



The Light

A monthly newsletter for
St. Augustine's in-the-Woods
The Episcopal Church serving Whidbey Island.



OCTOBER 2011

Rev. Nigel Taber-Hamilton, *Rector*
Rev. William Burnett, *Rector Emeritus*
Rev. William Seth Adams, *Priest Associate*
Rev. M. Fletcher Davis, *Priest Associate*
Rev. Amy Donohue-Adams, *Priest Associate*
Rev. Julie Bird, *Deacon*

St. Augustine's Services

SUNDAY

8:00 am Eucharist
followed by coffee and Forums

10:30 am Eucharist
with music, church school & child care
followed by coffee hour

MONDAY

5:30 pm Solemn Evensong
(with incense)

WEDNESDAY

10:00 am Eucharist and Holy Unction

*For additional activities please see "calendar"
listings in this newsletter.*



From the Rector



One of the most enjoyable parts of my dissertation reading has been those sudden times which I would describe as “Aha” moments. One such moment came when I was reading about the application of the social sciences – sociology and anthropology – to the bible, and particularly to the New Testament. I have frequently emphasized in my sermons that context is vital in understanding what we’re reading when we read any biblical text. I discovered two years ago that there’s a group of biblical scholars (of both Testaments) actually called “The Context Group” – as their name implies their passion and their scholarly focus is on the context of the texts.

And then I came across a particularly interesting piece about context that I think is helpful for all us. Here’s what I learned:

For any Christian the Bible, and especially the New Testament, lies at the very heart of Christian faith and identity. We are who we are because of the events recorded in our Sacred Texts. More than any other part of our faith, an understanding of the Bible, and especially the New Testament, is the absolute bedrock of, and a requirement for our Christian self-understanding and identity.

We know this – and in our own ways endeavor to be honest in biblical study. However, there are some pretty significant impediments to our understanding, not the least of which is that we make assumptions about what we are reading and especially *about the intent and understanding of the authors*.

If you speak to a professor of literature they will tell you that every author makes assumptions about the knowledge and experience of her or his reader. At the very least, such assumptions are necessary in order to avoid written works that would be enormously long, highly tedious, and most likely unreadable. So the author depends (has to depend) on the reader’s own cultural knowledge and experience **to complete the author’s text**. Any author in contemporary North America, referring to an idea that “came out of left field” or an action that was akin to an “unassisted triple-play” depends on his or her reader’s knowledge of baseball to complete the meaning of the text. If you don’t know baseball the metaphor is lost on you. Every written text thus invites immediate participation *and requires* some common cultural experiences – the reader has to be able to participate in the text. Every written text always requires we have this ability to complete it. But what if we don’t share the same cultural experiences? The meaning embedded by the author is not going to be accessible, or is going to be much less accessible.

That’s why it’s often difficult to understand something from a different cultural context: because that shared “language” doesn’t exist. For instance, if I were to cry “Gordon Bennett” in the middle of a tense meeting, none of you (or almost none of you) would have any idea of what I meant, (ask me!). This lack of context happens in spoken conversation as well. When – in front of a large group of people in Berkeley CA 1977– I offered to “knock up” a female seminarian someone wisely said to me “I don’t think that phrase means the same thing in England as it does here” (and they were right – in my lexicon that simply meant “what time shall I knock on your door tomorrow morning?”)

And now we get to the heart of our problem with reading the bible: for Twenty-First Century readers of First Century texts the agreement between reader and author – the common cultural lexicon and scenarios – does not exist.

Not only is the context different, but the very nature of our cultures is different too. The First Century was what is called a “high context culture”: one where everyone understood pretty much everything about their culture. For instance, in the First Century there were probably no more than 20-30 occupations. Narrow the population “slice” down to the vast majority of population, who mostly lived in an agricultural setting (Jesus’ primary audience, you’ll recall) and it’s easy to see that when Jesus talked about

sowers everyone would have understood everything about sowing and could “fill in the gaps” because most of them had practical experience of sowing. The gospels authors didn’t need to explain it to them; they simply “filled in the gaps”.

However, we live in a low context culture where (according to the U.S. Census Bureau) there are probably 30,000 occupations. We can’t know everything about every one of those occupations – we need (and, importantly, *expect*) explanations. When we don’t get them we fill in the gaps with our own Twenty-First Century understanding – so different than that of the First Century – and we miss what’s going on in the parable of the sower.

Our Fundamentalist brothers and sisters make this mistake consistently. We all make it at some time or another.

As you can imagine, there are significant repercussions of this lack of common context. One is the likelihood that individual perspectives on the great social issues of our day (whether claimed as being “biblical” or “un-biblical”) will be unrelated to the actual biblical texts’ meaning. Another is that individuals and churches are (sometimes) unknowingly playing ‘fast and loose’ with what Jesus “really said” or who Jesus “really was”. The result is that we end up with Jesus being remade in their image, rather than the other way around.

For us, I believe, it means this: we should be cautious in claiming that our understanding of what is in the bible is “The Truth”. We need, rather, to be willing to admit that biblical truth requires careful interpretation and that a community is necessary to achieve it; that our own understanding is inevitably a re-interpretation; and that thoughtful engagement with biblical texts using all the contemporary tools available to us is an absolute “must” if we are to understanding the texts at the heart of our faith.

Grace and peace,
Nigel.



Fun - Food - Fellowship!



The Annual All Parish Dinner

October 20th is the date for the Annual All Parish Dinner. This is a time to celebrate the abundance of our wonderful little church and conclude the active portion of our annual Commitment Campaign.

It should be a lively evening as Susan Sandri is planning some great entertainment and we will honor Nigel’s 10th anniversary as our priest. You never know what to expect from Susan, so you’d better plan to be there to see it for yourself. The women (and maybe some men) of ECW will be preparing a wonderful Prime Rib dinner that’s bound to be great. And I understand ‘Ray’s Wine Bar’ will be open at 5:30 p.m. You can’t pass that up, can you?

At the end of the evening you will be invited to attend Compline and place your commitment on the altar as a sign of your intentions.

We really hope you will plan to be there-October 20th at 5:30 pm.



A Letter of Thanks

July 4th, 2011

Dear St. Augustine's Scholarship Committee,

I would like to express my appreciation for your support of my education during the 2010-2011 academic year. I consider support I have received throughout my life from the St. Augustine's community a precious gift that has given me inspiration as well as shaped my outlook on life-attributes that have helped me as a University of Washington Student. This school year was filled with new experiences for me in terms of my academics and extracurricular involvement.



As a junior in chemical engineering, I began to take courses within my major. I found these classes to be fascinating as they taught me about the many physical phenomena observed in everyday life. One of the most interesting and applicable classes I took this year was fluid dynamics, which exposed me to the laws governing fluid flow. Such concepts have great relevance in industrial chemical operations and microfluidic devices that allow for fast human health diagnostics where access to health clinics is not readily available. Additionally, I found the topic of physical chemistry beyond interesting. I took two physical chemistry courses this year-one introductory and another related to thermodynamics-and thoroughly enjoyed combining math and chemistry to describe the behavior of matter.

This year was also my first experience with scientific research. Throughout the year I was involved in a project whose goal was to identify specific strains of a harmful bacteria, called *Vibrio Parahaemolyticus*, through the use of Raman spectroscopy. The bacteria infect seafood farmed in the Pacific Northwest, and consequently, if ingested, this seafood can cause serious health concerns for people with inclined susceptibility. A simple identification of the bacteria allows for an early health warning system that can prevent ingestion of contaminated food. Next year, I am looking forward to working on a new research project whose goal is to detect pesticides in the river systems of the Northwest.

I've also become very involved with Engineers Without Borders this year, serving as the organization's fundraising director. As the fundraising director, I managed the grant writing team, special events committee, and corporate sponsorship teams in raising money to support projects in Bolivia. This summer, Engineers Without will implement two projects in Bolivia: a water project in the town of Piriquina whose goal is to provide the community with year round access to water, and a Roof and Stove project in the town of Taconi designed to eliminate household health hazards associated with exposure to woodsmoke and the chagas beetle (a disease-spreading insect that lives in thatch roofing material). Both projects are being funded through fundraising events, grants, and corporate individual donations. I look forward to continuing my work with Engineers Without Borders next year, and also traveling to Bolivia to help with a project.

The education I'm receiving at the University of Washington, both in and outside the classroom has and continues to shape my life in countless ways. The concepts I learn, people I meet and experiences I have at university have taught me valuable life lessons. Again, Thank you for your support of my education.

Sincerely,

Matthew Idso





*From the Parish Nurse
by Wendy Close*

Way back in August we sponsored an all day conference focusing on End of Life issues. At this conference there were a few books that Carla Jolley from Whidbey General Hospital recommended. I am happy to report that we now have these books in the Caring Ministry library. They will be available for check out in October. I included an additional book on the same subject that I purchased primarily for the title, Good to Go.

We will be starting up Blood Pressure clinics in October. They will continue through the year on either the first or second Sunday of the month. The first one will be October 2. November's will be on the 13th. These will take place in the Fireside Room after each service. Come get checked out!



Mission Sunday Offering in October is Good Cheer

Some of the many values shared by the community at St. Augustine's and the larger South Whidbey community are creativity and generosity. I can't think of a better example of both of those qualities than Good Cheer. It feeds over 5,000 of our friends and neighbors. That is more than a third of the population of South Whidbey. It is an employer to its 16 staff members and a source of belonging and blessing to its 470 volunteers. Its innovative point system is a model in the region. In working with the homeless for many years, I can tell you how frustrating it can be for someone who is hungry to get food they can't cook or refrigerate. With the system at Good Cheer they can get what they need and can use. Senior citizens are the fastest growing group needing food assistance. With the point system, they can get the foods recommended for sometimes restricted diets.



Not content to just buy food, volunteers are growing food year round in Good Cheer's Community Garden. Its beauty and utility are both a testament to the talent and generosity of our small community. It provides a gathering place for individuals and families who come there to join with each other in bringing health and life to our island home. It gives children the chance to become connected with the earth as a source of food and to learn the value of contributing to their community. Volunteers also act as gleaners. They pick homegrown tree fruit donated by local tree owners. This provides fresh fruit that would be too expensive for many people to buy.

Through a program at Good Cheer several people learned how to fish this year and donated the salmon caught to the food bank. As those of us who love to fish know, having the joy of a fat one on the line and the opportunity to share it is a combination that can't be beat.

Each Sunday we have the opportunity to express our gratitude for what we are so abundantly given by filling up the food donation baskets at morning worship. But financial donations are also needed. The food bank can purchase food through the regional food bank network at a rate of \$1 to \$9. That means that every dollar that you donate goes to purchase nine dollars worth of food. Please join me in providing your financial support for Good Cheer. Mission Sunday Offerings for the food bank will be collected on the second Sunday of this October. Envelopes for MSO donations are in the racks on the back of the pews. Thank you for your continued generosity to this vital community resource.





Greening Article - October

Puget Sound Starts Here

"Here" is where each of us live. It's our backyard. It's our driveway. It's our home. It's our neighborhood. Here is everywhere in Puget Sound. But what we do here is having a serious impact on our local waterways and ultimately on Puget Sound.

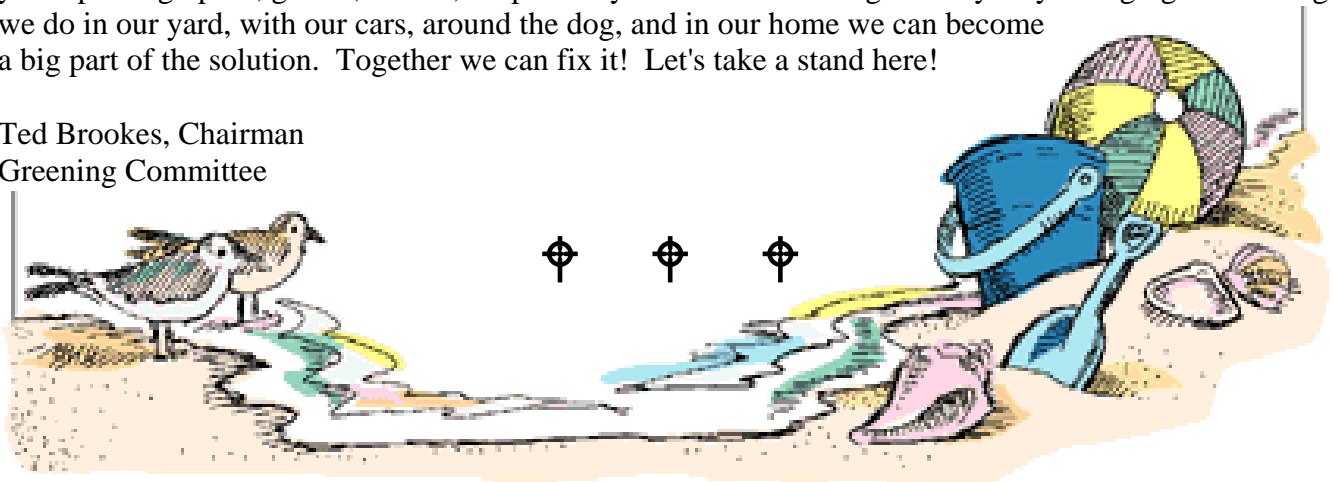
Our actions on land pollute the Sound with yard chemicals, oil, grease, soap and bacteria from pet waste and failing septic systems. No matter where we live-Bellingham, Seattle, Olympia, or Langley- our daily actions are contaminating storm water runoff with pollution. This untreated storm water flows over roads and yards into storm drains and ditches. It empties directly into streams, rivers, and lakes, winding its way into Puget Sound-where it stays.

On the surface Puget Sound is a watery wonderland and a source of great pride and enjoyment. It's a gem we are proud to claim as our own. Yet we are damaging our national treasure. Throughout the 12 counties that border Puget Sound there are thousands of storm drains and streams pouring polluted water into the Sound's delicate ecosystem. While it might look pristine on the surface, Puget Sound has unhealthy levels of many different toxic chemicals. Signs we are killing Puget Sound are becoming harder to ignore. The problem will only become worse as our population grows.

It's easy to take Puget Sound's 2500 miles of shoreline for granted-but as population increases so will beach closures. Whales and other marine life will continue to die. Salmon runs will continue to shrink. There are economic and future impacts, such as the demise of the \$147 million annual commercial and recreational fishing industries. Or the potential threat to the associated \$9.5 billion tourism industry, which supports a wide range of jobs while fueling our state's economic engine. Future generations might not know the pleasure of exploring tide pools for sea life, digging for clams, setting crab pots, or swimming in the surf. The experiences we take for granted today might be only nostalgic tales of tomorrow.

Hope starts here. The solution also starts here. We can fix the problem. You and I are the solution to the problem. Approximately 75% of all pollution in the Puget Sound comes from storm water runoff that starts in our neighborhoods. It comes from water that passes over roads, sidewalks, driveways, and yards-picking up oil, grease, metals, soaps, and yard chemicals along the way. By changing a few things we do in our yard, with our cars, around the dog, and in our home we can become a big part of the solution. Together we can fix it! Let's take a stand here!

Ted Brookes, Chairman
Greening Committee





The Holidays Approacheth

Can you believe it? Thanksgiving is next month and Christmas is soon to follow. That means we are getting ready for the Second Annual St. Augustine's Holiday Bazaar. It also means you'd better get busy with all of that knitting, sewing, canning and crafting because it can't happen without you.

Last year we raised over \$6000 in our little old Undercroft. This year we have a much larger space to fill and will no doubt raise even more. The money we earn will go to help retire the debt on the new building, so we need "lotsa dough", as Mama Celeste would say.

Please, please, please let's make this as special as it was last year. Many of the folks who attended our last bazaar said it was the best on the island. In addition, the Vestry is planning an open house on that day and inviting the community in to see the building. Let's see if we can help them with their holiday shopping.

If you have any questions please ask Lynda Anderson, Jody Heiken, Elaine Ludtke, Shirley Bauder, Liz Kershaw or Barbara Moss.

The Bazaar is scheduled November 19th from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

We will need help setting up and manning the sale day so mark your calendar and get busy.

Thank you in advance, The Bazaar Committee.



The RACK SALE

Saturday, October 15th, 9-2

Gently used clothing and accessories for men, women, teens, youth, and infants.

Also a *boutique* with 'designer' labels and up-scale items!

Adult Forum Schedule for October by Ted Brookes



During October the 8th Day Committee in partnership with the Greening Committee will reprise its well-received green theme "Christianity and the Environment." First, we will present an acclaimed film produced by Fr. Jim Friedrich titled "The Greening of Faith-Why the Environment is a Christian Concern." The Greening of Faith explores the religious dimension of caring for the earth. Theologians & environmentalists offer helpful ecumenical perspectives on one of the most pressing and exciting areas of faith and ethics. The film features stunning nature photography and haunting music. Second, we will feature a documentary that was inspired by the many Americans of all faiths who are answering the spiritual call to confront the enormous challenges of environmental degradation. Titled "Renewal", this presentation is a series of nine moving stories from America's religious-environmental movement. From within their Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, and Muslim traditions, these men, women, and children are finding unique ways to become caretakers of the earth. Their movement continues to grow and expand as people from diverse backgrounds work to build a sustainable future.

2 October - Theology & Spirituality. Highlighted topics of discussion are:

- Biblical Foundations for Ecology
- Creation Spirituality in Christian Tradition
- Nature as Sacramental
- The Reconnection of Faith & Science

9 October - Ethics. Highlighted topics of discussion are:

- Environment & Justice
- The Extension of Ethical Obligation Beyond the Human Species
- The Unique Role the Church can Play in the Formation of Attitudes & the Enabling of Change

16 October - Three Interfaith Green Stories. Story titles and focus are:

1. A Crime Against Creation. Evangelical Christians bear witness to mountain top removal and the destruction of Appalachia.
2. Going Green. GreenFaith, an interfaith partnership, helps congregations take the first steps in environmental action.
3. Food for Faith. Muslim tradition and charity forge bonds between urban communities and sustainable farms.

23 October - Three More Interfaith Green Stories. Story titles and focus are:

4. Ancient Roots. The Teva Learning Center & Adamah bring environmental education together with Jewish tradition.
5. Compassion in Action. Green Sangha, a Buddhist community, leads a campaign to save trees.
6. Eco-Justice. The Holy Spirit inspires a battle against industrial contamination in small town Mississippi.

30 October - Final Three Interfaith Green Stories. Story titles and focus are:

7. Sacred Celebration. Catholics & Native Americans embrace religious ritual in their struggle to protect land & water.
8. Interfaith Power & Light. Across America people are mounting a religious response to Global Warming.
9. Nature Meditations. Seven visual poems of the natural world.

*Ted Brookes present each of these episodes.



Stewardship Committee - Commitment Campaign

The following information is from the 2011 Commitment Campaign. It is presented here as a way for you to observe the issues we face as a congregation. Our Senior Warden, Harry Anderson, spoke on the budget at our 2012 Commitment Campaign kick-off event in September. The “best guess budget” was provided to you in the campaign packet. Just as a reminder, with plate offerings, that budget is approximately \$300,000. I know you will be able to identify where your commitment fits on this chart. I pray you will consider your commitment for the coming year. If you haven’t made a commitment in the past or if you haven’t made a commitment recently, I pray that you will consider God in your plans.

For 2011 we received 78 pledges for a total of \$231,541.

Thank you for your Stewardship commitments.

Here is a snapshot of how our pledges fall. Please note that your personal pledge is private. Only the Stewardship chair and the parish treasurer see your pledged amount.

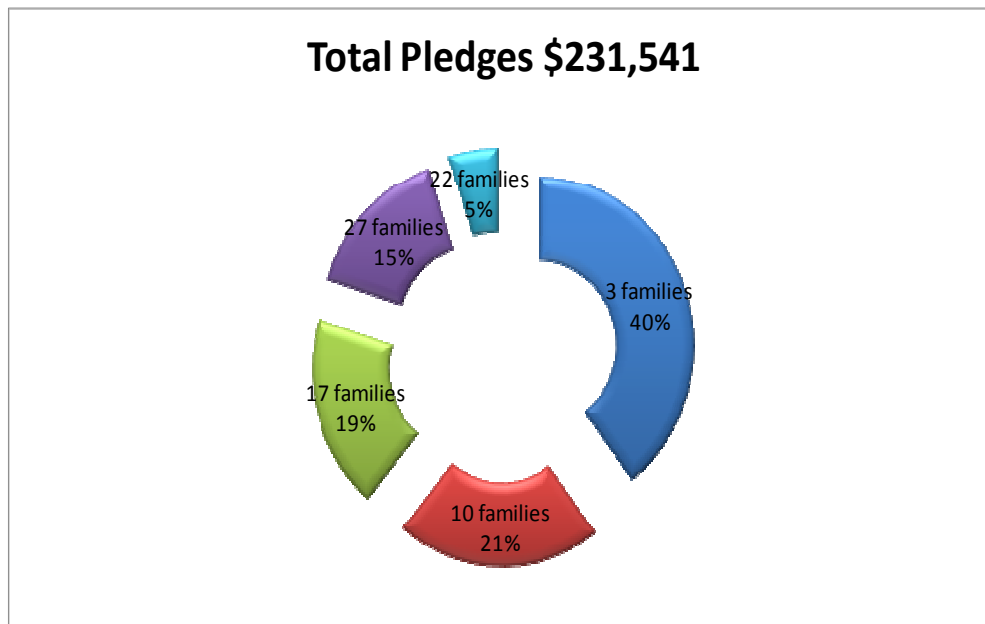
\$92,000 or 40.0% of total committed dollars are over \$6,900 annually and come from 3 parishioners.

\$49,300 or 21.0% of total committed dollars are between \$3,000 and \$6,900 and comes from 10 parishioners.

\$43,480 or 19.0% of total committed dollars are between \$2,000 and \$3,000 and come from 17 parishioners.

\$35,220 or 15.0% of total committed dollars are between \$1,000 and \$2,000 and come from 27 parishioners.

\$11,541 or 5.0% of total committed dollars \$1,000 or less and come from 22 parishioners.



The percentages listed in the colored chart indicate the percent of the **total** dollars pledged by that number of families. It is important for us to recognize that 40% of our pledge income comes from only 3 of the 78 pledgers. Almost 75% of our pledged income comes from 13 families.

No gift is more important or shows anyone to be a more important member of the congregation than another. However, this allows you to know where your gift stands in terms of other gifts and shows that we rely on a very small number of individuals for a majority of our pledged income.



ST. AUGUSTINE'S HOSTS ANNUAL INTERFAITH VIGIL OF PEACE AND HOPE

Blessed are the Peacemakers for they shall be called Children of God.

On October 30, at 3:00, on Sunday afternoon St. Augustine's-in-the-Woods will host the seventh annual Whidbey Interfaith Vigil of Peace and Hope. What is now a community interfaith gathering originated with St. Augustine's Episcopal Peace Fellowship who continue to be the primary organizer of the event. This year's interfaith vigil will again feature an interactive question/answer presentation led by the nationally acclaimed "Interfaith Amigos." The theme will focus on the possibilities that interfaith dialog can bring actual collaboration to work for peace in the name of religion instead of violence in the name of religion.



The Interfaith Amigos from Seattle are Sheik Jamal Rahman, Rabbi Ted Falcon and Pastor Don Mackenzie. They received national recognition as the subject of a November 24, 2009 *New York Times* article "Three Clergymen, Three Faiths, One Friendship," a CBS News report and several NPR interviews. Rahman is a Sufi Islamic minister at the Interfaith Community Church in Ballard, Falcon is a Reform rabbi who has founded synagogues in Los Angeles and Seattle, Mackenzie is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ (Congregational) and has recently retired as pastor of the large University Congregational U.C.C. church. The rabbi and pastor met and formed a friendship during a Christian-Jewish dialog group. Falcon and Rahman met when they were on the board for a new university - the university never took hold but their friendship did.

The three clergymen have given many presentations and workshops throughout the nation and have co-authored a book, *Getting to the Heart of Interfaith*. Last year they visited the Holy Land together and the result was another book, *Religion Gone Astray*.

Getting to the heart of interfaith for the Interfaith Amigos has required being direct with each other and confronting their disagreements. One example of this directness was to discuss verses in one another's holy scripture that they found offensive. At a Tennessee church where the Interfaith Amigos appeared, Rabbi Falcon stated, "We try to honor the truth. This is the truth for you, and this is the truth for me. It may not be reconcilable, but it is important to refuse to make the other the enemy."

While the primary focus of this year's Interfaith Vigil of Peace and Hope will be a discussion led by the Interfaith Amigos, the service will also contain Buddhist and Native American spiritual traditions. The service will begin with a First Nations smudging ceremony to cleanse the sacred space. Following the cleansing of the sanctuary, short peace and justice excerpts from the Qua'ran, Isaiah from Hebrew Bible,

Christian Gospel of Matthew, Buddha in the Dhammapada, the Hindu Taittiriya Upanishad will be read from the pews. Next the One Drop Zen Buddhist community of Freeland will offer a meditation and lead the gathering in a sutra. As in previous interfaith vigils, recording artist, Karl Olsen of the Brothers Four, will lead the gathering in song.

Island churches, faith communities and peace groups involved in the vigil planning and participation are the Tahoma One Drop Zen Buddhist Monastery, Langley United Methodist Church, St. Hubert's Roman Catholic, Trinity Lutheran, Whidbey Friends Worship Group (Quakers), St. Augustine's Episcopal Peace Fellowship, and Unitarian Universalists .

Although expressing different worship traditions and understandings of the Almighty, the different faiths have a call for justice and peace as a common denominator. The Interfaith Vigil of Peace and Hope is a wonderful opportunity for Whidbey residents to share in different worship traditions while experiencing a common desire for peace and justice expressed in prayers, readings and music. It is expected that this event of prayer, music and meditation will again be well attended by the various Whidbey faith communities.

