



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

# THE NUGGET

United Church of Christ



On Sunday, December 17 during our 10 a.m. worship service, our children and youth will be presenting the Christmas play, *The Time Machine and Its Christmas Magic*, written by Pastor Bonnie Hollinger. Come discover the many characters of the Nativity. The Bell Choir and Adult Choir will also be presenting their gifts of music.



**On Sunday, December 24, we will have worship at 10 a.m. and a candlelight service at 7 p.m. Come celebrate the birth of Christ with us!**

*The UCC staff is excited to invite you to our annual Christmas Open House at the church office on Wednesday, December 13 from 11am - 2pm. Treats will be provided. We hope you stop by to visit us!*



Join our Taizé service this Wednesday at 7 p.m. We will be receiving God's love as we meditate, sing chants, pray and reflect on the sorrows in our lives. In keeping with the Blue Christmas theme, we will seek comfort in this lovely candlelit worship. Be renewed and blessed! .

## Pastor's Article

Recently as I have been meeting with many of you and as we pray together, I am discovering that one of the great challenges for many of us, is the ability to let go of things we cannot change. I am reading a great book; *The Five Things We Cannot Change and the Happiness We Find by Embracing Them* by David Richo.

Richo suggests that when we say yes to the “givens” of life, this is a “yes” to the paradoxes of life. An example is this:

“We can make commitments even though plans fall through. We can maintain our compassion no matter how unjust the world may be to us. We can be loving toward others no matter how cruelly they act toward us. We can recognize people’s dark side and yet we do not give up on them, another feature of spiritual maturity.” [1]

He goes on to say, each time we practice saying yes to life, amid the pains and struggles, we grow in patience, forbearance, forgiveness, generosity, wisdom, appreciation, perseverance, and unconditional love.[2]

This is the way of Jesus and as I am learning to take one moment at a time and give up control of what I think needs to happen, peace resides in my soul. This is a continuation of what having breast cancer has taught me and the work with my Buddhist teacher, Vinod.

Each moment is a gift from God. Letting go of the need to control the moments is indeed a blessing. This Advent season, may we learn to say yes to life and experience wholeness and peace.

If you find yourself struggling in this season, when the Christmas decorations and music are already on full display, join us at our Taizé service on Wednesday, December 6 for a time of quiet reflection and to create space for the acknowledgment of the heaviness often carried during this season, as well as offering the hope that Jesus gives.

*A Blessed Advent to you all, Pastor Bonnie*



[1] Richo, David *The Five Things We Cannot Change and the Happiness We Find by Embracing Them*. 2005 pg. XIX.

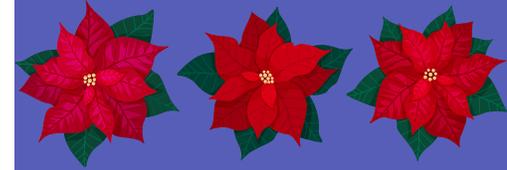
[2] Ibid. page XIX.

# Treasurer's Article



The budget committee has been busy revising and preparing the **2024 Budget which will be presented for approval on December 10th**. I have been working on a new Endowment Policy which includes a Prudent Investment Policy, but will not have it ready for a vote at this meeting.

I am excited about having some good financial advice from our Financial Advisors at UCFunds. I will be sharing some of this information at the Budget Meeting. The good news is that as of November 15th we have received 88% of the 2023 pledges. Hopefully, we can get this number higher. Please make sure you pay the remainder of your pledge before the end of the year. Thank you again for all your financial support. Please call if you have any questions or concerns on the budget or the Church finances. Patty



*Its time to order your Christmas*

*poinsettias! Every year, the Sanctuary is beautifully decorated with poinsettias that are in honor or memory of the loved ones of our members. They are available for \$15 and the deadline for ordering is December 17. You may fill out a form at church and return it, or you can contact the church office with the name of your loved one and payment info.*

**SING GENTLY**

**MOUNTAIN MELODY  
WOMEN'S CHORUS**

Presents: "Sing Gently"

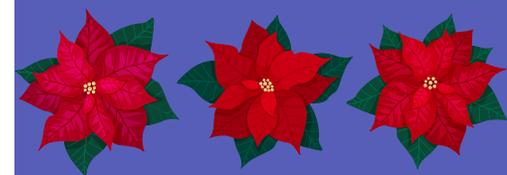
Our Holiday Music Program

**SATURDAY DECEMBER 2nd AT 9 PM**  
Baker Street West  
in Jackson CA

**SUNDAY DECEMBER 3rd AT 2 PM**  
Hotel Leger Banquet Room  
in Moke Hill CA

**SATURDAY DECEMBER 9th AT 9 PM**  
First Congregational Church  
in Murphys CA

**Come celebrate the Christmas Season with the Mountain Melodies! They will be presenting a concert on Saturday, December 9 at 2 p.m. right in our own sanctuary! Don't miss this opportunity to hear a fabulous local choir!**



# Moderator's Message

Is it a sign of aging that I think this year has just sped by? My goodness, it's already December! But what an eventful year it has been. We've welcomed new members, celebrated our volunteers, merged with the Union Congregational Church, and welcomed into our midst the membership of the Union Church with joy and thanksgiving. The various gifts that the Union membership has brought to us are just a delight. I'm still getting to know the various folks, and I'm hoping we all of us will continue to greet and welcome them.

Pastor Bonnie also had a refreshing (and very needed!) respite with her sabbatical from May – July this year. We are grateful she returned to us with renewed energy and spiritual joy.

The budget for 2024 has been carefully prepared by our Treasurer, Patty Haskell, and thoughtfully reviewed by the Finance and Facilities team, as well as the church Council. The resulting budget will be presented to the entire congregation for discussion and eventual approval on December 10th following worship. Be sure to join us to add your voice to the discussion and learn about the plans for 2024.

By the time you read these words, the sale of the Union Congregational Church buildings and grounds should be complete. Escrow was scheduled to close on 12/1/23. It's a bittersweet event to part with such a historic and sacred space, but we wish all the best to the congregation of the St. Gabriel Orthodox Church of Angels Camp, who will be refurbishing the property, and making it their own sacred space for worship.

We will be gathering an ad hoc team in early 2024 to complete the process of fully merging our two churches. Discussion will be had regarding potential renaming of FCCM to encompass both entities, and to decide what should be done with the 3 stained glass pieces that have been brought to Murphys from Angels Camp. Should you want to participate in this team, please let myself or Pastor Bonnie know.

submitted by Carrie Shinn



Many thanks to those who came to help with the church clean up, held on November 11. Joe Jackson, Connie Cook, Wendy Glessman, Terri Olivas, Karl and Vena Graves and Tami Chesnut were all there.

# Christian Education Recap



The Sunday school classes have been busy this month. We are practicing for our December 17th Christmas Program. Pastor Bonnie

wrote the script that includes a time machine that we enjoyed in our Vacation Bible school program. We have also been busy making gifts and cards for the residents of Avalon in Sonora. We are looking forward to our New Years Eve Game night when we celebrate the coming of the new year. This event is open to everyone, so please come and enjoy games, snacks and fellowship. Hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season and remember the reason for the season. Patty

# GAME Night



**COME JOIN US FOR FAMILY GAME NIGHT ON  
DECEMBER 31 AT 5PM. GAMES, FOOD, AND  
DRINKS WILL BE PROVIDED.**



## Small Group Meetings:

Dec. 5 & 12: Family Program

5:30pm in Social Hall

Contact Evelyn Betts

Dec. 8: The Wanderers

10am in Murphys

Contact Marilyn Baisel.

Dec. 11: South Grove Bunch

5:30pm in Eastman

Contact Faye Morrison

Dec. 12: Small Group #5

10am in Murphys home

Contact Pam Kimes.

Dec. 19: Cottage Circle

10 am in Murphys home

Contact Meg Self.

Dec. 27: Angels Angels

11am in Copperopolis

Contact Barb Olivier.

*\*If you would like to join a small group, please contact Pastor Bonnie.\**



The Knitters and Hookers will have their next gathering on Dec. 20. They meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from 11am - 2pm at Liz Tussey's house.

*We will be having TWO Christmas Eve services on December 24th. We will have our regular worship at 10am and then we will have a candlelight service at 7pm. We will have a special service with lessons and carols on December 31.*



# ***Advent Workshop December 2, 2023***

***Many thanks to our Christian  
Enrichment team, who put  
together a fun Advent workshop  
for the children. What a  
wonderful way to celebrate the  
First Sunday in Advent!***



A huge thank you to all the people who helped make the Thanksgiving meal a true joy: Wendy Glessman, chair, George Glessman, Tara, J.T. and Justin Glessman, Caity Johnson, Cheyenne Johnson, Joe and Teddie Jackson, Pat and Sanders Lamont. We so appreciated all the side dishes and desserts that you all made to make this feast a true blessing.



*In November, our church gave the Resource Connection Food Bank \$940 to help provide food to over 4,000 people in Calaveras County. The Food Bank has distributed over 909,000 POUNDS of food in 2023. Strong work and a HUGE thank you to all who donate to this essential program.*



On November 26, our church threw a baby shower for the Brown Family to welcome new baby, Olivia. Big brother, Eric seems pretty proud of his new sister. A new baby is always a joyous blessing!





**Many thanks to all who have turned in their pledge cards so far. Folks have pledged a total of 167,201 for 2024 and we are hoping to see that number grow. The practice of exercising financial stewardship is a spiritual discipline and a way to grow our faith. Thank you again for your part in the life-changing work of this congregation!**



Mark your calendars now for our famous Annual Heavenly Chocolate Festival, taking place on Saturday, February 10. More details to come!



**Sadie Oneto 1**  
**Carrie Shinn 6**  
**Candy Gutierrez 7**  
**Fred Cooper 8**  
**Jodie Gibson 8**  
**Ilona Igodi 8**  
**Marcus Collonge 8**  
**Larry Buchanan 13**  
**Bob Mulvaney 17**  
**Judy Hanson 18**  
**Elizabeth Machado 19**  
**Faith Roberts 19**  
**Patty Turcotte 19**  
**Alice Moore 21**  
**Ann Pestalozzi 23**  
**Kristina Lavender Love 24**  
**Charlotte Hunt 27**  
**Charles Moore 28**  
**Dylan Shinn 29**  
**Kett Conrad 31**



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:

## **Prayer List:**

**Bill Jennings**  
**Meg Self**  
**Elsbeth Mann**  
**Lynne Bird**  
**Dodi Horvath**  
**Gail Williams**  
**Shirley Soderer**  
**Tabitha Kremesec**  
**Hilary Oldenkamp**  
**Allen Davis**  
**Jess Hampton**  
**Tommy Pratt**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
10am Worship	6:30pm Al-Anon	5:30pm Family Program	7pm Taizé worship service 12:30pm AA & Al-Anon 6:30pm Al-Anon		12pm Women's AA	10am Bell Choir
9am Adult Choir ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING 11am OSJ EEC	5:30 - 7:30pm South Grove Bunch Sm. Grp. 6:30pm Al-Anon	10am Sm. Grp. in Murphys 5:30pm Family Program	12:30pm AA & Al-Anon 6:30pm Al-Anon	WIC in Social Hall 9am - 4pm	12pm Women's AA	10am Bell Choir 2pm Mountain Melody Concert
10am Worship Children's Christmas Play 11am Council EEC	6:30pm Al-Anon	10am - 12pm Family Connections EEC 5:30pm Cottage Circle Sm. Grp.	11am Knitters & Hooks 12:30pm AA & Al-Anon 6:30pm Al-Anon		12pm Women's AA	10am Bell Choir
9am Adult Choir 10am worship 7pm Christmas Eve service	Merry Christmas 6:30pm Al-Anon	Staff holiday, office closed	Jenny vacation Dec. 22 - Jan. 2		12pm Women's AA	10am Bell Choir
5pm New Year's Eve Family Game Night						

# December



God's love echoes through us to all creation.

Webpage: [www.fcmmurph.org](http://www.fcmmurph.org)

Email: [nugget@fcmmurph.org](mailto:nugget@fcmmurph.org)

Phone: (209)728-3141

DECEMBER 2023

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](http://www.ucc.org)

#### Staff

Pastor Rev. Dr. Bonnie Hollinger

Pastor Emeritus Rev. Dr. John Randlett

Music Director Dr. Daryl Hollinger

Secretary Jenny Fuqua

Custodian Lucie Tardif

Christian Ed Director Patty Haskell

Childcare Shayanna DuCharme

#### Officers

Moderator Carrie Shinn

Vice Moderator Barbara Olivier

Treasurer Patty Hskell

Assistant Treasurer Shad Sundberg

Financial Secretary Gary Carson-Hull

#### 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.