

# The Living Word

1035 Indiana St.  
Vallejo CA 94590  
707-643-7973



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## ***Common Ground 2020 Kick-off Action: A Different Kind of Politics***

Exciting things are happening in Common Ground and we want you to join us! After the new year we will hold our Kick-off Action for 2020 "A Different Kind of Politics". The event will take place in the gymnasium at St. Basil the Great Catholic Church on 1/21/20 from 6:30 to 8.

Common Ground members and members of our community will be represented, as well as several power people in the Vallejo City Council, candidates for County Supervisor, and members of the City of Vallejo staff. We are also expecting the Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sacramento, Jaime Soto, to visit and listen and support our community.

We will have Common Ground members telling their stories to the people who hold the power, and asking for their support in moving forward with two main issues affecting our city – the Vacant Lot Ordinance and the Housing/Rental Crisis. We also want you to share your story and your concerns about this community face to face with city and county officials and staff.

We are expecting over 200 participants from the community and Common Ground member groups. My hope is we can count on you to come as well. Christy, Carl, and myself are all on the leadership teams for the event, and we will be calling on you in the coming weeks to help in different ways. From registering guests, to setting chairs, to just being a body & voice in the gym representing FCCV.

Many times I have heard from our Congregation that "community organizing is just too slow and I would rather take action". Well, now is your chance!! This is a chance to show strength to those who hold the power in Vallejo & the County. Our community is changing, and together, through organizing, we can have a seat at decision making tables. Make your voices heard!!

For more information or to RSVP,  
email myself, Carl Cordes, or Christy  
Newton

Allison Mezzera



## *Living Stones*

*When the song of the angels is stilled,  
when the star in the sky is gone, / when the kings and princes are home,  
when the shepherds are back with their flocks, / the work of Christmas begins:  
to find the lost, / to heal the broken,  
to feed the hungry, / to release the prisoner,  
to rebuild the nations, / to bring peace among the people,  
to make music in the heart.*

*—“Now the Work of Christmas Begins” by Howard Thurman*

As we enter this Christmas season and the New Year, we are invited to hold the tensions of mortality—life and death in a moment—and to allow ourselves to be deeply human, fallible, imperfect, beautiful, messy, brilliant, uncertain. For just like the baby Jesus—born into our world once again—we each cradle a multitude of births and deaths in our own lives. Something is waiting to be born in us. And something is waiting to die.

Jesus is born into our world to demonstrate the powerful possibilities of being deeply human—to live and die—in all our complexity—in indivisible relationship with others. This is so very important. That no matter what, we are not alone. We are surrounded by vast communities of God’s other children. No matter what exists in this moment—good, bad, and everything in-between—Emmanuel. God with us. Even in the bleakest and most heartbreaking circumstances. Even in anxiety, frustration, and overwhelm. Even when we can’t seem to find hope or peace or joy or love. Emmanuel. God is with us.

And we are the ones God calls—in this moment—to do our best to incarnate the hope and peace and joy and love that the world so desperately needs. And this has always been the case. Our God has always chosen the most unexpected, unsuspecting people to do the most incredible and world-changing things. Like asking a poor, unwed, teenaged, Palestinian girl to give birth to the Prince of Peace, the King of Kings, the Savior, the Christ. Who would have expected that? And likewise, God invites us—and people everywhere—to be deeply human, to rely on relationships with others, to trust Emmanuel—God with us—and to incarnate the justice and joy, the goodness and grace, and the hope and possibility that will liberate an imprisoned and broken world.

You are invited to be a tabernacle for the holy. God chooses to dwell in you. And if we listen closely, we will hear our own annunciations—the voices of angels whispering to us continually, “Do not fear. You are not alone. The Holy One has great things in store for you.”

See you in church,  
Christy

**A BIG THANK YOU!**

Thank you so much, church family, for your generous Christmas gift! Your generosity means so much to me—and also to Jeanne and Clivie. I am blessed to serve as your pastor, and I am grateful for the faithful ways we minister together. Your gift helps make our Christmas (and my birthday) especially merry as we travel to Glasgow, Scotland, to spend part of the holidays with my sister and her family.

With much love and appreciation,  
Christy

**WORSHIP PLANNING RETREAT – JANUARY 18**

On Saturday, January 18, from 10:00-2:00, we will have our next Worship Planning Retreat, which will be an opportunity for anyone—and everyone—to come together to help envision and chart a course for our worship services over the next 3 months, including Lent and Easter. We will read scripture together and brainstorm themes, songs, poems, prayers, art, and ways we might structure our worship time. Everyone is welcome! So, bring yourselves, your ideas, a lunch, and snacks to share. We will share a refreshing and life-giving time together, while doing the work of the church—it is a retreat, after all! I look forward to seeing you there!

**SABBATICAL PLANS IN PROGRESS FOR MAY 2020**

Christy will go on sabbatical from mid-May to mid-August 2020. In preparation for this time, the Pastoral Relations Committee is making plans about what that time will look like in the life of our congregation. Thank you to everyone who shared ideas and suggestions about the sabbatical time during our recent Congregational Meeting.

And as a reminder, the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program 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.

**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.

**FINAL FAIRE REPORT**

by Jon Mezzera

This is the final report for the 22nd Annual Global Holiday Faire. **I am thrilled to announce that the Faire made a total of \$15,631.22, making it the biggest Faire ever!** That is nearly \$1,000 more than last year. Below you will see a breakdown of how much money each organization received. I did want to point out that this was the best year ever for nine of our organizations - Women's Bean Project, Concern America, Project Have Hope, Heifer International, Arbor Day Foundation, plus The Big 4 (Amador St. Hope Center, Genesis House, DePaul Women's Center and The Nature Conservancy). Each of the Big 4 received \$955 from the combined sales of the crafts, re-gifted items, gift baskets, baked goods (which sold out!) and lunch from the kitchen. It was a great day and I am blown away by the success.

Unfortunately, we haven't been able to find the records for some of the early Faires. So, we don't know the exact amount that we've made over the last 22 years. However, with what we know for sure, and with a combination of memory and educated estimates for those early years, **I am confident that this year we passed the \$200,000 mark for total monies raised at the Faire!** That money has gone to over 55 organizations. Just think about all the people all over the world that we have touched with this amazing effort!

Of course, I have to once again thank everyone for your help making this such a great success! Thank you to all who donated items to sell, helped spread the word, set up on Friday, sang in our choir on Saturday, volunteered at the Faire itself and shopped. Thanks so much!

Friends of Loma Vista Farm	\$403.50	SERRV	\$2887.77
Global Mamas	\$1178.00	Women's Bean Project	\$807.70
Concern America	\$1251.00	Gifts for the Journey	\$351.00
Milestones of Development	\$200.00	Project Have Hope	\$836.00
Azizi Life	\$708.00	Heifer International	\$2395.00
Arbor Day Foundation	\$690.00	World Central Kitchen	\$103.25
The Nature Conservancy	\$955.00	De Paul Women's Center	\$955.00
Amador St. Hope Center	\$955.00	Genesis House	\$955.00



**HUNGER WALK OF VALLEJO**

As the New Year is upon us, as we celebrate the Global Holiday Fair, as we worship the child in the manger, we start to think about the Hunger Walk of Vallejo. We have done the walk for the past 11 years and achieved much, but the committee needs help in order to continue this mission. If you are interested in helping, please let me know soon. We will need to start the process by the middle of January.

Thank You!

Carl Cordes (cc)

707-694-6274 (cell)

**CHRISTMAS OFFERING**

December always brings many agencies which need your support; the Region of Northern California is one of these. We will be taking the Christmas offering on December 22 and the 29th. This offering will help sustain the life of our regional church. Women's and Men's retreats, Reconciliation programs, Care and Recognition, Clergy retreats, and much more will benefit from your donation. *Every dollar you give comes back to the region.* Check out the region website [www.ccncn.org](http://www.ccncn.org) for more information.

Thank You!

Carl Cordes (cc)

707-694-6274 (cell)

**GREEN CHALICE**

Here's some amazing news for your information that affects our Green Chalice ministry going forward and affects new home construction in Solano County and statewide.

**January 1st New homes in California must be SOLAR**

California already generates more electricity from solar power than any other state. But now a dramatic expansion is about to begin as new building codes take effect Jan. 1 requiring all newly constructed homes statewide to be powered by the sun. Read more about this at: <https://www.timesheraldonline.com/2019/12/15/solar-power-required-for-all-new-california-homes-starting-jan-1/>

*Ed. note: If you want an earful on solar and all-electric homes, talk to John Grose. He's been in the solar industry since 1981, and is an innovator in meeting the new requirements.*



**MISSION ACTION: We lend a**

As previously noted, our Mission Action “Lend a Hand” outreach gift for the month of December was given to *Haircuts 4 the Holidays*, a local project right here at FCCV spearheaded by Renae Earl, our Minister-in-Training. Two very successful dates were held where dozens of people were given haircuts and provided with hygiene kits. Our gift was used to provide lunches and - along with additional donations from FCC members - provide those hygiene kits for the attendees.

Our January Outreach gift of \$150 will be sent along with the many, many pairs of socks (donated by FCC members into the SOX BOX) to a worthy project in Vallejo that provides meals, clothes and services to the homeless in our community. Two such projects are still being considered and our gifts will be noted in the next Living Word.

**DON'T FORGET:**

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

- ✓ Use [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) (instead of Google or Bing) for your internet searches.
- ✓ Start at [www.goodshop.com](http://www.goodshop.com) when shopping online.
- ✓ Sign up at [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) for when you patronize local stores and restaurants.
- ✓ Take your recycling to Valcore ([www.valcorerecycling.org](http://www.valcorerecycling.org)) and ask that the money go to the church.
- ✓ Use [www.smile.amazon.com](http://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**

January 5	*George Morris	Sara Morgado
January 12	*Adriana Zaragoza	Lisa Vigil
January 19	*Amanda Trujillo	Rebecca Morris
January 26	*Florence Gomez	Paolo Altamira

\*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, January 12	Epiphany Dinner following worship
Sunday, January 19	Elders Meeting, following worship
Wednesday, January 15	Administrative Council, 5:30 p.m.
Saturday, January 18	Worship Planning Retreat, 10:00-2:00
Tuesday, January 21	Common Ground Community Event!
Wednesday, January 22	Ministry Council, 5:30 p.m.

*Take a leap of faith and begin this wondrous New Year by believing. Believe in yourself. And believe that there is a loving Source – a Sower of Dreams – just waiting to be asked to help you make your dreams come true.*

*Sarah Ban Breathnach*



HAPPY NEW YEAR