

APRIL 2020 NEWSLETTER



Pastor's Corner

Words feel paltry these days. Our lives have changed, for many, tragically so. That's when words can start to fall off the map, especially with speculations about what the future may hold. For most of us, the phrase 'uncharted territory' will do. Deep breath.

At this same time I am glad to describe to you my fat and snoozing cat Riley, just now lying on his back on the couch, back legs in the air, front legs up, too, paws curled and touching, a sunbeam highlighting all his white belly fur. Some of the ol' familiar remains, be it relationships with humans or creatures or the rising gladness of Springtime treasures. Oh, what would we do without gratitude (and words) in such a time as this?

I am grateful for you, and for the odd and sustaining hope of 'church.' Oh, there are 'beliefs'— and ours are varied— but underneath, as a deeper sustenance: relationships. Relationships with each other, with the Holy One, with a Spirit above/ beneath/ around/ within/ through. God is far from absent; we are pulled not to answers, but to that holy 'being-with,' involving new challenges.

With 'social distance' we now engage each other a bit differently. For the church, we have old standbys like the phone, the mail, and email. If you'd like to be on our email "In the Loop" list (not private), just let me know (revbalmer@icloud.com) and I'll add you. Anyone can add something — with a 'reply' or 'reply all' — a thought, poem, youtube, etc. Every few days I start a new thread. Hopefully, too, many of us are/will be learning 'zoom' video — it's so wonderful to 'see' dear faces. Also, along with the Church Facebook page is now a private group called GICC Outreach which you may request' to join.

For those "In the Loop" you know that every Sunday at 9:30 am I send out a service to be 'practiced.' It's words...offering prayers, song verses, reflections. I love knowing some of us are prayerfully considering at the same time (perhaps in pajamas!).

The depths of this Lenten season culminate these next two Sundays. **April 5** is Palm/Passion Sunday, opening us to Jesus' celebration-to-suffering story. **Easter is April 12th**, when a risen Christ surprises, revealing a presence, mystery, joy. **After the emailed morning service, there will be a Zoom 'coffeehour' around 10:15 am; a time to see each other and say hello!** Look for details on the "Loop" email — or inquire for info.

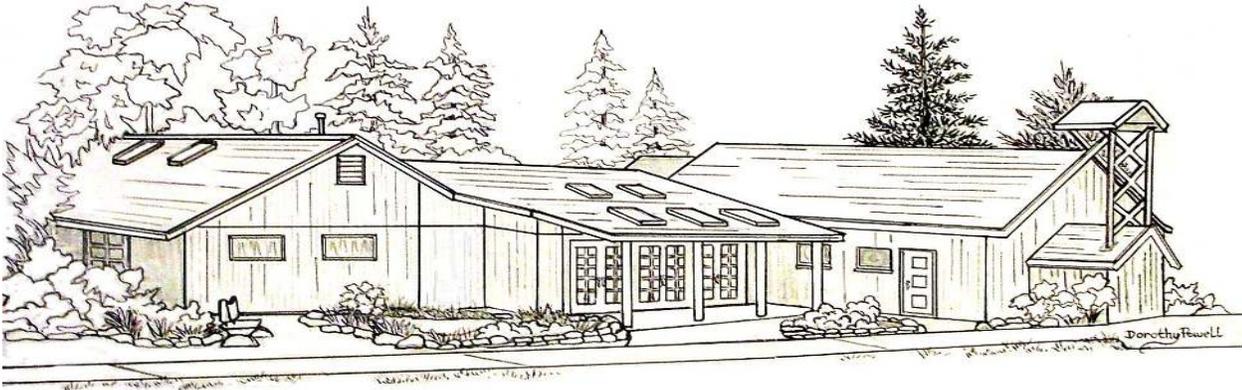
On Sunday, **April 19**, guest preacher, Helen Folsom will do a service using Zoom.

Sending love and prayers, with gratitude always. *Sally*

ZOOM MEETING INSTRUCTIONS can be found on the zoom website: <https://zoom.us>



The Red Bag Food Drive for April 12 has been cancelled. Many thanks to those who immediately sent a check to Simple Gesture, so they can continue to serve those in need. It would be wonderful if we would all remember to send a check every month, as we are well aware that the number of hungry people is skyrocketing. Mark your calendar monthly and send a check with gratitude for the food most of us still enjoy to Simple Gesture - Anacortes, P.O. Box 1413, Anacortes, WA 98221.



PLEDGES AND DONATIONS - A big THANK YOU to those of you who have sent in your pledges for 2020; and a reminder that even though we aren't gathering at church these days, the bills still need to be paid so that **we can reopen the doors, continue to pay the bills, and show our appreciation to Pastor Sally Balmer for all the goodness she brings to us.** During this time of lockdown, checks can be mailed to the church and our ever faithful treasurer, Carl Cady, will be most happy to deposit them. The GICC address is 7611 Guemes Island Road, Anacortes, WA 98221.

Guemes Island CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) - Help with Essential Activities During Coronavirus "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" - Guemes Island is divided into 35 CERT Neighborhoods, each with a Volunteer Leader, an Alternate and a Radio Team Member in order to provide communications and assistance during a possible disaster. While a pandemic wasn't exactly the disaster we had in mind, it is certainly an opportunity to work as neighbors to help one another. The network of 35 CERT Neighborhoods on Guemes Island is based on the "Map Your Neighborhood" program. Helpful resources are available for everyone to view and download at <https://myguemes.org/cert/>. Now is the time to help each other as our community responds to COVID-19. Those most vulnerable to the virus, who *must* stay home, can use our *careful* help.

This message is for people in two groups: 1) those who need help from their neighbors with "essential activities" in order to stay safe and comfortable in their homes and 2) those in a low health risk category willing to help the first group. Please contact your Neighborhood Leader or one of the CERT Leaders below if you or someone you know needs help with these outside-the-home "essential activities": grocery shopping, obtaining take-out food, picking up medical prescriptions, going to an essential medical activity that is NOT COVID-19 related.

The CERT Leaders are working to update the Neighborhood Leader Lists and Phone Tree. We know much work is needed in order to provide our volunteers and residents with the information and resources to better serve our community in times of emergency. Because looking out for others comes naturally to most of us, you may have already contacted your neighbors or you may have received a call from someone concerned for your wellbeing. Thank you for reaching out and don't be afraid to ask for assistance.

Neighborhood Leaders and residents, please do not go to houses unless invited and then only if you can adhere to the social distancing recommendations. Please make phone calls or send emails or text messages to anyone who might need assistance or reassurance. If you are concerned about anyone and you think a welfare check is needed, please call Gerry Francis, Guemes Island Fire Chief at 360-395-8047. Keep calm and wash on! Barb Ohms 303-521-9094 cell 360-298-1885 home barbaraohms@gmail.com Barbara Schnabel 206-465-1154 cell rbschnabel@mac.com

PLANNING A GOOD DEATH SERIES UPDATE

Speaking of Dying



Living Deeply ... Dying Well

The Coronavirus pandemic has reminded us of the fragility of life. Websites and estate planning offices have been deluged with calls by folks seeking advice on making or updating their wills. When we no longer have to practice social distancing, the *Planning a Good Death* series will be reoffered. Note: The requirements for wills are set by your state of primary residence. The minimum requirements for a self-made will in Washington

State are: you must be at least 18; you must be of sound mind; you must sign your will; and your will must be signed by 2 or more disinterested witnesses. This is not intended to pass for legal advice, but simply to encourage thinking about end of life issues now. It may also be an appropriate time to update your planning on the *Five Wishes* document or any other format you have used to express your final wishes.

Some news from Savage Frieze - Some of us fondly remember when Savage Frieze served as our interim minister. In speaking with Savage recently, Bob Anderson reports that Savage's wife, Ann Frieze, has recently been ordained for chaplaincy work. According to Savage, our support gave him the courage to continue in the ministry. They are hoping to visit Guemes in a year, and we will most heartily welcome them.



Some Words of Hope in this Time of Corona Virus

By Father Richard Hendrick, OFM, March 13th 2020

Lockdown

Yes there is fear.

Yes there is isolation.

Yes there is panic buying.

Yes there is sickness.

Yes there is even death.

But,

They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise

You can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet

The sky is no longer thick with fumes

But blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi

People are singing to each other

across the empty squares,

keeping their windows open

so that those who are alone

may hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland

Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.

Today a young woman I know
is busy spreading fliers with her number
through the neighbourhood
so that the elders may have someone to call on.
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples
are preparing to welcome
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary

All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality
To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.
To what really matters.
To Love.

So we pray and we remember that
Yes there is fear.
But there does not have to be hate.
Yes there is isolation.
But there does not have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying.
But there does not have to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness.
But there does not have to be disease of the soul
Yes there is even death.
But there can always be a rebirth of love.
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breathe.
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic
The birds are singing again
The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming,
And we are always encompassed by Love.
Open the windows of your soul
And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,
Sing.

Note: If you have program ideas for the larger Guemes community, call Connie Snell, 360-708-3589 or email her at conniemsnell@gmail.com. Also, contact Connie if you'd like to reserve the church facilities for group or personal events. **There is no fee for using church facilities; however, donations are much appreciated.** If you would like to be added to the newsletter contact list, email Lynn Prewitt at redhouselynn@gmail.com.