

Bear Fax



December, 2008

A monthly publication of Bear Creek United Methodist Church

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Consider alternative giving this year

Here's help for your Christmas shopping and for needy charities serving many people. This year the Mission Committee suggests the following charities:

Water for Life in Sudan: Without water, men, women and children perish. Without water, cattle and goats **can't live or give milk.** Without water, seeds dry up and **can't produce** luscious green crops.

Surviving the Food Crisis: Each year, more than 3,000 persons **benefit from UMCOR's** Sustainable Agriculture and Development Program, either directly as newly-transformed farmers or as people who

have heard of the new methods by word of mouth. Sixty percent of the training recipients teach the new methods to their friends.

(To learn more about these programs, go to www.umcor.org.)

Country Doc. A free medical clinic for homeless youth run by volunteer staff and physicians.

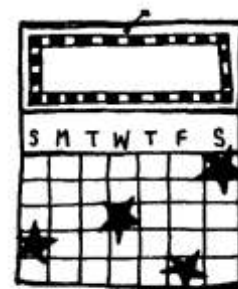
Habitat for Humanity EKC. Works in partnership with low-income families in our area and throughout the world for affordable housing.

Honduras Scholarships. Our Missions Committee is organizing a trip to Honduras with Honduras Outreach Inc (HOI) next August. The

trip is to the mountainous Olancho region of Honduras, which has one of the highest concentrations of infant mortality and poverty in an already poor country. HOI arranges for groups of North American volunteers to visit and work on community projects ranging from home improvement to school and medical clinic establishment. Our specific projects will be determined as the trip date approaches.

"Market tables" will be set up in the church narthex on December 14 and 21. Please look for your shopping list in a church bulletin one Sunday soon, and pick up your card(s) the next Sunday.

Pastor's Message	2
Worship Opportunities	2
Stewardship	3
Honduras Mission Trip	3
Fair Trade	4
Homeless Women	5
Sunday School	5
Save the Date	6
Finance Report	6



DATES TO REMEMBER

Saturday, December 6
Amazing Grace Seminar
8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 7
Advent Festival 5:00 pm
Vespers 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 9
Community Blood Drive
1:00-7:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve
Unrehearsed Christmas
Pageant 6:00 p.m.

Communion Service
11:00 p.m.

Traditional Christmas Eve Worship 11:00 p.m.

Reading the Lessons of Christmas and singing the Carols of Christmas, we hear and know that God has been born among us. Our traditional ending of **worship with candlelight and "Silent Night" is a warm love for our lives.**

Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant Christmas Eve at 6:00 p.m.

That's right, it's unrehearsed! Which means bring your child, your child's friend, your grandchild and your grandchild's friend around 5:30 p.m. The costumes will be provided. Children select who they want to be in the story. This year Emmett Ward will be Baby Jesus. Holly and Luke Ward will play the support roles of Joseph and Mary. Cameo appearances will be made by older brothers Carsten and Ian. And as we tell and sing Christmas, a crèche (with just the right amount of chaos) is formed before us. It is simple and it is beautiful. It is truly Christmas.

PASTOR'S MUMBLINGS

Dear Bearcreekians,
 Christmas came early to me this year. It was Sunday, November 23 and my 60th birthday. Unbeknownst to me, some unnamed conspirators (I have my guesses) decided it would be fun to surprise me with appreciation (boy, does that feel good) and gifts that had something to do with the number 60 and me.

We laughed and my heart sang from your love. The gifts varied from 60 peanut M&Ms to 60 rolls of toilet paper. I shared the gifts and cards with my mom and she said to me, "Having a son



so loved is having heaven." She is right. For me it was a taste of the divine eternal.

I won't get a thank you note to everyone. I got the cards mixed up with the gifts on the way home. I have no idea who

gave some of the gifts. And besides, I'm 60 now and can't remember. Boy, do I love that excuse!

I thank you all for your love. I thank you all for the laughter and the joy you brought to me, to my mother and to my family. You are angels and the living body of Christ.

I pray your Christmas is as good as mine has already been.

Merry Christmas and Shalom,
 Dave O

WORSHIP

Join us Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

Make worship a regular part of your life of discipleship. Whether the music is loud or soft, the sermon good or bad, our worship of God and with our brother and sister disciples of Jesus will be just right.

December 7—2nd Sunday of Advent
"Zechariah and Elizabeth: Forgotten Family"

It takes a family for Jesus to be the messiah.

Luke 1:5-26,57-80

5:00-8:00 p.m. Advent Festival
 Crafts, food, fun

8:00 p.m. *Vespers*

December 14—3rd Sunday of Advent
"Anna: Forgotten Prophet"

In order to know Jesus it takes those who can see what we do not see.

Luke 2:21-24, 36-40

December 21—4th Sunday of Advent
"The Shepherds: Forgotten Blessed"

For whom does Jesus come? He comes for the least—the forgotten.

Luke 2:8-20

December 24—Christmas Eve
 6:00 p.m. The Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant—A Family Affair

11:00 p.m. A Christmas Celebration in story and song

December 28—1st Sunday after Christmas Day

"Simeon: Forgotten Devout"

In every age and place there are those who remain faithful to God—those who are righteous and devout. It is these who know Jesus and follow.

Luke 2:21-35



STEWARDSHIP

Our Discipleship in Action

Offer big praises for little blessings

What do you think of when you think of the word "stewardship?" I will confess, that in a different place, and at a different time, I was asked to speak about what stewardship meant to me. I remember my reply being something like, "Oh, ask me to do anything else, except that!"

So now I step forward a few years (okay, a lot of years) and I see stewardship in a completely different light. When I think of the word "stewardship," what really comes to the top of my mind are images of little towns and humble people, all pulling together to bring in the harvest of the crops. All of this with the end result that I might have good food to eat.

This harvest image was very vivid to me this fall when I was fortunate enough to spend some time with my family back in the Midwest. My mom and I were driving on the country highways to visit my sister who lives another three hours away. You

get to see a lot of corn and soy beans in a three-hour trip through the farmlands.

The weather forecast was sunny and dry for the next seven days, and it was time for the harvest to begin. I do not believe it would be a stretch to write that many farmers believed, "The good Lord had answered a community prayer from the people, and the window needed to accomplish this harvest would now begin."

There was an excitement about "this harvest thing." I realized that I had long ago forgotten this excitement, this sense of common purpose in my everyday hustle and bustle lifestyle. Everyone in those little towns was pulling together, and the willingness to sacrifice for the greater good was clear to see all around me.

The farm trucks, tractors and combines were in the fields and all over the roads to bring in the corn and beans. Old friends that had long ago left the farm were now

home to help bring in the crops and help the family. The work would be very important, because part of the mission would be to feed people in many parts of the world. The sacrifice was evident, and no one needed to say "thank you."

If you already have given your heart, everything else will follow. There was just this feeling of thanksgiving that you could not help but observe, and could not ignore.

Sometimes I think our Lord puts little "life lessons" in our path. Maybe this was one of those times for me. I think I will take time every day to give thanks for the abundance that I enjoy here in my community.

May our Lord bless each of us here at BCUMC with some small, little, individual stewardship moment this holiday season.

Randy Garrett
Stewardship Committee

MISSIONS

Support our Christmas bake sale for the Honduras mission trip scholarship fund

The Missions Committee is planning a bake sale for Sunday, December 21. This may seem like a crazy idea so close to Christmas, but please make an extra dozen of your favorite or traditional Christmas cookies or a dessert to bring to the sale. While you're there, pick up a different dozen to add variety to your own Christmas desserts. We also plan to have freezable soups and chili for a yummy simple holiday dinner.



BAKE SALE

As before, the bake sale will be held after the worship service during fellowship time. Bring your items before church. Soups and similar products requiring

refrigeration can be stored in the refrigerator during the service. Bringing them in a gallon zip-lock bag has worked well in the past.

Also, let me know if you have put something in the refrigerator so we can be sure to pull it out. (We almost forgot something last time!)

Marcia Gordon
Honduras Mission Trip

CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Fair trade—it's not just for coffee anymore

Nearly three years ago, BCUMC made the conscious decision to serve only fair trade coffee. Fair trade is a worldwide movement aimed at empowering developing country producers and promoting sustainability in production and distribution of a wide range of products—not just coffee.

During this gift-giving season, it may be time for us as individuals to make the conscious decision

to also support this worthy cause, and the opportunity is right in our own back yard. Ten Thousand Villages in Seattle is one member in a chain of 156 retail outlets in the US dedicated to selling 100% fair trade products. They currently offer merchandise which represents 130 different artisan groups in more than 37 countries. The merchandise is as varied as home décor, tabletop and dining, plant and garden accessories, station-

ary, jewelry, musical instruments, toys and games, special holiday items, and much more.

The trip to Seattle may mean destination-shopping for some, but this destination is well worth the journey. Learn more about Ten Thousand Villages, fair trade, and your opportunity to give back at seattle.tenthousandvillages.com.

Johanna DeLong

Remember homeless youth this Christmas



and blankets, and new and used clothing. Gift cards can be given to Mimi Johnson, any member of the Missions Committee, or the church office.

We are again accepting donations for homeless youth. Please bring \$10 Safeway or other grocery gift cards, deodorant, dental floss, white cotton tube socks, sleeping bags

New Craft Group!

4th Tuesday of each month
7:00 p.m.
(no December meeting)

Bring your current project and your desire to get to know others at BCUMC. **Projects will be available if you don't have one of your own.** You may also share your own projects. Mark your calendar!

Dear BCUMC,

I just wanted to write an email thanking the church for the student scholarship I was given! Nursing school sure is expensive, and any bit helps out a bunch! Thanks to my church family for all their support!

In Christ's Love,
Audrey Garrett



Dear Bear Creek UMC,

Thank you so much for the academic scholarship. I am a senior at the UW Bothell, and the scholarship money was used to purchase a new, nice rolling book bag that is large enough to carry all my books and my computer. I appreciate your support of my schooling very much, and I thank you for this gift.

Sincerely,
Debbie Brown

MISSIONS

Bellevue First Congregation spearheads program to help homeless women

Dear friends who helped with TC4,

When Tent City 4 was here, it was the only emergency shelter available to couples and single women without children on the east side of Lake Washington. It is still the only form of emergency shelter here that is open to couples, but things are changing for single women.

After almost two years of hosting a women's day center, Bellevue First Congregational Church has spearheaded an effort to create an overnight program for single women on the Eastside and expects to inaugurate that portion of the Sophia project on December 1, 2008. Many Bellevue congregations have supported the

day program with hot lunches. Before going back to them to ask for more help, I am asking you if you could sign up for one slot in December to help with the evening meals (see the attachment for details).

This is much simpler than what was needed for Tent City 4. They will be housing only 8 homeless women and two staff. The participants will be selected on the basis of their willingness/readiness to work toward being ready to sustain themselves in permanent housing and the staff will support them in overcoming obstacles they face in achieving that goal.

This is a six-month pilot project. If it goes well, grants will be sought to continue the program, and the third phase, moving women into transitional housing, will begin. This would mean a great deal to the homeless single women who have been overlooked by most of the efforts to end homelessness. I hope that you will consider supporting this effort and pass the word on to others.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Maupin, M.Div.
(coordinator of Issaquah/
Sammamish Interfaith Coalition)
425 313 8937

"Mercy imitates God and disappoints Satan."

St. John Chrysostom

SUNDAY SCHOOL

What's been happening in Sunday School this fall?

If you peeked in on Elementary Sunday School this fall you would have seen students **experiencing God's plan for people** (Genesis) through planting bulbs, making rainbows, and learning about making difficult choices. You would have seen how God uses faithful leaders (Kings) and seen students using many wonderful ways to praise God. There was some awesome dancing and singing going on in those classrooms!

Our Elementary Sunday School teachers are doing amazing things with our youngest stu-

dents. Vickie Orendorff and Tina Thorson have helped their students cover the wall of their classroom with beautiful art. Norm and Kela Broome are assisting the second and third graders in building a gigantic Bible timeline. And this month Tracie Rakus and Kirsten Litchford are leading the fourth and fifth graders as they create handmade cards and fill treat bags for the children of Matthew House.

These students have chosen a couple of areas of mission focus for the year. They picked what is close to their hearts—children and

animals. Their offering each week will go toward providing essentials for Homeward Bound Animal Shelter. And prior to Easter they will coordinate a stuffed animal drive for children who stop at Matthew House while they or their guardian visits a loved one in prison. God is working in our children and they are finding caring ways to share His love.

If you haven't checked out the Sunday School wing yet, pop in and see how children are learning to live their belief in God. And thank a teacher while you're there!



Save these Dates

Vespers	January 4	8:00 p.m.
CERT/First Aid Class	Jan. 7-Feb. 11	6:00 p.m.
Ad Council Retreat	January 10	
"O Precious Child" Musical	January 31	7:30 p.m.
Amazing Grace Seminar	February 7	8:30-4:00
Interfaith Choir Festival	February 22	7:00 p.m.
Ash Wednesday Shrove Pancake Supper	February 25	6:00 p.m.
Women's Retreat (with Amazing Grace)	April 17-19	
Baccalaureate (Wooden Cross Lutheran)	May 17	7:00 p.m.
Recognition Sunday	June 7	
Vacation Bible School	July 13-17	
Evening Bible School	August 2-6	
Honduras Mission Trip	August 16	

www.bcumc.org

Click on "Calendar" to get up-to-date information and plan your committee's events!



You're invited!
Sojourners
Christmas Party

Sunday, December
21

5:30 p.m.

Bothell UMC 18515—92nd Ave NE

Jessica Rupley, daughter of Ted and Ann, was married to Brandon Fraser, son of Tim and Brenda, on Saturday, October 25, 2008. Pastor Dave officiated at the ceremony, which was held on the MV Skanson in Seattle. We were blessed to have extended friends and family in attendance from Virginia, California, and Alberta, Canada, as well as several parts of Washington state. Jessi and Brandon are living in Bellingham. Their contact information is below.

Brandon and Jessi Fraser
4022 Northwest Ave #103
Bellingham WA 98226
(206) 949-9847 (Jessi's cell)



Your prayer support is welcomed as they begin their new life together.

2008 FINANCE REPORT

Amount budgeted for 2008
\$361,717

Year-to-date offerings
through November 23
\$280,645 85.8%

Year-to-date ahead/(behind)
(\$46,291) -14.2%

Now is the time

to review your giving statement
and make sure your 2008 pledge
is up to date.

Don't miss out on that tax deduction!

Please see the enclosed letter
from the Finance Committee.



Tuesdays 6:00 a.m.

Shari's Restaurant
in Kirkland

All are welcome!

On My Journey

by Terri Stewart

I am initiating a short monthly article which will touch base with the journey that I am taking through Seattle University's Master's of Divinity program and the ordination process. Since Bear Creek is the community that is making this possible, I feel that all of you are journeying with me! Please join me in this very simple way on this journey.

School has been in full swing for about a couple of months and I feel like I am finally getting my sea-legs back after summer break. This year, my main focus is what they call "MTI" or "Ministerial Theological Integration." It is a year-long course that focuses on my internship and the theological ramifications of issues we will confront. Since my internship is at the King County Youth Detention Center, there will be plenty of confrontations, I am sure!

I'd like to share with you an incident from my internship and a paper I had to write (aptly called a "critical incident paper"):

As I arrived at the King County Youth Detention Center, I was feeling unsettled due to the discovery that our dog has cancer (again). As I entered the detention center to begin my rounds, I was apprehensive about how the evening would go. My task is to essentially wander the halls and check in with the staff and the youth to see if anybody wants or needs a chaplain.

As I did this, I discovered it was cleaning time, and there was no way for the youth to interact

with me. However, I did see that there was a group of honors playing video games in the library.

Curious, I entered the library. I went in and talked to the librarians, smiled at the staff, and interacted with the youth. I was invited to play Wii Bowling with a youth, the staff, and one of the librarians. As one of the staff was taking her turn at another group, we heard raised voices behind us and turned just in time to see a youth ripping off his shirt in preparation for a fight. The staff quickly called a code on her walkie-talkie, stood between the two boys, and started taking control of the situation. As soon as I heard the code called, I stepped back against the wall and stood still. Officers rushed in and the two boys were escorted out before any violence occurred. As I was flattened against the wall, the question of whether I belonged there occurred to me. Should I be in the library? Should I be there at all? It was unnerving to be this close to violence, although I never felt personally in danger.

Later on that evening, there was another round of violence. I'm told that two codes in one night is so rare that the full-time chaplain has never experienced it. Lucky me. After the second code (which I did not witness), I returned to the now-empty library and sat down and prayed. I prayed prayers of healing and calmness for the institution. As I prayed, I used my body to channel the energy through my hands in waves of the spirit flowing into the world. This connects to my

image of God as a wind or breath flowing through and in the cosmos.

After spending some time in prayer, I returned to my rounds, seeking youth to counsel. I was calm, settled, and able to focus on my task and to focus on the youth. I discovered that I was where God wanted me to be.

The youth that I am encountering at the detention center are heart-breaking. They are dealing with issues that they should not ever have to face.

On the school front, one of the most awesome things I have encountered is the massive amount of books that get recommended by faculty and staff. There is no way to read them all, but I thought I'd share a few that I have picked up and that I do recommend:

Proverbs of Ashes, Brock & Parker, a discussion of atonement theology.

The Mystic Heart, Teasdale, **awaken your own "mystic nature."**

The Crucified Guru, Thangaraj, a view of Christ through the Hindu/Indian culture.

Jesus through the Centuries, Pelikan, a view of Jesus through historical periods of time.

Radical Amazement, Cannato, a most compelling interpretation of a new creation story—great for science types, yet completely accessible.

Thank you for helping me along this journey. May your own journey be blessed and peaceful.



Did you know that the Pastor Dave's sermons are now available via iTunes on www.bcumc.org? You can also read the printed version, get the latest calendar dates, and lots more! Check it out today!

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David Orendorff, Pastor

pastor@bcumc.org

*A family place of
belonging*

**We're on the
Web!**

www.bcumc.org



DECEMBER

The Bear Fax is published monthly. The deadline for submitting articles is the 20th of each month.

Beginning in January, the Bear Fax will be distributed electronically. If you prefer to receive the newsletter in the mail, please let us know.

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On the Horizon



Sunday, January 4
Vespers 8:00 p.m.

January 7—February 11
CERT/First Aid Class 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 10
Ad Council Retreat

Tuesday, February 7
Craft Group 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 31
"O Precious Child" Musical
7:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 7
Amazing Grace Seminar
8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 3
Community Blood Drive
1:00-7:00 p.m.

Sunday Worship
9:30 a.m.

Sunday School
11:00 a.m.

Sunday Vespers
8:00 p.m.
(first Sunday)

All are welcome!

Office hours
9:00-3:00
Monday-Thursday
Closed Fridays

The mission of Bear Creek United Methodist Church is to create a diverse family place of belonging for all people and to reach out and make disciples of Christ.