



The Beacon

University Baptist Church

December 2008

THIS SEASON IN A NATURAL LIGHT

*From the blanket
Of darkness
The eye can see
The light of a candle
Ten miles away.*

– Susan Palo Cherwien’s
“Light, Sum of All” in *Crossings*



I have always enjoyed the lights of this season – bright, multi-colored, twinkling and even, in spite of myself, the sort of eerie pinpoint light emitted by the new L.E.D technology. It’s true that the artificial lights of this season can be seen as a sign of all that’s wrong with our celebrations of the holidays. But I always smile when I see the lights go up and, for years, we have reserved one night for a drive around the neighborhood to admire the glow. Between the price of gas and the cost of electricity, this tradition may be coming to an end. But I have to admit that I will miss it.

It’s probably better for the environment – and the economy – to tone down the displays of electric light. The glow can easily become a glare that blinds us to the meaning and vision of this season. So I’ve been thinking about the *natural light* of this season. When we were talking at the Fall Retreat about the texts for Advent, several folks pointed out that each Sunday could be seen as highlighting the foundational elements of life: fire, water, earth, air. And it’s true. Each Sunday’s text does refer to some expression of these elements. And each Sunday we will light an Advent candle – which is different, of course, than flipping a switch. Those Advent candles may remind us to look at our lives in a more natural light, without the glare of pretense or the shimmer of a good show. Perhaps the candles will remind us of the fundamental elements of our lives beyond the latest technology. Perhaps they will remind us of ancient wisdom and will rekindle the flame of hope.

Perhaps the light of a candle, the sparkle of light on the water or in someone’s eyes, or starlight can break us out of our well-lit blindness of spirit that saps our strength and misses the point.

I do enjoy the electric lights of this season but, this year, it’s the natural light I am after.

Join us as we light Advent and Christmas candles in this season. This issue of *The Beacon* will show the way. Please keep this issue for your own reflection and for reminders about activities each week. We look forward to seeing you in a natural light!

Blessings,

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Deadline for the January
issue is December 14.

HAPPY DECEMBER BIRTHDAY:



12/2 Annie Mix;
12/14 Tim Phillips;
12/18 Angela Farrar;
12/28 Virginia Bishop

If you don't find your birthday here, please
call the office so we can add it to our list.

OUR DECEMBER SPECIAL OFFERING:

supports the work of the **Church Council of Greater Seattle**. The Church Council of Greater Seattle brings hundreds of Protestant and Roman Catholic churches, thousands of volunteers and numerous religious organizations together to serve social needs and to advocate for global peace and economic justice. The Council is also the new home of the UBC-founded Rauschenbusch Center.

On December 21st we will take a special offering for the **Retired ABC Ministers and Missionaries Fund**.

AMONG OURSELVES

Thanks to **Bob Jeffers-Schroder** for his article on Middle East peace that was published in an October issue of the PI ... Thanks also to **Marilyn Marston** for leading Soul Soup through an exploration of the Psalms these last several weeks ... We have received greetings and thanks for care packages from **Sarah Reed & Xaviera Ortiz** – we were glad to see Xavi in worship on November 9 ... Also visiting on Nov. 9, was **Jim & Audrey Ogden** – Jim was assistant pastor at UBC during the ministry of Stan McNair ... Thanks to **David Bloom** for leading the conversation on mental health and faith during November ... Thanks to **Eric Brown** and **Brooke Rolston** for helping finish *The Beacon* this month ... Thanks also to **Marilee Nielsen** for coordinating the Harvest Table ... Thanks to **Suzan Blais-Wilkerson** for selling tickets for the *Godspell* benefit for Evergreen and Tent Cities ... Student ministry intern **Bruce Chittick** and husband **Russ** spent Saturday Nov. 15 with their son **Spencer** at the marriage equality rally ... Other UBC folks among the thousands at the rally were **Vincent Lachina** and **Meesh Cobban** ... **Glenny Law** returns from Hawaii where her Sweet Adeline Chorus participated in international competition ... We have been glad to see **Ginny Bishop** in worship and are grateful to her caregivers for bringing her – please keep Ginny in your prayers as she continues to work on her strength ... **Helen Haugerud** has moved from the hospital to Anderson House in Shoreline where she continues to gain strength and is ready for visitors ... **Carol Guthrie** sends her thanks and appreciation for all the beautiful

cards and remembrances; she is home and looking for folks to come visit, especially midday; she is also in need of folks to take her to doctor appointments in December ... **Shari Peterson's** heart has improved but she is now recovering from a rib injury ... **Mary Clare Benson** goes in for surgery in December ... Please remember long-time Saturday Kitchen volunteer **Angie Bartels** whose mother passed away at the end of October ... Also remember **Sheri Amundsen**, whose stepmother recently passed away ... **Tim Phillips'** father passed away on Nov. 15 after a long struggle with cancer – Tim and Patrick went to Michigan for the funeral and to be with Tim's mom Mary, sister Frances and Frances' partner Heidi ... Please remember all those who are returning from war in Iraq and Afghanistan and are struggling with physical and mental pain – and let us pray that peace will come at last ... Please also keep in your thoughts and prayers the many who have recently lost jobs and are struggling to find work in this economy.



Remember.... We have an *active Congregational Care Team* at UBC. If you or someone you know at church is sick, needs pastoral care or has prayer concerns, please contact Jackie Lamont, our Congregational Care Team Coordinator, at 206-985-7927 or jblamont@mindspring.com
If you could help by making a meal, visiting or writing a card please contact Jackie.



From the Moderator

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

I know what you're thinking. And you're right. Yes, I am a bit premature to wish you a happy 2009. And, yes, I am a bit over-anxious for my term as Moderator to end. But my greeting does have some legitimacy. As our seminary intern Bruce Chittick has reminded us, November 23 was the last Sunday of the liturgical year. November 30 is the first Sunday of a new

year (at least on the church calendar); it is the first Sunday of Advent.

In January, I decided that the theme for my term as Moderator would be "Seeking The Promise God Has For Us." I chose this theme out of respect for my predecessor, Martha Bean, with a commitment to continuing the good work that she began during her term with "Seeking The House God Has For Us." I wanted to draw us away from placing our identity in a physical space ("House") and lead us to place our identity in a spiritual space ("Promise"). I also wanted us to focus on hope in uncertain times.

I thought that these goals would challenge us, but I was wrong—these were not lofty goals for UBC.

Leading UBC to place its identity in a spiritual space—You're already there! I think the question of "what do we do with our building?" has been a part of life at UBC for most of my time here. For years now, we have reasoned and wrestled. We have been both alive with possibilities and heartsick with some of their consequences. We have done the work through our leadership, our teams, our congregational conversations, and our business meetings. A pivotal moment was the Fall Retreat of 2007. There, in our study of Psalm 23, the verse "And I will dwell in God's house forever" took hold in our hearts and minds. The collective realization that we *are* in God's house—God's presence—gave us comfort and allowed us to make the decision in November 2007 to sell our building and property. We have many remaining questions about our building, but we have not questioned where our home is.

Leading UBC to focus on hope in uncertain times—You lead me! Yes, I have tried to be a good cheerleader for you. I write to you of "hope" and "promise" and "journeying" in my monthly newsletter articles. But when it comes down to it, you have hope—genuinely and on your own (well, at least, not as a result of my efforts). I think that, at its best, religion brings hope. And I think that, at its best, community brings hope. The way that we practice religion and community at UBC makes us a hopeful people. There have been many times in the past year when I have been stressed or afraid or confused or lost. Some hopeful person has always stepped forward to help me and encourage me.

In Paul Rogat Loeb's book *The Impossible Will Take A Little While*, there is a chapter called "The Optimism of Uncertainty" written by Howard Zinn. It ends in this way:

To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places—and there are so many—where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction. And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.

Folks, you have behaved magnificently. You are a people of the present, choosing to emphasize the best and doing a little every day to shape a future of marvelous victory. Thank you for supporting me during my term and for being a living example of hope. It has been an honor to serve as your Moderator.

It's a new year. It begins with the season of Advent. We start our journey to Bethlehem to greet Immanuel—*God-with-us*. We take one step at a time. We journey in hope. — Eric Brown

GIFTS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE THIS CHRISTMAS

Each year we plan some way to help you give a gift that makes a difference in the world. This year, we invite you to give a gift that will make a huge difference in the lives of refugees from Burma/Myanmar being resettled here in the Seattle area. We will provide you with more details along the way but the procedure remains the same from past years – you choose an item from a list; buy the gift; and then receive a card to send to the person in whose honor you are making this gift. It's a thoughtful way to honor someone and to do good work at the same time.



BUY LOCAL – MAKE COMMUNITY MATTER!

Each dollar we spend is a vote for the future direction of our communities. In this time of economic instability, wouldn't you prefer your money helps support the people in your neighborhood? Purchasing locally grown or crafted items builds regional sustainability and helps reduce the (often invisible) amount of fossil fuels used to transport our food and goods around the world. So whether it's for holiday gifts, fabulous feasts, or anytime, here are a few sources for locally grown or created items:

University District Farmers Market – Every Saturday from 9am to 2pm • NE 50th & University Way

The market is now open year-round, with a great selection of fall and winter produce, eggs, meats, poultry, seafood, baked goods, preserves and more throughout the holiday season and chilly winter days. The U-District market only sells food products, but some farmer's markets also have craft booths. For more information or to find a farmer's market near you, visit the Puget Sound Fresh website at pugetsoundfresh.org.

Ballard Organic Soap Co. – 4759 Brooklyn Ave NE • ballardorganics.com or 206-527-2828

Right next to the U-District Farmer's Market is this factory store for Washington's only certified organic soap company. They sell bar soap, liquid soap and foaming soap, all made on the premises with organic oils. Liquid soaps are also sold in bulk. The store is open Saturdays from 9am to 4pm and Tues – Fri from 10am-6pm.

Big Dipper Waxworks Hand Crafted Beeswax Candles – bigdipperwaxworks.com or 206-767-7322

Big Dipper Waxworks makes all-natural beeswax candles using only natural colors and scents. You can order online through the website or find a selection of candles at Madison Market Co-op on Capitol Hill or your local PCC Market (see below for info). Be sure to check out the holiday candle section on their website.

Theo Chocolate – 3400 Phinney Ave N • theochocolate.com or 206-632-5100

Theo Chocolate is the only organic, fair trade, bean-to-bar chocolate factory in the United States. They use certified organic fair trade cacao beans and sugar to make a variety of luscious chocolates. The factory store is open seven days a week from 10am-6pm; for \$6 per person you can also take a tour of the factory (call in advance for reservations). Look for Theo Chocolates at locally-owned grocery stores and co-ops.

Other Ideas: you can find more local businesses and restaurants at ecometro.com; visit the Sustainable Communities ALL Over Puget Sound network at scalopswa.org and find a local sustainable group to get involved with; **shop at local co-ops** Madison Market (1600 E Madison St, madisonmarket.com or 206-329-1545) or PCC (see pccnaturalmarkets.com or call 206-547-1222 for locations) and look for locally-grown foods and locally-made gifts; support your favorite **local community organization** (many of them are in dire need of funds right now!); next year consider directly supporting a local farmer by buying a share through the **community supported agriculture (CSA)** program – find one at pugetsoundfresh.org in the CSA section.

PLEASE NOTE: NEW DATE FOR ANNUAL RAUSCHENBUSCH DINNER

Featuring a dramatic presentation of the life of Walter Rauschenbusch, the annual dinner of the Rauschenbusch Center has been moved to March 6, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. at University Christian Church. For more information call (206) 525-1213 or email jliljenstolpe@thechurchcouncil.org

UBC VISIT TO THE NORTHWEST AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM

UBC's Sacred Conversation on Race offers many chances for us to engage in the life-changing, church-changing exchanges that we need to become the church we're called to be. One recent opportunity was an early November visit to the Northwest African American Museum, which opened earlier this year in the old Colman School just south of I-90. It took decades of effort to bring NAAM from dream to reality, and the effort showed in what we were able to see and learn.

Two major display areas offer historical and artistic perspectives. The main long hall shows international slave trade routes, two over-and-under timelines – depicting national and local events of note over centuries, and a breadth of dramatic photos and narratives giving individually rich perspectives on African American culture in our area. (If you want to know who the real first George Bush was, to view photos and read stories



about him, you'll have to visit the museum!) The next hall, now divided roughly in two, is currently given to a broad sampling of the art of two of the nation's greatest black artists, Jacob Lawrence and James W. Washington, Jr., both of whom spent their most creative years in Seattle.

Even in a short afternoon visit, our group gained much and resolved next to bring more church members to visit the International District's Wing Luke Museum in early 2009. Participants were: Lin Carlson, Marilee and Tom Nielsen, Rhonda Hue, Brooke Rolston, Megan Walker, Aaron Burkhalter and Eric Brown.

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT ECUMENICAL CAMPUS COALITION

The University District Ecumenical Campus Coalition (UDECC) is exploring the possibility of co-locating seven partner organizations (five churches and two campus ministries) in one new facility in the University District. Three years ago, UBC agreed to be a part of UDECC's feasibility study to envision what this co-location might be. Now, UDECC is nearing completion of its feasibility study.

On October 25, UDECC presented its proposed Ownership and Governance Plan to representatives from its seven partner organizations. UBC was represented by Dan Peterson (UDECC Board Member), Tim Phillips (Pastor), Eric Brown (Moderator), and Joy Smith (Moderator-Elect). The Ownership and Governance Plan details how member organizations will interact with one another within a UDECC corporation. There are sections on the formation of and initial investments in UDECC, the core ownership and governance of UDECC, the admission of new members, the withdrawal/removal of members, increasing/reducing investments, renting space to non-member worshipping communities, managing and operating the UDECC facility, and the allocation of revenues.

Partner organizations have been asked to review the Ownership and Governance Plan and submit questions/comments to UDECC by December 12. Copies of the Ownership and Governance Plan will be made available at Sunday morning worship services. We will have an open discussion in early December (date and time to be determined) to collect UBC's comments and questions. For more information on UDECC, please visit ecumenicalcampus.org.

THE WEEKS OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

ADVENT I, beginning Sunday, November 30: *Candlelight (the fire of hope)*

*From the blanket
Of darkness
The eye can see
The light of a candle
Ten miles away.*

Using the poetry of Susan Palo Cherwien and the text about watching and waiting from Mark 13.32-37, Advent begins with a service led by Elizabeth Patrick and a sermon by the Rev. Paul Benz, Lutheran Public Policy advocate and co-author of the study, *Troubling the Waters*, about white privilege and racism. Rev. Benz will led a conversation about that study following worship in the McAfee Parlor.

Thursday, Dec. 4: Soul Soup *Sacred Conversation on Race* begins using the study *Troubling the Waters*. Soup at 6 and conversation begins at 6:30.

... Also today, the Church Council of Greater Seattle invites you to *Follow the Light*, an evening of music, laughter and light at Seattle University's Campion Hall. 5:30 p.m. / \$60 per person. UW professor David Domke will be speaking about religion, politics, and the media. Ecumenical Leadership Awards will be given to Mary Stamp, founder and editor of *The Fig Tree*; the Puget Sound Interfaith Youth Camp; and Father Michael G. Ryan, pastor of St. James Cathedral. For more information call (206) 525-1213.

Saturday, Dec. 6: UBC Team at Saturday Kitchen. Contact Daniel Hannah if you can help at (206) 992-9453.

ADVENT II, beginning Sunday, Dec. 7: *Light on the water (the light of peace)*

*In scripture we are presented with the image of
God as water
God as river
God as fountain
God as stream.
Imagine water pouring over your hands.*

The text for this week is Mark's story of the baptism of Jesus. Water is one of those fundamental elements of life and looking at this season in a natural light might include noticing how water sparkles in the sunlight or catches the glow of the moon on a clear night. Perhaps noticing that light can make a way for peace. Imagine Jesus beginning his ministry enveloped in water – the water flowing over him; the sun turning the drops into crystals; the Beloved One claimed by love for all the earth. Along with Susan Palo Cherwien's poem for this day, the closing lines of Wendell Berry's poem "The Peace of Wild Things" come to mind:

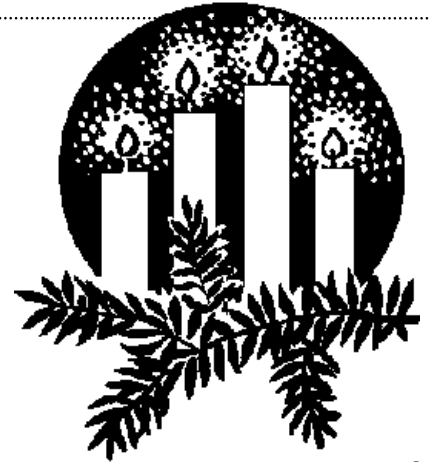
*I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.*

(continued next page)

(Sun. Dec. 7 continued) It is this light – the freedom and peace of being carried on the current of grace – that this day offers us. We light the candle of peace and look for sunlight or moonlight dancing on the water.

... **Also TODAY at 2:00 p.m.** Join others from UBC as our Sacred Conversation on Race takes us to a performance of *Black Nativity*. Tickets \$30. To order tickets, call Diane Schmitz or Bill Stalder at (206) 365-4392.

Thursday, Dec. 11: Soul Soup *Sacred Conversation on Race* continues using the study *Troubling the Waters*. Soup at 6 and conversation begins at 6:30.



ADVENT III, beginning Sunday, Dec. 14: *Light in your eyes (the light of joy)*

*One of the bright and swift messengers of God
went to a village called Nazareth
Greeted and startled
a young woman named Mary
with a message of a
new dawning.*

It is one of the great descriptions of joy to say that someone’s “eyes light up.” And this is the season! Watch the eyes of children light up with joy and wonder. See the light of love in the eyes of a beloved one. Open your eyes to the light of a new day and the kind of unexpected joy that catches you off guard. That light in your eyes is the light of joy. Imagine, even in the middle of all its complications, the twinkle in Mary’s eyes or in Elizabeth’s or Zechariah. Today we light the candle of joy and look for the embodied, earthy promise of a new dawning.

Thursday, Dec. 18: Soul Soup *Sacred Conversation on Race* continues using the study *Troubling the Waters*. Soup at 6 and conversation begins at 6:30.

ADVENT IV, beginning Sunday, Dec. 21: *Starlight (the light of love)*

This is Christmas Pageant Sunday written and performed by our youth. Join us as we light the candle of love and celebrate the young stars of our life together. Starlight is an ancient light, traveling the vast distances of space out of the past and into our present. It is the natural light that guided seekers – the pre-quel to the Epiphany story of the Magi and the star that led them to the promise of a child and a new hope. Today we light the candle of love and look to our youth to lead us into the future.

CHRISTMAS EVE, Wednesday, Dec. 24, 7 p.m. *The Light of the World*

This evening is our annual service of candlelight, music, and reflection on the coming of the Light of the World. Following this service, the McAfee Parlor will be open for food and conversation and this year’s Christmas Eve movie: Denzel Washington in *The Preacher’s Wife*.

CHRISTMAS SUNDAY, Dec. 28: *A Service of Carols*

If we haven’t sung your favorite Christmas carol by now, this is your chance! Join us for an informal service of carols and poetry.

SUNDAYS IN ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

Every Sunday ...

9:15 Choir rehearses in the Sanctuary

10:30 Worship & Children's Program

ADVENT I, Nov. 30, *Candlelight (the fire of hope)*

Mark 13.32-37. The Rev. Paul Benz, preaching. Sacred Conversation on Race follows worship.

ADVENT II, Dec. 7, *Light on the water (the light of peace)*

Mark 1.1-8. Student ministry intern, Bruce Chittick, preaching. Special Offering for the Church Council of Greater Seattle.

ADVENT III, Dec. 14, *Light in your eyes (the light of joy)*

John 1 & Luke 1, songs and stories about the promise of the dawning of a new day.

ADVENT IV, Dec. 21, *Starlight (the light of love)*

Christmas Pageant written and performed by our youth. Special Offering for American Baptist Retired Ministers & Missionaries.

CHRISTMAS EVE, Dec. 24, 7:00 p.m. *The Light of the World*

A service of candlelight, music, and reflection followed by a gathering in the McAfee Parlor.

CHRISTMAS SUNDAY, Dec. 28, *A Service of Carols*