Our April forum has been cancelled. We hope you find a few moments on April 3rd to give thanks for what Church Women United has meant to you and send a prayer for all its members, as they are held in the arms of God’s love.

LOOKING AHEAD TO MAY
May Celebration:
At this time we are not planning for our May Celebration. This is hard to give up.

Our theme is 2020 Vision for the Future: Agree to Differ. Our speaker was Jess Campbell of the Rural Organizing Project.

When we all get together again we will have a celebration of some kind.

Until then, keep up your spirits, and care for one another.
A message from World Vision:

Pray for people who are infected with COVID-19 or facing quarantine.

Jesus, during Your ministry on Earth You showed Your power and caring by healing people of all ages and stations of life from physical, mental, and spiritual ailments. Be present now to people who need Your loving touch because of COVID-19. May they feel Your power of healing through the care of doctors and nurses. Take away the fear, anxiety, and feelings of isolation from people receiving treatment or under quarantine. Give them a sense of purpose in pursuing health and protecting others from exposure to the disease. Protect their families and friends and bring peace to all who love them.

Pray for people at higher risk of developing the disease.

Dear Lord, we lift to You our concern for people who are more likely than others to become severely ill from COVID-19 — the elderly and people with chronic health conditions. Protect them from harm and be their comfort in this time of uncertainty.

Pray for medical professionals, caregivers, researchers, and leaders responsible for decisions about fighting the new coronavirus.

Father, we seek Your wisdom daily. Be with people making decisions that affect the lives and futures of our families, communities, countries, and the wider world. Inspire and invigorate people developing better tests to diagnose the virus, vaccines to prevent it, and protocols and communication to eliminate the disease’s spread. May truth and empathy be the touchstones of people setting policies for our protection.

He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers ...—2 Corinthians 1:10-11 (NIV)

I am praying for the whole world.
We can get through this with good sense and prayer.
A LOOK AT OUR MARCH FORUM
Anne O’Brien

United Lutheran Women did their usual wonderful job of preparing a feast for us. Their hospitality is very much appreciated.

The interim pastor at United Lutheran, Rev. Stan Bertson, gave a welcoming message that did add to our feeling of welcome at United Lutheran.

A big thank you to our 350 Eugene speaker Patty Hine and to Deb McGee. They left us with this message:

Climate Reality for the Faithful
1) Yes, climate breakdown is far more serious and coming sooner than we thought.
2) We must prepare by educating ourselves, building community, cultivating open-heartedness and resilience.
3) Remember that we evolved in a world of cooperation and adaptation, and we can and have faced enormous challenges in our history.
4) To resist fear but embrace the new reality that our systems are breaking down from misuse, greed, corruption and violence, and it is time for a revolution of love and compassion.
5) Everyone at their core has a heart for beauty and love, and it’s time to step away from extractive consumption and materialism that squander the future of living things on this place we call home.

And we need to start right now!
Patty ended by reminding us of the urgency we face as we sang together:
We need to wake up
We need to wise up
We need to open our eyes
And do it now! NOW! NOW!

We're on a planet
That has a problem
We've got to solve it, get involved
And do it now! NOW! NOW!

We need to build a better future
And we need to start right now
Make it greener
Make it cleaner
Make it last, make it fast
And do it now! NOW! NOW!
We need to start right now

No point in waiting
Or hesitating
We must get wise—take no more lies
And do it now! NOW! NOW!
We need to build a better future
And we need to start right now.

And many thanks for your contributions
to be given to homeless students.
You warmed many hearts.
Caught in a Nation-Wide Health Crisis, Homeless Students Need Your Help

Nancy Vrijmoet

Our world has been rocked by the coronavirus pandemic. We fret about our family and neighbors. We look especially toward the needs of Lane County’s unhoused. What about the children? How does a school age child end up homeless? On February 3 Mihir Zaveri described in the New York Times (https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/03/us/Homeless-students-public-schools.html) patterns in the circumstances leading to student homelessness:

- lack of affordable housing
- crises of opioid and methamphetamine addiction
- fluctuations in local economic conditions such as an unexpected work layoff or factory closure, after which parents are left unemployed and unable to pay rent.

The child is unable to control these circumstances. Adults in the school environment are not always clued-in to the needs of these students, but an increased vigilance helps. Watching for unpaid lunch balances, clothing needing to be washed, or inconsistent attendance, these education professionals can get needed supplies and support to homeless students. It takes diligence, perseverance, and a sense of how to organize the big picture: educators call this attending to the needs of the “whole child.” Who will be responsible for re-assembling the missing pieces, one by one, for these kids?

That’s where wonderful folks such as Bethel School District McKinney-Vento Program Homeless Liaison Donna Butera come in.

At her headquarters at Malabon Elementary, working with aide Dee Faiman, Donna (pictured here) assesses the needs of students in grades Kindergarten through twelve, organizes donated items, and distributes these needed pieces of clothing (underwear, caps, scarves, gloves), personal items, foods (peanut butter, packaged goods), school supplies, and even household supplies such as toilet paper and laundry powder.

To an outside observer it seems that Donna and Dee work miracles. Their dedication to these needy kids is phenomenal. The scope of their program is breathtaking. Their energy inspires us.

Last month our Church Women United community once again pulled together a generous offering of items as described above for the homeless students of Bethel School District. In addition, CWU President Anne O’Brien delivered to Donna an offering of seventy dollars collected at the World Day of Prayer celebration. These gifts will help Donna and Dee replenish their supplies.

We hope school life will return to normal, and educators will be able to take steps to adapt to the needs of their community, as the world faces the next chapter in this most difficult coronavirus situation. Meanwhile, our work continues.

Our partnership with Donna and Dee thrives. We can’t reverse all adverse circumstances for the Bethel kids, but we can certainly give them a boost.

Let’s pull together to make a difference.
CLIMATE ACTION

The coronavirus pandemic has upended our lives. Just a few weeks ago, individuals in countries around the world were going to bars, seeing movies with friends and, really, just going about business as usual. Now, all that has changed.

Amid the COVID-19 outbreak, many health experts and government officials are suggesting, and sometimes mandating, that we practice social distancing to flatten the curve of the outbreak — preventing a surge of infected patients that overwhelm our hospitals. In other words, that means we stay at home and limit nearly all in-person social interactions.

But as we exercise our individual and collective responsibility to reduce viral transmissions to preserve human health, we can still exercise our responsibility to act for environmental health. We can use this solitary time to reassess our current habits and develop new ones that are better for the planet. Below are a few ways to take action for the planet while social distancing — we hope they’ll stick, even after our global health crisis subsides.

When you’re stuck in your house, time is your friend. Now is the time to get creative and break those food ruts! Maybe you made a resolution to eat more plants this year, or maybe you just want to boost your immune system with an abundance of vitamin-rich fruits and vegetables. Either way, now is the time to get creative with your cooking.

Try some new plant-based recipes — Nonperishable foods, like canned or dry beans and rice, are easy to prepare and nutritious. I always end up making too much and then have leftovers, which makes my next meal easy for me. It’s always important to save leftovers and reduce food waste, and this is an especially good time to be making the most of what you have. If you have any produce that has gone bad and you can’t use, try composting. You can compost in a tupperware and store it in your freezer, under the sink, on a balcony, wherever!

— Sabrina Scull, Food and Environment Campaign Coordinator

Reading over streaming

Reading is good for the mind, the soul and it turns out, the planet: A pastime like reading easily replaces streaming, which is notoriously carbon-intensive. So, dust off that massive book you’ve been meaning to read, and get to work. Also, if you’re craving sports amid a sportsless pandemic, why not crack open a biography about your favorite athlete or sports moment? Since libraries are closed, opt for an e-book through your library’s digital platform. Our staff has some recommendations to get you started.

— Brandon Pytel, Communications Manager/Writer
Support a political candidate
It's election season! Is there a candidate you like or want to see succeed? There is plenty you can do while social distancing. Many campaigns have resources for people who want to volunteer, such as call scripts for reaching out to voters. As an added bonus, people who are stuck at home should be more open to having a discussion with you about the candidate you like. Don’t know who to support? Spend a little time looking at their record on the environment and see if it aligns with what you want for our planet.

- David Ayer, End Plastic Pollution Campaign Manager

When life gives you lemons... make disinfectants
When trying to fight a very contagious virus, cleaning products and disinfectants are our best friends. Whether it might be because your store is out of stock, or because you enjoy natural solutions, you can skip the harsh chemical sprays in favor of safer alternatives. Plus, they’re probably already in your pantry.

I have been making homemade disinfectant solutions, sprays and wipes using hydrogen peroxide and alcohol (just make sure your mix is 70% alcohol, and leave it to dry on its own). White vinegar and vodka are power cleaners, easily cutting through grease and removing mildew, odors, stains and wax buildup. For surfaces that need to be cleaned — but not sterile — lemons can also be used to clean non-porous surfaces. For extra points, reuse existing spray bottles in your home instead of buying new ones!

— Inna Galvez-Shorts, Digital Media Manager

Switch to green power
Did you know you may have a green power option available? Not everyone can put up solar panels or connect to a windmill, but more and more electric utilities are offering green power options, where you can sign up to get some, most or all of your electricity from renewable energy sources. While some utilities may charge a small premium, you likely will find savings in your bill over time. Contact your local electric utility today — it will be worth it.

— Will Callaway, National Campaign Director

Start a garden exchange
Start a neighborhood garden exchange. Post on neighborhood apps like Facebook, Nextdoor or OfferUp. I recently suggested a seed exchange, as well as a repurposed wood (for building raised garden beds) and dirt swaps, with my neighbors — now we’re growing our spring gardens together, but separately. To ensure safe social distancing, exchange seeds, wood and dirt by leaving them in front of homes, or set up times to exchange them in a safe manner.

— Terra Pascarosa, Virginia Campaign Manager

Keep your body moving!
Stir crazy yet? Social distancing doesn’t mean we have to stay indoors all day. Take 20 minutes to get outdoors and take a walk around the block, explore new trails or go for a bike ride. Many of these spaces allow you to connect with others from a safe distance. Spending time in nature, especially among trees, significantly reduces stress and anxiety, improves mood, energy, sleep and boosts the immune system.
Susan Daron, from Church Women United in Gresham, shared this.

When this is over,  
may we never again  
take for granted  
A handshake with a stranger  
Full shelves at the store  
Conversations with neighbors  
A crowded theatre  
Friday night out  
The taste of communion  
A routine checkup  
The school rush each morning  
Coffee with a friend  
The stadium roaring  
Each deep breath  
A boring Tuesday  
Life itself.

When this ends,  
may we find  
that we have become  
more like the people  
we wanted to be  
we were called to be  
we hoped to be  
and may we stay  
that way—better  
for each other  
because of the worst.

LAURA KELLY FANUCCI