



Notes from The Pastor

Happy Easter (season)!

I hope you were able to enjoy the flowers on the cross (by participating or by looking at the image online). The pandemic seems to be limping towards a conclusion. I wonder how your life is shifting (if it is shifting yet!?) as our community begins to regather? I wonder what is helping you feel grounded as you navigate the “to mask or not to mask” questions with neighbors and loved ones? I wonder what you’re learning about yourself? Are you able to receive visitors and/or be a visitor yourself? Is the sunshine warming your soul? How’s it going with your Star Word?

I wish that simply getting my vaccines meant that the entire world was now my oyster, but it is not (not yet anyway). I would love to travel to see loved ones and friends and make up for lost time. My travel bug is tempered by the need to wait and hope and pray that our country and our world will continue to be vaccinated so that we can all reach herd immunity. One day! God in your grace... (you hear our prayer). One day we will open the church building. I wish we had a clearer sense of that day and time. Our reopening team is working very hard. Worship planners are working very hard. We are also transitioning the office as we must say goodbye and thank you to Jonny. We are hiring for the office administrator position and this person needs to be in place before we can begin opening the building. We hope to gather in small groups sometime soon and we will feel a bit better once our county downgrades to the yellow tier.

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In the meantime, as I am slowly getting out and about, I am amazed by how good it feels to be among people and bodies in real time. I look forward to getting to know you in the flesh and hope to begin having individual conversations with you in coming weeks and months. Until that time, I also look forward to seeing you on Zoom and hearing from you via email/phone. Please take good care and enjoy the sunshine.

Yours in Christ,
Diana

**Northern California/Nevada Conference
Of the United Church of Christ
Report on the Budget Meeting**

As your Conference delegates, John Derby and I, along with Pastor Diana, attended the NCNC budget meeting on March 13. The short version is that a balanced budget, with no personnel cuts, was passed. For detailed financial information, see UCC.org On the menu bar, select "What we do," and scroll down to "Documents related to the Final Approval of the 2021 Budget."

Beyond the regular budget, the Camp Caz Property agenda item generated a long and passionate discussion. Camp Caz is not generating the income needed, and the Conference cannot afford to support it. (This has been an ongoing problem, not restricted to the time of COVID.) Two camps, so as to speak, have formed: those who believe the better option is to sell it to a buyer who would allow NCNC to rent it back for its traditional summer camps, and the Dreamers, who have created a lovely vision of renewal for the camp. This second option, liked by many, requires funding to hire a professional consultant to develop a financially viable plan for Camp Cazadero as a collection of ministries. For more complete information, follow the links above, beginning with UCC.org, "What we do," and then scroll down to "Stewardship of Camp Caz."

A second Budget meeting will be held on May 22. The purpose is to set aside time in case there are agenda items that need delegate action related to the Camp Cazadero property. Watch for the update in the June Seer.

Winnie Hogoboom, Delegate

Annual Meeting

For the second year, we met via Zoom to conduct our Annual Meeting. The difference was that, by this time, we were all Pros at handling the reports, motions, votes, and discussion. These were the highlights.

- A time of remembrance for longtime member and leader, Earl Holtz
- Treasurer's update from Mark Adams, reporting we are doing well, and will revisit the budget in July.
- Pastor Diana Bell-Kerr expressing that she feels the love and excitement through our community, and looks forward to worshipping in the sanctuary.
- Moderator Virginia Greenwald's reflection stating that our community has worked onward, learned, and rallied and supported one another and our mission. And has grown closer as we worship face to-face. All with God's help.
- Paul Chaffee reported that the Stewardship Team has re-formed this year, and is dedicated to helping us learn who we are.
- Virginia began the Nominations Report by thanking Linda Balfour for taking minutes as the substitute clerk for several months. She thanked Evelyn Smith who has termed-out of the Worship Team, and Rebecca Allington who served as Financial Secretary.
- Virginia read names of the continuing and new Council Officers and Team members as they appear in the 2020-2021 Annual Report. The motion to approve passed unanimously.
- Pastor Diana led a brief service of installation, and closed the meeting with prayer.

May Birthdays

5/2.	Rebecca Schroeder	5/10.	Sylvia Thorne
5/3.	Faeona Petersen	5:12.	Tom Gray
5/7.	Chris Pack	5/15.	Ethan Petersen
5/7.	Joe Williams	5/24.	Colleen Trouse
5/7.	Evelyn Smith	5/26.	Jeanne Thomas
5/8.	Mary Sue Trospers	5/28.	Judy Adams



First Congregational UCC, Santa Rosa

Council Highlights March 21, 2021

- If there is a need to speak with our office administrator Jonny Angulo, he works Tuesday mornings and Thursday afternoons.
- Conference—Winnie reports that the future of Camp Caz is uncertain, as it is expensive to keep and is bringing in no income. The Conference is still considering its future, as the Conference is required to balance the budget.
- Outreach—The sign in front of the church needs refurbishing; we will hold off on that for now but will move forward with adding Pastor Diana Bell-Kerr's name to the sign.
- Outreach would like to showcase volunteer projects that some of our members are involved in, and are considering a group community project, perhaps with Redwood Empire Food Bank?
- Outreach—North Bay Organizing Project is focusing on policing this year; the team is looking for ways we can offer support.
- Outreach—"Whose Lands" - text a zip code to (907) 312-5085 to receive a message that names the native peoples who occupied that area. This can be a small start to a larger discussion of amends.
- Stewardship—Paul Chaffee will lead the team's "Getting to Know You" project.
- The May 16 Council meeting of new and returning officers and team leads will include a retreat. The meeting will be held after Worship.

Playlist

Listen to music curated for the Easter Season by Bill O'Neill our Music Director. Click [here](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/2o5IHQBiBihL8586fMxqzQI?si=2c52c53c32d44454) to listen on Spotify! Or following the link below

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/2o5IHQBiBihL8586fMxqzQI?si=2c52c53c32d44454>



Financial Planning Seminar – Part II “Leaving a Legacy - Planned Giving“

Guest lecturer: James D. Allen, Esq.

Planned Giving is an expression of one’s values, as well as a commitment to good stewardship, to the people and organizations we love and cherish. Questions Jim will cover include:

- What are the best ways to gift my assets to my Church or Charity?
- How can I support a church/charity as part of my legacy while also leaving assets to my family members?
- What is the most tax efficient way of donating appreciated assets, stocks or real estate to my church or favorite charity?

Send your questions in advance so the time can be tailored to meet our needs.

Open to all Church members.

Register Now.

Wednesday, May 12th

5:00 – 6:30 pm

on Zoom

E-mail: secty@sonic.net

or Phone: 707-546-0998

and the Zoom link will be sent to you.

Sermon To Go

Every week we take last Sunday’s sermon and do our best to upload it to YouTube in a timely fashion. During this season, we know it’s nice to go back and listen to something again, or be able to pass a message along to a friend that was helpful to ourselves. Whatever the case, check out our YouTube to watch or catchup on something you missed! Click [here](#), or follow the link below.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVy6rmnyLZh_thnXgs8uWjA



A Meditative Moment

In this ever-changing world with its seemingly urgent need to respond, moments of quiet are restorative.

On Tuesdays at 9:00 am, our church offers that meditative moment and time for such reflection.

It began as one of the church's Lenten events and has found a dedicated group of church members who value the opportunity to slow down with twenty minutes of music, prayers, a chant, and silent reflection.

After Easter, this groups wants to continue to share this simple calming moment at the beginning of their busy weeks. All those who now attend treasure its calming and centering affect.

If you would like to join this very intentional break from your daily activities, please join us by Zoom at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3615456580?pwd=cTNKaVdzc0tDOGUrbkZQN0QvZUZyZz09>

Zoom Meeting ID: 361 545 6580

Passcode: 312471

We hope you can be a part of this simple spiritual experience. You will be surprised!

Safe Regathering Report 4/14/21

The Safe Regathering Committee has been collecting information and data about the issues we face in opening our church spaces after the shutdown. A survey of church members finds that 94% of us will be fully vaccinated by May 15. We recommend a phased reopening starting in May with small church groups. We are hoping to be able to resume worship in our sanctuary in July.

Our recommendation is that small church groups be the priority during a phased reopening. The reasons for this include:

1. We believe it is wise to open in phases to ensure we can meet the cleaning/disinfecting necessary with known groups first.

Continued...

2. By starting with small church group meetings, such as “Meet the Pastor” gatherings, our Bible study, or a prayer group, etc. we will be able to monitor the impact of small groups before opening to Sunday morning worship services etc. After a month or so, we can make a more informed decision about allowing outside groups to use the building for small gatherings. Additionally, protocols for outside groups need to be established, especially surrounding bathroom use, cleaning, etc.

3. Church groups also afford us an opportunity to re-enter our church spaces gradually. This has been a long season of missing our sanctuary and church building.


4. It is important that when we first regather, church members will be present to let our team know how it is going and what ideas or needs surface. Our committee is researching state and county guidelines for the Orange Tier which we are now in, and hopefully soon transitioning into the Yellow Tier. We are also checking with other churches to find out how they are approaching the reopening of worship. In addition, we will be seeking important information about eventually having live music in worship using safe protocols.

The committee plans to meet more frequently as we gather more information to help us make recommendations about a phased reopening. We expect to learn more as we gather research, watch the Covid-19 rates in Sonoma County and see the outcome of small groups of members gathering in our church.

Our priority is safe regathering, following all CDC, CADPH and local Health Department recommendations, and considering how other churches are planning to resume gatherings. Information will be forthcoming regarding the use of the kitchen, but until then we recommend the kitchen not be used. Individuals will need to bring their own water. Social distancing and wearing of masks will be required during all events. Be on the look out for more updates via the SEER or weekly Monday email.

We recommend all meetings have a process of approval to be determined by the Church Council.

Judy Adams, Mark Brumbaugh, Marcia Murray, Hannah Wallstrum



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