



# *First Congregational Church*

## *Highlights Newsletter*

### *March 2020*

**“And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.” – Mark 1:12**

This season of Lent we're moving from the mountaintop experiences we explored through the month of February into the wilderness.

The wilderness is a rich theme in scripture and in our own lives of faith. It can mean the times when we've ventured into the unknown, with its tests, challenges, opportunities, struggles, transformations. In scripture and in many people's lives people have gone into the wilderness for many reasons. To seek God or to follow a call from God. To escape oppressive circumstances or to flee due to rejection. For the sake of adventure or exploration.

When have you had a wilderness experience, either in our outward life or in your inner spiritual life?

What was mana from heaven that sustained you?

What wisdom did you rely on to guide you?

What signs and signals helped you find your way?

What tests and trials did you face?

What did you learn about yourself, about others, about God, about the world that you wouldn't have if you'd stayed at home?

I am very interested to hear from you whatever you would like to share about this.

Lent is a period of preparation for the great death and rebirth cycle at the heart of our Christian faith. It is the forty days in the wilderness that so often leads to spiritual transformation in the scriptural stories. The ways we choose to fast in this time, the ways we choose to pray and to practice our faith, can help us be ready to receive the holy gifts of Easter.

Peace,

Pastor Nathaniel



# Moderator's Missive

Dear Church Family,

It is finally starting to feel like a new year for our wonderful faith community. The budget has been finalized, the stewardship campaign has been completed, the pastoral and church survey has been put to bed, an annual meeting is concluded, and church leadership can finally get back to a 'rainy day' priority or two that still needs to be done following months on the back burner. It's nice to be able to just breathe, again.

Pastor Nathaniel's sermons this past month on mountaintop experiences have been nice reminders on the importance of stillness and reflection. I am grateful for the power of the spirit that comes to me in moments of quiet and detachment. Lately, this has come on walks to and from my place of work. What began as an exercise in response to a nagging case of plantar fasciitis has since morphed into a spiritual exercise. I'm certainly not on any mountains, but I do get to see them. I am grateful for this quiet time each day. My hope is that your year is affording you the opportunity for reflection amidst the tosses and turns of everyday life in the trenches.

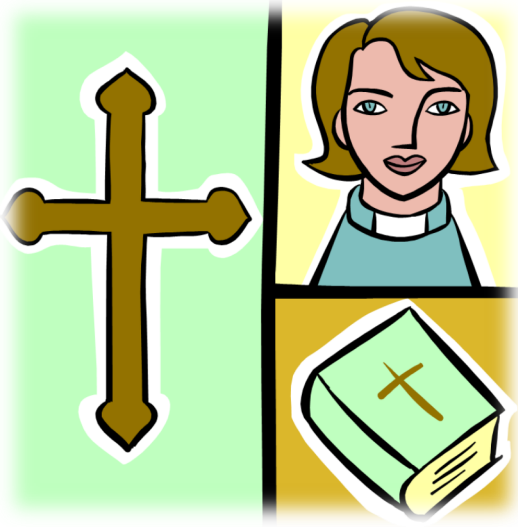
As I think about the early part of 2020, I can't help but feel the loss of some dear members of our church community in recent weeks. After a decade with First Congregational Church, more and more, the passing of people in our church family is felt more strongly. These are people that I have known first-hand. We are fortunate to have shared time with these good people. As we say our good-byes I am also heartened to note all of the new people who are passing into our church community, and the toil and treasure that keeps our church so alive. I am grateful to be a part of this family that continues to grow in such vibrant ways.

Peace,  
JR



**Christ our Lord did not come to bring peace to the world as a kind of spiritual tranquilizer. He brought to his disciples a vocation and a task-to struggle in the world of violence to establish His peace not only in their own hearts but in society itself.**

**~ Thomas Merton**



## *Greetings from your Deacons!*

At this writing, it is a beautiful, sunny, crisp, winter morning. Sitting in silence seems fitting as we quiet the extraneous noise and hubbub of life through this time of Lent. May you find the Sacred in the quiet, in the teachings and disciplines of Lent. May we each

prepare in our own ways to receive the risen Christ.

As for the work of the deacons, we are still seeking volunteer/s to coordinate or take charge of preparing the sanctuary with flowers for our worship services. Please consider this ministry of flowers. Speak to Judy Chacon, any deacon or the church office.

Likewise, we will train a team to work the sound system. Notify Judy Chacon, Larry Frank or the office if you would like to participate in the training.

Request for donations for Easter flowers will be accepted through **April 8th**.

Donations may be made in honor of, in memory of or in celebration of people or events. Ear mark this donation for "Easter flowers." Inserts will be placed in the church bulletins starting mid-March.

We have not yet made specific plans for Holy Week but please put these dates on your calendar:

- ♦ First Sunday in Lent is March 1st
- ♦ Palm Sunday (Passion Sunday) is April 5th
- ♦ Maundy Thursday Service will be at 6:30 pm, April 9<sup>th</sup>. We remember the Last Supper.
- ♦ Good Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at the labyrinth, we will burn the Lenten prayers submitted on the cross.
- ♦ Easter Sunday is April 12<sup>th</sup>

Check your **April** Highlights for more information regarding Holy Week.

As we step into this journey of Lent, we will reflect on the 40 days and 40 nights of Jesus' journey into the wilderness. We may reflect on our own struggles and wilderness moments. Remember to take a lesson from our worship of late. "Be still and know that I am God," Psalm 46:10

Judy Chacon  
Chair, Board of Deacons

# Christian Education



In March , following into April, our Sunday school children prepare for the Easter event. We will study, at their level of understanding, the important events leading up to a magnificent Easter. Palm Sunday will be very exciting as we will have prepared them with the entire story of Easter, so on the day, with their families in the Easter service, the reason for celebration will be clear.

On Easter Day we hope families will celebrate together, however, for children whose parents think will be too restless, childcare will be offered upstairs in the PreK room.





[www.meaningfulmovies.org](http://www.meaningfulmovies.org)

Social Justice Documentary Film,  
and Community Discussion

# Showing This Month

## “Bedlam”

**Saturday, March 21st, at 6:00 pm**  
**First Congregational Church**  
**73 S. Palouse Avenue, Walla Walla**

This movie covers a topic of significant concern for many people in our community.; the mental healthcare crisis. The title of the documentary is "Bedlam" and here is the synopsis of the documentary as it appears in their promotional material:

Haunted by the death of a mentally ill sister, psychiatrist Ken Rosenberg takes on the role of filmmaker to examine a national health crisis. *Bedlam* follows the poignant stories of people grappling with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and other chronic psychiatric conditions. Impossible to mask when untreated, their symptoms shove them into the path of police officers, ER doctors and nurses, lawyers, and prison guards. Shooting over the course of five years, Rosenberg takes us inside Los Angeles County's overwhelmed and vastly under-resourced psych ER, a nearby jail warehousing thousands of psychiatric patients, and the homes — and homeless encampments — of people suffering from severe mental illness, where silence and shame often worsen the suffering.

We are hoping to have several panelists from our community participate in order to give relevance to the subject as it exists here in Walla Walla. So far, we have Sheriff Mark Crider and Sgt. Kevin Huxoll with the Walla Walla Police Dept. committed to being panelists. We also hope to have someone from the county jail and from the medical community who can comment on the availability of resources for treating patients with serious mental illness. Here is a link to a conversation guide for community discussion following the movie to facilitate meaningful conversation and understanding of challenges facing community first responders and mental healthcare providers:

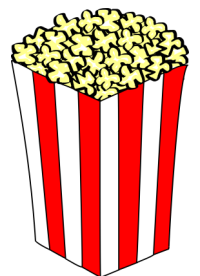
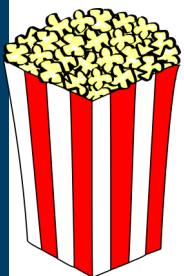
[https://independentlens.s3.amazonaws.com/2100/Bedlam/BEDLAM\\_DiscussionGuide.pdf](https://independentlens.s3.amazonaws.com/2100/Bedlam/BEDLAM_DiscussionGuide.pdf)

To learn more about this movie or about Meaningful Movies, visit our websites.

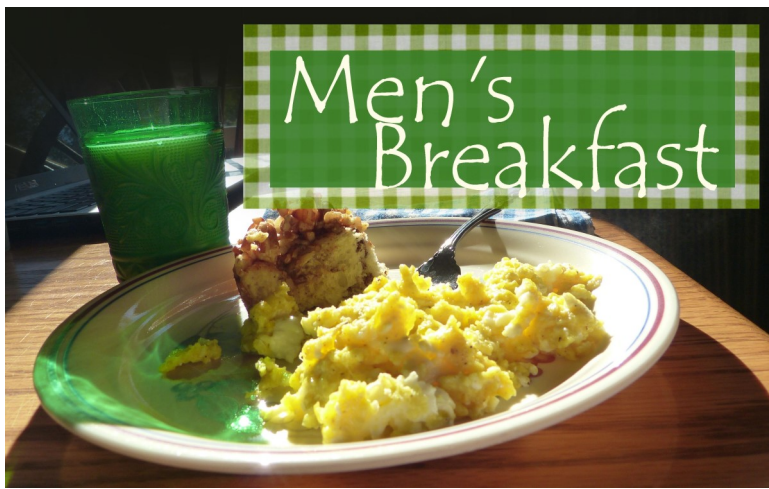
<https://meaningfulmovies.org/>

<https://meaningfulmovies.org/neighborhoods/walla-walla/>

**See you at the Movies!!**







Saturday  
March 14th, 9:00 am



All men (members, friends, & visitors) in our church family are invited to share breakfast on the 2nd Saturday of each month. All you have to do is show up and be ready to enjoy the fellowship!



You're  
Invited!

## *Ladies Lunch*

*Monday, March 9th*  
*12:00 pm*

Thanks to everyone who helped make candy, box it up, and sell it. Forty boxes were sold in 45 minutes and we made \$370.00 which will be used for the Missions and projects. As a new group we are exploring various ideas of things we can use these funds for and welcome suggestions from you.

At our March meeting, we will enjoy lunch and afterwards we will assemble Hygiene kits for women. If you have any travel size items to contribute, they would be greatly appreciated. We can use lotions, shampoo, combs, Kleenex, toothbrushes, toothpaste, mouthwash, feminine products etc. If you have any question, call Judy Gibbs at 876-2387 or e-mail her at [judysue2018@gmail.com](mailto:judysue2018@gmail.com)

We will also discuss our summer plans and show off our new Prayer Shawl Ministry space in the office. Needless to say we will also enjoy the great fellowship of one another.

# All-Church Camp Retreat at N-SID-SEN

Friday, September 25th through Sunday, September 27th

"One Sky - One Earth" - Is the theme for this weekend on the shores of Lake Coeur d'Alene in Idaho. It's a program our youth group will embrace which highlights world peace. Part of the program involves making kites and sending them aloft, symbolic of working toward world peace and acknowledgment of our participation. Margaret Thomas, youth director, and Marelú Greco will lead us in group activities around our theme.

For the adults, Priscilla Ingebrigtsen will lead an adult workshop. It will feature the work of the late Marcus Borg, a progressive Christian/religion teacher. It will explore various thoughts/beliefs about Jesus and his ministry.

Of course, there will be plenty of games and activities that you may participate in: "Capture the Flag", water fights (weather permitting), "Corn Hole" toss, talent contests for everyone, etc. Also we hope to have a dance at the pavilion on the camp grounds as well as singing around the campfires on Friday & Saturday nights. We are hopeful that someone(s) will volunteer to lead the music over the weekend!

We have reserved Spirit Lodge at Camp N-Sid-Sen on September 25th - 27th. The lodge will accommodate up to 32 people with any overflow staying in cabins. We would love to have a **huge overflow** of our church members and friends on this weekend!

You may register for the weekend online at [www.n-sid-sen.org](http://www.n-sid-sen.org). The camp accepts credit cards and to **receive a discount send in a deposit of \$25.00 per camper before April 15th**. The church will receive notification of all who register. The costs for the weekend are as follows:

<u>Lodges</u>		<u>Cabins</u>
Adults/Teens	\$94.25	\$85.50
Seniors (62+)	\$90.75	\$80.75
Youth (8-12)	\$85.50	\$76.25
Child (3-7)	\$70.75	\$64.50

\*\*5 meals are included in the cost. Meals are served at 8:00am, noon and 6:00pm. On Friday, we may opt for a later dinner at 6:30pm which allows for travel time from Walla Walla.

**So, talk it over, make plans to attend, register online at [www.n-sid-sen.org](http://www.n-sid-sen.org) and send in your deposit!!!**

Judy Gibbs, All Church Retreat Coordinator

[judysue2018@gmail.com](mailto:judysue2018@gmail.com)

# ↓ IN OTHER NEWS. . .



Jenn Blomme has been named Coach of the Year. Jenn is the swimming coach at Whitman College. Way to go, Jenn!!



**Sunday  
March 8th**



## Office Wish List

**It's been busy, busy, busy!**

**The office needs stamps and copy paper again. If you are out and about and are able to, we would gratefully welcome a donation of either.**

## *Easter Flowers*

*Beginning Sunday, March 22nd through Wednesday, April 8th, we will be accepting donations for Easter flowers. The donations can be made in honor of, in celebration of, or in memory people or events that are special to you.*

*Watch your bulletins beginning March 22nd for the order forms.*





**Trustees Meeting**  
Wednesday, March 11th, 6:00 pm

**Council Meeting**  
Sunday, March 22nd, 11:30 am

**Deacons Meeting**  
Wednesday, March 11th, 6:30 pm



## March 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Hebrews 12:14

Strive for peace with all, and for that holiness without which no one can see God.

### VOUCHERS

Please have your vouchers turned in by the dates indicated above.  
Thanks!

## Newsletter Deadline

Tuesday, March  
24th

Please have your  
submissions in by  
then.



## Coffee With the Rev

Tuesday, March 3rd

8:00am-10:00am

Coffee Perk

Stop by and have a chat.

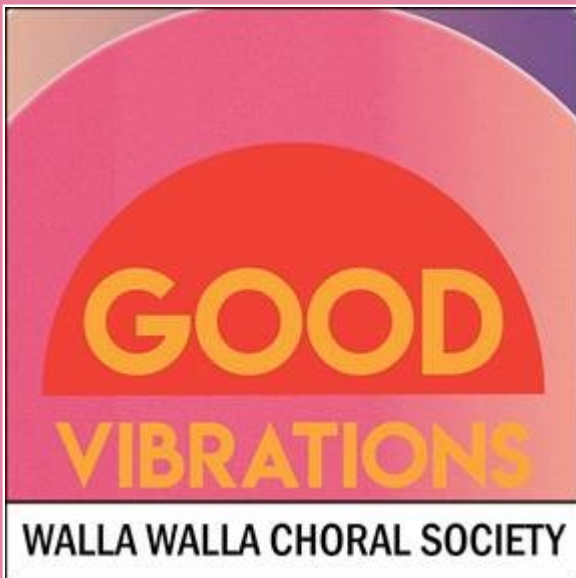




On Friday, March 20th, the soup kitchen crew plans to clean out cupboards, counter tops, fridges, freezers, bins, etc in the kitchen areas. Please be sure items, edible or not, belonging to anyone other than the soup kitchen is clearly marked for whom it belongs. If unmarked, we presume it is our mission to use it up or perhaps discard to better organize and make way for newer supplies. We want to be respectful of others property.

Thank you for your assistance.

Questions? Contact Judy Chacon 509-525-6618.



# **Good Vibrations**

## **“A 60’s Review”**

### **Walla Walla Choral Society’s Spring Performance**

**Sunday, March 15 @ 3:00**

**Monday, March 16 @ 7:00**

**Gesa Powerhouse Theater**

#### **About the concert:**

Vibrant, complex, tumultuous, contentious, fabulous, and of course, groovy — all at the same time. That’s the 60s. The extraordinary variety of cultural tones and nuanced music that was created and performed during this unforgettable decade has had an incalculable impact on our lives. The Beach Boys, Aretha Franklin, Bob Dylan, The Beatles, The Supremes, The Mamas and the Papas, Stevie Wonder, and so many more artists churned out one extraordinary song after another. Come out and sing these far out melodies and harmonies with us.

You can purchase tickets to “Good Vibrations” here:

<https://phtww.com/show/ww-choral-society-good-vibrations-concert/>

**You will leave “Feeling Groovy”**



In order to protect the privacy of our members and friends, we do not display personal information in the web version



You can read Pastor Nathaniel's sermons in his online blog at:  
<https://thedandelionwayblog.wordpress.com>  
Or hear them on our website at:  
[www.firstchurchuccww.org](http://www.firstchurchuccww.org).

## First Congregational Church United Church of Christ

### Ministerial Leadership

Minister Rev. Nathaniel Mahlberg

### 2020 Church Officers

Moderator	J. R. Van Slyke
Vice Moderator	Jennifer Rickard
Clerk	Larry Frank
Treasurer	Kim Croft
Financial Sec.	Bernie Newman
Asst. Fin. Sec.	Jonathan Webster
Head Usher	Galen Unruh
Diaconate	Judy Chacon
Christian Ed	Dot Willis
Trustees	Dana Taggart
Mission/Social Concern	
	Heidi McFarley
Music	Open
... and Affirming	Open

### Staff

Admin. Asst.	Gayle Kubrock
Bookkeeper	Kim Croft
Custodian	Art Davila
Pianist	Jackie Wood
Choir Director	Julie Jones
Webmaster	Emily Asmus

### Church Office Hours

Monday- Friday  
9 am - 2 pm

### Pastoral Assistance

Church Office 525-8753  
Rev. Nathaniel Mahlberg  
(608) 469-1406

*We celebrate our diversity as an expression of God's Creative love. We welcome persons of all age, race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, and physical and mental ability.*