



**JULY/AUGUST  
2020**

**Banks  
Community  
United Methodist  
Church**

E-mail:  
our-church@bcumc.net  
Web site:  
www.bankscommunityumc.org  
Pastor's email:  
revmargot@gmail.com

42451 NW Depot St.  
Banks, OR 97106



The history book heading for our time will read "Season of Pandemic and Racial Unrest."

Lord willing, there will be no third immense social upheaval added to this title. My thoughts lead to what our celebration of Independence Day 2020 will look like.

Clifton Clarke, the noted black theologian, wrote, "Though all have sinned (Rom. 3:23), God has acted to unify all things and all people in Christ (Eph. 1:9-3:10), who died for our sins to deliver sinners from this present evil age (Gal. 1:4). Racism is part of this evil age. By faith in Christ, Jesus's blood and resurrection reconcile a diversity of humans into one transformed and ethnically and racially diverse Christian community (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 5:9). (*Christianity Today*, August 2017)

Saint Peter wrote to the churches,

*"But you are the ones chosen by God, chosen for the high calling of priestly work, chosen to be a holy people, God's instruments to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference he made for you—from nothing to something, from rejected to accepted."* (1 Peter 2:9-10 MSG)

His message was confirmed in John's report of the angel choir he heard in heaven:

And they sang a new song, saying, *"Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation."* (Revelation 5:9 NASB)

My concern is not political commentary but is the seemingly impossible transformation accomplished by God and the presence of Christ's Kingdom among all of humanity. We are somewhere around 7.8 billion

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souls, soon headed for the nine million mark. To the question, what percentage of the world population is Caucasian or white? – there have been various answers. In 2018 Quora research group published a figure of 16%. Asian (mostly Chinese) is the greatest people group at 55%. The balance of the world is comprised of African, Central/ South American and Middle Eastern peoples. These are rough estimates compiled from the census figures of the nations of the world (quora.com). Should the most numerous people have the most power in world affairs? More to the point, should a people of less than one quarter of the world population hold 99% of the power and wealth? Just asking.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church, “...I, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...” (Ephesians 1:15-18)

My prayer is that we will be part of creating the historical heading “Healing Effects of the Church in Society” as we follow Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit in these unsettled times.

Holy and loving God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – move upon our anxious and lost world

with Your great love and compassion. May many see and experience Your grace at such a crucial moment in world history. Make us agents of Your Kingdom in these times.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Margot

## Written by C.S. Lewis in 1942 in response to the effects of WW II....

C.S. Lewis 1942

Satan: “I will cause anxiety,  
fear and panic.  
I will shutdown  
business, schools,  
places of worship  
and sports events.  
I will cause economic turmoil”.

Jesus: “I will bring together neighbours,  
restore the family unit,  
I will bring dinner back  
to the kitchen table.  
I will help people slow down their lives  
and appreciate what really matters.  
I will teach my children to rely on me  
and not the world.  
I will teach my children to trust me  
and not their money and material resources.”

## CALENDAR FOR JULY/AUGUST:

For Now - all group activities are on hold. We'll let you know when we can gather again. So stay well and visit with each other via phone, facetime, or zoom.

### July 4th - Independence Day

**July 26th** - Dexter Danielson will bring the message

**August 23rd** - Joel Peterson will bring the message



## FOOD OF THE MONTH

The Food of the Month program seems to be an easy way to collect foods and has added greatly to our supply of items that go into our Christmas food boxes and we thank you. We hope you enjoy bringing in the listed foods to help build up our supply. For the rest of this year the items and months of collection are as follows:

- July – refried beans
- August – diced tomatoes
- September – hearty soups
- October – stove top stuffing – chicken
- November – chicken broth
- December – cranberry sauce

As you shop for your own food you can be collecting items from the list above to donate when we can get together again. The need will be greater than ever.



Also, returnable cans and bottles are still

### July

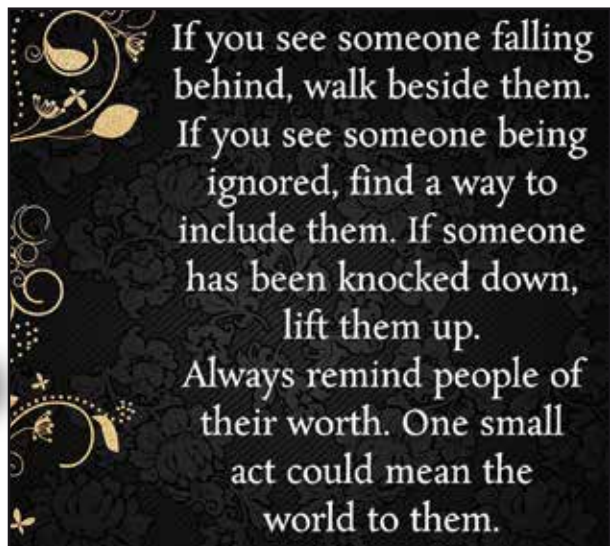
07/02 Liam Knifer  
07/16 Norma Stewart  
07/26 Ed Sipp  
07/29 Cindy Sprague  
07/29 Walt Gribner  
07/30 Margot Thompson



### August

08/02 Sally Smith  
08/06 Leola Stigleman  
08/11 Jeanine Bake  
08/19 Nancy Ridgway  
08/21 Sieata Fonua  
08/24 Bob Russell  
08/26 Patricia O'Neil  
08/27 Shirley Hines  
08/31 Marcelle Danielson

being collected. Leave them in the office building or by the garbage cans outside the back door of the office building.







## **“Fear Turns to Hope”**

Pentecost, which was celebrated on the seventh Sunday after Easter Sunday, May 31st, is the beginning of the longest season of our church calendar, with Sundays designated as the 1st, 2nd, 3rd (and so on)... Sunday after Pentecost ending with the first Sunday of Advent. It is the longest season of our church calendar sometimes referred to the ‘Ordinary Season’. Calling it “ordinary” in year 2020 seems a major incongruity, but we forget that there were major incongruities from the beginning with the first Pentecost.

Prior to the descent of the spirit in a spectacular way on the Apostles and followers of Jesus, things were also far from normal. Prior to the coming of the Spirit the followers of Jesus were gathered in sequestered locations fearful and confused, not knowing what the future would bring. But the spirit came in such a way to bring them out of the state of confusion and to speak confidently of Jesus and His teachings.

The word spoken by Jesus the night before His arrest, recorded in scriptures, were spoken to His faithful Disciples, a number of days before the Pentecost, but I am sure as they spoke to the crowds on that day these words were ringing in their collective memories.

**John 16:33**

***“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”***

With the confusion and feelings of isolation in this extraordinary time of the “Covid 19” virus and the demonstrations and the riots. It easy to feel confused cut-off and fearful. Remember the words spoken by Jesus, he has overcome the troubles of this world so that we might take heart and have inner peace. When we take to heart the words of Jesus that He conquered the world, even in death, we come to our own Pentecost and confidently declare our own hope even in the face of fear.

Peace and hope with all of you!

*Rev. Dexter Danielson (Ret.)*

**AT MY LOWEST: GOD  
IS MY HOPE  
AT MY DARKEST: GOD  
IS MY LIGHT  
AT MY WEAKEST: GOD  
IS MY STRENGTH  
AT MY SADDEST: GOD  
IS MY COMFORTER**

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

This is a new year, these are new times. Things are much different than a year ago, but one thing is the same; we can still spread the word of God and the joy and love of Jesus through the simple gift of a shoebox. We **will** be collecting shoeboxes this fall.

Although it is early summer, and we are able to get out to shop, now is the time to think about what to pack in the shoeboxes, what to purchase or make (handmade items are good to send), and pray for the children who will be receiving these boxes. When children receive an Operation Christmas Child shoebox they not only have the joy of getting lots of goodies that will be their personal gifts, they have the opportunity to learn about Jesus and a pathway to salvation. By giving a shoebox you are planting a seed.

Now is the time to start shopping for those summer sales of T-shirts, flip-flops, socks and other small clothing items you might want to pack in your shoeboxes. School supplies will be on sale soon and a good time to buy those pencils, crayons, tablets, etc. Buying sale items makes it easier to purchase lots of goodies to really stuff those boxes.

We are again asking for your help in showing your love through the simple gift of a shoebox that will be shipped around the world to children hungry for the word of God. Please be in prayer for this wonderful mission project and the part you may play in reaching children in the name of Jesus Christ. Help plant a seed.

## Yuliya and A Puppy



*The stuffed dog in my shoebox became my new best friend, and I still have it 14 years later.*

*Yuliya received a shoebox at age 9 in a Central Asian country.*

When I lifted the lid on my purple plastic shoebox, the first thing I saw was a stuffed dog. I was filled with exuberant joy! I just remember hugging it.

Even though I had toys growing up, the dog was an item you couldn't find in my country. It was really soft and had puppy eyes. It was my new best friend, my newfound treasure.

*"It was my new best friend, my newfound treasure."*

My second favorite item was bubble gum-flavored toothpaste that came in a pink tube. We didn't know such a thing existed. We would squeeze out a bit the size of the tip of a match so we could get a little bit of flavor and make it last as long as possible.

Word traveled fast. My friends would line

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up in our bathroom and my sister and I would squeeze out a tiny amount on their toothbrushes. I think we made it last about two years.

My third favorite item was an Etch A Sketch. At first we had no idea what it was. We kept pushing down on the buttons and asking, “Why is it not working?” After having it displayed on a shelf for a couple of months, my sister was dusting and she turned the knobs. When she saw the line going up and down on the screen she was so excited. The item we thought was broken was drawing!

The toys were the most important things to me as a 9-year-old but it also stood out that the letter in the box said, “I am praying for you.” As time went on, I realized why.

*“Here was someone I’d never met ... yet she was still praying for me.”*

With my shoebox, here was someone I’d never met and never seen, yet she was still praying for me.

We became pen pals and she would always close her letters, “I am praying for you.” I always wondered, “Why is she praying for me?” The impact hit me more than seven years later after I became a Christian. She was showing me the love of Christ all along,

starting with the shoebox and continuing in her prayers.

*“She specifically chose that dog for me and wanted to use it to communicate God’s love.”*



*Yuliya and her sister.*

The shoebox was a seed. That’s how the Lord works. He patiently knocks on the door of our heart and waits until we open the door. Sometimes you see fruit right

away and other times it takes years for the seed to grow.

I still have my stuffed dog 14 years later. That’s a glimpse of how much the shoebox meant to me because it was packed with love and prayer. It wasn’t just any dog. I could tell she specifically chose that dog for me and wanted to use it to communicate God’s love.



*Yuliya (left) and her sister.*

## RECIPE CORNER

During this time of sequestering I was looking through recipes and found a few that are my favorites and want to share them with you. Now that summer is here I am taking advantage of all the fruit and vegetables that are available.



### SHORTCAKE

Some of you have this recipe as it has been in our church cookbook and the Curves cookbook, but for those of you that don't, you are in for a delicious treat. Sally and Kathy both submitted this recipe and it is a good shortcake. This is quick and easy.

#### Ingredients:

2 cups flour  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1/4 cup sugar  
1/2 cup butter  
1 egg beaten  
2/3 cup milk

Combine flour, baking powder and sugar. Add butter and cut in until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Combine egg and milk and add to the mixture. Stir until just moistened. Spread in a greased 8 inch round pan. Bake at 450 degrees for 15-18 minutes .



### LANNY'S PICKLES

Lanny would always bring pickles whenever he subbed at the elementary school. These are the best! Do not hot water bath these! Another Quick and Easy!

Boil lids and rings.

1 cup sugar  
1 cup salt  
1 gallon water  
1 gallon white vinegar  
1/4 cup pickling spices  
Bring to boil.

Fill clean jars with cucumbers. Add 4 sprigs of dill and 4-5 cloves of garlic. Pour brine over pickles until it is 1/2 from the top of jar. Put on lid and ring.  
Listen for pops to know they are sealed.

Enjoy! Leslee





## A PRAYER FOR THE SEASON OF CORONA

Holy and living God,  
In you “we live and move and exist” (Acts 17:28)

In you we find our shelter and strength,  
In you our hearts are being filled with joy each morning,  
In you we sing praises with a new song,  
In you we trust that your promises are the way.

Like those disciples in Acts 1 experiencing the time in between,  
Witnessing Ascension of Jesus Christ and awaiting the descent of the Holy Spirit,  
A time in between staring into heaven and staying in one place.

During our time in between,  
We wait with hope for you are the source of every hope,  
We wait with patience for your timing is always perfect,  
We wait with prayer for you are listening intently,  
We wait with praise for you take all our anxieties as we cast them on you.

During this time, we pray especially for...  
Those who are graduates with uncertainty hindering their future,  
Those who lost their jobs and are finding ways to meet their financial needs,  
Those who lost their loved ones, and their funeral services are limited or postponed,  
Those who are fighting against addiction and are unable to meet with their recovery groups,

Those who feel fear as hate crimes and incidents arise.

During this time, O God,  
Enter into our sorrows, worries, addictions, financial burdens, fears, and injustices,  
Fill us with your grace, hope, and joy abundantly,  
Turn each home into a place of peace, unity, and love for each other,  
Renew our hearts and minds to seek the knowledge of your mercy and love,  
Help our souls to be united in incessant prayer.

Let us receive this prayer of Apostle Paul:  
“I ask—the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory—to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing God personally, your eyes focused and clear, so that you can see exactly what it is God is calling you to do, grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life God has for you, oh, the utter extravagance of God’s work in us who trust the Lord —endless energy, boundless strength!”  
Let it be so. Amen.

*(By Rev. Taesung Kang, New Hampshire District Superintendent)*



## IN OUR AMERICA, LOVE WINS

*by Pastor Margot*

Our story, the American story, began when we threw off the unjust rule of kings and queens. The United States Constitution is not just words on paper. It is a sacred document. The Bill of Rights guarantees human freedom and dignity. Yet, today we are in danger of seeing both the Constitution and the Bill of Rights shredded. Black and brown people in the United States are denied life, liberty and pursuit of happiness by an unjust system that discounts their worth because of skin color.

I believe we are beginning to have the hard conversation because of extreme conditions not only in the U.S. but all over the world. Widespread corona virus exposes the ugly truth that power and wealth are tightly controlled by a small, privileged few. Poor people and especially people of color are systematically excluded from education, jobs, decent housing and medical care. African American, Latino, First Nation and other minority peoples are most at risk. The virus hits hardest among poor, disabled, homeless folks already struggling to survive. The damaged economy exposes huge cracks in this white dominated system. Millions of laid off and furloughed workers – gig workers and self-employed are left without food or housing or health insurance in just a few weeks. A third of Americans of any color cannot save for a cushion against disaster.

The smothering death of an innocent man, George Floyd in Minnesota, the police shooting of Raychard Brooks in Georgia, plus the two black men found hanged in California, all reveal systematic violence against young black men. This has been so for hundreds of years of American (and world) history. Riots in the streets are triggered by rage and powerlessness. Military-style crackdown brings more rebellion. Can it be we are waking up to injustice that is official policy at last?

Each person of conscience – you and I – must act. We must work to end the racism that is more of a plague than the corona virus. Help your neighbors nearby. I am sure you are doing that: a bag of groceries or a grocery gift card or other helps. Email and call and write letters demanding that state and federal representatives ban choke holds, make firing without warning a felony and stop using chemical weapons on citizens. Inaction is acceptance of injustice.

I believe America can achieve peace with justice. Love is not an emotion. Love is an act of will that heals hatred. Long before war and slavery – long before racial domination – in the beginning you and I were created to care for and respect one another. When we look across our community, let us practice not judging. Remember everyone walking the earth was once somebody's baby. Everybody belongs to the human race, lovingly created in God's image.

This wonderful letter from Jeanne Cochrane arrived recently. I have transcribed it, since her writing hand is not so firm as it once was. Her daughter, Jill, addressed the envelope and put the letter in the mail. Jeanne has been receiving the sermon and pastoral prayer for about twelve weeks during this season of covid-19.

Blessings,  
Pastor Margot

May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble!  
May the name of the God of Jacob set you securely on high!...  
May He grant you your heart's desire  
And fulfill all your counsel!...  
We will sing for joy over your victory,  
And in the name of our God we will set up our banners.  
May the Lord fulfill all your petitions. . .

Now I know that the Lord saves His anointed;  
He will answer him from His holy heaven  
With the saving strength of His right hand.

(from Psalm 20)

*Dear Rev Margot,*

*I finally have found some lined paper so I can write to you. Thank you so much for all the letters you have sent me! I enjoy hearing from you and think about all of you lots and lots of times! Would love to pop in and be with you! I really feel part of you all the time – especially on Sundays.*

*This pen is very big and hard to write with! But I enjoy hearing from you so much!*

*Guess you know we're shut up here because of that nasty bug! Can't get out and travel! Sure hope that bug business will end soon! Keep away from them!!*

*Much love to all of you! Love you all so much!*

*In great love,  
Your friend, Jeanne Cochrane*

*(Sorry this pen is so big!)*

## Closing Windows and Windows of Hope

By Rev. Wayne Hobson



Photo credit: [jesusisthesubject.org](http://jesusisthesubject.org)

“The window is closing,” that is what some health and medical professionals are saying about the time left to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

It makes me think of another window that is closing due to the pandemic. I think of the window that is closing for Martha, a 77 year old legally blind woman who is in the latter stages of dementia.

Martha has been in our congregation for over two decades. Until she could no longer join us on Sundays here at Good Shepherd Church (Charlotte, North Carolina), she and her late husband Tom had been among our most faithful congregants. Now, she sits in a nursing home, rehabbing from a fractured back due to a fall, but because of the virus no visitors are allowed near her. The last time we saw her was when a few of us stood outside of her window, waving homemade “Get Well” cards realizing she probably could not remember who we were. The window is closing on opportunity to be near Martha, to touch her.

The window closed for Carol, a dear and sweet 79 year old that I had visited twice a month and shared communion with for three years. Carol was the most delightful and vibrant person I had the pleasure of visiting in a nursing home; her smile and hugs were the warmest that I have ever felt in my ministry at the church. But with Alzheimer’s rapid progression, her window closed during this pandemic. A friend gone.

In these last few months, this pandemic has stolen our time, our relationships, and for me personally, major portions of my pastoral care ministry. My invested time has been lost because I, like so many people, have been working under “Stay At Home” orders. I would rather be out visiting those who are imprisoned in nursing homes like Martha, with few, if any visitors. I have lost relationship with friends like Carol, who I would have visited, but who died – alone.

In a mere four months, the COVID-19 virus has taken much of what it took us four years to establish in ministry with our congregation. Three years ago we created several support ministries, like a Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance group, to help people struggling to deal with major obstacles in their lives – and now they are gone too.

Also gone in our church is a friend named Bill, who, because he could not stand the isolation from his support group members, committed suicide. Another friend gone as the window closes.

As I add up all of the losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I wonder if things will ever go back to the way they were. I wonder if those folks that I remember will still remember me when this pandemic is over. You have probably been wondering the same thing. Every one of us in care ministry – laity and clergy – have those concerns.

Whether you are a pastoral care clergy person, a member of a Stephen Ministries group, or simply a layperson who loves to visit others, caring for those in your congregation who need a loving touch has become “virtually” impossible – pun intended. Where possible, we can do a “Zoom” visitation, but often heartfelt cards or phone calls will have to suffice for now.

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So we miss the instantaneous gratification of knowing that we have brightened someone's day or even changed their life in the simple act of Christian care and hospitality. And of course we miss the opportunity to hold trembling hands, that clench ours all the tighter, as we pray for people in places where they often feel lonely and isolated. Our prayers bring comfort, relief, and most importantly hope. I always sense that has happened when people join with me in saying a strong, closing, "Amen!"

I have come to realize I have suffered loss simply because I cannot be physically near precious people who are suffering. So in these days I find myself recalling the Apostle Paul's great words to all of us:

*"...we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us" (Romans 5:3b-5 NIV).*

That is my blessed hope in all of this turbulence and instability. I believe that those I have visited remember (if they have the capacity to remember) that I was there at their loved one's funeral, at their side before the scariest surgery,

at their baptism, or at the birth of their first child.

People remember those sacred moments we share with them. They remember when we were at the hospital at 6 a.m. when they thought no one would be there. And they remember when we drove an hour in bad weather to attend the funeral of one of their loved ones we had never met. Most of all, the people we minister to remember our dependability, our faithfulness, our perseverance, and our character as we allow the power and tender mercy of the Holy Spirit to work in and through us.

In these days, when we are frustrated because we cannot minister to people in the ways we long to do so, let us remember Paul's words to the Galatians:

*"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" (6.9-10 NIV).*

And may the old saying be true, that as God closes one window, He opens another.

*The Rev. Wayne Hobson is the pastor of congregational care at Good Shepherd Church in Charlotte, North Carolina.*

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## PASTOR MARGOT'S OFFICE HOURS

Banks Community UMC

Tuesday - 10:00 a.m. - noon  
1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Thursday - 10:00 a.m. - noon  
1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

(At all hours, and any day Sunday through Thursday, please use her cell phone number.)

She is also available for urgent or emergency matters at all times via cell.

## BANKS TELLER

All submissions to the *Banks Teller* are **DUE BY THE 15TH OF THE MONTH** preceding the month you wish it to run. The *Banks Teller* is published every two months.