

# The Living Word

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[www.vallejochristian.org](http://www.vallejochristian.org)  
[www.facebook.com/fccvallejo](https://www.facebook.com/fccvallejo)

Greetings, FCCV Family!

So many things happening this month as we continue through Eastertide and prepare for Pentecost! Our theme for May and this season is, “God in us. God *through* us!”

Our primary Scriptures for this month are as follows:

May 5 – “No Greater Love”

Primary Lectionary Text: ***John 15:9-17***

May 12 – Mothers’ Day – “Redefining Motherhood and Fruitfulness”

Primary Text: ***John 15:1-8***

May 19 – Pentecost (Rev. Renae Earl preaching)

Primary Lectionary Text: ***Acts 2:1-21***

May 26 – Trinity Sunday — Coffeehouse Worship in Fellowship Hall (organized by Pastor Nicki)

Primary Text: ***1 John 5:7*** (We will look at several passages that talk about the Trinity and have a different kind of worship service—come ready to participate and enjoy fellowship.)

I am out of town May 8-24 and on vacation May 13-23, so please contact an Elder first, as I may be unreachable for part of this time. I will still attend remote meetings when not on vacation and will preach remotely on May 12, as I will be with some of my children, my grandmother, and my Mother-in-Love (law) for the first time on Mothers’ Day in years. The Rev. Renae Earl will join you all in person on Pentecost Sunday, and I’m back for our special coffeehouse service.

*(continued...)*

Starting with Sunday, May 5th, we will have a period of time each week for testimony sharing. We have invited one volunteer to start us off each week and will have time for others to share as the Spirit leads. Let's let this season be a season of sharing how God works in us and through us in word and deed! This is also an excellent time to invite someone new to join us in worship!

We will have a worship planning retreat through Zoom on Saturday, May 25th from 10:00 am-12:00 pm to plan our post-Trinity Sunday worship through the end of Summer. Our Transitional Training Retreat will take place in July. So far, it looks like most are favoring the last date. If you haven't voted yet, please do ASAP so we can finalize plans (<https://doodle.com/meeting/participate/id/dBRr1ZNd/vote>).

I want to leave you with a couple of quotes on Pentecost that inspired our worship planning for this month.

“Without Pentecost the Christ-event – the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus – remains imprisoned in history as something to remember, think about and reflect on. The Spirit of Jesus comes to dwell within us, so that we can become living Christs here and now.”

[Henri Nouwen](#)

“We do not need to wait for the Holy Spirit to come; he came on the day of Pentecost. He has never left the church.”

[John RW Stott](#)

“Bethlehem was God with us, Calvary was God for us, and Pentecost is God in us.”

[Robert Baer](#)

“Too many churches have become mausoleums for the dead rather than coliseums of praise for a living God. They have lost the spirit of Pentecost! They have lost their enthusiasm. They have lost their joy for Jesus and find themselves suffering from what William Willimon calls “Institutional and spiritual Dry Rot.” If the Church is to survive the next millennium it must recapture some of the praise and enthusiasm it had two millennia ago.”

[Carlyle Fielding Stewart III](#)

(Quotes taken from <https://healthyspirituality.org/pentecost-quotes-to-ponder/>. Attribution checked with multiple sites.)

May the Spirit of the Living God shine upon you, breathe life into you, and bless others through you. Amen.

Peace,  
Pastor Nicki

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**LOOKING BACK... LIVING FORWARD - Jon Mezzera**

One of the surprising things that has shaped our church over 125 years has been Sunday School. At multiple times in our history, the need for Sunday School has been more important than the need for worship services. One of the boons of moving into our first building was the ability to host more students at Sunday School. By 1913, there were 128 students enrolled. There was a shortage of both space and teachers. So, the church had to work to solve the problem and by 1916, there were finally enough teachers to meet the demands of the students.

In World War II, the church's membership grew as Mare Island became paramount to the Navy, and the city's population exploded. The old building wasn't big enough, particularly for Sunday School. By November 1942, we reached an all time high in average Sunday School attendance. I'll be exploring this new building effort next month, but the need for more classroom space was a big part of the desire for a new building. That same need pushed the church to complete the final wing of the building 16 years later. While trying to get a new building, FCC stepped up to face a large community need by helping to found a new Disciples Church in Vallejo, The Chabot Community Church which had its first service on Easter, 1943. The need for this church grew out of the booming population plus gas rationing which meant residents from the growing outskirts of town could not drive downtown to attend services. More importantly, there were no church schools, and the Chabot Church started as a school before becoming a church.

As the congregation's numbers have gone up and down, so too has the youth involvement. At times, it grew so substantially that there wasn't enough space in the designated classrooms for the students. Classes were held in the Fellowship Hall, in the hallway, throughout the sanctuary including in the balcony, and in the Pastor's parsonage! On the other end of the spectrum, we've had times when all the children shared one class because the numbers were so low.

In addition to Sunday School attendance, there have been times when the church has had a strong Youth Group (grades 6-12). A long period of Youth Group success was from the mid-80s through 97. Under the leadership of Youth Group Coordinator Helen Mezzera, and Pastor Karen Stanley, that group put on the first of several annual Youth Sundays in March 1987. This was not merely a service with some youth participation. The Youth Group planned and put on the entire service. During this time, the group grew with members encouraged to invite friends from outside the church. Under the leadership of Carl Cordes, this practice continued and the Youth Group took on more Mission efforts, including trips to All Peoples Community Center in LA in 93 and 94. Members attended regional camps and participated in the Regional Youth Council. After this boom, there was a slow period with practically no youth. When the church started to grow with younger kids in attendance, Pastor Judith Jones started a group called Just Kidding. That went well for a time before sizzling out. More recently, we had another period with more children, and Children's Time once again became part of our service. We don't have a lot of kids at the moment. But this has happened before, as those numbers have fluctuated. Hopefully soon, we will see another time of growth for young families and a rejuvenation of the Sunday School which has been such a major part of this church's history.

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EARTH DAY, APRIL 22, 2024 - Beth Grose



Top left - debris used as a breakwater in Lake Erie

Top right - smog obscuring LA

Bottom - Cuyahoga River on fire

I don't know where you were in 1970 when the first Earth Day happened, but I was in Ohio, where the Cuyahoga River had so much oil, tires, industrial waste and human waste that the river burned – more than once – and Lake Erie was so polluted there were massive fish die-offs and swimming was prohibited. John was in LA, where breathing the smog for 8 years damaged his lungs so badly that many years after he left, a doctor checking his lung function asked him (a lifelong non-smoker) if he smoked 4 packs a day. This is the world that I grew up in, that I didn't imagine could change.

I'm not sure what the organizers expected from that first Earth Day, but what came of it was a heightened awareness of the damage we were causing and a demand that we do better, and coordination of what had previously been scattered, marginalized efforts to effect change. It led to the establishment of the EPA, the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts, and the strengthening of the Endangered Species Act, among others. On the second Earth Day, President Nixon expanded Earth Day to Earth Week, saying, "Few concerns facing America and the world today are more compelling than the quality of our physical environment. All that we do, all that we hope to achieve for ourselves, all that we hope to create for our children will go for nothing if the world itself is made unfit to live in."

*(continued...)*



EARTH DAY, APRIL 22, 2024 - continued

“We have made a beginning in this, but we have only begun. Now, there must be a conscious, sustained effort by every American and, we might hope, by every citizen of the world if our posterity are not to look back in sorrow and wonder why, when God had created the Earth and seen that it was good, man did not agree and leave it that way.”

Through the efforts of people who cared, the Cuyahoga River is now a greenbelt through a revitalized Cleveland, supporting native flora and fauna, and has recovered to the degree that in 2019 fish were declared safe for human consumption again. Lake Erie’s waters are blue, and fish are living in the water instead of washed up by the thousands dead on the beaches. And you don’t need a gas mask to breathe safely in LA.

We are not done with environmental repair. Air and water pollution are still a concern. Climate change has created or worsened a multitude of problems - fires, floods, and droughts among them. And we are becoming increasingly aware of the insinuation of plastic residue in even the remotest parts of our planet and in the tissue of all living things.

As a Green Chalice congregation, we have committed to be people “who wish to live out their faith by caring for creation.” Let’s make every day Earth Day.



Top left: Cuyahoga River in downtown Cleveland

Top right: LA Skyline

Bottom: Lake Erie

## MAY MONTHLY MISSION - VETERANS FOR PEACE - Allison Mezzera

Memorial Day is on 5/27 and is a day to honor those who lost their lives while serving the country. To honor those Vets, the Ministry Council has decided to send our Mission Action gift for May to Veterans for Peace.

The best way to learn about Veterans for Peace is to read their own Statement of Purpose:

\*We, as military veterans, do hereby affirm our greater responsibility to serve the cause of world peace. To this end we will work, with others both nationally and internationally

- To increase public awareness of the causes and costs of war
- To restrain our governments from intervening, overtly and covertly, in the internal affairs of other nations
- To resist racism and repression in our home communities
- To oppose the militarization of law enforcement
- To end the arms race and to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons
- To seek justice for veterans and victims of war
- To abolish war as an instrument of national policy
- To achieve these goals, members of Veterans For Peace pledge to use non-violent means and to maintain an organization that is both democratic and open with the understanding that all members are trusted to act in the best interests of the group for the larger purpose of world peace.

FCC Vallejo has a long history of service particularly back when Mare Island was thriving. While not named in the history book, many members of the congregation worked on Mare Island during WWII and had family members who were killed in the war. We currently have many veterans in our midst and this donation is a way to honor the past and the present.

If you would like to make a separate donation or to get more information, go to <https://www.veteransforpeace.org/>

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DO YOU HAIKU? - Suzanne Awalt  
(125th Anniversary Edition)

Camping at CGC

Remember youth camp,  
gathered around the campfire?  
Faith! Fellowship! Fun!

Try your hand at Haiku. Five-seven-five syllable format.

Have some fun with it. Or send me an FCCV anniversary subject and I'll work on it.

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**LITTLE PEACE PANTRY - Allison Mezzera**

An Amazon wish list has been created for the Little Peace Pantry basic needs items.

[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3O734C3DKZ30?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3O734C3DKZ30?ref_=wl_share)

Most needed items right now!

**Non-perishable Food Needs**

Canned chicken, tuna, soup, etc (pull tab lids only)

MRE's

Juice boxes

Bottles of water

Snack packs of crackers, etc.

Take home silverware sets

**Basic Hygiene Needs (Travel Sizes)**

Period products & Incontinence pads

Combs/Brushes

Deodorant

Shaving cream & disposable razors

Floss

Shampoo, Conditioner

**HYBRID WORSHIP CONTINUES**

We continue to develop and improve our hybrid worship abilities. Every Sunday morning, we have some members of our worshipping community onsite in our sanctuary and some members of our worshipping community online on Zoom. We continue to work to make both formats engaging and accessible. Please share comments and suggestions that might make both formats better for everyone.

Our worship services begin at 10:30. To join us for worship on Zoom, click the link below and joining us through video. Or dial in by calling the number below according to your time zone. The instructions to connect are fairly easy, but if you need help, please reach out.

In preparation for Zoom worship, please have communion elements of some form with you so that we can all partake together. This can be bread and juice—or any other elements that evoke the Last Supper for you. You may also want to light a candle near you as we worship together.

**Worship on Sundays, 10:30 a.m. PLEASE NOTE THE NEW MEETING INFO!**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83204891403?pwd=YkJBNTQwWURabEtpRFVoaDU5aU5hQT09>

Meeting ID: 832 0489 1403

Passcode: 157093

Dial by your location

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)



# FIGHT HUNGER IN VALLEJO

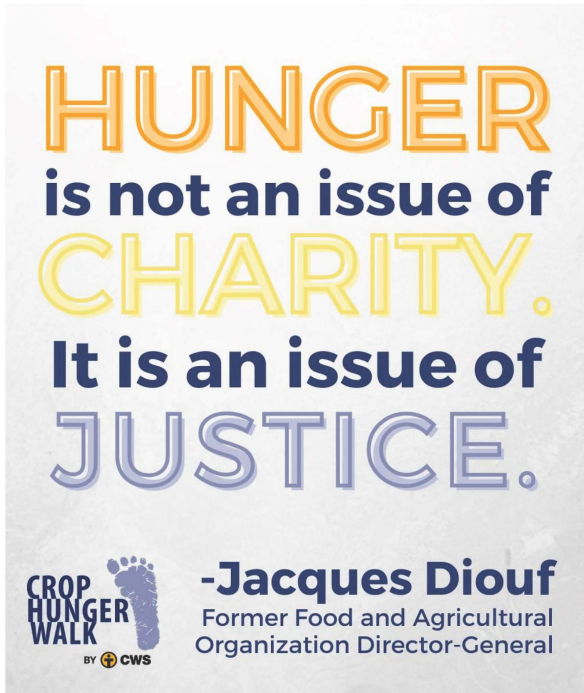
**Saturday, May 4, 2024, 10:00 am start time**  
**Behind the Ferry Building at**  
**Mare Island Way, in Vallejo**

Please join us for a 3K scenic walk along the beautiful Vallejo waterfront!  
 Registration starts at 9:30 am. Walk starts at 10:00 am.  
 For more information or to make a donation, scan the QR Code or go to [events.crophungerwalk.org/cropwalks/event/vallejoca](https://events.crophungerwalk.org/cropwalks/event/vallejoca)



**75% of the funds are used globally!**  
 Church World Service (CWS) sponsors CROP Hunger Walks nationwide. For over 50 years, they have used funds to provide food, medical care, disaster relief, and self-help development for people in need around the world.

**25% of the walk donations will be given to local organizations!**  
 Amador Street Hope Center  
 Vallejo Together



### UPCOMING FUNDRAISERS!

Visit these restaurants on the days noted and a portion of your meal ticket will be donated.

**MOD Pizza** - Vallejo - April 10, 10:30 am to 10:00 pm.

**Panera Bread** - Vallejo - April 16, 6 am to 9 pm.

**The Habit Burger Grill** - Vallejo - April 23-24, 3 pm to 8 pm

Find flyers and info at [www.facebook.com/VallejoHungerWalk](https://www.facebook.com/VallejoHungerWalk)

## Mark Your Calendar

May 4 - Vallejo Hunger Walk, 10 am at the Ferry Building (registration at 9:30).

May 6 - 125th Anniversary planning meeting, 7 pm on Zoom.

May 8 - Ministry Council meeting, 5:00 pm on Zoom.

May 10 - Elders meeting, 5:00 pm on Zoom.

May 19 - Pentecost Sunday.

May 24 - Administrative Council meeting, 5:00 pm on Zoom.

May 25 - Worship Retreat, 10 am - noon, on Zoom.

**The deadline for the next Living Word is May 29**

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