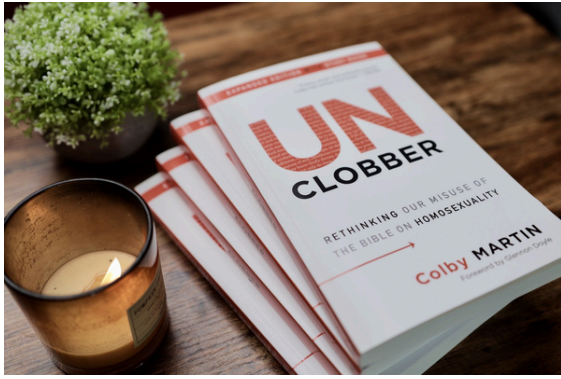
It's been my deep honor and abundant joy to serve with you. I will miss you during my time away, but will keep you close in my prayers as you enter this exciting season of change and opportunity. God is with you!

In His Service,
Elizabeth

On behalf of the Community Life group: THANK YOU!

- Thank you to all who helped with the planning and volunteering to serve during the luncheon
- Thank you to all of the musicians who put in extra rehearsal time and lent such meaningful pieces to the Retirement Service.
- To all who helped with the food (Nate Fox and crew!)
- To Vicki and all who contributed to the gorgeous quilt for Ann and Charlie
- And, finally, to all of you who made the trip, whether from across town, across the state or if you got on a plane to be here - your presence made a significant impact to the day and we're all so glad you were able to join us.

SUNDAY mornings



There are six passages in scripture, the “clobber” passages, that have often been used by mainline churches to exclude men and women in the LGBTQ+ community. The book **UnClobber** by Colby Martin reexamines each of those six passages to see what the Bible says and doesn’t say about homosexuality. UnClobber will be the basis for a ten-week adult education class beginning Sunday, February 2. Together we will study the Biblical teachings and interpretations in Martin's book as well as share our own stories and questions around this critical and divisive issue.

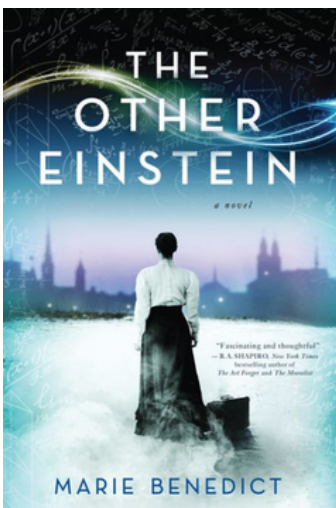
Some of the questions we will be addressing include:

- Who and how does God call us to love?
- What do we do when our hearts and our heads don't seem to align with what we read in scripture?
- What is at stake when we exclude marginalized communities?

This is the schedule for the 10-week class:

- Weeks 1 and 2 (February 2 and 9) Introduction
- Week 3 (February 16) Genesis 19–The Story of Sodom, Part 1
- Week 4 (February 23) Genesis 19–The Story of Sodom, Part 2
- Week 5 (March 2) Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13
- Week 6 (March 9) Romans 1:26-27
- Week 7 (March 16) I Corinthians 6:9
- Week 8 (March 23) I Timothy 1:10
- Week 9 (March 30) Catch Up
- Week 10 (April 6) Summary

We invite you to join us at **9:00 Sunday** morning beginning **February 2nd**. We will meet in the Lake View Hall. Dave Pugh will lead us in this important study and discussion. A limited number of books are available in the Narthex or you can order a copy on Amazon.



Our February book club selection is "**The Other Einstein**" by Marie Benedict, the story of a not-so-famous scientist who not only loved Albert Einstein, but also shaped the theories that brought him lasting renown. We will share a potluck salad at the home of Phyllis Mentzos at 12:00 noon on Wednesday, February 12. Anne Sterley will be our reviewer. Questions? Call Carol Johnson at 206 595 9462 or email Carol at cjohnson98290@gmail.com.

2024 Giving Statements

2024 Giving Statements are available for you to access in CCB! Here is a step-by-step guide:

- 1) Log into your CCB page
- 2) Click on 'My Giving'
- 3) On the 'Giving Statement'
- 4) Select Individual or Family
- 5) Select Quick Date Range - scroll down to 'Last Year'
- 6) Run Report

If you are having problems accessing this information or would like a paper copy mailed to you, please contact the office at:

office@snopres.org

Grateful for Your Gifts to FPCS

Our thanks to all who have made a pledge for 2025 and for all those making plans to do so. We can only carry out our ministry and support our local, regional, and global missions with your gifts! We are grateful for your faithfulness and generosity. Online giving has played an important role in providing consistent support through recurring or individual gifts. To give, follow this link:

<https://snopres.org/give> or visit our website and click on the "Give" link in the menu. For questions or help please email Kate in the office at office@snopres.org.



Sunday, February 9th

is FPCS Per Capita Sunday
aka: PerChocolateCake Sunday!

Come celebrate your donating \$60.00 per church member to our Per Capita Fund AND enjoy FREE Chocolate Cake on Sunday, February 9th right after church in Lakeview Hall.

Often called the Presbyterian Covenant Community Fund, per capita pays for the operating overhead of the church at all levels beyond the congregation. It works like an insurance policy: the churches together provide services for congregations and spiritual leaders.

Presbytery, funded by per capita, engages, equips and encourages congregations and their leaders. The Westminster Confession states, "all believers, are therefore, under obligation to sustain the ordinances of the Christian religion where they are already established, and to contribute by their prayers, gifts, and personal efforts to the extension of the Kingdom of God throughout the whole earth".



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING & CHILI COOK OFF FEBRUARY 23

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation is scheduled for Sunday, **February 23rd** right after worship. We'll begin with a chili luncheon coordinated by our Community Life Ministry Team. The purpose of the Annual Meeting is to hear reports of our Ministry Teams, Committees, Deacons, Stephen Ministers, Staff and Treasurer. We will receive the Session-approved budget at that time. Volunteers are needed to help provide chili, cornbread, or assist with clean-up. Watch for a Needs Request to be sent out mid-February. Plan to come and enjoy the lunch and celebrate the way God has been at work among us this past year with signs of God's hand at work in the new year.

Welcome Talea Blasko



Your Personnel Team is excited to announce that on February 1st, **Talea Blasko** will be starting her role as the new Supervisor of Youth and Children's Ministries. Talea grew up in our congregation and has a long family history at FPCS. She has recently graduated from Whitworth University and will be attending Medical School sometime in 2026. Until that time, she will be joining us to work with our Children and Youth. She has served in a leadership role with children and youth at Tall Timber where she went through the Youth In Leadership Training and counseled at camps. Please join us in praying for her ministry to our church family and the youth of our community and that it would be a time of personal growth and development. **Welcome to the First Pres. staff Talea!**

YOUTH GROUP

Our Middle and High School students meet on Wednesdays from 5-7pm. We are moving our meetings back to the church starting 2/5. Come with some ideas for Service Projects, Social Ideas, Activities, and Menu Suggestions. We will be planning and making our own meals each week (at least in part). We look forward to seeing you and your friends. Questions? Email youth@snopres.org



Ryan Corbett, who has been imprisoned in Afghanistan without cause for 2 years has been released to return to his young family here in the states. **Praise be to God!**



NEW LIFE

In spite of the news turning to other events, we do not forget the transforming work still being done in Afghanistan through the addiction treatment program, New Life, a project of Morning Star Development. Jon and Marita Bishop have first hand experience with the importance of this ministry. You are join in that through prayer and financial support

In a country of estimated 4 million addicts, New Life under the direction of John Koehler and the power of God's love, is mentoring successful recovery, transforming lives, restoring families. This year, fifteen men are participating in the arduous but freeing one year long experience. The program requires commitment to group living, working through the 12 steps, learning new understanding of themselves and God's grace. Since the origin, thirty-seven men have graduated, eleven of whom are taking leadership in the program.

God at Work: The government, realizing New Life has a better success rate than their own programs, has now approved adding a second site in Bamyán as well as Kabul. An exciting opportunity that you are supporting in prayer and funding. Thank you for making a difference in families half way around the world!

One of the hardest tasks I face this month is to notify the congregations he so faithfully served that their Pastor Peter is finally at peace in the arms of his Lord. After a long, hard battle with cancer, and weakened by radiation treatment, he developed pneumonia in both lungs and succumbed to acute respirator failure at Providence Hospital on December 13, 2024.

Joshua, Rosie and I have cried through too many boxes of Kleenex and laughed over so many memories this past month as gathered to mourn our loss and rejoice in the gift we have been given. And when our spirits become too heavy with mourning, we remember that he is finally free of the pain that he endured these past few years. Then one of us will say that we should be happy that he is in that better place, but what do you think that place is like? Is he sleeping, is he singing with the saints in glory, or is he shaking hands and hugging those friends and family who arrived before him. I can just picture him being greeted by Oma, his sturdy German mother who's stories made their way into so many of his sermons, and I can hear her voice saying, "Peter! You and 'Chimmy' Carter arriving at the same time! This is a doppel blessing! Gott sei dank!

So with Oma we say, thanks be to God for the gift of Peter Notehelfer and the mark he has left on our life of faith!

Please share my news with the congregation as you see fit. I know that there are many in the church who never met Peter, but for those who knew him and loved, tell them to rejoice that his battle is over and he is beginning his better life in the presence of his God.

With love,
Ellen Notehelfer

What Is a Poem

BY PETER NOTEHELPER



Ken Kewley powersofobservation.com

After all what's a poem
a few words basted together
like the patchwork of some quilt
tattered pieces of some tattered lives
remnants in fact of worn denim
threadbare from their years
suddenly useful again

Memories

BY PETER NOTEHELPER



Karen Knutson
banfilllocke.wordpress.com

Delicately we turn
the pages of the past
where the faces of all those
we have loved look back at us
through eyes so full of grace
we cannot look away
feeling young again

A Poet's Flowers

BY PETER NOTEHELPER



christine-wasankari <http://www.artfire.com>

A poet's flowers
bloom within his eyes
without need for a vase
They bend with the soft light
til spent they fall again
into the evening's sea
return to dreams

And What Has Your Session Been up to Lately??

SESSION CORNER:

January 6th Business Meeting:

- Alleluia! We never missed a Sunday in the sanctuary as the electrical panel was moved and improved! So grateful!
 - And another Alleluia that financially we are ending 2024 in the black instead of red! All due to generous giving of YOU, the congregation.
 - The session experienced affirmation of God's leading when we coupled prayer with a quiet time of listening for God's voice. We then each expressed what came to us in thought....and in the end were able to make a decision that everyone could agree was divinely led. We need to do more discerning instead of deciding first!
 - The above discernment was used to arrive at a salary for the interim that we felt good about and he accepted gratefully.
 - Orientation for new elders was held on January 11th.
 - Elder support assignments to Ministry Teams and committees were made.
 - We gained 14 new members in 2024 and lost 3 (Kathleen Hansen, Scott Miller and Bill LaBarge) which brings our total active membership to 223.
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- January 20 business:
 - Celebration with the confirmation of our interim pastor, Rev. Tom Dabasinskas who will start February 3 and preach the 9th.
 - Approved the hiring for our new Supervisor of Children and Youth Ministries - Talea Blasko.
 - Separation Agreement with Pastor Charlie: The separation guidelines are still in the process of negotiation with COM to be consistent with those Ann has. We will notify the congregation when we have guidelines to share with you.
 - Our Special Event was inviting a founder and leader of the 3 Practices for Crossing the Difference Divide, Jim Henderson and his associate Robin Stangland, to lead us in an hour of practicing this affirming way discussing difficult topics. Robin has led 3 Adult Ed sessions for the church but this one was just for Session. You can ask a Session member how it was for them.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marita Bishop





Remember in your prayers...

Church Family Members

- Debby Ingram - treatment for multiple myeloma
- Patrick Ingram - as he recovers at home
- Heather Miller and daughters Brittany, Molly & Jessica in the loss of husband and father - Scott Miller - a longtime friend and member of FPCS
- Kero Ebeid - recovery from accident
- Sara Seiber - treatment for cancer
- Shelagh Hizey - cancer treatment
- Caregivers for these and other church family members
- Please keep Myrna Lucas in your prayers - health concerns.
- Lois LaBarge and family as they mourn the passing of Bill
- Mary Beth Kurtenbach as she continues to recover from foot surgery.
- Sue Davis in the loss of her mother.
- Bill & Pam Wanser in the loss of his sisters Bethia and Kathleen
- Elmer Johnson recovering from hospitalization

Homebound

Gary Gloe, Josh Hesseltine, Carolyn Moss, Jerry Williamson, and Bill Barker

Friends of FPCS

- Tamara Montoya, friend of Lise Pettigrew
- Sue Davis' daughter-in-law, Tammy, with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Valerie Christopherson (sister-in-law of Marlie Bilbruck) for cancer metastasized to the liver
- Yvonne Carr (mother-in-law of Marlie Bilbruck) for malignant brain tumor
- Cynthia Sundman, missionary in Peru
- Pastor Moses & Margaret Tanni in Cameroon
- Praise for Tall Timber as the Board has announced Aaron Fishburn as the new Executive Director
- Cindy Duncan - Jan Gavin's niece - cancer

Ongoing Prayer Support

- Prayers for peace where there is war and turmoil: Israel, Palestine/Gaza, Lebanon, Ukraine, Russia, Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen, Haiti, and many other places
- All refugees forced to leave their homes due to violence or natural disasters; all those left homeless, and those experiencing hunger such as in Tigray region of Ethiopia and Sudan
- Global leaders--for wisdom and the will to act justly and to uphold human rights



And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.
With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.
Ephesians 6:18



Deacon's Offering: **First Sunday of Every Month**

The first Sunday of each month is Deacon's Offering Sunday, and you can put a donation marked "Deacons" in the offering plate or go to SnoPres Online and designate a donation to the Deacon's Fund. The Deacons thank YOU and those we help also thank you!

Need a Hand, Lend a Hand

What is it? This program is an outreach of the Deacons. It provides a means for members to make requests for assistance, or offer assistance in a variety of ways. This could include things such as changing a light bulb in a hard-to-reach area, helping to move a microwave, or maybe helping with a tree that has fallen during a storm. We are in the process of moving the request online, so if you have a need we may be able to assist with, please call/text Chad Bjerkan at 206-920-2837. In the meantime, if you would like to be placed on the list of potential hand-lenders, please let Chad know as well.



Deacon's Transportation Ministry: **Do You Need a Ride?**

If you can't drive yourself, we can give you a lift. We can take you to a doctor or dentist appointment, to our church on Sunday, or for a church event. When you need a ride and you have run out of options, just call the office and we will see what we can do!
360-568-6498

Church Library

To see a listing of all the books in the library, go to our online catalog:

<https://www.librarything.com/profile/FPCS>
or follow the QR code to our links library.



Click or Scan



One QR Code to Save Them ALL!

If you're looking for it, you'll probably find a link to it [HERE](#) or scan the QR code. Not finding what you want? Please let the office know:

office@sno-pres.org



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In This Edition:

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- New Sunday Morning Adult Ed Class - starts February 2nd
Capita Sunday - February 9th
- Annual Congregational Meeting - February 23rd
- Welcome Talea Blasko!

We are a Stephen Ministry Congregation, providing care-givers to those who request them.

office@snopres.org | www.snopres.org