

# Communicator

June/July 2011

*Nurturing Faith,  
Growing Community,  
and Sowing Seeds of Justice and Peace on the Palouse*

“In biblical tradition, the practice of encounter shows up most often as the practice of hospitality, or philoxenia. Take the word apart and you get philo, from the four Greek words for love, and xenia, for stranger. Love of stranger, in other words, which is about as counterintuitive as you can get. For most of us, xenophobia – fear of stranger – comes much more naturally, but in that case scripture is unnatural. According to Jonathan Sacks, chief rabbi of Great Britain, ‘the Hebrew Bible in one verse commands, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ but in no fewer than 36 places commands us to ‘love the strange’”.

An Altar in the World by Barbara Brown Taylor

Dear Friends,

In her book “Altar in the World,” the Rev. Barbara Brown Taylor reminds us that, while the Hebrew scriptures encourage us to love our neighbor as ourselves once, they encourage us to “love the stranger” 36 times. Over the past few weeks in Pullman, our community has been given the opportunity to understand why this injunction is made over and over again.

We live in a university community in which “strangers” pass through all the time. Much of the time, students and their families come and go, and, to be honest, unless they walk through the doors of our building, we are unaware of their lives and their stories, their needs and concerns. However, that changed for many of us a few weeks ago. There are 2500 Libyan students studying in North America, sponsored by their government. It turns out that the fourth largest group of Libyan students are studying right here, at Washington State University. Within our Pullman and Moscow communities, there are currently around 120 Libyans – students in degree programs and in the Intensive American Language Center, their children who range from newborn through high school and college, some who have been here for years, others who arrived as recently as April. About 50 are students at Washington State University.

At the end of May, in support of the NATO action backing of the counter-revolutionary movement in Libya fighting the regime of Muammar Gaddafi, the United Nations froze all Libyan assets, including moneys from the Libyan government that pay for scholarships and support Libyan students studying in North America. This meant that, as of May 31st, Libyan students were informed that they would have no money coming from their government for tuition, rent, insurance, living expenses, etc. Needless to say, the news has been dramatic and upsetting. Some of our students studying here risked losing their visa status if they could not enroll in courses this summer. Others are still waiting uneasily to see if the funding will become available by the time they need to enroll for the

(continued on page 2)

“Welcome the stranger  
in your midst, for you  
were once strangers  
in the land of Egypt:”

-- Deuteronomy 10: 19

God is still speaking,  
**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**

## Inside

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## In the Community

Fall semester. Many of these students have needed immediate assistance in order to remain in this country, or risk going back to a situation that is at best in uncertain chaos, in many situations one in which family members have disappeared, been raped, or killed. For all of the students, the suddenness of the situation left many without enough money to purchase food and basic supplies.

The quick response from the Pullman community, and now from communities around the state has been amazing. There is now a make-shift “food bank,” located in Fellowship Hall of our church, where families come by on Fridays after mid-day prayers at the Mosque to pick up what they need. Donations have come in from Buddhists and members of the Jewish community, Sufis and Sikhs, Christians of many backgrounds and denominations, people of no particular faith background, and many more. As of today, we, collectively, have received enough funding through donations to keep every Libyan student here and with their visa status current. As the word gets out, we have received monetary donations from small churches and large churches around the state.

I have been especially overwhelmed by the support we have received by other UCC churches around the Conference. When our Conference Minister, Mike Denton, heard about what was happening in Pullman, he let others know, and we have received monetary support for the Libyan students from our UCC brothers and sisters in Seattle and around the Conference, as well as a tremendous amount of prayers and support from others.

There are many stories I could tell you about the impact this support is having within our community. Yesterday, as I spoke with one of the students, he said that this experience has completely changed his understanding of Christians, and he felt sure that this would change the way he will live in the world. As many of us come to know our Libyan neighbors and their stories, as we are invited to share in their joys (a baby born a few days ago!), and their concerns (a family member with serious diabetes who can no longer get medication), as we move from knowing little about this country beyond what we see on the news to waiting to hear the latest from our friends, things shift for us. We understand why we are encouraged to love, not only our neighbor, but to engage in the sometimes challenging work of loving the “stranger.” In the process, we realize that the “stranger” was really always our neighbor after all.

Peace/Salaam,

*Kristine*

## NEXT COMMUNITY COFFEE HOUSE -- Friday, June 17th, 7-9 pm

The Pullman High School Key Club will be sponsoring June's Coffee House, with proceeds going to help the Libyan community here in Pullman. For those of you who have not had a chance to attend one of these events yet, this is a great time to join us! We may have members of the Libyan community joining us at 7:00 to do a short presentation on current events in Libya. They will also be bringing traditional Libyan food to share. We invite you to come, meet some of our Libyan neighbors, listen to a variety of wonderful performers of all ages, and raise money for a good cause. If you would like to help but are unable to attend, we invite you to make something yummy to be shared at the event. New as well as veteran performers are invited to come and perform! For further information or to let us know in advance that you would like to perform, please contact Leda Zakarison (ledabobeda@hotmail.com). For further information about the Libyan Student Emergency Fund or to volunteer to set up or clean up, contact Kristine Zakarison (kristine@pullman.com/ 332-6411).

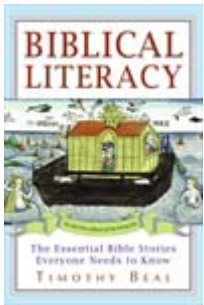
If you would like to help with the Coffee House, you can come at 4:00, when we will be “transforming” the basement from the current set up as a food bank into a coffee house, or you can make some goodies for the event, perform, or attend and enjoy!

## WORDS FROM A LIBYAN STUDENT

I would like to take a moment and reflect upon all what happened during the last few weeks with the Libyan community in Pullman. No one of us as the Libyan community in this area has ever imagined that we would go through such difficult times in which we would suffer from lack of financial support, food, education and medical care. Also, nobody has ever thought that a civil war might take place in our home country while we are here. There are so many things that all Libyan community members never thought about or saw it coming, but in this time of crisis there was one thing that was the most unexpected above all and that was the endless support of the Palouse community. You can't imagine how grateful we are to the Pullman community ...for this glimpse of hope that made us believe again in values that some of us thought were gone in this day and age. Thank you for your help, thank you for your support and thanks for all who helped us in any way during these difficult times.

## 'SUMMER" BOOK GROUPS

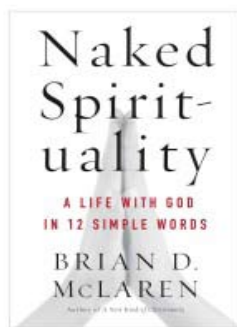
Like the summer itself, summer book groups are a little slow in coming this year! If you'd like to read and discuss one of the books below, take a look at the details below then send me an email (chiplaird1@gmail.com) or call the church 332-6411. My thought is that the Biblical Literacy group would meet mid-day on Tuesday, and the Naked Spirituality group would meet on Monday evenings at 6 pm. Both books contain too much to cram into an already short summer, so the groups could continue into the fall. You can find more information on both books at [www.harpercollins.com](http://www.harpercollins.com), or take a look at copies on the table in the narthex at the church.



Biblical Literacy: The Essential Bible Stories Everyone Needs to Know, by Timothy Beal. Recent surveys indicate that the Biblical literacy of Americans - whether churchgoers or not - is abysmal. In his introduction, the author makes a case for knowing the stories of the Bible not only because they allow us to be more

culturally literate (we can interpret songs by Bob Dylan, speeches of US Presidents, etc...), but also because the writings contained in the Bible are inspiring. "The Bible engenders creative thought and action. It generates new meanings, new ways of seeing ourselves and the world." Beal is a religion professor at Case Western Reserve University. The book is \$11.00.

Naked Spirituality: A Life With God in 12 Simple Words, by Brian D. McLaren. "At their best, religious and spiritual communities help us discover ... pure and naked spiritual encounter. At their worst, they simply make us more ashamed, pressuring us to further enhance our image with the best designer labels and latest spiritual fads, weighing us down... I hope this book will help you strip away distractions and discover that precious hidden treasure, that primal gift underneath." (p. viii.) McLaren is a prolific writer, pastor, and has been at the forefront in describing the changes in Christianity over the past 20 years. This book is \$15.00.



## LEARNING COMMUNITY UPDATE

The CE Board had a special teacher recognition on June 5th to thank all of the teachers who volunteered their time and energy each Sunday to the Learning Community. Without these wonderful teachers' commitment and work, Learning Community would not be possible. Thank you - Preschool Teachers: Mary Wandschneider & Sue Kreikemeier; School Aged: Hope Tinney & Francis Clark; Middle School: Connie Beecher, David Brown, Marie Glynn & Phil Wandschneider; High School: Jonathan Bliss.

Summer programming will begin on June 19th. A class for younger children, infant through age 7, will be in one classroom, with two caregivers planning their program. At times older elementary and middle school students will stay in a service designed for all ages. Other times they will leave for their own activities. Kristine is looking for adults who will help with these other activities that have already been designed. If you are interested, contact Kristine.

Also, we are **looking for a few great teachers for our 1st grade - 4th grade class for the fall**. If you are interested in a great opportunity to work with children, please contact me for more information.

-- Chandra Crow, LC Coordinator - (509) 432-3906

## JUNE BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES\*

- 4 John Roberson
- 5 Bill Ackley
- 6 Nicole Lovrich
- 7 \*Judy & Maurice Windsor
- 7 Christopher Reed
- 8 Carl Hauser
- 9 Clayton Johnson
- 10 Cooper Stanton
- 13 \*Carol & Walt Spurling
- 14 Bob Grunewald
- 14 Karl Bamesberger
- 15 JoAnn Story
- 16 MaryAnn Boehmke
- 17 \*George & Helen Belt
- 17 \*Nancy & Richard Mack
- 17 \*Gary & Sue Schell
- 18 \*John & Alice Kramer
- 18 Katie Hauser
- 20 \*Jim & Joyce Wills
- 20 Beth Hindman
- 22 Roger Spencer
- 27 Klayton Johanson
- 30 \*Doug & Beth Hindman



Community Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
525 N.E. Campus Ave.  
Pullman, WA 99163

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**DATES TO REMEMBER (see inside for details)**

- June 19 **SUMMER WORSHIP BEGINS - 9:30 AM SERVICE**  
June 17 Coffee House with Libyan Community - 7:00 PM  
June 29 Thrift Shop Board Meeting

**SUMMER WORSHIP  
STARTS AT 9:30 AM**



**Remember to visit our Thrift Shop  
for the best bargains in town . . .  
and spread the word to others!**  
**Hours:**  
**Tuesdays: 4:30 - 6:30 pm**  
**Thursdays & Fridays: 12 noon - 4 pm**

**CHURCH STAFF**

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**LC COORDINATOR:**  
CHANDRA CROW

**ORGANIST/PIANIST:**  
KATHY SPENCER

**CHOIR DIRECTOR:**  
SHEILA CONVERSE

**NURSERY CARE:**  
CHANDRA CROW &  
ANNELISE SMITH

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