



# THE TOWLINE



Dear Friends and Members of NPUCC,

**February  
2024**



**Normandy Park  
United Church  
of Christ**  
19247 1<sup>st</sup> Ave S  
Seattle, WA

(206) 824-1770

[www.npucc.org](http://www.npucc.org)

**Pastor:**

Rev. Amy Hitchens  
[amy@npucc.org](mailto:amy@npucc.org)

**Music Accompanist and  
Choir Director:**

Cindy Dow  
[cindy@npucc.org](mailto:cindy@npucc.org)

**Office Manager:**

Vernadette Lapena  
[vernadette@npucc.org](mailto:vernadette@npucc.org)

**Office Hours:**

9:15 am – 2:00 pm  
Tuesday – Friday  
(subject to change)

As we begin this month, and before I jump in and write about our upcoming Lenten season, I want to let you all know that our office manager, Vernadette, will be transitioning out of the position this month. Her last day will be February 16. The good news is that Vernadette helped us find her replacement. We will be welcoming Weronika (pronounced Veronica) Holmes to the church office on February 20. She has recently emigrated from Poland and is married to a member of our US National Guard. She has many years' experience working in offices and also taught English for several years in Poland. I want to thank Vernadette for all that she has contributed during her time with us and for taking the time to get to know us, especially when helping with tech on Sundays. I wish her the best as she transitions into the next parts of her life and may God's grace go with her. Vernadette has written a note to you all that you will find in this newsletter.

Okay, now onto Lent! Ash Wednesday arrives early this year, on February 14. This means there may very well be chocolate at our Ash Wednesday Service. I mean, how do you celebrate being oh so very human and Valentine's Day on the same day? I think the answer is chocolate.



This year during Lent we will be following the theme of Staying Rooted in our faith. This can mean many things—how we interact and are in right relationship with the earth, how we stay connected to God and each other, and how we covenant with one another and with God. We are utilizing the UCC Lenten Devotionals once again—the theme they have chosen is “Bend” which has something to do flexibility and resiliency in our rootedness. I think of how really tall trees, deeply rooted, are able to bend and sway even in the most ferocious of windstorms. Rev. Molly Baskette says just this exactly in

the introduction to the devotional: “Trees that don’t stand stiff but flex in the wind—bounce back, rather than break.”

I invite you to journey with us as we explore how deeply rooted we are in our faith this season, and just how, when and why we need to allow for a posture of flexibility, so we can bend but not break in the windstorms of this life. Of course, now I have the image of a great big branch of the Hemlock tree in my front yard that came down in the last big windstorm. It took up our whole front yard but was but a branch—the integrity of the tree itself was not damaged by the loss of this one, very large branch. Sometimes, in the bending and in the flexing, we lose things. Things break free. Things break away. Sometimes in the bending something new forms. I encourage you all to stay open to the movement of the Spirit in your life as we enter into another season of Lent—this time of self-reflection, intentional decrease of the muchness and manyness of life, this time of allowing and exploring just how deeply rooted we are in our faith.

My hope this Lent is that through prayer, time in nature, study and worship we can reconnect or deepen our connection to our local watershed and all that it holds—both the beauty and lamentation of a world in the throes of climate change. On the final page of the UCC Lenten devotional, Rev. Quinn Caldwell leaves us with this prayer—it is just as good for the beginning of Lent as it is for its completion on Easter Sunday: “*Holy God, when I am bent and searching, come to me. Amen.*”

Rooted in Faith,



## February Calendar of Events

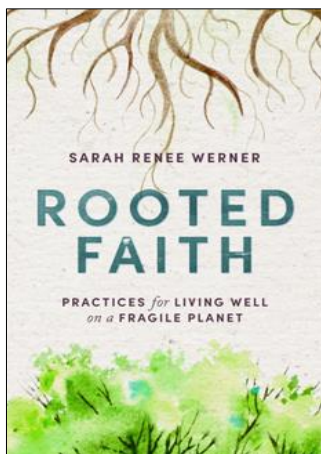
**ONLINE:** invitations/directions for accessing these events will be shared via email:

- Sunday Worship Services: 10:00 am
- Communion: Sunday, February 4, 10:00 am
- Church Council meeting: Tuesday, February 13, 7:00 pm
- Bibles & Brews: Fridays, February 2 and 16, 7:00 pm

**IN-PERSON:** we encourage wearing a mask and practicing reasonable physical distancing to keep vulnerable people safe:

- Sunday Worship Services: 10:00 am, Sanctuary
- Communion: Sunday, February 4, 10:00 am
- Sunday School: youth are dismissed to attend class during Worship, except on Communion Sundays and special occasions
- Souper Bowl of Caring: Sunday, February 4
- Parish Care Committee meeting: Wednesday, February 7, 1:00 pm, Fireside Room
- Guest speaker from Mary's Place: Sunday, February 11, 10:00 am, Sanctuary
- Ash Wednesday Service: Wednesday, February 14, 5:00 pm
- Lenten Soup Lunches: Wednesdays, February 21 and 28, 12:00 pm
- Enneagram Study Group: Thursday, February 22, 1:30 pm, Fireside Room
- Guest opera singer/soloist Stephanie Pfundt: Sunday, February 25, 10:00 am, Sanctuary

# LENTEN SOUP LUNCHES Wednesdays, February 21 – March 20 12:00 – 1:15 pm



During Lent we will be reading the book *Rooted Faith: Practices for Living Well on a Fragile Planet*. It's a new publication by a Mennonite pastor, Sarah Renee Werner, who lives and works in Ohio. I find that she brings many concepts and ideas that we have been thinking about as individuals and puts them all together in this book. I also

recommend *Becoming Rooted: One Hundred Days of Reconnecting with Sacred Earth* a devotional by Cherokee writer Rev. Dr. Randy Woodley and *Nature's Best Hope* by Douglas W. Tallamy. Having the books isn't required but if you would like Lynn to purchase any of the books for you, let her know. *Rooted Faith* is not at the library but the other two are. Also, please sign up if you plan on being there so we have enough soup for all. Each church committee will take a turn at hosting.



From February 21 through March 20, we will meet on Wednesdays for a soup lunch and discussion:

## **Week One/February 21:**

*All Creation Is Alive and The Land Belongs to God*

Read Psalm 98: 4, 7-9

The concept of Animism

Indigenous Perspectives, including a spatial point of view p. 55

Celtic Spirituality

Practice: Earthing

## **Week Two/February 28:**

*A Wild and Animate Earth*

Read Job 12:7-10

Looking to Scripture

De-colonizing the concept of Shaman

Practice: Nature Walk

## **Week Three/March 6:**

*Lament and Creation*

Read Jeremiah 4:23-26

How do we lament?

Dealing with climate anxiety

Turning to Scripture

Practice: Lament for the Earth

## **Week Four/March 13:**

*Reconnecting with the Earth, our Bodies, and the Holy*

Read Psalm 139:14-15; Exodus 20:8-11

Earth Poetry

What keeps us from wholeness

Why Sabbath time matters

Practice: Writing your own Psalm and/or making time for Sabbath

## **Week Five/March 20:**

*A New Heaven and a New Earth*

Read Revelation 22:1-2

Interpreting a new heaven and a new earth through the lens of climate justice

Embracing our role in ecological restoration

Becoming a Climate Justice Church

Practice: Climate Justice in your area



**Please bring donations (items and monetary) to church for Souper Bowl of Caring on February 4. Donations will be delivered to the Des Moines Area Food Bank.**



**Ash Wednesday Service**

**February 14 ~ 5:00 pm**

**Sanctuary**

**All are welcome**



We will not be having Lunch Bunch during February and March. Instead, join us for Lenten Soup Lunches on Wednesdays, February 21-March 20, 12:00-1:15 pm.

**2023 giving statements were emailed/snail mailed to you in January. Please let Lynn know if you need her to re-send yours.**



Sunday School continues with the WHO IS GOD? – Engaging The Mystery” from the

“Generation Why” curriculum. On the Sundays that Pastor Amy is off, we’ll use the “Simple Sundays” curriculum because they can be used with little or no preparation. Please let Lynn know which Sundays you are available to teach or help.

Bibles & Brews will meet via **Zoom only** on Fridays, February 2 and 16 at 7 pm to continue our study/discuss from Exodus and Leviticus for Everyone by John Goldingay.



### *A message from Vernadette...*

Hello members of NPUCC! It was an immense pleasure working with all of you for the short time I was here. I had a lot of fun being the Office Manager and learned many things from all of you. As many of you know, I am growing a family while tackling graduate school. My decision to depart from working with the church is to open up more time in my life so I have the flexibility to grow into my new *forever role* as a mother. I will miss all of you dearly, but know that the church will be in amazing hands with the incoming Officer Manager, and my dearest friend, Veronica Holmes. If you would like to keep in touch with me, Veronica will be able to provide you with my contact information at the office! It was a blessing being part of this church.

Also, I will be having a boy! His name will be Connell John Thie. CJ for short!

As what Ferris Bueller said, *‘Life moves pretty fast. If you don’t stop and look around once in awhile, you could miss it.’*

Love, Vernadette

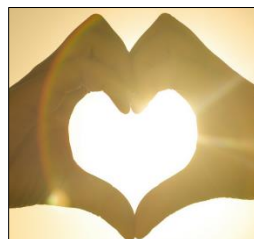
### **Banned Books Blessing ~ Sunday, February 11**

[www.jointhemovementucc.org](http://www.jointhemovementucc.org)



Why a Blessing of Banned Books? Despite decades of activism aimed at desegregation, the statistics all tell us that in the United States, we still largely live in a segregated society. In our daily lives, we are most likely to

cross paths with and be in relationship with people with whom we share experiences and identities. Social media algorithms, search engines, and web platforms conspire to keep us in echo chambers, encountering the lives of people who look like us, think like us, agree with us. For many of us, books have been one way to expand our horizons. What and who we read opens us to new worlds, diverse ideas, different experiences beyond our own. We rely on books to educate and inform us and expand our imaginations, so that we can be better siblings in Christ. As a people of sacred stories, we know that stories have the power to inform and transform us, to show us both who we are and who we can become. In a time of intense political polarization, we are facing an unprecedented number of attempts to ban books. Books by authors of color, by LGBTQ+ authors, by women and books about racism, sexuality, gender, history are the ones most often targeted by bans. When some seek to police access to some experiences, some histories, some understandings, some ideas, the image of God is dimmed. Without these books, our encounters with the amazing diversity of creation are incomplete, and our capacity for compassion across difference is stymied. Our love of God is limited because we do not have the chance to recognize all the ways the divine image is manifest in our world. In the United Church of Christ, we know that as people called to build a just world for all, we need each other’s stories and experiences to live into the fullness of the Body of Christ. We believe that banned books have a special vocation, a particular calling in our faith communities: to help expand and enliven the image of God and empower us to reckon with truths that demand our loving accountability. So the Love is Louder Campaign and Join the Movement toward Racial Justice join together to invite us to bless banned books, so that they might live out their calling and empower us to continue becoming God’s kindom of justice and love, on earth as it is in heaven.



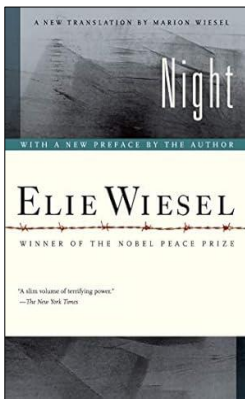
**Donations are needed** for both Hospitality House (it is NPUCC’s month to collect – a complete list is on the last page of this Towline) and the refugees staying at Riverton Park United Methodist Church (see list below). Please contact Alice with any questions.

- Rice
- Peanut butter
- Eggs
- Yogurt
- Milk
- Paper plates



- Top ramen
- Baby wipes
- Razors
- Full size deodorant and shampoo
- Umbrellas
- Gloves
- Men's belts
- Disposable spoons
- Instant and ground coffee

## BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

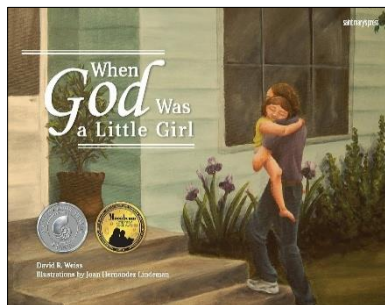


Night by Elie Wiesel, 1928-2016, translated from French by Marion Wiesel, commemorative edition 2017 Recommended by Fred.

"A reissue of Wiesel's (Open Heart, 2012) foundational, exemplary memoir of the Holocaust. Even though bracketed by post-mortem appreciations by Barack Obama, genocide scholar and former U.N. ambassador Samantha Power, and Wiesel's son Elisha and including

Wiesel's Nobel Prize acceptance speech and lecture and a commemorative address before the U.N., Night is a slender book, just a shade more than 100 pages long. But it packs a whole world perhaps better, a whole inferno, into that brief span, much trimmed from a draft reported to be eight times longer."

When God Was A Little Girl by David R. Weiss, 2015. Recommended by Kirsten.



"'Tell me a story, Daddy...about when God was a little girl.' Susanna's playful request begins a whimsically profound tale woven between father and daughter. Together they retell the familiar story of creation, but with unexpected twists and insightful turns along the way. The exuberant joy of God's creative energy sparkles in this tale that honors both interconnection and diversity. Between the gentle wisdom in the text and the beautiful paintings that accompany it, you may never think about God, creation, or yourself in quite the same way."

This is a wonderful book to introduce kids and adults alike to the idea that God is more than an old man with a white beard sitting on a throne on a cloud!

*Do you have a social or environmental justice book that you've read and would like to recommend to others? Send its name to Lynn and she'll include it in the next Towline.*

## FROM EXODUS TO JESUS AND BEYOND

Progressive Christianity,  
Social Justice, and the Bible

AN ONLINE LENTEN SERIES

Ground yourself in this five-part series exploring the lessons and values of our faith tradition that can, sometimes surprisingly, inform our work to build a better world.

JUSTICE  
LEADERSHIP  
PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 20, 27, MARCH 5, 12, 19  
4:00 - 6:00PM PST

[JUSTICELEADERSHIP.ORG/EVENTS](http://JUSTICELEADERSHIP.ORG/EVENTS)

### From Exodus to Jesus and Beyond: A Lenten Series Workshop on Progressive Christianity, Social Justice, and the Bible

There is an amazing and often hidden alternative understanding of what it means to be Christian. From Exodus to Jesus and beyond, the Bible offers an ancient, enduring, and surprisingly relevant story about people living in the light of the love of God. This five-part online workshop series will explore how the lessons and values of our faith can inform our work to build a better world.

Register [here](#).

This workshop meets online via Zoom every Tuesday (Feb. 20, Feb. 27, Mar. 5, Mar. 12, Mar. 19) during Lent 4:00-6:00 pm (PST).

Workshops will be recorded and shared with those registered.

\$75 per person for all 5 workshops. Group discounts available for groups over 8 people.

This workshop is led by Rev. Rich Gamble who has hands-on experience in leading congregations and a variety of social justice campaigns.



Please note that Easter  
is early this year ~ March 31<sup>st</sup>!



## February Birthdays

Kendra Elwell	2/6
Alice McGregor	2/18
Konesane Polu	2/18
Steve Allen	2/20

## February Anniversaries

Lori and Jon Comen	2/8
Joan and John Held	2/11

If you don't see your February birthday or anniversary on this list and would like to be included, please let Vernadette know at [vernadette@npucc.org](mailto:vernadette@npucc.org) or 206-824-1770.

# FEBRUARY 2024 DONATIONS NEEDED

*\*Indicates an urgent need*



## HOSPITALITY HOUSE

Home, Health, and Hope for Women  
Experiencing Homelessness



### RESIDENT NEEDS

*to help our residents feel at home*

*Shampoo & conditioner for natural hair	Deodorant
	Body wash
*Umbrellas	Eye brow pencils
	Mascara
*Pajamas (size S)	Flip flops/shower shoes (size S, M)
*New underwear (size S, M)	Eyeshadow

### YOUR DONATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE

I was so scared about not having anywhere to go, but Hospitality House provided me with a place where I could feel safe for the first time.

-Current resident

**Donations may be dropped off at or mailed directly to Hospitality House.**  
Your volunteer coordinator may also collect directly at your church.

### Questions?

Contact Olivia at (206) 242-1860 or [olivia.hospitalityhouse@gmail.com](mailto:olivia.hospitalityhouse@gmail.com)

**Scan to visit our Amazon Wishlist!**



Hospitality House is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization. Your donation is tax deductible.

### HOUSE NEEDS

*to help us maintain a clean & organized environment*

*After shower spray cleaner	Bleach
	Kleenex
*Lysol wipes	Diatomaceous Earth
*Toilet bowl cleaner	Raid
	12 Gallon trash bags
*Dishwasher cleaner	Rubber dish gloves
	Washcloths (new)
*O-Cedar Spin Mop Set	Dishwasher pods

206-242-1860



[hospitalityhousesouthking.org/](http://hospitalityhousesouthking.org/)



1419 SW 150th St, Burien

WA, 98166



### CHURCHES COLLECTING THIS MONTH:

**John Knox Presbyterian Church  
& Normandy Park United  
Church of Christ**

### FOOD NEEDS

*to ensure our residents have everything they need to stay healthy*

*Coffee	Yogurt	Individually
*Sugar	Lunch meat	packaged
	Fruit cups	snacks

### SPECIAL REQUESTS

*to be handed out in our weekly resident raffle*

Nail polish, \$5 Starbucks or McDonalds gift card