



Let's send some sunshine!



LADIES LUNCH

The ABW would like to encourage all women to join the Women's Lunch Bunch on Friday, May 15th at 1:00 pm, at River's Edge Restaurant.

We have started a note writing group event, sending **notes of encouragement** to all members who may be shut in, sick and/or in treatment and unable to attend services. This is the start of something we would like to see done each month!

So, mark your calendars to join us on the 15th at 1 PM.

(River's Edge is next to the Tumwater Valley Golf course.)

Location: River's Edge:
4611 Tumwater Valley Drive SE



FRIDAY, MAY 15TH @ 1:00 PM

Come and enjoy this time to share our lives, enjoy a meal and be a part of the notes of encouragement project.

Enjoy a healthy salad, sandwich, burger, clam chowder etc

... Lots of choices!

MAY BIRTHDAYS

HAPPY birthday



Sarah Matos	2
Karen Wilson	3
Emily Locke	4
Sarah Lehman Waterhouse	5
Margie Johnson	7
Richard Ewert	8
Jeff Grebbs	8
Becky Nash	9
Jodi Honeysett	10
John Nunneh	12
Gershon Chilka	19
Carrie Bowman	27

Tending the Tenders



Tending to Tender Hearts: A Personal Journey

Mylinda Baits

I sit down to edit this update that I started last week and find myself at a loss for words. I struggle to express what feels raw and right to say. My stomach knots, my throat closes, my chest constricts and feels tight. I cringe whenever I read or hear comments in the news about my home country bringing other countries to their breaking point, using violence and force to make sovereign nations capitulate to our wishes and serve our interests as if God ordained it. War, America first mentality, and Christian nationalism are not Christian nor in anyway compatible with my understanding of faith and following Jesus. It hits home, it hurts and breaks my heart when I hear, *“Cuba is in it’s last moments of life and gonna fall pretty soon. They want to make a deal so badly, you have no idea. Maybe a ‘friendly takeover’ is coming, not now but soon.”* *“Iran is going down and Cuba is next.”* Soundbites, stereotypes, and political narratives tend to shape the way some might see the situation in Cuba. I, on the other hand, have seen and experienced a very different reality. Maybe telling some of my

stories of the humans in Cuba will help tend to what’s tender right now. Maybe writing my way through wordlessness can help me to find the words. Maybe coming back to my senses: what I see, hear, smell, taste, and touch might help. I trust that attending to these tender places: what and where it hurts, and what and where there is hope, will help.

It was my ninth visit to Cuba since 2016. I breathed a sigh of relief when I saw my friend Ernesto’s giant smile as I walked through the exit door of the Holguín airport. Even though, as had become my routine, I was sent to secondary luggage inspection and one of the last to leave the airport, I was thrilled to be with my dear friends again. Planning for this visit, we were concerned that all flights to Cuba might be cancelled and that most inter-region transportation in the country would be suspended, thus cancelling our leadership retreat with our Expressive Arts in Transition educators. On top of dealing with major health challenges due to a recent chikungunya viral epidemic, the ripple effects from economic sanctions and US intervention in Venezuela, with its subsequent control of oil distribution in the region, are causing a great amount of suffering for the ordinary folk who call this place home. The airport cannot refuel planes, and it is very difficult to obtain gas for cars and buses. The transportation and tourism industries have collapsed across the island. People are either stuck in their homes or have to walk many kilometers to hospitals, work, or stores. The schools and universities have had to suspend in-person classes and are moving back online for now. These are tender and uncertain times.

...These dear humans I am privileged to train in our Expressive Arts cohorts are tenders. They tend to the needs of their communities. They tend to the tender places where it hurts. They are moved by compassion to engage with those who have been hurt and wounded. Their open hearts carry the stories of others as well as their own. They tell me, *“Yes, it is hard. Yes, it gets discouraging. Yes, there are multiple crises happening at the same time. AND our lives are being transformed. We know in our bones that being together helps. And helping each other helps. And being heard and seen in the struggle helps. And art and breath and rest and play all help.”* The evidence shows up in these bodies, with nimble nervous systems learning to return to calm and connection through breath and movement, able to regroup and repair. We see signs of life and health in the emotional, spiritual, and relational growth happening in churches, classrooms, and community centers, where our leaders are exploring arts-based healing practices in small groups. I see vitality in their faces, hear hope in their voices, and feel the apapacho in their touch as they greet me and each other with affection. Noticing beauty is becoming habitual, blossoming through cracks in the concrete and cradled in fractals, flowers, and familiar objects found fascinating again. Thank you for holding my heart and hearing my stories... Thank you for seeing beyond the headlines to the people whose lives are impacted and touched by the complicated situations we are ALL connected to. Thank you for your gifts of solidarity and presence in the struggle. Thank you for being curious enough to care.