

The Living Word

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“A Different Kind of Politics”

On January 21st, Common Ground held our first Action of 2020. Members of our organization, along with 12 other organizations in Vallejo, Napa, and Fairfield gathered in the gym at St. Basils Church to use our voices, and to tell our stories. Many stories were issues with housing, rentals, mobile homes. Issues with education and schools, vacant lots and trash on the road. Issues with aging family members. Issues with police relations and community safety. All of the stories were very personal, and all of them were heard by the community, City Council members including the Mayor, police officers, and county politicians.

By the end of the evening we got commitments from the Mayor, the new Police Chief, two current County Supervisors, and two people running for the seat, to meet with Common Ground to discuss these issues and work toward solving them.

This is the different kind of politics Common Ground wants. We want to be at the forefront of the issues, and have a seat at the table with the people who hold the power to change it. We do not want a few making all the decisions for the many.

Community organizing isn't glamorous or flashy. It is hard work that takes dedication and time. Of course we all wish that change could happen overnight, but in reality sustainable lasting change takes a long time. You need to do research, talk to people with knowledge, and speak with the community who is impacted, so you can create plans that are grounded in reality and will stick.

On February 11th from 6:30pm to 8:00pm Common Ground will have its first Leader Meeting since the Action. We'll talk about the Action and about where do we go from here. If you would like to have a seat at the table, you are all encouraged to attend.

If you have any questions about what Common Ground is and how you can help, please let me know. You can also speak with Christy and Carl, who are both Leaders in Common Ground.

We look forward to having more voices from First Christian Church of Vallejo at the table!



Living Stones

*Hope, like every virtue, is a choice
that becomes a practice
that becomes a spiritual muscle memory.
It is a renewable resource for moving through life as it is,
not as we wish it to be.*

—from “*Becoming Wise*” by Krista Tippett

All it would take is one quick look around to start feeling completely hopeless. Crime, pollution, political corruption, poverty, hunger, physical violence, sexual violence, emotional violence, gun violence, psychological violence, spiritual violence, racism, natural disasters, un/der employment, floundering schools, homophobia, chronic illness, paralyzing loss, crumbled dreams. . . . It really wouldn't take a lot to focus (what's left of) our attention on these vast sources of hopelessness. In fact, I know plenty of people who do just that. I see Facebook pages devoted almost entirely to reasons to be hopeless . . . about our government, our environment, the spiritual state of affairs of our world. Just a glance, and I feel instantly weary (as if I weren't already. . . . So what am I doing on Facebook?!).

But, just as I don't want to board the hopelessness train, neither do I want to ignore reality and drift through my days in the rosy carriage of privilege and denial. I want to approach life with the kind of spiritual maturity that acknowledges the realities of how things are but does not acquiesce into absolute despair. I want to manifest the kind of hope that Krista Tippett describes in the quotation above—where hope is really a spiritual practice—as important as any other. This allows me to recognize situations for what they are, but does not require that I succumb to the devastations those situations may carry. I have (ok, I work to develop) the power—in the form of spiritual muscle memory—to get on the spiritual bicycle I may not have ridden in ages and move in a different direction.

So, as I look around, yes, I see significant challenges. But I also see the incredible gifts and commitments of members of this church rising to meet those challenges. I see people working toward and claiming alternative realities. I hear voices speaking out against injustice, and I feel movements preparing to turn the tide toward greater love, generosity, and welcome. In other words, I see reasons to hope.

See you in church,
Christy

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Please remember that everyone is invited to join Sunday School/Bible Study starting at 9:30 on Sunday mornings.

Kids meet upstairs with our fabulous teacher Sara Steenhouse. They have named their Sunday School class FLURCH (Fun Learning chURCH).

Adults meet in the Parlor with our incredible Minister-In-Training Renae Earl. We always share a rich and engaging conversation, and all voices/perspectives/insights are welcome.

CHRISTY'S SABBATICAL MAY 16 – AUGUST 16

Christy will go on sabbatical from May 16 through August 16, 2020. During that time, **Bill and Mary Jacobs** will be our Sabbatical Minister “Trail Guides.” Their schedule and details are being worked out, and the Pastoral Relations Committee will keep you apprised as these plans develop. They will need housing for part of the time they are with us. So, please consider whether you might be able to offer a spare bedroom. We will be putting a schedule together. Also, they will be with us at church on *Saturday, March 21, from 11:00-3:00, for a Worship Planning Retreat*. This will give anyone who would like to come a chance to meet them and to help structure their time with the congregation.

Christy's last Sunday before she leaves on Sabbatical is May 10. On that Sunday, we will have a Sending-Off Ritual and Catered Lunch. Please make plans to be there! Her Sabbatical is being funded by the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program, which seeks to strengthen Christian congregations by providing opportunities for pastors to step away from the persistent obligations of daily parish life and to engage in a period of renewal and reflection. Renewal periods are not vacations, but times for intentional exploration and reflection, for regaining the enthusiasm and creativity for ministry, for discovering what will make the pastor's heart sing. This is also a time for congregations to invite and experience renewal!

If you would like more information about the Lilly Renewal Grant and/or Christy's sabbatical plans, focusing on “*Labyrinth Walking: Integrative Journeys for Renewal*,” please let Christy know.

NOTES FROM THE 12/8/19 CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The question: What would sabbatical renewal look like for you/ for our church?

Following are responses received from members:

- 1) Instead of same ol', same ol' order of worship, any possibility of trying out creative worship changes to the usual order as repeated weekly in the bulletin?
- 2) Interest in learning more about labyrinth!
- 3) To grow in fellowship. Meet new people- Need more youth!
- 4) Walk labyrinth; simple worship; community meals; maybe suspension of committee meetings over June/July? Prayer or meditation partners
- 5) For me-Personal growth—perhaps in a new way/new direction; For Church-To grow from new ideas, new way to see ourselves and our mission.
- 6) Get to know other people in the community. Make contacts. Have more time for making FCCV eco-friendly. Reflect on being peace-keepers to community!
- 7) Understanding labyrinth: grow in my understanding of why and how they are used; bring more of us together in many ways; go to different places with the members.
- 8) Cheryl, as in, “I want Cheryl to be our pastor while we are away.”
- 9) I like the idea of no/few meetings. Let's concentrate on the garden boxes. Growing as a congregation.
- 10) Spiritual renewal/centering. Connecting with the environment and saying it in this place.

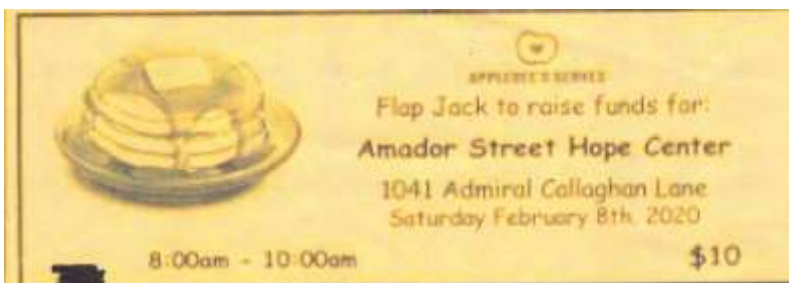
- 11) Less meetings, more community building. Experience different formats of Sunday morning worship. Play.
- 12) Rest. Create more of a nesting. Do protecting of the natural world.
- 13) At his workshop on compassion fatigue, John Pavlovitz delivered some parting words that have stayed with me: "Know what is yours to do." How about some discernment and meditation on what is ours (FCCV) to do?
- 14) No crashing and burning; need cohesive leadership during sabbatical time.
- 15) I hope that our (congregational) path aligns with what Christy is doing.

WORSHIP PLANNING RETREAT – MARCH 21 – WITH THE JACOBS

On Saturday, March 21, from 11:00-3:00, we will have our next Worship Planning Retreat with our Sabbatical Minister "Trail Guides," Bill and Mary Jacobs. This will be an opportunity for you to meet the Jacobs and to help envision and chart a course for our worship services during the Sabbatical time (May 16-Aug. 16). Everyone is welcome! So, bring yourselves, your ideas, a lunch, and snacks to share. I look forward to seeing you there!

FOOD & FUNDRAISERS

The "flapjack" breakfast on Saturday, February 8th is a fund raiser for the Amador Street Hope Center, one of the Non Profit Organizations that we support at the Faire every year. The ticket is \$10 with half going to the Hope Center and half going to



Applebees. It would be a lot of fun to meet for a mouth-watering breakfast, enjoy good company, and support the Hope Center. I have tickets, so let me know if you want to purchase one. If you can't attend the breakfast but still want to support the event, then all of your \$10 will go to the Hope Center. The Hope Center is doing important work for those in need in Vallejo--let's support them! Call me, and I will save you a ticket. Thanks, Helen

Also, Genesis House will have their spaghetti dinner fundraiser on Sunday, Feb. 16th from 4pm to 8pm, with dinner served from 4:30 to 6:00pm at Dan Foley Park. Tickets can be purchased at the door. Raffle tickets will be sold and a silent auction will take place. It's always a fun evening with great prizes and opportunities to bid on a variety of items.

CROP HUNGER WALK OF VALLEJO POSTPONED

Because of my upcoming move, I don't have the time needed to organize the Hunger Walk. Therefore, the Hunger Walk which usually takes place around the first part of May will be postponed to a later date. Church World Service, which is our sponsor, still needs our support. Feel free to go to www.crophungerwalk.org and find a walk to donate to or just donate to CWS directly. Your support is always needed and appreciated. Thank you, Carl

CAMP SEASON IS RIGHT AROOUND THE CORNER!

Camp season is just around the corner. It will be summer before you know it and again this year it would be great if we can have some kids and adults attend the Regional Summer Camp program. All camps take place at the Community of the Great Commission, (CGC as we warmly call it.) There are many ways a person can get involved. There is counseling, directing, being a camper or working at the camp, you could even work in the kitchen during the summer months. Here are the dates for this year’s festivities:

- May 8-9 CGC work days (open to all ages)
- June 4-7 Adult Camp (Dan Paul will be keynoting)
- June 20-27 Junior Camp (grades 4, 5, & 6)
- June 21-27 Chi Rho Camp (grades 7, 8, & 9)
- June 27-29 Joy Camp (our own Sara Steenhouse will be directing)
- June 27-July 4 CYF Camp (grades 10, 11 & 12)



On-line registrations will be available soon. We again will be having a Camp Sunday to help with these costs.

Please let me know if you are interested in helping raise scholarship money, become a counselor, help at workday or just plain give to the cause. As a camp veteran, I know how deeply meaningful the experience can be; so we do not want campers to miss this opportunity because of costs.

Thanks, Carl

SUSTAINABLE SOLANO

On February 23rd after church we will have leaders from Sustainable Solano here to speak on our continuing partnership. They will discuss a Project Proposal for their program Solano Gardens. Below is a draft/sample of the proposal. After we discuss this on February 23rd and pray on it after, they will put together a full proposal which I think we should all vote on. Please plan to attend, a simple lunch will be provided.

Thank you. Allison

About Solano Gardens:

Our vision is to combine forces with community members and organizations interested in creating edible gardens based on the principles of permaculture and secondary water use (rainwater, laundry-to-landscape greywater systems), to serve as a source of fresh produce, inspiration and companionship for people in need across diverse communities in Solano County.

Project Proposal:

We are interested in working with First Christian Church because of all the great work you do with the community, specifically looking at the food donation services you are already part of. In order to increase your impact, we would like to enhance the garden by adding a few fruit trees, and perennial plants where appropriate. However, this is ultimately the church’s garden and while we are able to provide garden guidance by a professional horticulturist and

sustainable landscaper the final design will be created with input from the congregation and church administration and staff.

While we are not able to offer maintenance of the garden, we want to see the garden succeed. As such, a garden champion is needed. In order to support this garden champion or garden caretaker we will provide written garden care support plan, and once every growing season (for up to 18 months), Sustainable Solano will provide a one-hour consultation with a sustainable landscape professional, as well as season vegetable starters and seeds. During these garden visitations the garden champion may ask questions or voice any concerns or challenges that might have presented themselves.

The cost of plants, soil and irrigation equipment needed to spruce up the garden will be provided by Sustainable Solano. Installation of garden will be done by volunteers from both Sustainable Solano networks and First Christian Church. Tools will be provided by Sustainable Solano.

MISSION ACTION: WE LEND A



Our December generosity at church yielded boxes and boxes of socks and coats, which were delivered to the Sparrow Project at First Baptist Church in Vallejo. The clothes were snatched up quickly and the pairs of socks were meted out with great appreciation by more than 100 in attendance for the daily meal there.

Our January Outreach gift of \$150 was sent to Genesis House, a local recovery program, which we have long-supported. Genesis House is having their Family Night Spaghetti Feed fundraiser on February 16th (see info elsewhere in the Living Word), and through FCC-V's donation, we will be recognized as a sponsor of the event, with our gift going toward direct resident care assistance at the facility.

Our February Outreach gift will likely be used to supplement our individual donations to Week of Compassion, with a specific request that our gift be used to assist in the recovery from the natural disasters in Australia (fires) and Puerto Rico (earthquake). More information next month.

WEBSITE UPDATE

Giving to the church through Tithe.ly is now easier than ever thanks to some work from Shannon on our website. We now have a donation page which can be found in the footer of the website, right next to the Contact button. You can also access it directly here:

<https://vallejochristian.org/donate>

Once there, click the big green Donate button and a box will pop up. If you have a Tithe.ly account already, you can log in there and donate through your account. If not, you can fill out the form and make a one-time gift without an account. Your gift can go to the general fund, or to one of several funds like the Capital Campaign, or one of our special offerings like Easter.

Thanks again to Shannon!

DON'T FORGET:

To help earn money for the church beyond your generous donations:

- ✓ Use www.goodsearch.com (instead of Google or Bing) for your internet searches.
- ✓ Start at www.goodshop.com when shopping online.
- ✓ Sign up at www.escrip.com for when you patronize local stores and restaurants.
- ✓ Take your recycling to Valcore (www.valcorerecycling.org) and ask that the money go to the church.
- ✓ Use www.smile.amazon.com. The first time you use it, you will be asked to select a charity to support. Pick our church, and don't forget to bookmark the page!

DEACON'S SCHEDULE

February 2	* Rebecca Morris	Adriana Zaragoza
February 9	* Florence Gomez	Lisa Vigil
February 16	* Sara Morgado	Amanda Trujillo
February 23	* Rebecca Morris	Abijah Steenhouse

*Denotes Head Deacon (set flags out in front of church & bring in after service, check collection envelopes & replenish if needed, light candles in front of church before service & extinguish after & enter attendance into log).

Mark Your Calendar

Sunday, February 9	Elders' Meeting, following worship
Wednesday, February 12	Administrative Council, 5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, February 19	Ministry Council, 5:30 p.m.
Sunday, February 23	Deacons' Meeting, 9:30 before worship
	Lunch with Sustainable Solano following worship
Wednesday, February 26	Ash Wednesday – services at other local congregations

