



Church of the Foothills
JUNE 2020
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:

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

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

Marie: Tuesday – Friday, 9am to 11am
6279 Foothill Road, Ventura, CA 93003
(805) 644-3036

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

Calendar JUNE 2020



We are clearly amidst an unprecedented time of uncertainty and patience.

All church activities on site are postponed, cancelled or moved online until further notice.

Please 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.

Message from ONA Committee:

Thank you for your responses to the ONA Survey. We are compiling data and developing an outreach plan based upon your input. Look for more on this effort in next month's Sower.

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.

Please continue to email, text or call Rev. John Forrest with any prayer requests that you would like included in the Prayers of the People during our online services.

Sower editor: Linda Marsi



Dear Church,

"When will we gather in-person again?" This is a question that I'm sure has been on many of your minds over the past few months. I, too, would like us to be able to gather in person again soon. The Church Council is in the process of reviewing a plan to safely and gradually facilitate our return to in-person gatherings. Details of this plan will be available when it is voted on by Council in a few weeks. In the meantime, we will continue to gather in our online format. More information can be found in Judi Balcerzak's article on page 4.

As I think back over the past few months, I am filled with so much gratitude.

- Gratitude for all of you and for the ways you have shown up for one another.
- Gratitude for the ways our congregation's life continues to be active with online worship, Zoom at Noon, two book groups, boards continuing to meet, and so many prayers.
- Gratitude for Liz, Karen, and too many musicians to name learning new ways to make music together and Josh Bandy for his help editing videos.
- Gratitude for Jim Harris, who has been safely working on our church campus, making sure it's ready for our eventual return.
- Gratitude for Craig and Marie who bring so much care to their roles and have made sure our bills are paid, phones are answered, and the other office tasks have gone uninterrupted.
- Gratitude for those who make phone calls, write emails, and send cards to those in need.
- Gratitude for Stephanie, Melissa, Katie, and all the other adults who've volunteered to continue leading amazing Sunday School gatherings for our kids on Zoom.
- Gratitude for Judi (our Moderator), Eleanor (our Vice-Moderator), and Steve (our Past Moderator), who have met with me weekly to assess the ever-changing news and to chart a way forward.
- And gratitude for too many more to name.

This has been a difficult time, but I am grateful that we are taking this journey one step at a time together. Let us continue forward as a people of hope.

Blessings,
John Forrest

ALL WOMEN ARE INVITED!

The 2020 Women's Retreat, September 25-27.
We will use the inspiring path of Ruth and Naomi.

LIFE INTERRUPTED! Love and Trust in times of change.

Watch for ongoing updates.

The Northern Association Spring Meeting

will be held via Zoom on Saturday, June 13 at 1pm.
This gathering is open to all members of churches within the Association and is a wonderful opportunity to connect with other UCC churches in our region.

A Zoom link will be sent out
two weeks prior to the meeting.

If interested in attending, please text or email Valerie Allison at 805-212-0299 or vallison@parker.com

Recently, during Sunday Service Children's time, Pastor JF shared Kelsey MacConell's book, "Freddie." A few people asked Karen MacConell about the availability of Kelsey's book, "Stand Right Freddie." Karen has copies for \$10, and they are available at her home. (She would be happy to deliver.) Contact Karen to reserve your copy: kmacconell@roadrunner.com



JUNE PROJECT PLAYGROUND UPDATE

We made it to \$15,000! As of May 24th, the Playground Capital Campaign has raised \$15,098.65. It is wonderful that this project is still important to people even in these uncertain times. Let us keep the momentum going and try our best to raise the funds to have a playground this year. Keep those donations coming! Mail your donations to the church office or you can donate online using the new link on the church website. *Be sure to note that your donation is for the “playground project”.

Please help move these smiling faces to the top of the ladder. I cannot wait to see the children playing on the playground in the near future.

Sharon Groeneveld, Playground Committee Chair



FROM THE MODERATOR

Judi Balcerzak 5-31-2020

“We’ve never experienced anything quite like this before” is an understatement! These past few months of Coronavirus contagion have involved new and unusual circumstances, unlike any most of us have seen. In recent days, the national and international responses to the pandemic have been, at best, like trying to hit a moving target. We do know that anyone can contract the disease, not get sick but still be contagious, so isolation and quarantine have been essential steps in curbing the spread of this virus. On March 18, Ventura County Public Health Officer, Dr. Robert Levin, issued a firm directive about venue closures and shelter in place restrictions for older persons.

Recent advice from the CDC, WHO, the State of California, and Ventura County Public Health preclude our normal Sunday worship format. To be consistent with other churches in our community and beyond, Church of the Foothills will continue to offer only online church services for the immediate future. We realize that this course of action is not a perfect solution, but it’s one step toward helping to contain the spread of COVID19. With our congregational demographics, we have a high proportion of members in an “at risk” category. I hope you will join me in concern, support, and protection for our most vulnerable members. **WHILE CA IS DOING VERY WELL IN REDUCING AND PREVENTING NEW INFECTIONS, WE ARE NOT YET OUT OF THE WOODS!**

Reverend Douglas held his first “Zoom at Noon” virtual meeting and meditation on 3-18-20. It was very well attended and has been repeated each Wednesday with excellent participation. Church Council members have been continuing to phone or to email our congregational members to ensure that everyone is doing ok.

Thank you for your flexibility as we sort things out. One thing that we do know about crises and isolation, folks tend to feel anxious. Anxiety and concern are very normal responses, so if you feel some anxiety, know that you’re not alone! Keep in mind, though, that negative mood states or over-exaggerated responses will not help us individually or collectively, so trying to take the epidemic in stride is advisable for us all. I do know that while we don’t have control over what’s happening around us, we can claim control over what’s happening within us at the level of our thinking and our emotional responses.

We should all be reassured that nothing has changed Church of the Foothills’ commitment to love, respect, and protect the wellbeing of congregational members. Please know that Reverend Douglas and church leadership are available to provide support to church members as needed. Just ask!!

In the meantime, stay home as much as you can, don’t binge watch news, if you must go outside, go protected with mask, gloves, and hand sanitizer, practice social distancing, keep in touch with those you love, and **WASH YOUR HANDS!**

Blessings to all. We will get through this together!