

BIRCHWOOD BEACON

A Publication of Birchwood Presbyterian Church

August 2010

From Pastor Bruce Becker

On July 16 we put down our thirteen and a half year old German shepherd, Gehrig. She was 94 in dog years. That's old for a German shepherd. She was infested with tumors, and though her forelegs were as strong as ever, her rear hips swayed on wobbly legs and numb feet like a drunken sailor on three day leave.

Between 1997 and 2010 she greeted both four year old foster children and five year old grandkids. She watched our family grow up. She was there when our oldest left for college. She was there as Pete's sleeping partner while he endured months of near fatal encephalitis and Kleine-Levin Syndrome. She was our security dog the last five years we resided in inner-city Philadelphia. Then she chased away the rabbits from our backyard in the suburbs. In 2007 she was Mary's constant companion through chemotherapy. In 2008 she played security dog in the back seat of our Chevy when Pete and I drove across the continent to Bellingham. She was a big part of our lives for thirteen memorable years.

Years ago, long before Gehrig, I was a counselor at a summer camp full of junior highers. There a student asked the camp speaker if pets went to heaven. The junior high speaker answered a room full of kids, "No. Pets don't go to heaven. Pets don't have souls." I thought that speaker was an idiot. I still think so. Single-handedly he turned God into a graceless curmudgeon, and he ruined the gospel for a hundred, animal-loving adolescents.

Romans 8 tells us that all creation is kept in frustration because of sin and stands on tiptoe waiting for the day that the children of God will come into their own to rule the planet. Heaven is not just redemption for people. Does not God love all His creation? Remember. "God saw all that He had created and called it, 'Very good!'" All He created! Heaven is redemption for all creation led by the children of God.

What is heaven like? Heaven is the best you can imagine and then some. Heaven is all we have dreamed for, overwhelming joy drowning all our disappointments. "No one who hopes in the Lord will ever be disappointed" says Isaiah. Martin Luther could not imagine eternity without his pet dog, Topol. Heaven is as good as your finest imagination, and then some. As Elizabeth Barret Browning wrote, "For God's gifts put man's best dreams to shame."

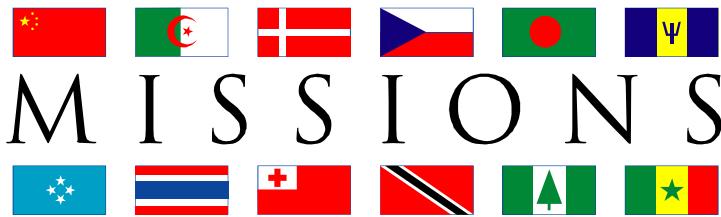
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"We offer Hope, Community, Acceptance, and Purpose in a broken world."

Continued from Page 1

So Isaiah says that the lion will lie down with the lamb and eat straw like the ox; and the child will play next to the serpent's den and never be harmed. Among heaven's population snakes and children, oxen and lions and lambs are mentioned by name. But the Bible has nothing at all to say about smarty-pants junior high teachers with a stingy theology smarter than the Bible. I guess we ought to imagine that some of them will be there, too. Grace covers the stingy. Maybe, in heaven they will be put to work making dog biscuits.

"As it is written, 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things God has prepared for those who love him.'"
1 Corinthians 2:9



Missions News!

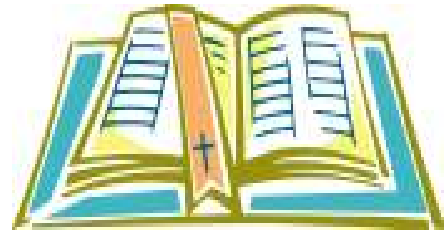
By Tom Linvog, Missions Elder

Save the Date! Guatemala Dinner and Auction Saturday, October 2

On Sunday, July 18, it was nice to hear from Bill and Linda Brierly, who started Hope for the Pokemchi in Guatemala. We learned how many Guatemalans will fit into a pick-up. Answer: One more.

We are looking forward to a dinner and auction fundraiser on Saturday, October 2 in the BPC Family Life Center. Stay tuned for more details. We will be selling tickets soon.

During a short term mission trip it is hard to really know just how much we touch peoples lives. Our Food for the Hungry team host, Amalia, in Nebaj remembered teams coming from the USA to her village when she was a child. I think the Holy Spirit does more than we'll ever know in the lives of the adults and children we visit as well as in our own lives.



August Sermon Schedule

August 1, 2010

Lord's Supper
"Come Out, Come Out, Wherever You Are!"
Genesis 3:1-9
Bruce Becker

August 8, 2010

"Evangelism Is Listening!"
John 4:1-26
Bruce Becker

August 15, 2010

"Not Enough Funny People"
John 4:27-42
Bruce Becker

August 22, 2010

"Faith Does Not Make the Dentist Real"
John 4:43-54
Bruce Becker

August 29, 2010

"Jesus Heals a Goldbrick"
John 5:1-15
Bruce Becker

All sermons are available on CD or you may listen to them on-line at www.bpchurch.org



News of the Seasonaires

A Fellowship Ministry for those 55 and over

By Minister of Congregational Care, Bud Lee

We have had some great summer activities thus far. The trip to Mission, B.C., was inspiring as well as enlightening. Did you see the picture on the church bulletin board? The picnic at Lake Samish was also a great time with the usual barbecued scrumptious turkey and all those wonderful desserts. About 30 of us enjoyed the day and the report from Caroline Yaude on her adventures in Guatemala with the Birchwood mission team. One more adventure to go, and that is the Seattle Mariners baseball game on August 11. As of this moment we have 15 tickets left. So grab them up fast! This might be a great opportunity to take a grandchild or neighbor along with you.

Looking ahead to September when our third Tuesday dinner meetings start up again, our first meeting will feature the Buckingham family musicians. Everyone enjoys them. Plan on being there. Till then, enjoy your summer; and be sure to share your yard or table with someone else who would benefit from your hospitality. Remember, everyone needs a friend.

Early Birds Women's Bible Study



Tuesday Mornings at 6:30 am Begins Again on September 7

EARLY BIRDS: plural noun describing women who descend on Birchwood Presbyterian Church every week at 6:30 am for breakfast (more than seeds and suet!), Bible study, prayer, and outstanding fellowship. The red-winged blackbirds in the adjacent wetland, greeting the day with their songs, have nothing on us!

The first gathering of the “birds” this fall will be on Tuesday, September 7, for a delicious start to our study year. Breakfast will be served, NEW WOMEN WELCOMED, and old friends enjoyed. A brief intro/recap will help put us back on track for continuing our study of ISAIAH. For new attenders (or if you've lost your study book over the summer), books will be available for purchase. For more information, contact with Barb Mills, 676-8139, or Mary Kingsford-Smith, 738-6959.

P.S. The group usually meets at 6:30 am, but to ease into things gently, on September 7 (only) we will meet at 7:00 am.

Love INC Furniture Ministry



Love INC is in need of furniture. Since our warehouse opened at the end of May over 40 families have received furniture. Our warehouse is staffed by men from a number of local churches who have an opportunity to interact with people. Beds, dressers, tables and chairs are in big demand. Please call 671-6201 if you have furniture to donate or are interested in volunteering at the warehouse.

Bible Study Fellowship



Want to study the book of Isaiah? Beginning in September, BSF is beginning a study of Isaiah for the very first time. BSF is an interdenominational Bible study with day classes for women and children (infants through five years old) and evening classes for women and students (grades 1 - 12). There is no charge. Introduction for the day class will be held on Thurs., September 16, at 9:10 am at Bellingham Covenant Church. Introduction for the evening class will be held on Mon., September 13, at 6:55 pm at Birchwood Church. Please contact Janet Robinson at 398-9899 (day class) or LeAnn Young at 733-6712 (evening class) if you have questions.

BPC Book Group!



August 12, 2010
6:30 pm
Chapel

BPC Book Group cordially invites all interested (men and women) to attend our August meeting on Thursday, August 12, at 6:30 pm at the church. We will be discussing the novel, The Cellist of Sarajevo, by Steven Galloway (Don and Sharon Galloway's son). Steven Galloway, who teaches creative writing at the University of British Columbia, plans to attend our discussion. "In following the lives and days of four strangers, The Cellist of Sarajevo brilliantly explores how war can change one's definition of humanity, how music affects our emotional endurance, and how a romance with the rituals of daily life can itself be a form of resistance." Please email Sandy Hiorns at sandyhiorns@yahoo.com if you plan to attend or phone her at 392-8264.

In the Library



Beautiful Art Books Check Them Out!

Maybe you are not aware that the library has beautiful art books for your enjoyment. There is a beautiful book called "Rembrandt and the Bible". This book is so large it doesn't fit on a shelf. It is on the counter near the children's books. It was donated by the Wilbee's. There are other lovely art books on the slanted shelves too. The art books were also donated by Carl Holmgren, the Glen Crowe family as well as other generous library patrons.

Besides your own enjoyment this gives you an opportunity to introduce beautiful art to your children and grandchildren.

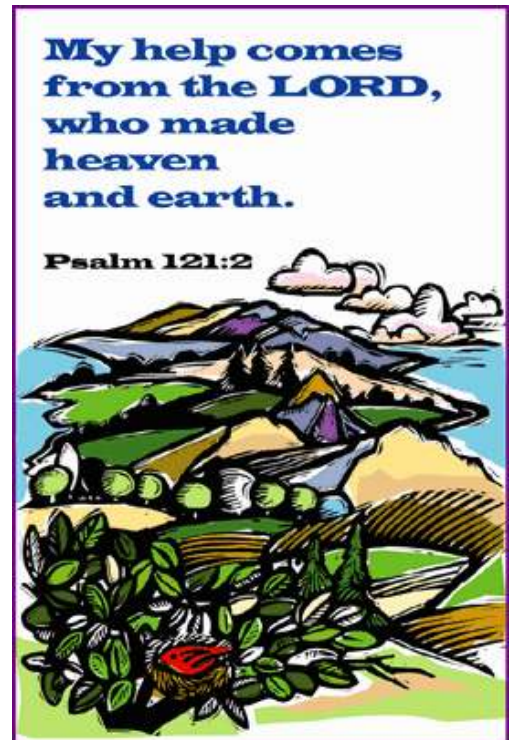
On another note, several library books are very overdue. Please look around and see if some library books are hiding on your shelves.

Fall Adult Education Class w/ Rosie Harris

God had you and me in his infinite mind~ BEFORE he crafted sky, sea or sand. Join in the creation of a room-size time line done from this perspective! We will wholeheartedly ponder the intentional choice and value our Creator poured into having us here this very day. This interactive class is called "Creator, Creators" and will only encourage your socks off...if you're there!

Can't wait to learn with you,
Rosie Harris

P.S. If you want to get a head start on the terrific truths we'll spring from, check out Genesis 1 and Ephesians 1! What a parallel blessing!



Adult Education at Birchwood!



Summer: a time when schools close -- along with Christian Education activities in many churches -- is an enjoyable and spiritually profitable time for Birchwood adults this year. We are in the middle of weekly classes led by a variety of teachers, such as Pastor Bruce, Nate Beede, Dave Loeppky, and others. Come at 9:00 am on Sundays in the chapel. This series will continue through August 22.

In September will begin the second year of adult permanent study-and-fellowship groups. You choose one of these and get to know and appreciate your fellow group members, while various teachers come to the group for periods of up to a couple of months. So, if there is a particular subject you've heard about from another group that you would really like to learn about, chances are you won't miss out! That teacher will likely visit your group with the same material later on. A couple of weeks before the fall session, we'll publish the details of the several adult groups and their initial study subjects.



August Memory Verse

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"
John 20:19

Children's Ministry at BPC

by Jen Zimmermann

Vacation Bible School Update:



About 105 children participated in VBS this year. I was amazed at their energy, their passion for learning, their fantastic behavior and of course, their amazing dance moves! At every moment during the entire week, I could feel the Holy Spirit moving in the building and in the hearts of all involved. One little girl told me that she accepted Jesus in her heart; priceless!

Thanks to all of my volunteers who helped with VBS. I couldn't have done my job without all of you. Our team was 40 strong and that doesn't even include all of our prayer warriors and donation suppliers. I am so thankful for the support that the entire BPC community gives!

This year, our service area really shined! The families that participated in VBS donated over 600 lbs. of food to the Bellingham Food Bank. The children made 80 sack dinners for Church on the Street for their homeless ministry. They made over 50 bags of trail mix snack for the Ray of Hope summer camp. The kids created cards and letters for the men and women serving in the military and donated candy to be sent in a care package overseas.

Looking Ahead:



Education Kickoff and Playground Dedication on September 12

Mark your calendars for Sunday, September 12! We will be having our Fall Sunday school Kickoff and Playground dedication! Come at 9:00 am to enjoy fruit and breakfast breads, hear about the Sunday school program for adults AND children and be a part of blessing our beautiful new playground.

Speaking of Sunday school, I am looking for willing participants to lead children's Sunday school classes. I need 1 or 2 teachers for Preschool, K/1, 2/3 and 4/5. It works out perfect if you have a partner to teach with, but you can certainly survive on your own as well. I would ask that you teach every Sunday for one quarter. The curriculum is provided for you. It's easy to follow and I will support you through each step. Last year's teachers would be happy to talk to you about the program.

Please consider this opportunity to make a HUGE difference in a child's life. All you need are three things: a passion for Jesus, a love for kids and a heart for teaching!

New Children's Ministry Elder!

Please join me in welcoming Jen Reidel as the new children's ministry elder! It's the Jen and Jen team! Please see either of the Jens if you have any questions, comments or concerns.

Sunday School!



Beginning on Sunday September 19, Sunday school will be provided for you and your child at 9:00 am. This is an AMAZING opportunity to grow in your faith; not only for your child, but for you as well! Please plan to plug into a class. Check for more information which will be provided next month!

What's Up With the Youth?




Greetings Birchwood family! Can you believe it's already August? The summer has gone by so fast. I guess that's what happens when you're having so much fun! July has been a very busy month filled with barbecues, Vacation Bible School (huge shout out to Jen Zimmerman and the wonderful job she did!), and Creation! August is going to be a bit slower than July. The barbecues, which have moved to Cornwall Park, are ending August 11.

Sunday school starts up again with a kickoff breakfast September 12 at 9:00 am. The middle school will continue to go through a Presbyterian confirmation class to help guide the students in their own faith. The high school will be taking a look at the parables of Jesus to find out what they are all about and even who they are about.

There is going to be a youth group kickoff night on Wed., September 15 from 6:30-8:30 pm. Youth group will look quite a bit different than in years past. The high school and middle school will continue to meet on Wednesdays but will be separated for most of the night, coming together at the end for worship and offering as we continue to support Chirange Wishwabashitha. The middle school is going to go through the gospels and take on the dares that Jesus gave to his disciples, the Pharisees, and the crowds that gathered to listen. The high school will be exploring the character of God as we try to shed our stereotypes and wrap our minds and hearts around who He really is.

Thank you Birchwood family for all of your support, encouraging words, and prayers! For more information contact Sarah Halstead (sarah@bpchurch.org) or Peter Becker (peter@bpchurch.org).

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 August Youth Calendar!						
1 10:15 am Worship	2	3	4 Community BBQ 6-8 pm	5	6	7
8 10:15 am Worship	9	10	11 Community BBQ 6-8 pm	12	13	14
15 10:15 am Worship	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 10:15 am Worship	23	24	25	26 Camping Trip Deception Pass Cost \$15, register by 8/22		28
29 10:15 am Worship	30	31	Youth Group is On its Way! Mark your calendars for Wednesday, September 15 for our kickoff night from 6:30 to 8:30 pm!			



The following is a summary of
“Operating” cash for June 2010:

Operating Revenue	\$46,186
Operating Expenses	\$<47,861>

Operating Reserves Balance 1/1/10
\$25,673

YTD change in Operating Reserves
<19,745>

Operating Reserves Balance 6/30/10
\$5,928

During the month of June, \$500 was
transferred from the operating reserves.

The following is a summary
of the Capital Campaign
as of June 30, 2010

Capital Campaign Donations Received
\$541,426

Missions allocation (10%)
\$<54,143>

Capital Campaign Debt Paydown
\$487,283

Loan Balance at 6/30/2010
\$1,588,147



Choir Invitation

All singers, high school age and older, are invited to participate in our no-audition adult choir. Rehearsals will resume on Wednesday, September 8 at 7:00 pm in the chapel. The choir will restart our regular worship service ministry on September 12. You'll be welcome to join the choir regardless of whether you can make a one-week, every other week, one-month or nine-month commitment. Experienced singers are great but beginning singers are welcomed too. Questions? Contact Mary Walsh at mary@bpchurch.org or 733-8860 ext 109.

Worship Team Invitation



Singers, guitarists, drummers and other instrumentalists are always needed for our worship teams. At present, we are particularly in need of bass guitar and electric guitar players but all who are interested in leading worship through the worship team ministry are encouraged to volunteer. Members of the worship teams choose how often they would like to minister on a team, from every other week to once a month. Contact Mary at mary@bpchurch.org or 733-8860 ext 109 to arrange for an audition.

A Christmas Reminder In August

SAVE THE DATE:
Saturday, December 4



Our **December 4** Advent celebration this year will be a “not to be missed” event (worth even postponing a trip to sunnier climes in order to participate in). Last year, our Advent event titled “RockAround the Christmas Tea” was a smashing success. Folks from all over Whatcom County came and experienced a joyful celebration of the reality of Jesus’ birth and continuing essential presence in our lives. This year, although the name of the event may be changed, we expect it will be an even more fun-filled, spirit-filled, God honoring, 3-hour jam-packed afternoon/early evening, no admission charge event. And, we would love to reach even more people than we did last year. This time around we are planning to include a Christian Rock concert in the Family Life Center, a Gallery Walk event in the Chapel, a Community Christmas Carol Sing with full orchestra and choir along with a dramatic presentation in the Worship Center, Jonah’s Café in the Palm Room, presentation of the Nativity Story in the Youth Room, a coffee/cookie hospitality bar in the foyer, an art display in the hallways, Christmas Crafts for all ages in the Pre-K wing, and many other surprises.

As the expression goes...”It takes a village to raise a child” but here at Birchwood we will alter that to say “It takes a congregation to present our Advent Event.” Please put our advent event on your calendars now and make your early December plans to include volunteering to minister to our county through this outreach event. Our intention is to share the life saving and life altering good news of Jesus with our community through this multi-sensory presentation. We need volunteers to take charge or help with the following details: **advertising** (this one ministry is critical to letting our community become aware of and excited about attending –and needs to start as soon as possible); **Jonah’s Café**; the **coffee/cookie bar**; the **Nativity Story** presentation; the **artwork** presentation; the **crafts** areas; **set-up crews**; **clean-up crews**; **Greeters/Guides**; and other as of yet un-thought of needs. Everyone, no matter your age, can minister to others through this event.

If you have other ideas of what should be included in the event, or to sign up to take charge or help in one of the many ministries, please contact Mary Walsh at mary@bpchurch.org or 733-8860 ext. 109. And, if you have a name suggestion for the advent event, you can also share that with Mary.

*Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God
a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess his name.
And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for
with such sacrifices God is pleased. Hebrews 13:15-16 (NIV)*

Birchwood Playground News!

By Claude Robinson, Facility Elder



The Play Area construction is moving ahead rapidly!

Progress to Date:

- The concrete header wall is complete with fence posts. (The tests on the concrete show that it exceeds specification.) Backfill is essentially complete. Installation of the French drain is complete and connected. The wheel chair ramp remains to be completed by the concrete contractor, planned for July 20.
- The Play Equipment parts have been delivered and unloaded by a Birchwood Team.

Future Plans:

- The major next step will be to have the Sitalines Supervisor mark/drill for the equipment.

Planned Timing:

- July 22, 23: Mark and drill play equipment anchor holes by Sitalines.
- July 30, 31: Install and assemble play equipment to anchors, 15 or more volunteers with Sitalines supervisor, THE biggest event of the project.
- August 2: Pour concrete for anchors, 5 or more volunteers. Remove dirt ramp.
- August 3, 4: Finish surface raking, Install Terra Flow and fabric, 4 volunteers.
- August 6, 7: Install 150 cu. yd. EWF chips, certify installation, 15 or more volunteers, recommended project for youth. Lots of wheelbarrows needed.
- August 9-11: “Economy Fence” install permanent fence, remove temporary fence.
- August 14: Site cleanup by SECOND SATURDAY TEAM.
- August 16-20: Contractor complete asphalt patch, install extruded curb, parking lot stripes.
- August 28: Install soil and plants at regular “grounds” work party.
- Sunday, September 12, CELEBRATION with start of Sunday School.
- Completion of permanent plantings around the Play Area will proceed through the fall time as it is appropriate to plant each species.

Costs:

It is estimated that we will remain under the \$95K budget, thanks to much donated value and volunteer workers.

- Examples of donated value: Jim Alberg (RSC) donating use of equipment, Dave Comstock operating equipment, Devin Reidel (Economy Fence) donating use of construction fence, Ken Hunter (Inspection services), Cowden for donated gravel and concrete.

Thanks to many volunteers who have worked, and Tom Linvog who has provided construction leadership. There is need in the near future for volunteers to complete the project, especially for installing the equipment on July 30, 31 and the EWF Chips on August 6,7. Thank you to all for the enthusiasm and hard work. Praise God for making this happen.

Join a Small Group Today!



Some Small Groups have taken a summer break and are re-forming in September!

- Want to join a small group?
- Want more members in your group?
- Want to “birth” a new small group?

Elder Harold Scott keeps a “Group Clearinghouse”. Please contact him at scott@bpchurch.org or 392-3685 for details.

If you have never been in a small group, it is now time to explore the possibility!

A Prayer Group for Our Nation



Some BPC church members have requested a prayer group to pray for our country. The group would be strictly non-political, perhaps meeting one hour a month. If you have an interest, please contact Harold Scott at scott@bpchurch.org or 392-3685. At the initial meeting we will select the time, date and location. God bless the USA!

*If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.
2 Chronicles 7:14*

You are Cordially Invited

to a Special “Ladies Only” Fall Luncheon
Saturday, October 23 at 12:00pm
Birchwood Family Life Center

Presented by your 2011 BPC Spring Retreat Planning Committee

This event is meant to honor, unite, and celebrate the growing Ministry of Women at Birchwood Presbyterian Church. We will be revealing this year’s amazing speaker for the March 2011 Cedar Springs Women’s Retreat and provide those in attendance with a special preview of how God is “working in our souls to make us well”! We will also use this special gathering to announce and launch the first of its kind “special assignment”! This will provide a unique opportunity that is bound to inspire and involve every woman that has ever attended Birchwood: past, present and future. Come alone, or bring a friend! We are so excited to share with you the special vision God has put upon us!



Save the date! We want every woman from BPC present on October 23 at 12:00 pm!

400 Meadowbrook Court
Bellingham, WA 98226
phone (360) 733-8860
www.bpchurch.org



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Office Hours

Monday - Thursday 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Friday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Summer Sunday Schedule

NOTE: A well-staffed nursery and pre-school program is provided during the worship service and education hour.

Summer Adult Education 9:00 am
Worship 10:15 am
Fellowship 11:30 am

September Beacon deadline is:
August 20, 2010

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Bellingham, WA
Permit No. 11



Get Ready to Watch the Seattle Mariners at Safeco Field!

Wednesday, August 11
All Ages Welcome

We have 15 tickets left for the Mariners baseball game on Wednesday, August 11 at 12:40 pm. We have a chartered bus to get you there. Bus departs Birchwood at 9:30 am. Cost for a ticket and transportation for one person is \$32.00.

To Make Your Reservation
Sign Up at the Welcome Center!

