



SEPTEMBER 2025

THE EBBERT CONTACT

Ebbert Memorial UMC's Monthly Newsletter

Shifting Sands, Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania

A Note From the Pastor

REV. LIV GIBBONS

Out on the eastern Serengeti, there is a most wondrous pile of ash known as the Shifting Sands. Originating from the Oldoinyo Lengai volcano, the ash forms a crescent-shaped dune 100 meters long — a black mound standing in sharp contrast to the golden, grassy plain around it.

The wind is constantly reshaping the dune, but instead of being scattered hither and thither, the iron-rich magnetic grains fight back by clinging together. Toss a handful of the ash in the air and the grains will find their way back to one another. The result of this magnetism is a solitary dune that rolls along across the plains, migrating at a leisurely (to us) pace of 15 meters per year.

As we begin our new program year here at Ebbert and our calendar fills up with all sorts of exciting, audacious things (Building homes! Starting a homework club! Planning our third Santa Lucia pageant!), perhaps we can take a lesson from the Shifting Sands. Like this migratory dune, the Church is being carried forward — reshaped, renewed, and set in motion — by the Spirit of God. But we are also being carried together. Our work will not be scattered, and neither will we; we will hold fast to one another and make the long journey side by side.

Moving forward with faith, may we embrace the wind of the Spirit with courage, trusting that together we will travel farther than we ever imagined, a force for hope and love moving ever-onward through our neighborhood, our city, and our world in Jesus' name.

So glad to be your pastor,
Liv

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News and Events

Rally Day!

WORSHIP & FELLOWSHIP HOUR ON SEPTEMBER 7

Our annual fall kick-off celebration, Rally Day, will be Sunday, September 7th. We'll celebrate the beginning of school and our church program year, worship, eat and play! There will be good music, a bounce house, ice cream and hot dogs. Join us, and bring friends! This is a great time to introduce them to the work and spirit of Ebbert UMC.

Homework Club Volunteer Kick-Off

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 FROM 3:30-5:30

All Homework Club volunteers (and anyone interested in learning more) are invited to our kick-off party and orientation day in the Fireside Room.

September Council Meeting

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 AT 5:30 PM

High School Homework Club

SEPTEMBER 18, 3:30 - 5:30, FIRESIDE ROOM

Ebbert UMC is launching a tutoring program for high school students to help with homework, boost confidence, and improve grades. Join us for the Kickoff Party on September 11th at 3:30 pm. Classes will continue every Thursday afternoon from 3:30 - 5:30 in the Fireside Room.

September Book Study

SEPTEMBER 14, 21, 28 AFTER WORSHIP

Join Pastor Liv for a three-week book study on "The Serviceberry," by Robin Wall Kimmerer, which explores themes of reciprocity, interconnectedness, and gratitude — perfect for the harvest season.

We will meet in the Wesley Room at 11:15 after Sunday service beginning September 14th, with our third and final session on the 28th ending in a short hike and picnic lunch at Mt. Pisgah, where we'll look for serviceberry.

A limited number of books are available at church for \$12, as well as online and at Coburg Commons Bookstore.

Celebrations

We want to celebrate with you!
If you find that your birthday or anniversary is missing from the CONTACT, please email office@ebbertumc.org.



Affordable Housing Update

Vote on Exploring Sale

On July 13, after two Q&A sessions with the Affordable Housing Team, the congregation approved the Team's request to explore selling the garden lot at 6th and D to an affordable housing developer. This decision followed two years of pursuing the possibility of a ground (land) lease.

The ground lease was initially preferred because it would allow the church to retain ownership of the land. However, the legal, financial, and logistical burdens proved substantial, and most developers and non-profits we consulted are seeking to purchase—rather than lease—the land they build on. While a sale is permanent, working with a trusted partner offers a clear and effective path to creating affordable housing near the church.

The church's vote did NOT authorize the sale of any church land, but it did give the Team the green light to collect more information. At the congregation's urging, we expanded our research to include all three lots' value and potential.

Land Value

The Affordable Housing Team turned to Gary Raze, a local realtor, to get an estimate on the market value of the church's back three lots. He generously researched the project for us and offered the following assessment:

Garden Lot: \$110,000

House Lot: \$275,000 with the house in its current condition, \$110,000 for the land alone

Parking Lot: \$212,000 as an improved parking lot, \$110,000+ as a vacant lot.

Sold Together: \$350,000-375,000

Analysis

The Affordable Housing Team discerned that keeping our parking lot would be best for the church and its future plans. The group is also mindful that the house on D Street is already occupied, though the cost of deferred maintenance on the home far exceeds our abilities at the moment. Ideally, we could sell the Garden and House Lots to an affordable housing developer for market rate without disrupting our tenant at this time. A tall order.

A Unique and Time-Sensitive Opportunity

The City of Springfield is offering Land Acquisition Funding to support affordable housing. These grants help developers purchase land (not buildings) at market value, though funds have been available for some time and are nearly gone.

Tim and Betty Olguin—Ebbert members and middle housing pioneers—have proposed applying for this funding to purchase the two lots and lease the existing house back to the church. This would allow the church to make space for affordable housing without essentially giving the land away, as would likely be the case without grant support (since covenanted land is valued below market rate). It would also give us flexibility to continue our current tenant arrangement with grace.

Given this unique opportunity, the Olguins' strong record of housing development, and their inventive partnership with Lane Community College's building program, the Affordable Housing Team is asking the congregation for time-sensitive advisory vote on whether the church would be willing to sell if this funding were to be awarded.

Join us for our next Advisory Vote on September 14th!



HAPPY LABOR DAY!

Robert's Ramblings

BOB BECK

"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."

Genesis 2:15

10 A wife of noble character...

She is worth far more than rubies.

17 She sets about her work vigorously;

her arms are strong for her tasks.

18 She sees that her trading is profitable,
and her lamp does not go out at night.

20 She opens her arms to the poor
and extends her hands to the needy.

27 She watches over the affairs of her household

31 Honor her for all that her hands have done,
and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

Proverbs 31

Labor Day: a holiday to honor and recognize laborers... OK, I can understand the need to honor those who work. God put humans "in the Garden to work it and take care of it." From the beginning, we have worked to feed and care for ourselves and our families, especially after we were expelled from the Garden. Work is honorable and, as the quote from Proverbs adds, those who work in the home also do honorable work. Though some of us may work just to feed and care for our families, there are many other benefits from our work. Human labor has provided many wonders that satisfy the hearts and minds. For many, work provides an opportunity for fellowship, which can warm the soul. Others find satisfaction when they observe what they have created.

I have been retired for eight years, but that does not mean that I sit around all day. I continue to study and participate in worship, which keeps my brain alert and my soul alive. My work with other veterans gives me companionship and fellowship. My work with youth gives me a feeling of accomplishment and peace. At home, I work at gardening and getting my shop organized, which helps to keep my body active. Years ago, I read, "When a tree stops growing, it begins to rot." I may not be growing physically, but if you check, my head is still trying to grow through my hair. I am still active enough to keep some of that rot at bay. I pray that YOU also continue to work and grow!

Bob Beck



Mission Central

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE AT EBBERT AND BEYOND



Become a Homework Helper

ORIENTATION ON SEP. 11, PROGRAM STARTS SEP. 18

Our after-school high school tutoring program (Springfield Homework Club) will meet Thursdays from 3:30 to 5:30 in the Fireside Room beginning September 18th. If you have an area of expertise or skill you'd like to share, please let us know! We also need people to help with planning crafts and organizing supplies; recruiting and scheduling volunteers; and picking up pizza and snacks. Our Volunteer Kick-Off party is September 11th at 3:30. See flyer (pg. 5) for more info.

Winter Warmth Drive with CCS

SEPTEMBER 9 - OCTOBER 31

Winter is coming, and many people lack the basics to help them stay warm when the weather turns nippy. Bring your new or gently used hats, gloves, scarves, socks, jackets, and blankets to Ebbert and contribute to the comfort of your disadvantaged neighbors this winter through Catholic Community Services. A bin will be available for your donations.



Lead as a Liturgist

SUNDAYS AT 10 AM

We are currently seeking folks of all ages to serve as liturgists and lead our congregation through scripture readings and prayer. This is a wonderful opportunity to actively engage in our worship services and share your gifts with our community. Please email Pastor Liv at pastor@ebbertumc.org.

Community Garden

HARVEST SEASON IS HERE

Come on down to the Community Garden and see what's happening. Tomatoes are beginning to ripen, as are the abundant grapes. Collect lavender for sachets and bouquets. Have a seat, soak up the autumn sunlight, and enjoy the array of fall flowers. As always, volunteer efforts are appreciated! There's weeding, watering, and general maintenance to be done.





Peace Vigil

Thursdays at 5:30 pm

Bob Keefer Center Peace Pole
250 S 32nd St, Springfield, OR 97478

In response to ongoing war in the Middle East and with an eye on conflict across the globe, we gather every Thursday at 5:30 pm for a weekly vigil around the Peace Pole at the Bob Keefer Center in Springfield.

The purpose of this gathering is to actively support and pray for peace in our troubled world. We find it unacceptable that our fellow human beings, especially children, are dying as they endure capture, starvation, dislocation, and lethal attacks. We do not seek to make a political statement or to place blame, but instead to recognize the immensity of human suffering.

We call on the Divine through prayer, poetry, song, and silent meditation, and invite people of all faiths to join us each week.