

First Congregational Church of Murphys
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE Nugget

Volume 20 Issue 1

FEBRUARY 2022



The Church is Alive and Thriving!

Come and see what God is doing among us! Even amid Covid, we are still the Church! We are reveling in all that God is calling us to do! There are many opportunities for growth, challenge, prayer, worship, and service. Take some time to read through this issue of the Nugget and ask yourself, “What is God asking of me? How might I serve others? What are my gifts?” Our pitchers are full and ready to pour love on the world!



Our 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

Won't you join us on this path of discipleship and love? Come be with us, there is *Joy in the Journey!*

Inside this edition:

Reports from: The Moderator, Vice moderator, Treasurer



Call to Service for The Blessing Box, The Resource connection, Recycling, Prayer Requests

Call to Worship & Prayer through Sunday worship, virtual prayer meetings and small groups

Call to Fellowship through Small groups, Grief support Group and celebrating Birthdays!

Advent Calendar Recap!

It's A New Day!

The Pastor's Post



Dearly Beloved, It's a new day indeed! As of this writing we are once again worshipping via zoom and taking great care to stay healthy in this COVID time. So you might be asking, is it really a new day? Seems like more of the same to me!

On the one hand, you would be right, however, with God, it is ALWAYS a new day! God's mercies are new every day and you and I can marvel in that fact! As we seek to continue to be the presence of Christ in this community, I am finding all sorts of new ways to connect and share the love of God.

Remember that old fashioned thing called the telephone? Yes indeed, more people are picking up their flashy new iphones, androids, etc. and making person to person calls to touch base and lift up one another. Texting and emails work too, but hearing the voice on the other end of the phone is so sweet!

I'm a visual and tactile person, so pastoral work on the phone is a stretch for me. I like seeing you, looking in your face, putting my arms around you and holding hands as we pray. It is not to be at the moment, but I am confident that the Holy Spirit is surrounding us while we gather, no matter how or where.

As we worship, call and email together, let us vision the Holy Spirit hovering among us and let us see what God is calling us to do!

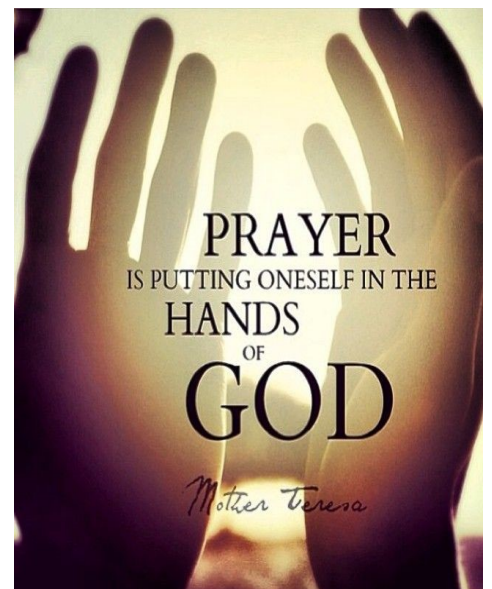
As part of this ongoing zoom life we are living, I am inviting you to join me in a prayer meeting on Wednesdays when possible. I will send the link on Monday's. See the box below for the details. *Loving you from a distance, Pastor Bonnie*



Join Pastor Bonnie for virtual prayer meetings on Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. via zoom. You will be sent a link on Mondays.

This is a time to come together and seek God's grace, comfort and guidance. It will be the best 20 minutes of your day!

If you are not on the church email list, call or email Pastor Bonnie and tell her you want to be invited to the prayer meeting.



Moderator's Musings

Darn this virus! It just keeps getting in the way of our return to normal! But we can overcome it with our loving and caring cards, telephone calls, and socially distanced visits. The way we care for one another now is so very important and will bring us that much more joy in reunion when we get past these difficult times. It's going to come to an end, I can feel it! And what joy we will have once again when we can gather together!

Speaking of gatherings, what a wonderful annual budget meeting we had on January 9th. Many thanks to all who attended. It was an impressive display of the democratic nature of our church and a joyous example of what we can do if we come together and truly listen to all voices. Pastor Bonnie gave us the incredible news of a \$94,000 gift from the Bissell family. Truly an answer to prayer as the budget committee had struggled mightily to close the gap between income and expenses for 2022. With the joyous news we were able to discuss the expenses and answer a lot of questions, make a few budget modifications, and pass the budget with a unanimous vote. Many thanks go to all who assisted in the process of developing and presenting the budget. And many thanks to those who attended, asked thoughtful questions, and participated in the adoption of the 2022 budget.

Spring is around the corner; we will turn that corner together!

Blessings, Carrie Shinn, Moderator



A note from the Soderer's:



The Soderer's thank our Church Family Members for your loving care of us over many months in 2021. Prayers, cards, telephone visits, food, an afghan and always your love, following us wherever we had to be for a day, night or week. You are all special people. Love Shirley.

A Life Celebration service for Fred will be held in the Spring. Fred Soderer passed away in December 2021.

Treasurer's Report

Hello All and Happy New Year. I am excited for 2022. I thank all of you who attended the recent budget meeting and all those who called with questions before it. It is encouraging for a Treasurer and leaders to know you really care and want to be involved in decisions.



Despite raising costs and well-earned staff increases, we were able to pass a realistic budget for 2022. It is not exactly balanced, but we have overcome anticipated deficits in both previous years, so I am more than optimistic. I have faith. I was very pleased with the amendments suggested and passed; they made the anticipated income more realistic and obviously, more aligned with the thoughts and vision of the congregation.

The miraculous unrestricted bequest from the Bissell Family is definitely a gift from God. We still need to hold true to our personal pledges though. The family has stated they are “thrilled to death that we use some of the gift to replace our broken organ,” which we know will cost at least \$35,000. Everyone at the budget meeting seemed to think that was a fitting tangible memorial. The congregation voted to use another \$30,000 to fund the Miscellaneous Income line item on the 2022 budget. All funds will stay invested until the money is needed. The Finance and Facilities team will be recommending to Council other ways the church might use the balance to meet needs and serve God.



I have finally relaxed having learned to trust more in God and you.

Mandy De Smidt, Treasurer.

Jesus said, Love God with all your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself! Matthew 22



Knitters & Hookers

Get your crochet hooks and knitting needles ready!



Join us at Liz Tussey's house on February 19, 11:00 to 1:00. Bring a sack lunch, your needles, crochet hooks, and your latest projects. Vaccinations for Covid are mandatory, mask are required and recent negative covid test is preferred.

Staff Update



I hope everyone is enjoying the beautiful weather and staying healthy. Since the Personnel team has a number of things going on, I thought I would do a Personnel update for my article.

The Church Secretary position is currently posted and we are receiving applications and setting up interviews. Peter is going to continue as the Church Custodian, so that position is filled. The Child Care worker position is posted in the local newspaper, Columbia College and at Bret Harte High school. We hope to get someone hired soon. We are waiting to post the Christian Education Director position until these other 2 positions are filled and COVID slows down.

The other project that Personnel has been working on is the evaluation of the Music Director and the Pastor. These evaluations should be in your email by now. The Music Director is evaluated by the Worship Committee, Council, and the Sound Committee. We usually have the Choir evaluate, but not this time since they are not meeting.

The Personnel team thought it would be a good idea to send the Pastor's evaluation to the entire Congregational this year, since it has been awhile since everyone has done it. Please fill out the evaluation, and send it back. If you did not get a copy of the evaluation, or would like a paper copy, please let me know. Thanks for all your support. *Patty, Vice Moderator & Chair of Personnel Committee*



The Blessing Box Update



Jeri Carson-Hull, the coordinator of our **Blessing Box** shared that we could use more food items at this time. We mostly need foods that are ready to eat, such as Chef Boyardee meals in a can. They need to be with a flip top lid.

This Blessing Box helps many people who just cannot make ends meet or are homeless. Your contributions are a life saver on many days. Thank you for your continued donations to this little food pantry.

You may drop items off at Jeri's home or the church office on the back porch. Please drop them off on Monday through Thursday.

For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; Matthew 25:35



Resource Connection Sunday—

Let's bring our bags of canned goods and staple goods, and our checks, as we continue our support in our county of The Resource Connection and the good work that they do.

Since we are not meeting in person, please drop off your bags the **Week of February 6 through February 11** at the church office and place them on the back porch. You may also leave them at Jeri Carson-Hull's home.



Small Groups Give Joy to our Lives in Times of Covid!



If you are new to our parish, you may not know about the wonderful opportunities to gather in small groups amid this Covid time. Faye Morrison and Marilyn Baisel prepare a brief study guide for our groups. Each group sets up its own time and place to meet. By now, most of the groups know one another well and take the necessary COVID precautions.

The time together is precious as it allows us to connect on a deeper level than through zoom. However, if you would like to be part of a small group but don't want to meet in person, please contact Faye or Marilyn so they can set you up with a group that does meetings by zoom.

If you want to meet in person and are not yet part of a group, then call them and they will connect you right away! This is a true blessing!

Recycle! The Next Date is March 2!

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!





Sharing the Joy with Our Partner in Ministry, The Resource Connection

(Tina Mather getting ready to deliver food)

Most of you already know that we are a partner in ministry with the Resource Connection. This organization serves over 900 families in Calaveras and Amador counties. Not only do they provide food, but many other services, such as child care, assistance with financial subsidy, housing, a place for women and men in crisis due to domestic violence, education and much more.

We partner with them because they already have these wonderful established programs and when putting our money and food together, we can achieve much.

Here is a letter we received from Tina Mather, the Director of the Resource Connection Food Bank.

Dear Members of FCCM.

On behalf of The Resource connection Food Bank, I would like to thank you for your generous donation of \$2911.98 and for all you have done to put food in the hands of those who need it the most. Your kindness means they have food for the holidays.

Through your support, we can continue to provide wholesome food, resources and more to those who may not have enough food to put on their table, For many, food is the perfect gift. Together we are accomplishing extraordinary things.

Thank you for being a champion for the hungry in our community! Gratefully, Tina Mather

If you would like to volunteer at the Resource Connection there are many opportunities available to you. **Our own Council Secretary, Barbara Olivier-Leigh, is a board member.** You can contact her for more information.

There are several ways to donate. You can bring food in grocery bags, or write a check to FCCM and mark either TRC-General, or TRC-food in the memo spot. The money to their general fund helps all of the programs in the organization.

Barb's email is: olivierleigh2@gmail.com Her phone is 951-312-5849



Is Your Information Correct?

We are hoping to print a church directory next month. We want to make sure we have your correct information. If you have access to a computer, please go to our website and click Engage and then find your name and make sure the info is correct. You are all entered in the system, so do not enter a new account. If you need help accessing it, please email Pastor Bonnie and she will walk you through it. If you do not have a computer or online access, please check the current directory to see if we have the correct address, phone

number, email etc. Also, please include your birthday. If we do not already have a photo of you, please email one to Pastor Bonnie or add it to your Engage account on line.



The Engage system is a wonderful way for us to keep track of things and is easy to use. It aides the office staff incredibly. Thanks for your help!

New Member Class to be Held in February

There is a myth going around many places that churches are closed due to Covid. We certainly are not! As a matter of fact, **we are as busy and vibrant as ever**. We currently have worship via zoom, prayer meetings, small groups, volunteers working with our partners in ministry, Committees and teams working hard, Parish Care happening every day and NEW folks joining us.

For now, we will begin our new member class on zoom, starting, **Tuesday, February 8 at 10 a.m.** if you are interested in finding our more about FCCM, then email or call Pastor Bonnie to receive a zoom link!

Perhaps you are trying to decide if we are a good fit for you as you seek to follow God's call in your life. These classes are full of good information, fun times of getting to know one another, and sharing the ways FCCM seeks to be the hands and feet of Jesus in our community and the world.

Once the Covid numbers start to decrease, we will try to meet in person in small gatherings. Join us for a marvelous time together!





Advent Calendars are a Great Gift to Many!

This year during Advent Season we had two special Advent events. Penny Sarvis created magnificent Advent Calendars of our church and offered them for sale as a fundraiser for us. Not only were they so gorgeous, but a true keepsake. Her artistic work blessed us all and we received almost \$1000! Thank you Penny!

The other Advent Calendar that brought so much joy was through our Family Program. Members of the church volunteered to provide each child with an Advent calendar. You can see both Advent calendars given to Stella Sundberg in the photo above. Monika Riedel made the box Advent Calendar for Stella.



Stella's father Shad, stated this. "It used to be that Stella would ask, how many days till Christmas. When she received the calendars she asked, how many days until Advent?" What a great joy!



Monika Riedel (left) and Penny Sarvis (right)

Sharing Our Grief Brings Healing and Hope: A Time of Support

In 2021, our parish experienced many losses. We had over 16 deaths of either members or family members. Our grief is deep and compounded by our inability to gather in person and weep, remember and hold on to each other. Yes, we have prayed, sent cards, made phone calls and even provided meals, but the wounds still remain. We want to walk with all of you in this tough time. We will be holding some support group sessions for those coping with the sorrow and pain. Mary Kelly will facilitate the meetings and Pastor Bonnie will start the first one. We are trying to gather a sense of how many of you be interested in participating so we know if we can meet in person. We also want to know the best times for you to meet.



Please send an email or call the church office to let them know you would like to be included. We will then notify you of our first meeting in February.



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

<i>Angela Patterson</i>	9
<i>Paula Smith</i>	11
<i>Tracey Ellifritz</i>	12
<i>Carol Dougherty</i>	14
<i>Shad Sundberg</i>	16
<i>Monika Riedel</i>	18
<i>Vena Graves</i>	19
<i>Chelsea Page</i>	19
<i>Colleen Silva</i>	21
<i>Hilary Oldenkamp</i>	28
<i>Joanie Singleton</i>	28



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:

Sharon Grassmyer & Family

Shirley Soderer & Family

Joanie Singleton

Tabitha Kremesec

Connie Cook & Family

Mary Dahl

Hilary Oldenkamp

Angela Patterson

Diane Brown & Jesse Hampton & family

Patti & Steve Pollock




Laura Argento & Sally Elliott

The Bissell Family

Monika Riedel

Tracy & Kelly Ellifritz



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
February 2022			10:30 a.m. Zoom Prayer Meeting			
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
10 a.m. Zoom Worship	Resource Connection Bags Bring to church office all week. Office closed	10 a.m. zoom New member Class 7 p.m. LGBTQ Youth				
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
10 a.m. Zoom Worship	1 p.m. Finance & Facility meeting Office closed	10 a.m. zoom New member Class 7 p.m. LGBTQ Youth g				
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
10 a.m. Worship Council Meeting	Office Closed/ Holiday for staff	10 a.m. zoom New member Class 7 p.m. LGBTQ Youth				
27	28					
10 a.m. Worship	Office closed	10 a.m. zoom New member Class 7 p.m. LGBTQ Youth				

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FEBRUARY, 2020

DATED MATERIAL— DO NOT DELAY

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Murphys, CA 95247

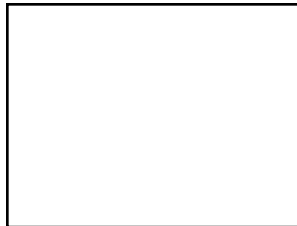
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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

First Congregational Church of Murphys

THE NUGGET



www.ucc.org

First Congregational Church of Murphys

United Church of Christ

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Pastor
Pastor Emeritus
Music Director
Custodian

Rev. Dr. Bonnie Hollinger
Rev. Dr. John Randlett
Dr. Daryl Hollinger
Peter Mari-Muro

Officers

Moderator
Vice Moderator
Treasurer
Financial Secretary
Clerk

Carrie Shinn
Patty Haskell
Mandy DeSmidt
Shad Sundberg
Barbara Olivier

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.