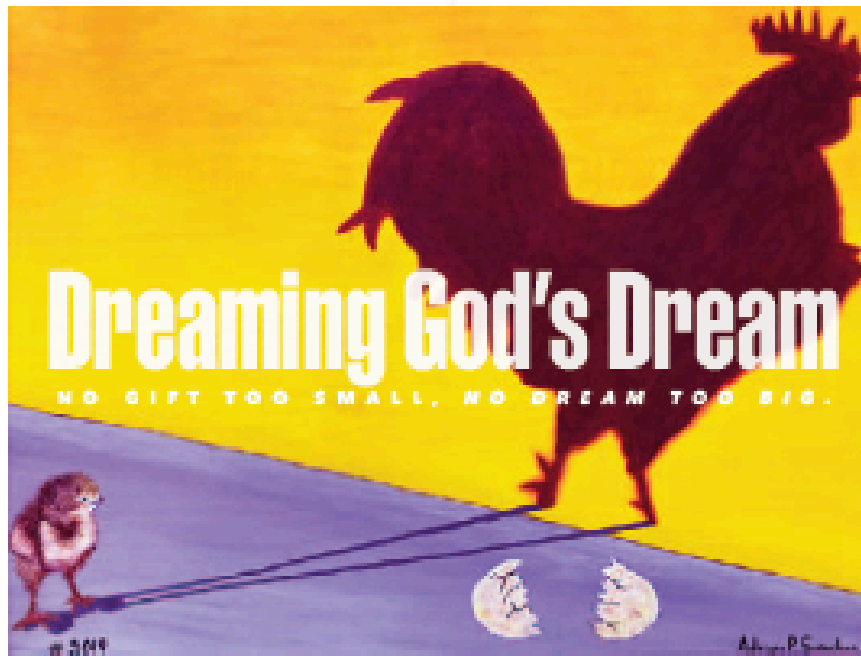




THE NUGGET

Open Door United Church of Christ

*Whoever you are,
Wherever you are on life's journey,
You are welcome here.*



New in the Nugget:

Poet's Corner
featuring Tony
Hoagland
page 6

In the News
Rev. Davena's
response to ICE
assault on UCC
Pastor
Page 8 - 9

*We will be celebrating our Stewardship season by welcoming guest speakers from our congregation in the coming weeks. We will be having our offering on **Sunday, November 9**. Please remember to bring your pledge cards with you and join us for an appetizer potluck and celebration after worship. Potluck sign-up sheets are in the Social Hall.*

Dreaming God's Dream Theme Story

Artist Adrian Sanchez, currently incarcerated in the California Institution for Men, created "Process of Life" as part of an arts program funded by a local congregation. He reflects, "I believe that our young ones begin life with innocent hearts. I have learned that there are better ways to do things without violence. We artists were asked to imagine what a city of compassion would look like and how the people there could cooperate so that everyone would have enough food. The Process of Life shows that there is pride and hope in carrying out positive ways of thinking about things like this." Sanchez' art reminds us of the power of dreams – that the chicklet can become the rooster, that the whisper of the Spirit can become a movement for transformation, that **no gift is too small to help make God's Dream a reality.**

*We are in the
season of
Pentecost and the
color is GREEN.*



Interim Thoughts

Did you know that before the invention of the printing press, what we now know as “the bible” had not been compiled into a single volume. Did you know that before Gutenberg’s invention the scriptures were almost exclusively read in community?

With the rise of capitalism in the west came the rise of what we know as the ideology of individualism. This had an impact on the reading and study of scripture. What was once a collective activity has become individualistic and isolated. The body of Christ has fractured into tiny units of private interpreters. Protestantism, of course, contributed to the rise of both capitalism and western individualism (Hello, Max Weber!). As the old joke goes, Protestants replaced the

Pope with a million popes! You will not find a single scriptural reference to “individual rights.” That was the creation of western philosophy, more Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke, and Kant than holy writ!

Capitalism, of course, is the greatest machine for creating wealth that the world has ever known, but it has also led to rising wealth inequality and fierce competition among individuals for scarce resources. It’s the law of supply and demand, predicated on a world of scarcity. This has had a huge impact not only on education (as students compete against one another other for grades—there can be only so many A’s handed out, making your neighbor a direct threat to your own economic future!) but has also affected the way we interpret scripture, and the church has been the poorer for it.

Scripture was designed to be read—wrestled with—in community. Not only among those physically gathered on a Sunday morning, but as the body of Christ across time and space.

Modernity owes a debt to those who came before us, our spiritual ancestors who grappled with the mysteries of sacred scripture for millennia.

What happens when we read in isolation—just me, the Spirit, and my Bible—absent the sounding board of our multi-millennia, racially and economically diverse family?

Well--- 2 Timothy 4:3-4 happens. And things like White Christian Nationalism.

“For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound teaching, but, having their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths.”

The antidote to “private interpretation” and “the vanity of ear tickling” is to spend some time with our sisters and brothers studying the scriptures in community.

Yes, I am talking about starting up a bible study at Open Door. Anyone interested? I have no interest in “leading” a bible study where one person has the correct answer and the rest of us are passive receptacles being force fed “the truth.” I’m talking about what Walter Wink calls “transformative bible study” where we are all active participants, and no one has a corner on truth; where everyone benefits from each person’s contribution, and no one is left out or made to feel dumb, inadequate, or unlearned. A bible study that brings us together and is open to a multitude of perspectives, not bible study that isolates us and emphasizes our differences.

Interested? Drop me a note and let me know you’re interested, and when you might be available. In person or via Zoom? Morning or evening?

Your brother,
Gary

Tuning in With Our Music Director

It's November and you know what that means! Musicians, like Santa's elves, are busy preparing gifts of music for the Advent and Christmas seasons.

The vocal choir is gaining momentum, and will have a lovely anthem for you each Sunday of Advent, which begins on November 30.

The handbell choir has begun rehearsing music for Christmas Eve, and all are welcome to join in the ringing - no experience or note-reading ability is necessary. But, because each ringer is responsible for two notes, it is important to be able to commit to rehearsals and to the services where handbells will play - it may not seem like a lot, but two missing notes can leave a big hole in the music!



The rehearsal schedule is as follows (all dates are Saturday mornings at 10:00):

November 8

November 22

December 13

December 20

MUSICAL SANCTUARY

The theme of the November Musical Sanctuary is "Nurturing Faith and Gratitude." We will practice being grateful for all of life - not just the things we like - to help develop faith as defined by Erik Knud-Hansen in his book, "Imperience": "An open and trusting quality of mind that creates balance in perilous circumstances by not reacting or trying to force a particular outcome. Faith supports courage and equanimity when we need to act in the present without knowing what the result will be."

Sunday, November 16, 5:00 p.m.

All blessings,
Kate

MUSICAL *Sanctuary*

**Nurturing Faith
and Gratitude**

*Music and Guided Meditation
with Kate Moody*

Sunday, November 16, 5:00 pm

Open Door UCC

509 N Algiers Street

Murphys

by donation



*Kate Moody is
available for piano
and Musical
Creativity lessons for
adults and children.
Please reach out to
her for more details.
coco@katemusic.com
(503)701-1951*

Vice-Moderator's Musings



Here we are in November already! To me, November is the start of the Giving season: thanksgiving, Christmas giving ... and church giving - also known as Stewardship. Of course, we try to be giving all year round, but the end of the year seems to be a special time to consider what and how we give to others. Here at Open Door UCC, we ask you to think about how important our church community is in your life, and to let us know how much you can and will contribute to our church for the next calendar year. Letting us know helps the Budget Committee and the Council, realistically plan the budget for the upcoming year. The budget reflects the Church's priorities and fuels its mission, and your pledge helps us to realize the goals we set as a congregation.

Just like our personal budgets, many of the church's expenses are rising, so we ask that you consider increasing your pledge a bit this year. Our pledges are the most important source of funding everything we do as a faith community, from paying the salaries of our pastor and staff to supporting our outreach ministries, our pastoral care, our worship, our music, our education programs, and our facilities. Spiritually speaking, our pledge is both a statement of thanksgiving and a visible sign of our commitment to follow in the way of Jesus. Each of us is called to play a significant role in our church's mission to this community and to the world. Please join me in making your pledge by November 9th.

Thank you!
Barbara Olivier

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, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. ... Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.

-Matthew 25:35-36, 40



Dreaming God's Dream

NO GIFT TOO SMALL, NO DREAM TOO BIG.

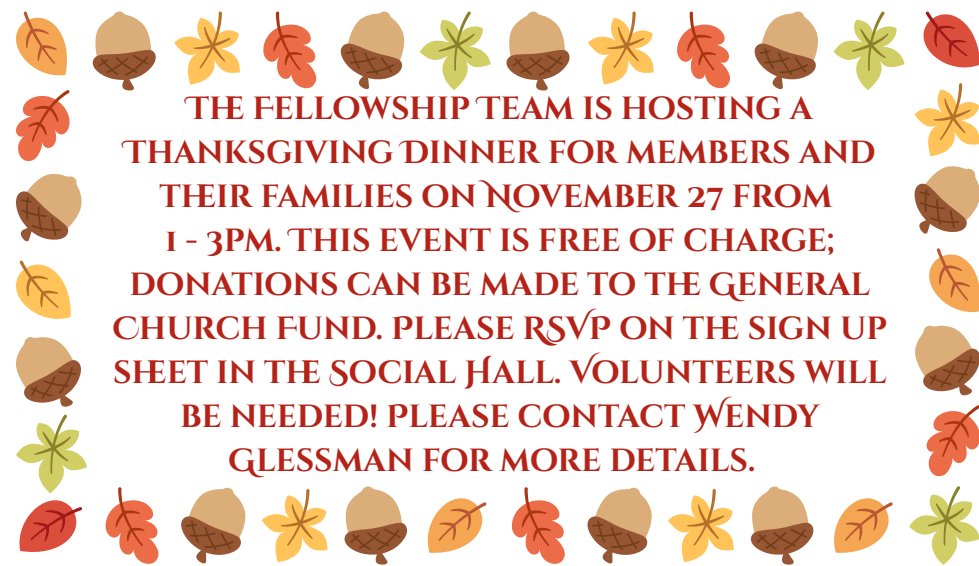
Treasurer's Report

Thank you to everyone that participated and supported the latest Budget revision. Financially it has been a difficult year with all the changes our Church has had. I will be starting Budget meetings in November, and I hope that we can be more realistic about our Budget in 2026. Please make sure that you turn in your pledge cards as soon as you can so we can have a realistic estimate of income. Thanks for all your support and for completing your pledges for this year. Please call if you have any financial questions. Patty



Christian Education Recap

It's safe to say that Fall is here. Sunday school has been busy making temples, doing leaf prints and studying the Old Testament. The faith links have been turning to God, trusting and following God, talking to God and celebrating God's love. Remember that Advent begins on November 30th, so I will be sending home Advent calendars for the Sunday school students. December 7th is the Advent workshop which is a craft workshop for all ages. We are also starting to prepare for our Christmas pageant, which is on December 21st. I will be contacting families to see if you will be in town for this event. These last months of the year are always a busy time for us. Hope to see you and your children at Church each week. Patty



**THE FELLOWSHIP TEAM IS HOSTING A
THANKSGIVING DINNER FOR MEMBERS AND
THEIR FAMILIES ON NOVEMBER 27 FROM
1 - 3PM. THIS EVENT IS FREE OF CHARGE;
DONATIONS CAN BE MADE TO THE GENERAL
CHURCH FUND. PLEASE RSVP ON THE SIGN UP
SHEET IN THE SOCIAL HALL. VOLUNTEERS WILL
BE NEEDED! PLEASE CONTACT WENDY
GLESSMAN FOR MORE DETAILS.**



***Daylight Savings ends on
Sunday, Nov. 2. Don't
forget to set your clocks
back one hour on
Saturday night!***

SMALL GROUP SCHEDULE

First Fridays Friday, Nov. 7 2pm Alan Horvath	The Seekers Tuesday, Nov. 18 5pm Faye Morrison	The Wanderers Friday, Nov. 21 10:30am Marilyn Baisel
South Grove Bunch Monday, Nov. 10 5:30pm Faye Morrison	Faith & Friends Thursday, Nov. 20 10am Pam Kimes	Angels Angels Weds., Nov. 26 11am Barb Olivier



The Knitters and Hookers have resumed their monthly gathering. This group is an official ministry of our church, concentrating on making beautiful Prayer Shawls for those who need some comfort. They meet on the 4th Wednesday of the month, with their next gathering being held on November 26. Please contact Liz Tussey for more information.

Poet's Corner

On October 26 Pastor Gary preached a sermon that referenced a Tony Hoagland poem, “Bible Study.” Here is more about Tony Hoagland—a review of his last book, published just four months before his death in 2018—the review is written by Chris Menezes, and was first published in South 85 Journal, online.

Priest Turned Therapist Treats Fear of God by Tony Hoagland

Chris Menezes

Tony Hoagland's last book of poetry, *Priest Turned Therapist Treats Fear of God*, published in June of 2018, just four months before his death, explores the tangles of contemporary human experience that looks for beauty and happiness within the current American milieu of late stage capitalism, fraught with inequality and injustice. While there are no direct references to Hoagland's illness within the book, we see a poet at the end of life trying to take it all in and make peace with everything—the good, the bad, and the messy.

Rather than detangle the mess that life makes of emotion and thought—the highs, lows, monotonous loops and insane contradictions—Hoagland presses a finger on the common piece of thread that connects the entire ball of yarn. In tracing the pattern, he shows the intricate beauty behind the entanglement, enjoying every knot and twist. There is a certain powerlessness to Hoagland's observations. This is not a book of answers, but a means to cope through laughter, connection found in brief everyday moments of shared relief, joy, and suffering. He does this through clear images, direct language that swings from elliptical fragmentation to narrative, blending everything we've come to love about Hoagland's poetry—astute observation, humor, profound sadness and pleasure found in the most unlikely of places.

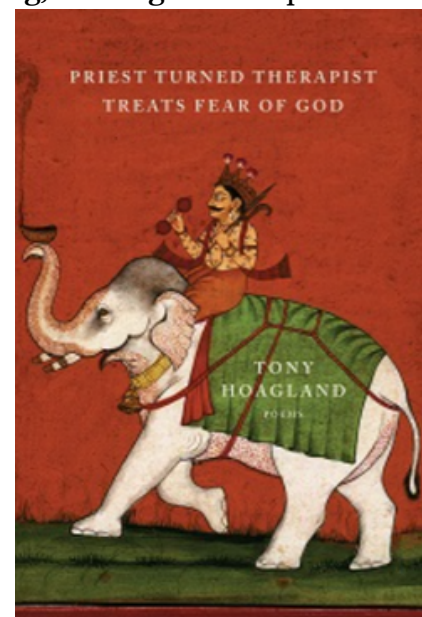
Divided into four sections of over sixty-five pages of poetry, *Priest Turned Therapist Treats Fear of God* begins with the poem “Entangle,” a perfect introduction to Hoagland's motives, laying the foundation for what the reader can expect from the rest of the book. He begins, “Sometimes I prefer not to untangle it. / I prefer to remain disorganized.” Right away, Hoagland elevates the messy over the organized, imperfection over perfection. Although he starts with this entangled abstraction, he quickly puts feet and body to it by comparing it to a certain shrubbery he passes on Reba Street, offering a nice image that serves as both metaphor and visual aid for his abstract subject—society or life. Within his description of the shrubbery, Hoagland notes, “The white and purple combination of these species, / one seeming to possibly be strangling the other, / one possibly lifting the other up—it would take both a botanist and psychologist to figure it all out, / -but I prefer not to disentangle it.” Hoagland's metaphor is not difficult to unravel, but rather, in classic Hoagland fashion, it's clear, accessible, and clever as hell. He is not here to offer an answer or a reason to the complications of living, although we suspect that he could, and even says, “I could probably untangle it.” He would rather enjoy it:

yet I prefer to walk down Reba Street instead

in the sunlight and the wind, with no mastery
of my feelings or my thoughts,

purple and ivory and green, not understanding what I am
and yet in certain moments remembering, and bursting into tears,

somewhat confused as the vines run through me
and flower unexpectedly.



Hoagland writes with a keen awareness of his chosen aesthetic, moving from elliptical styles to traditional narratives, depending on his objective. The first elliptical poem in the book is found just five poems in, using fragmentation, humor, and abstraction. Hoagland writes about elliptical poetry quite a bit in his craft book, *Real Sofistikation*, often discussing the potential pitfalls and/or positives of the aesthetic compared to traditional narrative poetry. He addresses this very topic within his elliptical poem “Which Would You Prefer, A Story or an Explanation?”

Hoagland gives us both, as the poem shifts to fragments of dialogue that jump in time and place, to observations to abstract ideas, like in the lines “I am interested, said Madeline, in people’s ability to live their lives / in fragments. Two ex-husbands, three jobs in seven years, one daughter, / a geranium, and a certain TV show,” and “The pursuit of happiness is a particularly American form of / nihilism,” and then “I can’t tell the difference between inner peace and mild depression, / writes her friend from Philadelphia, in small blue script / on the back of a postcard of Chagall.” Hoagland introduces us to Madeline as a character within the poem through snippets of dialogue and fragmented moments, teasing the narrative until he drops the plotline that could be her story: “In the next two years, Madeline will have a love affair, / visit Bali and return, develop endometrial cancer, / and reconnect with her childhood Catholic faith, / worth more to her than anything.” Hoagland then shifts away from the straight narrative of Madeline to end on a fragmented image that seems to serve as a metaphor for not only Madeline’s life, but all of ours: “Even at the bottom of self, even in the illness and despair; / in hubris, ecstasy and gloom, / the chick can be heard inside the shell, / pecking to get out. Pecking and pecking.” The reader is left to answer the question of the title for themselves; however, after navigating through Hoagland’s entanglement of elliptical and narrative devices, the answer seems to be both.

There are so many other great poems that are worth talking about in *Priest Turned Therapist Treats Fear of God*, but for the sake of brevity, I suggest you pick up a copy and read it for yourself. You will enjoy Hoagland’s social-political humor, like in the book’s title poem: “In Hollywood, fifty movie stars have pledged / not to use their swimming pools / until world thirst is ended;” his ability to capture moments of human honesty within clear images, like in the poem “Examples of Justice:” “when the attorney stands beside her car, / removes her sunglasses, and looks up at the sky;” and be comforted by a shared confusion and love for what is natural, like in “Hope:” “I didn’t belong in the Twenty-First Century. / I didn’t belong anywhere anymore. / I sat in my old-fashioned kitchen / staring at the green Formica counter. / That’s when the butterfly floated through the window, / and landed on the artificial flower.”

Chris Menezes holds an MFA in Poetry from Converse College. His work has appeared in journals like Pearl, Switchback, RipRap, Buck Off Magazine, Foliate Oak, Goldman Review and Best Emerging Poets of California. In addition to working as a freelance writer in California, he volunteers on the poetry committee of South 85 and Carve Magazine.



In the News

At Bay Area protest, a second pastor is shot by federal agents with a pepper round

OAKLAND, Calif. (RNS) — For the second time in six weeks, a pastor was struck in the head with a pepper round fired by a US immigration agent as faith leaders protested the arrival of more than 100 US Customs and Border Patrol agents.



The Rev. Jorge Bautista was hit with a pepper round during a protest, the second time this has happened to a pastor in six weeks, on Thursday, Oct. 23, 2025, in Oakland, CA. Photo courtesy Leah Martens.



Dozens of demonstrators gathered before sunrise on Thursday, Oct. 23, 2025, at the entrance of the narrow bridge to Coast Guard Island, a military base near Oakland, to protest ICE and National Guard deployment in the city. Photo courtesy of Leah Martens.

Response from our NCNC Conference Minister

Northern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ Statement

After the events of yesterday in the Bay Area, when a dear colleague Rev. Jorge Bautista was directly attacked by ICE agents. He was standing with a banner peacefully and received an unprovoked blast of pepper spray on his face. He was sent to the ER because the effects of a direct blast caused him immediate harm and trauma. In proximity, Rev. Bautista was with Rev. Penny Nixon and Rev. Deb Lee who was also traumatized by witnessing this violence to their beloved colleague.



As the Conference Minister of NCNC, UCC

I state the following:

We believe in every human being right to be free

We believe no human being is illegal

We believe that families belong together

We believe in fighting injustice with love

We believe in justice and freedom for all

We reject ICE terrorism

We reject government's invasion

We reject dehumanizing of communities

We reject the cuts on social benefits that will leave people in poverty

God is still speaking

Our God is with us

Our God sees us

Our God will not leave us alone

With every peaceful and prayerful protest is an act of prophecy and justice.

We are building peace with every act of kindness

We are building a word where love is the rule of law

We still believe justice and freedom*

We still believe that justice is for ALL*

We still believe in Faith that won't be silent*

The Earth is crying and is called to mend her, her healing comes when we still believe.*

****Song Lyrics from "We Still Believe"**

Composed by Dr. Patricia Gill - City of Refuge United Church of Christ

On Behalf of your Northern California Nevada Conference Staff,

Conference Minister-Rev. Dr. Davena Creer-Jones



**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA
NEVADA CONFERENCE**
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Cherishing our members, friends, and community...



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Margaret White 1
William Rosenhart 8
Sanders LaMont 9

George Glessman 11
Sandra Sather 11
Vienna Watkins 12
Hiro Phillips 14

Sharon Grassmyer 17
Vicky Oneto 20
Evelyn Betts 21

Sandy Fox-Hill 21
Joe Silva 23
Shannon Ryan 30

Prayer List

The scriptures tell us:

“And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Jesus Christ.”

Philippians 4:19

We continue to witness the stories of how God answers our prayers!

God hears our cries and answers them.

Let us pray daily for the following members and friends of our community:

Shoshana (Laura Leonard)
Vienna Watkins
Elaine Lewis & Family
Diane Tussey
Jodie & Dianne Gibson
Gordon, Willow, Emre (Jesse Hampton)
Tracey Ellifritz
Tabitha Kremesec
Shirley Soderer
Bonnie Danielson (Mark McCormick)
Terry Dowell
Lauren Clark Tusa (June Perry)
Tom Olivier
Robin Chesnut
Sandy Fox-Hill
Laura Miller (Noel Helmbrecht)
Adrienne Zimmerman (Carrie Shinn)
Tari Takara
Ben Richardson (LaMonts)
Bruce (Miriam Thorsen)
Dodi Horvath
Brian Whitehead (Nancy Burton)
Rev. John Randlett
Rev. Marty Williams



Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

 November 2025 						
2 9am Choir 10am worship Holy Communion Daylight Savings Ends	3 6:30pm Al-Anon	4 10:30am Past. Search mtg., EEC	5 8:15am Morning Prayer, Zoom 4:30pm Worship mtg. Zoom 12:30pm AA 6:30pm AA	6 	7 12pm Women's AA 2pm First Fridays	8 10am Bell Choir rehearsal
9 9am Choir 10am Worship TEAM BUDGETS DUE Stewardship Sunday	10 11am F&F mtg. ZOOM 12:30 CE mtg. EEC 5:30pm South Grove Bunch 6:30pm Al-Anon	11 	12 8:15am Morning Prayer, Zoom 12:30pm AA 6:30pm AA	13 	14 1pm Budget comm. mtg. Social Hall 12pm Women's AA	15
16 10am Worship 11am Council mtg., EEC 5pm Musical Sanctuary	17 6:30pm Al-Anon	18 10:30am Family Connections. EEC 12:30pm M&C mtg., EEC 5:30pm The Seekers	19 8:15am Morning Prayer, Zoom 12:30pm AA 6:30pm AA	20 10am Faith & Friends	21 10am The Wanderers 12pm Women's AA	22 10am Bell Choir rehearsal
23 9am Choir 10am Worship Guest Preachers Mickey & Penny!	24 6:30pm Al-Anon	25 	26 8:15am Morning Prayer, Zoom 11am Angels Angels 11am Knitters & Hookers 12:30pm AA 6:30pm AA	27 HAPPY THANKS GIVING	28 12pm Women's AA	29 10am Advent decorating
30 9am Choir 10am Worship						

The office will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday on Nov. 27 & 28.

Church Office Hours: Mondays 8am - 1pm, Tuesday - Friday 10am - 2pm

Pastor Office Hours: Monday - Wednesday 10am - 2pm or by appointment (808)283-8035

God's love echoes through us to all creation.

Webpage: www.fccmurph.org

Email: nugget@fccmurph.org

Phone: (209)728-3141

NOVEMBER 2025

DATED MATERIAL - DO NOT DELAY

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Murphys, CA 95247

509 N. Algiers Street

PO Box 48

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

First Congregational Church of Murphys

THE NUGGET



www.ucc.org

Staff

Interim Pastor Rev. Dr. Gary Percesepe

Pastor Emeritus Rev. Dr. John Randlett

Music Director Kate Moody

Secretary Jenny Fuqua

Custodian Lucie Tardif

Christian Ed Director Patty Haskell

Childcare Abby Fuqua

Officers

Moderator Carrie Shinn

Vice Moderator Barbara Olivier

Treasurer Patty Haskell

Assistant Treasurer Alan Horvath

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 25th of each month.

The Committee reserves the right to edit submissions for length and content.