



The Circuit Rider

Salmon Creek Church

★ SEASON OF ★

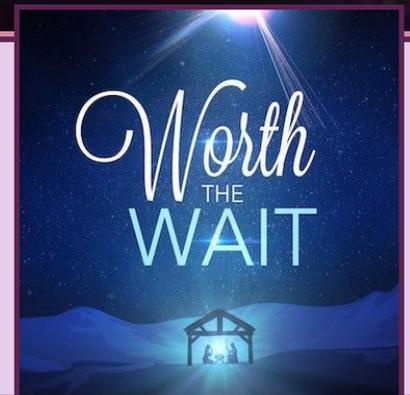
Hope

A child is born to us!
A son is given to us!
And he will be our ruler.
He will be called,
"Wonderful Counselor,"
"Mighty God," "Eternal
Father,"
"Prince of Peace."
(Isaiah 9:6)

December
2020

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a note from Pastor John



This year in particular gives us all a real opportunity to not only think about, but to experience the real meaning of Advent and Christmas. We say the words each year, and with some level of sincerity, but nevertheless we find ourselves in crowded malls, getting anxious over what to buy for Aunt Tillie, and stressing over decorations and bank accounts. I am not throwing out guilt at anyone, since I am as guilty as anyone, but nevertheless, if we can pull one positive thing out of this crazy pandemic and the lockdowns, it is the value of our faith. We need Christ like we need air, and Advent and Christmas is that time of year when we can really focus on how God has provided for us. A cure for a virus is not the most important thing; the most important thing is salvation through the grace and mercy of a loving savior.

Jesus was born into a world at least as dangerous as ours. High infant mortality rates, poverty and malnourishment, an occupying army, disease: all were common components of daily life, particularly for the poor, in 1st century Judea. You'd think God might have picked a better time to incarnate. But that's the point, isn't it? When we most need to turn to God, God is there. When the Hebrews cried out to God from Egypt, God responds. When the twelve tribes needed a warrior God in Judges, God responds. And when the world so clearly needs a savior, God responds.

Since our time at the malls is going to be so limited this year; since we're going to order Aunt Tillie a gift from Amazon; since we're going to recycle last year's decorations anyway to save money for our stressed out bank accounts, why don't we use all the time we're saving to thank God! The gift of Immanuel, God with us, was given to all who have cried out to God over the centuries. And while the gift of Christ is a gift to all, it is particularly valuable for the lonely, the dispossessed, the hungry and forgotten.

My hope is we will spend this Christmas giving thanks for what we do have, not grouching about what we don't; that we can replace pandemic psychosis with Christian love. Even if our edges are getting a little frayed, we can still reach out and share that love. We all know, and have known for a long time, that these are the things that represent the true celebration of the birth of a savior.

Merry Christmas!

Pastor John





Church Service Schedule for December

Because of changing restrictions and guidelines, please be sure to check your e-mail or call the office to find out if we are having in-person worship.

You can always find our online services by going to our YouTube channel:

https://youtube.com/channel/UCI7QmlP0p6_Pv_-imbPiUZA.

Sunday, November 29 – 1st Sunday in Advent (Hope)

Online only

Sunday, December 6 – 2nd Sunday in Advent (Peace)

Online only

Sunday, December 13 – 3rd Sunday in Advent (Joy)

Online only

Sunday, December 20 – 4th Sunday in Advent (Love)

Online and in-person if possible

Thursday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

Best possible scenario for in-person services:

Children's Service: 5:00 pm (Praise Team)

Candlelight Service 8:00 pm (Bells)

Midnight Service 11:00 pm (Special Music)

OR

Candlelight Service, online only, at 8:00 pm

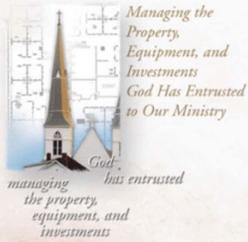
Sunday, December 27 – 1st Sunday after Christmas (Look to the New Year)

Online and in-person if possible



The holidays provide a great time to act on God's goodness to you and your family by expressing your gratitude.

trustees



Serve the Lord with gladness

-Psalms 100:2

**Board of Trustees
2020 Year-End Report
Salmon Creek United Methodist Church**

The year started with replacing most of the computers, Server and software as they were over 8 years old and did not support new software requirements. The WIFI system was also upgraded for better coverage. The Trustees and other members continued the light replacement and painting efforts. Three sets of doors were automated in compliance with the ADA requirements. A special donation covered much of the door automation cost. Trustee funds were used to pay for most of the lighting program.

With the COVID shut-down, we accelerated replacing lights with new LED lights and painting projects in most of the Main building, Kitchen and Daycare Hallway. We took on cleaning and repainting the Sanctuary and replacing the lights in June. The chancel was modified to include a wheelchair ramp and the pews modified to provide more wheelchair placements. The St. Paul room furnace failed late this year and we are in the process of having it and the Main office HVAC unit replaced. We used funds raised by the *Pay-It-Forward* campaign to fund the Sanctuary work, new carpets and 2 HVAC replacements. \$48,500 was raised so far this 1st year in the *Pay-It-Forward* Campaign.

Services after COVID were held in the parking lot until October, when they were moved into the Gym. The gym filters were replaced with MERV 11, to meet guidelines, and Victory cleaning staff procedures modified to include disinfecting surfaces. The lights on the stage were modified to improve video recordings. And in conclusion; the overhang was fixed by the Trustees after damage by a Fed-EX truck. Two Scout projects were completed, adding room in the storage building and covering outside storage areas.

Plans for coming year: We will continue to replace fixtures with LED lights in the Fellowship Hall and Day school rooms. Depending on funding, and COVID impacts on church finances, we may schedule 2 HVAC unit replacements late next year.

We give all honor and glory to our God and this wonderful congregation for all that has been accomplished this year.

Steve Enyeart, Chairman 11/19/2020

PAY IT FORWARD

HVAC Failure and Replacement – Pay It Forward

Well, it has happened. We lost the Furnace portion of the HVAC unit that serves the St. Paul and Choir rooms and in this one, the heat exchanger rusted out. There is no backup, but fortunately the St. Paul room is not being used very often due to COVID closures. It is a bad time to lose it, weather-wise. The St. Paul unit has been out since October 22nd and replacement is not expected to be completed until after Thanksgiving, probably early December.

Trustees have been holding off on spending money out of the *Pay It Forward* account until we get some reserves built up. We do have funds for this HVAC unit and the Trustees decided that we should replace the office side HVAC unit at the same time. Both are the same size and loss of the office side HVAC unit would be a more onerous event. You may have heard that we received a very large donation from the trust fund and life insurance of two of our former members. As such, some of those funds are helping us to pay for the 2nd unit replacement.

As with everything this year since COVID, funding for *Pay-It-Forward* has lagged from what was forecast; it stands at ~50% of the expected first year contributions. We all understand the strain COVID has put on church members and their finances. The Trustees are grateful for the contributions that have been made. These 2 units are part of the 12 HVAC units that are over 25 years old. I suspect the other 3 roof top units have similar issues – as they sit out in the weather. Hopefully, next year (sometime after life returns to ‘normal’ - whatever that is), funding will improve, so we can replace the remainder of the roof mounted units over the next 2 years.

Thanks for your continued support!

Steve Enyeart, Chair, and Your Trustees Committee



Dear Friends:

Thank you so much for all of the support you have given (some of you for so many years) to Larry and me as we have been living and teaching at Africa University, Mutare, Zimbabwe. Your prayers, presence, and financial contributions bring you here with us in mission to share God's love and light.

You are here when we are sharing God's love through the work we do.

You were here at the beginning of the semester when Africa University moved from face-to-face teaching and learning to the enormous challenge of keeping our students engaged in their studies online.

You were here from April to November as the Africa University farm produced potatoes, cabbage, eggs, milk and meat for the students living on campus, and as the winter wheat crop was planted, irrigated and finally harvested (a record crop for AU!!).

As you may be aware, Larry retired from GBGM at the end of September, 2020. I continue as a GBGM missionary, teaching in the English program at Africa University. Larry is also teaching, but in a voluntary capacity. We will be sending you a letter with '*Updates from Mutare*' very soon.

Your prayers and financial support are as vital to our joint ministry as our answer to the call of God to go! We pray that you will consider transferring support that was specifically for Larry to support for me, so that together, we may all experience the privilege of serving others as God asks us to do.

A United Methodist-Related Institution

We know that times are uncertain, but your financial support means that I, and other United Methodist Missionaries, can continue to serve with you throughout the world.

Thank you!

Jane Kies

Africa University
Box 1320
Mutare
Zimbabwe

Click below to give:

<https://umcmmission.org/missionary-bio/10739z/>

To give by check, make it out to Advance GCFA, put my Advance Number #10739Z (Jane Kies) in the memo line, and send it to: Advance GCFA, P.O. Box 9068, New York, NY 10087

AFRICA
UNIVERSITY®

A United Methodist-Related Institution

Known and Loved: Finding your community

By Marlena Graves*

You may be thinking a lot about community, loneliness and belonging. I know I am. Right now, many of us are surviving by doing what we can through virtual contact and limited and distanced social contact. But it's not the same as prolonged and intimate face-to-face interaction.

Prior to the global COVID-19 pandemic, however, there was already lots of talk about the epidemic of loneliness.

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, cites research indicating, "Loneliness and social isolation can be as damaging to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day... and the problem is particularly acute among seniors, especially during holidays."

The HRSA goes on to note, "As a force in shaping our health, medical care pales in comparison with the circumstances of the communities in which we live. Few aspects of community are more powerful than is the degree of connectedness and social support for individuals."

The importance of connection

In 2013, a forced move caused us to lose our connectedness. Major changes occurred at the Christian university where my husband and I worked, and we both were let go. It was an excruciating and traumatic ordeal, which was compounded by the economic uncertainty of staring down joblessness.

Thankfully, my husband found a job right away. I eventually did, too. However, nothing could replace the loss of our community and close friendships.

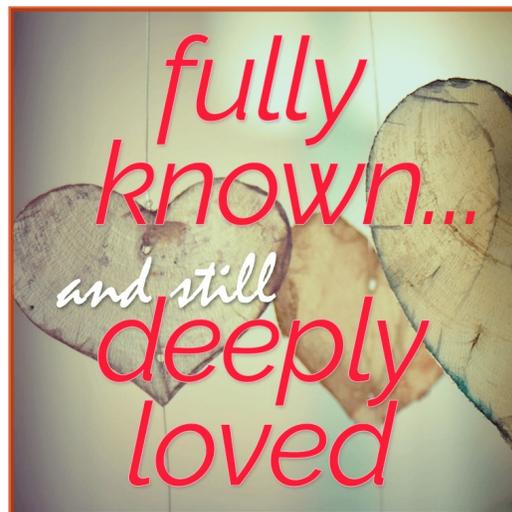
I had dear friends who watched and loved our daughters or invited us over to dinner at a moment's notice and vice versa. In joy, sorrow, celebration, or crisis—we had friends—we had a community to look out for us.

A new connection

Shortly after our forced relocation, a United Methodist pastor, the Rev. Larry Kreps, and his wife, Marti Kreps, struck up a conversation with my husband as my husband was mowing the lawn. They happened to be strolling past our house on their daily walk around the neighborhood.

Eventually, they invited us into their home, to church, and babysat our children. They loved us on the heels of our traumatic and wounding experience. The assistant pastor at the church, Debbie Kaylor, did the same.

Not long after, Larry and Marti started a small group and invited us to be a part of it. In our new town, they knew our names, knew that we existed, and actually cared about whether or not we lived or died.





fully known.
deeply loved.

I will never forget the care they showed us by simply stopping to converse with us, inviting us into their home, and eventually into a small group. They embodied life-giving Christian love and hospitality.

It is rare these days.

We moved from that town and are currently having to rebuild our friendships and community. It is extremely difficult even though we attend a wonderful United Methodist church. And now, the COVID-19 pandemic has limited our ability to gather together.

For my part, I want to be known and loved and cared for by others. I want to extend the hospitality that Larry and his wife Marti extended to me; the care and friendship that Debbie shared.

One way to do it is through small groups, but we also need to find other creative ways to enfold others into our lives, into the church's life and within our world. Cultivating and sustaining friendship and a healthy Christian community is countercultural in the world.

And yet, it's the way of Jesus. John 1:14, tell us the Word, Jesus, came in the flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus enfolded others into his life and his community. It is on us to do the same. It takes work and is not always convenient. But it's a life or death matter and well worth it.

The community my husband and I had will never be replaced—it's in the past. That doesn't mean we cannot contribute to forming new communities where we and others are known and loved. **None of us can survive for long without friendship, connectedness, and social support.**

My prayer is that you would make the intentional and concrete effort to extend friendship and community to others. May you be known and loved.

**Marlena Graves is the author of "The Way Up Is Down: Becoming Yourself by Forgetting Yourself." Hear Marlena on an episode of our podcast, Get Your Spirit in Shape.*



The Coronavirus pandemic has rapidly transformed life as we know it for millions of people all over the world. For many, COVID-19 carries feelings and challenges of fear, anxiety, economic hardships, isolation, and many other stresses. This prayer reminds us that we are not alone in our feelings and we can ease our own fears by praying for others.

Dear God,

It seems like lots of uncertainty around us.

So many people who need prayers.

Today, I pray...



For those whose health is compromised by the coronavirus or other health issues.

For those who suffer from the economic impact of the virus, in travel, manufacturing, hospitality, energy or so many other industries.

For health care workers and first responders, and other public servants who put themselves in harm's way for us.

For our leaders of the world, our countries, states, and cities, as they seek to help manage this challenge.

God, it can be overwhelming. But you tell us over and over again not to be afraid.

Show me how to trust in you.

As I examine my heart this *Advent* season, help me to turn away from my concern with self, and turn my heart, hands, and prayers toward the concerns of others.

In the name of Jesus Christ, I pray.

Amen

A Prayer for a World Facing the Coronavirus was adapted from a prayer posted by St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Houston, Texas.

For more resources regarding coronavirus,
visit [UMC.org/respondingtocoronavirus](https://www.UMC.org/respondingtocoronavirus)

If you press
your hand
to your heart
I'll press my hand
to mine.

We can both feel
the rhythm
of being alive,
and that's all
the reason I need
to stay inside.



**AUSTIN
DAVIS**



The Missions Team is excited to share with you how we can continue to share the love of Christ by making a difference in our community this Christmas season. The season of Advent begins November 29th and St. Nicholas Day is December 6th. With this in mind, we will be supporting families who have graduated from Family Promise through the annual Salmon Creek Church Giving Tree, hosting Family Promise the week

of December 27th through January 3rd, as well as an opportunity to make a warm meal for the Winter Hospitality Overflow (WHO).

Given the circumstances of Covid-19, it may look a little different this year, but others will feel the love and support of our congregation through your gifts. We are blessed to be a blessing!

Salmon Creek Giving Tree

Dec. 1—18: Please donate cash gifts to missions through Vanco at: salmoncreek.church - please indicate Giving tree, or mail a check to the church office; please indicate missions giving tree on your check. The missions team will be buying gifts and/or gift cards for the families, as well as providing Christmas dinner for them.

Hosting Family Promise

December 27 - January 3: Please watch for sign-up opportunities coming closer to our host week.

Winter Hospitality Overflow

(WHO)SHARE staff will be operating the shelter this year, but they would appreciate a warm meal delivered between 6:00 pm-6:30 pm each night in December to St. Andrew. They request 2 crock pot-size meals per night to serve 30 guests. Please visit this link to sign up:

<https://sharevancouver.us13.list-manage.com/track/click?u=66cf1d7ac3adb58e30dbfd47a&id=3344a26362&e=697dd2c555>



As we welcome the season of Advent, here are a few new books to help you experience Immanuel, God with us.

[Little Mole's Christmas Gift](#)

The second in a series, this children's picture book, starring Little Mole, is a Christmas tale of kindness and generosity. The book is written by Glenys Nellist, a United Methodist pastor's wife, and illustrated by Scottish artist Sally Garland.

[Stillness of Winter](#)

This beautiful gift book from journalist and author Barbara Mahany is part spiritual guide, almanac, scrapbook, field notes and recipe box, sharing with readers ideas for experiencing joy and curiosity in the season of winter.

[Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas](#)

United Methodist pastor and author Adam Hamilton examines the names of Christ used by the gospel writers, while exploring the historical and personal significance of Jesus' birth. "Incarnation" is a standalone book and also is available as a four-week Bible study. A leader guide, DVD and children and youth resources are available. A special "Incarnation" Virtual Kit also is available.

[Making Room](#)

This book and Advent study explores the warmth of welcome at Christmas as readers follow interactions with Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the magi. Ultimately, as Jesus makes room in God's Kingdom for all people, including the marginalized, Dr. Ed Robb, United Methodist pastor and author, asks us to ponder who we can make room for this Christmas.

[The Advent Calendar of Devotions 2020](#)

This pocket-sized book provides daily devotions centered on the importance of Advent and preparing to celebrate Jesus' birth. Cokesbury sells the devotional as an e-book or the physical booklet in packs of 10.

You may also want to check out perennial favorites from [United Methodist Publishing House](#), including:

[The Gift of the Nutcracker](#) by Matt Rawle

[The Redemption of Scrooge](#) by Matt Rawle

[Not A Silent Night](#) by Adam Hamilton

[7 Days of Christmas: A Season of Generosity](#) by Jen Hatmaker

[Heart & Home for Christmas: Celebrating Joy in Your Living Space](#) by Victoria Duerstock

[Almost Christmas: A Wesleyan Advent Experience](#) by Magrey deVega, Ingrid McIntyre, April Casperson, Matt Rawle

[Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent](#) by Amy-Jill Levine

[Faithful: Christmas Through the Eyes of Joseph](#) by Adam Hamilton

[Christmas Gifts that Won't Break](#) by James W. Moore with Jacob Armstrong

[Sent: Delivering the Gift of Hope at Christmas](#) by Jorge Acevedo, Jacob Armstrong, Justin LaRosa, Rachel Billups, Lanecia Rouse

Crystal Caviness, who works for UMC.org at United Methodist Communications, compiled this list of books based on recommendations by staff at United Methodist Publishing House. You may reach her by [email](#) or at 615-742-5138.



POST-ELECTION SURVIVAL GUIDE

Post Election Survival Guide

By Rev. Mark Feldmeir

Chances are you're feeling disillusioned, disheartened and distressed by our current political climate and the ubiquitous divisions it has created in your personal relationships—what mental health professionals now call Post-Election Stress Disorder (PESD). Anxiety, anger, fear, and conflict fatigue are common symptoms of PESD. If any of them describe what you're feeling right now, you're not alone. Here are four keys to reclaiming your peace of mind and restoring peace in your

relationships after the election.

Resist turning penultimate matters into ultimate concerns.

It's common to conflate the Kingdom of God with the pursuit of the common good, and to overinvest ultimate significance in what are actually penultimate, immanent concerns.

We may disagree with Uncle Phil over immigration policy or the Affordable Care Act, but remember that such disagreement is, in the end, merely a political disagreement, not a metaphysical one. For Christians, the penultimate is always adjudicated and refined by the ultimate, but it never becomes the ultimate. Assigning ultimate value and meaning to any political solution or agenda leads to a religious extremism that weaponizes faith, an idolatry that denies the sovereignty of God, and a "functional atheism" that believes that ultimate responsibility for everything rests entirely with this policy or that candidate.

Undoubtedly, there are matters that really are about the Kingdom of God and about which we should take a stand. Our baptismal vows obligate us to "to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves." Dismantling systemic racism or stemming climate change, for example, are matters about which God is profoundly concerned. Even still, such work acknowledges its finite limitations and God's infinite sovereignty.

In the post-election aftermath, keep things in perspective. As Jeremiah says, "Ah Lord God! It is you who made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you" (32:17). Or, as the wise farmer says, "God doesn't settle all accounts in October."

Refuse to stereotype, scapegoat, demonize or otherize.

As with any election, there's always a winning candidate and a losing candidate, one of whom may have campaigned on values and principles more closely aligned with your moral and religious framework. If your candidate lost in this election cycle, you may be feeling what psychologists call "moral injury:" the sense that your deeply held beliefs, convictions, or values have been betrayed or violated, or that the will of God has been subverted. Millions of years of human tribalistic thinking have taught us to project or transmit whatever disillusionment we are feeling onto others, like Uncle Phil—as though Uncle Phil represents everything that's wrong with the world and must now be excluded from our "tribe."

Leave some room in your tribe for Uncle Phil. Avoid binary thinking that categorizes people in terms of good/evil, light/dark, friends/enemies based on political preference. Remember the words of the late theologian, Walter Wink: "When we demonize our enemies, calling them names and identifying them with absolute evil, we deny that they have that of God within them which still makes transformation possible. We play God... We conclude that our enemy has drifted beyond the redemptive hand of God."

Affirm that not all polarization is bad, and not every compromise is wrong.

Some issues merit healthy conflict; some solutions require conciliation. As political theologian, Luke Bretherton suggests, politics is a “dance between conflict and conciliation” as we negotiate our common life together. Democracy always thrives on the vigorous competition of opposing ideas, and Christian witness always demands a prophetic spirit that drives us to the margins.

The gospel is not politically neutral. It has something to say about our obligation to the poor, the immigrant, the oppressed, the sick, and the prisoner. Because of this, whenever Christians do politics, conflict is inevitable—but it doesn’t have to be insoluble or eternal. While most of us live in a fight or flight mode that either compels us to flee from conflict or to resist conciliation, Jesus builds a longer, wider table and invites tax collectors, zealots, soldiers and politicians, enemies, friends, and the friendless to be a part of a conversation that transcends social and political divisions by breaking bread together and sharing a cup.

The results of this election cycle will not heal the political polarization in our country. The dance between conflict and conciliation will continue, as it has for generations. If you want to join Christ in that daring dance, ask yourself: “How big is my table?” “Am I tough enough to be kind?” “Will I share my bread and pass the cup?”

Finally, practice the politics of compassion.

Politics is about more than how we vote or who we vote for. It’s more than systems, structures, policies, platforms, or party affiliation. The word “politics,” from the Greek, “polis,” means “affairs of the cities.” To do politics is to be concerned about the affairs of the communities in which we live, and to do politics as Christians is to ask, “What does the gospel of Jesus Christ say about how I should live in my community. What is my responsibility to the people with whom I share the sidewalk?”

This is a politics of compassion, and it transcends “issue politics” by calling us to consider what kind of community we want to live in and what kind of neighbors we want to be. We cannot answer those questions by simply voting because, in the end, Jesus will still ask us, “When I was hungry, thirsty, sick and in prison, did you care for me? When I was your neighbor in disguise, did you love me?” This is the only kind of politics that matters to Jesus.

With the election now behind us, step away from the cable news talking heads and the social media echo chamber, and serve the real human needs of your community. Feed the hungry, march for racial justice, visit the imprisoned, care for the sick.

Change what’s changeable, control what’s controllable.

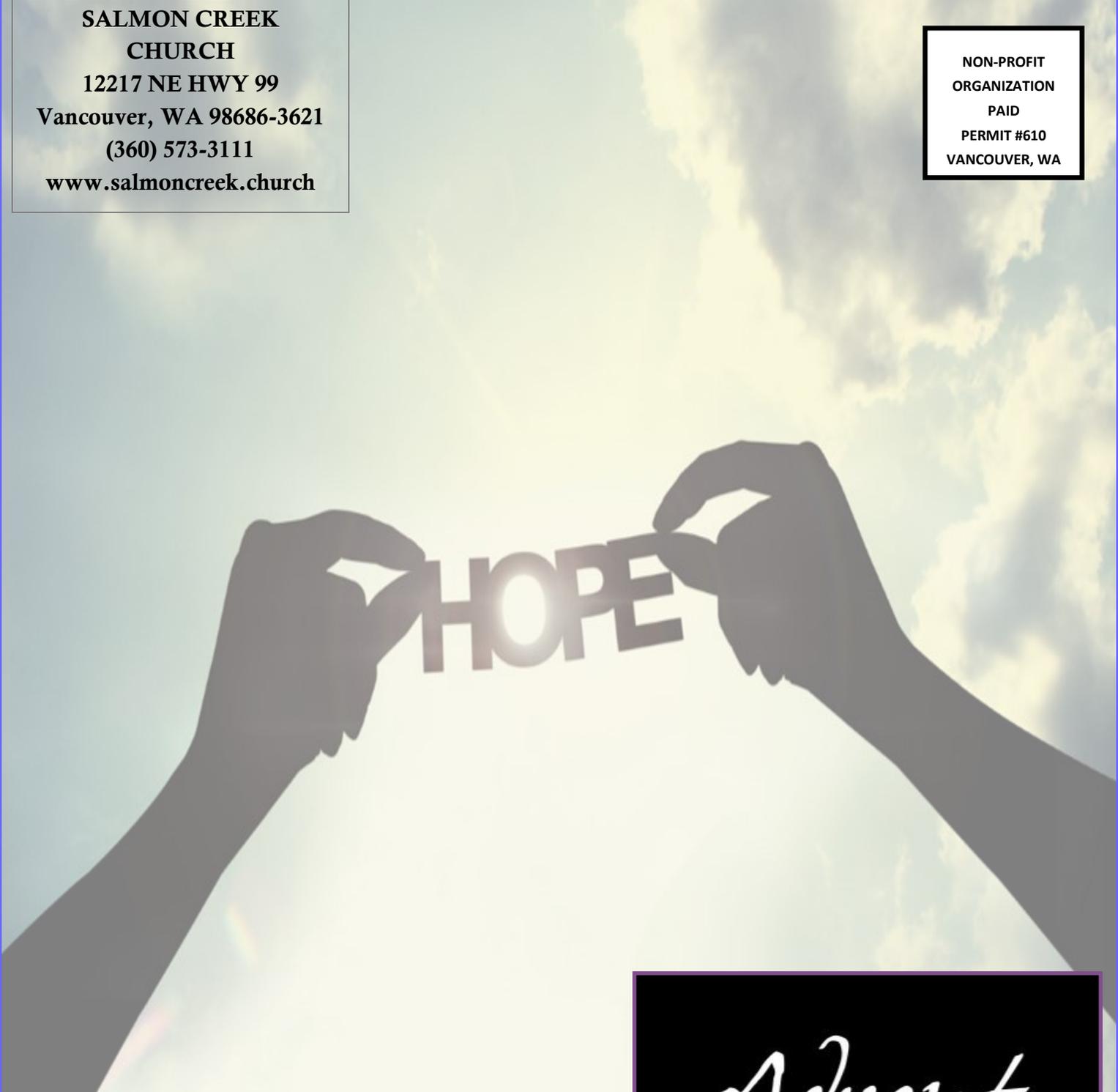
And bring Uncle Phil with you.

The Rev. Mark Feldmeir is Lead Pastor at St. Andrew United Methodist Church in Highlands Ranch, Colorado, and the author of [A House Divided: Engaging the Issues through the Politics of Compassion](#). Hear him on our podcast, [Get Your Spirit in Shape](#).



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HOPE

Thank you for reading the Circuit Rider! If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

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Submissions for the Circuit Rider can be sent to circuitrider@salmoncreek.church. Articles and announcements are due by midnight on the third Sunday of each month.

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