The Living Word

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GLOBAL HOLIDAY FAIRE - JON MEZZERA

The 29th annual Global Holiday Faire will be here soon on Saturday, December 5th, from 9-2. Last year was our fourth year back in person after the pandemic hiatus and it was easily the biggest of those four, and the fifth most successful Faire overall! Can we do even better this year? Once again, the Faire will feature several tables with items for sale along with our traditional chili / soup / lumpia lunch. In addition to multiple tables with merchandise, we will have our Alternative Giving table where we will raise money for Heifer International and Arbor Day Foundation. Plus, we will have what we call the Big 4 tables with crafts, gift baskets, baked goods and regifted items raising money for 4 charities - Amador St. Hope Center, dePaul Women's Center, Genesis House and Feed the Children. We are also excited to announce that long time former Faire organization, Milestones will return this year with their wonderful ceramic gifts!

There are lots of ways that you can help. We are looking for volunteers. Please think about volunteering at the Faire or setting up the night before (let Helen Mezzera know if you can do either ASAP!). If you can contribute a donation for one of the Big 4 tables, it would be greatly appreciated! Start crafting now. Think about a gift basket you could put together. Think about gifts you have been given that you've never used, that someone might buy to regift (not looking for garage sale items). Also, please help spread the word about the Faire, as well as our virtual marketplace which is open at globalholidayfaire.org. Flyers will be emailed out soon, so please help us get those out to the people. Print them out or share them electronically with your friends, neighbors, coworkers or strangers on the street. If you know a place where you can post a flyer, please do so. If you can't print them out, we have physical copies in church and can always print more.

The Global Holiday Faire is our biggest Mission Action effort of the year. Times are difficult. Inflation has hit us all hard, including the great non-profits which we partner with. But, that is what makes the Faire more important now than ever. With your help volunteering, donating and spreading the word, there is no reason why this can't be our biggest Faire ever!

PASTOR'S PEN

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.
Colossians 3:17 (NRSVUE)

It is always a pleasure to witness the folks of this congregation show up with intention to build community with love and grace.

At our Narcan training last month we gathered to learn how to administer life-saving treatment to anyone who is experiencing an opioid overdose. We learned from our excellent trainer about public health trends and some facts about narcotics like fentanyl. Nearly twenty of us from this church and our wider community are now ready to save a life in an emergency. We also have a trove of supplies to make sure Naloxone (generic for Narcan) is available as needed to people in our circles. We showed up out of concern for our neighbors and will keep sharing what we learned.

Twice now we've had FCCV members set up a table at the Vallejo Farmers Market to be present in our community. Scores of interactions have taken place and some genuine connections have been made. We do this because we want people to know about the limitless love of God and the family available for them at our church; but we also go to spread joy. Each conversation is a chance to offer spiritual care with presence and warmth and to let God's love flow through us.

This Sunday we'll celebrate All Saints Day in worship, remembering the 'great cloud of witnesses' (Hebrews 12:1) who have run the race ahead of us. We will call forth the names of people who have loved us, taught us, inspired us, and challenged us in our own lives. In our remembering, we will maintain connections to our wider community throughout time - acknowledging that our kinship spans across generations.

Through all of these actions we take, and so many more, we are allowing our words and deeds to be filled with the love of Christ in service to creation. We are expressing our thanks to God the Creator for the opportunities to grow and serve and welcome others as members of the Body of Christ. And I hope we are embodying the sentiment that 'whoever you are and wherever you are on your journey, you are welcome here.'

In this month of Thanksgiving, I am grateful to be serving alongside all of you in our ministry of presence, love, and service. I'll see you out there, in this community we're building together.

With Thanksgiving,
Pastor Sara

NOTES FROM THE PASTOR

•Mission/Vision Process Update

Your follow up team of Mission and Vision word-crafters has been meeting faithfully to develop our new Mission, Vision and Identity Statements for FCC Vallejo. We've met together three times now and have one more meeting on the calendar. We hope that will be the last meeting we need to have drafts ready to share with all of you for feedback later this month. Stay tuned!

•All Saints Worship November 1st

For All Saints Day we'll honor the people in our lives and community who have passed from this life into the next. During worship we'll build an altar to remember their contributions and celebrate the love we still have for them. Bring photos, objects or other symbols to commemorate the saints in your life. They could be family members, friends or other spiritual ancestors that have guided you. We are so fortunate to belong to the communion of saints that connects us all, living and dead, in community and fellowship through Christ.



•Pastor at the Pub



Come join me for some down-time at **Mare Island Brewing Company - Ferry Taproom** (289 Mare Island Way in Vallejo) on **Monday, November 30th from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm**. This is a chance to get together and hang out during the week. It's informal and open to any who'd like to join. There's a menu with appetizers and meals if you're hungry for a snack or dinner while we visit. All ages welcome.

NOTES FROM THE PASTOR

•Advent 2026 - Until the Dawn: Actions for the Work of Advent

Every Advent, we light candles and speak of hope. We wait for the good news that God is born. We prepare with pageants and presents. Yet, in the midst of our busy waiting, we know all too well that the world is not as it should be. Wars rage on, violence persists, new tragedies unfold. God's promises are real, and God's promised day has not yet come. This tension keeps us yearning—for a new day, a new way, a world made new.



This year we will focus on the actions we can take as we move through the night with hope for tomorrow. Night is a time when the way forward may seem unclear, when our senses are heightened and fear may creep in. And the darkness also brings gifts—rest, regeneration, dreams, intimacy with God. In our sacred stories, angels often arrive in the night, calling for courageous action and singing good news. In the night, Mary's labor pains crescendo and Christ is born. In the night, shepherds and Magi follow the stars to get closer to God. And so, in the metaphorical night, we will carry on with the work that is ours to do.

Just as surely as the sun rises, God's steadfast love and mercy are made new every morning. As we move toward the horizon, we will cry out, start somewhere, speak up, take courage, build up, and choose joy. These actions will help us resist despair and put our prayers in motion. Until the day when God's love reigns and all the earth echoes shalom, let us keep moving, singing, resisting, and rejoicing—trusting that God joins us in the work of Advent.

NOVEMBER QUICKIES - Dave Mezzera

[1] Is **All Saints Day** always celebrated on the first Sunday of November as it is this year?

[2] Why does **Daylight Savings Time** end on November 1st?

[3] Why is **election day** held on the first Tuesday in November?

[4] Why is **Veterans' Day** always celebrated on November 11th?

[5] Is **Thanksgiving Day** held on the last Thursday of November or on the 4th Thursday of the month?

See below for the answers.

NOVEMBER QUICKIES - Answers

[1] in the lectionary, **All Saints Day** is always positioned on November 1st of each year. Historically, we celebrate it on the Sunday closest to that date - which this year perfectly coincides with Sunday, November 1st.

[2] **Daylight Savings Time**, for many years, ended on the last Sunday of October. Due to the fact that Halloween typically followed that date (and it became darker an hour earlier), in 2005 the federal government changed the end date to the first Sunday in November to be sure that kids had an extra hour of daylight every year on Halloween.

[3] **Election Day,** going back to the 1800s, has always been on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Farm culture explains why elections are held in November, since other times interfere with planting seasons or with harvest season, and winter months become too harsh and cold. Elections were not held on Sundays (going-to-church day) and people were given a day (Monday) to travel to their voting locations and then a day back home on Wednesdays for market day (no mail-in ballots back then!).

[4] **Veterans' Day** is always on November 11th, regardless of the day of the week. This specific date goes back to the end of World War I in 1918. When the warring factions in Europe finally decided on a true end to the War, the date chosen to give all factions a chance to spread the word and cease hostilities was set for November 11, 1918. To be more precise, it was agreed that the armistice (from the Latin meaning "stopping arms") would begin at precisely 11:11 in the morning on the 11th day of the 11th month. Following World War II, it was felt that all Veterans of all conflicts should be honored, but it took until 1954 for Congress to declare that November 11th should be known as Veterans Day, changing the prior nomenclature of Armistice Day.

[5] **Thanksgiving Day** was held sporadically early in America's history, but was formally established as the last Thursday of November by Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War in 1863. In 1941, Congress passed a joint resolution officially setting the holiday on the fourth Thursday of November, as it remains until the present.

•Ruach Reads

Ruach: *(Hebrew) n. Wind, breath, spirit. An invisible, animating force known by its movement. Pronounced ROO-ahkh.*

Our every-other-month spirituality book club is on hiatus in December and will meet again in February to discuss "All About Love" by bell hooks.

THERE OUR HEARTS WILL BE - Carl Cordes

Subversive Stewardship, written by Rev. Dr. Elena Larssen

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4: 5-12 (NRSV)

For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus's sake. For it is the God who said, "Light will shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way but not crushed, perplexed but not driven to despair, persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed, always carrying around in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For we who are living are always being handed over to death for Jesus's sake, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us but life in you.

Commentary

"I'm a businesswoman…I stepped out in faith."

A beloved and departed church member once gave a brief stewardship testimonial during the pledge drive season of the year. This beloved saint was a wild card choice to give a stewardship testimonial. Known throughout the congregation for her extensive volunteerism and leadership, she was also church-famous for her analytical mind and sharp tongue. Many members had been crisply put in their place by this intelligent businesswoman and her outspoken ways. But she was trusted; her lack of tact seemed to simply be proof of her honesty and willingness to deal with hard facts. Her sharp-tongue and her loyal heart were an unforgettable combination. We adored her.

What only those on the stewardship team knew was that she was quietly a major donor to the church. She gave to the church and our partner ministries. She paid for a lunch ticket for the church luncheons even when she had to bring her own medically-required sack lunch. She would give two pledges, one in private that was easily three times the amount of the public gift.

We weren't sure what she would say. She was a facts-and-numbers-person. But she really wanted to share, although she warned us that what she would share would be challenging. We on the stewardship team steeled ourselves for a tongue-lashing. She would put us all in our places, and hopefully the congregation would overlook any barbs in what was surely going to be a lecture.

(continues…)

THERE OUR HEARTS WILL BE CONTINUED - Carl Cordes

The day of the service came, and our saint stood up to speak. She told us how much she loved the church. She said how it was her home, that she and her elderly mother had chosen it to be the place where they would spend Sundays together. And then she dropped her bomb. It wasn't a lecture, or a scare-tactic about paying bills. Instead, she said:

"You know I'm a business person, so I can't explain this, but it happened to me, and I believe it can happen to you: the more I gave, the more I had. See, I had gotten to a place where I knew it was really important for me to give more, but I wasn't sure I could make it happen. So, I stepped out in faith. I don't know how it works, because this is not how business works, but giving more meant I had more. Money! Actual money! There is something I can't explain about generosity, but everything worked out, and better than I knew it could. I think you should try it."

The congregation was not superstitious, and they knew she wasn't a flighty type. But she challenged us deeply that day. Not that something could be made of nothing, but she warned us that giving is part of God's economy, not the economy of her business world. And inviting God into your finances is like inviting God into any part of our daily lives: it's transformational.

My Comment:

I hope you have enjoyed reading these short commentaries from different people in the past few months. The words are meaningful, thought provoking, and hopefully help you consider the reasons why we give.

The theme was:
Recenter our lives on God's quiet, faithful presence.
Let our giving reflect our deepest values and commitments.
Align our actions with our confessions of Christ.
Allow God to transform, heal, and renew our hearts.
Practice a generosity that is not performative, but rooted, joyful, and Spirit-led.

You will be receiving your Commitment Card in the mail or by email in the next 7 to 10 days. Our small but mighty community has and will be doing the work that God has called us to do. With your kind dedication and giving, we will continue to reach out and help those who need it.

thank you, Carl

HYBRID WORSHIP CONTINUES

We continue to develop and improve our hybrid worship abilities. Every Sunday morning, we have some members of our worshipping community onsite in our sanctuary and some members of our worshipping community online on Zoom. We continue to work to make both formats engaging and accessible. Our worship services begin at 10:30. To join us for worship on Zoom, click the link below and join us through video. Or dial in by calling the number below according to your time zone. The instructions to connect are fairly easy, but if you need help, please reach out.

In preparation for Zoom worship, please have communion elements of some form with you so that we can all partake together. This can be bread and juice—or any other elements that evoke the Last Supper for you. You may also want to light a candle near you as we worship together.

Worship on Sundays, 10:30 a.m. PLEASE NOTE THE NEW MEETING INFO!
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83204891403?pwd=YkJBNTQwWURabEtpRFVoaDU5aU5hQT09

Meeting ID: 884 4460 0052
Passcode: 503337
Dial by your location
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)



To attend the worship service and dinner in honor of Rev. Dr. LaTaunya Bynum, click this link to register .

Mark Your Calendar

November 7 - Sustainable Solano Planting Day

November 8 & 15 - Commitment Sundays (please bring your pledge cards to church those days)

November 9-11 - Pastor Sara at DOC Preaching Retreat

November 12 - Admin Council Meeting, 5:15 pm on Zoom

November 14 - Haircuts for the Holidays, 10 am - 3 pm. Set up the night before at 7:00 pm

November 16 - Ministry Council, 5:00 pm on Zoom. Elders Meeting, 6:30 pm on Zoom

November 22 - FCCV Thanksgiving Luncheon after worship

November 22-28 - Pastor Sara on vacation

November 28 - FCCV at the Farmers' Market

November 30 - Pastor at the Pub, 4:30-6:30 pm at Mare Island Brewing Co.

The deadline for the next Living Word is November 25