



# seasons

s p r i n g  
2 0 1 1



s p r i n g  
2 0 1 1

Rebecca Warren  
beccanaturalist@gmail.com

| editor

Michelle Frost  
cmfrosty@hotmail.com

| associate editor

Kate Shirley  
katenben@comcast.net

| graphic design

Editor's Note .....	4
Submission Guidelines .....	4
Guest Artist   Paul Baker .....	5
Poetry   Michelle Frost .....	8
Poetry   Michelle Frost .....	9
Prose   Turella Woods.....	10
Lenten Prayer   Lois Gerlach.....	11
Poetry   Sue Dolan.....	12
Poetry   Sue Dolan.....	13
Essay   Becky Warren.....	14
Art   Bobbi Fluaitt .....	15
Poetry   Stan Clayville.....	16
Interview   Barton Rippe .....	17
Interview   Audrey Voon.....	18



## EDITOR'S NOTE

"A Time for Greening" • Thank you, Paul Baker, our featured artist, for penning a phrase that the MUMC Writing Group agreed is the perfect theme for this Spring issue of Seasons.

Whether we admire Bobbi's artistically customized canvas shoes or recognize how the Lenten Prayer submitted by Lois Gerlach reflects our own inadequacies, it is a surety that spring wakes us up. We, like bulbs, are "released from hibernation," as Stan Clayville writes in his poem "Peeking Through the Dirt." We become like "a swarm of honeybees" (Michelle Frost, "First Nice Day") abuzz with activity. With sunshine, or warmer, softer rain, we observe "mystic sacraments" (Sue Dolan, "March Promises") and whisper "thank you" into the wind asking God to stir our hearts – to make this a time for greening us into discipleship.

Rebecca Lowe Warren, *Editor*

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

SEASONS is a quarterly literary/art publication featuring the original works of the Montavilla UMC community. Online it is a full color publication at [www.montavillaumc.org](http://www.montavillaumc.org) but is printed in black-and-white only. Submissions must be the original work of the author or artist with contributors retaining all rights of ownership.

## Guest Artist | Paul Baker

Each issue of Seasons will feature a guest artist. This issue's guest is **Paul Baker**, a member of Montavilla United Methodist Church.

Paul Baker, longtime member of the Montavilla UMC family, has been painting with watercolors since 1984. His wife Kathleen suggested he start taking watercolor classes. "I enjoyed the classes and the instructors and have kept at it since then." He has been with one of his instructors, Chris, for at least twenty years.

He has painted pictures for their family's many exchange students so "if they have kept them, there are paintings of mine in Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Brazil, and Costa Rica."

Family members are proud owners of Paul's paintings as well. Daughter Naomi Carrisoza and husband Raul display four: *Desert Mesa*, *Fall Beach*, *A Fiery Sunset*, and *A Pastel Mt. Hood*. At son Matthew and wife Emily's house, several of Paul's untitled landscapes grace the walls as do *A Chameleon*, *Heceta Head Lighthouse with Storm Approaching*, and *Winter Abstract*. In his and Kathleen's home Paul enjoys *Beach at Newport* and *Cape Through Trees*.

...continued on next page



Paul Baker, MUMC  
Watercolorist and Poet

photo: Becky Warren



Paintings (cropped)  
from top to bottom:  
*A Fiery Sunset*,  
*Desert Mesa*

## Guest Artist | Paul Baker

“Watercolors give bright, transparent colors,” Paul explains. “A watercolorist paints pictures on paper that has been dampened – sometimes applying many layers of paint with the paper allowed to dry between applications. If the artist keeps the paper damp, the result is a looser appearance.” A watercolor painting will continue changing color – mostly lightening for at least a day as it finishes drying. “The main challenge,” Paul cautions, “is knowing when to quit so a picture doesn’t become overworked.”

Paul can use a pallet knife, like an oil painter, and give the picture a more textured look, i.e., enhancing a rugged landscape. “I rarely work on site, preferring to paint from pictures in calendars or from photographs I’ve taken.”

Painting is not Paul’s only artistic talent. He is also a poet with his poems providing inspiration for worship services and members of the church’s creative writing group. He began writing poetry in 1992. “I have a copy of my first poem some place. The early poems were less inspirational and more about the weather. There was also some humorous stuff.”

But now the poems seem to be messages from an inner self that Paul says prompt him “to do things, to act a certain way.” Sometimes circumstances trigger his writing of poetry, and sometimes it’s challenges. “Often I feel like I need to start writing. The feeling is vague but the poetry flows and rarely do I have to change things.”

Paul admits that an audience is “definitely important in the poetry because it is one of the things that keep me writing.” At the present time the church creative writing group is his major audience. “They suggest changes and while this may be irritating initially, I move from irritation to change....if I decide to make the changes.”

In this spring issue of Seasons, Paul’s poem titled “This Month of May!” written on May 20 of last year is appropriate to share:

*Paintings (cropped) from top to bottom:  
Beach at Heceta Head,  
Cape Through the Trees,  
Beach at Newport*



**THIS MONTH OF MAY!**

Here it's May –  
the storms of Fall  
are here !  
They strip leaf and limb  
from trees, pour heavy  
showers not seen  
before on unsuspecting  
grass and window,  
drenching any who  
dare to question  
their authority,  
laughing at us  
for trusting the  
sunlight shining  
between their  
towers !  
Wild is this season !  
Wild is this time !  
Let the lightning  
Flash !  
Let the thunder  
roll !  
Our earth loves  
Us !

Another poem, untitled, written on December 3, 2010,  
provided the theme for this issue of Seasons:

Each season  
a certain flavor  
Winter a time  
for waiting –  
Spring a time  
for greening –  
Summer a time  
for adventure –  
for growing –  
Fall a time  
for gathering in.  
Each year a pallet  
of its own colors.

Paul, painting, and poetry – an alliterative trinity that  
graces our church family. Amen.

—Becky Warren

*Photos: Matthew Baker*

*Paintings (cropped) below:  
Heceta Head Lighthouse with Storm Approaching,  
A Chameleon*



## Poetry | Michelle Frost

### IT HAPPENS EVERY APRIL

Spring's Parade approaches  
First come the daffodils  
Yellow trumpets trumpeting  
Their frilly silent song  
Blooms appear suddenly everywhere

Colorful silly clowns the red tulips  
orange calendulas' wobbly heads  
tottering dandelions and the waving beauties  
the blushing camellia  
congregation of Easter bonnets

Already the trees take their cue  
turn the corner in frocks of white  
fluffy as wedding cakes  
top-heavy brides sashaying  
the sun-warm walkways aglow

Tomorrow the sweet librarians  
Petunias and the fragrant grandmothers  
Lilacs sweeping the lawns  
lovers of rivers and poetry

Before June crosses the bridge  
every possible blossom tips her hat  
curtsies for us awhile

Then a legion in green  
summer's smiling tourists the leaves  
they return happily  
taking over the entire town

*M. Frost  
April, 2006  
for Laurie Alice  
on her birthday*



*Michelle Frost with friend and  
neighbor Wanda Adams*

photo: Becky Warren

**FIRST NICE DAY**

Hawthorne Bridge raises its belly  
one boat floats downriver  
Afternoon traffic waits  
only this boat and clouds adrift in the wide blue sky

Drawbridge alarm beeps while sun rains down  
line of cars becomes a stalled train  
nobody seems to mind the wait in cars on bikes  
This first shirt-sleeve day of spring

Pedestrians and bicyclists collect on the walkway  
joggers stretch in place  
like a swarm of honeybees resting abuzz  
while the river carries on its affairs

Sunlight sparkles on the water  
speedboats slice the waves  
Minutes pass unnoticed  
Then beeping stops gates lift

Car engines re-engage  
A momentary calm scatters  
We return to busyness more rested  
warmed by this retreat of sunshine and river

*M. Frost*  
*April, 2006*



**JULIE, A PRAYER WARRIOR: A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT**

I have been very grateful to have a handful of people who have influenced my spiritual life. When I was 12, I had a neighbor who invited me to church, picked me up every Sunday, taught my Sunday School class and then invited me to dinner after church with her and her husband. She truly was the example of “Radical Hospitality” that we read about in Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations by Bishop Schnase. Her life continues to leave an imprint on my spiritual walk with Christ.

Julie, my sister-in-law, has also made a difference in my life. As you probably know, she was diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig’s Disease) 7½ years ago. She lives her life unable to move much of her body as she either sits in her wheelchair or lies on her bed. I have watched her faith in Christ grow since her diagnosis and seen how it has influenced her friends and family. She has been the supreme example of trusting for every need she has, knowing that every day has blessings and that waking up each morning, even trapped in a body that no longer works, is just plain awesome.

Many times I have been caught up in the challenges I have in my life and they seem to be huge and insurmountable. I forget at times that I have some control and choices over what I face, but Julie doesn’t have much control over anything in her life. Daily, her life is grounded in an hour of prayer. She is such a prayer warrior and knows that is a gift God has given her to serve others. People call her or email their prayer requests, and they know they can count on her to remember them each night between 8 and 9 p.m.

I have been asked the question, “How does her life influence yours?” I think the amount of faith that she has, the smile and happiness she shows to everyone in the midst of the darkest times give me inspiration and encouragement to keep going. If this example doesn’t, then I am the one with the disability!

I always think of Julie when I read or hear this scripture from Proverbs 3:5-6

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart;  
do not depend on your own understanding.  
Seek his will in all you do,  
and he will show you which path to take.*

Turella Woods, 2011



Turella Woods with her sister-in-law, Julie Brizendine  
photo: Larry Woods



A Break in the Clouds  
photo: Kate Shirley

For years Lois Gerlach has had this Unison Lenten Prayer posted on her refrigerator. She is sharing this with her church family because she has found it so meaningful. Thank you, Lois!

**UNISON LENTEN PRAYER**

*Lord, at the beginning of this Lenten season, I sense my need of you.  
Yet I'm not quite sure how to reach you.*

*I heard someone say, "Read your Bible,"  
but too often the words are like bullets that ricochet off my brain.*

*I heard someone say, "Pray,"  
but my prayers, hurled heavenward, fall back to earth like lifeless stones.*

*I heard someone say, "Meditate,"  
but my wandering mind was lost in a desert of thoughts and daydreams.*

*Lord, speak to me through your word,  
and let it penetrate my mind, my heart.*

*Lord, speak to me through my prayers,  
and turn lifeless stones to bread.*

*Lord, speak to me in the midst of meditation,  
that I may see, amid life's wilderness, the truth, the life.*

*In Christ's name, Amen.*



*In the midst of her active schedule, Lois finds time to knit prayer shawls and chemo hats for the church's Prayer Shawl Ministry and to participate in the UMW Book Group.*  
photo: Becky Warren

Snow Melt

photo: Kate Shirley



## Poetry | Sue Dolan

### MARCH PROMISES

Morning skirmishes between  
the departing frost  
and green shadows of new life.  
Spring's eager bloomers  
shocked by the morning's chill,  
unfurl in the mid-day sun  
and creation continues.  
Wings flutter and buzz  
searching for available real estate.  
Mystic sacraments lay ahead  
resurrecting spirit and mind.  
Gifts of warmth renew hope  
to all seeking the unknown  
and recalling the familiar.  
Joyous hearts return  
to patient souls cheering  
the departing frost.

*Sue Dolan, 2010*



*Explosion of Green*

photo: Kate Shirley

### RAIN STORMS

A light sprinkle of rain  
becomes a riotous downpour.  
Transformed by the holy water  
dry walkways convert to rivers  
the parched earth is reborn.  
Worms awaken from peaceful rest  
refreshed skin and delicate senses  
infused with hope and energy.  
Muscles wiggle and writhe,  
an undiscovered territory waits!  
Recently christened explorers  
transformed by the holy water  
follow the penetrating rain.  
Shooting through slick new tunnels  
seeking levels below well depth  
quickly claiming a new sanctuary  
below the oldest garden roots.

*Sue Dolan, 2011*



*Sue Dolan, Church servant  
and poet, with Fellowship  
Hour hostess and friend Sandy  
Thompson.*

photo: Becky Warren

*Spring Thaw*

photo: Kate Shirley

## Essay | Becky Warren

“Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder,” how knitting is like gardening. This is probably not the thought that occurred to Robert Frost when writing “Mending Wall,” but as Presidents Day is my annual reminder to inoculate the sugar-snap peas before consigning them to the vagaries of the lion-and-lamb month of March, and as I am immersed in knitting three sweaters and a pair of socks, the comparison seems reasonable if I can find the time to make it.

Both gardening and knitting appear to require a plan, decisions, and the acquisition of supplies. There’s a range of possibilities here – from the free-form use-the-heel-of my shoe-to-make-a-furrow approach to a schematic of an herb garden in Celtic knot design.

Such is the case with knitting. You can scavenge household supplies and use two chopsticks and cotton twine or trek to a high-end knitting store where the purchase of sleek bamboo needles and alpaca wool from a llama named Charity can use up your entertainment budget for the month.

Knitting and gardening begin similarly: Review the plan and start with the basics: a certain number of stitches cast onto a needle, seeds cast 3” apart in a row.

Now, sing along with me, “Inch by inch, row by row, gonna watch this garden grow.” You can easily substitute the word “sweater” for “garden.” Incremental growth follows, unless working with size 24 needles on a



“guaranteed three-hour sweater” (Probably never to be worn in public) or with a ready-to-eat garden kit with Big Boy Tomatoes, burpless cucumbers, and sweeter-than-sugar corn on the cob delivered in your friend’s U-Haul. No fast-food here, nor speedy stitches either, but the patient tending of fragile rows of yarn and seeds in the hopes of yielding garment and produce.

Days of working and watching follow. One sock has about 10,880 stitches; a 20’ x 20’ garden plot can shave \$700 from the grocery bill. Rip out the mistakes; weed out the undesirables. Reknit and replant.

Once the parts of a knitting project are complete, like the day when a few of the garden vegetables ripen, some assembly is required. Matching seams and combining vegetables lead to moments of presentation, to yourself or others, when the socks are slipped over toes or the veggies grace the palate. This is the culmination of weeks of thought and work, of hope and fulfillment. But the feeling is temporary. There’s more yarn in the stash and more seeds in the potting shed. Hurry now. Maybe you can get another row in before bedtime.



*The MUMC Writing Group meets monthly to share their recent writing projects. This was the pre-Christmas gathering. Beginning lower left: Ellen Duffield, Eileen Winson, Becky Warren, Roger Warren, John Andersen (Gresham UMC), Paul Baker, and Kathleen Baker. Photographer is poet and Seasons Assistant Editor, Michelle Frost.*

### HAND PAINTED SHOES

High-stepping into spring is MUMC member Bobbi Fluaitt with arty shoes handpainted by her granddaughter Samantha Middleton in Rowlett, Texas. "Samantha is very interested in art," Bobbi explains, "but never wanted to take art classes. She does these types of projects on her own." Samantha has recently worked on the stage crew of her high school's production of HAIR SPRAY. In the past she has done smaller productions but HAIR SPRAY was her first big-time production. "She is just a very talented, fun girl."

Bobbi hasn't worn these shoes this winter but look for them when sunny days finally arrive.



*Bobbi Fluaitt has been coming to MUMC since 1959. She has been involved in Christian Education, teaching Sunday School when her children were young, and is presently active in UMW.*

photos: Becky Warren



## Poetry | Stan Clayville

### PEEKING THROUGH THE DIRT

Sleep, little bulb, through the storms of winter  
Snug and secure in your underground bed,  
Dormant and peaceful and not even hungry  
For sunshine and warmth and some food to be fed.

But Mother Nature is tracking the sun and the moon  
While they orbit our earth around and around.  
When the planets align, then will come an awakening  
And the annual time for the greening is found.

First tender green sprouts try peeking through the dirt  
And if top soil is softened and dried out enough,  
Those sprouts become stalks full of buds just yearning  
To burst into bloom like a spring rainbow puff.

Released from hibernation, now the greening begins,  
Nature's revolution against dark grays and browns.  
When a crocus or primrose reveals its blossoms  
Mankind responds with smiles not frowns.

*Stan Clayville*



*Stan Clayville has occupied space in the Montavilla neighborhood since 1929. He graduated from John L. Vestal Grade School and Washington High School. He served five years in the U.S. Navy and 17 years in the U.S. Army Reserve. He worked in the U.S. Postal Service, then as a realtor, bookkeeper, and, finally, as a residential interior environmental modification technician. He is now a sometime poet, world traveler, and fulltime Grandfather.*

caption: Stan Clayville

photo: Becky Warren

*Melting Snow*

Photo: Kate Shirley

### MASTER OF CEREMONIES, COMMANDER OF ALL THINGS MUSICAL

Our music director, Barton Rippe, is well-known by all of us in the pews at Sunday services, not to mention his musical appearances at our holiday events and various extracurricular activities. We know Barton Rippe is one busy guy, and that is only what we see of his Montavilla activities. Reluctant to interrupt his schedule for an interview, I asked the Montavilla Writers' Group, "Is there a way to interview Barton without interviewing Barton?" (They understood, amazingly, which is a testament to the clever thinking of the writers in our writing group!) They suggested that I gather factoids about Barton from his friends and admirers at Montavilla UMC. Brilliant! I emailed and asked around for anything you might know about Barton. I received dozens of emails and nothing but praise for the man we see hard at work every Sunday. These are a few of the words used to describe Mr. Rippe: Gifted, patient, positive, mischievous, appreciative, humorous, flexible, unflappable and unfailingly complimentary. In the spirit of late-night TV hosts, I have compiled a Top Ten list of things you may or may not already know about Barton Rippe. I call it ...

#### The Top Ten Things You May or May Not Already Know About Barton Rippe

10. Barton was musical even as a child
9. He is a gifted pianist, organist AND singer
8. He is a patient music teacher to both children AND adults
7. In his spare time he works tuning pianos
6. "Everything Barton does involves music!"
5. He is the baritone section leader for the Portland Opera
4. "He brings out the best in the Montavilla UMC choir!"
3. Our new band *The Montavilla Experience* is a hit, thanks to his vision and direction
2. Bicyclist and former racer, he has a bicycle collection taking over his garage
1. Possibly the least known fact about Barton is his love of UFC fighting (which may or may not be true, I am at the mercy of my confidential sources)

Anyone can see, we are blessed with an exceptional director of music and there appears to be no end to the scope of his musical abilities. (Thank you, Barton, for agreeing to this interview-without-interview).

—Michelle Frost, March 2011

*Barton on Halloween as Jimi Hendrix; his costume was the inspiration for the MUMC band name, "The Montavilla Experience."*

photo: Michelle Frost



## Interview | Audrey Voon

### A FEW WORDS WITH CHOIR MEMBER AUDREY VOON

You may recognize Audrey Grace Voon as the smiling soloist in Montavilla UMC's choir, or half of the duet singing with Wil Olandria in *The Montavilla Experience*, our new rock band. Audrey Grace Tien-Ai Voon is her full name. Tien-Ai is Chinese for Heavenly Love." She began singing when she was 2 years old and has "always loved it." Her entire family was musical, including parents who led the worship team in church, hosting choir practices in their home, her mother also a studied singer and pianist, her father a singer and guitarist, one sister who plays guitar and sings, and two brothers who write music and perform as well.

Audrey was born in Selma, California, the "Raisin Capital" to a family with a history of raisin growing. Her family moved to Oregon City and Olympia, Washington and then Audrey came to Portland to attend college.

When Audrey is not singing at Montavilla on Sunday mornings, she is actively making music all week with the Portland Opera Chorus and the Electric Opera Company, and teaching music at Ethos Music Center, a non-profit organization in north Portland. She performs in shows with various opera and musical theater companies and Gilbert & Sullivan productions. The Electric Opera Company is a group of University of Portland students and alumni who perform concerts of classical music on electric instruments. Audrey has been teaching students at Ethos for two years. "My students give me so much energy," she says, "the extra boost I need."

When asked to name her favorite musicians, she said that lately she's been listening to Norah Jones, Ella Fitzgerald, Ingrid Michaelson and Cole Porter. She enjoys new jazz as well as Gershwin and especially Cole Porter. Her inspiration comes from her friends and family, "the people I see all the time who support what I do and always come to my performances," she tells me. "*Montavilla Experience* is an awesome group of people and the music gets tighter every time we play." Audrey expands on this with her closing words to me, "Being at Montavilla has been such a great experience for me where I'm at in my life right now and everyone is so friendly and so welcoming."

I believe I can speak for all of us when I say our choir is a bit more heavenly with the musical talents Audrey brings to us at Montavilla.

—Michelle Frost, March 2011



Audrey in costume on Halloween with "The Montavilla Experience; Audrey Voon

photo 1: Michelle Frost

photo 2: Jonathan Sakkos