



*Church of the
Foothills
February 2019
Sower*

Church Staff & Leadership

Elizabeth Helms	Music Director
Karen MacConell	Accompanist
Craig Rhea	Office Administrator
Marie Stauffer	Bookkeeper
Steve Treanor	Moderator
John Martin	Pastor Emeritus
Lena Martinez	Office Assistant
Jim Harris	Facilities Manager
Johnny Martinez	Facilities Assistant

Church Office Hours:

Craig: Mon, Wed, Friday, 9am to 2pm

Marie: Tuesday - Friday, 9am to 11am

6279 Foothill Road, Ventura, CA 93003
(805) 644-3036

After-hour emergencies: (805) 420-7748

churchofthefoothills-ventura.org

Calendar

FEBRUARY 2019

Every Sunday (830am) and every Friday (10am) - Book Study

Every Wednesday (6pm) – Men’s Book Study

Every Thursday (7pm) – Choir Practice

Sunday	3	Communion Sunday Rev. Joan Ishibashi’s last Sunday at COTF
Friday	8	Quilt Ministry – Agora Room – 11am
Sunday	10	Board Meetings, after church
Tuesday	12	Council Meeting – 7pm Men’s Breakfast Group – 8am – Danny’s Deli
Saturday	16	Women’s Lunch – 11:30am – The Townhouse , 4900 Telegraph Rd.
Sunday	17	Valentine Potluck/BBQ, after church
Tuesday	19	Dining for Women – Tanzania, 6pm, Merrick home in Ventura
Tuesday	26	Men’s Lunch – 12noon – Main Street Steakhouse

Pastor Joan’s

Final COTF Sunday

February 3

FoodShare Dates and Times

Wed	2/27	12:30-2:30pm
Wed	3/27	12:30-2:30pm
Thurs	4/25	12n-2pm
Thurs	5/23	12n-2pm
Wed	6/16	12:30-2:30



Our New Members Potluck was a Big Success!

A great big thank you to everyone who brought food, those who helped set up and clean up, and to those who donated money (enough to pay for all the chicken) for our New Members Potluck on January 13th. Seventy-eight (78) happy eaters attended.

Thank you from the Special Events Committee

PLEASE HELP MAKE MORE CARE CARDS

Follow Sandy Artman's easier design for handmade cards. Our church family members adore receiving these notes of love from many of us. There is a box in the Agora Room marked CARE TEAM CARDS. In this box are the necessary papers and instructions to fashion the lovely cards. Donna J., Candace R. and Linda M. have contributed in the past. Help yourselves to the supplies. Contact Cheryl Bruckner at 805-701-4653 if you are interested and need help.



Looking for a way to combine fun and creativity?

Join our **Quilt Ministry** time on Friday, Feb. 8 at 11am in the Agora Room. We have many patterns and fabrics to use to create prayer quilts for members, friends, & relatives.

Come take a look!

We can help beginners get started.

We conclude each session with lunch and fellowship.

Contact Candace Reynolds at (661) 205-1023

Pastor Search Committee Update

February 2019

Judi Balcerzak, Chair, Pastor Search Committee

We have narrowed our search and have entered into serious conversation with someone whom we like very much. With all the many steps still before us, it is premature to provide specifics, but we hope to have good news in the next several weeks. Many details remain to be worked out, so we are not yet to the finish line!

Once we have clarified all that needs clarification, our candidate will be invited to Ventura for a weekend. During this weekend, COTF will hold a getting-acquainted potluck with the candidate. This Saturday gathering will provide the congregation with an opportunity to get to know the candidate, ask questions, and get answers. The following day (Sunday), the candidate will preach a sermon for us and preside over the worship service. Following worship, the congregation will *vote* on accepting the candidate. The congregation will have the final say. Only after a decision is made will the selected candidate notify his or her present congregation of accepting the call. We hope to conduct this “candidating” weekend by late March.

As explained in previous posts, most ministers’ contracts require a minimum of a 90-day notice for leaving a position. Add all this together and we might expect to have a new pastor called and settled by July or August.

Pastor Joan was a gift to us all and we are sorry to see her go. Please continue to keep in your prayers all those who are working to ensure that the church continues to function smoothly during this transitional time.

Watch this space for details and updates!

Blessings! From Your Pastor Search Committee

DINING FOR WOMEN IS...

DFW is a global giving circle dedicated to transforming lives and eradicating poverty among women and girls in the developing world. Through member education and engagement, as well as the power of collective giving, Dining for Women funds grassroots organizations that empower women and girls and promote gender equity.

We gather for a potluck meal at members' homes. We dine and fellowship together and then move into the business part of the evening. We review 2 short video clips of the featured grantees for that month. Upon return home, we each donate to DFW, paying the organization vs. a restaurant.

DFW has grown to 450 chapters nationwide and began with four girlfriends going out for dinner. See www.diningforwomen.org for a myriad of details. Also feel free to discuss details with co-chairs Candace Reynolds and Linda Marsi

Our first session on Jan. 17th was well-attended. The information on Niger was provoking. The food – delicious!

Our next potluck meal will be hosted at Nancy Merrick's home on Tues, Feb. 19 at 6pm. Contact her if interested in attending.

nancy.merrick@gmail.com or (805) 298-0025.

(Invites are sent out via evite.)



Maji Safi Group

Featured: 02 February 2019

Location: Mara Region, Tanzania

Women's Lunch will be

Sat, Feb. 16 - 11:30am

We will be guests of Joan Egeris at

The Townhouse, 4900 Telegraph Road





It's SOUP-ER BOWL time!



Sharing is ~~super~~ SOUP-ER!

The Faith Formation Board and all our great kids encourage you to bring whatever soup you *can* contribute to Church on Sunday, February 3rd. We will donate all the soup cans to Ventura County's FoodShare Bank.



THANK YOU FOR SHARING WHAT YOU CAN!

Moving Forward in the Coming Months

February 3rd will be the last Sunday for our amazing Sustaining Pastor Joan Ishibashi. Joan will be returning to her home in London. While this is yet another loss for us, Joan continues to have family in Southern California, and we can anticipate her presence with us when she visits. Joan helped us in our effort to find a suitable replacement and we are hopeful in the effort. More information will be provided as we are able.

Filling the pulpit for the coming months has not been easy. We are fortunate to have congregants stepping up for the two weeks after Joan's departure. Frankly after those two weeks, our path is not totally clear. Concepts are being worked on and it is hoped that we can announce a plan very soon. As of the publishing of this edition of the Sower, we still have work to do.

Rest assured that you have a Council that is committed to filling the gaps and keeping the congregation in the loop as answers appear.

Our Book Studies are continuing thanks to the interest of the congregants and lay leaders. The focus is clearly on issues of poverty, race and privilege. Outreach continues to be robust and Fellowship is strong. Our Ministry to children is filled with committed talented people. Our staff extraordinarily capable and willing to fill the gaps. Our Music Program continues to be an anchor for all our worship. Trustees are working hard to ensure our resources and facilities are well cared for. We have much to be grateful for and I predict many exciting days ahead. Our strength is contained within our kinship and quest. We are blessed with an abundance of diverse seekers committed to one another on our walk with Christ. The future appears quite bright as we work together in this special way. I believe that this time of working together will prepare us well to come alongside our next Minister.

Steve Treanor, Moderator



Care for the Environment

On Sunday, February 24, Nancy Merrick and Scott Marsi will host a **Carbon Footprint Workshop** for all who are interested in finding out how they are doing in the effort to limit global climate change to non-disastrous levels. The workshop will include a brief presentation of the state of global climate change, and individualized carbon footprint calculations using online tools. If there is interest, there will be a follow-up workshop on actions that we as individuals can take to limit our carbon footprints and be a part of the solution to global climate change.

For questions, contact Scott Marsi, (609) 713-0254.

COTF 2018 5 FOR 5 COLLECTIONS

The Church of the Foothills is a **5 for 5 Church** which means we contribute to: Our Church's Wider Mission and the following four Special Mission Offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen The Church, Neighbors In Need and The Christmas Fund.

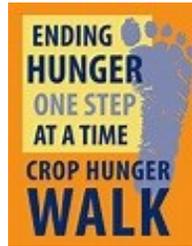
These Special Mission Offerings "allow a common witness and make a collective positive impact."

We finished 2018 with a donation to the Special Mission Offering for the **Christmas Fund** totaling \$1155: \$700 of the Christmas Eve offerings plus \$455 in direct donations.

The Christmas Fund provides direct financial assistance to retired and active United Church of Christ authorized ministers and lay employees and their surviving spouses, including pension and health premium supplementation, emergency assistance, and Christmas thank-you checks.

The following summarizes our special offerings for 2018:

One Great Hour of Sharing	\$1,045 contributed in March
Strengthen the Church	\$1,015 contributed in May
Neighbors in Need	\$ 685 contributed in October
The Christmas Fund	\$1,115 contributed on Christmas Eve
Our Church's Wider Mission	\$2,000 contributed from the O&B Budget



Ending hunger one step at a time...The Ventura CROP Walk (Church World Service fundraising event)

Sunday, March 17, 2019

The Walk Committee is seeking volunteers to help with different aspects of the Walk, from decorating to serving refreshments, directional signage, etc.

Those interested in helping please contact Renata Hundley renatahundley@gmail.com or 805-216-3161

Thank You Joan Ishibashi!

February 3rd will be Sustaining Pastor Joan Ishibashi's last day with us at Church of the Foothills. Reverend Ishibashi will be returning to her home and husband in London. She has been such a wonderful friend and gift to us in our time of transition. Her knowledge and talents have been so important to us during the Advent and Christmas season. She has helped us welcome 8 new members and assisted us in navigating our time of change. While she will be some 8,750 km away (5,437 miles), she continues to have family ties in our area, and we are sure she will visit and remain connected with us. Take advantage of the time she has left with us to show how much we appreciate her.

Book Studies

Three adult book studies are now in progress thanks to grassroots interest. The Friday (10:00AM to 11:00AM) and the Sunday (8:30 AM to 9:30AM) study groups are reading "Evicted" by Matthew Desmond. This is an in depth look at issues of housing from the viewpoint of poor tenants and inner-city landlords in the City of Milwaukee. It informs us of the issues of poverty and homelessness in a way that may help us understand how we might address these issues in our own community.

The Wednesday Night Men's Book Study is reading the book "The New Jim Crow" by Michelle Alexander, a professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. This is currently **THE** book on issues of race and incarceration in the United States. It offers us an opportunity to look at the issues of race from a view that many in our community have not benefited from. The group recently changed the meeting time to 6PM – 7:30PM. Currently there are 7 regular attendees.

All study groups welcome drop-ins and periodic attendance. If you have not made it to a study but are interested in dropping in – please do!! There are no tests. All are welcome at any time.

Church of the Foothills Outreach to Uganda

“Be the change that you wish to see in the world.” Mahatma Gandhi

Church of the Foothills has taken Gandhi’s wisdom to heart, generously supporting 2 important projects in Uganda since fall of 2016. Here is an update on these good works:

a) Myende Toilet and Shower Facility – COTF played an integral part in bringing toilet and shower facilities to a fishing village of 800. As of October 2018, the facility is fully in use, improving hygiene, reducing exposure to schistosomiasis and other diseases, and moving closer to securing government staffing of a clinic. US nonprofit Children of Conservation is now fostering efforts to improve the local school and obtain government support of the clinic, essential to improving hygiene, education, and health.

b) Bulindi Chimpanzee & Community Project – This project is in its 4th year, and serves the environment, improves human lives, and saves wild chimpanzees. A church grant (\$2,000) in 2018 has helped the project grow from a small pilot to a comprehensive program that covers school fees for 54 young people, protects and restores forest through its 5 tree nurseries, protects 5 chimp communities, improves water sources for local communities, provides fuel-efficient stoves, teaches more sustainable agricultural methods, and is enabling creation of a coffee cooperative.

COTF also contributed scholarship support (\$355) last fall that directly enabled 2 young women to continue secondary school. 16-year-old Susan was able to complete her 4th year of secondary school – a big accomplishment, especially given that she was recently orphaned on the death of her mother. Imagine the impact of keeping her in school with the support she needs.

For reference: Only 53% of girls in Uganda complete the 7 years of primary school, and very few receive support for secondary school (families give preference to sons). Every additional year of education means a 10-25 percent increase in the income of a woman, and greatly increases the likelihood her own children will one day attend school.

All that - yet there is more “change” to thank you for. Your support at the Holiday Faire means we now have 47 solar lights for Bulindi Project students. These solar lights will enable them to do their homework in the evenings. Currently, most have no ability to do so while a few others have kerosene lamps that are costly and harmful.

We wish you could see firsthand the impact you’ve had on people’s lives – and on the landscape. We’re always glad to share stories, photos, and the latest update (including the Bulindi Project’s Quarterly Updates).

Your support has truly produced important change. Our thanks to all. – Gary Lairmore & Nancy Merrick