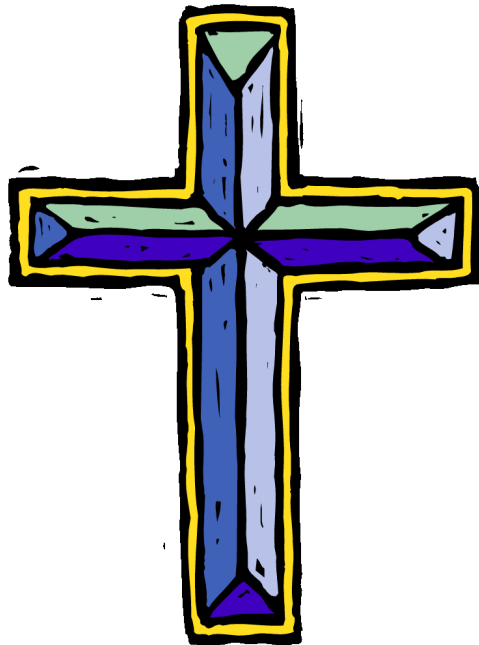


The Church Mouse/Vashon Lutheran Church
18623 Vashon Hwy SW
Mailing: PO Box 2930
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JULY/AUGUST 2023



The Church Mouse

From the Bishop:

As I write this, I am still re-living a beautiful experience that I had last weekend. Five of my friends and I drove to the Gorge Amphitheatre and we saw Joni Mitchell in concert. For some of you, this might be interesting, for others, you might not even know who Joni Mitchell is. For me, the time was filled with joy, laughter, tears, friendship, and community ... not to mention amazing music and storytelling.



But this isn't about Joni Mitchell ... at least not entirely. For what struck me as I sat on the grass with 26,000 other people, was the church-like feeling that was there. Or perhaps I should say the "Jesusy" feeling that was there. Or maybe the Holy Spirit in action feeling. And this came from the crowd itself.

As we all sat crowded together on blankets and chairs, people told stories, shared food and drink, sang songs, helped those who were having difficulty navigating the hillside, and together we became community. The little children sitting to the right of me danced, the young girls sitting to the left of me accepted blankets from my friend, and the man in front of me told me that he had traveled from North Carolina to see Joni. He told me that he was surprised to discover the Gorge was not located in Seattle!

There was one point in the concert, after it had gotten dark, when Joni was singing and people – one by one – started shining the flashlight from their cellphones towards the stage. Throughout the crowd, little points of light lit up the darkness. Now, if you have been to a concert in the last ten years, this is a common occurrence. Cell phone lights have taken the place of lighters being raised. However, because Joni has not performed in over twenty years, she was bemused by the lights. She turned to the person next to her on stage and said, "It looks like a fallen constellation. Where did they get all those lights?"

I thought her words and her surprise were charming. But as I looked around me, at the people sharing blankets, at those with arms around each other swaying to the music, at the cozy darkness around us and the lights looking like fallen stars, it was more than charming. It was

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holy.

For a moment, we were a cathedral. For a moment, we were community. For a moment, we were one.

At our best, this is what it means to be church. To be the Body of Christ. To practice hospitality and generosity, and grace. To see Christ in one another. To accept others' limitations and to be accepting of our own.

I confess that all was not perfect at the Gorge. There was a person close to me who insisted on singing every word to every song. While her voice was fine, I was not there to hear her but to hear Joni. There were people who cut in line after we had been waiting two hours to get inside. There was a driver who bullied his way into the front of the very long line of vehicles as we were leaving.

Perhaps this is like church, too. At least church as a human construction. Those of us who have been part of a church for a while, we know that church is not always sharing blankets and food, singing and joy. Sometimes, as humans, we hoard our stuff. We take offense at others. We refuse to listen. We bully. We push. Our voices sometimes drown out other voices.

And yet ... I pray that the moments of grace we receive this summer – from music at the Gorge to singing lustily in church, from sharing food on a hillside to receiving the body and blood of Christ – may we be church together. May we know and make it known that all are fully loved by God – in the times when we are like fallen constellations and in the times we are not.

May your summer be filled with holy moments.

+ Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee / bishop@lutheransnw.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you, Rev. Kristy Daniels for your participation in worship today at VLC!

Sunday Bible Study Class – will resume in the fall. Many thanks to Roger Gebhard, Bible study leader!

Contact Gail Larson (206/567-4779) with your prayer requests.

Dinah Helgeson has a large amount of unstained cedar that was removed from her deck. It would make fabulous kindling! Call Dinah, 206-434-1484, for details and haul away.

IFCH Dinner Program: VLC provides five hand out meals at Vashon Presbyterian Church at 5:00 PM the fourth Thurs. of the month. Contact Patte Wagner: pattewags@aol.com to help.

The Care Closet, Medical Equipment/Supplies – 206-473-8715. Vashon Care Network – 206-604-3253. Email: contact@vashoncarenetwork.org; website: www.vashoncarenetwork.org

The Church Secretary's office will be closed Tues - Thurs., Aug. 29 – 31 for a mini-vacation. The office will be open Mon., Aug. 28, in the late afternoon, & Fri. & Sat., Sept. 1 & 2, noon – 3 PM.

On Sat., Sept. 16, 2023 we are having our annual rummage sale. People can start bringing items and leave them near the west entrance in the fellowship hall, but please don't block the door.

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”
Matthew 11

OUR FAITH IN ACTION

SUNDAY

1st, Food Bank Sunday

NO CHURCH SERVICE SUNDAY, JULY 16 - due to the main roads being blocked for the Strawberry Festival and the Car Parade

6:30 – 8:30 PM AA Group

MONDAY

10:00 AM Intercessory Prayer Group

TUESDAY

2nd, 9:00 – 1:00 PM Quilt Sewers Group

3rd, 10:00 – noon Vashon Quilting Group

June 6, 7:00 PM Worship Committee Mtg. at June Langland's

WEDNESDAY

1st, 9:00 – noon Lutheran Quilters Group

THURSDAY

July 27, 5:00 PM IFCH Dinner prepared by VLC, served at VPC

FRIDAY

7:00 - 8:30 PM AA Group for Men



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