



Open Door United Church of Christ

Open Doors • Open Minds • Open Hearts

— *All are Welcome Here* —

JUNE 2026 VOLUME 24 ISSUE 6

THE NUGGET

Welcome New Officers!

At the Congregational Meeting that took place on June 28, our congregation elected our 2026-27 team of officers! Thank you all for always stepping up to lend your talents!

Barbara Olivier: Moderator

Patty Haskell: Vice-Moderator

Carrie Shinn: Treasurer

Darlene Davis: Clerk



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

WITNESS FOR JUSTICE

Join us as we stand for
justice, peace and
democracy each
Sunday from 3 - 4 pm
at the stoplight in
Murphys.

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

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
MONDAY - FRIDAY
JULY 27 - JULY 31
9AM - 12PM



Interim Thoughts



Beloved,

I write this message to you on June 12, two days before we leave for vacation. It's possible that you will read this, and I will already be back! But I wanted to share with you a few thoughts about staying and leaving home, wherever home may be.

Yesterday we had a call from the landlord of our beautiful home in Arnold. The landlord shared that she may be selling the house, and asked, "would it be OK if her realtor contacted us so a time could be set up to take a look at the house?"

After I hung up the phone, I was a bit in shock. I asked Resea if this unexpected news meant

that we should begin to look for a new house? We signed a one-year lease, which does not end until over three months from now! Does this mean the lease can be broken by the landlord (yes)? If we were to search for another house (meaning another move!) should we look for a short term or another long-term rental? But how can we know if will need a house for one year or less!

Of course, there is no point in "worrying" of "being anxious" about housing. Even if the house is listed, this does not guarantee that it will be sold quickly! Up and down our street are homes with "For Sale" signs hung on them!

Ha! This is the life of an "Interim" pastor. It can be quite an adventure!

But aren't we all interim?

And isn't the path of true discipleship always an adventure? Isn't that the point of following Jesus, who always manages to lead us into some "good trouble?"

Churches as well as individuals face this question: Do we stay where we are and remain comfortable, safe, and secure even though there is no future there? Or do we respond to the call of God to move beyond where we are, to embrace and risk the unknown possibilities of God?

Our ACT team was formed as a response to these questions. ACT stands for "Adaptive Change Team." The team is comprised of members of the Pastoral Search Committee (Carrie, Barb, Tami, Mark, Noel, Judy, and Rev. Penny, plus Rev. Mickey and Darlene Davis). These are the folks who brought to you those amazing five (5) conversations after church around tables and food as we attempted to discern where God may be asking our church to go!

The season after Pentecost is also known as Ordinary Time. There is a message here for us, if we are willing to hear. The Christian story moves from Resurrection through mystical appearances of Jesus to fire from heaven and speaking in tongues (Pentecost) to a church that sounds like a Marxist (or anarchist) boot camp: The community of believers was one in heart and mind.

None of them would say, "This is mine!" about any of their possessions, but held everything in common. The apostles continued to bear powerful witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and an abundance of grace was at work among them all. There were no needy persons among them. Those who owned properties or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds from the sales, and place them in the care and under the authority of the apostles. Then it was distributed to anyone who was in need.~ Acts 4:37

From all of this to . . . Ordinary Time. Nothing "novel or marvelous." Just the regular rhythms of life.

Open Door Church, what is happening to you in this season of uncertainty and pastoral transition is nothing terribly unusual. Don't fall in love with the misleading term "settled pastor," for the Christian life is never really settled, is it?

Change is the norm. We learn to adapt! And all of us are interim on this earth!

At the beginning of this mundane season, the lectionary relates two stories of following. In Genesis, God asks Abram to leave his home and follow him to a new land. In the New Testament story, Jesus asks Matthew, a tax collector, to follow him. In both readings, following God is an act of faith. But following also involves some pretty regular things — packing up, venturing out, pitching a tent, having a meal with new friends. Following God — responding to the call — takes us from a known place to another place, a place that will become a new and different home.

Ordinary Time begins with two journeys — and it reminds us that a spiritual journey isn't something odd or particularly heroic. To understand life as a spiritual journey is the ordinary state of things.

Gary

PS-- Sunday, July 5th marks the one-year anniversary of my first Sunday with you as Interim Pastor at Open Door! See you in church!

Moderator's Message

The congregation held its semi-annual meeting on June 28th following worship. The slate of officers and teams was unanimously approved, which included Barbara Olivier as Moderator, Patty Haskell as Vice Moderator, Darlene Davis continuing as Clerk and Carrie Shinn as Treasurer. Let's all help them in their efforts as some are new to their positions. The teams will meet in July with a few new members and will select their team leader at that time. Thank you all who stepped up and volunteered to serve in leadership roles or on a team.

We also heard an update from the ACT team, and they shared with us some wonderful new and ongoing ministries which have us reaching out into our communities. There will be a potluck to celebrate the progress of ACT sometime in the fall. Continue to check the bulletin board in the Social Hall for updates and news.

Please spread the word about Vacation Bible School coming up the week of July 27th to 31st from 9 to noon each day. The curriculum is outstanding, and VBS is being led by Evi Betts, and many volunteers. Spread the word to ANY local youth – we are hoping for a robust turnout. As always, there are no fees to participate.

This is my last Nugget as your Moderator! It's been a very interesting and engaging 4 years of service, and I now take my efforts to the task of Treasurer.

Blessings,
Carrie Shinn
Outgoing Moderator.



NCNC UCC PRESENTS **2026** 

CAMP TAM

 **JULY 12-18** **JR HIGH CAMP GRADES 7-9**

 **SR HIGH CAMP GRADES 9-12**  **JULY 19-25**

 **JULY 26 TO AUGUST 1** **JUNIOR CAMP GRADES 4-6**

 **COUNSELOR-IN-TRAINING CAMP AGES 16-18**  **JULY 26 TO AUG 1**



SUMMER 2026 DIRECTORY UPDATE

The Summer 2026 directory will be available the second week of July. There will be printed copies available at church or you can request an online version.

Tuning in With Our Music Director



Greetings, Open Door!

The most exciting music news for July is that Dr. Daryl Hollinger and Rev. Dr. Bonnie Hollinger will be visiting Open Door on July 5 and participating in the music that day. The choir will make an unusual summer appearance singing "Total Praise" by Richard Smallwood, one of my favorite choral anthems. American composer Smallwood recently died (December, 2025). He graduated cum laude from Howard University, where was a member of the Celestials, Howard University's first gospel chorus, and the first gospel act to appear at Switzerland's Montreux Jazz Festival. "Total Praise" is one of Smallwood's most

popular compositions, along with "I Love the Lord," sung by Whitney Houston in "The Preacher's Wife." Also on that Sunday we will be treated to an organ postlude offering by Daryl.

Hymnal Perusal: Wednesday, July 15 at 10:00 a.m. Anyone who is interested is invited to join Pastor Gary and me in a discussion about a possible additional hymnal. We'll look at hymns from different hymnals, including our current "The New Century Hymnal" and discuss pros and cons. If this is of interest to you, please join us! In the sanctuary.

Musicians Wanted! I will be out of town the first three Sundays of August. If you have a special song or instrumental piece or even a poem you would like to offer at a Sunday service (August 2, 9, or 16) please let me know! We love to have everyone share their gifts.

Musical Sanctuary is taking a break for the summer and will start up again in September. Looking forward to seeing you then for relaxing and healing music and guided meditation. In the meantime, I will share this short poem:

*There is beauty in the sunlight
And the soft blue heaven above
Oh, the world is full of beauty
When the heart is full of love.*

- Anon.

All blessings!

Kate



**THE VOCAL CHOIR
WILL REHEARSE ON
JULY 5TH AT 9AM AND
THEN WILL BE
TAKING A BREAK FOR
THE SUMMER.**



Christian Education Recap

Sunday school students were pleased to be in the Prayer Garden project. They spent several Sunday craft sessions painting the rocks that are placed around the birdbath. They are two sided so every month or so we'll change them.

We are full steam ahead on VBS. The theme is #Kid Connections with an emphasis on making connections with community, friends, generations and Jesus. You'll be seeing some evidence of the coming connections as the date draws closer, **JULY 27-JULY 31 9-12 AGES 5-11** We encourage you to invite your neighbors and grandkids. It was included in the postcard mailer, so many might already be aware and just need that personal invitation! Its going to be a FUN time with games, crafts, skits, Bible stories, good snacks and music. Stella is going to juggle for us and we might have a surprise music group! We'll end the week with pizza and creek play at Murphys Park.

Sunday school has been discussing how special we each are and how special Jesus is. The students are learning The Lord's Prayer. Know that you are special, too!

Submitted by: Evelyn Betts

A transformation and a blessing...

Many thanks to Darlene and Ron Davis and Marie Studebaker for creating the Prayer Garden outside of Fisk House. Their dedication reflects Open Door's commitment to being good stewards of our sacred church grounds and to welcoming the greater community to enjoy this space. The youth in our Sunday School also shared their skills and creativity by adding Prayer Rocks to the garden.



Treasurer's Report

This is my last Nugget article as your Treasurer. I have enjoyed the many years (don't remember how long) doing this job. I can finally say that I have it figured out!! I will be working with Carrie this month so I can share my knowledge with her. Since she has an accounting background, she will catch on quickly. Because of all your support it has made this job easy. Keep up your contributions and all your support.

Thanks, Patty



NEWS



On Thursday, June 25, the Calaveras Enterprise published an article, written by staff reporter Tori James, about the blending and renaming of Union UCC and First Congregational UCC into Open Door UCC. James spoke with member Darlene Davis, and together they discussed the name change, our commitment to being Open and Affirming, and other history of our little church. You can read the full article at this link:

<https://www.calaverasenterprise.com/articles/featured-stories/a-blended-church-celebrates-historic-milestone-with-new-name/>

Poet's Corner

"Hope" is the Thing with Feathers

By Emily Dickinson

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -

I've heard it in the chillest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.

Submitted by: Liz Tussey



Photo credit: Wynston Cooper, New Zealand Rock Wren, 2003

A graphic for an organ concert. The background is a light yellow with musical notes. A large white rounded rectangle contains the text. To the right of the text is a photo of Dr. Daryl Hollinger, a man with glasses and a blue and white checkered shirt, playing an organ.

A Festive Organ Concert

Free Admission

Featuring
Dr. Daryl Hollinger
performing on the **Allen Digital Organ**
St. Matthew Lutheran Church
13880 Joshua Way, Sonora

July 12 - Sunday 4 pm

Enjoy an inspiring afternoon of organ music featuring works by J. S. Bach, Buxtehude, Mendelssohn, Langlais, Young, and Fey, plus Dr. Hollinger's own hymn arrangements and original compositions, including the premiere of his three-movement setting of *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty*.

A Festival Choir of local singers will also perform Dr. Hollinger's *Psalms 98* for organ and choir.

All are invited to a reception following the concert.



The Resource Connection, in partnership with the California Department of Public Health will be distributing food resources for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) on Thursday, August 13 from 9am - 4pm in the Open Door UCC Social Hall.

Guest Column

FR. RICHARD ROHR

“Remain in Me as I Remain in You”



Note from Gary: On Maundy Thursday I spoke of “sin” in the sense of separation from God. In this wonderful meditation, Richard Rohr speaks of what comes after separation: connection. The good news is that our separation from God is overcome by the Cross. God is always waiting, always inviting us back into connection.

Here is Richard Rohr:

Jesus said, “Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.... As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love.” —John 15:4–5, 9

In this homily, Father Richard speaks of Jesus’s desire for us to remain connected:

I want you to be honest: Would you rather have a friend who is always right or one who is in right relationship with you? I think I know the answer: We’d rather have someone who’s in right relationship with us. In fact, someone who’s right all the time can be pretty obnoxious. Would we rather have a friend who’s always correct or a friend to whom we’re always connected? Of course, we’d rather have the second.

So why did we in the West seemingly change the rules for God? Many of us grew up thinking God wanted us to be right, to be correct, even to be perfect. This passage in John’s Gospel is saying that God wants people who are in right relationship, which means that we are open, and that we can listen to others with understanding and compassion. It means that we can admit when we’re wrong, which is almost every day for most of us. It certainly is for me.

Yet we keep condemning ourselves and others for not being perfect, for not being right, or for not being correct. This parable, one of the most beautiful in all the Gospels, tells us what God desires—simply that we remain connected, a branch on the vine, which is the love of God.

Everybody seems to be trying to prove that they are right. We have almost a collective incapacity to admit failure, to ever admit that we are wrong, which makes us liars most of the time. Jesus is calling forth a very different kind of human being.

Jesus says people who live a vulnerable life of connection and relationship will bear much fruit. These are the people we trust, like, and admire, so why are so many of us afraid to be the very thing that we admire the most? How foolish human beings are! But again, Jesus has told us the way: He is the vine; we are the branches. None of us can be or need to be correct, but we can always be connected.

Cherishing our members, friends, and community...

Happy Birthday!

Jeff Chadwick 2
Faye Morrison 2
Elaine Lewis 5
Wendy Glessman 8
Teglene Ryan 12

Lynne Klein 15
Celine Decker-Breen 18
Noel Helmbrecht 22
Valerie Shinn 24

Anthony Armstrong 25
Mandy DeSmidt 26
Karl Graves 31

Don't see your birthday listed? We promise it isn't on purpose! If you would like to have your special day listed in the newsletter, please call or email the church office.

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:

Pam Kimes and Family
Teddie Jackson
Doug Fraser (Doug & Patti Lau)
Miley Sophia (Breen)
Will and parents (Penny Sarvis)
Diane Tussey
Enoch Samraj
Ryan VanCleave
Faye Morrison
Miriam Thorsen
Shoshana (Laura Leonard)
Jodie Gibson
Tabitha Kremesec
Lauren, Gordon, Emre, Willow (Jesse Hampton)
Shirley Soderer
Bonnie & Chuck (Mark McCormick)
Terry Dowell
Robin Chesnut
Tari Takara
Ben Richardson (LaMonts)
Bruce (Miriam Thorsen)
Dodi Horvath
Brian Whitehead (Nancy Burton)
Rev. John Randlett
Rev. Marty Williams

SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THURS

FRI

SAT



July 2026



July 2026

30

1
12:30pm AA
6:30pm AA

2

3
STAFF HOLIDAY
OFFICE CLOSED
12pm Women's AA

4
4TH OF July
Independence Day

5
Welcome back
Pastor Gary,
Bonnie Lee
and Daryl!
Holy Communion
11am small group

6
6:30pm Al-Anon

7

8
8:15am Morning
Prayer, Zoom
12pm Executive mtg.,
Fisk
12:30pm AA
6:30pm AA

9

10
12pm Women's AA
10:30am The
Wanderers

11

12
Dr. Daryl concert
at Faith Lutheran
4pm

13
1:30pm F&F mtg.,
5:30pm South Grove
Bunch
6:30pm Al-Anon

14
New Moon
10:30am Family
Connections. EEC
Jenny out of office

15
8:15am Morning
Prayer, Zoom
12:30pm AA
6:30pm AA

16

17
12pm Women's AA

18

19
11am Council mtg.,
EEC

20
6:30pm Al-Anon

21
5:30pm The Seekers

22
8:15am Morning
Prayer, Zoom
11am Angels Angels
11am Knitters &
Hooks
12:30pm AA
6:30pm AA

23

24
12pm Women's AA

25

26

27
6:30pm Al-Anon

28

29
8:15am Morning
Prayer, Zoom
Jenny out of office

30

31
12pm Women's AA

1

28
6:30pm Al-Anon

29
6:30pm Al-Anon

30

31
12pm Women's AA

1

2

3

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 7/27 - 7/31 9AM - 3PM

God's love echoes through us to all creation.
Website: www.fcmmurph.org
Email: nugget@fcmmurph.org
Phone: (209)728-3141

JULY 2026
DATED MATERIAL - DO NOT DELAY

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

First Congregational Church of Murphys
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
PO Box 48
509 N. Algiers Street
Murphys, CA 95247

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

Christian Ed Director Evelyn Betts

Childcare Abby Fuqua

Ministers at Large: All Members at Open Door UCC!

Officers

Moderator Barbara Olivier

Vice Moderator Patty Haskell

Treasurer Carrie Shinn

Clerk Darlene Davis

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 20th of each month.

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