

# TOWN HALL MEETING

JOIN US FOR A TOWN HALL MEETING  
SUNDAY | OCTOBER 11 | 5 PM

Pastor Corey & the Church Leadership Team will host a Town Hall Meeting to discuss plans for reopening and to answer your questions. **The Zoom link will be sent by mail in early October.**

Limited in-person participation will be available for those without access to the Internet.

## QUESTIONS?

Contact the church office:  
(509) 878-1509

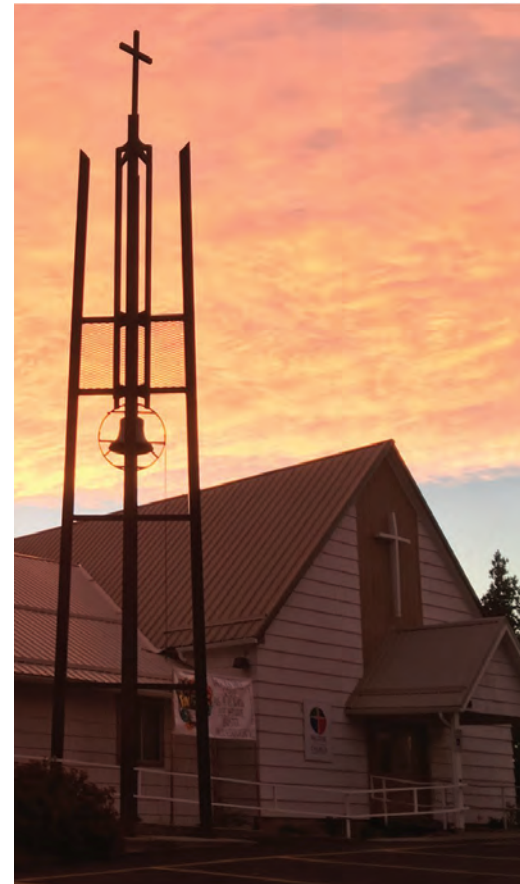
Or...e-mail Pastor Corey:  
corey@palousechurch.org



## JOHN READING PLAN

Join us on a journey through the Gospel of John. We're recommending a simple plan that covers one chapter a day. Simply pick a day to start and read one chapter every day and you'll be done in 21 days. If you want to join a You Version Bible App reading plan, let us know and we'll help you get started. New groups are starting all the time.

Day 1 - John 1	Day 12 - John 12
Day 2 - John 2	Day 13 - John 13
Day 3 - John 3	Day 14 - John 14
Day 4 - John 4	Day 15 - John 15
Day 5 - John 5	Day 16 - John 16
Day 6 - John 6	Day 17 - John 17
Day 7 - John 7	Day 18 - John 18
Day 8 - John 8	Day 19 - John 19
Day 9 - John 9	Day 20 - John 20
Day 10 - John 10	Day 21 - John 21
Day 11 - John 11	



Palouse Federated Church  
635 N. Bridge St.  
Palouse, WA 99161  
(509) 878-1509  
www.palousechurch.org

Corey Laughary, Senior Pastor  
Cell | (509) 336-9154  
corey@palousechurch.org

Vanessa Moore, Youth Leader  
Cell | (509) 595-1910  
vanessa@palousechurch.org

Hua Ming Newman, Worship Arts  
& Tech Assistant  
huaming@palousechurch.org

Tim Sievers, Connection Director  
Cell | (509) 595-2778  
tim@palousechurch.org

# Connections

October 2020

## Unscheduled Chaos

Tina Laughary



I like to know what's next. I sort of LOVE my day planner and would find it hard to stumble my way through a day without it. I mean I can handle chaos—I have 3 kids and usually have an extra child or two hanging around. I am no stranger to chaos. But unscheduled chaos—unplanned chaos...that's where I struggle. It's not a new struggle, it's something I've been aware of for years. I've prayed many times for God to help me be flexible, to allow the plan to change at the last minute and not totally freak out. I thought I was making progress—I thought I was doing ok. And then 2020 hit. "Unscheduled Chaos" could be the title of a book written about the year 2020. We thought we knew where we were headed and then COVID-19 hit.

2020 has been hard. 2020 has been filled with unscheduled chaos. These statements are undeniable, they are both true. But I know another truth. A truth I have come to believe in a whole new way. God is still in charge in 2020. God still has good things to give us in 2020. If we allow Him, He can even lead us to places of unparalleled growth and character development in 2020. Here is the question that needs to be answered: Will you be brave enough to grow to grow in 2020? Sure, it would be easier to hide from the pain, throw the covers over our heads and numbly "wait it out" until life is "normal" again. But, I don't want to get to the other side of pandemic and have nothing to show for it. Don't misunderstand me. I am


not talking about putting yourself or your neighbor at risk. I am talking about being vulnerable to God and asking him how you can get to work on growing right where you are planted—even if you are planted almost exclusively in your home right now.

All of this makes me think about God's people, the Jews, when they were ripped out of their homes, out of their land and taken captive by the Babylonians. All of their "normal" gone, they were forced to live as strangers in a strange land. They must have felt much the same as we do. They thought they knew what their "tomorrow" would look like only to find all of their plans ripped away. I am encouraged by the letter written to them on behalf of the Lord by the prophet Jeremiah:

*"Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. 6 Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and*

**Continued...Next Page**





### Covid-19 Education Mini Grants

Schooling in the midst of a pandemic brings about a host of unforeseen expenses. If you have encountered a need for education-related supplies unique to learning in the Covid-19 pandemic, we invite you to submit an application for our Covid-19 Education Mini Grants for Garfield and Palouse area teachers and families.

A total of \$1,500 will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis, and the maximum grant amount is \$100.

**Applications are due by October 15, 2020.** Visit [palousechurch.org](http://palousechurch.org) for the easy online application.

give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. 7 But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare... 11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. 13 You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.”

Jeremiah 29: 4-7, 11-14

Certainly the Israelites deserved to sulk a bit, right? Everything they knew had been taken from them. But sulking was not the mission God had for them. God tells them to build and live, to plant and eat, to marry and reproduce. Basically God tells them to keep going, to use the gift of life He was giving them—to grow. This was not a time for them to hunker down and survive until God came to their rescue (which He did). This was a time for them to thrive. Do you believe God is calling you to thrive in 2020? We have 3 months, one full quarter of 2020 left. Will we just survive? Or will we thrive?

Again, I want to make sure you understand me. I am not calling you to go out and live like COVID-19 is not happening, or to ignore the suffering it has brought. I am not telling you to live recklessly and ignore the necessary changes we must make to keep our families and neighbors safe. What I am saying is please do not give up on 2020. Do not waste the precious gift of today, simply because it does not look the way

“Our God has a future and a hope for us, let’s not give up on Him.”

you hoped it would.

I still don’t like unscheduled chaos. I don’t know if I will ever “like” it. But, I am going to choose to embrace it, to make the best of it, to see it as an opportunity to grow, to embrace the potential of the time God has given me. I am going to write down some goals for the last quarter of 2020. Nothing is ever “real” for me until I write it down. I will be doing that as we head into October. I encourage you to give it a try as well. We will get through this together friends. Our God has a future and a hope for us, let’s not give up on Him.

### My Goals

October | November | December

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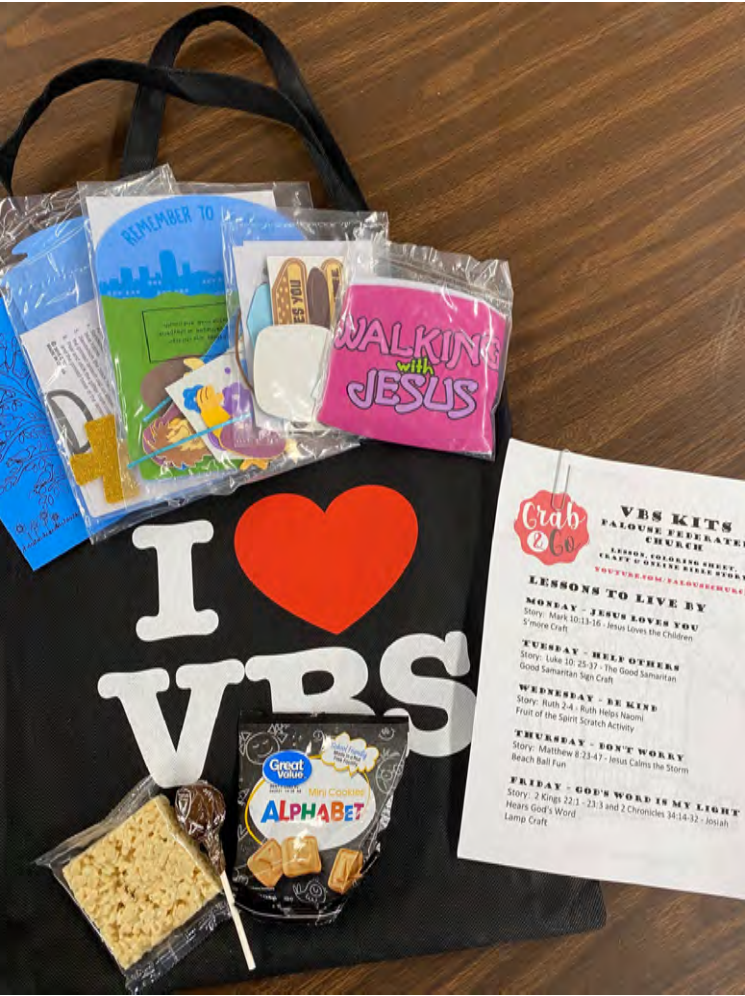
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## Covid-19 Can’t Stop VBS

The pandemic changed the way we do things around here, but that didn’t keep us from offering Vacation Bible School to area youth. Thanks to the creativity of our children’s ministry team we were able to offer Grab & Go VBS for area youth and their families. Our theme was “Lessons to Live By” and each day a lesson, craft and video Bible story were provided to help kids learn:

- Jesus Loves You
- Help Others
- Be Kind
- Don’t Worry
- God’s Word is My Light

A special thank you to Brenda Cook for orchestrating it all, with her helpful assistants, Sarah Anderson for coordinating the Garfield distribution, Pastor Marty and Pastor Dean in Garfield for their support and work with distribution, Carol Fielder for recording the wonderful Bible stories (still on YouTube if you want to check them out), and Hua Ming Newman for recording, editing, and uploading all the videos.



**Top:** Contents of the bag, including craft/activities, lesson sheets and snacks. **Bottom:** Liam Cook & Ayden Bassler hand out a Grab & Go VBS kit to Asher Sievers. **Left:** Charlie Palmer, all smiles, shows off her completed project.



Investing in our Sanctuary for the 21st Century

Palouse Federated Church Executive Board

Dear Fellow PFC Folks,

It is our honor to serve as your leadership team for our local church. Part of the responsibility you have entrusted us with is to steward and develop our facility to best achieve our God-given mission. Since 1957, when our local church founders built the facility here on the North Hill of Palouse, this building, together with its additions and changes, has served as an outpost of the Kingdom, holding continuous worship services on Sunday mornings and myriad other outreach and ministry activities as well as community events. This year, however, has been different, and right now our sanctuary isn’t hosting in-person worship, though it is the location for the filming of our worship services. This has been a seismic shift for us and given us much to think and pray on.

Because of this, it may seem like a strange time to invest in the sanctuary, but these days of pandemic-based ministry have crystalized for us the necessity of growth, flexibility and adaptability for the future. We never dreamed of having an online ministry as robust as what we currently offer, but our present circumstances have brought us to this place, and interestingly, expanded our Sunday worship ministry to reach far-away places, across the country and around the world.

As many already have heard, the Executive Board has taken steps to invest in our sanctuary. We can assure you that we are thankful and appreciative for the legacy of past leaders that built and stewarded the PFC building; and we recognize that the sanctuary and pews were where many faith decisions were made and prayers have been offered. The sanctuary has hosted weddings, funerals, dedications, baptisms, confirmations, vow renewals, baccalaureates and more. The way God worked in the past should be rightly remembered and honored. The Executive Board believes that in order to best honor the mission of our local church to host worship services, memorials, weddings and other events in our future it was best to update our facility in one particular way. We decided to remove the pews and to replace them with chairs for seating in both the main floor of the sanctuary and the balcony. This decision was made with our deep concern being our charge to have a facility that can best serve our mission as a church and to have a facility that blesses us and our community going forward.

The main reasons we opted to move away from our beloved and beautiful pews to chair seating include:

- 1. Safety
- 2. Health
- 3. Accessibility

- 4. Flexibility
- 5. Financial Stewardship
- 6. Comfort, especially for those in pain

With the new arrangement of seating we will now have multiple ways for people to safely enter and exit the sanctuary. Also, the narrow distance between pews was difficult for some people to navigate **safely**.

Having chairs allows us to group people up in ways that we can have the best arrangements for **healthy** distance, in cases where we need it.

Chairs allow those with disabilities to sit easily wherever they want. Our pews made it difficult for people with walkers or wheelchairs to access much of the sanctuary. Improving **accessibility** gives all people access to the sanctuary space and is important to our congregation.

Having a **flexible** seating arrangement and the ability to use the sanctuary space in different arrangements, both smaller groups and groups that would want to meet face to face, rather than facing forward, gives us more options in our facility for different types of worship gatherings. We believe worship gatherings will always be important to our local mission. With our current and potential future challenges of Covid-19 and other illnesses, it only makes sense to have our sanctuary become a flexible space.

We have been processing the decision of sanctuary seating for years. The previous plan was for custom upholstered cushions. The cost for these cushions would have been essentially the same as the cost for the set of chairs. The costs being relatively the same, the cushions did not address the other issues above and only addressed improving **comfort**, which was not the most important issue for us. Since chairs will likely have the same lifespan as the cushions, it seemed a better **stewardship** decision to invest in chairs for all the above reasons and additionally for the comfort they will provide for those who are uncomfortable in pews.

Pews were the best and right option when the church was built. They are still the more beautiful and aesthetically pleasing option, we don’t deny that. But they are not the option that best serves our local church going forward. We pray that this is not understood as an insult to our past church leaders. We think they were wonderful leaders who bravely formed a unique type of Federated Church - and took all kinds of risks, including leaving entire buildings, pews and all, to start something new together for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ on the Palouse. Our sincere prayer is to continue the tradition of stewarding a facility that best helps us fulfill our mission and also blesses our community.

A Prayer for Today...

Tim Sievers

O Lord our God,  
You are the One...  
The One who protects,  
The One who guides,  
The One who quenches our thirst,  
The One who satisfies our hunger,  
The One who keeps his promises,  
The One who gives light and hope in our darkest days.

We sing your praises!  
For you are gracious and merciful,  
Slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.  
You were in the beginning,  
You are now,  
And evermore shall be.  
Together with all creation we declare your glory,  
We proclaim your excellency to the nations.  
You are our strength, Oh, God,  
And we long to dwell in your presence.  
Our hearts rejoice in your goodness.  
For you have worked beautiful miracles in our lives

O God, we confess that we have sinned,  
We have not always honored you.  
We’ve placed the desires of our flesh  
Above Gospel of Christ.  
We have allowed seeds of bitterness to grow into hatred,  
We have sown division instead of peace,  
We have not cared for the least of these,  
We have not loved our neighbors,  
We have not loved you as we ought to –  
With all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.  
And still,  
Still you love us.  
Still you invite us into your kingdom work.  
Still you reach out to us.

And so, we give you thanks  
Thanks for your unchanging, abounding and steadfast love  
A love that is...  
Vast, Unmeasured, Boundless, Free  
Thank you for your continued goodness,  
O Lord our God, our provider,  
Just as you rained bread and quail for the Israelites in the desert,  
So you are good to us,  
Providing for all our needs,  
Giving us what is right.  
Help us to see your hand at work  
Put to death our complaining when your provision  
doesn’t look like what we expect.  
And nurture in our hearts a spirit of gratitude.

We pray for your church, O God,  
That we would be your light in this world,

Messengers of hope to a world trapped  
in the darkness of sin.  
We pray for your people, O God,  
That all would turn their hearts to you,  
Putting to death our earthly desires,  
And living in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ,  
Standing firm in unity,  
Striving side by side,  
That your Kingdom might be made real in the here and now.

We pray for our leaders:  
Our president and congress,  
Our governor and legislature,  
Our mayor and city council,  
Our pastor and church leadership team.  
Give them wisdom,  
Give them discernment,  
Give them courage to do what is right.  
And for those of us arranged under their leadership,  
Give us humility,  
Give us compassion,  
Give us understanding.

We pray for the helpers –  
Our law enforcement professionals,  
Firefighters,  
Emergency Medical workers,  
Doctors and nurses,  
Protect them in the face of danger.

We pray for our educators and school administrators,  
For students and parents  
At the start of a new and unusual year.  
Help them to persevere in the face of difficulty,  
And may they have grace for each other  
As they all learn together.

We pray for those who are sick and dying,  
We ask for healing,  
We pray for comfort.

We pray for those who have lost their homes,  
And maybe even their livelihoods due to the recent fires.  
Strengthen them for the journey to come.  
And strengthen us to come alongside our neighbors,  
As bearers of your light and your hope,  
And helpers in the midst of their difficulty.

Give ear, O God,  
To our prayers.  
Transform our hearts  
To be more like yours.  
And light our way,  
This day and forevermore.  
We ask this all in the name of Jesus,  
Amen.



# Wildfire Relief Fund



Many have inquired about a way to help those who have experienced great loss due to the many wildfires across Eastern Washington. While many immediate needs have been met thanks to an outpouring of generosity from the community, there will be medium and long-term needs that must be addressed. Pastor Corey is making connections in affected communities to identify avenues for us to help. In the meantime, the church has established a Fire Relief Fund to collect donations to assist as needs arise. If you would like to contribute to the fund, you may do so online at [www.palousechurch.org](http://www.palousechurch.org) - just choose online giving and select the "Fire Relief" fund. If you want to give by check, just write "Fire Relief" in the memo line and send it to the church: 635 N. Bridge St., Palouse, WA 99161.

**\*Hybrid = Zoom + In-Person**

Tues.	5:30 AM	Mens Hybrid
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**Tues. | 10 AM | Mixed In-Person**

**Wed. | 9 AM | Ladies Hybrid**

**Wed. | 6:30 PM | Mixed Hybrid**

**Thurs. | 4 PM | Ladies Hybrid**

# Zoom Prayer Meeting

**Join us every Sunday after the 9 & 11 AM services for an online Zoom Prayer Meeting. Contact your online greeter for the link or ask Pastor Corey to e-mail the Zoom meeting information to you.**

# Who Is Jesus to You?

Vanessa Moore

When I was asked to write an article this week, my immediate thought was, "Oh, I don't know if I can handle that right now..." I had a busy weekend ahead and was already struggling to keep up. To be honest, I was still thinking of a way to decline right up until the last minute. Then, at the most random time, a thought came to me. A question that we'd been asked by Pastor Corey, and then again at the Bible Study I attended that week. "Who is Jesus?"

**To me, Jesus is  
Everything. He's  
my rock. He IS  
love, and light, and  
all that is good.**

to ask various family members this question: "Who is Jesus to YOU?"

Zoey (Age 5): Jesus is God's son. They live in the clouds.

Cooper (Age 2): Doggy! God's still alive! (A favorite song right now)

## Grandma: Leader, Teacher, Counselor

## Mother-in-Law: Counselor, Protector, Healer

Dad: The way to salvation. The perfect example of how you should treat others and be in life.

Mom: The loving forgiver of my sins.

Sister: To me, Jesus is love, hope, grace, and a sense of peace knowing that my family and I are saved and protected because of Him.

Brother: Jesus is the foundation of who I am.

As you can see, I got a variety of answers, all beautiful and inspiring! This also led to some amazing conversations, as well as helped me to examine my own answer. To me, Jesus is Everything. He's my rock. He IS love, and light, and all that is good. Who is Jesus to YOU?



# Always Changing Life, Never Changing God

Hua Ming Newman

Life always changes and has unexpected turns. Who can we count on? When things are changing, we can always count on God to stay the same. On March 15, 2020 everything got shut down and everything changed. During this time, I did not know what to expect and I did not know what was going to happen. I was still in high school and I did not know if I was still going to graduate. At the church, everything has changed there too. It seemed like life got turned upside down and no one knew that this was going to happen.

In life, when everything changes, we feel like we need to try and find the best way to put it back to how it used to be. We work on finding ways to make it go back to “normal”, but what really is normal? Everyone around the world was wanting to go back to normal but no one really had a definition of normal.

During this time, all I could think about was going back to school and going back to church in person. We looked at what was going on and thought the changes were bad. We want things to stay the same because it is comfortable for us. Many of us did not rely on God; we decided to fight back, and we decided to hurt one and other because we were frustrated. I hate to admit it, but I fell into this too. I did not like being told what to do and how I should live, and I hated not



really being able to see people. I wanted so badly for everything to go back to normal.

I forgot to look beyond what was going on and realize the good work of the Lord. It took someone else to tell me to look to the Lord and give him my frustration. God taught and reminded me of things that I had forgotten and needed to learn. He reminded me that he is bigger than all of this and stronger than all of this. He reminded me that he can take my frustration and that He can handle the things I want to say to him. All I had to do was pray; all I had to do was give him my frustration and anger towards what is going on. Once I looked beyond what was going on and saw the great things he has been doing, I was able to work harder in school and I did everything I could to help the church. I was able to work at the church and do what I love to do. The Lord taught me that change is ok, because at the end there will always be good out of change.

Now I want to ask you this: Where is the good that has happened during these changes? Are you going to stay where you are, thinking everything sucks, or are you going to go find the good? I like to tell the youth group that this is like a storm and in any storm, there is the eye where the light shines through. Are you going to be stuck in the storm or are you going to go find the light of it? God is never changing, God has not changed, He is bigger than this and all we need to do is pray to him and tell him what you are frustrated about or angry about. God wants to talk to you and have a relationship with you. So right now, I ask you to pray to Him.

## Youth Group Activities

## Middle School Youth Group (Grades 6-8)

**Wednesdays | 6:30 - 7:30 PM**  
**Palouse Federated Church**

## High School Bible Study (Grades 9-12)

**Sundays | 6:30 - 7 PM**  
**Palouse Federated Church**

**Masks and permission slips required. Please contact Vanessa Moore for forms or with any questions:**

(509) 595-1910  
vanessa@palousechurch.org





# Common Yarrow and God’s Love

Tracy Lee Sievers



I love to grow beautiful things. When my family moved into the ministry house more than four years ago, I began immediately dreaming of growing beautiful things in our new space. Since then, I have planted flowers, added a little bit of hardscape, and pushed back the grass in hopes of seeing blooms and variety in the landscape around the property for my family and my neighbors to enjoy; always seeking to leave the space better than I found it. Yet, despite my best efforts to only plant things that will look lovely, I keep finding weeds among my carefully chosen cultivars.

My friend Vickie has told me several times how weeding her gardens teaches her about God’s love in her life. I’ve listened and learned but until this Spring, never myself experienced a direct lesson from God in the garden. There was a lot going on in our world, then and now; COVID-19, race riots, protests, shutdowns, and political disagreements. As I knelt in the garden one morning with a hand trowel and my garden gloves, apron on, I found lessons.

I had just weeded this particular garden bed extensively a few weeks before, spending hours on my knees digging out whatever I could see that I knew didn’t belong. For a while my garden looked lovely. The daffodils were blooming, and freeing the soil of those things I could see mucking up the bed made the blooms pop even more. I walked by it daily enjoying how lovely it all looked and opened the shades on the windows so I could see it from inside. Eventually the flowers faded, as flowers do, and the garden began its work of preparing the bulbs for next year’s petals, leaves gathering sunlight for photosynthesis to feed the tuber as the roots pulled nutrients from the soil gathering as much energy as possible before the heat of the summer caused the leaves to fade, pushing the plant into dormancy where it will wait for the early Spring next year when it once again bursts to life above the earth.

Slowly at first, then gaining size and growing ever faster thanks to the rainy days of late May and early June, I began to see them...the weeds. Even though I had just sifted the earth thoroughly, there they were: Dandelions, Clover, Crabgrass, and the like - they aren’t too hard to handle, a trowel and a little effort yields pretty easy picking, and if you dig deeply enough you can get the tap roots too, but there was one other nasty bugger in the ground causing me grief - Common Yarrow (also known as Milfoil, Bloodwort, or Devil’s Nettle). Common Yarrow grows a lateral rhizome that can spring forth a plant at any point and often puts off many all at the same time. These rhizomes run just a few inches below

the surface and can terminate a foot or more from where you see the leaves. They shoot out in all directions and until the plant begins to grow they continue to expand their territory without being seen, stealing the nutrients needed by the plants chosen so carefully for that space. To effectively remove Common Yarrow long term you have to dig laterally to remove the whole of the rhizome and all its roots and then fill the area with at least seven inches of good, clean soil. If you let the plant get too big then the only recourse is to mow it; not something you really desire doing in a flower bed.

As I knelt there digging out the Common Yarrow with my hand trowel I began thinking about what’s going on in our American culture. I began to see that, like the pesky rhizomes of the weed, the roots of racism run across our society unseen until suddenly some action spurs it into the open. We’ve all seen the reports: highways blocked by protests, looting & riots in the cities, families breaking from the choices of others, and hearts heavy under the weight of it all. How does this unseen but pervasive racism sit with me? What role do I play? Have I benefitted from a system I don’t recognize?

My parents taught me to welcome and love all people regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, or creed; that all people were made in God’s image and that it has nothing to do with how much melanin is in their skin, only that they are human. I have friends of many colors and faiths; and even in my own family line there are Native American threads. Yet, upon sight I appear as a white, middle-aged woman. I am not often questioned when I wander the aisles of a store, perusing their wares. I don’t usually get stopped for minor infractions like a taillight out or rolling through a stop sign. My friends don’t typically make comments about my whiteness or how well-written or well-spoken I am. Yet, these are things that happen to my fellow humans with darker skin than mine around our country every day. If I’m honest, I have to admit that I rarely notice the privilege with which I engage the world.

So what am I to do? How do I begin to climb out of my ignorance and unconscious participation in a system that I had nothing to do with setting up, but have continued to benefit from throughout my life?

I think the first thing to do is educate myself. To consider the thoughts and experiences of others without putting my own spin on it. To consider that my experience may not tell the whole story. To listen. To study. To grow. And to dig out any rhizomes of racism in my own heart and mind.

There are many Scriptures that speak to this, but a few have stood out to me:

Galatians 3:28 ~ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female,

for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Exodus 22:21 ~ Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt.

John 13:34 ~ A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

Genesis 1:26-27 ~ then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

1 John 3:15-16 ~ Anyone who hates his brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him. This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

While I worked in my garden that morning, mind turning as I considered all the things I’ve brought up here, and more, I was listening to one of my favorite singers, Nichole Nordeman. Some of her lyrics planted themselves in my mind and pushed me to consider something outside my own comfortable place. Here’s an excerpt from her song “Wide Eyed” -

They were tongue tied, drawn by their conclusions  
Would I have turned and walked away  
And laughed at what He had to say  
And casually dismissed Him as a fraud  
Unaware that I was staring at the image of my God

Nichole raised a serious question I needed to consider. Do I recognize that the person who has a different political affiliation from mine is made in the image of God? How about the people who choose to practice a different religion than I do? Those people are made in the image of God. Skin that appears differently than mine in color is made in the image of God. Do I treat people as made in God’s image? If I recognize all humanity as bearing the image of God, why do I not love them with a love like God’s; without expecting them to fit into my view of what the world should look like or how they should act?

Next, Nichole’s song “Dear Jesus” came on:

Dear Me...  
This is a letter to the girl I used to be  
You'll see, you're gonna take the long way  
And there is nothing you could do or say  
to separate you  
From the love of God who made you just exactly  
as He meant to  
And you cannot imagine all the places  
you'll see Jesus  
But you'll find Him everywhere you thought  
He wasn't supposed to go  
So, go! Go!

Nichole calls all of us to go. Go where? Go beyond our experiences. Go learn more. Go talk with your friends who look different than you do. Go listen. Don’t sit comfortably among your own thoughts, never challenging your assumptions. Take Jesus out into the world. Love humanity with God’s own love. Let God’s light shine through you in the way you interact with everyone, regardless of their skin, socio-economic status, religious affiliation, or political alignment.

Like my garden, with hidden rhizomes just waiting to crop up with weeds that can easily choke out the beauty and diversity in my flowers, the seeds of a culture that has made one human more important or worthy than another simply on the basis of the skin tone, political choices, or socio-economic agility need to be dealt with because ignoring it just allows time and space for racism to grow. And yes, I think that racism goes beyond color - it is anything that causes us to feel like we are better than another. John 3:30 says, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” If anything, God wants us to consider others better than ourselves and there’s no limit on that about who we should consider as such. As believers we are called to humility.

My friend Vickie says the weeds are most easily dealt with when they’re small. It’s when we let them have the run of things that suddenly we look out one day and can’t see the flora we wanted to enjoy in the first place; then the job is a big one that takes much more effort, expense, and time. My encouragement to you today is to start where you are and begin thinking deeply about the role you play in all of this. Then don’t sit contentedly; embark on a journey to listen, learn, grow, and change. I’m on this journey with you. May we all love as God loves.

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***“Do I recognize that the person who has a different political affiliation from mine is made in the image of God? Do I treat people as made in God’s image?”***

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# Anyone have an easy button?

Jim Fielder

I’m not sure if any of you remember the Easy Button ads by Staples, but I sure wish I had one.

Staples ads were pointing to the fact that if you just open their Web site and order online, suddenly your products were at your door. And to your amazement you would say – “That was easy!” They even sold an Easy Button for your desk.

During this pandemic season, it sure would be nice to have an EASY Button. It would be so nice to just say ignore it and it will go away. We could ignore the research surrounding the pandemic, we could ignore our leaders and hope it will just disappear. Our cars have a check engine light, when they light up, we do something, or we pay the consequences when we run our engine without oil. It would have been easy to respond to this pandemic by looking the other way and saying it doesn’t apply to me. Or, I don’t want to follow orders or suggested guidelines, they can’t apply to me. We each have decisions to make on how we will respond and how we can make it “easy.”

Back around 1980, a couple of church friends suggested we start a Bible study for our families. We did, and we started in the Gospels, but didn’t do them one book at a time – we did a harmony method of study and studied them all at the same time. Looking at the stories one by one and how there were told in more than one book. One evening, one of our Bible study group summed up our study as this – this is about Jesus’ rescue plan to the world, Jesus was constantly caring and loving on those around him. The world became a part of his rescue project. At Palouse Federated Church, that is our message too – Jesus cares. It’s not about any one of us, it’s all about Jesus. Our message to our congregation is this – we care about you. Our message to our community is this – we care about you, too. Simple and to the point – we care because he first cared for us. But there is no EASY button!

Navigating this pandemic season, your board, pastor and staff have taken this pathway – one paved with caring and compassion. Fear has never entered into it, as fear would have been the easy path. We never feared our congregation would stop worshiping together, no matter the time or place. We never feared our congregation would stop giving. We never feared that God wouldn’t guide us and bless us. We have had to make some huge changes as we move forward as a congregation and as a partner in our community. However, we still have been able to serve and bless our community thanks to your generous giving.

We have flexed as a church and became better for it. Our annual Life Lessons class to our local graduating seniors was able to be done via Zoom. We invested in additional technology that allowed us to provide an FM radio broadcast to our town area. We use it every Sunday to broadcast our



worship services. We take it to Pullman and use it at Bishop Place, where we can’t do our in-person worship. We’ve shared the technology with the community and broadcasted via radio for both the Senior Drive-by and the Graduation ceremony that was pretty much a closed event. Currently we broadcast on Sundays for about 3 hours starting at 8:45, and on Wednesday afternoon from 5-7 PM.

The technology of getting you a Sunday morning worship service has gone from a bandwidth challenge to a smoothly streamed service on Sundays as we worship together. It wasn’t done via an EASY button.

Last May, the Executive Board formed a Reopening Task Force. That group has met on an average of once a week since that time. Looking at guidelines and developing policies, to give us pathways to reopen. That, too, has not been with an EASY button.

In July, the Youth Group was allowed to meet outside together, following guidelines and policies developed by the Reopening Task Force. This included permission slips signed by parents or guardians, attendance being kept, and no-touch temperatures taken at the beginning of every gathering. This September, we began to have outdoor Bible Study groups meet following similar guidelines and policies. And now as the chill of Fall is upon us, those groups have begun to gather at the Church in groups of 10 or less. Progress is being made as we learn how best to gather together, not via an EASY button, but through Christ’s teachings to us to love and to care for one another.

One of the next steps for the Reopening Task Force is to decide on a metric which is an indicator that our community risk is heading in the right direction. We will share that information with you as soon as we have the metric developed. We will be watching the infection rates for both Whitman and Latah Counties and how they are trending. Last May and June we were seeing rates down in the 1 or 2 cases a day and it looked promising that we would be out of Phase 3 and into Phase 4 by mid-June. Now we are seeing the rates in both counties climb and set new records on a regular basis. Recently, in a two day period, Whitman and Latah counties reported 135 new cases. Our area still is exhibiting Red Zone numbers and community risk remains high. I so wish there was an EASY button to fix this!

Your Church Executive Board and staff are working to make sure we have ways we can continue to worship, grow, serve and share. We are looking at ways to bring Jesus to our kids via non-traditional methods of Sunday School. We will be rolling out different options soon for our kids to be engaged during these times.

I want to thank each of you for your patience as we navigate this unprecedented period. We are all in this storm together; all desiring to be at anchor in a safe harbor. Each of us are in a different boat, with our own challenges. We will arrive soon, but dangerous waters must be navigated as we approach the shore. Be safe, communicate, pray and care for one another, and never forget that Jesus has something wonderful ahead for us when we are resting gently with the tides.



## Where do the Pews Go Now?

The pews are currently being stored in the St. Elmo building. Thank you to Justin Brown for storing them at no cost to us, and thank you to the folks at Adult and Teen Challenge for moving them down there.

Our hope is to find new homes for the pews. Do you want one in your home, cabin, or shop? They are wonderfully built and are in good shape. If you want a pew, please contact the church office.

## New Screens & Tech in the Building

Long before Covid-19 hit the scene, we as church leaders were discussing how to improve the visual aspects of our worship services, weddings, and funerals/memorials. We’ve long had an issue with the visual quality of projection in the Fellowship Hall when we have overflow there for memorial services. We found the best solution and improvement for both the sanctuary and the fellowship hall was to move to flat screen televisions and away from video projectors. With our new setup, all the screens are High Definition quality, and they are also not impacted by light on a bright day. This means we can allow as much natural light as we want into the building without lessening the ability to see the screens. Also, the screens have more functionality. We won’t bore you all with the details, but they are able to do more. We think it is important to invest in our facility for the sake of our shared mission together. Moving to screens was also good stewardship. A video projection solution would have been more expensive and would still have been hampered by natural light. The screens in the Fellowship Hall and Sanctuary can show the same material simultaneously, or different material. This allows us to do two separate worship spaces, or “overflow” for worship services and memorials. Having that option is important for the challenges we are currently facing.



## Spokane Adult & Teen Challenge

A special thank you to Tyson West and Spokane Adult & Teen Challenge program participants who spent a day (170 hours of service in Garfield & Palouse) at the end of August helping with projects around the community and in our church: moving the pews to the St. Elmo, running wire for the new screens in the sanctuary, staining a fence at the ministry house, filling cracks in the asphalt, repairing drywall, and cleaning. They also walked around Palouse praying for our community. (Photos Below)

