



## First Church Tucson Weekly Digest

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# “Signs of New Life and Hope”

By South District Superintendent Matt Ashley on November 17th, 2020

When it rains, it pours. Last week, my wife Felida was looking on her Facebook page when she saw that her cousins in the Philippines were stranded on the second floor of their home during a terrible flood. They had small children with them and were using Facebook to call for help. Nobody could get to them, but thankfully the waters receded by the next day and they were okay.

Last week, three separate typhoons hit the Philippines in succession, and so the Manilla area flooded. This is nothing new, just as hurricanes are nothing new on the East Coast and Gulf Coast of the United States. In fact, Filipino homes used to be built on stilts so that they could stay above water when the floodwaters came. They aren't built that way anymore, so residents know to just keep their heads above water and survive.

That's been 2020 in the United States too. Between Covid19, and protests, and a tense election season, and divisions in our denomination, and hurricane floodwaters, you just keep your head above water and survive.

A long time ago, God was growing tired of humanity's wickedness and self-centeredness. People refused to honor God with the way they lived their lives, and they refused to love their neighbors. As told in Genesis 6-9, only one family, Noah's family, was paying

attention enough to hear God's warning that a terrible flood was coming. So Noah and his family built an ark and loaded up the animals; they kept their head above water, and they survived.

After a long time, the floodwaters started to recede, and the ark came to rest upon a mountaintop. Noah sent out a raven, but it could not find anyplace to land, so Noah knew it wasn't time to come out of the ark yet.

After a while longer, Noah sent out a dove, but it could not find a place to land, so Noah knew the flood hadn't receded yet.

After a while longer, Noah sent out the dove again, and this time it came back with an olive leaf. A small sign that dry land was appearing. A small sign of new life and new hope. A small sign that Noah and his family could begin again.

It seems like a good time for Thanksgiving. It's not going to be the Thanksgiving we want; travel is hard, and large family gatherings are dangerous. But it's a good time for Thanksgiving, even a small and uneventful Thanksgiving.

This Thanksgiving I invite you to take some time to notice the small signs of new life and new hope in the world.

A dove. An olive leaf. The opportunity to begin again.

Thanks for listening –

Matt

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## Help a Child Hear from their Teacher

Do you remember how every Christmas, Olga Tafolla and others helped us share shoes with children in Agua Prieta, Mexico? Well, Women in Service at our church is still making a difference for families at Iglesia Fuente de Vida through a new educational ministry. Due to the pandemic, Agua Prieta kids receive school lessons indirectly via phone. Sadly, many families cannot afford the \$10 a month for phone service, and these children are unable to talk to their teacher. Please keep this ministry in your prayers and if able, contribute what you can.

Give online at [www.bit.ly/fivetofumc](http://www.bit.ly/fivetofumc) or via PayPal to recipient address [finance@firstchurchtucson.org](mailto:finance@firstchurchtucson.org). Alternatively, just mail a check payable to First United Methodist Church, with "Women in Service" or "Outreach" on the memo line, to FUMC, 915 E. 4th Street, Tucson, AZ 85719. Pastor Paul hopes we can raise \$1,000 to connect 100 children with their teacher for 10 months. Funds will flow directly to their destination, because they can be wired from an account in Douglas, AZ, to Fuente de Vida's church account.

God has His ways of working. Jessie Hansen told me she feels a deep connection with the Agua Prieta church, because Fountain of Life UMC, where she once belonged, contributed their sanctuary materials for a place of worship. We can rejoice that there are practical ways to help others despite the obstacles we face this holiday season.

~ Nan Rollings

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“This Thanksgiving I am particularly grateful for the loving, faithful lives of Christian friends ahead of me in years. I marvel at their peace, patience, and caring for others. They are radiant beacons. They help me so much.”  
“We are forever grateful for Christ's sacrifice and God's gift of the Holy Spirit.”  
~ Nan & Don Rollings

“I do not think of all the misery, but of the glory that remains. Go outside into the fields, nature and the sun, go out and seek happiness in yourself and God. Think of the beauty that again and again discharges itself within and without you and be happy.”  
~ Anne Frank

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*First Church Family on Sunday's  
Joint Thanksgiving Zoom Gathering.  
Photo by Paul Cho*

*Flagging our plants for maintenance to be  
done by the NOMADS during a future visit.  
Photo by Tripp Gordon*



THIS WEEK'S  
ANNOUNCEMENTS & GATHERINGS

## The 5 Love Languages for Advent Study

Join us on Zoom for our Advent Study on the 5 Love Languages; Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Quality Time, Gifts, and Physical Touch. Sessions start at 10:30am (12:00pm in Korean) following the Sunday Morning Live! stream. Follow the link

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/97274927766?pwd=bVlqNmZjTk84bHFHd0JRS0U5R0c4Zz09>

**ZID: 972 7492 7766**

**PW: 6226481**

## Recruiting Weekly Digest Contributors

Have you come across an inspiring story? Perhaps you were able to capture a fascinating shot. We invite you to submit a story, a photo, or anything you feel would be in the best interest of our church. We will work to add them into our Weekly Digest. Submit your story or picture at <https://bit.ly/fumcsubmit>

## Women on a Spiritual Quest

Meet with WSQ for book studies and the best kind of Methodist small group accountability.  
**Mon @ 4:30PM.**

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/92059519248?pwd=ZmN4dTFCCcVVCVjlNM3FHUHVvemNFdz09>

**ZID: 920 5951 9248**

**PW: 6226481**

## Exploring Biblical Wisdom

*We are on break this week.*

## Music Workshop - World Music Tour

Join Music Ministry Director Lorena Suarez as she tours the world music scene. This week, music from the US and UK! **Wed @ 5:30PM.**

<https://dscumc.zoom.us/j/92978304567?pwd=Mmo4UWZtc012TUxzVS9VYXlpVU1iZz09>

**ZID: 929 7830 4567**

**PW: 6226481**

*Information session about the Virtual Choir will be on December 2nd at 5:30 with Paul Cho.*

## Progressive Christianity Book Study

*We are on break this week.*

## Korean Language Ministry

*We are on break this week.*

## Support the Ministries at First Church Tucson

Now is the time to give courageously to ministries that matter to you.

Visit this [link](#) or go to [www.bit.ly/givetofumc](http://www.bit.ly/givetofumc) to set up online donation.

You may also send gifts via Paypal to recipient address: [finance@firstchurchtucson.org](mailto:finance@firstchurchtucson.org)

And as always, you can mail in checks to the church office. Alternatively, have your IRA advisor automatically make payments from your IRA to the FUMC checking account.

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### THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Megan Dominguez (Nov 23)

Patricia Murphy (Nov 29)

Leonard & Eunice Santos (November 28)

*[If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please let us know so we can update our records!]*

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### SONG FOR **THOUGHT**

“Change My Heart, O God”

**Eddie Espinosa**

by **Lorena Suarez**

Director of Music Ministries on November 21, 2020

Eddie Espinosa has dedicated most of his life to public education, teaching, and as an administrator at schools in Southern California, but also as a worship leader and songwriter.

One of his best known songs is called *Change My Heart, O God*. It was written in 1982, while Espinosa was driving to his job. The song came suddenly to his mind, he stopped the car, found a piece of paper and wrote down the lyrics. He said that it came “as if it was a dictation”. He kept the melody in his mind until being able to record it.

Espinosa mentioned that he wrote this song because he desperately needed for God to change his heart in order to love what He loves. Enjoy!

**Lyrics:**

Change my heart, O God,  
Make it ever true.  
Change my heart, O God!  
May I be like you.

You are the potter,  
I am the clay.  
Mold me and make me,  
This is what I pray.

**Suggested recording:**

Maranatha! Music

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlSmG-\\_eJTU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlSmG-_eJTU)

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**LECTIO DIVINA PRAYER GUIDE**  
for Individuals and Families

CENTERING - *Practice Square Breathing*

- Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds,
- Exhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds.
- Repeat as necessary.

SONG OF PRAISE

Select a song of your choice, or  
Refer to this week’s Song for Thought

OPENING PRAYER - *Psalms 19:14*

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart  
be acceptable to you,  
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.

## READING

John:9-10

## REFLECTING

Take a minute or two in silence.

Allow your thoughts to rest on a word, a phrase, a memory from this passage.

Journal or share your thoughts from this moment of meditation on the passage.

## RESPONDING

Respond to the reflection through the guidance from the Holy Spirit.

## MINUTE MEMOIR - by Paul Cho on Pastor Raven Gaston's Message

Just what is the "world?" There is a need to separate us being in the world, and being of the world. Whereas all things are indeed created in Jesus Christ, we are to not be *of the world*. This world focuses on materialism. They entice us to buy, buy, buy, even those things we do not need or ever knew we wanted. This world can mean to be a system. A system that is, among other things, designed to make our products, even ourselves, obsolete and insignificant.

To be *in the world*, and not be *of the world*, perhaps can be done if we reversed these ideas. Instead of focusing on get, get, get, may we learn to give, give, give. Instead of creating systems that are designed to make things insignificant and obsolete, perhaps we can create systems that are designed to appreciate, to cherish, and to give thanks. As we approach thanksgiving, may we be a people fully in the world but not be of the world.

## RESTING

Dwell in your reflection and response.

Take time to offer God praise and glory.

Repent and seek forgiveness.

Offer joys and the concerns, adding in your personal prayers.

Lastly, offer a thanksgiving for God's grace and mercy.

## CLOSING PRAYER *Wesley Covenant Service Prayer*

I am no longer my own, but yours.

Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;

put me to doing, put me to suffering;

let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,

exalted for you, or brought low for you;

let me be full,

let me be empty,

let me have all things,

let me have nothing:

I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things

to your pleasure and disposal.

And now, glorious and blessed God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

you are mine and I am yours. So be it.

And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.

Amen.



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