A time such as this: a Bonhoeffer moment?

We are living in historical, unusual times in our nation, a time I’ve never come close to experiencing in my 56 years of walking on God’s earth. In a time such as this, it is important for the Christian community to find a voice and stand up for the purposes of Jesus, a Jesus whom many believe (myself included) has been corrupted and stolen by a far-right-leaning political machine. It is time for us to proclaim the unconditional love, the radical inclusiveness of our Savior. In a time such as this, we need to take a stand.

I refer you in part to the abbreviated “Reclaiming Jesus” statement in this issue of the Dialogue (page 5), written by a number of concerned pastors and spiritual leaders who are bringing that statement to the very gates of the White House this week.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a pastor in Germany in the 1930’s who saw the message of Christ being corrupted by German Nationalism. In time, this nationalistic movement replaced the Bible in Christian churches with copies of Volumes 1 and 2 of Mein Kampf, a 1925 autobiographical book by Nazi Party leader Adolf Hitler. The work describes the process by which Hitler became anti-Semitic and outlines his political ideology and future plans for Germany. Volume 1 of Mein Kampf was published in 1925 and Volume 2 in 1926. Bonhoeffer and other religious leaders such as Karl Barth stood up to this nationalist, racist movement, to their own peril.

They wrote the Barmen Declaration in 1937 in response to Hitler and the Nazi movement, which says, in addition to many other things, “The Christian Church is the congregation of the brethren in which Jesus Christ acts presently as the Lord in Word and sacrament through the Holy Spirit. As the Church of pardoned sinners, it has to testify in the midst of a sinful world, with its faith as with its obedience, with its message as with its order, that it is solely his property, and that it lives and wants to live solely from his comfort and from his direction in the expectation of his appearance. We reject the false doctrine, as though the Church were permitted to abandon the form of its message and order to its own pleasure or to changes in prevailing ideological and political convictions.”

Theologian Lori Brant Hale, in her article, “Is This a Bonhoeffer Moment?” writes, “By Bonhoeffer’s (continued on page 3)
June church events include something for everyone

SERMON SERIES ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS – Please join us as Pastor Dan focuses on the Ten Commandments beginning June 3 through July 15. How do God’s commands apply to our lives today?

SUNDAY, JUNE 10 - NOISY OFFERING – Support the World Peace Flame, which is coming to Ashland, Oregon, thanks in great part to the efforts of the Culture of Peace Commission. Ashland will be the only city other than Memphis, Tennessee to have a World Peace Flame. Our Noisy Offering will help pay for this wonderful honor.

SUNDAY, JUNE 10 – HONORING OUR GRADUATES – at the 10 a.m. worship service.

SUNDAY, JUNE 10 – MEMBER-SHIP DISCUSSION during coffee hours after both services.

SUNDAY, JUNE 17 – GUEST PREACHER – Rev. Steve Parker from Presbytery will be our guest minister for the 8 and 10 a.m. services, while pastor Dan and family are in Eureka for Dan’s mother’s memorial service.

TUESDAY NIGHT, JUNE 19 at 6 p.m. – FLICKS AND FAITH MOVIE NIGHT! Join us for The Mission, a 1986 British period drama film about the experiences of a Jesuit missionary in 18th-century South America. Written by Robert Bolt and directed by Roland Joffé, the film stars Robert De Niro, Jeremy Irons, Ray McAnally, Aidan Quinn, Cherie Lunghi, and Liam Neeson.

It won the Palme d’Or and the Academy Award for Best Cinematography. In April 2007, it was elected number one on the Church Times’ Top 50 Religious Films list. Furthermore, it is one of fifteen films listed in the category "Religion" on the Vatican film list.

SUNDAY, JUNE 24 – RECOLOGY PRESENTATION ON RECYCLING. Ever wonder just what IS recyclable and what is not? Jamie Rosenthal, who works for Recology, will join us for a special presentation in Calvin Hall after the 10 o’clock service to help us better understand recycling and how best to be caretakers of God’s creation.

Come to church at 8 o’clock for a nice change of pace

By Lawrence King

Please join us each Sunday for our 8 a.m. communion service, a wonderful way to start your Sunday. Enjoy the beautiful stained glass windows, the small chapel where we have no need for a PA system, and the service hymn printed in the bulletin. In the past, some members have even attended our service in their ski clothes.

Join us afterwards, if you wish, for coffee at a local business.

The Dialogue

Thanks to all who have contributed to the Dialogue. Articles are welcome for the July issue. Please submit by Thursday, June 21. Email (preferred) to huntermarcia@gmail.com
own account, he and his co-conspirators were living in a time and place in which ‘the huge masquerade of evil has thrown all ethical concepts into confusion and in which evil appears in the form of light, good deeds, historical necessity, [and] social justice.’ They were living in a time that required a radical form of ethical discernment, attuned to concrete reality, historical urgency, and the desperate cries of help from victims of the state.”

We are living in similar times. Racism, once mildly dormant has regained its voice, as people of color and ethnic diversity have been shouted at, attacked, deported, demonized and shot – all victims of the state. A huge masquerade of evil has thrown all ethical concepts into confusion. The message of the value of life, of seeing all people as children of God, and God’s radical, inclusive unconditional love has been replaced with deceit, judgment, separation and accusation.

This is a time for Christian pastors, leaders and congregants to take a stand against the policies of “America First” and against the racist, nationalist, anti-immigrant, misogynist attitudes and ideas being embraced by political leaders and even many evangelicals in the Christian church.

Brian Almquist shared the quote on page one from Bonhoeffer last month, and I wanted to share it again. Those words rang true in the 1930’s as the church took a stance, and they still ring true today as well.

Hale closes her article by asking, “Bonhoeffer’s life and work and death require the church to ask these questions. In the midst of this current political maelstrom, do you individually or collectively want to be a perpetrator, bystander, or resister? Everything is at stake.” In a time such as this, with so much at stake, it is time for us to find our voice, before that voice is silenced.

In Christ,

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Serving others feeds us — Spring Team finishes its work

By Elaine Morgan

And serving others is just what members of the Spring Planning Team (Sam Alvord, Tammy Hald, Barbara Marsh, Shirley Patton and Virginia King, with Addie Thornton and Jill Turner willing to help) have been doing since Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14 through Pentecost, May 20.

We began our duties by moving chairs and worship implements to make Calvin Hall ready for the 10 o’clock worship service on Sunday mornings while we waited for the boiler to be replaced in the sanctuary. Barbara Marsh scheduled all of the hosts for coffee hour (often filling in when needed) and Sam Alvord led the Lenten group, “Prayer and Problems,” a discussion of Anne LaMott’s book Help, Thanks, Wow. Shirley Patton gave an inspiring half of the sermon (with Sook-Ja Hansen) when we celebrated the gifts of women on April 29, and Tammy Hald will be purchasing new tablecloths for Calvin Hall (our old ones have been washed so many, many times).

In an effort to get to know each other better, we were the guests for the special Shabbat worship and a potluck lunch at Temple Emek Shalom on Saturday, March 17. Members of their congregation were our guests in April for worship and a potluck lunch. Both occasions were very gratifying and we hope to get together again soon.

Team members decorated the sanctuary with new banners for Palm Sunday and Easter and purchased and arranged the lovely flowers for Easter. We had special help from three young Easter bunnies who prepared an Easter egg hunt for our children. We called on our team, plus more helpers, when it came time to decorate for Pentecost.

Special offerings were taken for One Great Hour of Sharing and for Pentecost, plus a noisy offering for Dunn House on Mother’s Day.

I greatly appreciate the team members’ positive attitudes and willingness to help with whatever needed to be done. Thank you for going above and beyond the call – it was fun working with you all.

Thanks!

Thank you to all of our faithful members who came out to help with work day in May. You were all appreciated greatly, and we’re very happy to say thank you.

Without your help, the church would not be as beautiful as you have made it. Hope to meet up with you next time as well.

God bless, from Gene Wright and the B & G committee
Session notes for May
By Marcia Hunter, clerk of session

At the May session meeting, Steve Parker, Presbytery liaison, made his triennial visit, asking questions on church vitality and growth. Positives mentioned were a new pastor, new members, community perception of our mission and newfound unity, and the long-range planning team’s work. A goal was the hope that we can find ways to spread our faith stories and our culture of generosity.

A concern was brought up that only one person has volunteered to be part of the summer planning team. Since the spring team has concluded its run, the time has come for action. A small group of elders will meet to discuss the role of the planning teams and make recommendations.

An all-church retreat has been scheduled for Oct. 26-28. Renewal Ministries will plan a program specifically for our needs, with some open sessions and some for church leaders. We were granted $2000 from Presbytery’s Partnership in Ministry and have already earmarked funds to make up the rest.

Buildings and Grounds reported that, as usual, they have not been idle. Painting of Calvin Hall has been completed. We received a $3591 rebate for the boiler and a generous donation from Hald family.

The Personnel Committee reported that employee reviews have been completed, and the results were positive.

The Membership Committee is planning an event for June 10 (see article on this page).

June Birthdays
5 – Griffin McCollom
11 – Mike McCollom
12 – Neil Martin
13 – Barbie Breneiser
15 – Michele Cleveland
16 – Bill Sager
16 – Elaine Morgan
17 – Sharon Laws
26 – Michael Morris
26 – John Sager
26 – Mimi Dryland
28 – Carl McKirgan

June Anniversaries
18 – Bill and Sue Sager
20 – Sam and Pat Alvord
20 – Dan and Paula Fowler
20 – Stella and Ned Schaaf
27 – Kent and Amy Patton

Travel along with Rev. Art Mills on his “Journey of Conscience”

Have you been following Rev. Art Mills’ blog entitled “Journey of Conscience: Visiting the World War II Japanese American Internment Camps”?

If you have, you know how fascinating his recent travels have been, seeing the desolate places that were set apart to imprison these American citizens.

If not, take a look at: revarttrek.com
He posted a special Memorial Day message this week.

Explore ideas about membership on June 10

By Jill Turner
The membership committee has been meeting and discussing membership and growth. We are exploring ways to attract new members and friends to our congregation. How can we be more attractive to our Ashland community? How can we share or express our faith to others and invite them to church?

We believe there is not one answer but many. We would like to hear your ideas. Please join the membership committee in exploring these questions during both coffee hours on June 10.
From *Sojourners*: “Reclaiming Jesus”

Many of you asked for copies of Pastor Dan’s recent sermon which included the statement from *Sojourners*, “Reclaiming Jesus.” Here is the abbreviated version. The full six-page version is accessible through the web. Just type “Reclaiming Jesus” in your browser window.

WE BELIEVE each human being is made in God’s image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). THEREFORE, WE REJECT the resurgence of white nationalism and racism in our nation on many fronts, including the highest levels of political leadership. We, as followers of Jesus, must clearly reject the use of racial bigotry for political gain that we have seen.

WE BELIEVE we are one body. In Christ, there is to be no oppression based on race, gender, identity, or class (Galatians 3:28). THEREFORE, WE REJECT misogyny, the mistreatment, violent abuse, sexual harassment, and assault of women that has been further revealed in our culture and politics, including our churches, and the oppression of any other child of God.

WE BELIEVE how we treat the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the stranger, the sick, and the prisoner is how we treat Christ himself (Matthew 25: 31-46). THEREFORE, WE REJECT the language and policies of political leaders who would debase and abandon the most vulnerable children of God. We strongly deplore the growing attacks on immigrants and refugees, who are being made into cultural and political targets, and we need to remind our churches that God makes the treatment of the “strangers” among us a test of faith (Leviticus 19:33-34).

WE BELIEVE that truth is morally central to our personal and public lives. Truth-telling is central to the prophetic biblical tradition, whose vocation includes speaking the Word of God into their societies and speaking the truth to power. A commitment to speaking truth, the ninth commandment of the Decalogue, “You shall not bear false witness” (Exodus 20:16), is foundational to shared trust in society. THEREFORE, WE REJECT the practice and pattern of lying that is invading our political and civil life.

WE BELIEVE that Christ’s way of leadership is servanthood, not domination. Jesus said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles (the world) lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant” (Matthew 20:25-26). THEREFORE, WE REJECT any moves toward autocratic political leadership and authoritarian rule. We believe authoritarian political leadership is a theological danger that threatens democracy and the common good—and we will resist it.

WE BELIEVE Jesus when he tells us to go into all nations making disciples (Matthew 28:18). Our churches and our nations are part of an international community whose interests always surpass national boundaries. The most well-known verse in the New Testament starts with “For God so loved the world” (John 3:16). We, in turn, should love and serve the world and all its inhabitants, rather than seek first narrow, nationalistic prerogatives. THEREFORE, WE REJECT “America first” as a theological heresy for followers of Christ. While we share a patriotic love for our country, we reject xenophobic or ethnic nationalism that places one nation over others as a political goal.
Women’s Book Club reading Manhattan Beach

By Marcia Hunter

The Women’s Book Club is reading Manhattan Beach by Jennifer Egan for our June selection. We will meet to discuss the book at Kathy Campbell’s house on Monday, June 25 at 7 p.m.


In the novel, young Anna Kerigan accompanies her father to visit Dexter Styles, a man who, she gleaned, is crucial to the survival of her father and her family. She is mesmerized by the sea and by some mystery between the two men.

Years later, her father has disappeared and the country is at war. Anna works at the Brooklyn Naval Yard, the first female diver, repairing the ships that will help America win the war. One evening at a nightclub, she meets Dexter Styles again, and begins to understand the complexity of her father’s life and the reasons he might have vanished.

With the atmosphere of a noir thriller, this novel follows Anna and Styles into a world populated by gangsters, sailors, divers, bankers, and union men. Manhattan Beach is an exploration of a transformative moment in the lives of women and men, of America and the world.

(With thanks to Amazon for this description of the book.)

Pizza, pizza, pizza

By Marilyn Mobley

Elsie Nelson Circle has completed this year’s study guide, "Cloud of Witnesses." We will be having our annual pizza lunch on Monday, June 11 at 11:30 at Angelo’s Pizza Parlor’s party room in Phoenix. Anyone who wishes to join us for food and fellowship is welcome.

Westminster Circle, PW taking a break in June

By Barbara Marsh

Presbyterian Women will take a break from regular meetings in June, but the coordinating team will meet Thursday, June 7 at 1 p.m. to discuss plans for the upcoming program year. Please let a PW officer know if you have suggestions for programs.

Westminster Circle will not meet in June but will hold their traditional summer potluck on Thursday, July 19 at 12 noon at the home of Sue Sager.

Also, keep in mind the Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women in Louisville, Kentucky is in August. It’s not too late to register. Talk to Shirley Patton if you are interested.
Law and Sin

Shall we say, then, that the Law itself is sinful? Of course not! But it was the Law that made me know what sin is. If the Law had not said, “Do not desire what belongs to someone else,” I would not have known such a desire. But by means of that commandment sin found its chance to stir up all kinds of selfish desires in me. Apart from law, sin is a dead thing. I myself was once alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life, and I died. And the commandment which was meant to bring life, in my case brought death. Sin found its chance, and by means of the commandment it deceived me and killed me.

So then, the Law itself is holy, and the commandment is holy, right, and good. But does this mean that what is good caused my death? By no means! It was sin that did it; by using what is good, sin brought death to me, in order that its true nature as sin might be revealed. And so, by means of the commandment sin is shown to be even more terribly sinful.

The Conflict in Us

We know that the Law is spiritual; but I am a mortal, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do; for I don’t do what I would like to do, but instead I do what I hate. Since what I do is what I don’t want to do, this shows that I agree that the Law is right. So I am not really the one who does this thing; rather it is the sin that lives in me. I know that good does not live in me—that is, in my human nature. For even though the desire to do good is in me, I am not able to do it. I don’t do the good I want to do; instead, I do the evil that I do not want to do. If I do what I don’t want to do, this means that I am no longer the one who does it; instead, it is the sin that lives in me.

So I find that this law is at work: when I want to do what is good, what is evil is the only choice I have. My inner being delights in the law of God. But I see a different law at work in my body—a law that fights against the law which my mind approves of. It makes me a prisoner to the law of sin which is at work in my body. What an unhappy man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is taking me to death? Thanks be to God, who does this through our Lord Jesus Christ!

This, then, is my condition: on my own I can serve God’s law only with my mind, while my human nature serves the law of sin.

So then, my friends, we have an obligation, but it is not to live as our human nature wants us to. For if you live according to your human nature, you are going to die; but if by the Spirit you put to death your sinful actions, you will live. Those who are led by God’s Spirit are God’s children. For the Spirit that God has given you does not make you slaves and cause you to be afraid; instead, the Spirit makes you God’s children, and by the Spirit’s power we cry out to God, “Father! my Father!” God’s Spirit joins himself to our spirits to declare that we are God’s children. Since we are his children, we will possess the blessings he keeps for his people, and we will also possess with Christ what God has kept for him; for if we share Christ’s suffering, we will also share his glory.
Editor’s note: Sam and Pat Alvord are our newest members at First Presbyterian. When asked to submit a story for the Dialogue, Sam sent a copy of this letter which he recently wrote to their sons and wives and a few friends who were surprised when Sam and Pat said they had joined a church.

Dear Ones,

Many of you have asked or wondered why Pat and I joined Ashland First Presbyterian church. We found a group who hold many of our values and represent an alternative to the posture of the Evangelical tradition which we were born into and must now resist. First Presbyterian is a gathering of folks who are committed to the ethic of the Sermon on the Mount. They do not proselytize, but practice their values in the kind of community cooperation and social activism that is closest to the choices which have made up our actions over the years.

The times call for a medley of neighbors to join hands and stand for an alternative to many of the practices of the current national government. We also need to find our people. That means folks who regardless of race, religion, gender, ethnicity, etc., work to make life wonderful for all persons.

The church is not a cloister but a platform to make connections and work for healing and regeneration. So in this particular church we met people very engaged in health care, city government, homeless programs, theatre, education, and business, as well as many retired individuals using their skills in various causes. Our congregants spend their days with kindred spirits who may not share our faith but certainly share our values, and we are striving for the same ends of peace and healing.

I have attached six affirmations which Pastor Dan Fowler talked to us about at church (http://reclaimingjesus.org). They make sense to me as a believer in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, my faith tradition. At the same time, they sound like what I heard when a group from our congregation worshiped with our Jewish neighbors recently and what I talk about with my Buddhist, Catholic, Quaker, Mormon and Humanist friends and neighbors.

We are not of the mind that any particular faith tradition is the one true way. Instead we hold to our faith as a strong mooring for us, but certainly aware that it, like all human systems, is fallible. This set of affirmations comes from Jim Wallis of Sojourners Magazine (Jim and I studied at the same Evangelical seminary in the early ‘70s) and a bishop of the Episcopal church. It reflects Biblical language. More vital, it states succinctly a set of principles that transcend sectarian limits and embrace universal responsibilities to respect and care for our planet and all its people.

I find it inspiring.

As ever,

Sam

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Men’s Book Club plans summer reading

By David Hall

The Men’s Book Club has lined up our summer reading. So next on the docket of books is Killer Angels by Michael Shaara (about the battle of Gettysburg). We plan to meet on Thursday, July 19 at 5:45 p.m. at Smithfield’s Pub and Pies to discuss this book.

After that we plan to delve into any of the writings of Irish poet/philosopher John O'Donohue. Our library has Anna Cara (about friendship) and Eternal Echoes (about the human desire to belong). But don't limit yourselves to only these writings; if you find something else, please read it and share your perceptions of any of his works. We currently plan to meet on Thursday, Sept. 20 at 5:45 p.m. at Smithfield’s Pub and Pies to discuss this book.
Ian Shibley-Styer, son of Mark Shibley and Trish Styer, plans to attend Oregon State University Honors College to study mechanical engineering. He is particularly interested in the field of renewable energy and hopes to design and build new ways of generating and storing electricity.

Ian is graduating as a valedictorian from Ashland High School on June 1. Ian was a varsity soccer goalie on AHS’s championship team and a varsity basketball athlete and also participated in a number of other extracurricular activities. He tutored in the Student Tutor Center, was involved in the Griz Pageant helping to raise money for the Asante neonatal intensive care unit, and was a member of the National Honor Society. The Rotary Club of Ashland chose Ian as their May Student of the Month. And, not surprisingly to some (Ian’s parents, for example), Ian was also voted the AHS class of 2018 Class Clown!

Ian has been on numerous mission trips with AYC (Ashland Youth Collective), including trips to Portland, eastern Washington, Eugene, and most recently, New Orleans.

Brook Hall, daughter of David and Lauren Hall, is graduating from Ashland High School on June 1 with the class of 2018. Brook attended Sunday school at First Presbyterian Church.

She was a representative from Ashland to sister city Guanajuato in 2017 and wants to participate in the 50th anniversary celebration scheduled for 2019. She also performed in the Ashland High School Theatre productions of “The Boyfriend” and “Midsummer Night’s Dream,” but her favorite roles were Johanna in the musical “Sweeney Todd” and as a featured singer in the “tribe” from this spring’s musical production of “Hair.”

Brook has always enjoyed the sciences. She took a three-week course in neuroscience at the University of San Diego and was both a student and counselor at Academy at Southern Oregon University. Her favorite thing to do is to spend time with her Belgian Malinois dog "Ace."

Brook will attend the nursing program at the University of Portland in the fall. Let’s hope we see her again in a hospital near you!

Ian and Brook will be honored at the 10 o’clock worship service on June 10. Please join us!
### Regular Sunday Schedule

8am Chapel Worship  
9am Pony Espresso  
10am Sanctuary Worship  
11:15am Fellowship  

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#### Noisy Offering-Peace Flame
Birthday Sunday  
Grad Sunday  
Membership Coffee Hours  

#### Father's Day

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<tr>
<td>7pm Women's Book Club</td>
<td>6:30-9pm Gothic Choir (S)</td>
<td>10am Back Porch Bible Study</td>
<td>10am Dialogue Folding</td>
<td>Presbytery in Salem</td>
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#### Weekly Building Schedule

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<th>AA</th>
<th>7am-8am M-Sat</th>
<th>Realtors Fireside Room</th>
<th>Calvin Hall 8:30am - 9:30am Thurs</th>
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<td>AA</td>
<td>9am-10am M-Fri</td>
<td>OLLI Knitters Fireside Room</td>
<td>1pm-2:30pm 1st &amp; 3rd Tues</td>
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<td>AA</td>
<td>9am-10:30am Sat</td>
<td>OLLI Watercolor Nursery</td>
<td>10am-1pm Mon</td>
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<td>Alanon</td>
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<tr>
<td>AA Workshop</td>
<td>11am-12pm Sat</td>
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Hello Summer
Pastor: Rev. Dan Fowler revfowler@yahoo.com Office Manager: Susan Coghill presbyashland@yahoo.com
Director of Music: Laurie Anne Hunter lahunter@mind.net Parish Worker: Wendy McAninch wendy@mcaninch.ch
Treasurer: Trish Styer fpcashland@gmail.com
Ruling Elders on Session: Jill Turner, Elaine Morgan, Linda Purdom, Jim Holloway, John Sager, John Wren
Clerk of Session: Marcia Hunter
Deacons: Gail Johnson, Wendy Ray, Debbie Miller, Judi Quiett, Ruth Ralls, Sook-Ja Hansen, Rick Herst, Katy Slyt
Deacon Moderator: Marjorie Lininger
Ministers: the whole congregation

Our Mission
We are a faith community centered in Christ, doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with God.

Our Vision
Open Minds, Open Hearts, Open Hands, Open Table

Visit the church website at www.firstpresashland.org
“Like” us on Facebook at fb.com/firstpresashland