

THE

Christ the King Anacortes

Oct. - December 2025

Quarterly Issue 6

COLLECTIVE



Worship
Community
Story

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Information about upcoming events can be found on the back cover!



Welcome!

Whether this is your first time reading our publication or you've been attending CTK for years, there's something for everyone within these pages.

But if you are new, here's a little bit of context to our church:

Christ The King is a community of disciples seeking to love Jesus, become like Him, and do what He did. Together on Sunday mornings and in small community groups throughout the week, we set the table where individuals can encounter Jesus. In everything, we desire to glorify God as we seek to be Entirely His, being formed by His Spirit into people of love for the sake of others. Everyone is welcome to the table.

If this sounds interesting to you, we encourage you to keep reading! The stories, thoughts, and information within these pages will give you greater context to community and our beliefs.

If you'd like to inquire more about our church, we encourage you to visit us online at ctkanacortes.com or visit us in person on Sunday morning.

Where: 916 8th St
Anacortes, WA
When: Sundays
9 & 10:45 AM

Editor's Commentary

Recently, I was sitting during a rare quiet moment at home - after a morning (and to be honest, a whole holiday season) where many things hadn't gone quite as hoped - and I found myself thinking about "catching up." Then the thought nudged into my mind, with what felt like a kind and knowing smile: There is no such thing as "catching up." I could feel some of the tension instantly drop from my shoulders. Of course. This is a lesson I continue to need reminding of, in so many different contexts: time cannot actually be recovered (It seems so obvious when I write it down!). I cannot return to the start of a day, a week, or an entire season of life and hit the reset button when it isn't turning out as I expected or hoped. But what I can do is look around, name honestly where I am at, and begin there. With rest.

In her book *Teaching from Rest: A Homeschooler's Guide to Unshakeable Peace*, Sarah Mackenzie offers some encouragement that has stuck with me for several years now. I am confident that, although the majority reading this aren't homeschooling parents, you can all relate to life not always going according to plan! After listing a myriad of ways one's average day might be thrown "off course" - from toddler tantrums to cars not starting - she reminds us:

"We can't really rest in God's care until we trust that He will indeed care for us ... We are meant to recognize every facet of our day as coming from the hand of God. It all passes through His fingers first, and He uses it to make sure that we lean hard on Him. Surrender your idea of what the ideal homeschool day is supposed to look like and take on, with both hands, the day that it is. Rest begins with acceptance, with surrender. Can we accept what He is sending today?"

This is the kind reminder my Father knew my heart needed as I stepped across the threshold of a new year. There is no such thing as "catching up." Look around at where you are at - what is the reality? Name it, honestly. That is your starting point - not your "ideal plan." Now take on, with both hands, the day that IS. He is trustworthy. He gives us grace and guidance for the day He has given us: the day that is.

I pray that as you read these stories from our church family, you will be encouraged as you recognize and celebrate God's guiding hand in the lives of those around you. And I pray with Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

- Courtney Remmenga





Identity Restoration

Reflections On
Sabbatical
From Pastor
Ben Boatright

In college, I worked in my school's cafeteria to help pay for tuition. Most days I would spend several hours in class, then throw on my work shirt to begin my shift in the cafeteria. The first couple years of college were tough. School was never easy for me, and the prerequisite classes that had nothing to do with my major were hard work. There was so much to read and write, and very little of it interested me. I remember long days of classes and studying flowing right into another kind of hard work in the cafeteria.

Though this was the early 2000s, the state of my university's cafeteria was criminal. In my memory, the kitchen was straight off the pages of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. Most evenings, there were at least fifty students just like me trying to survive, following the orders of old, weathered cooks conducting a clanging orchestra of outdated industrial appliances. I tried to just be a dishwasher, but I was always pulled into food prep—hauling bags of strange sauces and carving mysterious meats. In the rush, student workers frequently slipped on the greasy floors, and on a couple of occasions I saw students accidentally cut themselves. It was absolute chaos.

I distinctly remember the feeling of walking out of the fire of academia into the frying pan of the cafeteria—clocking out of class and clocking into the jungle. It was too much. My days were too full in that season, and I began to grow completely out of touch with who I was, especially within the context of a new city, living away from home on a campus of strangers. Eventually, my college experience equalized, but fast-forwarding twenty years or so, I would find myself in an even more unreasonably full season of life: A husband and father of four, clocking into a full-time vocational ministry role every morning, never really clocking out, and clocking into being a full-time dad at home.

I thought it was brutal to have no exhale most days in college, but now ministry and parenthood seem to be moving like a freight train in front of me—with no beginning and no end—waiting for a break in the action, waiting for the caboose to make an appearance so I can get a glimpse of my surroundings. And it doesn't seem to end. At least in college I could sleep! In this stage of life, there just so happens to be a twenty-month-old sleeping a couple hours here and there, thus making sleep deprivation a brutal reality for my wife and I.

As I began to flirt with burnout, God graciously invited me to rest, and last July, I stepped fully into a sabbatical. I clocked out of full-time pastoral ministry for the first time in almost ten years. And while that might evoke visions of rest and quiet, that's not exactly how I would describe it. In many ways, I felt like I stopped going to class and fully dedicated myself to the cafeteria. That seems a bit dismal, but truthfully, I stepped away from the work of ministry and stepped fully into my wife's world—the all-day, everyday work of parenthood—while being deprived of sleep. Needless to say, rest was hard to come by, and yet somehow I found a different kind of rest.

I described those full days in college as leading to a sense of being out of touch with myself. Going into sabbatical, I was completely out of touch with who I was apart from the work of ministry. In that disordered sense of identity, God met me—out of the fire and into the frying pan—in the difficult and beautiful, sleep-deprived world of 24/7 parenthood. The Holy Spirit tailored a rich experience of rest in the deepest parts of me. That rest came with a sacred reminder of my identity as the Beloved.

1 John 3:1 says, “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.” John, the “beloved disciple,” lived in the loving gaze of his Rabbi within the context of the covenant family of God. We often misunderstand this title, assuming that Jesus somehow loved John more than the other disciples. But what I believe is being conveyed is not that Jesus loved John more, but that John knew Jesus' love for him more deeply than most—and he lived out of that beloved identity with deep, immovable conviction. My ministry mentor advised me to forgo lofty agendas and simply let God love me on

sabbatical. This became my primary goal. I heard the Spirit speak through the Song of Songs: “Come away, my beloved.” Detach your worth from your work, your sermons, your ministry, your ability to please people, and reattach it to your Heavenly Father, who loves you enough to die for you. The beloved can rest freely and effortlessly into the presence of Christ. This is how so many artists have depicted John—affectionately resting on the shoulder of Jesus. This reminder of my belovedness came in many moments and in many different places. Three stand out in my mind: at a monastery, on a mountain, and in the forest.

I spent a few days in Oregon at a monastery. I fell into the monks' rhythm of daily prayer and worship. It was difficult not to. The bell in the tower of the church rings around seven times a day to call everyone in to sing psalms and pray. There's no sermon, no production—just beloved apprentices of Jesus turning their lives toward the Spirit, frequently and faithfully. In the church, in the library, at meals, in my bed at night, in their spiritual rhythm I found it natural to simply be my Heavenly Father's beloved.

A little over an hour from the monastery, I took a half day and hiked up Tom Dick Peak. Through endless patches of huckleberries and past a little alpine lake, I reached a shelf overlooking the Willamette Valley behind me and Mount Hood in front of me. I sat in awe, studying its massive crags and glaciers that made me feel minuscule. I remember writing in my sketchbook, “I'm here to meet with you.” As I wrote it, I thought it was me declaring my intentions before God at that monastery and on that mountain, but as it turns out, it was the Spirit revealing His intentions for me.



While that place in Oregon was a one-time visit on my journey, there was another place I frequented. In the fall, once school started, once or twice a week I would load Matthew, our 20-month-old, into my truck and head for my favorite trail on our island. We established a routine: parking, loading him into a backpack carrier, and hitting the trail. The first mile of this particular trail goes straight up a steep hill. Within the first seven minutes or so, we would hear a rooster crowing from a nearby property. I would ask Matthew, "Hear that chicken?" and within minutes he would be asleep. I would hike sometimes up to two hours with him sleeping in the pack.

Like the bells from the tower at the monastery, the rooster crows, Matthew falls asleep, and I enter into a time of silence, worship, and conversation with God that I cannot put into words. Knowing that the child who won't sleep is sleeping, strapped to my back, knowing that my wife is getting a break, and knowing that all I need to do is put one foot in front of the other opened me up to so much beauty in the forest, to the goodness of God, and to His desire for His children.

Like restless babies, we spend our days striving—clocking in and never really clocking out, moving from one form of work to the next, one room to the next, starting projects, making messes. Even when the sun goes down, even when things are clearly out of our control, we refuse to relent. We refuse to rest. There's too much to do. What if I miss out? What if I can't get what I need? What if the milk runs out?

Then one serendipitous day we say, I'm done. We pull ourselves away from the noise and proclaim, "God, I'm here to meet with you." And as we step into His presence, we discover that it is God who wants to meet with us. In fact, it is Jesus who wants to be with us. He stands ready to pick us up and place us in his pack, so that our feet won't slip, so that we might feel a profound sense of security and identity in Him and in His perfect love, which casts out all fear. As we rest, He carries us. He who neither sleeps nor slumbers carries us into deep places of rest and identity restoration.

To the church; What if that serendipitous day is today? The bell tolls, the rooster crows, the Father beckons: "Come away, my beloved." What say you?

- Ben Boatright

Numbers From The Holidays

1,768 dollars raised for the Salvation Army by ringing the bell on December 9th.

86 Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts sent to children abroad.

35 gifts given to local children via the Salvation Army's Angel Tree program.

86 individuals attended our Thanksgiving Dinner at the Salvation Army.

15 gifts donated to Rosario Assisted Living via their gift wreath.

During the holidays, our church regularly partners with local non-profits and community organizations to support those in need in our community. Through your contributions, here's what we were able to achieve this past holiday season:



Numbers are fun, but they don't always tell the real story. We love and appreciate those organizations doing good in our community, and we hope you do as well. From our church to you, we want to sincerely thank you for all of your generosity this holiday season. Whether it be through donating your time, your finances, or your gifts, it does not go unnoticed.

"I wish each one of you could see how much those gifts and your kindness meant to each one of our friends here. Your thoughtfulness was met with huge smiles, joyful tears, and I received numerous crushing hugs upon delivery of these gifts.

At Rosario, we have a staff shoutout board. We write down something that we saw a staff member do that was great, and the staff with the most shout outs wins the employee of the month. We call them a 'big dill.' I've written a shout out for you, as you all are a big deal to us! We hope to continue the tradition next year."

- Heidi Poirier,
Rosario Assisted Living Activities Director



Photos from our 2025 Christmas Eve Service



A New Year, A New Creation

A devotion from congregant Jim Stiles

For many years, New Year's Day felt like a hollow celebration to me — a change of numbers on a calendar, a moment inflated with expectations that rarely lasted beyond January. But recently, I encountered a deeper understanding of what the New Year truly marks, and it changed everything.

Time as God's Creation

At its heart, the New Year is not about resolutions, nostalgia, or even time passing faster than we'd like. It is about creation itself: Time as God's Creation. Scripture begins not with people, laws, or even morality — but with time:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the Earth.

The opening chapter of the Bible unfolds through days, rhythms, evenings and mornings. Time is not accidental; it is intentionally shaped by God. To mark a new year is to acknowledge that time still belongs to Him, and that we are still living inside His creative work. Every turning of the year quietly echoes the words: "In the beginning."



God Is a God of New Beginnings

Throughout Scripture, God repeatedly resets the clock for His people. In Exodus, He tells Israel that their calendar will begin again—not with a season, but with redemption: "This month shall be for you the beginning of months." (Exodus 12:2) God ties time to deliverance. When He saves, He starts something new.

Time Is Directional

That pattern continues: Sabbaths interrupt endless labor, jubilee years restore what was lost, and festivals rehearse God's faithfulness. New beginnings are not sentimental — they are theological. Unlike many modern cultures, biblical faith does not treat time as meaningless repetition. Time is directional.

We Are a New Creation in Christ

The New Testament takes this even further: "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation." (2 Corinthians 5:17) Notice the language: not merely improved behavior, but new creation. The resurrection of Jesus marks the dawn of something entirely new—not only for individuals, but for all of creation. The New Year, then, becomes a quiet proclamation of hope: God is not finished with what He has made.

Why Does This Matter?

Without this lens, New Year's can feel forced or meaningless. But seen through God's story, it becomes an invitation: To give thanks for existence itself, to release what no longer needs to be carried, and to realign our lives with the Creator's ongoing work. It is less about self-improvement and more about participation as we join with God in the renewing of what already exists.

- Jim Stiles

Questions To Consider:

Where have you experienced God bringing "new creation" into your life - perhaps quietly or unexpectedly?

What parts of the past year feel finished or complete?

What might God be inviting you to receive rather than achieve in this new season?

How does it change your view of time to see it as something God continually holds and renews?

Creator God,

*You are the One who speaks
beginnings into being.*

*Thank You for the gift of time, for
seasons that turn, and for Your
faithfulness that does not fade.*

*As we step into this new year, help us
release what no longer gives life.*

*Renew our hearts, reorder our days,
and remind us that You are still making
all things new.*

*May this year be less about striving
and more about abiding,*

*less about fear and more about trust,
and always about Your creative love.*

Amen.



Our Annual Report

Mark your calendars! Our annual all-church meeting is coming up soon, and we want you to be a part of it! Join us at 1PM in our sanctuary on Sunday, February 1st to learn about what we were able to achieve this past year and what we hope to achieve this coming year. Refreshments will also be served afterward.

If you can't join us in person, this event will also be live-streamed and archived on our website so you can review it anytime. However, if you have a vested interest in CTK, we strongly encourage you to attend in person.

Our annual report will also be available during the meeting. This vital document contains information on our previous finances, anticipated needs and spending, ministry achievements, milestones, and our mission, vision, and values for the upcoming year.

Feel free to pick up a copy of our report in our lobby starting February 2nd. You can also access our report online via our website.



Community Stories Pt. 2

In our last *Collective* edition, members of our congregation shared their experiences living out this practice. Now, hear from our community director Mary as she shares her heart for this vital spiritual rhythm:

I had parents who exemplified the rhythm of community to me. My mother was a Norwegian blonde: an extroverted, opinionated powerhouse with a loud, boisterous laugh. She was a homemaker, managing all eight of us. You would think that would be enough, yet she was known for having several ladies over on a daily basis. (One of my siblings loves to reflect on the 12 coffee cups in the sink that she often had to wash.) She was a PTA president, team mom, and friend to all. Her motto was “there is good in everyone” and she loved that way. There was always deep conversation, laughter, love, and an acceptance for all. Her home was warm and welcoming. She was loved and admired.

My father was a jovial gentleman. Also an extrovert, everywhere we went he knew somebody. He greeted all with his big Croatian smile. He could cook, sew, coach, and converse with anyone on any topic. He held high expectations for our performance in sports, grades, manners, and work ethic. He was a pharmacist and owner of a pharmacy in Seattle for years. I would sometimes go to work with him and marvel at the way customers would become friends and would clamor for his conversation and time. He listened, advised, and laughed so beautifully. He was loved and admired.

In my childhood, neighbors were part of our family; the priests would frequently visit, and many couples would gather at our home weekly to play pinochle while all the kids played in another area. There was a constant buzz in our home. To some this is chaos; and others, complete joy!

I thought it was complete joy... until it wasn't. Fast forward. This joyful chaos wasn't sustainable. The busyness caught up with them, and their marriage dissolved after 25 years when I was 8 years old. Thankfully, I fully encountered Christ at age 23.

I owned a hair salon in Seattle, married, and started a family. These same patterns were naturally ingrained in me. Little did I know that this would take years to unravel; an unraveling that would bring healing, transformation, and a healthy balance to my life.

The blind spots we all have from our family of origin are undetectable to us at first. This is why we need the gift of community: a new family that can lovingly illuminate our darkness. My life grew in leaps and bounds, from having 4 children, to adopting another, to welcoming 18 foster children over 6 years. I was an Awana leader, basketball coach, teacher at a Parent Partnership Program, home business owner, weekly small group host at our home, and pre-marital mentor. Life was wearing on me. See the common thread? Joyful chaos yet again.

I was worn thin. With the help of therapy and a rich community of believers, I was brought to the realization that I was creating that joyful chaos because I thought I needed to feel loved and admired. The Spirit spoke clearly to me that I was trying to save the world while losing my soul. What a reality check!

Things in my life started to shift. Two children were off to college and it was getting too quiet for me, so I accepted a part-time weekend job at the Lighthouse Mission working with the poor, unhoused, and marginalized community. After a year, this evolved and I became the Director of Women's Ministries. This meant I was to manage a staff of eight, and serve the 50 residents of the Agape Home. The joyful chaos paradigm again!

As part of my role, I was required to go through The Genesis Process to become a certified counselor so that I could train the staff and counsel women living at Agape one-on-one. The Genesis Process provides a biblical and neuro-chemical understanding of what causes our self-destruction and equips us with a real plan for change. Wow, did I ever get clearer revelation of my brokenness through this ten-week process!

This opened Pandora's box for me. I discovered I was a performance-based people-pleaser, who needed to be freed from that false identity. I started weekly therapy with a licensed counselor and met with a spiritual director regularly for years. I even had a few visits with a psychiatrist to address neuroscience and gain a clearer understanding of that aspect.

Throughout this, I had the privilege to work alongside staff and attend many training sessions to further equip me both to serve others and to heal personally. The Spirit was near and dear to me throughout it all. He gave me all I needed, at exactly the right time. I became more "addicted" to him than to the chaos or people pleasing I'd known before! Part of my role was facilitating women through studying the books *Boundaries*, *Safe People*, and *Changes That Heal*, along with learning biblical conflict resolution strategies; all areas where I was weak and in need of healing. His miraculous ways of transforming are only good: nothing to fear, no need to hide. His arms are always open wide for us.

At CTK, our Rule of Life and our Rhythms of Grace, each play a key role in maintaining our emotional and spiritual health. The goal isn't legalistic perfection; it's spiritual transformation, as we utilize the practices to their full potential.

As I reflect on my parents' lives, I can see how they were lived outwardly and superficially, lacking interior depth. Did they choose that? I'd like to say, "No." I'd say they were so busy that they thought they didn't have time to stop and ponder. Were they still saved? Of course. Did they live the life Christ had intended them to? I don't feel confident answering that, but I know I am so grateful that my life is being resurrected as I continue to intentionally schedule my time to spend in scripture, prayer, rest and community.

I'm so grateful to work alongside each of you in the practice of community, and I invite you to respond to this invitation to seek Him. It's a beautiful, intimate journey that surpasses anything else. I look forward to what He will reveal to each of us in this New Year. All for His glory and Kingdom!

- Mary McDonnell

So let's do it - full of belief, confident that we're presentable inside and out. Let's keep a firm grip on the promises that keep us going. He always keeps his word. Let's see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out not avoiding worshiping together as some do but spurring each other on, especially as we see the big Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24 - 25 (MSG)



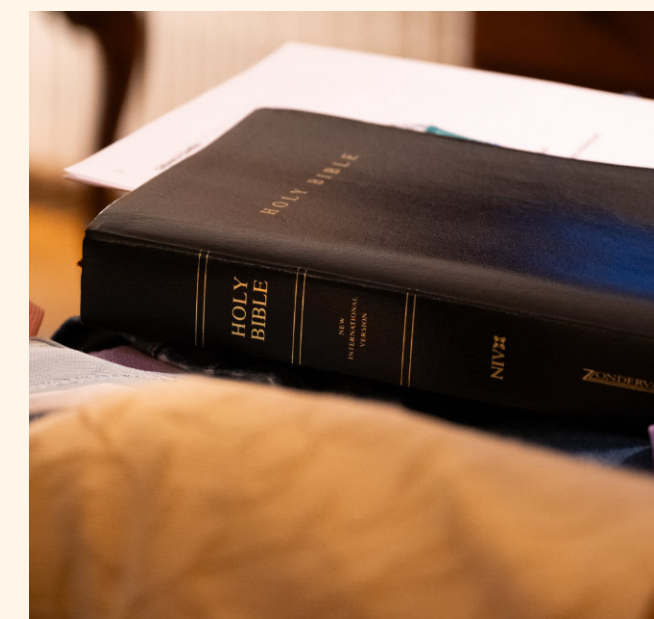
Community is a huge blessing. It's a little piece of God's love, in which we can start to understand the love within the Trinity. Sometimes it can be easy to think we can do things on our own, but we were created to be in community. Even Jesus had close-knit friends! While friendship strengthens you with love and grace, it can also strengthen through struggle. As miscommunication and human flaws arise, we are taught grace through love. We learn what it is like to love a broken person, modeling Jesus as we do. It's within these struggles that we come to realize that love conquers all, and through this love, we are formed into people full of joy, peace, and patience. Community is more than just the people you're surrounding yourself with; it's the gift you've been given to honor, to love, and to grow closer and closer to God.

- Maddyn Rueb



There was "before community" and then "after community." Before, life wasn't as fulfilling and joyful. Sure, I found joy in other things, but that didn't bring me true joy. God knew I needed community and he made the impossible happen. He moved me across the country and brought me back to the people that He knew would bring me closer to Him. So, community has done something that the world could never do. It saved me when I was at my darkest, and it brought me to His light.

- Olivia Kapp



Can You Find John?

As many of you may know, our Worship Director, John, is currently on a leave of absence as he tours to promote his new album. Keeping in that spirit, can you find him hiding somewhere in this painting?

Hint: He's smiling



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Council Member

Frank Jeretzky
Council Member

We hope you enjoyed this issue of The Collective. We here at Christ the King love the opportunity to highlight how God is working in the lives of those we love, and we hope you do as well!

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Thank You For Reading!

Do you or someone you know have a story you would like to share? Would you like to be highlighted in our next issue? Let us know! We would love to hear from you. Feel free to visit our website at www.ctkanacortes.com/connect to fill out a connection card or email jacob@ctkanacortes.com so that we can learn more about what you have to share.



If you haven't already, please subscribe to our mailing list via the QR code so that you automatically receive a digital copy of this publication when it's released each quarter. Our next issue will be published in April 2026.



Upcoming Events

March

Called to Make 7th **10 AM | CTK Building**

For all women; a time of fellowship, crafting, and learning something new.

The Gathering 9th **6:00 PM | CTK Building**

An evening of a meal, activities, and fellowship for all community group leaders or anyone interesting in starting a community group.

Winter Youth Retreat 13th **6:00 PM | Leavenworth, WA 14th**

Middle and High Schoolers, join us for a weekend of fun and fellowship at Youth Dynamic's Stonewater Ranch. Register online or contact Kevin with questions.

April

Good Friday Art Experience 3rd **12 PM | CTK Main Building**

Join us as we navigate Christ's passion and the events leading to his death and resurrection through our immersive art experience, here at our building.

Easter Services 5th **9 & 10:45 AM | CTK Building**

February

1st All Church Meeting **1 PM | CTK Main Building**

Join us as we review last year's finances and logistics, and hear about our mission and vision for the new year. This event will also be live-streamed and archived on our website if you can't join us in person.

6th Middle School Lock In **7th 6 PM | CTK Main Building**

Middle Schoolers, join us as we spend the weekend at CTK for a time of prayerful practice and consideration. Contact Kevin at kevin@ctkanacortes.com if you have questions.

18th Ash Wednesday Service **6:30 PM | CTK Building**

Join us as we begin the lenten season as we prepare our hearts for Easter by worshiping together.

25th Lenten Soup and Bread **6:00 PM | CTK Building**

Beginning Wednesday Feb. 25th and running until March , we will be hosting weekly Lenten Soup and Bread nights: A time to share a meal and fellowship with our fellow congregants.

There's always something happening here at CTK, and we want you to be a part of it! If you have any questions or would like to RSVP for any of the events listed here, please visit www.ctkanacortes.com.

Please note all dates and times are subject to change. Online RSVP may not currently be available for some events, but will be updated in a timely fashion.