

Words of Faith

THE NEWSLETTER OF FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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The annual meeting, in aspects medieval and modern

The scene could have come right out of *Ivanhoe*.

In that pleasant district of merry Tacoma, which is watered by plenteous rainfall and which is even now surrounded by remnants of a large forest, the king's subjects were gathered for a feast in the Banqueting Hall, with the fires of friendship burning bright around the long tables.

Noblemen, their ladies, assorted single folk, and children dined on large quantities of meat pies, which were heaped, dozen upon dozen, on the trenchers at one end of the hall, while sideboards offered the harvest of the garden, ales both dark and light, and sweetmeats in abundance.

Sturdy young men chatted easily with fetching lasses, small children skittered back and forth between the victuals and their parents, and elders discoursed with younger members of the group, their conversations calling forth the joy of good food and communal life in this one small corner of the kingdom.

After the meal some women and children busied themselves in the keep below the Banqueting Hall, while several hundred adults gathered in the Meeting Room to discuss the affairs of their collective life.

One might have expected Sir Wilfred

himself, or the stunning Rebecca, or the luminous Lady Rowena, or even the Black Knight, to come walking through the doors during the evening, and had they done so they might have felt a certain kinship with the setting that they encountered.

But while no knights or knaves appeared, chivalry, charity, and civility were much on display, and these qualities did indeed tie the present subjects with those of 12th-century England.



Thus went the evening at the annual church dinner and meeting, held on Wednesday, January 25, 2006 in the new fellowship hall, and old sanctuary, at Faith Presbyterian Church.

The handout for the meeting, which ran a full 28 pages of reports and numbers, disclosed continuing steady growth and development in the congregation during the previous year. Total communicant and non-communicant membership increased from 590 to 628. The number of families increased from 171 to 190, while average morning worship attendance rose from 528 to 559.

An expanded and revamped Sunday school program was put into place during 2005, with more adult classes and a new curriculum for grades four through eight, ▶7

Art project for new narthex

Plans for an art installation, to be displayed on the south wall of the new narthex, were introduced at the 2006 annual meeting.

Seven wood carvings, each approximately 40" x 40", will be created by artist and FPC member Dale Woodard. Each carving will highlight a notable person from biblical history.

One-third of the project's cost will come from the church's general fund, with the other two-thirds funded by gifts from members of the congregation and friends of the church.

The hoped-for target date for completing the project is October 2007.

The renderings will be an exposition of Hebrews 11, the great faith chapter of the Bible. Abel, Noah, Abraham, Stephen the Martyr, Moses, Rahab and Samson will be carved in high relief in each scene, with supporting figures and background in shallower relief.

Further details on the project can be obtained from the church office. ♦

Fourth in a Series

Presbyterianism

By Rev. Rob Rayburn

Having provided a definition of Presbyterian church government and having considered whether it is, by the teaching of Holy Scripture, a divine law to be obeyed by all Christians and all churches, we move now to considering some of the strengths of our polity, some to be mentioned in this installment of our series and some in the next.

The Lord's commandments are not burdensome (1 John 5:3). "Great peace have they who love your law" (Psalm 119:165), and that is true whether we are thinking of the individual Christian life or the life of the church as a whole. With most of God's laws it is not difficult to see the wisdom and goodness in them, and the laws of church government are no exception.

First, like no other system of church government, Presbyterianism trades on the principle that "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed" (Proverbs 15:22). Three times in the book of Proverbs we are reminded that wisdom and success are to be found in many counselors. It is for this reason that, in the Bible, the word "elder" is almost always found in the plural and invariably in the plural when describing elders at work.

Each church, according to the Presbyterian system, should have a plurality of elders. The many counselors, in other words, are found at every level of the church's government: the local session, the Presbytery, and the General Assembly. In the local church, the elder, by which I mean the lay ruler, what we call the *ruling elder*, does his work together with others and in the meeting of their minds is found sound judgment. Most of us know very well how often talking out a matter with someone else has helped us to see an issue more clearly and to come to a better judgment about it. In the same way, any man who has been an elder knows very well how much wiser a church session's decisions are because they are the considered judgment of a number of godly minds and not just one.

On the other hand, there is wisdom in many *counselors*, the Bible says, not in everyone having his say. Democracy is not the Bible's principle of government and there is nothing in Holy Scripture to suggest that a majority vote of the congregation is a likely way to reach sound decisions. Congregationalists trust too much, we

Presbyterians think, to the wisdom of the masses. The Bible's way seems rather clearly to be to trust to the wisdom of the godliest and most mature of the church's men. I add my own testimony that this congregation has been greatly blessed by the collective wisdom of its elders and deacons.

Second, the provision of three distinct offices – the ministry, the eldership, and the diaconate – serves to ensure that the major responsibilities of church leadership are adequately provided for. The *Second Book of Discipline* of the Scottish church (chapter 2) reads in its old Scots way:

"The hail polity of the Kirk consisteth in three things, to wit, in Doctrine, Discipline, and Distribution. With Doctrine is annexit the administration of Sacramentis. And according to the pairts of this division ariseth a three-fauld sort of office-bearers in the Kirk, to wit, of Ministeris or Preachers, Elderis or Governors, and Deaconis or Distributeris."

Everyone who has a long history in the church knows very well how easy it is to neglect one or the other of these vital functions, each necessary for the life, the vitality, and the fruitfulness of the church of God. God has provided an office in the church to ensure that each area of responsibility (worship, rule, and mercy) is undertaken by godly and gifted men who are made directly accountable for that and for nothing else.

History seems clearly to teach that when one man or when every man is responsible for all things, some things don't get done. In many churches of my upbringing, the ministry was the supreme office, the minister was very often in charge of almost everything, and the eldership and diaconate had fallen into serious neglect. The deacons often did the janitor's work, the elders did some of the deacons' work, and no one did either the deacons' true work or that of the elders. The renewal of the offices of elder and deacon in Presbyterian churches over the past generation has done much to revitalize many of our churches.

I remember, early in my ministry at Faith Presbyterian, how much of the time in a session meeting was spent attending to matters that really belonged in the diaconate. Every meeting the elders talked about money for a considerable

"It is a fact of biblical history that priests and prophets, much more than elders, led Israel astray."

part of the time. We had to learn to talk about other things, the things that belong directly to the elders' office. Happily, your elders almost never talk about money in their meetings and haven't for many years. They talk about the life of the people of Faith Presbyterian Church and the ministry of this church.

I remember those early deacons meetings as well. We talked about minor matters concerning the church property and its upkeep most of the time. Such matters, thankfully, have been for a long time now an insignificant portion of the diaconate's business. The deacons talk about their ministry of mercy to those within and outside of the congregation. How much healthier a church we have become precisely because each office is looking to its own responsibilities!

Third, the Presbyterian system, with its lay officers, creates a barrier against clerical supremacy. It is a fact of biblical history that priests and prophets, much more than elders, led Israel astray. False teaching is more deadly than false or ineffective ruling. And so it has continued in church history. The preacher has access to the entire congregation every Sunday. If he is an effective speaker and leader he can lead Christian people, even people who should know better, to think thoughts they ought not to think. This has happened times without number over the cen-

turies and is, alas, the sad story of Protestant Christianity in the 20th century.

There is little check on the minister's power and influence in Episcopal church government, but there is in Presbyterian. There is a body of elders who also are responsible for the fidelity of their congregation to the Word of God and the gospel of Christ.

Before we go on next time to consider what is perhaps the greatest strength of the Presbyterian system, it behooves me to say as I conclude that it is perfectly obvious that Presbyterian church government, like all other Christian polities, is only as good as the men who occupy its offices. We have already admitted that Presbyterian church government has often failed to live up to its promise precisely because the officers did not do their work in faithfulness to the Lord and according to the instructions of his Word.

It is both a proper humility and a biblical realism that leads many Presbyterians to admit that they would rather be governed by a godly bishop like J.C. Ryle or a godly rector like John Stott than by an unfaithful group of Presbyterian elders! I am thankful to be able to say that this congregation enjoys the blessing of godly men in both its eldership and its diaconate and so reaps the rewards of what we believe to be the most biblical form of church government. ♦

Call it sanctified subterfuge, or long-distance legerdemain, or even the predilective pursuits of plotting Presbyterians.

But whatever you call it, a bit of deft planning and a pinch of skulduggery resulted in the recent engagement of FPC member Courtney Rayburn and Charles Dey.

The deception went like this: Charlie, who met Courtney when they were both attending Covenant College, is a member of the Air National Guard, and was on a four-month assignment in Iraq.

Unbeknownst to Courtney, the deployment ended just before Christmas, which was slightly earlier than anticipated.

But Charlie, who was back on U.S. soil, pretended that he was still many thousands of miles away, limiting his cell-phone calls to 15 minutes, telling Courtney that her Christmas box had not yet arrived, and expressing hope that he might be able to return to the States before the 2005 holiday season was totally over.

On New Year's Eve the trap was sprung.

Courtney's married older sisters, Bryonie Moon and Vangie Wykoff, in Tacoma for the holidays, were tasked with getting their unsuspecting little sister to the rose garden at Point Defiance Park on a winter Saturday afternoon.

So, after going out for coffee, the two accomplices coaxed their sibling into a visit to the park, and away they went.

As they approached the rose garden, lo and behold a call came from far-away Charlie, telling her that it was 3 a.m. on the other side of the world, that he couldn't sleep, and that he very much wanted to talk to her.

The solicitous sisters sent Courtney into the pagoda at the rose garden so she could talk in private, and as they turned to go they spied Charlie walking towards the pagoda from the other side of the park.

It is not known if any apologies for the duplicity that may have been offered were accepted, but it is known that the marriage proposal and accompanying ring were.

Wedding plans will be announced at a later date. ♦

**“Can you hear me now?”
Romantic ruse results in Rayburn ring**

CHS throws its own masquerade

By Becky Love

Covenant High School students, decked out in their finest, hailed the start of their Christmas vacation by throwing a banquet in the classic Venetian style of a masquerade.

Each year the school hosts a banquet, often fashioned after a specific theme, and on the evening of December 15th students met for the

2005 banquet at the Vault in downtown Tacoma to hold their own masquerade.

The tradition of the masquerade dates back to the early 15th century when Renaissance Italy was known for throwing extravagant costume parties. These elaborate dances were generally for the upper classes only and were especially popular in Venice.

During the 18th century, they were introduced to English society by John James Heidegger, a Swiss count who sponsored the first masquerade in London at the Haymarket Opera House. Theresa Cornelys, a Venetian-born opera singer, carried on this new trend by throwing her own masquerades, mostly at Carlisle House in Soho Square. They became such a popular activity in England that entire newspaper columns were devoted to describing the details of the most elegant masquerades. Eventually they spread to Colonial America and were welcomed with enthusiasm there as well.

As the years went by masquerades became less of an occurrence, but the “costume parties” that we know today have descended from the tra-

dition, and they serve to remind us of a more elegant and extravagant era in our history. (The 2004 motion picture *Phantom of the Opera* has no doubt enhanced the appeal of the masked ball as an expression of entertainment in today's society as well.)

For Covenant's masquerade, feathers and phantoms were the adornments of choice, and formal gowns were quite popular among the ladies. A chance to dress up is always welcomed, and even more so when masks are encouraged. Along with a scrumptious meal of chicken and pasta, the Vault provided decorations for the occasion. True to the Christmas season, the glow of the sparkling white lights amidst the garlands and candlelight provided an enchanting atmosphere.

Throughout the evening, people ate, talked, and had their pictures taken, but the highlight of the event was the march of the masks. Those who wished to display their masks paraded down the stairs from the balcony to the main floor, and the teachers below judged them to determine which masks were the most eye-catching.

In the category of “store-bought” masks, Juliet Campbell was chosen for her mask, and Deanna Strohm took the prize for her elegant mask in the category of “home-made” masks. Again, the feathers and fanciful style of the old Venetian parties received the greatest applause.

Truly, the night was a success and was enjoyed by all who attended. A special thanks must go out to the ladies who put the night together: Brittany Bond, Callie Pribyl, Alle Taylor, Carrie Orr, and Leah Weigley. It was a spectacular night and the perfect start to the Christmas season. ♦



Can you identify these two belles of the ball? The masks come off on page 7.

Becky Love is a senior at Covenant High School, daughter of Gary and Chris Love, and plans to attend Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, where she will major in journalism.

The Resurrection was not regarded simply or chiefly as evidence for the immortality of the soul. It is, of course, often so regarded today: I have heard a man maintain that “the importance of the Resurrection is that it proves survival.” Such a view cannot at any point be reconciled with the language of the New Testament. On such a view Christ would simply have done what all men do when they die: the only novelty would have been that in His case we were allowed to see it happening. But there is not in Scripture the faintest suggestion that the Resurrection was new evidence for something that in fact been always happening. The New Testament writers speak as if Christ's achievement in rising from the dead was the first event of its kind in the whole history of the universe. He is the “first fruits,” the “pioneer of life,” He has forced open a door that has been locked since the death of the first man. He has met, fought, and beaten the King of Death. Everything is different because He has done so. This is the beginning of the New Creation: a new chapter in cosmic history has opened.

—C.S. Lewis, writing in *Miracles*

Latin America's "Invisibles"

God has called longtime MTW missionaries John and Cathy Rug to reach the "invisible people" in Chile. These invisible people are the disabled, or differently enabled, and many of them live and die alone. Many are hungry, lacking medical care, and certainly lacking support from families who prefer to hide them away and forget about them. Families leave them to fend for themselves.

In fending for themselves they sometimes meet John Rug, who is blind, and who tells them they are not an accident, nor a substandard product of evolution, but created in God's image. One of Rug's favorite passages is Exodus 4:9-13, when Moses complains to God about his disability. "...Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I the Lord?" Rug delights in sharing with the disabled that they were created in God's image and they can become new creations and take their rightful place in the context of the church.

A new ministry center called CEMIPRE (Centro de Ministerio Presbiteriano) is helping MTW missionaries reach out to the differently enabled in Chile, and eventually the disabled in

other countries too. CEMIPRE seeks to emulate Christ's example in ministry, reaching out to those in need. The ministry offers classes in Braille, adaptive computer technology, and sign language. The Rugs also teach others to reach out to the differently enabled and their families, providing skills training and teaching them how to share the gospel of Christ.

Another large part of CEMIPRE's work is educating Chile's churches to receive the differently enabled. Rug said, "We should not allow the disability excuse to get in the way of ministry. Churches should consider that the 13 percent of all Chileans who are disabled are worth the trouble to get them into their churches to hear the gospel." He also encourages the integration of the disabled into the Church body, even if it means making changes.

"It is worth it to tear down bathroom walls to make them wheelchair-accessible [a relatively new concept in Chile]. It is worth it to have the service translated into sign language for the deaf. It is right and good that those without disabilities act as Aarons for the differently enabled people to be active in leadership and service to the rest of the Body of Christ." ♦

Need a devotional? Check out church library, then check out book

Since we still have some weeks left with early sunsets and long dark evenings, perhaps this would be a good time to check out a book from your church library.

Let me recommend our devotional/inspirational book section, which is recognizable by the Holy Spirit dove symbol on the spine of each book.

The books in this section are meant to inspire, uplift, instruct, admonish, guide, and help you mature in faith. Some of the authors found here include William Barclay, Oswald Chambers, Elizabeth Elliot, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Andrew Murray, and R. C. Sproul.

Our devotional/inspirational books are very diverse, with a wide range in size, depth, style and focus. The shortest book in the section is 70 pages (*Hezekiah: A Study in the Faith of Judah's Great King*), but if you're up for a challenge you might want to tackle *The Practical Works of*

Richard Baxter at 956 pages. The books vary in age as well. The still-relevant *Voice of the Heart* by John Newton was written in 1780, while others, such as John MacArthur's *How To Survive in a World of Unbelievers*, are brand-new. Some devotionals, such as Charles Spurgeon's *Morning & Evening*, give you daily readings, while others, such as Phillip Keller's *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, build upon a particular theme.

With 160 different titles in this section, you should be able to choose one that meets your spiritual needs. You might benefit from a book that is specifically written for men, or for women, or that addresses a certain stage of life. Teens are also included in the section, with titles such as *If God Loves Me, Why Can't I Get My Locker Open?* And still others, such as *Praying the Attributes of God* by Rosemary Jensen, are written with most everyone in mind.

The devotional section of the church library awaits your visit. Drop by soon and try one of our devotional titles, for yourself or to share with a friend or with your family. Thank you! ♦

By Maggie Moores

New Members

Louise (Denbrook) Allen grew up in Portland, Oregon, and graduated from Pacific Lutheran University in 1975 with a double major in pipe organ and musical education. She has been an elementary teacher since then, both in public schools and at home; she spent seven years schooling her own three children (Debbie, Jackie, and Kyle), and the house in north Tacoma where she taught them features a color-



Andy and Louise Allen

coded timeline of world history on the ceiling. She started attending Faith some four years ago, drawn in part by Elder Doug Bond's books on hymnology. Two years ago she started attending regularly, and at the end of 2005 cemented her status as a Presbyterian by not only becoming a member but also by marrying one of the deacons, in the form of Mr. Andy Allen. (photo by Brad Miller)

Kristin Burch is 21 years old, a junior at PLU, and working toward a B.F.A. in theater and directing. She was raised in a Christian home in Olympia, baptized a Lutheran, but grew up attending a Nazarene church. She was introduced to Faith by Michael Gronewold when the two of them were working together at Starbuck's, and

started attending a year and a half ago. At the church she has found out new things about herself and the Christian faith, and says that "It's a great revelation to discover a deeper relationship with Christ." After graduation she would like to move to New York or Los Angeles and become a witness in the community of performing arts.



Tim, Sharletta, Abby, and Julia Vander Pol

Scott and Beth Jensen were both raised in the Lutheran church; Scott in Tacoma and Beth in Vancouver, Washington. They met at PLU. Scott has worked for Weyerhaeuser as a computer

programmer since interning there in the early 1990s. Beth graduated with a degree in elementary education and taught school for three years. In their 14 years of marriage they have led classes and Bible studies, both together and separately, including Bible Study Fellowship for the past six years. Their daughter Allison is a seventh-grader at Cascade Christian School in Puyallup. Their household also includes a cat, Catherine Grace, and Hobbes the kitten, which came to them courtesy of Kent and Aubrey Dawson.

Matthew & Mary Lou Longenbaugh grew up in Alaska, married in 1978, and have been attending Faith for the past six years, driving up from their home in Tumwater. Raised in the Episcopal and Roman Catholic churches, respectively, they came to personal faith while attending a community church in Oso, Washington. They looked at churches closer to home, but found that the teaching, music, and worship at Faith provided sufficient reason to make the commute. Matthew is a graduate of Western Washington University, and works as a salmon habitat biologist with the National Fisheries Service. They have three children: Leah (married to Aaron Hall, ceremony performed by Pastor DeMass four years ago), Miles (a senior at WWU, majoring in business), and 12-year-old Olivia.

David Uthlaut is a captain in the U.S. Army, and transferring from Church Creek Presbyterian Church in Charleston, South Carolina. He is presently attending the Infantry Officers Advanced Course at Ft. Benning, Georgia.

Tim & Sharletta Vander Pol met at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, and started seeing each other after a spring break mission trip during their junior year. They graduated in 1995, Tim with a degree in business administration and agribusiness, and Sharletta in elementary education, and were married that same year. He is currently employed with Auburn-based Peninsula Truck Lines, a small regional carrier, as director of pricing. Sharletta taught Christian school for three years and is now preparing to home-school their own children, which currently includes a student body of three: four-year-old Abby, one-year-old Julia, and their new son Malachi. They were raised in the Christian Reformed Church and attended Evangelical Reformed Church in Parkland before coming to Faith. ▶ 7

Annual Meeting, continued

1 ◀ written by FPC's own Miriam Sheldon.

Covenant High School, in new quarters and in its 14th year of operation, reported an enrollment of 125 students, now with room to expand.

The previous year saw the dedication of the new building on May 22, the resumption of congregational dinners, and the introduction of a church-sponsored soup and salad dinner on Wednesday nights, all designed to encourage more participation in the various ministries of the church.

Giving to the Deacon's Fund topped \$75,000 in 2005, with additional sums given for hurricane Katrina victims and pastor training in Cambodia and Viet Nam. In addition, giving to the building project was running ahead of projections, enabling the congregation to pay down the principal on the loan by a significant amount.

In 2006 there will be some corrective touches on the new building, the development of some preliminary plans for expanding the west end of the sanctuary, and the launching of an art project installation in the new narthex (see accompanying story).

The numbers and programs, encouraging as they may be, are only a part of the ongoing ministry of the church. As the pastoral/elder report concluded, "In these annual reports we tend to focus on ministries under the direct supervision of the session. But a signal aspect of the Lord's blessing and sign of spiritual health and vitality are the many unreported acts of personal generosity, kindness, encouragement, and hospitality. We are heartened by evidence of the Lord's blessing on every hand and look to the future with expectation of more of the same. May we be found faithful." ♦

New Members, continued

6 ◀ **Ray & Carol Weigley** learned about Faith from Mike and Annie Stipek when their daughter and son were both on the same swim team. Long-time residents of Tacoma, they spent some years in the Christian & Missionary Alliance and have been married for 20 years. Ray is employed as a press operator at a printing company in Renton. They are the parents of Covenant High School students **Leah** (senior) and **Carl** (junior), who were both home-schooled by Carol through the eighth grade. Of Faith Ray says "We felt drawn to the church; we were welcomed and made to feel right at home. In some ways, attending here is almost like being on vacation."

Adult Baptisms

Katie Schrupp, December 11.

Child Baptisms

Brenna Lewis, December 11, infant daughter of Michael & Jennifer Lewis ♦ Priya Lovelace, December 18, infant daughter of James & Linda Lovelace.

Child Professions of Faith

Alexandria & Margaret Oatridge.

Into Life Eternal

Ruby Gordon, January 11. ♦

Gene Shaw

1916-2005

Gene Shaw, a former elder at Faith, departed this life for a far better one on Christmas Eve, 2005, in Tacoma.

He was born in 1916 near Mt. Clare, Nebraska, graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1940, and was drafted into the Army in 1942. He served as a battalion and regimental operations officer with the 91st Infantry Division from 1943 to 1945.

He worked as an agricultural engineer for the Soil Conservation Service (USDA) and also for USAID in India and Pakistan over a 39-year career as a federal service employee, retiring in 1981.

An early interest in aviation led to a private pilot's license in 1946, and he maintained currency for almost 30 years. He was also an avid runner and walker, and received many awards in competitive running and walking events as a senior.

Gene served as an elder at Faith from 1982 to 1987. In recent years he attended Reformed Presbyterian Church in Seattle.

He is survived by his wife, LuVerne Shaw of Lakewood, three sons, seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Mrs. Shaw now attends Faith Presbyterian Church.

"Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has also come the resurrection of the dead." (I Corinthians 15:20)

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Church Calendar

Second Sunday of each month:

Church potluck ♦ **April 16:**

Easter ♦ **April 28:** Pacific NW
Presbytery meeting at Evergreen
Presbyterian, Beaverton,

Oregon ♦ **April 29:** Women in
the Church Spring Tea ♦ **May 12:**

Covenant High School Spring
Concert ♦ **May 18:** Women in the
Church meeting ♦ **June 20:** General
Assembly meets in Atlanta. ♦

Report from the reservation:

Christmas with the Yakama nation

MTW missionaries Chris and Mary Granberry, who operate under the ministry of the Pacific Northwest Presbytery, held their third annual Christmas Feast on the Yakama reservation in eastern Washington on December 20, 2005. Members of Faith Presbyterian contributed more than 200 presents, plus some kitchen help, for the occasion. Here is an excerpt from his report:

Christmas is not a “traditional” holiday for the Yakama people, so we try to emphasize the importance of recognizing and celebrating the advent season. We decided early on to have a special Christmas dinner and party with the folks who come to Bible Study (Hope Fellowship) on Tuesday nights.

The first year about 25 or 30 people came. The second year the regular Bible study group had grown to about 50 and we expected 75 to attend the feast. We had 120! This year the regulars at Bible study had grown to about 70-80 so we expected 150-200, but more than 200 came! At least 100 were new folks that we had never met.

Thanks for the generosity of many, many friends in churches all over the nation we had over 400 gifts and plenty of food.

At the feast we also sang Christmas carols and gave out the gifts. The highlight for me, however, was the responsive reading from John 1:1-14. It was amazing to hear 200 traditional Yakama people read scripture together in their own longhouse. For most this was the first time they had ever read Bible verses. I don't think any had ever heard of a “responsive reading” before! One lady got up and asked to speak (typical at traditional feasts). I had never seen her before and was a little nervous about what she might say but it would be very rude, unheard of really, to refuse. She said, “I came tonight because my aunt invited me. She said that this church helps people by working on their homes and in other ways. I'm not sure what kind of church this is but I'm glad I came and I want to thank them for being here.” ♦