

the Sounds of Messiah

Summer Church Office Hours
9:00am–1:00pm Monday–Friday
May 30–September 1

Graduation Celebration
Sunday, June 4

Semi-Annual Meeting
of the Congregation
Sunday, June 4

Saturday and Sunday
Godly Play begins
June 10 & 11

Newcomers' Orientation
June 11

Messiah Beach Camp-out
June 15–18

Middle School Picnics
June 22 & July 27

Confirmation Camp
June 25–30

Heritage Farm Work party
July 5

Vacation Bible School
July 10–14

High School Mission Trip
to Colorado
July 16–22

Wallowa Backpacking Trip
August 4–9

Intern Farewell
August 11



Pr. Peter Braafladt

wondering about the future of gardening

He [Jesus] said therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it? It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches."
Luke 13:18

Now there was a garden in the place where he [Jesus] was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.
John 19:41-42

I'm a lawn guy from way back. When I was nine years old, my weekly allowance was 30 cents—an amount I got, as my mother put it, "just because I was part of the family and still breathing." I suspect it was also part of my parents' effort to teach me how to manage money. My earning capacity changed when I got to be 10 years old. That was when I grew just big enough to manage a self-propelled gas-powered mower. On the weeks I mowed the lawn, I got a whopping 35 cents added on to my Saturday allowance. The prospect of more than doubling my weekly take home "pay" meant that we had one of the best-kept parsonage lawns in all of Seattle. It was a wonder to behold.

Nowadays a great week for me is when I'm able to cut the lawn while still short enough to leave the clippings on the yard without even noticing them. I read somewhere that the clippings are a natural fertilizer for the grass and that they really do green up the lawn over time.

Kathy is a gardener. She delights in planting, weeding, and harvesting... and informing me about the shrubs that need cutting, moving, or removing. Different facets of the Braafladt ecosystem captivate our attentions. We, however, do share something in common. We're both focused on the future—Kathy on the harvest, and me on improving the health of next week's growth in our lawn. (continued on following page)

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Pr. Peter Braafladt

Pr. Kathy's Book Club
first Wednesdays of the month
childcare always available
Hazel Dell campus
10:00-11:30am June 7

*A Different Kind of Daughter:
The Girl Who Hid From the
Taliban in Plain Sight*
by Maria Toorpakai

Newcomers' Orientation
5:00-7:30pm Sunday, June 11
Hazel Dell Campus

The Newcomers' Orientation is an opportunity for newcomers to Messiah to learn more about its mission, ministries and culture, and the pathway to membership. Includes a fully hosted meal and childcare will be available. For more information or to register your intention to attend, please contact Pr. Peter or the church office.

Adult Bible Study
The Divine Drama
10:00-11:30am and
6:00-7:00pm Wednesdays
(goes through June 14)



**Semi-Annual Meeting
of the Congregation**
11:00am Sunday, June 4

The work we do in the church and its relationship to the future can be fickle, especially these days. If author and theorist Phyllis Tickle is correct, every 500 years or so the Church goes through a time of crisis, an upheaval, from which it eventually benefits, but through which there is a ton of pain and messiness, the very stuff of death and resurrection.

As one called to be a Christian public leader, it feels like getting it right is a lot harder than it used to be. The harvest isn't coming forward and the grass isn't greening up like it used to, at least using the methods and messaging we've employed in the past. All churches, regardless of denomination or non-denominational stripe, are in decline. Even the "megas" are facing the reality of shrinkage.

Here on the west coast, we've long known something of the challenge as those who have never pretended to have majority status in the culture. As Greg Rhodes, Project Manager for Messiah's North County ministry, has often repeated, 70% of the people with whom we live are two generations away from knowing anything of the story of Jesus and the Christian message. This means that the last persons to know anything of the Christian story in most families (70%) are two generations ago. That figure is daunting and worthy of our best efforts to discern new ways to connect with our neighbors, new ways to be the church, new ways to carry ministry into the future.

You are just now welcoming Hannah Norem and Zach Croonquist as college summer interns. It is one of the best things Messiah is doing for the future of the church. The congregation has become a seedbed for encouraging and supporting young adults to become church leaders. Partnering with Luther Seminary to host pastoral interns is an even greater investment. Future iterations of church community and activity will undoubtedly be different, and be measured by different metrics than they are today. But I am confident the Church will always benefit from faithful leaders skilled in pastoral arts, thoughtful in theological reflection, and filled with love for the people they will serve. Thank you giving yourselves as gardeners in an enterprise that certainly brings us joy in the present, but is primarily focused on benefit to others in the future.

Thank you too for your participation in Messiah's recent discernment process. We began the process thinking that it might move us toward the purchase of land in north Clark County. Through it came a growing awareness of something more profound and important—that for the sake of our neighbors, and the larger Church, Messiah itself should become a seedbed, a laboratory for learning, risking, and experimenting in how to be church in a very different world than the one we assume. It will probably mean that we'll be doing some planting, weeding, cutting, moving, and removing for the sake of future harvest.

If there's one thing I noticed about the Messiah community, it's unafraid to focus on the future for the sake of neighbor. We know with certainty that God promises to provide the resources as long as we are part of God's family and still breathing... and even beyond our last breath. We are, after all, people of the harvest. And that is definitely a wonder to behold!

“...the Church will always benefit from faithful leaders skilled in pastoral arts, thoughtful in theological reflection, and filled with love for the people they will serve.”



Mary Beenken
Seminary Pastoral Intern

the timing is all up to God

Nathan and I love gardening. Of course, like many gardeners, we love the end results of our hard work. We like the beauty of flowers in our front yard and the satisfaction of eating vegetables we grew ourselves. But we also love the glamor-less, labor-intensive parts: the pruning and weeding, the digging and watering. It's a lovely and gratifying hobby—but one which is difficult when one is a twenty-something who moves every year into a new place that somebody else owns. When we moved into the intern house next door to the church last fall, we found ourselves daydreaming about what might grow in the un-turned dirt and the far-off days of the next spring's sunshine.

So this spring, when Easter was a week or so behind us and a few un-claimed Easter lilies and hydrangeas were languishing in the narthex, we decided to put our gardening gloves back on. Those Easter flowers found new homes (and hopefully new life) in the dirt in front of the intern house. Then, with the help of some friends in the congregation, we installed two raised garden beds in the backyard. The beds are made from leftover wood that once



was part of a deck on the church—so it's fitting that it has come full-circle now with its new purpose in the church's big backyard.



But of course, Nathan and I are coming to the end of our time here at Messiah. It's something we try not to think about too much because we have come to love this place so deeply—but we had to face that reality when we went to pick out our seeds and seedlings. Most things will be ready for harvest in about mid-August...right when we're leaving. The perennials we re-homed into our yard might not bloom again while we're here. We tried to select early-bearing varieties of tomatoes and peppers and planted more than our usual amount of cool-weather crops whose season we might extend with a little added shade. But the fact remains that nature's timing is out of our hands. It's likely that much, if not most, of the fruits of our labors will be reaped by the intern house's next occupants this fall. And I find that I'm at peace with that.

Because that's not unlike what we do as a church. Oh, we love the end results of our hard work: As a community, we are rooted in our shared traditions and values. We like watching the seeds we've planted flower in the lives of those we touch or the ministries we invest in. But so much of what we do is also for the next generation: we plow new soil and hope that it will be fertile, knowing that it might not grow anything for many seasons. We prune away old practices and smart from the pain, but hope that it will lead to fresh buds and luxuriant growth. We pray for continued rain and sunshine to nourish that which is out of our hands. Because the joy of the body of Christ is also in the hard work of tending and cultivating, and the timing is all up to God. For Nathan and me, our new little garden has been a good reminder that it is worthwhile to plant for those who are not yet here, and to think with longing and hope—and yes, with a little sadness—of the bounty that is to come even after our part in this growing season is over.



This vocation into which God has called the church is lovely and gratifying, and we rest in the knowledge that our Gardner will continue to tend what will bloom in the time to come. Amen.

for more information about all events, adult ministries, and small group opportunities, go to messiahvancouver.org

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David Teeter
Minister of Worship and Music

the church, God's masterpiece

“Praise be to
the God who
made us, who
formed us and
gave us life.”

Messiah Worship Choir
(High School–adult)
7:00–8:30pm Wednesdays
through June 7

Messiah Worship Orchestra
(H. School–adult)
11:00am Sundays
through June 10

The landscape lay flat and empty, dry and dusty before me. Ten flowering plants stood straight and tall, a contrast to the emptiness around them. What made them stand with such courage in such few number? I began to focus away from the stark emptiness and to the plants themselves. Their stalks were newly fresh, firm, strong, green and watered. Their faces beamed a joy of life that was difficult to comprehend in the midst of a dry and parched land. Petals around their faces shone brilliant colors, making halos of blue, green, yellow, pink and purple. Suddenly, a chorus of sound burst forth from their midst, “Praise be to the God who made us, who formed us, and gave us life.”

A burst of wind came upon them, and seeds were blown to the north, east, south and west. New plants began to spring up, wispy in features, struggling to survive. I heard the chorus begin again from the stronger plants, “Praise be to the God who made us, who formed us and gave us life.” It resounded through the land, encouraging the new and weaker plants, who slowly began to hum and then join the chorus as they were able.

CRASH! Lightning flashed, thunder roared, waters came from the heavens. All the plants lifted their faces to the sky and the chorus resounded with even greater strength and sound, “Praise be to the God who made us, who formed us, and gave us life.” The weaker plants began to reach toward the sky and you could see them gaining strength each moment as the waters filled their stalks.

The older stalks reached out to the newer stalks and with courage the newer began to reach back. The beauty of the newer stalks began to mirror, and even surpass, those who were before them. They stretched forth reveling in the joy of being close to newfound brothers and sisters. Their faces and petals shone a light of joy and I heard the masterpiece of song resound as the chorus reached out toward the highest heavens, “Praise be to the God who made us, who formed us, and gave us life.”

The clouds broke and the sun revealed itself, warm in its life-giving strength. All faces turned upward to experience the warmth. The throngs swelled with love and courage, “Praise be to the God who made us, who formed us, and gave us life.”

My focus moved further out as from a great height, and I saw the beautiful colors waving gently together, moving as one on the plain. Hues of green, yellow, purple, blue, red, pink, gold, magenta, chartreuse and orange moving together as far as I could see. I remember thinking what an incredible transformation of creation lay below me and I began to hum with the masses, “Praise be to the God who made us, who formed us and gave us life.”

Suddenly, God, came into the field and began harvesting flowers. Many in the field became frightened, their courage faltering. Those culled began to cry out, “What is happening? Why would such a thing be done? Why must we be taken from our friends and family?” Those who remained called out, “Be strong, be firm, God knows what he is doing and loves you.” Slowly the song began to grow, “Praise be to the God who made us, who formed us, and gave us life.” All flowers began to chant, even those who had been culled from their family in the field. The chorus became so loud that it became a beautiful, masterful and compelling duet resounding back and forth across the landscape, from culled to those who remained. As those culled were taken away, the song continued with strength in the landscape, unfettered by the loss of their companions. The winds blew, seeds were scattered, more flowers filled the spaces left empty—the beauty was unsurpassed in its newness—its fresh uniqueness. And I wept at this stark vision of new creation.

My eyes suddenly turned toward a room where an elderly lady sat in tears, saddened by the death of her son. I saw another room where a mom and dad in tears looked down at their newborn baby boy in desperate need of a transplant. I saw a room where parents were grieving over the incarceration of their daughter lost to drugs. I saw fields of rooms filled with loneliness, pain, suffering, homelessness, hunger, sickness and death. God came to each room and placed a magnificent arrangement of flowers in every corner. The flowers looked toward God questioningly. God simply smiled at them and said, “Sing.”

kindness of strangers

“...for I was hungry and you gave me food, was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ and the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’” Matthew 25: 35-40

When have you been welcomed by a stranger? I cannot even count how many times I have had “strangers” help me along the way and am humbled by the amount they have helped me. One of the most impressive experiences happened last year around this time. I was just getting ready to start hiking the last 110 Km of the Camino de Santiago in Northern Spain. Messiah had graciously gifted me time off for a sabbatical and I convinced my sister (who is not a hiker) to come with me on the adventure.



We did pretty well staying on the marked trail, but about three days in, we came into a town and couldn't find a place to sleep. We had



to stay at a hotel on the outside of town (and off of the marked path). We were told some vague directions about how to reach the trail again and so we started off walking along a busy highway. I kept assuring my sister we would probably see it soon, but then as the highway got busier and busier and the shoulder of the road got smaller and smaller, I knew we were lost.



Suddenly, a man approached us, also on foot. He recognized we were lost. He introduced himself as “Bruno from Belgium” and said he would take us through some back woods and farmlands to get us back to the Camino. Okay, maybe this doesn't sound the safest way, but jumping into a steep ditch every time a car passed didn't seem safe to me either.

So, we followed Bruno until he said he needed to hike faster to get to work in time. Within a few minutes we were back on the marked trail. I kept thinking... did we imagine him? Why would this stranger go out of his way to help us so much? And at the same time I was saying prayers of thanks.

Jesus calls us to welcome strangers. In today's society sometimes it is hard to know where a safe place to start is. My hope is that when opportunities present themselves that I'm willing to take them.

Middle School Picnics in Felida Park

(3798 NW 122nd St., Vancouver)

11:45am–1:15pm June 22 and July 27

Please meet and get picked up at the park. Youth should come dressed to play and bring a food item to share. Hot dogs and drinks provided.



Jessica Potts
Director of Youth
and Young Adult Ministries

“Jesus calls us
to welcome
strangers”

Graduation Sunday

All are welcome to come and celebrate with Messiah's graduates at the 9:45am worship service on Sunday, June 4. A cake and punch reception will follow worship in the fellowship hall.

Beach Campout

A few more tent spots are available for the beach campout at Nehalem Bay June 15–18. Please contact Jessica Potts at jessicap@messiahvancouver.org if interested.

Please keep the following
trips in your prayers

Confirmation Camp
June 25–30

High School Mission Trip
to Colorado
July 16–22

Backpacking Trip
August 4–9



Joyce Handran
Preschool Administrator

“I believe we too were created for one primary purpose, and that purpose is to love.”

Reunion Playdates

9:30-10:30am June 12
Mrs. Bogart's AM Class

11-12pm June 12
Mrs. Bogart's PM Class

10:30-11:30am June 13
Mrs. Haywood's AM Class

12:30-1:30pm June 13
Mrs. Haywood's PM Class

10-11:00am June 14
Mrs. Young's Class

9:30-10:30am June 15
Mrs. Van Buskirk's AM Class

11-12:00pm June 15
Mrs. Van Buskirk's PM Class

10-11:00am June 16
Miss Cheyenne's Class

lessons from a silk moth

Moments after settling in at my desk, the morning quiet was interrupted by a cheerful outburst coming from one of the classrooms. The source of the excitement was a preschool teacher who, upon entering her classroom, was surprised to find that a magnificent natural phenomenon had taken place overnight.

Eight months prior, this same teacher had discovered the larva (caterpillar) of an *Antheraea polyphemus* silk moth. A naturalist at heart, she brought the caterpillar to the preschool and placed it in her classroom. Her intent was to share it with her new preschool students the following day, which happened to be the first day of school. The bright green caterpillar was no ordinary caterpillar; it measured approximately 7cm in length and 1cm in width and she was sure it would capture her young students' attention. Much to the teacher's disappointment, the caterpillar encapsulated itself in some leaves overnight and spun itself a cocoon, hiding its form from her inquisitive students.



The specimen remained in its protective habitat for months while its viewers wondered about what might be transpiring within. Despite her curiosity, the teacher wisely refrained from inspecting the cocoon, even though she was skeptical about what, if anything, remained inside. Typically, such a caterpillar transforms into its pupal form and then hatches as an adult moth within two weeks of spinning its cocoon. This one was definitely following a different plan.



On the morning of the grand discovery, eight months after bringing the caterpillar to school, she entered her classroom to find

a beautiful male silk moth near the cocoon. The moth's wingspan measured approximately 15cm! Apparently, the moth had overwintered in its classroom habitat, finally emerging when nature intended.

After quickly researching what these particular moths eat, the teacher was shocked to find that they don't; in fact, their life span measures a maximum of four days during which time their primary purpose is to search for a mate, reproduce, and then die. She came to the realization that, in order for the moth to fulfill its purpose, she had to release it that very day, which she did under the watchful eyes of the students, all of whom were a little overwhelmed with the entire experience. A creature that was not there when they left for home the previous day 'magically' appeared and then had to be immediately released.



Like this silk moth, I believe we too were created for one primary purpose, and that purpose is to love. The act of loving others and witnessing their transformation can be a process that requires extreme patience, an 'overwintering', if you will. As curious as she was, if the teacher had poked and prodded the cocoon, she might have damaged the specimen and interrupted the process. Yet, I believe that sometimes an opportunity arises and we are called to respond with urgency. Had the teacher waited to release the moth, it might have missed its opportunity to mate before its life ended just a few short days later.

My prayer is that I would be mindful of my purposes, be patient with the transformation process, react quickly when prompted, and hope God blesses it all to produce positive results.

what grows in my garden... a happy heart

I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations. For your steadfast love is as high as the heavens; your faithfulness extends to the clouds. Ps. 57:9-10

You know what's extremely difficult? Summarizing my trip to Guatemala. You know what is even more challenging? Trying to explain how life changing it was when most of my experience can't be put into words... but sure, let me attempt to do just that.



I spent ten days in the Cloud Forest of Alta Verapaz outside of Cobán, Guatemala, at a place called Community Cloud Forest Conservation (CCFC). Pictures do not do it justice. The organization I went with, Lutheran Partners in Global Ministry (LPGM), focuses on partnerships, working alongside communities, versus missions, where you might do something for the community. I can't express to you what this organization is doing in so many areas of the world, but I'll summarize by saying they are rock stars. So, said rock stars

invited me along on their trip with three weeks to prepare and absolutely no idea of what to expect, but I blindly leapt for the opportunity knowing that sharing Godly Play® was the reason for the invite.

When we arrived at the CCFC site, I was blown away. Not only by the hospitality of the people, but by the many layers that this organization had

going. They had children coming in from the villages to stay for a week at a time where they would have beds, delicious meals, and running water. The children would learn about different species of birds in their area, as well as different plants and trees. They would take my hands and have me follow them blindly into dark caves. I have to say I never questioned them. Their smiles were contagious, and they were sponges, willing and wanting to learn. Apparently, I say "wow" a LOT, because by day three, every time they saw something new they would show me and say, "JOY! WOW!" They made my heart happy.



I walked through rows of lettuce, blackberries, fruit trees, and coffee plants with fireflies dancing all around me. I learned which plants in the area could contribute to a balanced diet. Sadly, the Guatemalan people commonly burn down their area of Cloud Forest and grow corn... just corn. In turn, they become

diabetic. If you have hardly a drop of clean water, being diabetic is a tough diagnosis to handle. CCFC teaches the women and children how to live off their land, what to grow, and how to sustain it.

On the last day with the children, I walked with them and blew bubbles, which made them laugh and giggle madly as they followed me. We hiked up a large hill and when we got to the top we planted trees together. This was a very special moment for all of us... even without being able to communicate in Q'eqchi, I was able to tell the kiddos we were going to take turns digging and planting. It was hot. They were very thankful for time to take a break in the shade. (continued on following page)



Joy Studer
Director of Children's
and Family Ministries

“Their smiles were contagious, and they were sponges, willing and wanting to learn.”

Saturday Godly Play
June 10–August 26
children ages 3 and up
begins at 5:00pm

Sunday Godly Play
June 11–August 27
children ages 3 and up
begins at 9:30am

Families in the Park
10:00–noon every other Monday
meets at Eisenhower school
begins June 19

VBS — Maker Fun Factory
July 10–14

The smiles we passed back and forth working together will be forever in my memory. After we planted over 50 trees, each child was given a tree to take home and plant. This way they could remember CCFC and their time at the center and this tree would give them and their family fruit to eat.



It is a beautiful gift and their faces lit up when we handed them each their own tree.



There's so much we don't see as we live our lives so peacefully here in the United States. We can take a lot for granted. During my trip, a poem by Wendell Berry was repeated in my mind. To me, it hit every part of the trip—from my walks in the evening, to venturing blindly into caves; from the hurt the people have gone through and continue to battle, to the graciousness with which they greeted us travelers and showed us what they could; from genuine smiles they gave without reluctance, and the happiness with which they lived, even those who have nothing but each other... but to them, that was enough. We all have much to learn.

To Know the Dark by Wendell Berry

To go in the dark with a light is to know the light.
To know the dark, go dark. Go without sight,
and find that the dark, too, blooms and sings,
and is traveled by dark feed and dark wings.

Heritage Farms Work Party

Do you like gardening, working with your hands or playing in the dirt? Do you want to help to increase access to fresh produce in our community? Messiah is putting together a work party 9:00am–1:00pm July 5 at Heritage Farms. Work includes weeding, harvesting and lending a hand wherever needed! Pack a lunch and join us for a picnic after we serve at the farm. For more information please contact Mary Beenken or Alison Treichel at (360) 574-7081.



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