



A Welcoming, Come-As-You-Are, Christ-Centered Community Church

Being Community Together

Agate Windows Newsletter

And I will make thy windows of agates Isaiah 54:12

March/April/May/June 2020

The March issue of the Agate Windows Newsletter—distributed March 4—including, “What’s Happening at YCPC”...Lenten Soup and Study; Earth Care Workshop; Chili Cook-Off; St. Patrick’s Day Potluck; YCPC Book Group; Families Together; Community Potluck; and information on something called “The Coronavirus.” **Eight days later on March 12**—after a long special meeting of the YCPC session—Pastor Bob sent an e-mail about the rapid spread of the coronavirus; his e-mail included the following action taken by the session:

Out of an abundance of caution, and with the utmost concern for the long-term health well-being of the YCPC family, and the community of Yachats, and in deference to the recommendations and guidance of the WHO, CDC, and the Oregon Department of Health, the Session of Yachats Community Church approves a suspension of worship, church related activities and public gatherings (with the exception of the Yachats Home School Group) for an undetermined period of time, beginning Sunday March 15, 2020.

The session will re-evaluate the situation on a week to week basis.

The pastor will make materials available for use by congregants for in home Sunday worship, and explore opportunities for an online worship experience should the suspension need to continue...

So . . . What’s Been Happening at YCPC the Past Three Months?

EXTRAORDINARY THINGS!!! The next TWO issues of the newsletter are devoted to the amazing work that Pastor Bob, the session, members, and friends of YCPC have been doing to address—and hopefully minimize—the impact of the coronavirus . . . not just for the congregational life of YCPC but for the entire community.

This issue highlights the efforts on behalf of the community and includes: excerpts from Pastor Bob’s e-mail message of April 4, describing how much had been put into place in the 19 days since his March 12 e-mail; an article in the May 15 issue of *Oregon Coast TODAY*; a parable from Rev. Brian Heron, Presbyter for Vision and Mission, Presbytery of the Cascades; graphs by Treasurer, Nan Scott, showing the unbelievable generosity of unbelievable numbers of people; notes on the Pantry, and—at the very end—a message of thanks from Pastor Bob.

Read on . . . It really has been extraordinary.



John 5:17 "My Father is always at his work to this very day,"

April 4, 2020

Dear Friends –

One of our greatest calls as Christians is to serve.

We are called to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with God.

We are called to love one another.

Paul reminds his readers over and over again to “seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.”

In case you have missed it, I wanted to let you know, that while we are not gathering in person for worship, the church is not “closed.” We are, in the words of the Apostle Paul, “seeking after that which is good.” We are striving to be the hands and feet of Jesus for our COMMUNITY, and people in our COMMUNITY are modeling the way of Jesus for us as well. Whether or not they believe like us, they are following the way that Jesus calls all of us to. The way of grace, peace, mercy, kindness and love.

I'm convinced that kindness is contagious, and goodness begets goodness. I'm also convinced that it's easier to *seek after that which is good*—when we *see good* being done. If you're like me, seeing someone else go first helps get my creativity and motivation flowing. Seeing the positive, hearing stories of the good being done, refreshes me--emotionally and physically.

Stories of faith inspire us, they "*put the spirit in us*" (it's what the word literally means).

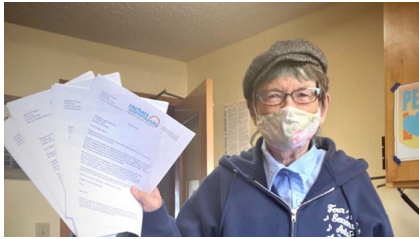
Here are some stories about the way YCPC is being COMMUNITY and Loving Neighbor as Self. These stories "put the Spirit in me," and I hope they "put the Spirit in you."

Longing for that time when we can be together again...

pastor bob

Pastor Bob's e-mail introduced the following four stories of faith and spirit . . .

- ◆ Leta's Legacy Quilters sewing protective masks for healthcare workers . . . following a pattern sanctioned by Centers for Disease Control for emergency use.
- ◆ Moving the Yachats Food Pantry to the church when the Yachats Commons needed to close its doors to protect the health of city workers.
- ◆ The session's March 18 decision to create a Displaced Worker Relief Fund for any worker in Yachats who lost a job because of the COVID-19 outbreak. The session approved pledging \$5,000 to the effort and appealing to the community for additional donations, which by Pastor Bob's April 4 message had reached nearly \$50,000.
- ◆ An e-mail message and pictures from YCPC members Jim and Shirley O'Brien who planned an outdoor—socially distanced—music event in their Arizona community to raise money for IMPACT of Southern Arizona, their local food bank.



The pulpit and the pandemic

By Barbara B. Covell for the May 15 issue of *Oregon Coast TODAY*

Reprinted with permission from *Oregon Coast TODAY*

(This article neatly summarizes activities from March 12 to May 15.)

This is a story about love. The kind of love that transcends race, sexual and religious preferences, income and status. This is about a community rising up and giving to those in need. It is the response to the coronavirus, unemployment, housing shortages and hunger that blights Lincoln County.

In March of 2020, the COVID-19 crisis hit the coastal towns whose economy is driven by tourism. Oregonians and the entire country were told to stay at home, socially distance and self-quarantine to reduce the risk of infection.

This dried up tourism, employment and educational opportunities for residents. There were no more concerts, theater, dining or public events. Most retail businesses immediately closed as we were told to shelter at home.

The City of Yachats is a haven for tourists who love the restaurants, lodging, unique shops, the priceless views and bounty of the Oregon Coast. When tourism stopped in its tracks, the service workers, shop owners and those in the entertainment industry lost their sustainable income completely.

Members of the Yachats Community Presbyterian Church (YCPC) decided they could not stand by and watch those in need. On March 12, the session voted to suspend worship. Pastor Bob Barrett began to look for ways to help.

“When I was called here, I was told that my call was not only to the church, but to the local community,” he said. He began to look for ways to connect and be inclusive of the homeless, LGBTQ+, immigrants, anyone in the service industry impacted by the shutdown.

So many people were still waiting for Unemployment Insurance, so YCPC decided to donate \$5,000 toward a Displaced Workers Fund.

“Rent was due, car payments, insurance, utilities, they couldn’t afford groceries,” Barrett said. “We decided to offer \$100 cash assistance to anyone who needed it.”

“We set up a Facebook page and GoFundMe account,” he added. “Appealing to the public on Facebook page resulted in an additional \$10,000 the first day. The thinking was if we gave \$100 to anyone in need, we could serve 150 people. We established some criteria: 1) You had to live in Yachats or a contiguous town; 2) You had to have worked in Yachats; 3) You had to have proof of job loss and an ID.”

They cleared out a space in the office by the sliding window, taped off six-foot increments on the side wall and worked out a system to disinfect themselves and their space after each recipient. They disperse funds on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11 am to 1 pm. Recipients are able to receive \$100, if they haven’t received Unemployment Insurance yet.

“The program is largely one of trust,” Barrett says. They do record names for internal use.

To date, the church has raised and distributed \$74,300 from that fund, serving about 50 people per week. As of now, those funds have been exhausted and they are recruiting more on Facebook.

Then Barrett says, “we began seeing small business owners at the window, desperately looking for answers as to how they would survive. We knew that the loss of our small shops would have a devastating impact on our local economy.”

[Continued on page 4 . . .](#)

The pulpit and the pandemic continued . . .

On April 17, the church session met again to discuss how they might fund a Small Business Fund. They decided to give an additional \$10,000 to that cause, again seeking public donations. Almost immediately they received an additional \$20,000 donation. The fund now is almost \$80,000.

Again, they established criteria: 1) Business must be 'brick and mortar;' 2) Must exist in city limits; 3) Been ordered closed or severely impacted; 4) Not eligible for the federal PPP.

To date, they have helped 19 businesses, mostly covering their rent and utilities for April and May. One recipient is Judith MacDonald of Judith's Kitchen Tools.

"Normally, Spring Break kicks off the season," she said. "However, since the middle of March my only income has been Social Security, some very generous people and YCPC. It is very trying for small businesses."

The Yachats Food Pantry is housed in the church building and managed by Pam Luderitz and Jim Finlayson, scheduling volunteers and shopping. Donations to the Food Pantry are up by 10 percent.

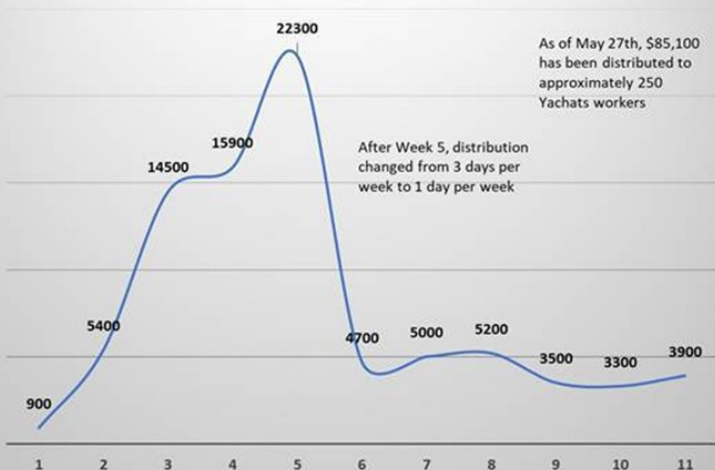
Our local cities are going to action by offering help. Yachats city donated \$5,000 to YCPC's efforts and is granting \$4,000 loans for 2 percent. Newport and Lincoln City are also offering stimulus programs; and the Depoe Bay Chamber of Commerce is fundraising for a support program as well.

These are tough times but our coastal communities are helping those in need.

NOTE: The information reported in this article is as of May 15.

Hundreds of people, local charities, and the City of Yachats have donated thousands of dollars to the Displaced Workers Relief Fund and the Yachats Business Relief Fund. Many of the individuals have given more than once. Many of the donors live in other cities and other states. The graphs below provide details on funds raised and distributed both to Yachats displaced workers and small businesses.

Yachats Worker Relief Distribution
Dollars per Week
March 20 - May 27, 2020

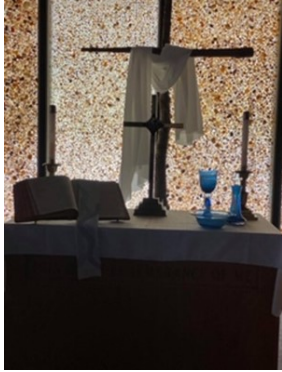


Awards from the Yachats Business Relief Program

April 21 - June 1, 2020

Initiated and Facilitated by Yachats Community Presbyterian Church and supported by citizens of Yachats and friends beyond





The Parable of Yachats

*By Rev. Brian Heron, Presbyterian for Vision and Mission,
Presbytery of the Cascades, Dated April 22*

Once upon a time there was a little village on the coast of Oregon—a favorite tourist destination in the summer and a sleepy little hamlet of 700 in the winter. Many people say that Yachats is a magical little place and it appears that that magic has once again shown its face. Yachats is the home to the “church with the agate windows” also known as Yachats Community Presbyterian Church.

It seems that the church has caught the magic of Yachats or maybe Yachats has caught the magic of the church—I am not quite sure which way it goes.

What the town calls magic the Bible calls faith. In this case, it is the faith that is expressed in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25: 14-30). The Yachats version of this parable goes like this:

A church positioned just a couple hundred yards above the crashing waves of the Pacific had a few assets they had saved over the years. It wasn't much, but it was enough to run a church year to year, support a number of community programs, and provide a place for theological reflection and musical nourishment.



Then one day they felt called by a higher voice to take some risks and do more and be more. They felt a need to respond to the call of faithfulness more than the need to be prudent and safe. They felt a call to respond to the increasing needs caused by the coronavirus pandemic. They didn't have a lot, but they had something. So they challenged the community, they invited the community, to join them in providing relief to the people of a tourist economy that was taking a hard beating.

They invested, just like the parable of the talents reminds us, in the community knowing that their sacrificial gift might result in the death of the congregation. They invested \$15,000 for displaced workers and small business. They asked and they prayed that the community might match their gifts—maybe even double the impact they were hoping for.

This is where the magic comes in. This is where what the Bible calls faith becomes real. Not only did the community match their gifts, but the original \$15,000 investment has produced nearly \$150,000 in total donations to provide relief for those affected by the coronavirus. Remember, that this is a village of just 700 people! That's an average of more than \$200 per person. That's faith! That's magic!

Of course, I am only telling you part of the story. They have provided financial relief to 250 displaced workers and 15 businesses so far. They have funded for two weeks a program at the Moose Lodge that feeds 100 people daily. They have stepped up funding for a program that feeds immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

And, did I mention that their offerings have also gone up in the church? Yes, isn't that interesting?



Says the Rev. Bob Barrett when asked to reflect on this, “The feeling of the council had been, ‘We are a resurrection people. We risk death and trust that new life is possible on the other side.’ Giving begets giving. People want to invest in something that is making a difference and changing lives.”

Magical and faithful.

But the story continues. The presbytery has taken notice of all the places in our churches where a generosity of spirit and faithfulness seems to be taking root and changing the cultures of those congregations. There are dozens of stories in the presbytery where such magic and faithfulness is taking place.

The presbytery wants to honor that and continue seeing the parable of the talents, the parable of Yachats, take root in our congregations. Giving begets giving. Generosity has a way of catching on like wildfire.



Next week every church in this presbytery will receive \$1,000 to experiment with their own version of the parable of the talents. Take a risk. Invest it in something that changes lives. Invite the community to join you on this journey.

In fact, take the presbytery gift and ask your Session to double it and then ask your ecumenical partners to double it again and then ask your community to match what the faith community has invested.

Take our \$1,000 and find a way to leverage it so that \$1,000 becomes \$10,000. Practice the parable of the talents. Give God a shot.

Once upon a time, there was a little village on the coast of Oregon...

Believe in the magic.

Believe in the power of faith.

Believe that God loves nothing more than a good story.

Brian



Brian Heron served as interim pastor at YCPC beginning in 2012 after the retirement of Rev. Bob Perdue and ending after Pastor Bob was called in September of 2014.

NOTE: The information reported in Rev. Heron’s parable is as of April 22.



The Yachats Food Pantry

The Yachats Food Pantry, currently located in the church, is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm.

On behalf of the countless individuals and families served by the Pantry . . .

Many thanks to

- ◆ Everyone who donates food and money for the purchase of food to stock the Pantry
- ◆ The volunteers who distribute food on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and shop for food to make sure there is plenty on hand: Lorraine Barrett, Hannah Barrett, Sue and Jim Finlayson, Tony Godfrey, Betty Groth, Ruth Hale, Patty Hodgins, Joel Keller, Johnni Prince, Kelly and John Simmons
- ◆ Mary Brelsford for fresh baked breads, muffins, and cookies
- ◆ Johnni Prince and Dave Cowden for remembering pets with dog and cat food



- ◆ Pam Luderitz and Jim Finlayson who coordinate the Pantry.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Following is Pastor Bob's message to everyone who has contributed to the Yachats Food Pantry, the Pastor's Discretionary Fund, the Displaced Workers Relief Fund, the Small Business Relief Fund, or designated a gift for "the greatest need" . . .

Thank you for your generosity and concern for our community.

Words can never express my gratitude. Because of you and countless others like you, together we have been able to provide assistance for displaced workers and small business owners, food for those who need it, temporary shelter, clothing, assistance with utility bills, gas vouchers, bus tickets, medical expenses and so many other needs that people have had.

I am humbled by the trust that you have placed in me and promise that every cent raised will go to support those affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Thank you. You are a blessing. It really does take a village.

Together we are COMMUNITY.

pastor bob