



MARCH 2022 VOLUME 20 ISSUE 2

THE NUGGET

First Congregational Church of Murphys, United Church of Christ

Lent Begins with Ash Wednesday Service

We will be meeting in person on Wednesday, March 2 at 7 p.m. to begin the season of Lent and celebrate the Imposition of Ashes.

Masks are required.

This service will be in the style of Taizé.

You may also choose to attend the Ash Wednesday service at Faith Lutheran Church in Murphys at noon.

Lent is a special forty days where we walk the path of Jesus to the cross. It is a blessing in our journey to enter more contemplative worship and practices.



Our Lenten devotionals this year will be video postings by Pastor Bonnie. She did this a few years ago and people have requested that she do it again. This series is called:

Out of Hibernation: A New Place to Be! You will not want to miss this delightful, funny, tearful, and provocative series. You will receive a link each day to the short devotional.



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



Pastor Bonnie's Article



Dearly Beloved, by the time you are reading this, we will be getting ready to worship and meet in person! What a glorious day this will be. One of the blessings of Covid has been to discover just how precious community is to our daily lives.

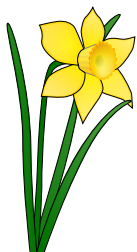
We are affirming the words in the scripture, :”Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another..” Hebrews 10:25-26

I especially like the phrase, “provoke one another to love..” Often when we think of provoke, we conjure up images of anger or torment. This passage propels us to a new kind of “provoking.” How might we do this? For me, it means, saying hello to people wherever I am. Opening doors and letting others go first. Picking up the phone and calling to say, “I was thinking of you today.” When someone hits me with nasty words about wearing my mask, I say, “It is frustrating isn’t it, but I need to do it for my health and others,” instead of walking away mad.

You get the picture – provoking love! Let’s do it and change the angry tenor of our society into one of grace and kindness. We can make a difference.

When we do gather in person, we can revel in the stories of how we are “provoking love.” Can’t wait to see you in person!

Antsy to be with you! Pastor Bonnie



Save the date



Pancake Breakfast

Date: Saturday, March 19

time: 7.30 am

Price of tickets: \$10

You may order your tickets online by going to our website and clicking Engage. or you can call the church office to reserve tickets and send a check in the mail or drop it in the slot in the office. Put "pancake breakfast in the memo spot." Tickets will also be on sale on Sundays following worship March 6 and 13.





Treasurer's report



Spring Clean-up on March 26th



Lots of helping hands are needed to accomplish the annual outdoor clean-up of FCCM grounds. From 8 a.m. until noon, members and friends have the opportunity to make a difference and help the property shine. There are many jobs, some bigger, some smaller, and no experience is needed. Bring garden gloves and tools and come on down!

We ended the year 2021 with our Operations Fund in the black and all Designated Fund balances as they should have been. That trend has continued through January without using any of the Bissell Family gift.

Income these past two months has been enough to cover the regular monthly expenses. Expenses were slightly under budget and income slightly above. We finished 2021 because of that same trend. The generosity of our membership and visitors and the frugality of teams and staff are the reason.

Endowments finished well in 2021 with an overall balance of almost \$377,000 and an invested saving account of just shy of \$10,000 for the Pastor's upcoming sabbatical.

The new organ was ordered with a down payment of \$24,000 which was taken as directed by the congregation from the Bissell Family Gift leaving us a healthy balance and will be used as the Congregation directed us to cover the Miscellaneous Income line item in the budget. The entire balance of the gift (designated and not) will be invested until needed so that we maximize growth and earnings while it is in our care.

I am certain I will be at the March Council meeting but may not be except by Zoom after that. As I told many of you earlier, I have purchased a condo in Arizona near my younger son and his family. I will be moving as soon as my house sells and definitely before June. I intend to complete my term remotely and hope to train my replacement before leaving. I assure you; I will be available as Sally was for me to help remotely anyway I can when the time comes.

Thank you again for all your love and support. I am excited about this new venture and know it is the right thing to do. As when I needed to leave the Bay Area ten years ago, God opened doors and led me here. I truly believe, this new adventure in Divinely directed as well.

Mandy De Smidt, Treasurer



Recycling

Our next recycling is on March 3rd, Wednesday. Please have all your items sorted when dropping off your recycling!

Men's Fellowship



Volunteers Needed



Over the last several months we have talked about fund raisers for the Church. One successful thing that we have done in the past was getting donations for parking during events in town. This was discussed and approved at Finance and Facilities.

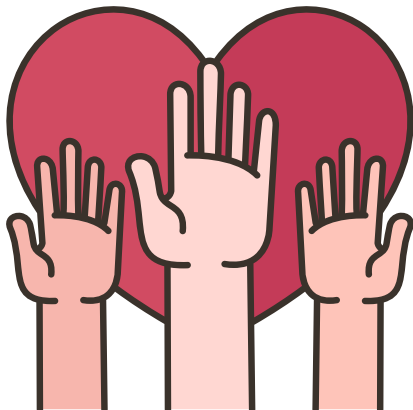
We will start out doing 4 events this year; Irish Days, Grape Stomp, Murphys Open House and Day of the Dead.

To do this we will need a "Parking Lot Coordinator". They will recruit volunteers for the shifts, as well as people to set up and clean up. We figure 2 people per shift will be enough. We have resources to help the Coordinator with the logistics.

Please let me know if you are interested or need more information.

Thank you... 

Patty



Taizé Ash Wednesday



**Wednesday, March 2nd at
7:00 PM**

**Come for an evening of
quiet meditation,
prayers and song in our
lovely sanctuary.**



Worship

Hallelujah! We are planning to begin in person Sunday worship on March 6. What a joyous time this will be. Masks are required and the Phasing Forward team is requesting that you wear an N-95 or KN-95 if at all possible. We will have some available for you. If you are experiencing any symptoms of a cold or any illness, please do not attend. We will wait until we can be outside to have coffee hour and social time.

blessed



New organ to be given by Bisell Family



NCNC Conference

Northern California Nevada Conference

annual meeting on June 17 – 19. It is the same date as our all-church

camping trip, so if you are not planning to camp with us,

please consider going to the conference. We have funds to

cover the costs and we can get two for the price of one if

we reserve early! This is a wonderful time to gather with

other UCC folks and celebrate and learn much about loving

God and others.

Call Pastor Bonnie if you are interested in attending.

We rejoice in the miraculous memorial gift by the Bissell Family.

When our current organ became unplayable this past year, the Worship Team and Finance and Facility Team began the discussion about what could be done to find a new organ. As we looked at the various options, it seemed like a long and daunting prospect. Then

the miracle happened. When the Bissell family heard that we needed to replace our current organ, they decided they want part of their gift to be used to buy a new organ. They are thrilled to offer this gift to our church.

The Worship Team and Finance Facility Team got quotes from the 2 most prominent digital organ companies: Rodgers and Allen. A team of 6 went to Vallejo to see and listen to the Rodgers Imagine Series Organ. They were in awe with what they heard and saw and recommended we purchase the Rodgers Imagine 235 organ. The Worship Team, Finance and Facilities Team, Executive Team, and Council unanimously voted to purchase this organ with the Bissell Family memorial gift.

The Rodgers Imagine 235 was designed to give an unparalleled organ experience for churches and institutions. The tonal palette has 217 different sounds offering an astonishing versatility of pipe stops and orchestral voices. Every pipe organ is professionally sampled using a unique high-resolution recording process. When people hear this organ, they often say “where are the pipes?” This particular organ is just the right size and sound for our small sanctuary. It will enable us to continue this beautiful tradition of organ music in our church, town and county. We plan to hold concerts for the public.

Classic Organs of Northern California will oversee the installation of the new organ and removal of the old organ. The organ is expected to be installed on or before May 31, 2021.





Easy Fundraiser

At our recent Annual Congregational Budget Meeting the congregation agreed to set a goal of \$5,000 under

Fundraisers to help support our 2022 budget.

Most of us shop at Sierra Hills Market, Sierra Natural Foods or Angels Market where they donate up to 5% to local nonprofits such as our Church.

*If you have lost your card, you can give your phone number each time you make a purchase at one of their 3 locations to give credit for your purchase.

*If you already have a card for another organization you can support more than one for example Murphys

Volunteer Library & FCCM by going to

www.eScrip.com and clicking on "my eScrip" to update your choices.

*If you do not already have a card, just ask your clerk to help you sign up. They will give you a one page sign up sheet that lists our Church as "FCCM Women's

Fellowship" or see Connie Cook to sign up.

Note--Women's Fellowship has forwarded all proceeds to FCCM Fundraiser since 2014 while the account has remained in the original name.



*Greetings to all
Knitters and Hookers!*

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DAY

We will meet FRIDAY, Feb 25,
11:00 AM to 2:00 PM, at Liz
Tussey's, 194 Oak Tree
Circle, Murphys. Please
respond to this email. Bag
lunch optional!



zoom | **PRAYER
MEETING**

Zoom Prayer Meetings are Uplifting and Encouraging! In the month of February, Pastor Bonnie led us in zoom prayer meetings at 10:30 a.m. each Wednesday. Each session began with music and an active prayer. Prayer requests were shared, prayers were offered and the session ended with music. This will continue in March if we can find a leader.

If you are willing to lead the group and have good internet connection please call Pastor Bonnie.





**Come Discover More about our Church!
A New Membership Class is Forming!**

We are so thankful for your presence in our church community! Whether you come often or a little, or perhaps you are in one of our small groups, you are precious to us!

Attending this class does not mean that you have decided to join our church. We are hoping that it might open the door for you to consider if we are a good fit for your faith journey.

If you would like to discover more about who we are here at First Congregational UCC, then email or call Pastor Bonnie.

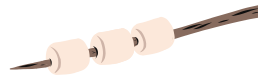
Together We Can!

New Member class will be held on March 6 following worship. We will meet in person in the Eastman building and a light lunch will be served. Masks are required. Please call the church office to reserve your place

WELCOME



Save the Date



All church camping trip at Big Trees State Park on June 17-19

Such an exciting news that thanks to **Tanya Sundberg**, Our Christian Enrichment Chair, we are scheduled for our all church camping trip on June 17 through the 19th.

We will be going to Big Trees again in the group camping area! **Mark your calendars now and save the date.** Tents and RV's are all welcome. We will send out more information when it gets closer to the time, but we know many of you are already planning your summer events and wanted you to know now!



Sunday School is back in Session

Parents, please drop your children
off at the Eastman building for
Sunday School. Masks are
required. Cannot wait to see you
again!



LGBTQ



We are continuing with the
schedule for youth on the 1st
and 3rd Tuesdays of each
month at 7pm to 8:30pm via
Zoom.

Thank you for your support
and for sharing this
information with those who
can benefit from the support of
this group!

Thank you,

Matthew Johnson
(209) 352-1828





UCC winds down 2 years of medical debt relief with \$33M Ohio buy



With a \$33 million purchase in Ohio, the United Church of Christ's campaign to relieve medical debt has just exceeded \$104 million — and is now winding down.

Showing some Valentine's Day love for its headquarters state, the UCC announced Feb. 14 that 10,757 households in 70 Ohio counties had received letters telling them their medical debt had been abolished.

The debt buy was the latest in an effort the UCC has been waging for more than two years with the help of New York-based RIP Medical Debt. This one used \$200,000 from a UCC Giving Tuesday campaign.

As with all buys in the series, the UCC sent the money to RIP, which bought the debt for pennies on the dollar. The \$200,000 also counts as a lead gift toward a new \$5 million campaign, "A Nation that Cares," that RIP is extending across denominations and geography. In it, "communities of faith across the country have formed a coalition to relieve medical debt throughout the United States, regardless of where the patient lives," the campaign's website said. "This effort was formed to expand their impact beyond small, regional communities so that families struggling with medical debt anywhere can benefit."

So, with the UCC wrapping up the collaborative national campaign, local churches interested in gifts toward debt relief still have options. **The Rev. Traci Blackmon**, associate general minister for Justice and Local Church Ministries, noted that they can give to A Nation that Cares. Or they can work directly with RIP. But the point all along, she said, has been even bigger than bringing "some measure of relief to tens of thousands of families unjustly burdened with medical debt."

"As we close this campaign by abolishing all the debt available to us in the state of Ohio, we urge you to remember charity and celebrations were never the goal of this initiative," Blackmon said. "Advocacy was. The public nature of our campaign helped us amplify the embedded injustices of our health care systems, the targeting of those least positioned to fight back, and the absurd profitability of sickness in this nation, all issues most media outlets are reticent about on their own merit."

The Rev. Traci Blackmon (right) speaks at an October 2019 news conference at Chicago's Trinity UCC. Church leaders announced more than \$5 million in medical debt relief in that city, launching a campaign that touched every region of the U.S.

Photo by Hans Holznagel.



The UCC buy in Ohio was largely concentrated on the state's eastern border, in Belmont County. There the church eliminated \$23.6 million in debt for 7,628 families. Neighboring Jefferson County was next, with more than \$6.6 million in debt abolished for 2,102 households.

Because RIP uses a confidential debt-buying process, the families that benefit from it are anonymous to the church. They received letters saying simply, "The funds that abolished this debt were generously provided by the United Church of Christ. **No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome in our churches.** You are beloved by God and your debt has been forgiven."

"To be honest I thought it was a scam at first," said the beneficiary, who identified himself to RIP as Chris A. "Nobody does this. You never hear of this happening. I have to blame it on what I did for a living. I worked in a prison my whole life. Whenever someone says something to you, you have to ask what their angle is. Well, I couldn't find your angle. I had to quit being so cynical. I was overjoyed and shocked that someone could do something so nice for me."

(to read the full article go to www.ucc.org/ucc-winds-down-2-years-of-medical-debt-relief-with-33m-ohio-buy)



March

BIRTHDAY'S

Don Anctil 1
Savannah Nunez 2
Joyce Hauck-Swanson 3
Sally Greninger 4
Diane Campana 8
Ken Grassmyer 9
Walt Marcus 11
Allan Thode 15
Daryl Hollinger 17
Kylee Luchetti 18
Carol Osterlund 19
Lizzy Restivo 22
Pete Ryan 23
Mary Kelly 26
Chris Markus 27



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

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

Alan & Dodi Horvath

Jody Quick

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 7pm LGBTQ meeting	2 10am Recycling 7pm Ash Wednesday Service	3	4 12-1.30pm AA World Day of Prayer	5
6 10am Worship New Member class 	7	8	9	10	11 12-1.30pm AA	12
13 10am Worship 	14 1pm Finance & Facility meeting Begin One Hour of Sharing Promotion	15 7pm LGBTQ meeting	16	17	18 12-1.30pm AA	19 Pancake Breakfast
20 10am Worship Council meeting 	21	22	23	24	25 12-1.30pm AA	26 8am Clean up Day
27 10am Worship 	28	29	30	31		

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

MARCH 2022

DATED MATERIAL— DO NOT DELAY

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

First Congregational Church of Murphys
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
PO Box 48
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THE NUGGET

Staff

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

Officers

Moderator Carrie Shinn
Vice Moderator Patty Haskell
Treasurer Mandy DeSmidt
Financial Secretary Shad Sundberg



www.ucc.org

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 15th of each month.

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