

## Pastoral News

### Overlooked or Ignored

As the [father](#) of a child with disabilities (many of you have met Ryan) and being a pastor for 22 years now, I have witnessed first-hand, the challenging circumstances in which the church has struggled to be a Sanctuary, not just for kids and adults with [disabilities](#) but for their families as well. I need you to know that this is coming from a desperate place of love. Because that is the kind of love Jesus expects from us at times, a desperate kind of love. Last Sunday I shared with you the vision God has been chasing me down with. Not a vision that I would have planned for myself or the church, trust me. But I have been haunted and convicted, over and over again, by...this scripture.

#### Matthew 25:31-40 (The Message)

31-33 "When he finally arrives, blazing in beauty and all his angels with him, the Son of Man will take his place on his glorious throne. Then all the nations will be arranged before him and he will sort the people out, much as a shepherd sorts out sheep and goats, putting sheep to his right and goats to his left.

34-36 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Enter, you who are blessed by my Father! Take what's coming to you in this kingdom. It's been ready for you since the world's foundation. And here's why:

### What's In This Month's Issue:

- Caritas Challenge
- Prayers Needed
- Birthdays and Anniversaries
- United Women of Faith

## December Calendar

### 4th, 11th, 18th, and 25th

Worship @ 10:30

### 1st UWF @ noon

### 6th, 13th, 20th, & 27th

Tops @ 9

Prayer Group @ 10:30

Bible Study @ 11

### 8th & 22nd

Crafting Group 9 till noon

### 4th

Ad Council meeting at noon

### 22nd

Flashes Articles Due

I was hungry and you fed me,  
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,  
I was homeless and you gave me a room,  
I was shivering and you gave me clothes,  
I was sick and you stopped to visit,  
I was in prison and you came to me.'

**“I was [disabled](#), and you invited me in, allowed me to use my gifts, and loved me like family” (Rene’s words)**

37-40 “Then those ‘sheep’ are going to say, ‘Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?’ Then the King will say, ‘I’m telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.’

**I would like to share some examples with you...these are not necessarily Fowlers’ missed opportunities to minister to someone overlooked or ignored, but the [church](#) in general. Just to give you an idea of what I am talking about.**

As a pastor and a parent of a child with disabilities, [I](#) have heard numerous times that all lives are made in God’s image and that all lives matter. [However](#), those words are easier said than done. Especially when there is the cost to the church or the need [for](#) flexibility of the saints, or [an](#) act of desperate love is needed.



Many churches are not equipped to truly welcome those bound to wheelchairs or in need of using a walker. When a church building has a large set of stairs [which](#) is the only way to get to the sanctuary or the [Sunday](#) school room or even the [altar](#), people get the message. When disabled children or adults end up sitting at a table by themselves during Sunday school while all the others sit together, we get the message that inclusion isn’t something that matters.

Many of us are told that our children are welcome in Sunday school as long as we stay with them. What we hear is that you see our children as our responsibility, not as members of this Church family, and often taking them into worship is really not an option. And when the Sunday School teacher said my son was “ruining her Sunday School class” because he wouldn’t do the worksheets. You care less about loving the vulnerable than you do about completing worksheets about God’s love. He or she kind of missed the point. It is not uncommon that parents, many starved for worship, fellowship, and respite, feel like there is no way they can be part of a church. This [is](#)

an incredible opportunity for us to create spaces where people with disabilities and their families know they are welcome, and where they know they can be a part of our family. We have already begun that work when we offered The C.R.E.W. to use part of our building to [offer](#) respite care for families in our community. The church should reflect the person of Jesus. "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for someone overlooked or ignored, you did for me.'"



Reading the Scriptures, I see Jesus repeatedly, bringing this message, it's [a message of inclusion \(Open Hearts, open minds, and open doors?\)](#). And for us, it is a message of [making ourselves servants](#), of being the last and losing our life in the [process](#). Jesus makes it clear that it will be those who are considered the least in this life that will receive the place of honor in the next.

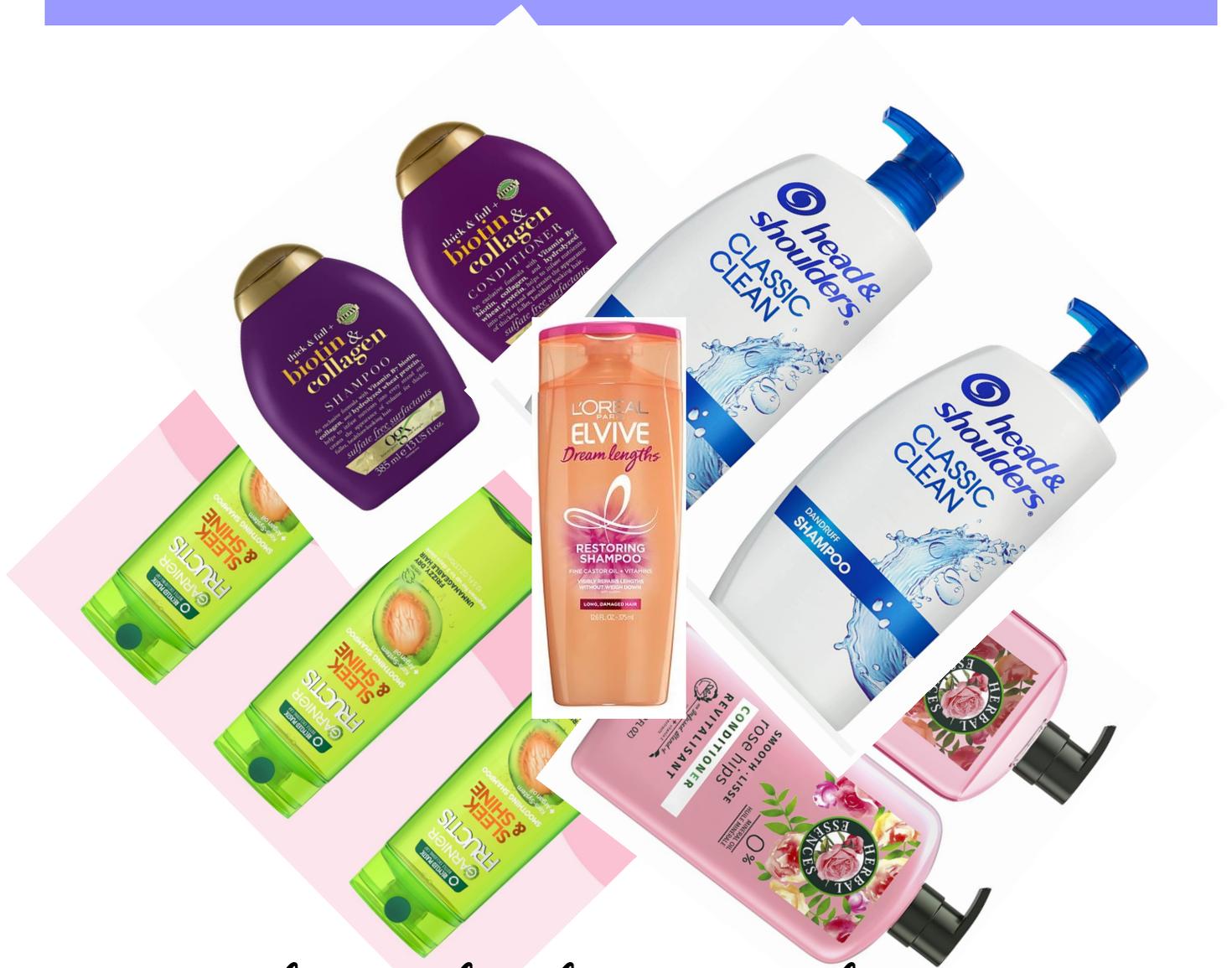
People with special needs are human, just like you and me. They want to be seen and treated with respect and kindness, to be known and talked to. If taking care [of](#), and loving Ryan has taught me anything, it is that I need to be more like Ryan in many ways. Before knowing Ryan, I had no idea of what unconditional or desperate love even looked like (thank you, Ryan, I am still learning).

Jennifer and I had a chance to meet last Sunday with Lynn Swedberg, she is awesome and smart and has a love for the overlooked or ignored. She has a double major bachelor's (OT and psychology), a master's in health services administration, and additional certifications in the health ministry, ministries with people with disabilities, and soon in accessibility studies. Needs 4 more courses to become a deaconess. She has agreed to help us and teach us and stand with us as we look forward to learning what [desperate](#) love in the way of [Jesus](#) looks like, are you with me? Can we serve the overlooked or ignored?

Peace,  
Pastor René



# Caritas Challenge



*This month's challenge is Shampoo!*

*Let's get at least 100.*

*We can do this!*



**FREE**

# *Christmas*

## **HANDBELL CONCERT**

BY

# *BellaCristo*

Sunday, December 4 at 3 pm  
at Millwood Community Presbyterian Church  
3223 N Marguerite Rd, Spokane, WA 99212

Come enjoy the sounds of the season with selections like Carol of the Bells, White Christmas, The First Noel, Joy to the World and so much more! Allow us to set the holiday mood for you, your family & friends.

**FREE WILL DONATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED**

The concert will be live-streamed on the YouTube channel of Millwood Community Presbyterian Church at 3 pm, December 4<sup>th</sup>. After the live concert, you can watch the concert on the church's YouTube channel at your convenience.





## Prayer Requests

8th - Larry Price

18th - Carol Vrolson

19th - Robert Hammer

23rd - Ron & Carol Ring

28th - John & Bev Parrott

29th - Janet Abernathy

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.”

Ephesians 6:18 NIV

### **Hand of God to Touch**

René, Jennifer & Ryan

Make the snow manageable

Our Church

Safe travels during bad weather

### **Health and Healing**

Granddaughter pregnancy

Vonnie Fergen

### **Continued Prayers.**

Linda Stancil

Larry Price -

### **Prayers of Gratitude**

For Thanksgiving together

For friends and family

Wishing our friends and family

a “happy. . .”,

a “merry. . .”,

a “best wishes . . .”,

and a “blessings . . .”

for their special day.



United  
Women  
in Faith

The Fowler Local Unit will meet December first at noon in Corinthian Hall for our Christmas Program. Bring a sack lunch, Joan Grater will provide a dessert and the program. All women in the church are invited to join us.

We will be sending out cards to shut-ins. If you know of anyone who would like to receive a card remember to bring their name and address with you. We will also be sending year-end donations to local charities. If you know of a charity that helps support women, children and youth let us know. We will also have pledge cards for your next year's giving. United Women in Faith supports global and national missions of the United Methodist Church as well as local missions.



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# COME AND CRAFT WITH US!



The 2nd and fourth Thursday  
at 9am