

The Living Word

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www.facebook.com/fccvallejo

WATER REFILL STATION INSTALLED - SUZANNE AWALT

We have all heard the expression “living water.” Our ministry has recently added a new articulation of this idea. We now have a fresh water dispenser on a new concrete platform installed adjacent to the Little Free Pantry. Have you tried it??

This installation was a very fitting way to celebrate Earth Day 2026.

Thanks to a \$6000 grant from Disciples’ National Benevolent Association and the volunteer labor of our members, we can now forgo handing out plastic bottles of water. This water bottle refill station will benefit our members and visitors to the Peace Garden, building users, neighbors and passers-by, and unsheltered visitors, who rely on our garden and pantry for a moment of respite.

Thanks to John and Beth Grose, Ted Goode, and Carl Cordes for bringing this envisioned project to life.

I would love to hear any stories or reports on how our visitors feel about this addition.

While we are no longer dispensing bottled water, please remember the needs of the Little Free Pantry when you shop.

Thank you for sharing in important Mission Action initiatives.



PASTOR'S PEN

For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?
~Esther 4:14 (NIV)

This text from Esther was the theme of our 172nd Annual Gathering of the Christian Church in Northern California and Nevada in April. Through preaching, presentations, conversations, and workshops we explored how we are prepared to stand up for our values and guard our beloved communities in a time such as this.

Rev. Grace Kozak, Associate Director for Immigrant and Refugee Response at Week of Compassion gave a wonderful presentation about how Disciples of Christ are responding to immigrants in crisis with compassion and care. She gave examples from Regions and congregations who embody hope with solidarity to educate members, accompany refugees and immigrants, offer legal aid, and lead mutual aid operations.

Rev. Dr. Davena Creer-Jones, Conference Minister for the Northern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ offered an inspiring sermon about how to see ourselves in the story of Esther. She challenged us to be ready to show up in whatever ways we're called to the current moment.

Our congregation was well-represented by so many! Rev. Dr. Christy Newton was there in her role as Disciples Seminary Foundation Executive Director. Rev. Gem McIntyre led two workshops about Internal Family Systems and the Wheel of Awareness. Rev. Shannon Gomez and I co-led a workshop and panel presentation about Open & Affirming Ministries, and Carl Cordes led the call to worship for opening worship on Friday evening. Rev. Caro Bono and Jeanne Cordes also attended, and it was great to keep running into each other. I also got to share the story (and photos) of our new water bottle refill station at a "Good News" in the local church workshop. People loved hearing about it! I was proud to see such engagement and participation among us.

We are always stronger together and I'm grateful for the connections that strengthen and sustain us across the wider church.

God Bless You,
Pastor Sara

NOTES FROM THE PASTOR

Pastor at the Pub

We had a great time in March trying out a new way to meet up. We're going to repeat it for May at Mare Island Brewing Company - Ferry Taproom (289 Mare Island Way in Vallejo) on **Thursday, May 21st** between **4pm and 6 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 while we visit.

Bible Study

We continue to meet on the last Sunday of the month to dive into scripture together. For May we'll meet after worship from **Noon to 1:30** on **Sunday the 31st**. Bring a brown bag lunch and your Bible. We'll meet in Fellowship Hall and take a look at the **Gospel of John** and what makes it unique among the gospels.

New Member Celebration May 17

Sunday May 17th we will have the pleasure of welcoming CCNC-N Regional Minister **Rev. Dr. LaTaunya Bynum** to preach for us in worship. After worship she'll join us as a special guest with our newest FCCV members at a luncheon in their honor. The elders are planning a baked potato and chile verde lunch. We'll have a fun time getting to know each other and all will leave full of love and good food. No need to bring anything! Just **RSVP to Pastor Sara** at pastor@vallejochristian.org so we know how much to prepare.

Coming 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.

New FCCV Name-tags

With the help of Beth Grose we're hoping to print new name-tags in the near future. We'd like to include everyone's pronouns this time around. Check in with Pastor Sara to let us know what pronouns work best for you!

NOTES FROM THE PASTOR

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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PENTECOST QUIZ - David Mezzera

Pentecost will be on May 24th this year, so I’m sure you would be disappointed if my challenge this month didn’t involve questions about Pentecost. So here goes:

1. Which Gospel(s) contain(s) the account of Pentecost?
2. In what city did this event take place?
3. How many days after Christ’s Ascension did Pentecost occur?
4. What is the root meaning for the word "Pentecost?"
5. What did the fire that came to rest on the disciples look like?
6. What amazing accomplishment did the disciples possess on Pentecost Day?

Find the answers below.

PENTECOST QUIZ - Answers

1. The Pentecost event does not appear in any of the Gospels! It is recorded only in Acts of the Apostles 2:1-41.
2. The events took place in Jerusalem where the Apostles retreated to after the Ascension of Jesus for fear of reprisal from the religious leaders.
3. Pentecost occurred 10 days after the Ascension, which itself was 40 days after the Resurrection of Jesus (see the next answer).
4. The word "Pentecost" comes from the Latin word *Pentecoste* and from the Greek *Pentekoste*, which both mean "fiftieth (day)." Pentecost was actually an established feast in the Hebrew religious tradition, signifying 50 days after Passover, which is what the Apostles were gathered to celebrate when the descent of the Holy Spirit occurred. In the Christian tradition, Pentecost occurs 50 days after the Resurrection.
5. The Acts of the Apostles tells that the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles and appeared as tongues of fire - as to the right - which parted and came to rest on each of them (Acts 2:3).
6. Since the Apostles were emboldened by the presence of the Holy Spirit, they felt the power to preach to the people about the risen Christ and what they must do to be saved. There were Jews in Jerusalem from all over the known world at the time to celebrate *Pentecoste* (see #4 above) who spoke multiple languages other than Aramaic (the local language). Amazingly, each foreigner heard the Apostles preach in their own language. This is referred to as "speaking in tongues," or "glossolalia," speaking in a language not previously known to the speaker. The listeners were amazingly able to understand the Apostles who appeared to be speaking in each of their own native languages.



MISSION ACTION REPORT - Suzanne Awalt, Mission Action Coordinator

Monthly Gift

The May Mission Action donation of \$275 will be made to Freedom Reads, an important prisoner enrichment organization. We thank Allison Mezzera for lifting up Freedom Reads.

From their website:

Freedom Reads is a first of its kind organization that inspires and confronts what prison does to the spirit. We bring beautiful, handcrafted bookcases into prisons, transforming cellblocks into Freedom Libraries. The library is a physical intervention into the landscape of plastic and steel and loneliness that characterizes incarceration. In an environment where the freedom to think, to contribute to a community, and even to dream about what is possible is too often curtailed, Freedom Reads reminds those Inside that they have not been forgotten.

Amidst the chaos and control that characterizes prisons, it is difficult to bring into focus the intellectual, cultural, and emotional loss that incarcerated people experience. Freedom Reads is the only organization in the nation transforming the experience of incarceration by opening libraries in cellblocks.

Learn more at www.freedomreads.org

Disciples' Pentecost Offering

The 2026 Pentecost Offering supports New Church Ministry and our Region to nurture emerging and affiliating faith communities. Through these ministries, new spaces are created where people can encounter God, build meaningful relationships, and serve their neighbors with compassion. We will receive this offering on Sundays, May 17 and May 24. Your offerings are welcome any time. You may use a designated offering envelope or simply annotate a donation for "Pentecost Offering."

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)

Save The Date

The Christian Church of Woodland invites you to a community viewing of **1946: The Mistranslation That Shifted a Culture**

This will happen on June 13th in our sanctuary with a movie screening and a meal! More details to follow.

-Pastor Shannon

Mark Your Calendar

May 2 - Haircuts for Spring, 11-3 (set up at 10:00 am).

May 3 - Elders meeting after worship.

May 7 - Admin Council Meeting, 5 pm on Zoom.

May 14 - Ministry Council Meeting, 5 pm on Zoom.

May 17 - New Member Luncheon, after worship.

May 21 - Pastor at the Pub, 4-6 pm at the Mare Island Brewing Company - Ferry Building.

May 31 - Bible Study, after worship (bring a lunch).

June 13 - "1946: The Mistranslation That Shifted a Culture" film at Woodland Christian Church.

The deadline for the next Living Word is May 27
