

First Congregational Church of Murphys
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



THE Nugget

Volume 18 Issue 1

JANUARY 2020

We begin January in the season of Christmas, the color is white.

Christmas Worship Services

*Christmas Eve, Tuesday, December 24, 7:00 pm & 11:00 pm,
with Holy Communion at 11:00 pm*



Sunday, December 30, 10:00 am, Lessons & Carols



6:00—9:00, Tuesday, 12/31

- see page 6 for details

*Coming sooner
than you think—
Heavenly
Chocolate
Festival— see
page 8 for
more !*



We Worship Together as We Build Sacred Community



December can either be a very stressful month or a time of great rejoicing. For some of us, it is the busiest time of the year and we can easily forget the love of the Christ Child. Our tempers flare as tiredness sets in and we see the harried schedule before us. Going to church is the last thing we want to do on a cold night or even trying to get the family out the door. “No one will miss me and what does it matter if we miss the Christmas Eve service? We went to church on Sunday and that is enough!”

Ah, but I hope to change your paradigm. Setting the tradition of coming to worship on Christmas Eve has so many benefits. First of all, it lets your family know that God is very important and this special day is a way to tell the old story in a sacred and blessed setting. You will be part of the Christian community that we hold dear here. Young children will begin to see the importance of this ritual of making time for the Christ Child and that Christmas is more than getting ready for the presents on Christmas Day. You will have an opportunity to hear and sing music that magnifies God and lifts your weary spirits.

The worship in the evening is different than the usual Sunday morning gathering: the light of Christ is seen through the darkness and the setting enhances our meditations. We often have out-of-town guests and you can be part of welcoming them and sharing your hospitality.

As I am reflecting on this Blessed Christmas, I am reminded of God’s unconditional love and unconditional forgiveness. These are two gifts I need every day. I am also trying to practice them myself. I pray that you have both of these in your life every moment!

In closing, I thank you all for a wonderful year. The growth we are experiencing in our membership, attendance, small groups, spiritual practices and praying for one another is enriching me beyond my imagination. Each day I say, “God, you are sending blessing upon blessing!” Indeed it has been a year where we have asked much of you—to support the Uganda Orphanage more than ever, to walk with us to fight hunger, to help the homeless, to serve on teams and committees, to hold a dinner for our general fund and to be present in worship! You are faithful, my beloved, and I go into each day confident that the good work God has begun in us will continue!

Dancing in the aisles, Pastor Bonnie



The Christmas Pageant, written and directed by Pastor Bonnie, was a joy to all! The children gave their best and presented a program that had us laughing, crying and thankful for our families!



The children sang and played hand chimes to tell the story of Christmas! Dr. Hollinger practiced with them many times and they learned it beautifully!



We Build Sacred Community

Moderator's Musings

Happy New Year! We start the year with an exciting new church budget. We had our annual Congregational Budget Meeting on December 15th, and we unanimously passed our 2020 church budget. This budget includes a new Christian Education Director and a new team, the Faith Community Nursing Program. The Christmas Pageant was amazing, with 27 people, most of them children, participating. It is so exciting to know that we can now hire a Christian Education Director to help with our growing children's program. Thank you to everyone who helped with the Christmas Pageant and to everyone for their support for the CE Director.

The other new program that the Congregation approved is the Faith Community Nursing Program, previously called the Parish Care Nurse Program. Many of us remember the Parish Nurse program and are thrilled that we will have the support again. Thanks to Diane Hosmer for taking the lead on this.



The other vote that was taken at the meeting was to reinstate the Stewardship Team. We have realized that we do need the help and support of the Stewardship Team. The Council will be appointing members for rest of this church year, which ends in June. We will elect new team members in June, like we do for rest of the Committees.

I hope everyone has a blessed Christmas season and a joyful and positive New Year.

Patty Haskell



Save the Date! Big Trees Camping Trip!

It seems so far away, but it'll be here before you know it! **The second annual FCCM camping trip** in Calaveras Big Trees State Park will happen on the weekend of **June 5-7, 2020**. We've reserved both group camping sites, so we'll have plenty of room for everybody who wants to come!

Bring your campers or tents, bring an instrument, bring a friend... whatever floats your boat! We'll set up a sign-up sheet as it approaches, but **please mark your calendars to save the date**. It's sure to be another fun-filled weekend of fellowship and community in the beauty and sanctuary of Big Trees.



Stella is ready for CAMPING!

Advent Workshop

What a fun evening indeed! December 3rd, we had a delicious soup supper and scrumptious dessert. Then we gathered the children for a rehearsal of the Christmas pageant, practiced our lines, practiced our hand chimes and practiced our singing. We all got to do lots of fun projects for Advent and Christmas, including making up our Advent wreaths with green boughs and new purple and pink candles—gluing and painting, coloring and cutting, with lots of big hands helping the little hands. Thanks to the cooks, those helpers who worked in the kitchen, and those who cleaned up all of our mess afterwards!



Knitters & Hookers

Get your crochet hooks and knitting needles ready!

Join us at Liz Tussey's house on **Thursday, January 9th**, 11:00 to 1:00. Bring a sack lunch, your needles, crochet hooks, tales of Christmas and your latest projects.



We Study and Grow Together
 Join us on December 31st to Celebrate!



...from 6:00—9:00 pm for games and snacks, something for everyone.

We will gather in the FCCM Social Hall. Bring your favorite game, and a snack to share.

All musicians are invited to bring your musical instruments and join the fun, children too.

New Year's will be celebrated "New York Style" at 9:00 pm.

Good News About Money!!!

How often do you get to hear good news about money? Well this is it! We had a stellar year of supporting our partners in Ministry and with our fundraisers. Below is a Fundraiser summary:

1. Fundraisers that support church operations (Pancake Breakfast, Chocolate Festival, Recycle program, etc.): these efforts raised over \$11,800 this year.

2. Fundraisers that support important missions outside the church: whatever we raise for these missions goes directly to the organization (Uganda - both the general fund and scholarships, CROP Walk, UCC's 5 for 5, The Resource Connection, Habitat, etc.). **This year we have raised over \$16,000.** This is all above our regular pledges! We are truly a giving congregation and this truly is reason to Celebrate!



Recycle Sunday, January 12th

Plastic water bottles, glass containers with CA CRV or CA CASH printed on them and aluminum cans can all be recycled for cash. Please be sure all your cans and bottles are empty and the caps or lids are off. Men's Fellowship reports that folks are doing a better job of sorting what they are turning in — keep up the good work!

Many thanks!



Small Groups Help Us Grow in Faith and Fellowship

Recently our small group, Spirit of the Pines, met. Besides catching up and checking in with each other, we found we loved the lesson for this month. It was a blessing to talk about how we all have connected with each other in this church and how we have noticed and appreciated what each other does within our congregation. We talked about and named several people who do so



many things “behind the scenes” that keep the church going; not just the teams and officers, but you know them: those who wash dishes, vacuum carpets, make the coffee every Sunday, prepare the meals for the Family Nights, pick up people for worship or other activities, set up and take down chairs and tables, etc.; also how we each “weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice”. We left our gathering with thankfulness for each other and all of you who make and keep our church strong and vital in our community.

A big thank you to Marilyn Baisel and Faye Morrison for writing our Small Groups Curriculum. We now have ten small groups — two new ones were just recently formed. If you would like to be part of a small group, please let Pastor Bonnie know.

Mary Kelly

Life Celebration for Yolanda Randlett January 4, 2020

You are all invited to join us for the Life Celebration of Yolanda Randlett on Saturday, January 4, at 1:00 p.m., with a reception following in the Social Hall.

Yolanda was a gifted quilter and her many talents enriched our lives. Please continue to pray for Rev. John and his family during this time.

Jesus comforts us as he says, “Come to me all you who are weary



Green Team Reports Great Success!

Thank you all for continuing to bring your empty pill bottles and supporting this great project. Angela Patterson, who heads up this project, states: “I estimate we have sent about 1200 bottles to be used again. The organization, Matthew 25, provides all kinds of medical supplies to doctors who travel all over the world to help those in desperate need of medical care. The pill bottles are particularly important in the successful treatment of HIV/AIDs to ensure medication is contained and used correctly.” Thank you for helping!



We Reach Out to the Community and Beyond

FCCM's Annual "Heavenly Chocolate Festival Saturday afternoon, February 8, 2020. From 1 - 4:00 p.m.

This spectacular annual event hosts tables full of delectable chocolate treats to sample.

There are usually 65—75 different hand-made chocolate items to choose from – **YUM!!!**



For \$12 guests can have all the chocolate they can eat. There are many return visitors who watch for this special event. What a great way to treat friends and neighbors!!

FCCM members are asked to bring their favorite chocolate treat. The variety is always fantastic! Did you know that the guests get to vote for their favorite chocolates? If you'd like to participate by volunteering, submitting a chocolate item or if you need a recipe, please sign up at the church, or call Becky Smith at (209) 768-0371, or Diane Hosmer at (209) 559-5464.



Let's make this our best festival ever!



Our Santa's Express

The Resource Connection was so pleased when Paula Smith and Connie Cook arrived with a load of toys.

Our FCCM congregation contributed \$ 1100 and Paula and Connie went shopping. It seems that the Resource Connection had only received a few toys up to that point.

Thank you for all you did to help the Christmas effort for our children in Calaveras County!





Taizé on the second Wednesday in January

Wednesday, January 8th at 7:00 PM

Bless the Lord, my soul.

And bless God's holy name.

**Bless the Lord, my soul,
who leads me into life.**

**Come for an evening of quiet meditation,
with prayers and music, silence and song.**

If you are weary and needing respite for your soul, this is the perfect place to be. God will refresh your spirit. Bring a friend with you to this blessed service.

Uganda Orphanage Update

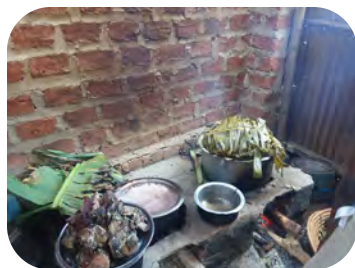
As of this writing, we know that our beloved Moses, the head of the orphanage, has just undergone surgery for a mass in his stomach. We were able to send \$1600 to pay for the surgery. We do not know the results yet and we ask for your continued prayers for him.

The time is almost here to send our funds for the scholarships, which pay for education for the children. Some members here have already made a monthly commitment and we are grateful for those funds. Some people contribute whenever they can. We are grateful for every dollar we receive for the children. You can write your checks to FCCM and put Uganda general fund or scholarship in the memo spot. *The scholarship fund is not used for any other purpose but school.*



Above, Moses and wife Josephine at the orphanage.

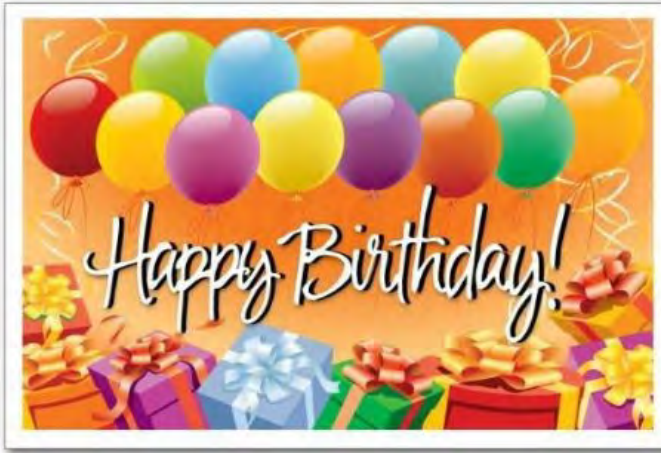
The Uganda Orphanage is one of the partners in ministry that we support. We also give time, money and our talents to our other partners, Sierra Hope, Habitat for Humanity, The Resource Connection and Church World Services' CROP Walk. All of these organizations help the homeless, those who are hungry, those who face poverty and many other life challenges.



Above, the kitchen at the orphanage.

Right, Moses and the children in his and Josephine's care. Some of them were living on the roadside before coming to the orphanage.





JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

<i>Jeff Kelly</i>	5
<i>Rachael Buchanan</i>	13
<i>Joe Jackson</i>	13
<i>Connie Cameron</i>	14
<i>Del Harris</i>	17
<i>Dustin Shinn</i>	18
<i>Pat LaMont</i>	19
<i>Jeri Carson-Hull</i>	20
<i>Kelly Ellifritz</i>	22
<i>Joan Thorsen</i>	27
<i>Janet Reynolds</i>	30
<i>Seth Ford Burns</i>	31
<i>Charles Lindberg</i>	31




Prayers Answered

The scriptures tell us: "Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."

Philippians 4:6

Recently we have witnessed the stories of how God has answered our prayers! God hears our cries and answers them. Let us pray daily for the following members or friends of our community in your prayers:

Bobby & Celine Breen and Family
 Nancy Burton and Family
 Susan Giannini Chadwick
 Jara and Max Clark
 Susana Crow
 Tracey and Kelly Ellefritz
 Tara Glessman
 Del Harris
 Patti Hennessee
 Alan & Dodi Horvath
 The Family of Barbara Hurlbut
 Caity Johnson
 Hilary Oldenkamp
 Angela Patterson
 John Randlett and Family
 Meg Self
 Joanie Singleton and Family
 Becky Smith
 Gail Withuhn
 Moses Zimbe

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><i>January</i> 2020</p>	<p>HAPPY NEW YEAR</p>	<p>1 NEW YEAR'S DAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4 1:00 pm, Celebration of Life for Yolanda Randlett</p>	
<p>5 COMMUNION SUNDAY 9:00 am Bible Study/EEC 9:00 Choir Rehearsal 10:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School</p>	<p>6 EPIPHANY </p>	<p>7 5:30 pm, Family Night/Social Hall, EEC & Fisk 7:00 LGBTQ Youth Support Group/EEC</p>	<p>8 9:00 Quilters/EEC 9:00 AM, Executive Committee/Social Hall 4:15–6:15, Christian Enrichment Team/EEC 5:00 pm, Bell Choir 7:00 pm, Taize</p>	<p>9 11:30, Knitters & Hookers/Tussey's 1:00 pm, Finance & Facilities Team/EEC</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>
<p>12 RECYCLE SUNDAY 9:00 am Bible Study/EEC 9:00 Choir Rehearsal 10:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School</p>	<p>13 11:00 am, Outreach & Social Justice Team/EEC</p>	<p>14 8:00 am, Men's F'ship/EEC 10:30 am, Membership & Calling Team/EEC 2:00–4:00, Book Study Pot Luck/EEC</p>	<p>15 10:00, Worship Team/Social Hall 5:00 pm, Bell Choir 6:00 pm Vocal Choir</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 NUGGET DEADLINE</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>19 9:00 am Bible Study/EEC 9:00 Choir Rehearsal 10:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School 11:45 am COUNCIL</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21 5:30 pm, Family Night/Social Hall, EEC & Fisk 7:00 LGBTQ Youth Support Group/EEC</p>	<p>22 9:00 Quilters/EEC 10:30, Parish Care Team Marilyn's house 5:00 pm, Bell Choir 6:00 pm Vocal Choir</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>
<p>26 9:00 am Bible Study/EEC 9:00 Choir Rehearsal 10:00 am Worship 10:15 am Sunday School</p>	<p>27 11:00 am, Green Team/EEC</p>	<p>28 8:00 am, Men's F'ship/EEC 2:00–4:00, Book Study/EEC</p>	<p>29 5:00 pm, Bell Choir 6:00 pm Vocal Choir</p>	<p>30</p>		

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JANUARY 2020

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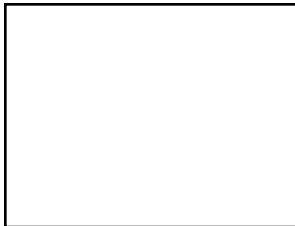
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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

First Congregational Church of Murphys

THE NUGGET



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First Congregational Church of Murphys

United Church of Christ

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, MURPHYS MISSION STATEMENT

We believe that all people are beloved by God and we strive to serve as a welcoming and nurturing church community to discern the Bible with insight for today and to live out Christ's teachings.

The Nugget Committee invites you to submit articles of interest and wishes to stress that the deadline is always the 3rd Monday of each month. The Committee reserves the right to edit submissions for length and content.