

# Heartbeat

## Communities Practice Vulnerability

By Pastor Scott Roberts

A community that loves and serves one another, practices times of fellowship, and incorporates others will also be a community that practices vulnerability. To understand why vulnerability is necessary, one must first understand what vulnerability is. Vulnerability means that one is exposed to the possibility of being harmed or attacked. The vulnerable person opens his or her life to others who can theoretically cause pain in return. Sometimes this pain is caused by the rejection that follows when something is revealed. Sometimes the pain is caused by others misusing or mishandling the information released. But the community that genuinely wants to develop deep relationships will be a place where people regularly practice opening themselves up to others.

Imagine a group of people who never took a risk in revealing themselves. A conversation might go something like this:

What's your name?  
*I will not tell you; you might stalk me on the web.*

What part of town do you live in?  
*If I told you, you might think less of me.*

What kind of work do you do?  
*It's none of your business.*

(Continued on the next page.)



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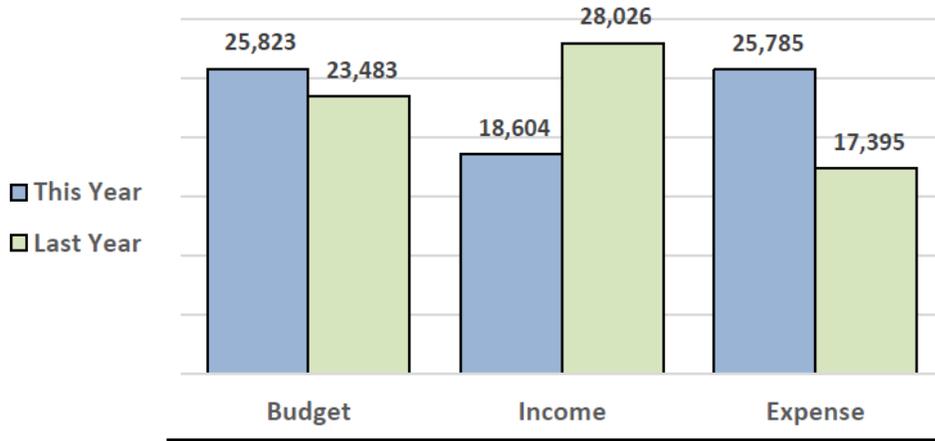
## **Communities Practice Vulnerability**

Giving answers to these questions requires the risk of basic vulnerability, but many of us realize that the risk of this level of vulnerability is worth the reward that comes in making friends. It is hard to be friends with someone whose name you don't know, whose work you cannot relate to, and whose fellowship you refuse to engage.

But it isn't this kind of vulnerability that genuine communities need. They need a level of community that goes even deeper. People need places where they can safely talk about their marital and parenting struggles. People need to be able to be open about their psychological difficulties – struggles with depression, anxiety, fear, etc. People need to know that they can honestly answer the question, "How are you doing?" and know that the person on the receiving end will receive the answer and respond in a way that displays love and grace. We also need people who can hold us accountable in the places where our sin seems to be strong. Our battle against sin can be bolstered by others who come alongside us, not to judge us but to pray with us, to encourage us, and to share similar struggles so that we realize we are not alone in the battles of life. All of this requires vulnerability in our church community.

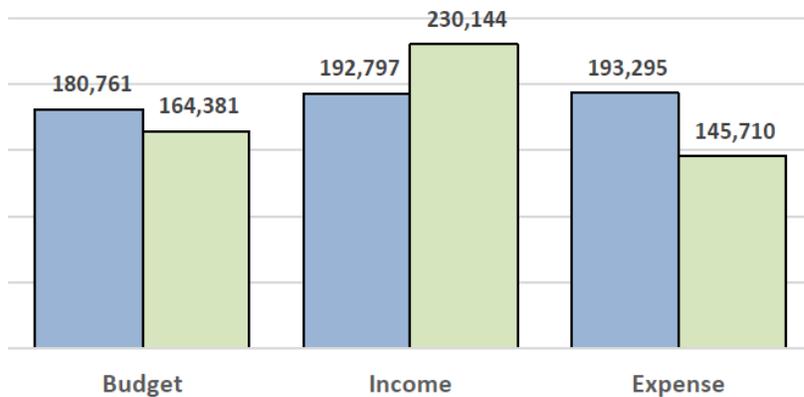
A community that can't foster this level of intimacy will miss so much of what God wants for his people. We are to be people who carry one another's burdens. Practically, this will require a high level of confidentiality, i.e., no personal conversations will be shared without permission. Furthermore, we strive for a two-way street model where those who open themselves up to others are responded to in kind. As we practice vulnerability regularly, we will find it permeating every nook and cranny of our church life. We will find that as people share, there is nothing to fear, but rather love, grace, and acceptance become more and more a hallmark of our common life. May we strive to be a vulnerable community.

Monthly Financial Update – June

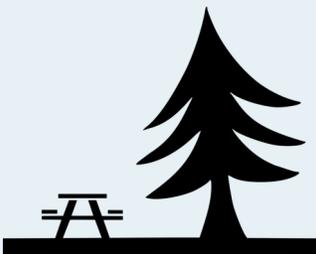


HCC  
June  
Giving

Seven Months – December to June



## Potluck Get-Togethers



Place: Birch Bay State Park (Permit Required)

Date: Saturday, August 6

Time: 3:00 p.m. with dinner @ 5:30 p.m.

Menu: Hot dogs/hot dog buns. condiments (provided)

Salads, pork & beans (warmed)

Desserts

Each is responsible for bringing their own chair, table service, and beverage

A sign up sheet will be available for each potluck to have more people willing to set-up/take down/wipe each table, set tables (when potlucks are scheduled at church), clean-up.

**SCHEDULED POTLUCKS:**

Sunday, October 9 at Church, noon

Saturday, February 11 (Birthday/Valentine Dinner), 6 p.m.

Sunday, April 16 at Church, noon

Sunday, June 25 at Church with an invitation to have Legacy Church join us!

A new sign up sheet available for each potluck that is scheduled for church.

Thanks in advance to all for your willingness to serve in some capacity when these potlucks are scheduled.

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# Encouragement from Encouragement

## Part Three

By Pastor Ethan Rogers

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Last month, we discussed the layers of context that effective encouragement is contingent upon, and established an earnest, patient, and listening presence as a necessary baseline for effective encouragement. This month, I would like to focus on the practical side of encouragement, that is, that portion that can be taught.

From a Scriptural perspective, we have already encountered the chief necessity to effective encouragement, that is, Ephesians 4:29 and speaking encouragement “to the need.” In last month’s article, I mentioned how this instruction compels us to greater awareness of those around us, how it demands that we be knowledgeable enough in the individual, our relationship to that individual, their feelings, and the circumstance they are facing. As a natural result, then, a great deal of what will be helpful in any given instance cannot be taught. However, one can learn what to look for, and how to utilize what one knows to become a more effective encourager. This will be our purpose today:

### **The Circumstance**

The circumstance is a necessary component in assessing how best to encourage anyone; it is the circumstance (more likely than not) that has created the need for encouragement. When considering the circumstance, and how best to factor in its parameters into your desire to encourage another person, consider first the nature of the circumstance; does the distressing circumstance come from a relationship the individual has with another person? Is it a form of spiritual warfare? Is it a result of a longstanding battle in mental health? Is it based in a failure of the individual? Can it be remedied by the individual, or is it unalterable and unavoidable? If it can be remedied, what would it take to create the necessary relief? If it is unalterable, what would it take to endure the circumstance? Could you, if you were given permission to, help them end the unpleasant portions of the circumstance, or would that prove either unwise or uncouth? In asking questions like this, we begin to come to a better, more comprehensive perspective, not only on what caused the issue, but also what we can do to encourage the brother or sister to overcome it.

### **The Individual and Our Relationship to Them**

The individual in need of encouragement is an imperative factor to consider; if one does not know the individual’s personality, their history, their likes and dislikes, weaknesses and strengths, or their disposition, one will not succeed in encouragement. If I encouraged a colleague the way I would a frightened child, then it would not work. If I attempted to encourage a colleague who had spent many years working alongside me by offering encouragement befitting a new hire, then it would not work. The reassurances must be different because of the individual’s life preceding the encouragement, and most especially, our position within that individual’s life. It is fortuitous, then, that our inquiries into one often reveal something of the other; we cannot understand the individual without drawing on their relationship to us. What questions, then, can we ask ourselves that will help us understand the individual: How old are they? Where do I know them from? Have I known them long? Are they married? Do they have children? Do they come from a good and loving family? Am I a part of their family? Are they more consistently my advisor, or do I advise them? Are we equals? Are they outgoing or withdrawn? Do they understand themselves well? What flaws do they have? What gifts do they have? Are they agreeable or disagreeable? Am I on good terms with them? Do they know me well? Have I experienced what they are experiencing? Questions of this variety will encourage us to think of the other and their position in life analytically, and so allow us to better determine how to respond. Each of these questions reveal underlying factors about how the person is likely to respond to and appreciate, as well as what will upset them or cause frustration for them. Consider these as you seek to encourage.

### **The Feelings of the Individual**

“What is the individual feeling?” This is a seemingly foolish question; “Obviously the person is feeling discouraged!” However, discouragement can be brought about by a number of negative emotions: anger, sadness, and fear, among others. Each of these emotions require different tactics and tones, hence allowing us another way to narrow down how we ought respond:

### **A. Anger**

The chief result of anger is a volatile desire for action against that which caused it; when one is attempting to encourage someone away from anger, or away from an enangered discouragement, one must seek a calm tone of voice, and one must not associate oneself directly with the instigating agent of the anger, even if the agent involved in the provocation is ultimately either a delusion or exaggeration. One must instead work to listen to the anger being expressed, and convey genuine concern and empathy to the enangered; this will help soothe the anger. Once the anger is soothed, then one can actually begin to address the issues at hand; it is typically best to do this, not by diminishing the slight received, but by magnifying the offended party's character, or, more accurately, by encouraging them to let it go. "Honestly, friend, I'm sorry you're so angry but I'm happy to know that you're going to let it go; there's more than enough Christ in you to put this behind you, and show love to so-and-so in spite of them doing such-and-such." This should help encourage them to let go of the anger, and try again.

### **B. Sadness**

Sadness is, perhaps, the second most common form of discouragement; when bad things come to us, we are likely to become melancholy. In this particular case, the best thing an encourager can do is listen, as before. This will be helpful to their state of mind (as listening diligently conveys love), and it will set up safeguards early on so that you don't overwhelm nor disenfranchise the saddened brother or sister with high-sighted advice or empty cheers. Once this has been done, the encourager must be careful to strike an optimistic, yet down-to-earth pattern of speech. Commiseration, despite its comforts, is not encouragement; neither is naive optimism. Balancing empathy with hope can often be difficult, so for those trying to do exactly that, begin by asking questions about the discouraging, saddening circumstance, namely questions aimed at understanding what makes it sad to them. This will not only help you understand, but also help them understand themselves as well. After you sufficiently understand the situation, express that understanding to them in ways that show their reaction is justifiable. If it is not, be very precise in noting which parts of their perspective is. It is at this point you need to read the person; do they want solutions, or will they be encouraged merely by you listening and understanding them, as you already have. It often depends on the issue and gravity of the issue, but most consistently depends on the individual. If all the individual needs is to be understood, then understand them, and watch as the sadness begins to diminish. If solutions are needed, then offer them cautiously and in light of the questions you have already asked. In this way, one 'weeps with those who weep' without betraying the command to "encourage one another."

### **C. Fear**

Fear is perhaps the most common of all discouragements; fear comes about whenever people believe that something which they lack the resources to overcome will cause either their ruination, the ruination of someone they love, or else the world as they desire it to be. It enters existence when a lack of control is realized, and is sustained by a continued belief that there is nothing that can change the status quo. In this sense, fear is deeply rooted in a Christian understanding of reality, whether it is experienced by a Christian or not. According to the Christian, no human holds true control over a situation, it is all subject to God's authority. This is why, when one is attempting to encourage one who is fearful, one should speak of God's power and His providence, of His love and care. Recalling that God is in control should be an immense comfort to the Christian. However, one should not stop there, for the Lord Christ has given us the Body for the sake of working alongside each other to further His Kingdom. Therefore, we are His tools, and when we are given opportunity to assuage fear, we are also given opportunity to give more than words or a listening ear; we are also enabled to aid the person through the discouragement. This could mean helping them do the work required to overcome, it could involve praying with them, it could involve reminding them of the truth; regardless of what it involves, if it is necessary to the encouragement, then we are obliged as brothers and sisters to accomplish it.

There are many more things which could be said, but for now, I wish only to encourage you, myself; I know that you've had busy weeks over the past month, and you'll undoubtedly have busy ones coming. I know that you're often at the end of your rope, and often stressed or worn out. I know that you need rest to keep going, and I wouldn't dream of denying it to you. But I want to remind you of something you already know; the whole of humanity feels much the same. That is why Christ has called us the way He has, why we are to encourage and love each other; because the world is too battered by life to do it. By encouraging others, we bring Him glory, and teach the world that they need Him. May the Spirit guide you along the path of righteousness, at which end the Son awaits you in the glory given Him by the Father, who calls you child.

# Deacons Digest

By Rachel Carlson

It was shared at the appointment of the new elders and deacons that God has assured us He equips those He calls into His service. This assurance was a topic of discussion at my first Deacons and Council meeting and several conversations within the church during this time of transition. God equips those He calls as is evident in so many stories in the Bible, in the commentaries and histories of God's servants from the Old Testament to today. But how fast are we to protest, ignore, resist, or otherwise delay answering God's calling? I am guilty of some of the very same things Moses used in his protest to God's calling him to face Pharaoh in Exodus 4:10-11. I am not eloquent; I am slow of speech and slow of tongue. I've considered Jeremiah's doubts of being too young (Jeremiah 1:6) to have the life experience needed to serve Him properly. I am not good enough (Gideon in Judges 6:14). I am too flawed. I am not worthy. Oh, how the doubts pile up!

While I have no plans to pull a "Jonah" (seriously... fish that are bigger than medium-sized dogs terrify me) I have forgotten and/or ignored God's assurance that He will equip. He will provide. The assurance in Hebrews 13:20-21 that says He will "...make [us] complete in every good work to do His will, working in [us] what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." I am convicted by this promise but so very encouraged and relieved to have this assurance! It is our hope you find the same peace and assurance as God calls to you.

Side note: please know that I meant "too young" as in I only have \*cough-cough 1\* years of experience from which to pull. I have been thoroughly reminded of my chronological wear/tear by having to explain to one of my employees that music used to come on a thing called a "CD". And that employee was younger than my oldest child.

## Interfaith Coalition and Family Promise

By Lorraine Brouwer

*TAKEN FROM A FACEBOOK POST:*

"During the six months a single mom and her little boy lived in one of our emergency shelters, we helped the mom secure a childcare subsidy and get her child enrolled in summer childcare. She also achieved a promotion at her job, found a new doctor, was treated to weekly meal kits from our amazing congregation partners, and received deposit assistance on her rental apartment. All of that added up to this mom and little boy securing their own home! "

We (Hope in Christ) partner with Family Promise and other congregations to provide several meal kits 4 times a year to families experiencing homelessness. Thank you to each of you who has helped this year, and in years past with preparing meals and delivering! You are appreciated by the families and the Family Promise staff!



## WORLD RENEW UPDATE - WHATCOM COUNTY

Edited and Submitted by Lorraine Brouwer

One of the supported missions of the Christian Reformed Church is World Renew, which is the agency that responds to disasters. Jan and Randy Bode (former members of Hope in Christ and current members of Third CRC in Lynden) are regional managers for the agency. Jan recently sent an update on the Whatcom Flood Recovery and how World Renew is involved.

**WHAT WORLD RENEW HAS BEEN DOING:** The immediate response to a flood is to remove dirty and wet items from the home and mitigate mold. World Renew supplied mold misters and a mold killing agent. This was used extensively throughout the flood areas. It is important to kill all mold as mold is harmful to humans and grows back quickly if not totally removed.

WR Regional Manager (Randy Bode) and Area Rep (Ken Herwerden) were involved in the daily briefings immediately after the flood. They were able to listen for those needs where WR has expertise and resources to provide guidance and hands-on assistance. They are staying in touch with the local leadership team, the WHATCOM LONG TERM RECOVERY GROUP (WLTRG) by attending biweekly zoom meetings.

Prior to starting reconstruction of homes three things are needed:

1. Money for materials
2. Materials
3. Manpower

Money is first needed to hire a construction supervisor. This is generally a paid position because it requires expertise and knowledge of local codes, and becomes a full time job through the period of recovery. Estimates must be calculated and documented for each home to be repaired. WR teamed up with one of our disaster partner agencies UMCOR (United Methodist). UMCOR has committed to provide funds to hire the Construction Supervisor. WR has committed to bring volunteer estimators. After the estimates are done and the CS is in place, materials can be acquired. Once materials are available, workers can be arranged for.

**World Renew future work in Whatcom County:** WR is now working with WLTRG to schedule short term groups (one week intervals) to help with remaining cleanup. Eventually, when adequate housing is established, WR intends to provide adult volunteer teams for two and three week intervals to do the rebuilds. WR also provides tools for its workers." WR requires its workers to subscribe to the purpose to "be the hands and feet of Jesus to show His love to the needy." Workers need not be skilled in construction techniques as WR provides training and proper supervision on the job. If you want to volunteer with WR for Whatcom Flood Recovery (or disaster response in general) for short or long term work, please contact World Renew. More info is available on their website, [worldrenew.net](http://worldrenew.net). Randy and Jan Bode are also available to answer initial questions about volunteering and how to get involved in the Whatcom county effort.

# August 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 12:15 p.m. Zoom Lunchtime Prayer	3 11:45 a.m. Elders Meeting GEMS & Friends Crafts	4 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 7 p.m. Deacons Meeting	5	6 Potluck at Birch Bay Arrive 3:00 Dinner 5:30
7 9:30 a.m. Worship with Communion 11:00 Membership Class	8	9 12:15 p.m. Zoom Lunchtime Prayer	10	11 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 7 p.m. Council Meeting	12	13
14 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Membership Class 5:00 p.m. Jesus Gathering 6-9 p.m. Youth Event At Parsonage	15	16 12:15 p.m. Zoom Lunchtime Prayer	17	18 6:30 a.m. Men's Group	19 September Heartbeat Deadline	20
21 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Membership Class	22	23 12:15 p.m. Zoom Lunchtime Prayer	24 Worship Planning Team Meeting	25 6:30 a.m. Men's Group	26	27
28 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Membership Class 6-9 p.m. Youth Event	29	30 12:15 p.m. Zoom Lunchtime Prayer	31			

## Happy Birthday

7 Don K  
13 Joe Z  
15 Micah O  
15 Zachariah K  
15 Scott E



17 Dan G  
22 Heidi K  
24 Abee K  
31 Don N



## **Friendship: A Time to Celebrate**

Submitted by Tanya Obbink

Friendship is a ministry for “people with and without disabilities growing in faith together” ([friendship.org](http://friendship.org)). This past year 30 Friends and 13 mentors gathered to worship God through song, prayer and studying his word.

We celebrate God’s truth being revealed through the study of his word. This year we began learning about how to choose courage, knowing God is fighting for us. We were challenged to choose to be courageous, trusting in God each day, no matter what. This was a great lead into our next study called Jesus: Face to Face, which we plan to resume in the fall. Jesus: Face to Face points us to Jesus to help us through life’s difficulties and encourages us to be the one who points others, who are struggling, to Jesus as well.

Singing songs and prayer are integral parts of our time together. We also try to find ways to serve or fundraise to support others. In 2019 we had begun raising money for the Max Higbee Center. We resumed this fundraiser, which was halted due to COVID, and gave them the donation at their open house celebration. Many of our Friends enjoy the services Max Higbee offers, as do countless other people in our county. Summer 2021 the mentors toured this facility to increase our understanding of this integral part of our Friends lives’ and to forge a relationship with this organization.

The highlight for Friendship this past year was a thought provoking Christmas program, graciously authored by Christie Miller. She has already written a new script for the coming December program. It’s a little more playful in nature but also contains a great reminder. You won’t want to miss the annual Christmas Program on December 12 at 7pm! It’s a fun way to celebrate God’s gift to us: Jesus.

Enjoying a snack to end our meeting and sharing about life with each occurs consistently. Opportunities to see each other outside our regular meetings are also appreciated. The Bell’s blessed us with free tickets to attend one of their games this summer. Around 35 of us gathered to watch the 6-1 Bell’s victory. Sitting in the bleachers together we celebrated the opportunity to be together half-way through the ‘loong’ summer break.

September 12, Lord willing, we’ll celebrate the beginning of the Friendship ministry for this coming school year when we’ll meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays most months thru May. If you know of someone who may be interested in joining us, please give them my contact details ([friendship@hopeinchristchurch.org](mailto:friendship@hopeinchristchurch.org)). You can also direct them to our HCC website and/or the [friendship.org](http://friendship.org) website.

(Continued on the next page.)

Please keep the Friendship ministry in your prayers:

- God would guide all the planning and implementing required
- God would be at work in the hearts and minds of each person who is present each meeting
- God would provide what is needed in his perfect timing and way
- We would have eyes to see where God is at work and take time to celebrate what he has done and is doing
- Mentors would connect meaningfully with our Friends, their families and caregivers

Thank you for your ongoing support, allowing the Friendship ministry to continue. Through your prayers, the faithful serving of each mentor, and God's strength, direction and workings, may we have much to celebrate as we look back on all that transpires over the next 10 months!

## Northwest Hispanic Ministry Report for July 2022

By Pastor Joe Strong

Have you ever immigrated to another country? I know that many people did after the Second World War. My wife and I have been immigrants, we have lived in 3 different countries and have a good idea how hard it is. In the last few months, we have had a wave of new immigrants arriving in our area. They all arrive legally, coming mainly from Columbia and Venezuela. They know little English. They come with the clothes on their backs, and often know no one. They are fleeing extreme violence. Then God leads them to the realm of our church Amor Viviente. What a blessing our church has become! Our church has become a refuge. Our members work together to bless the newcomers. People who have had little or no knowledge of Jesus are coming into the light. Our church is full. We are in great need of housing in the Lynden area. Help us, pray for us.

Both of our churches have a lot of young people. That makes for exciting church. I have been backing away from being the person in front and I am teaching several people to take the reins of running the churches. Being full of young people also has its trials and joys. We have had two weddings this month and a couple of unexpected pregnancies. Both Pastor Marco and myself have had to co-sign for apartments that several members are moving to as they move up. I get the privilege to be in the middle of all this. We grow leaders. Pray for us.

Recently one young family had their 5 day old baby, Carlos, spend a week in Children's Hospital in Seattle. Our church prayed and prayed. Carlos is home and is healing. A man with wife and 4 children living here, had to go back to Mexico in order to solve his immigration issues. Our church prayed and prayed. He is back.

Our seminary students have just finished the first quarter of studies. A lot of students were taken back by the amount of work. These courses are university level courses. I was very proud when the professors told me how well they did. Keep praying for this. These are the future leaders of the Spanish speaking CRC.

And you dear reader, thank you for your support. Your prayers and financial help are very important. This work is very important. God is blessing this ministry.

