



Church of the Foothills
JANUARY 2021
Sower

Church Staff & Leadership

Rev. John Forrest Douglas	Pastor
Judi Balcerzak	Moderator
Rev. John Martin	Pastor Emeritus
Elizabeth Helms	Music Director
Karen MacConell	Accompanist
Craig Rhea	Church Administrator
Marie Stauffer	Bookkeeper
Lena Martinez	Office Assistant
Jim Harris	Facilities Manager
Johnny Martinez	Facilities Assistant

Church Office Hours:

(Note: Our campus is closed, but staff is in the office several days a week)

Rev. John Forrest: Tues-Fri & Sunday
 pastor@foothillschurchinventura.com

Craig: Mon, Wed, Friday, 9am to 2pm
 admin@foothillschurchinventura.com

Marie: Mon, Wed, Thurs & Fri, 9am to 11am
 6279 Foothill Road, Ventura, CA 93003
 (805) 644-3036

After-hour emergencies: (805) 228-4167
www.churchofthefoothills-ventura.org

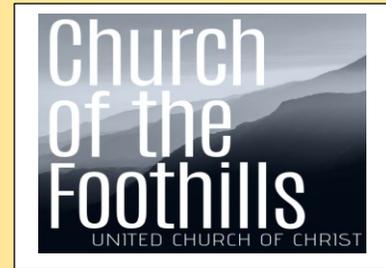
January 2021

We remain amidst an unprecedented time of uncertainty and patience. Most church activities on site continue to be postponed, cancelled, or moved online. However, please make note of these special dates:

Friday, January 1	HAPPY NEW YEAR! (church office closed)
Every Thursday	Zoom Choir Rehearsal, 7pm
Fridays	Group Walks on hold until further notice
Sunday, January 3	Drive-Thru Communion, 1-2pm
Thursday, January 21	Drop-off Food, Clothing & Book Drive, 9am-Noon
Sunday, January 31	Annual Congregational Meeting, after the morning worship service

Please continue to practice all COVID-19 guidelines and stay well.

The Church Council would like to remind you that the **Pastor's Discretionary Fund** will be used to address financial needs within our community as they arise. If you feel led to give in this way, please feel free to donate to the fund either online or by mailing a check to the church office.



Recordings of our past services can be found on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/foothillsventura and on our website: www.churchofthefoothills-ventura.org/ under the "Worship" tab.

You will find previous editions of the Sower on our website, as well, under the "Church Life" tab.

Sower editor: Linda Marsi

Remember in Prayer

Karina D'Arcy, Irene Hostetter, Doris Keyes, Helga Ohrt, Jan Osborne, Ken Schmidt, Nancy Wingate, Fred Widney & Daniel Widney, Mike Gibbs (the Allen's daughter-in-law's father), Bob & Kathleen Holmgren (friends of the Allens), Katie & Josh Bandy, whose baby is due soon, Carmen (Karen MacConell's childhood friend), All those affected by COVID-19, including our community, healthcare workers, hospitals and those who are ill.

Loved ones of Joan Egeris on her passing.
 Didi Pinkstone & family on the passing of Nuni Mederos. Didi is grateful for the love and support received from her church family.

Loved ones of Filomena Krambo on her passing.



Dear Church,

Well, what a year 2020 has been! Who would have imagined that we would spend the majority of the year quarantined away from one another? There are signs of hope that we will be able to reunite with one another in person at some point in the new year. As I am writing this, healthcare workers are beginning to revive the first vaccines. Thank God!

The beginning of a new year brings with it the opportunity to set an intention for the ways we will live in the new year. On Sunday, January 3, we will celebrate the beginning of the season of Epiphany and we will consider which “star” we want our lives to follow in 2021.

Blessings as we step into this new year with hope and faith.

Peace and Love,
Pastor John Forrest



Happy New
Year!



Join us on **Sunday, January 3,**
from 1-2pm, for our **Drive-Thru
Communion.** Please drive up
to the church, roll down your
window, and a volunteer in
protective gear will give you a
sanitary, disposable, and
individually pre-packaged
communion wafer and juice set.

From Your Moderator

by Judi Balcerzak

What a year we have had! So many changes and so many stories to tell! A year of pandemic, political upheaval and economic uncertainty has resulted in new fears but also in new opportunities for service and for growth.

In a million years, Pastor John Forrest could not have imagined that his first year of full-time ministry with us would involve ministering to a congregation during a worldwide pandemic! I know you join me in offering a hearty “Thank you” to Reverend Douglas! Pastor, your resilience and creativity in the many ways you minister to us have been exemplary! We are so grateful to have you. You have been a comfort, a blessing, and a true leader.

Join me in offering a heartfelt “Thank You” to all involved in church leadership and to all who have helped to keep Church of the Foothills functioning for 10 months. Thank you, Banday-Helms family members for your technical expertise and thank you Liz and Karen for your flexibility in providing an enriched music program. Church Council members, you have done a great job in leading boards and committees in your ongoing work. Thank you to all Board Chairs and Council members.

My hope is that all members and friends of our faith community have continued to feel connected by the various ways COFH has provided for us, including:

- Virtual Sunday services
- Virtual Sunday School and Zoom at noon
- Virtual book studies
- Virtual choir
- Drive by Communion
- Socially distanced Vespers
- Fresh air group walks
- Cheerleading caravans to say to those in congregate living, “We love you. We have not forgotten you.”
- Monthly donation of food, clothing, and books and
- Our playground fund raising project!

So, where are we today? A vaccine is on the way and many in our congregation will be among the first to be vaccinated. That is great news. Thanks to Sharon Groeneveld, the playground installation will have been completed by the end of December, making our campus more KID FRIENDLY for young families. We have retained membership and attracted new prospective members. Congregational financial support continues to be generous for our organizational expenses and to help meet community needs. We can be proud of what we have accomplished in 2020!

As we move into 2021, we are ensuring that board positions are filled and that we have continuity in leadership. Our board nominations for the new year and our stewardship drive will be completed so that when we have our congregational meeting at the end of January, on Sunday, January 31, we can approve the new slate of officers, and approve the budget. Our by-laws indicate that we need a quorum to conduct business, so thank you in advance for staying after church that day for this important meeting. All relevant materials will be distributed one week prior so watch your email or your postal mailbox.

At our annual congregational meeting on January 31, I will pass the baton of moderatorship to Eleanor Wilson. I know I am leaving the job in very capable hands. Let me say that it has been a joy and an honor to have served these past two years. Thank you for your confidence in me and for your support.



December
15th was
Dave
Wuerth's
92nd
birthday.
8 COTF
cars with
passengers
made his
day quite
special!

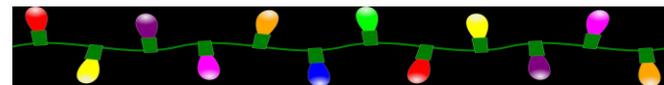


12/17/20

Notes NOTE TO CRAIG,
SOWER, EDITOR:
UNLESS YOU ^{ALREADY} MADE NOTE OF
MY BIRTHDAY CAR PARADE,
ELSEWHERE IN THE SOWER, HERE
IS A POSSIBLE ARTICLE. IT'S
ENTIRELY UP TO YOU WHETHER YOU
WANT TO USE IT. -DAW

"I WISH TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION
AND THANKS TO THOSE MEMBERS OF
OUR CHURCH, WHO ORGANIZED AND
PARTICIPATED IN MY 92ND BIRTHDAY
CELEBRATION THIS PAST DEC. 15.
THE PARADE OF CARS PAST MY HOME
ON HENDERSON RD., WITH "HORNS HONKING"
AND "HEADLIGHTS BLAZING," WAS OUT-
STANDING," AND RESULTED IN ONLY
3 CITATIONS FOR DISTURBING THE PEACE.
DAVE WUERTH

Dave's P.S. "Just kidding about the citations!"



We also had a wonderful church-sponsored *Car Parade* on Sat, Dec. 5th.
Twelve cars with 20 riders visited 13 members of our
church family who reside at the *Townehouse, Aegis,
Cypress Meadows & Cypress Point* in Ventura.
We waved, cheered, blew kisses, played Christmas carols and generally
lifted each other's spirits for the holidays.
The indefatigable Annagret Riley and helpers assembled and distributed
gift bags for each of our residents.
It was a special day for riders & residents alike!

Outreach and Benevolence

Volunteer Opportunities at Food Share

In these trying pandemic times, let us join together to help those in our community that are unable to afford sufficient nutrition. The following opportunities are available to help Food Share feed our neighbors:

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>
W	1/13/21	9am-12n	Disaster Box Packing
W	2/17/21	2-5pm	Pop-Up Food Distribution College Park Oxnard
M	3/15/21	11:45am-3pm	California Works Drive-Thru Food Pantry
W	4/14/21	2-5pm	Pop-up Food Distribution College Park Oxnard

To sign up for one of these opportunities to volunteer, or to search for others, go to [Volunteer Opportunities - Food Share of Ventura County](#). For any questions, call, message or email Scott Marsi at (609) 713-0254 or scott.marsi@gmail.com.

“Look how far you’ve come...and then keep going!”

By Dr. Nancy Merrick

We have come a long way, but for today, the Winter Surge is still seriously challenging our local hospitals and community. We hope you are muscling through! Thankfully, vaccines are arriving, our first BIG step towards getting us back to normal. When it is our turn, my family and I will gladly roll up our sleeves. Want to know what vaccination will feel like, how it works, if it is safe, and why we will still be wearing our masks even afterwards? Two Ventura infectious disease doctors have put together a wonderful 14-minute video on YouTube. Check it out at: <https://youtu.be/2u5bjhobc4A>. Some specifics will undoubtedly change in coming weeks, but it is a great overview! Keep muscling through. We are nearing those better days ahead, and we hope you will stay safe until we are in the “all clear.”

Dining for Women continues to meet monthly via Zoom. Zoom meeting will be January 27, 2021
Contact Candace Reynolds or Linda Marsi

January Grantees:

**The BARKA
Foundation
Burkina Faso**

**Integrate Health
Togo**

JANUARY PROJECT PLAYGROUND UPDATE

WE HAVE A PLAYGROUND!! Great Western Recreation started installation December 7th and the surface was done on December 23rd. I want to personally thank all our donors for making this playground a reality! I also want to thank Pastor John Forrest and the Church Council and Boards for their financial and emotional support. When my wonderful committee first met, I do not think we could have ever dreamed that this amazing structure would become a reality. Thank you to my co-chair Tarah Gilson, and the rest of the committee, Karen MacConell, Jack and Janet Amos, Dustin Allison, Carol Dawes, Lena Martinez, and Cheryl Hodge for all their research, hard decision making and devotion to this project.

OUR DONORS:

RED BALLOONS: Jim & Cheryl Bruckner, Cheryl Hodge, Janet Kessler, Gary & Nancy Lairmore, Karen MacConell, Scott & Linda Marsi, Amy Schroller, Mandy Shoemaker & Jennifer Tribo, Bruce & Signe Smale, Steve & Mardi Treanor, Van Riper/Kurnick Family Trust, Jim & Alberta Word

GREEN BALLOONS: Dustin, Valerie & Savannah Allison, Jack & Janet Amos, Judi Balcerzak, Josh, Katie & Malia Banday, Paul & Karina D'Arcy, Carol & Larry Dawes, Jacque Everton, Tarah Gilson, Scott & Sharon Groeneveld, Liz Helms, Jack & Laurel Hewson, Brian & Jan Osborne, Bruce Strathearn, Lynn Weitzel, Eleanor Wilson, Sigrid Wong

BLUE BALLOON: Steven & Denice Barr, Betsy Chess, Diana Hopkins, Juergen & Helga Ohrt, Virginia & Jeff Weber

YELLOW BALLOONS: Denise & Wendell Allen, Sandy Artman, Russell Black, Deana Blackwood, Terry Brenner-Farrell, Rich & Ann Deamer, Sandy Greenberg, Nancy Hill, Melanie Lang, John & Robin Martin, Walter & Loretta McCarty, Rosena McConica, Rod & Laurie Oberlander, Didi Pinkstone & Nuni Mederos, Craig Rhea & Allen Kieffer, Anngret Riley, Karen Selander, Helen & Ezra Spevak, Marie Stauffer, Virginia Stout, Lou & Rosemary Vigorita, Madeleine Waddell, Kay Wilbur, Bobbie Wilson

ORANGE BALLOONS: Faye Campbell, Sandy Case, Bill & Brenda Duckworth, Ken & Marilyn Gesch, Newell & Dottie Gragg, Aaron & Nicole Hardy, Lennie Harris, Valerie Husbands, Estelle Ichino, Sylvia Mack, Hank Morris, Meg Perry, Irma Plate, Ann Powell, Keri Prout, Iris Schulman, Karena Senchack, Charles & Kathy Silverman, Jim Watkins, Carolyn "Tuni" Wilbur, Gordon Wilson

(If you made a donation and don't see your name or would like to be listed differently, please email me at greatengraver@yahoo.com with the addition/change. Also, if you would like to add a notation "In Memory Of" or "In Honor Of" someone next to your name for the recognition wall, we can do that too.)

FYI: We will continue to accept donations, which will go in our playground maintenance fund for future upkeep. Donors will continue to be added to the Donor's Wall through the end of January 2021.

Thank you!

**Sharon Groeneveld,
Playground Committee Chair**



Another Successful Drive

The Outreach and Benevolence Board extends many thanks once again to our church community for all the generous donations. On December 17th our monthly “Drive-thru” Food, Clothing and Book Collection at the COTF yielded **30 bags/boxes of food and hygiene products** for Project Understand and **30 bags/boxes of clothing, shoes, backpacks and rain ponchos** for the homeless served at the County’s One Stop program. In addition, several boxes of used books were collected to help support Friends of the Library. Our homeless and food insecure community neighbors will have a better holiday because of your efforts.

We will continue the tradition of monthly “Drive-Thru” collections into 2021. **The next event will be Thursday, January 21st from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.** in the church parking lot.

Open & Affirming (ONA) Update

Since 90% of respondents to our survey earlier in the year were in favor of welcoming and including LGBTQ+ folks fully into the life of our church, the ONA Committee decided to streamline the process a bit.

We have created a draft Welcoming Covenant (see below) and would love to receive your feedback on it by the end of January. Please feel free to contact one of the committee members or Pastor John Forrest.

Thank you, Scott Marsi, Lena Martinez, Keri Prout, Margaret Seawell, Craig Rhea

Welcoming Covenant (draft):

No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.

As a community of faith that believes in and strives to live into these words, Church of the Foothills lovingly declares that we are an Open and Affirming congregation in which all people, including persons of every race, ethnic background, age, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, socio-economic background, marital status and faith background, are welcomed and embraced in the full life and work of our church.

We recognize that the LGBTQ+ community (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and variations thereupon) often has been the target of discrimination and judgment in the name of God, and we consciously choose to renounce any discrimination and judgment by embracing justice and welcoming all people, including people of diverse sexual and gender orientation, into the full life and communion of our church.

We recognize that declaring Church of the Foothills to be Open and Affirming is not the final destination, but the continuation of an ongoing journey to seek justice for all of God’s children and to love our neighbor as ourselves, in accordance with the teachings of Christ Jesus.

COTF Food, Clothing & Used Book Drive 2021 Schedule

The drive-through collections continue! Many of you regularly contribute canned goods, non-perishable packaged foods, hygiene products and other items to Project Understandings’ food pantry or gently used adult clothing to our homeless neighbors. We also collect used books in support of Ventura libraries. Ventura Friends of the Library will be on hand to accept used books for resale or recycle.

We will continue **monthly** collections throughout 2021 on **Thursdays from 9:00 am to 12 pm**. Mark your calendars! The January – June 2021 schedule is as follows:

- January 21st
- February 18th
- March 18th
- April 22nd
- May 20th
- June 17th

Same place: Church of the Foothills parking lot between church office and sanctuary

Same process: Just drive up to the designated area and pop your trunk or have a door unlocked and a church member in personal protective equipment (PPE) will unload your contributions. No need to leave your vehicle.

It is simple and will benefit those in need during these times. Even if you do not have any donations, come on up to the church drive-through just to say “hi”. Even when masked, it is good to see everyone and have a little chat.

Thank you in advance for your generous contributions.
Your Outreach and Benevolence Board