

HEARTBEAT

The Hope in Christ Church Monthly Newsletter

March 2020 Issue

By Pastor Scott

Marriage is confused in our world - and it isn't confused only by those arguing that same-sex unions should be called marriage. There are also countless others confused about marriage. Some insist that marriage is outdated and needs to be abandoned all together (Abolition or Privatization crowd). Others think marriage needs more fluid boundaries about who participates in a particular union on a particular day (Polyamory crowd). Then there are those who argue that cohabiting, civil unions and common law are all the same as marriage (Equivocation crowd).



But this is to confuse what the Scriptures clearly teach about marriage. Marriage was instituted by God as the best way for people to thrive relationally, spiritually, physically, emotionally and sexually. As one reads Genesis 1-2 it is clear that a good, loving and creative God was capable of opting for any of the aberrations listed above, but instead God determined that one man should have an intimate, life-long relationship with one woman and that out of that union children should be born, families instituted and the faith passed on to their offspring (Gen 1:28, 2:24, Eph 6:4).

In fact, the Scriptures extol marriage¹, and broken examples of family and male-female interactions are displayed (not to give us ideas and examples of ways to redefine marriage and family) but to show us what happens when people refuse to follow God's best plan. In short - more pain, more suffering, more difficulty, more brokenness is caused in the world and to the people involved in these sinful practices. Therefore, marriage must be honored and held in high regard (Heb 13:4). This is all the more im-

portant when we consider the exalted teaching that St. Paul gives in Ephesians 5, where he declares that marriage is a picture to the world of Christ's love for the Church. In marriage, a man is called to display his love for his bride by being responsible, sacrificial, and giving. Furthermore, he is to point her to the one who spiritually cleanses and heals both of them of their sin and brokenness. This is a picture of what Jesus does for his bride, the Church. He cares for, gives himself for, leads and loves so that she, the Church, can respond by following His lead.

Therefore, all the talk about gender fluidity, marriages that mix up the order of one man and one woman united for life in love to God, and the normalcy of divorce in our world is a rejection of God's creation mandate to participate in the good order of filling and subduing the earth. It is also a direct attack on the very gospel and on one of the illustrations that God has given us of the amazing wonder of the gospel - Christ giving himself for us, uniting himself to us. Though the reformed churches have never considered marriage a sacrament, mostly out of reaction to the Roman Catholic confusion about the sacraments, St. Paul seems to be declaring that marriage is an outward picture of an invisible grace. This was St. Augustine's definition of a sacrament. The Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 66 defines sacrament this way: 'holy, visible signs and seals...instituted by God...that fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel...' Isn't this the very argument St. Paul is making in Ephesians 5? So even though we may shy away from using the language of sacrament for marriage, it behooves us to remember that when we define marriage as something other than what God defines it as - one man and one woman united in sacrificial love for life - then we are not just giving new meaning to a word - we are attacking marriage, and also the heart of the gospel - the mystery of Christ and the Church.

¹ Prov. 6:26; 12:4; 18:22; 31:10-12; Is. 62:5; Luke 16:18; Eph. 5:25, 31-32; Heb. 13:4; Rev. 19:7, 9

Deacon's Digest

By Elaine Snapper

At our February meeting we had as our guest, Alice Brakke, the health minister for our church. Alice informed us that she spends a portion of her time working with various Friendship members, helping them understand their health issues. She occasionally takes them or meets them at their doctor appointments. She will sometimes go to their homes and change their bandages, etc. Alice is willing to assist anyone in our church with their medical appointments. Having been a nurse for many years, she understands medical issues. If anyone needs help, don't hesitate to call her. The deacons very much appreciate Alice offering her services to our church.

Interfaith Coalition is having their Annual Hope Auction on Sat., March 28, at 5:30 p.m. at Four Points by Sheraton in Bellingham. This organization makes an effort to eliminate family homelessness and poverty. Everyone is welcome to attend this evening with the dinner and the auction. Call the Interfaith Coalition for tickets if you are interested in attending. Each year our church donates an auction item, and this year Lisa DeSalvo willingly agreed to prepare a basket for the auction.

Giving in January 2020

	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Designated Fund Offerings:	\$ 1,591	\$ 5,886
General Fund Offerings	\$20,384	\$ 41,578
Rent / Utilities Income	3,260	5,817
Interest Income - Undesignated	41	83
Total Undesignated Income	23,685	47,478
General Fund Expenses	(18,108)	(28,748)
Income Over(Under) Expenses	\$ 5,577	\$ 18,730
Total 2020 budget, including ministry quotas		\$ 273,588
Year-to-Date Budget for 2 months		\$ 45,598
Total Undesignated Income		47,478
Income Over (Under) Budget		\$ 1,880

Loan Balances:

Classis: \$ 12,500

Items of Interest from the February 12th Council Meeting

By Herman Laninga, Secretary

1. Council accepted the Vitality Team's recommendation that we again engage Tena Crosby to present her communications workshop. A number of members, both long-time and new have not attended this excellent workshop which greatly boosted us on the journey of church Vitality that we are currently following. Members who have previously attended are welcome to attend as a refresher. We will also invite others like Legacy Church, for example, to join us. Stay tuned for a date to be announced.
2. The Worship Team announced they are planning special services for the Easter season including Maundy Thursday and Good Friday observances.
3. As announced last Sunday, advertising has begun for adding staff as proposed in this year's budget. Again if you know a person who would be a good fit for either Educational Director or Director of Outreach or both, please inform Pastor Scott or your Elder.
4. Debra Ivancovich with Journey Christian Counseling is renting space in our Ministry House.
5. The Worship Team recommended we end the practice of greeting during the service and instead encourage greeting before or after the service. This was approved. Further explanation regarding the grounds for this decision are included in this edition of the Heartbeat.
6. Classis North Cascades will be meeting at 7pm on Feb. 27 at First CRC in Lynden. Representing Hope In Christ will be Pastor Scott, Elder Herm Laninga and Deacon Rockelle Ruiter.
7. Our 4 older high school aged students will be attending a spiritual growth weekend in Wenatchee, WA in April with Clair and Hildred Abee as chaperones. The goal is for them to experience what a "Developing Discipleship Year" would look like – a year spent between high school and college.
8. The Christian Reformed World Renew team is looking for a representative from our area. If this is of interest to you, please inform Pastor Scott.

If you recall, our 2019 Advent theme was centered around the things that happened when Jesus came to the earth to be our Savior. Four different things were highlighted and symbolized by various objects each week:



1. **Jesus came to establish a new covenant with us (Communion Bread & Grapes)**
2. **He came to establish true worship: in spirit & in truth (Word & Music)**
3. **He came that we might know God (Baptism Water)**
4. **He came to bring us the Light of Salvation (Christ Candle)**

As a reminder, these symbols will remain in the front of the sanctuary until Maundy Thursday of Holy Week. (April 5-12 this year)

We're all familiar with the significance of observing Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter every year, but throughout church history (including the reformed tradition), *Maundy Thursday*, the 5th day of Holy Week, has often been observed in various ways. We believe by understanding more of what Jesus' experienced during his last week on earth, we will receive a deeper appreciation of his love and sacrifice for us, which ultimately is the heart of the gospel.

So, this year, the worship team has decided to observe *The Triduum* (three days) with Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter services. The Maundy Service will contain elements portraying Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples and will include Communion, some form of foot washing, and a time of "preparing" the sanctuary for Good Friday. The Good Friday service will not be a formal gathering, but rather an opportunity for you to individually come, observe and reflect on Jesus' suffering through the stations of the cross. Easter will be a "traditional" celebration of Jesus' resurrection.

Because many of you may not be as familiar with Maundy Thursday or the Stations of the Cross, next month's Heartbeat will explain more in detail, the history of these practices in the church. We hope this will answer some of your questions and remove your reluctance to participate.

We pray that this upcoming Lenten season will be a blessing to you!

Jerry Hop (for the Worship Planning Team)

***Children's
Sunday School
Memory Verses***

**Marvel: Acts 1:8
Wonder: Psalm 23:4-6
Dive: Psalm 95**

Getting to Know our Church Family



By Elaine Snapper

This month I am featuring Del and Pat B., both of whom were born and raised on dairy farms in Lynden about a mile apart. Del's family lived on the Van Dyk Road while Pat's family lived on the Abbott Road. They both grew up working on the farm. Both Del and Pat attended Lynden Christian Schools, and both families attended the First Chr. Ref. Church in Lynden. Del would often usher Pat's family to their pews. Pat was from a family of six girls, and she was in the middle. Del and Pat married at a young age and started their family. They had three children, two boys and a girl.

Before they were married, Del worked for a landscape business and learned to lay bricks. His first love was working with engines. His mother always said she thought he was born with a motor in his head. He got a job with Meridian Tractor as a mechanic. After they were married, he got a job with a Caterpillar company; N.C. Machinery in Mt. Vernon. He worked there as a mechanic and then got into sales. They lived in Mt. Vernon for five years, but when he got into sales, they moved back to Bellingham. They have resided on Marine Drive for over 50 years. They have a home with a great view overlooking Bellingham Bay. After five years at NC, he worked for Lynnwood Equip. and he later bought into a John Deere dealership in Mt. Vernon and Everett. When they sold that, Del, his son Rick, and another partner started Bakerview Equip a sales and rental co. in Bellingham. They eventually sold that to United Rentals Co., a national company. When they moved to Bellingham, Pat decided she wanted to get a job to work outside their home. She worked for A & H Hallmark as a salesclerk and then got into management. She worked there for about 16 years. Pat said she really enjoyed working there. They were like family. and she also enjoyed the customers. In that time their children, after their schooling, all got engaged and married within a

year and a half. They currently have seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren and a ninth one is on the way.

After they sold Bakerview Equip., they purchased a home in Tucson, Arizona. They travel there often in the fall and spring, but they always want to be home for the holidays with their family. They really enjoy their family and family get-togethers. They are a close family. After Pat retired, she spent much of her time helping out and caring for aging parents, and also helping out when grandchildren were born.

As far as hobbies, Del enjoys old cars, tractors and engines, which he has collected. He belongs to antique tractor and car clubs. He enjoys doing small jobs with the equipment he has, helping others. They both enjoy their neighbors and helping them out when needed. They have enjoyed yard work and gardening. They enjoy short road trips into small towns, etc. They have enjoyed their motor home, going with friends and family. Pat enjoys cooking, baking, knitting, decorating, and especially making almond roca in the holiday season, which she likes to give away.

When their children were young, they helped at church, with teaching Sunday School, and being a Calvinette leader. Pat sang in the choir and led Sunday School music and helped with Vacation Bible School. Del was deacon and elder in our church and has served on the Lighthouse Mission Board for about 35 years. Presently he is president of the Foundation Board. Del enjoys the Thurs. night Men's Bible study, and Pat the Wed. morn. Bible study when she is able to attend. They said they have been truly blessed by our church family. They have seen many changes, which sometimes have been hard, but through it all, God has truly blessed us, she says, and been so good to us. Both Pat and Del grew up in the church. It has always been a part in their lives. Pat said as you grow older, your faith becomes stronger, and you always see God has a plan for your life.

They have also gone on some small group mission trips with their church group and friends from Lynden to Rehoboth Chr. School in New Mexico. These were a real blessing to them.

Last Sept. they celebrated that they have been married 60 years. This delightful couple has been a real blessing to our church, and we pray for God's richest blessings on them.

Worship *Greeting Time*

The worship team has been experimenting with omitting the greeting time from the worship service. The main reason (as stated in the Jan. Heart-beat) was in response to recent studies we looked at that listed things churches do or don't do that prevent visitors/first time attenders from returning. One issue was the "stand and greet time" in the worship service. It made people feel awkward and even ignored. An additional finding was that not all regular attenders liked it either. We have received feedback from some of you, both negative and positive, and we suspect if a poll was taken, there might be an even split.

Over the years, our greeting time has evolved from a simple "passing the peace" to those around you, to an extended time used to shake hands with as many people as possible. We feel this often disrupts the flow of our worship and it's difficult to get everyone "back on track." So, it's an issue of time management as well.

Is this a vital part of our worship service? Is it merely a tradition we have "abused" over time? What is the best way to fellowship with each other? Wouldn't these conversations be more meaningful before or after the formal worship time when you can truly connect with someone?

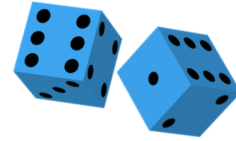
So, in order to be sensitive to our visitors and our members who feel very uncomfortable with this practice, and in the interest of time management, we have decided to omit the greeting time **during** the service for now.

We know this decision is probably going to disappoint some, but we encourage you to use the time **before and/or after** the worship service for fellowship. If you still have questions, please talk to one of the worship planning team or the elders. Thank you.

Jerry Hop, for the Planning Team
(Melissa, Ida, Mark, Mattea, Pastor Scott)



GEMS Baked Potato and Bunko Event



The GEMS will be hosting their annual Baked Potato Dinner and Bunko Night fundraiser on Friday, March 6 beginning at 6 p.m.

They will be serving baked potatoes with all the trimmings, chili, salad, and dessert followed by Bunko.

Invite your neighbors and friends for an evening of fun and fellowship - you may even win a prize!

The girls will be accepting donations for the dinner to help pay for GEMS ministry expenses.



02 John K

04 Anthony M

10 Ruth S

19 Caleb R

22 Esther V

25 Miriam S

26 Terry V

29 Alice S

31 Nathanael C



UNANTICIPATED FRIENDSHIPS THROUGH FAMILY PROMISE

“Sometimes I hear from volunteers that Family Promise is a lot of work,” says Cari Griffith, a volunteer who serves on the Leadership Team for Interfaith Coalition’s Family Promise of Whatcom County. “Yes, it takes work and money to help people who are in messy situations.”

Family Promise involves 850 local volunteers and 30 faith communities in Whatcom County that feed and shelter local families in need, using church buildings throughout the county. Because it relies on existing resources, Family Promise is able to leverage every \$1 donated into \$3 worth of services for folks experiencing homelessness.

Family Promise is fully supported by local donations and local volunteers. More importantly, Family Promise builds a personal connection between neighbors in need, and neighbors with resources. That’s more effective than government services.

“With Family Promise, we get personally involved, and eliminate the need for some of those tax dollars,” Cari points out.

Sometimes volunteers don’t see the impact of a two-hour shift, four times a year, Cari says. “But in your two hours of service, our guests can make a friend.

Last week, one of our guests who’d graduated from Family Promise attended church with me. We took her daughter to the room where the children were gathering for children’s church.

The daughter entered hesitantly, then bounded back to us, announcing ‘I have a friend here! You can go now!’

The friend was a volunteer she’d met during our church’s Family Promise hosting week.

What we volunteers see as two hours of service, our guests see as making a friend.”

FAMILY PROMISE UPDATE

By Ali Laninga

We had a wonderful time at our volunteer appreciation coffee on Friday, Feb. 21. About 20 of us gathered for fellowship over coffee/tea and coffee cake/muffins. The highlight was a presentation by Family Promise Director, Carolyn Roy. She shared how she came to be the Director. It was truly God persistently tugging at her heart that led her to accept the role – a very demanding one! Carolyn shared some success stories from the last two years which were inspirational. She brought us up-to-date on the ministry and thanked us for our part in making this program a success in Whatcom County. So again, thank you to all our volunteers in whatever role(s) you have played in making a difference in the lives of our neighbors who are experiencing the chaos of homelessness.

Our next opportunity to serve these families is the week of March 15 – please mark your calendars. Anyone interested in learning more about volunteering with Family Promise, please contact Ali Laninga, HICC Coordinator or Lorraine Brouwer/Herman Laninga, Assistants.

March 2020

Sermons

3/1	Cries of the Heart Matthew 26:38-39 <i>Moving Mountains</i> Ch. 3 & 4
3/8	Bold Authority Matthew 8:5-10 <i>Moving Mountains</i> Ch. 5 & 6
3/15	Consecrate Yourself 1 Peter 1:13-25 <i>Moving Mountains</i> Ch. 7 & 8
3/22	Guest Pastor Jason Hubbard <i>Moving Mountains</i> Ch. 9 & 10
3/29	Praying for Guidance Daniel 2:1-24 <i>Moving Mountains</i> Ch. 11 & 12

Greeters

3/1	Lisa O., Deloris P.
3/8	David & Ida R., Junior J.
3/15	Lanny & Christine S.
3/22	Don & Elaine S.
3/29	Joe P., Ruth S.

Cookies

3/1	Jennifer B., Pat B.
3/8	Helen B., Alice B.
3/15	Lorraine B., Lisa D.
3/22	Faye H., Avis K.
3/29	Marilyn K., Melissa K.

Serving Assistants

3/1	Abee, Caleb, Maggie
3/8	Brenna, Chantel, Michal
3/15	Amber, Faith, Amariah
3/22	Micah, Clara, Mattea
3/29	Maggie, Zeke, Grace

Prayer Room

3/1	Lou K.
3/8	Vicki S.
3/15	Jay K.
3/22	Herm L.
3/29	Ken W.

Offerings

3/1	Kingdom Advancement Fund
3/8	Kingdom Advancement Fund
3/15	Outreach Fund
3/22	Kingdom Advancement Fund
3/29	Benevolence Fund

Ushers/*Foyer

3/1	Helen B. / *Bud B.
3/8	Elaine S. / *Don K.
3/15	Len V. / *Joe P.
3/22	Lou K. / *Ken W.
3/31	Hildred & *Clair Abee

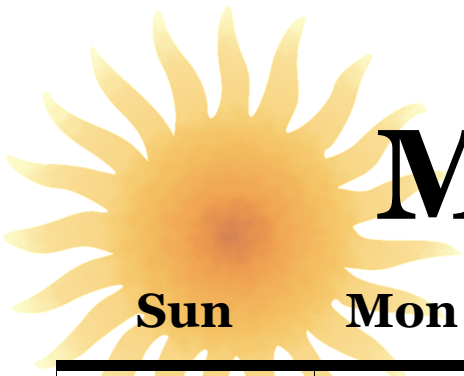
Children & Worship

3/1	Jen R., Michal
3/8	Diane B., Grace
3/15	Kylie, Ali L.
3/22	Marjie H., Abee
3/29	Daniel O., Michal

Sunday School

3/1	Aaron, Herm, Ali, Brian, Jenn B. (observer)
3/8	Aaron, Herm, Ali, Brian, Jerry H. (observer)
3/15	Aaron, Darlys, Diane, Rockelle R. (observer)
3/22	Aaron, Darlys, Diane, Ruth S. (observer)
3/29	Aaron, Darlys, Diane, Elaine S. (observer)

*Unable to serve on your date?
Please call someone else on the list and trade days.*



March 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:30 a.m. Worship & Communion 11:00 a.m. Sunday School	2 6:00 p.m. GEMS	3 9:00 a.m. Elders 6:00 p.m. Richards' Study	4 9:45 a.m. Women's Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Deacons	5 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 7:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Praise Team Practice	6 6:00 p.m. GEMS Bunco & Dinner Fundraiser	7
8 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Sunday School 4:30 pm Roberts' Group 4:30 Jesus Gathering 7:00 p.m. Laniga Group	9 7:00 p.m. Friendship Class	10 6:30 p.m. Boer's Study	11 9:45 a.m. Women's Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Council	12 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 7:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study	13	14
15 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Sunday School FAMILY PROMISE MARCH 15-21	16 6:00 p.m. GEMS	17 6:00 p.m. Richards' Bible Study	18 9:45 a.m. Women's Bible Study	19 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 7:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Praise Team Practice	20	21
22 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Sunday School 4:30 pm Roberts' Group 7:00 p.m. Laniga Group	23 7:00 p.m. Friendship Class	24 6:30 p.m. Boer's Bible Study	25 9:45 a.m. Women's Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Worship Planning Team	26 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 7:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Praise Team Practice		28
29 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Sunday School Potluck Lunch	30 6:00 p.m. GEMS	31				