

# The Living Word

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[www.vallejochristian.org](http://www.vallejochristian.org)

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## EVANGELISM IS NOT A BAD WORD! - ALLISON MEZZERA

Years ago, evangelism seemed like something to shy away from. Like maybe we should just be modest, pray internally, and not boast about who we are. We are living in a far different world than it was “years ago” and our brand of peaceful Christianity is taking a hit from the Christian Nationalism movement which is co-opting the name. I think it's time we shout out, speak up about who we are as Christians, and how we are ready to stand up for our community, our nation, and our planet!

On July 1st at 7pm, I will have a zoom meeting open for anyone who would like to start the conversation on how we can get the word out! Some ideas are:

- Having a “Get to Know a Disciple” table at the Farmers Market and other local events
- Using social media to interact with the community
- Writing letters to the editor in the local paper
- Having community gatherings with other local churches

Keep an eye out for the link to this Zoom meeting.

I listen to a lot of political podcasts and one of the thoughts shared frequently is that people are scared, lonely, and looking for community right now. We can be that place; we just have to let them know we are here. I look forward to this discussion and getting to work!

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**PASTOR'S PEN**

**See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?  
Isaiah 43:19a (NIV)**

Last month I shared with you our FCC Vallejo Vision Statement that has been guiding us since 1993. I asked you to read through it and reflect on who we are today and where we might be headed these 30+ years later. This month we will begin the process of creating new Vision, Mission, and Identity statements for our church. It *will* be a process - so, I'm asking you to trust the process and trust God to guide it! I hope you will participate and bring your voice and vision to the work we accomplish together.

Right now we are working to determine the dates of our meetings, so watch for those to be announced soon. The plan is to meet twice from 10 am to 2 pm (lunch provided) on Saturdays in the next few months. If you haven't already responded to the scheduling survey sent by email, please do it soon!

I'd also like to ask you to please pray for our congregation. Pray that we will be guided by grace and that our vision will begin to clarify the more we hear from one another. Pray for God to fill our hearts with hope for good things to come and to help us include every member and friend who cares about our future in this effort.

In anticipation of our own statements developing, I invite you to read the Vision, Mission, and Identity statements of our denomination.

CC(DOC) Vision Statement

To be a faithful, growing church, that demonstrates true community, deep Christian spirituality and a passion for justice. – Micah 6:8

CC(DOC) Mission Statement

To be and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, witnessing, loving and serving from our doorsteps "to the ends of the earth." – Acts 1:8

CC(DOC) Identity Statement

We are a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one Body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us.

Let's see what new things God will do with us in Vallejo!

Peace,  
Pastor Sara

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## NOTES FROM THE PASTOR

### Pastor at the Pub

We had a great time in May trying out a new venue for our pastoral meet up. We're going to repeat it for July at Mare Island Brewing Company - Ferry Taproom (289 Mare Island Way in Vallejo) on Tuesday, July 21st 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.

### Bible Study

We continue to meet on the last Sunday of the month to engage in scripture study together. For July we'll meet after worship from **Noon to 1:30** on **Sunday the 26th**. Bring a brown bag lunch and your Bible. We'll meet in Fellowship Hall. Stay tuned for the scripture we'll be looking at for July!

### Virtual General Assembly July 10-11 2026

The whole church throughout the United States and Canada, is invited to attend **General Assembly 2026**. **Ephesians 3:14-21** invites the Stone-Campbell tradition of today and tomorrow to be rooted and grounded in the love of God that surpasses knowledge and barriers to build fuller relationships and ministries led by the limitless love of God. The prayer that calls to the church in Ephesus also calls the Christian Church to set a bigger table that surpasses our previous capacity.

More than just a series of meetings, General Assembly is a covenantal table set for education, discussion, worship, business, fellowship, and action. Each congregation is invited to boldly claim their covenantal place at the table by inviting everyone to attend online and by prayerfully designating 3 delegates to vote at General Assembly. Meeting every year online will allow more Disciples to connect more frequently and to work together more fully "to be the church we say we are." If you've never attended General Assembly before, a special welcome is extended to you.

One and all, individuals, Congregations, General Ministries, Regional Ministries, Ministry partners, and friends are invited to actively participate in our new way of being church and our church wide resolve to embody and share God's surpassing love as we gather in July. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

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NOTES FROM THE PASTORComing UP: Disciples Discovery Series

Over the summer, we'll have several opportunities to engage in conversation about who we are as Disciples of Christ! We'll reflect on our current mission and vision statements, identify our current priorities and take some steps toward our next chapter as a congregation. We'll also get to participate in a study series about our denomination - What makes us unique? What do we believe? What are our values? Stay tuned for ways you can participate in continuing to develop our own vision for FCC Vallejo.

In July our worship will be centered around the identity statement of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Over three Sundays we will look at parts of our denominational identity statement and see what it has to teach us about the values and practices of our church.

**“We are a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one Body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord’s Table as God has welcomed us.”**

Ruach Reads

This program year I'm launching a new Book Club called Ruach Reads. This offering will give us a chance to read, reflect, and discuss books that focus on Spirituality. I hope the reading and discussions will speak to our souls and give us some meaningful opportunities for growth. We'll meet bi-monthly on the fourth Thursday, starting in August (skipping December), giving us five Book Club meetings throughout the year. I hope to be able to offer attendance by Zoom for those unable to join in-person. Watch next month's newsletter for details about our August meeting. If you'd like to host a meeting in your home, let me know!

August 27      *Water in the Desert: Progressive Christianity for the Spiritually Thirsty* by Jim Burklo

October 22      *Fear Not* by Eric Law

February 25      *All About Love* by bell hooks

April 22      *Sustaining Hope in an Unjust World: How to Keep Going When You Want to Give Up* by Timothy Charles Murphy

June 24      *In Defense of Kindness: Why It Matters, How It Changes Our Lives, and How It Can Save the World* by Bruce Reyes-Chow

JULY CHALLENGE - Dave Mezzera

You might be disappointed if this month’s challenge didn’t have some reference to the 4th of July. So here goes: see if you can answer these questions about our renowned *Liberty Bell*.

1. In which colony was the Bell originally cast?
2. The Bell was first rung in July of 1776 in Philadelphia. True or false?
3. The Bell was cracked the very first time it was rung. True or False?
4. What word is misspelled on the Bell?
5. What Bible verse appears on the Bell?



See answers on the next page.

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MISSION ACTION GIFT - Suzanne Awalt, Mission Action Coordinator

Our monthly Mission action donation of \$275 for July will be directed to The Amador Street Hope Center. Our congregation has partnered for many years with The Amador Street Hope Center in its ministries to unsheltered persons. The Hope Center is a regular recipient of donations from the Global Holiday Faire held in December, an important partner in that mission action effort.

The Amador St. Hope Center has had its home at First Church of the Nazarene for 20 years. The church has ceased operations and combined ministry with New Life Church of the Nazarene in Vallejo. Thankfully, The Hope Center will continue to be a ministry of the New Life Church of the Nazarene. Thank you for continuing to support The Amador St. Hope Center and its important ministry in our community. The support is particularly crucial during this time of transition as they look to continue to thrive and grow.

For now, you can direct donations to New Life Church of the Nazarene, 4200 Georgia Street Vallejo, CA 94591 and note Hope Center in the memo.

Thank you for supporting Mission Action outreach ministries of First Christian Church, Vallejo. Our reach is broad and deep.

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SUMMER BBQ - Carl Cordes

Come join us on August 4th from 5:30 pm to sunset for our "Neighbor and Friends Yard Picnic". We will be having BBQ, special desserts and other food, plus music, games, and a chance to meet our neighbors. So circle your calendar and invite your friends.

We also will need help with the preparing, serving, setting up, and cleaning up. Please let me know how you can help. Thanks!

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 JULY CHALLENGE - Answers

1. Trick question! The Bell was actually cast in England prior to the Revolutionary War. It was transported by ship to Philadelphia to be hung there in the Pennsylvania State House (now called Independence Hall).
  
2. The Bell arrived in early 1753, was hung in the bell tower of the State House and was first rung there on March 10, 1753.
  
3. This actually is true about the first time it was rung, but that occurred on March 10th of 1753, not July of 1776. The Bell cracked, was immediately removed, melted down and recast before being replaced in the bell tower. It remained in place and continued to be rung during the next couple of years for various occasions. It was rung a couple of days after the 4th of July (on July 8th to be specific) when the Declaration of Independence was actually read aloud on the steps of Independence Hall. No problems yet. But when it was rung on February 22, 1846 (to commemorate the birthday of George Washington), it did crack with the fracture that remains until today and has never been rung again (although it is tapped on rare, special occasions with a mallet, as probably will be done this coming 4th of July to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence).
  
4. Believe it or not, the name of the state (then colony) "Pensylvania" is embossed on the face of the Bell - one of the most famous "typographicals" in history!
  
5. On the face of the Bell is a citation from Leviticus 25:10: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."

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 LORD'S PRAYER, VALLEJO STYLE - Beth Grose

Over the next couple of months, we are presenting some of the Lord's Prayer versions written by those in our own community. Some will just be modernizing archaic language; others may be reinterpreting the prayer for our current times. As a follow-up to the discussions at the Lord's Prayer study sessions, I hope you can use these to examine the prayer in a new light, to incorporate them in your private devotional time, to gain inspiration to express the prayer in your own words and share it with the rest of us. Ultimately we will be deciding how or if we will modify the Prayer in our weekly worship.

Below, you'll find three "new" versions of the prayer. We will have more of your submissions in next month's Living Word.

## LORD'S PRAYER, VALLEJO STYLE

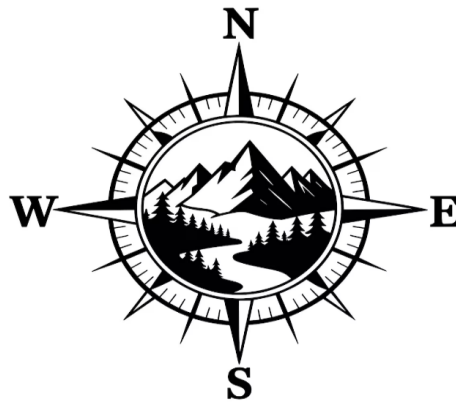
Great Spirit, Creator of all Life,  
Sacred is your name.  
Your Vision come,  
Your Love be done,  
This life as it is in Paradise.  
Give us today our daily essence.  
And grant us Grace,  
as we grant grace to our neighbors.  
Lord, lead us to your light  
and deliver us from hate.  
For you are the Holy,  
the Power,  
and the Glory  
Forever!  
Amen!  
(John Grose)

Our heavenly creator,  
Holy is your name,  
Your kingdom come,  
Your will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Protect us from temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For yours is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory, forever.  
Amen.  
(Jon Mezzera)

Beloved one who breathed us into being,  
Everywhere you are, there is Heaven.  
Your name is powerful and holy; it embodies your entire being.  
Help us see your presence here.  
Show us what you want us to do as clearly as if we were face-to-face with you.  
Fill all of our emptiness with your Spirit; satisfy our hungering for you.  
When we make mistakes, heal us with your mercy,  
So that we can learn the power of forgiving people who harm us.  
Be our strength when we are put to the test  
And keep us from becoming like those whom we despise.  
You are the source of all true authority,  
You are the source of all true strength,  
You are the source of all true wonder,  
That was, is, and will be.  
(Beth Grose)

# CCNCN Christian Men's Fellowship Retreat "Positive Masculinity for Changing Times"

October 16 – 18, 2026  
Community of the Great Commission



The times they are a-changing! Come join us for conversations (in a safe space) about what masculinity really means. We will meet at CGC campground in the beauty of God's creation, 30303 Chicken Hawk Rd., Foresthill, California. Men of all ages are invited. Friday dinner through Sunday brunch is included. All rooms are shared.

Check in starts at 4 p.m. on Friday.

Keynoter: Rev. Ted Firch

Rustic Cabin accommodations: \$80

Motel style accommodations: \$165

Tent or camper accommodations: \$75

Come to the mountain top for this weekend of fellowship,  
delicious food and spiritual challenge.

**Register at [ccncn.org](http://ccncn.org)**

Scholarship assistance is available. For information contact Ted at [revsfirch@gmail.com](mailto:revsfirch@gmail.com)

**Apply by October 1, please.**

## POETRY CORNER - Pastor Sara

Unfolding Light is a daily reflection by Steve Garnaas-Holmes rooted in a contemplative, Creation-centered, justice-oriented spirituality. This poem and many other reflections can be found at the Unfolding Light website.

**Fourth of July**

By Steve Garnaas-Holmes

Oh, Nation,  
I salute you  
and I chasten you,  
land that I love  
and lament:  
your liberty and justice  
for some and not others,  
your innovation and energy  
and slavery and genocide,  
your high ideals  
and your war-making,  
your peace and your violence,  
born of an idea  
you can't quite believe  
and a shot heard round the world  
that's still shooting and shooting,  
your spacious polluted skies,  
your amber waves of  
chemically treated grain,  
your melting pot diversity  
and fear of diversity,  
your pride, your arrogance.  
God shed his grace on thee,  
for we are going to need it,  
hard times coming,  
if we are to see liberty and justice  
for the rest of us.  
Let the fireworks begin.

## 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. Please share comments and suggestions that might make both formats better for everyone.

Our worship services begin at 10:30. To join us for worship on Zoom, click the link below and joining 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)

# Mark Your Calendar

July 6 - Office Closed (in observance of 4th of July).

July 9 - Admin Council Meeting, 5 pm on Zoom.

July 10-11 - CC(DOC) General Assembly.

July 12 - Memorial Service for Susan McCown, noon in the sanctuary.

July 16 - Ministry Council Meeting, 5 pm on Zoom.

July 21 - Pastor at the Pub, 4:30 - 6:30 pm at the Ferry Building Taproom.

July 26 - Bible Study, after worship (bring a lunch).

July 27-August 2 - Pastor Sara on vacation.

August 3 - FCCV Community Block Party, 5:30 - 8 pm.

August 8 - Elders Mini-Retreat, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm.

**The deadline for the next Living Word is July 29**

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