



JANUARY 2021 VOLUME 19 ISSUE 1

THE NUGGET

First Congregational Church of Murphys, United Church of Christ



Epiphany

What is Epiphany and Why Should we Celebrate It? Because WE ARE the LIGHT OF CHRIST!


Christians celebrate Epiphany as the symbol of God becoming incarnate in Jesus Christ. It is a time of recognizing the light of Christ in our world.

In 2021, we need light more than ever. We do not need to travel far to discover the precious love of the Christ Child. It is here in our parish and community. Even though the past year was full of trials, we thrived. One of the best testimonies of a church is how they live in times of crisis. You are a stellar example of shining stars!

We loved and nurtured each other. We attended to our children and families through zoom and phone calls. We took care of our elderly by delivering meals, sending cards and creating a phone check-in system. We financially supported The Resource Connection, Habitat for Humanity, Sierra Hope Transition House, Uganda Orphanage, and our own members who needed money to make it through this rough year. We participated in our denominational offerings and held classes on how to be an anti-racist. Members spent hours tending to the landscape of the campus. These are just some of the ways we shined as disciples of Jesus.

Beloved, YOU ARE THE CHURCH!

Let us rejoice in the gift of love and light through Jesus Christ!



Epiphany begins
January 6th, it
begins in white and
changes to green



PASTOR'S ARTICLE

Dearly Beloved, as we prepare to enter the New Year of 2021, I am eager to see the adventures that we will journey together with God's grace abounding in us. Through the disastrous events of 2020, we have hung together, prayed, worshipped, given, and received.

We are the church, and we continue to thrive. We do so because of the love of God and the generous spirits that are alive and well within each of you. I joyfully reiterate The Apostle Paul's words.

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that God, who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ; Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace."

I am blessed beyond measure by your generous hearts. You give to the church, to one another and to the community. You uphold me and Dr. Daryl in your prayers and with cards and sweet gifts. Thank you, my wonderful people, thank you!

I wish I could adequately convey the great joy I feel when chatting with the children in our zoom sessions. They make me laugh, and share their wonderful stories which enrich my life. The youth are not wondering lost in this struggle, but participate in helping one another through the loneliness and the online classes, even as they miss a lot of the college life. Our zoom sessions are rich with dialogue and I learn something new every time.

Our zoom community chats are refreshing as we get to see one another's faces and for a moment we are transported to being in sacred space together.

Your comments about worship and daily devotionals give us encouragement as Dr. Daryl, Matt and Liz Graham and I work hard to bring you God's good news. We are thrilled that so many people join our services across the country!

As I close, I want to bless you. May God grant you a day filled with peace, joy and good health. Loving you from afar, Pastor Bonnie

Family Program

For Kids

The first and third Tuesday of every month at 5.30pm via zoom



for Parents

The second and fourth Tuesday of every month at 7pm via zoom





Dear Church Family,

This is the last message from me this year. It has been said before, but I say it again, "What a year it has been!" Seldom has our faith or resolve been tested so aggressively. As usual you have offered compassion, financial support, empathy, and prayers when the world seems to be unraveling. Your kindness and goodwill have been a beacon to God's love and your commitment to do His work. We have remained connected and on mission. You have blessed each other and the community in so many ways; may God bless you and yours as well.

**VICE
MODERATOR'S
MUSE**

We came together virtually on December 13 in a joyful celebration of who we are as a church. We received Norma Fritsche, long time participant into our flock as an associate member and then got down to business. We unanimously adopted the proposed 2021 church budget based on expectations that we will not get back together for worship until mid-year. We are still a little short of anticipated pledges to reach our conservatively anticipated income for next year. If you intended to pledge and have not sent in the card, please do so now. If things have changed and you are unable to pledge this year, please let us know you will be praying for the church and its mission. We know these times are tough.

We also amended our church bylaws to affirm legalities on contributions made through and by the church to protect future leaders from any missteps due to ignorance of the laws governing them. We heard from Diane Hosmer, our Faith Community Nurse, regarding the Needs Assessment form mailed to you earlier. She can serve us better if every adult in the church will return one. Revealing your identity on it is your option. We ended with a worship tradition when we shared our joys and concerns before Pastor gave the closing prayer. Thank you to the almost 40 who attended. We missed those of you unable to come and we hope to see your smiling faces soon.

May Christ's Peace be with you through the holidays. May you remain healthy and safe as you celebrate Christmas and enter a New Year.

With Joy and Thanksgiving, I wish you a merry Christmas and a safer more friendly New Year.

Mandy

thank you

*Joy Behind the Scenes!
Even though we are in COVID-19 sheltering in place, the church continues to grow and serve. Last year we had an anonymous donation of a dishwasher for Eastman. This has been on our wish list for a long time as small groups, LGBTQ Youth Group, AA groups, team, committees and prayer groups use the building and often serve refreshments and meals.*

Thanks to Phil Hosmer, the dishwasher is now installed and working! This gift will be a blessing and we thank the donor for their generosity!





For thoughts: A new frame



My mother was an artist. Oils and watercolor were her medium. Unfortunately, many of her paintings that grace my walls are framed by dark, heavily carved frames that were popular in the 1970s—not my favorite décor era. I recently determined I would appreciate her artwork more if I were not so distracted by the unattractive frames.

I concluded this is also applicable to life in these COVID times. COVID is a fact. The need to mask, social distance and wash hands frequently are facts. How I feel about this COVID picture depends largely on the frame I choose to put around it. Am I grieving not being able to spend time with friends and family? Yes, but how I feel about that grief changes when I think about how I am protecting them and doing my best in decreasing opportunity for the virus to spread. Do I wish I could just get on with activities I love, such as dining out, going to museums, and traveling? Yes, but how I feel about not being able to do those things now does not negate my need and duty to follow “the rules”. If I choose to reframe those losses as a time to reflect on all the good times I have had in the past with those family and friends and to look forward to the time we can be together again, I keep from wallowing in sadness and loss. If I think with joy about the great places I have been and things I have done, I realize I can do things at home I love. I can reframe what COVID precautions look like to me.

“The essential idea behind reframing is that a person’s point-of-view depends on the frame it is viewed in. When the frame is shifted, the meaning changes and thinking and behavior often change along with it.” A. Morin. There are many factors that make up our thoughts and ways of being, though we often have some control over where we allow our thoughts to take us. When I notice my thoughts and find myself sliding down that slippery slope of sadness, loneliness or despair I try to put on the brakes and look at the frame I have wrapped around the situation. Most often, in those cases, I have not included God in my thoughts. Asking God to help me put a new frame on the situation helps me to view my picture in a new light, giving me greater peace.

“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Phillipians 4:7 NIV

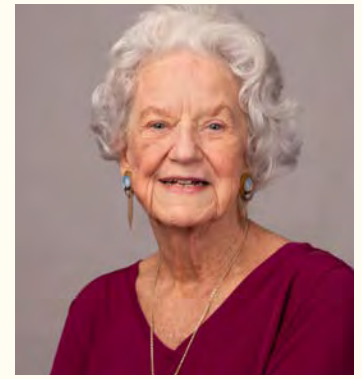
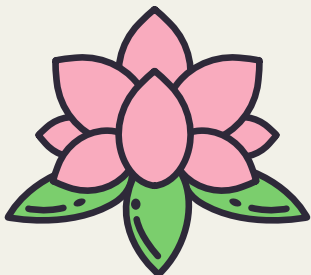


Congregational Health + Wellness Survey

Happy (and Healthy) New Year! As the Faith Community Nurse, I hope to develop programs and activities that are tailored to your health and wellness needs. Your participation in the Congregational Health + Wellness Survey will help us meet this goal.

- The Survey is strictly confidential. We are not keeping track of who has returned them but remember we can best serve you if you let us know what you want or believe will be helpful. If you wish to be contacted by the Faith Community Nurse, there is a place to make that request on the Survey.*
- Please complete a Survey for each adult (18+ years) in the household.*
- You received a copy of the Survey prior to the Congregational Meeting in December 2020 and will receive an email mid-January with a fillable PDF or you may print the PDF and fill it out. These may be mailed to the church or emailed to me at dhosmermsn@gmail.com or to the church office. Additional copies are available. You may call the office to have more sent to you.*

If you have further questions regarding the Congregational Health + Wellness Survey you may contact me at the email address above or call me at 209.559.5464. I am looking forward to helping you achieve your health and wellness goals in 2021!



SEASON OF LOVE

*In this season of love
be a child again. Gaze wide eyed
at stars hanging in trees,
bright lights dancing on roof tops.
Dream of hidden boxes holding
whispered wishes and come-true
dreams.*

*What brushed your cheek just now?
Was it winter wind or caress of
angel wing?
Each moment is another gift.
Some dove-gray evening
the greeting of a stranger may
become
the warm smile of a friend.*

*Feel the candle glow of home
create a shining world that holds
back the dark,
fills each empty space with music
and laughter,
memory and promise of all that was
and all that yet may be.*

*In the peace of this moment
in the magic and wonder
of this season of love ... cherish the
love.*

*By Carol Osterlund...sent with a
thank you and a blessing.*

Book of Joy

Hi Everyone and Happy New Year from the Book Study group, for the upcoming "Book of Joy",

Isn't this a perfect time of year to go on a journey to find joy? That is what The Dali Lama and Archbishop Desmond TuTu did, and shared their journey in their book Lasting Happiness in a Changing World The Book of Joy.

A group of you have already purchased the book that will be the basis for our study, but everyone is welcome. We can order additional copies of the book at about \$22., a little expensive, but it's only in hardcover.

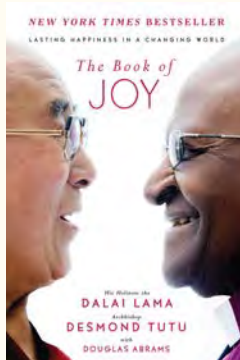
The plan is to begin in January via Zoom, and the choice of times and dates are: Tuesday at 11 AM Or Thursday at 2PM, and the dates would be Jan.19 Or 21, depending upon the majority choice. We can decide in the future if we want an hour or an hour and a half, each week or every other week--think about it. Please e-mail Marilyn or Liz and let us know your choice.

We will plan to host Zoom, and by now we are all "Zoomettes" whether we like it or not. We can manage to do a lot we do not like when it serves a purpose (so I tell myself).

A big question to think about, in the meantime, is how did these two spiritual leaders, The Dali Lama and Archbishop Desmond TuTu manage to find agreement and consolidate their thinking when they come from two such different worlds. They do this with a writer, Douglas Abrams, and The Dali Lama's translator, Jinpa. They trade stories and spiritual traditions throughout their journey.

*Happy New Year, and gratitude for the joy of a new beginning,
Liz and Marilyn*

*"What the Dalai Lama and I are offering is a way of handling your worries: thinking about others. You can think about others who are in a similar situation or perhaps even worse a situation, but who have survived, even thrived. It does help quite a lot to see yourself as part of a greater whole". ~
Archbishop Desmond Tutu*



Recycling



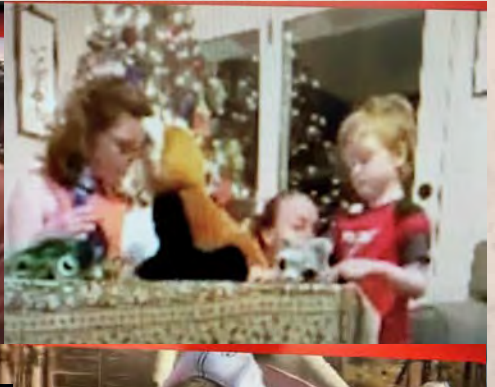
*Our next recycle date would be the first Wednesday of January which would be on the 6th.
10am-11.00am
Men's Fellowship*

Pastor Bonnie and Dr. Daryl are going to have a well deserved vacation and they are going to return on Tuesday 01/12/2021.





FAMILY CHRISTMAS PAGEANT 2020



a little bit different
but still Together



Outdoor



CLEANUP



Thank you
for making
a difference!



LGBTQ



LGBTQ

Youth and supportive friends
are

invited to join us for

dialogue,

education, friendship, and

support!

~Currently meeting online via

Zoom~

When: The 1st and 3rd Tuesday

of every

month at 7pm

RSVP with your email address

at

CalaverasGSRM@gmail.com

or call

(209)352-1828





Monetary Donation is a Sustaining Gift

We are so blessed to have received a monetary gift from Margaret White in honor of her beloved husband, Bob who passed away a few years ago. The gift is invested, and the monthly dividends will go directly in the First Congregational UCC's General Fund. Margaret stated, "This is something Bob wanted to do and I think it is important also."

Margaret continues to give in many ways to the church in addition to her financial contribution. She sings in the choir, volunteers in the office (when we are not in COVID-19) served on Women's Fellowship leadership and takes care of the roses in our garden, to name a few.

As we thanked Margaret for this generous gift, she said she was happy to be part of an ongoing gift into the general fund. These gifts enable the church to thrive now and in the future. The Finance and Facility is especially grateful when people donate to the General Fund of the church. We never know what lies ahead and for times exactly like the one we are experiencing; the church can continue to pay all its bills.

Sometimes it is not so glamorous to put money in the general fund, however, it is foundational to the financial health of this parish.

When Margaret was asked if we could share this with the congregation, she said yes, because of her deep love for Bob, and she hoped it would encourage others to do the same. If you would like to make a similar gift, please contact our treasurer, Sally Elliott or Pastor Bonnie.



Advent is a season of the liturgical year observed by Christians welcoming the coming of Christ. So many traditions are practiced beginning in Roman times, in the church and society. As we light the candles of our Advent Wreath each candle symbolizes meanings: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

Connie Cook is starting a tradition of her own---an Advent Tree. it is about 4-to 5 feet high and each abstract limb has an Advent word that are symbols on the Advent Wreath. Since these words will carry us into the New Year maybe Connie will leave her tree up in front of her house. so we see it in 2021. It is so special!





Happy BIRTHDAY



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

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:

All those who are ill
Bobby & Celine Breen & Family
Susan Giannini Chadwick
Jara & Max Clark
Tracey & Kelly Ellefritz
Tara Glessman
Hilary Oldenkamp
Angela Patterson
John Randlett & Family
Joanie Singleton & Family
Gail Withuhn
Josephine Zimbe & Family
Kim Plowman
Anna Abando & Family
all of the children at the orphanage

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

January 2021

S M T W T F S

3	4	5	6	7	1	2
10	11	12 7pm LGBTQ meeting	13 7pm Family Program for Parents	14 9am Executive Meeting 11am Community Chat	8	9
17 11am Worship 12.30pm Council meeting	18 10 am Outreach & Justice meeting 1pm F & F meeting	19 5.30pm Family Program for Kids 7pm LGBTQ meeting	20 11am Community Chat	21	15	16
24 11am Worship	25	26 7pm Family Program for Parents	27 11am Community Chat	28	22	23
31 11am Worship					29	30

Happy New Year!

God's love echoes through us to all creation.
Phone: 209.728.3141
Email: nugget@fccmurph.org
Webpage: www.fccmurph.org

JANUARY 2021

DATED MATERIAL—DO NOT DELAY

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

First Congregational Church of Murphys
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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509 N. Algiers Street
Murphys, CA 95247

THE NUGGET

Staff

Pastor Rev. Dr. Bonnie Hollinger
Pastor Emeritus Rev. Dr. John Randlett
Music Director Dr. Daryl Hollinger
Secretary Peter Marai-Muro

Officers

Moderator Mandy DeSmidt
Vice Moderator Patty Haskell
Treasurer Sally Elliott
Financial Secretary Shad Sundberg
Clerk Joe Silva



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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.