



## Be Part of the Light

By Rev. Dr. Johanna McCune Wagner, with Lisa Justice

*\*On Monday, June 1, I spoke with Pastor Johanna over the phone as she was recovering at home from surgery. Our congregation has been very much on her heart and she wanted to write a piece for the First Press addressing the current state of the world. But sitting up long enough to type it up was too taxing at this stage of recovery. So she spoke with me about her ideas, I took notes, and the text below is the result. The words and sentences may be mine, but the wisdom, experience, and hope are all hers. – Lisa Justice*

Pastor Johanna wants everyone to know that she's thinking about the congregation and praying for us all. She knows how overwhelmed we all must be with the ever-changing COVID-19 situation, and now the racial unrest with protests, rioting, and looting that is sweeping our nation and coming all too close to home.

When Pastor Johanna and Michael were living in St. Louis they experienced the community grief and upheaval over the Michael Brown shooting and the Jason Stockley verdict. In August 2014, 18-year-old African American Michael Brown was shot and killed by a white police officer in the St. Louis suburb of Ferguson, MO. Three years earlier, white police officer Jason Stockley fatally shot 24-year-old African American Anthony Lamar Smith in St. Louis. Stockley was tried for first degree murder in the shooting, and in September of 2017 he was found not guilty.

In both of these incidents, St. Louis and its surrounding suburbs erupted in protests decrying the unequal and frequently violent treatment of black people under the law, protests which often gave way to rioting, violence, and property destruction.

Shepherding her congregation at Trinity Presbyterian in St. Louis through these events, Pastor Johanna learned that there is much that churches can do in times like these. It's easy to feel impotent and like the problems are too big for one person, or even a congregation of people to address. But that simply isn't the case.

First, congregations can learn about how local politics work in their area and how local centers of power contribute to systemic problems of inequality, be it racial, economic, or due to any number of factors. For example, in the greater St. Louis area, the local township structure has resulted in over 90 different court systems, all of which are struggling for adequate funding. These funding issues lend themselves to problematic practices of imposing steep fines for small infractions, causing serious economic impacts in the local community. In such a system, it's easy for a little parking ticket to escalate into a crippling financial burden for a working class family.

Learning about how such systems work in one's local community and how easily such issues can crop up and engulf our neighbors

can increase our capacity for empathy. It can inform a congregation's missions work, allowing us to better serve the specific needs in our immediate community.

Second, congregations can facilitate conversations and educational events for local voters. All too often most voters are very well informed about national issues and candidates, but local information, especially about candidates for positions such as judges and sheriffs, can be much harder to come by.

Congregations can invite non-partisan speakers and groups to hold community forums. For example, the local bar association is a great resource for learning about local judges. Members of the local bar association try cases before these judges all the time. They can speak to a candidate's professionalism, experience, any preferential leanings, and give voters a much more detailed picture of a candidate.

And our congregation is no stranger to such efforts. Just last fall we hosted an event with the Diablo Valley League of Women Voters breaking down different candidates' stances on proposed health care legislation.

An important point to bear in mind when facing such issues is their vast complexity. There are lots of different people and groups involved, each with their own

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motivations and goals. While many may want to draw attention to pressing issues, there will be others out to delegitimize their voices and their work. These protests are by nature complicated phenomena and cannot be reduced to just one point of view.

But the point for us to take away today is one of hope. While these issues are playing out in cities all across the country, the solutions can be born right here at the local level. There are excellent non-profits hard at work in Concord right now, helping marginalized communities navigate the legal system, advocating for their rights and protections, providing

guidance and material support to the powerless.

Many of us are familiar with Humanity Way, providing services for the homeless, unemployed, and those facing economic hardship. Our congregation also partners locally with the Faith Alliance for a Moral Economy (FAME), the faith-based arm of EBASE (East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy), protecting the rights of workers, immigrants, tenants, and the incarcerated.

We need not give into the fear that riots and looting can produce. We can view these protests as a collective outpouring of grief at the ways the systems of our society

create pain and oppress our neighbors. We can hear them as a call to action.

And we are capable as a congregation of answering that call. We can educate ourselves and others. We can partner in the work of reforming broken systems with reputable non-profits. We can focus our outreach efforts to address these specific wounds in targeted and practical ways. And we can help bring God's holy justice to the corner of His kingdom entrusted to our care. We can be part of His light in the world.



## Continuing to Be the Church in Difficult Times

By Rebecca Chase - Director of Community Care

This has been an extraordinary time in the life of the church. It's been a time of learning new terms, like "Shelter-in-Place", "Social Distancing", "Zoom" and "Webex". We've gotten more acquainted with our internet service than we ever thought possible. Many of us have "seen" friends that we haven't connected with in decades, because there's nothing going on to make us "too busy" to talk.

The difficulties have also been many. Masks, social-distancing, and isolation have kept us from being close to our dear ones. No small group or fellowship gatherings! No greeting on the church steps! No HUGS!!

Ever since Day One of our Shelter-in-Place, your Deacons, staff, and volunteers have been working tirelessly to be in touch with everyone in our congregation, and many beyond our walls. When we could count on Sunday mornings as a time set apart for connection, we knew more about each one of you – your families, your doctor appointments, your worries, your gardens, your prayers...

As we take a moment to look back at some of the ways we have supported each other, I would like to share who each of the Deacons are, so you know who we can thank:

### Deacons:

- Parish 1 (Jan–May): **LaVerne Herren** – LaVerne has now

moved to Carson City Nevada to be with her daughters who live in that area. Sharon has particular medical needs that require LaVerne's support. We will miss her.

- Parish 1 (May–Dec): **Wayne Matzen** – Wayne has been a part of the Deacon Board until this time as training and support. Thank you for stepping in, Wayne!
- Parish 2: **Bev McHale**
- Parish 3: **Terry Jones** – Deacon Moderator.
- Parish 4: **Abby Ford – Margaret Bachman** has been lending support in phone calls as Abby juggles home-schooling with elementary and middle school kids, and working full-time. Teamwork!
- Parish 5: **Kaffy Cecil**
- Parish 6: **Charmaine Ferrera** – Prayer Chain (if you have a prayer request)
- Parish 7: **Beth Byrne**
- Parish 8: **Carolyn Thornton**

### FPCC Staff

Rev. Dr. Johanna Wagner	Pastor
Darryl McCollum	Commissioned Lay Pastor
Andrew Cardiasmenos	Director of Music & Worship
Rebecca Chase	Director of Community Care
Robin Stearns	Preschool Director
Lisa Justice	Administrative Assistant
Lisa Gonzalez	Financial & HR Assistant
Amanda Ramirez	Nursery Coordinator
Harold Lund	Custodian & Night Watchman

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## Continuing to Be the Church in Difficult Times

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- Parish 9: **Judith Snider & Trudy Meigs**
- Parish 10: **Don Horgan**
- Parish 11: **Harold Lund**

If you have not spoken with your Deacon, please give them a call or email. They have probably left you a bundle of voice messages! If you don't know who your Deacon is, please contact me or Lisa Justice.

### Volunteers:

I also want to shout out to the volunteers who since early April have been contacting the many people who are alone, or who do not have internet, so cannot see our YouTube services. You all have given a voice to the many of us who love them! You are gems.

Thank you.

- **Ron Potts**
- **Christy Smith**
- **Wayne Matzen**
- **Judith Snider**
- **Maren Stanczak**

### Staff List:

Each one of these people has been diligently making church "work."

- **Pastor Johanna**, of course. Fearless in the face of COVID-19

and a cancer diagnosis.

- **Lisa Justice**, Administrative Assistant – online bulletins, social media graphics, Tuesday Morning Prayer, supplies, lists, lots of details, and she's been leading Theology on Tap. There's more, but only so much room...
- **Rebecca Chase** – Director of Community Care
- **Lisa Gonzalez** – she's far away in NV, working with the Finance and Personnel teams to keep us afloat.
- **Andrew Cardiasmenos** – Director of Music & Worship, at church and at home
- **Harold Lund** – facilities, and night watchman, especially watching our local housing-challenged community
- **David Stearns**, volunteer – facilities and banking (PPP loan application!) (and more)
- **Jim Whitfield & Marilyn Wollenweber**, volunteers – Directors of the HUB, delivering CD's & DVD's of the service to those without internet, Small Group leaders (Mondays)
- **Darryl McCollum**, CLP – Zoom Storytime with the Kids on Sundays, burning discs, Morning

Prayers on Thursday, preaching when needed

- **DeVonn Powers** – CLP candidate, Clerk of Session, Humanity Way (works with the housing-challenged in our community); with Nanci, collects food from White Pony Express and distributes to over 200 people on Sundays; Morning Prayer on Friday, preaching when needed

There are more people who have been hard at it, volunteering and loving people from where they are. **YOU ARE THE CHURCH!!** We thank God for you.

As a final note: Stay tuned for other opportunities to share online/recorded fellowship. Shared "Virtual" Tea, Scrapbook photos, and more!

If you have been making phone calls to others or running errands and I am not aware of it, I THANK YOU, whoever you are! You are what makes church - the "people" - not the building. You are sharing God's love. May God bless you. Hope to see you again soon!



## Small Groups

**The Men's Bible Study** continues to meet on Tuesday mornings, however it is now meeting virtually on Zoom because of COVID-19. The meeting is at 8:00am on Tuesdays. The members report that Zoom is working out really well. The group is currently studying 1st, 2nd and 3rd John. This is a great opportunity for you to join in, make new friends, and see how interesting and rewarding a Bible study can be. We have a lot of fun, too. David Dowell says "Come on

and test the water and get to know a great group of fellows. You won't even have to leave home". Email David at drdowell99@gmail.com and he will help you get set up Zoom (for free) and send you a web link to get online.

**The Wednesday Night Bible Study** has started a study of the book of James. James strives to develop mature Christians. Growing takes work. We don't wake up wise, and faith is not a reflex. James, a pastor, confronts the confidence

we place in our own capacity for wisdom and faith. He challenges us to instead receive God's wisdom - freely given and available to all. Each week as we look at the book of James we will discover practices of faith and wisdom to help us grow in Christian character. We currently meet online at 7:15pm until about 8:30pm. If you would like to join this study, please contact Rebecca Chase to get the book and sign up for the Webex meeting this Wednesday. †

## Communications During COVID-19

By Kristin Harvey, Communications Committee Chair

In January, the Communications Team rallied around the vision of "Becoming a spiritual community hub in Downtown Concord" as we set our goals going into 2020: We wanted to explore modern marketing tools to amplify the points of entry into an experience of Christ. We were also developing a long view of upcoming holidays, events, and programs to be more creative with extra time to plan. And then COVID-19 happened...

Our spiritual community hub is now remote ... we're finding connection and inspiration on social media, with phone calls, text messages and even sidewalk visits. With this change of lifestyle and church community, we are getting a crash course in effective marketing and communication for FPCC. Huge applause and praise for Lisa Justice who manages the email blasts, Webex meetings and holds things together. For Pastor Johanna and her husband Michael who have become video producers in the span of a few weeks. And for Rebecca Chase who never ceases to think about connecting with those who aren't online.

With all this buzz of activity - we wanted to reach out to you all with a survey to better understand which of these efforts was helping, if something was missing, and to generally hear how you were all doing. Many thanks for those who took a few minutes to fill it out! Here are a few highlights from the 61 survey respondents:

Engagement with FPCC during coronavirus

What is the most common way we are staying connected to church? Perhaps it's no surprise, but almost

90% of survey participants have watched a Sunday Service online since we've been sheltering in place. Our YouTube channel was enabled for live broadcasting just weeks before shelter-in-place started (what good timing!) and we have steadily grown up to 94 subscribers. While half of our viewers come directly to the channel page and are subscribers, 21% find us by browsing and 16% by YouTube's recommended content suggestions, and just 5% by search. It's a point of entry! For those not online - they receive DVDs or CDs of the service to experience worship as well.

See the bar chart on the next page for the full results on this question of engagement. It's interesting to note that 3 of the top 5 methods had nothing to do with a worship service or social media, but connecting with other people. We are a spiritual community!

Which of these is most helpful for us as we shelter in place?

Digging deeper into which of these methods were actually the most helpful, here are a few direct quotes so you can hear the voices of your fellow members and get a sense of the range in responses:

"They all have been helpful in maintaining a connection to the church. I look forward to "attending" church on Sunday. The video conferencing for meetings is also interesting and fun. Staff have been very helpful in assisting to maintain a connection."

"Morning prayer. Helps me start the day"

"I have appreciated the various options of services, classes and

connections with each other. Though we are not physically together, I feel we have learned how to reach out to one another in different ways."

"DVD's make me feel like I've gone to church."

"Encouraged by worship service! Pastor Johanna is warm and presents uplifting scripture and sermons. Enjoy seeing church members and staff assist. Hymns enjoyed."

"The occasional phone call is probably the most helpful for me as it is a personal connection with real-time interaction."

What do you think could be improved?

No surprise that technical issues surfaced, and a desire to keep getting the latest information and missing certain programs. However, almost half of respondents said either "nothing" could be improved or "I don't know" or "great job!" Read in their words:

"Nothing comes to mind. I'd just love to be able to be back in church again - at a social distance, of course."

"I don't have any ideas. I think the staff is being creative and eager to make this easy for us. I appreciate the morning prayer people who are doing such a fine job."

"I think the church family is doing a great job keeping in touch"

Is there something else you'd like the church to be doing?

There was a common thread and desire for more mission and justice work during the pandemic...

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## Communications During COVID

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"keep encouraging food donations and cards to juvenile hall."

"I'm sad more didn't participate in SHARE. Wish we could do more hands-on ministry. How do we do that?"

"Activism to protect powerless people who need help"

"More to help those in the community who've lost jobs and need basics."

And this last quote sums it up well:

"Continue to be real, honest, and not afraid to do try new things. I like how we see a need (kids need to see their friends), then we did something (a video chat). I can't wait to hear about it. Easter bunny is another out of the box thinking during these crazy times."

### So When Will We Resume In-person Sunday Worship?

The short answer is, we're still figuring that out. Contra Costa County is gradually reducing restrictions and has set June 15<sup>th</sup> for religious gatherings, but only if they are held outdoors, which we don't feel will work for us. They have not yet given a scheduled date to resume worship inside.

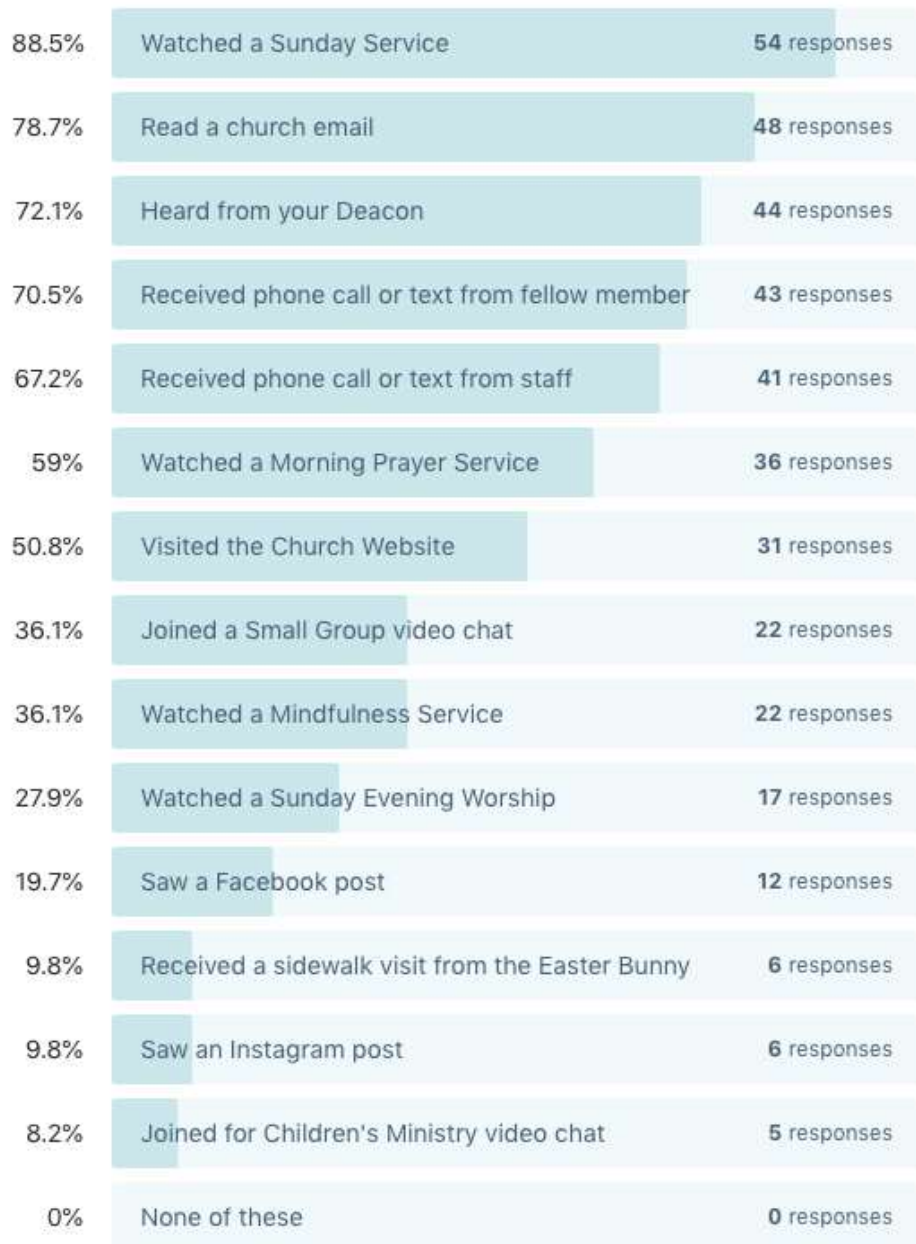
When we do resume there will be many requirements and restrictions that will make things difficult, including restrictions on the number of people, social distancing, wearing masks, and special cleaning requirements.

We are also curious to find out how many of you would want to resume worship at church if they do allow it anytime soon, or if you will wait until we have a vaccine. We are planning on another survey to find this out, so expect to see this soon.



In which of the following ways have you engaged with FPCC staff and members during Covid-19?

61 out of 61 people answered this question (with multiple choice)



## CD and DVD Deliveries

by Jim Whitfield and Marilyn Wollenweber

Each week Pastor Johanna or Darryl "burn" master CDs and DVDs of the Sunday Worship Service, and copies are made for distribution. Jim Whitfield and Marilyn Wollenweber print copies of the weekly bulletin to deliver along with the CDs and DVDs to our attendees who don't have access to

our online Sunday service. Jim King is also helping to make deliveries – it's part of his daily walk!

It has been a joy for Jim and Marilyn to make the deliveries to our people. We get to chat briefly at a safe distance while wearing masks and see how they are doing.

We also mail copies to the minister at Juvenile Hall for the youth that are there.

If you would like to have a delivery of a CD or DVD because you can't access the Sunday Service, please contact the church and put in a request for either a CD or DVD, and Jim and Marilyn will bring you one. †



## Eric Harvey Graduates!

Next time you see Eric Harvey in person, be sure to call him Dr. Eric Harvey! He successfully defended his PhD dissertation over a Zoom meeting mid-March and passed with the glowing praise of his committee and department at Brandeis University.

In fact, his dissertation entitled, *"Sing to the LORD a New(-ish) Song: The Psalms of the Egyptian*

*Hallel across Two Thousand Years"* was so well received, they gave him The Nahum and Ann Glatzer Prize for an Outstanding Dissertation this year.

He is now officially a Doctor of Philosophy in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies, specializing in Bible and the Ancient Near East.

Sadly the Harvey's celebratory trip to Waltham, MA for the graduation

ceremony at Brandeis this May was canceled due to Coronavirus. So Kristin is finding every other way possible to embarrass Eric and celebrate the achievement eight years in the making!

†

## *A Journey of Mask Making*

*by Anna Belle Horgan*

In mid-March it became evident that it would be a good idea to have some masks to wear during the Sheltering in Place mandate when essential trips to the grocery store would be needed. I researched all sorts of patterns and construction tips and finally chose one that would follow the County Health recommendations for non-surgical masks to help slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Requirements were that they be easy, quick to construct with a filter opening, no need to be custom sized, but would have the ability to closely fit the nose shape.

Then there was time spent locating materials. Fabric was not a problem (my quilting passion helped create a large stash of interesting prints and batiks). I had swimsuit elastic which would wash well and be soft around the ear. Pipe cleaners were my choice for the nose fitting issue. I bought the last of Ace Hardware's pipe

cleaners and searched online for a good supply. Finding fast delivery options was a problem.

In April it came, and I started sewing. Family and extended family soon had masks in hand. The word spread and requests came in. My masks were soon delivered to South Dakota, Nevada and all around the Bay Area. 41 masks and I was DONE! I was getting back to my normal list of projects.

THEN – On April 21, Michelle Piperio, the site administrator of The Heritage and Plaza Tower phoned! She had heard from the owners of Barcelon Management Associates that Anna Belle might be able to help them. They wanted each of the residents of the facility to have a cloth mask to use to comply with the County Health mandate. 316 residents – each a mask – What!!! That's not an overnight project!!!! Barcelon and

their contacts helped find more elastic, and pipe cleaners were ordered. The next day we (Dennis was the delivery man) delivered the first 15 masks. I began to make phone calls to my Quilt Therapy group to solicit help. Margaret Bachman, Linda Fribley and Phyllis Nishimori volunteered to start sewing. Frequent deliveries ensued and on May 22, Dennis delivered the final batch of 20 – making 326 cloth masks in total. Mission accomplished! The extras will be ready for any new residents.

This is only ONE story of "Masks." So many people are doing their part to help out their families, friends, and hospitals sewing their dozens and hundreds of protective masks. We really are all in this TOGETHER.

I am grateful to God to be able to use one of my gifts He has given to help our community during this pandemic. ✚

## *Easter Happenings*

*By Jeremy Martin*

COVID-19 wasn't enough to stop our youth from celebrating Easter!

With the help of representatives of our church family, children and youth received goodie bags, colored posters, and a (socially distanced) visit from "Eric" the Easter Bunny.

Special thanks to Rebecca Chase (Director of Community Care), Darryl McCollum (Children's Ministries "Director of Play" and Certified Lay Pastor), Marilyn Wollenweber and Jim Whitfield as well as Jeremy Martin and his parents, Jon and Joan Martin. The Easter Bunny

received extra help from Jon Martin.

Volunteers used preventive measures (social distancing while wearing masks and gloves) to prepare and distribute the goodies.

Here are photos of just a couple of the visits! ✚





## *Mission Updates*

In this issue, you will be able to read about how FPCC is still serving even while we are in lock down. We wrapped up a successful virtual food drive to feed the homeless and currently are writing cards to go to Juvenile Hall. Learn more about Winter Nights that found housing for all of its clients and how you can help furnish a home with new towels, bedding, kitchen supplies, and other items. In the upcoming months, prayer walk and Clean Start Concord will resume. Be on the lookout for when these events in the announcements. Come and join us!

### **Hope Solutions**

A new name, but the same focus: Hope Solutions, formerly known as Contra Costa Interfaith Housing, has housed 40 formerly homeless people in the last six weeks, they continue to help the school children through ZOOM and YouTube. They have prepared individual packets of lessons. They are looking for donations of backpacks for whenever the school reopens in the fall. So far no one has the virus. Pray they will continue to be safe from the virus and for the staff as they continue to work hard. Praise God that 40 more people have found a home. The Mission Team has received a list of items that will help these people out as they move in. Check with **Susan Koester** or **Maren Stanczak** for ideas.

### **Winter Nights**

Adjustments in this time of Pandemic: Winter Nights Family Shelter started as a project of the Social Justice Alliance of the

Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County. This year it is near the completion of a change to become a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Normally, the shelter opens in September, closes in early June, and serves up to 30 persons at any given time. The shelter site moves every two weeks throughout the winter, between hosting faith communities from the 107 member congregations that belong to the Interfaith Council. Congregations throughout central and east Contra Costa who provide space, meals, activities and volunteers.

The above description was true this year up until March, when following the Coronavirus Pandemic guidelines required change and flexibility. Moving the families from one faith community to another, with volunteers providing and serving food they had prepared, became impossible. Two communities, Walnut Creek United Methodist and the Mt Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, stepped up to the plate to provide space for the remaining six families for a longer period each. Three of those families left the shelter in the first couple of weeks, two to homes, one out on their own. The remaining three families stayed until the shelter closed on May 4<sup>th</sup>. During that time, special protocols for COVID-19 were implemented, staff hours were extended, clients took over chores and upkeep, and the children continued their studies by distance learning, with coaching. Volunteers continued to provide groceries for breakfasts and lunches, and restaurant meals

were provided for dinners. The additional costs were covered by special grants and increased donations by regular givers, including FPCC. On May 4<sup>th</sup>, the one remaining family was moved to a hotel, where they will be supported through June, as needed.

At this point we are not sure what will happen in September. The Homeless Summit, a group of representatives from the various faith communities, along with shelter staff, will be meeting in June to begin work on planning for the fall. We don't know how conditions may change, but we are looking to God for guidance and ask for your prayers to support our thinking. The one thing we know for sure is that there will still be families who need help in finding permanent homes. Please pray that Winter Nights Shelter may continue to provide that support.

### **Special Projects During the Last Few Months**

#### **SHARE Food Drive:**

Because of extra demands for food due to the Pandemic, the Mission Team organized a special food drive for the SHARE Food Pantry. Jerry and Ann Johnson served as the collection point for what turned out to be four bags of groceries and over \$200 in gift certificates. SHARE gives much of the food to homeless people, but the staff says that at this time families that have lost income due to the COVID-19 crisis are also in need. They are always most grateful for any contributions. We are very thankful for the volunteers who keep the pantry

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## Mission Updates

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open to serve those in need, especially at this time. Bless all those who helped.

**Pentecost Offering:** It has been a general practice at FPCC to collect a special offering for a project at one of our supported mission agencies during Christmas and Easter seasons. Because our church services have been virtual since March, so that the Easter Offering would have been difficult to run in the usual manner with special envelopes available, the Mission Team decided to ask our community to give, above and beyond their usual pledges, during the week of Pentecost, May 31<sup>st</sup>, for a special offering for She is Safe (SIS), a mission agency that has worked for sixteen years in communities where it is dangerous to be female, where young women and girls, who are not valued in their culture and become a financial burden to their families, are sold into sex slavery. SIS rescues them from human trafficking, but their families often see them as having brought shame upon the family and reject them. So SIS offers a safe place for them

to be educated and to learn they have value in God's eyes, and also teaches them a trade so they can be self-supporting – including small loans as needed. The offering will help continue this lifesaving program.

### FPCC's New Ministry

Our Church's Great Commission Team announces a very special new ministry. We have arranged to send messages of encouragement to young people (both boys and girls) who are inmates of the Juvenile Hall in Martinez.

These are especially lonely times for these young people because they cannot see visitors, or even family members, due to the Coronavirus pandemic. We are now looking for volunteers to support this effort by helping to write short personal messages on the cards.

To participate, all we ask is that you add your personal message to cards that already have a preprinted message on the front. It just needs to be made more personal with a brief handwritten note.

Please let David Dowell that you are willing to help, and tell him how many cards you are willing to prepare. He will then send you the number of cards that you requested along with detailed instructions, including examples of things you can say to get you started. You can either pick up on the theme preprinted on the front of the card or create your own personal message, signing it with your first name or, if you prefer, something like "Your Friend".

When you have finished you would mail your cards to David. After he gathers up all the cards, he will send them to our contact person, Rev. Julius Van Hook, the chaplain for Juvenile Hall.

To volunteer for this unique opportunity to serve please send an email to David Dowell (drdowell99@gmail.com) or give him a phone call at (925) 914-0429 and tell him how many notes you are willing to prepare. This is a wonderful time to serve the Lord in this unique way during this time of shelter-in-place because you can work right from your home. †

## Beginnings & Beyond Preschool

Even a pandemic cannot stop the preschool. Over the past 12 weeks preschool teachers and children have been hard at work continuing school through distant learning. This is new to all of us and definitely a learning experience. Distant learning has been a lot of Zoom circles, individual lessons and Tinker boxes for the littlest ones.

We have also now re-opened, starting June 1<sup>st</sup> for those families who can go back to work. Currently we have eight students coming from 8am – noon each weekday.

Please pray for the preschool. We lost many families during the past weeks and valuable time to bring new families in for the new school year. Plus with required modi-

fications limiting class sizes and eliminating interaction between the two classes our income will be cut by up to 60%. But hopefully these changes are temporary, and we will eventually be able to resume normal operations.

†

## Something to Consider

By Walt Rogers

Greetings FPCC. I trust you are all making the best of this forced time at home. By the time you read this, we will have been under the State mandated "Shelter in Place" order for close to 80 days. Perhaps you have found a few interesting activities to keep you busy when you aren't watching TV, cleaning drawers, reorganizing closets, gardening, or trying out new recipes.

If you have run out of ideas how to fill your free time, might I suggest you set aside an hour or two to review any Revocable Living Trust, Last Will and Testament, Advanced Healthcare Directive and General or Special Powers of Attorney you have in place. Each of these documents are important and should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis anyway (lawyers usually recommend about every five years), and what

better time than now while you have all this free time on your hands. Most attorneys are also working from home, awaiting your call!

California recognizes the right of a competent adult to decide in advance to accept or refuse certain kinds of medical treatment. Do you wish your life to be prolonged artificially? Many people do not. Your Advanced Healthcare Directive can make it clear just how you feel about the subject.

In your Will, you can appoint someone of your choice to act as Executor with or without bond. You can decide exactly who should receive your assets and in what amounts. Without a Will, the State will make that decision for you, and that may not reflect how you really want your estate to be handled.

Finally, be sure to review your Revocable Living Trust, if you have one. Are its provisions still relevant to your current situation? Are there additional gifts you wish to make? Are there some gifts you want to eliminate? Do certain loved ones have special needs that should be addressed?

What a great feeling it is to know you have used this extra time productively. Perhaps you will want to review these documents with your attorney. But, before that, talk with your spouse, children or other relatives about what you have planned. Their input may be helpful.

Hopefully, you will find after a careful and thoughtful review, that everything is in order and no changes are called for. Enjoy the rest of your "Shelter in Place" time and stay healthy. ✚

## Theology on Tap Bubbles over with Big Ideas

By Lisa Justice

FPCC's newest small group, Theology on Tap invites participants to read about and discuss big ideas and social issues. We began last winter with a study of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's classic *Life Together*, examining what it means to live together as a community of faith—great food for thought as FPCC aims to become a community spiritual hub!

For Lent, we took up James H. Cone's *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, a classic work of African American liberation theology. Cone's comparison of Jesus' cross with the all-too-common lynching experience in Black American life and history

opened a path for many of us to explore issues of racial reconciliation. We discovered that there was much we did not know and had not thought about. The Holy Spirit truly used Cone's words and the African American experience to begin opening our eyes.

Coming up next, we'll be diving into *"Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible"* by Ellen F. Davis, a work that comes highly recommended by Pastor Johanna. Davis's work takes an environmental perspective on the Old Testament, arguing that God's covenant with Israel was contingent upon their proper care

and use of the land they were given. Any exploitation of that land would violate that covenant.

Davis connects this Old Testament covenant relationship with twenty-first century environmental and economic issues with which our society currently struggles. Perhaps the Old Testament prophets will have a word for us too.

Theology on Tap will return on Wednesday, June 24<sup>th</sup> with a Zoom meeting, and new members are welcome! Don't worry about buying the book; Lisa J. will scan and email chapters to anyone interested. Email the church office at [fpcc@fpccconcord.org](mailto:fpcc@fpccconcord.org) to sign up.





1965 Colfax St., Concord, CA 94520

Change Service Requested

## ***First Press***

**Deadline for Sept/Oct 2020 Issue:  
Friday August 21, 2020**

*Thank you for your contribution.  
Submit all news in writing. Digital  
photos are also welcome as long as  
we may use them on our website.  
Please contact the church office  
with address changes!*

### ***Office Hours!***

The office is currently closed until  
the Shelter-in-Place order is lifted.

### ***Mission Vision & Values***

#### **Our Mission:**

*Love God, Love People ... Serve*

#### **Vision:**

*As a community hub, connect  
with the needs of people, joyfully  
sharing Jesus and serving where  
God calls.*

#### **Values:**

*Guided by Scripture and prayer,  
we are a welcoming place  
where people, service,  
and God's love meet.*

*Focused on hospitality,  
inclusiveness, and spiritual gifts,  
we worship God with delight.*

*Unified in Jesus Christ,  
we are led by the Holy Spirit  
to invite, engage, and share  
God's Truth with each other,  
our community and the world.*

### ***Join Us Online!***

Just a reminder: Because of the statewide shelter-in-place order, we will not be meeting in person at the church on Sundays. Please join us online instead. Pastor Johanna and Andrew will post a worship service video on our YouTube channel at 10am each Sunday, complete with music, scripture, prayer, and a sermon. If you are receiving the email invitations, you can join us by clicking on the link for Sunday Worship. If not, you can go to YouTube and search for First Presbyterian Church Concord. If you are not receiving the weekly emails you can request them by emailing [fpcc@fpccconcord.org](mailto:fpcc@fpccconcord.org). See you online!

### ***First Press Distribution***

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