

December 2021

Still Speaking...

A newsletter from the Community Church of Atascadero



**Community Church
Of Atascadero**

United Church of Christ

**5850 Rosario Avenue
Atascadero, CA 93422**

☎ (805) 466-9108

✉ atascaderoucc@gmail.com

www.atascaderoucc.org

**Virtual Worship
10 am Sunday**

**Virtual Fellowship
3 pm Wednesday**

Pastor: Heather Branton

ccauccpastor@gmail.com

Cell phone (805) 470-9486

Office Hours: by appointment

Day off: Mondays

Church Office:

Marth Thomson, Office

Administrator

(805) 466-9108

atascaderoucc@gmail.com

As I Ponder...

I am having a difficult time wrapping my head around the fact that we are already into Advent! For this season of preparation... I feel unprepared. For this season of waiting... I feel like I'm running around in circles. For this season of anticipation... I find myself wondering, *What for?*

And so, I pause. Take a deep breath. (And another one.) And I approach this again.

Recently I read (somewhere) that Advent isn't actually a happy time. Advent isn't a season filled with love and joy, brimming with hope, surrounded by peace. For those of us in the northern hemisphere, Advent is during a time of increasing darkness. It's a time (at least in many regions) when it gets colder and wetter. Advent seems infused with stress. *I've got to get gifts for... [fill in the blank]! How am I going to get through the family gathering? With increased utilities and everything else, how am I going to pay my bills? And what is happening with the pandemic? Will we, will I, be safe?*

Ok, Heather... pause. Take a deep breath. It's not about *being* prepared, it is *preparing*. It is *God with us*. It is that the presence of the Eternal is *with us* as we muddle through all of the craziness. Stop trying to get it all right and done. Allow some space, some breathing room. Open yourself to the Spirit who walks with you.

Isaiah wrote,

*The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.*

Light in the darkness. Rather than trying to turn on every light, warm yourself to the glow of the Light *within* the darkness. Allow the darkness to be there – but don't be consumed by it.

That's the message every Advent, and in every season, isn't it? That whatever we are going through, God is with us.

Gratefully yours... heather

Growing Our Community

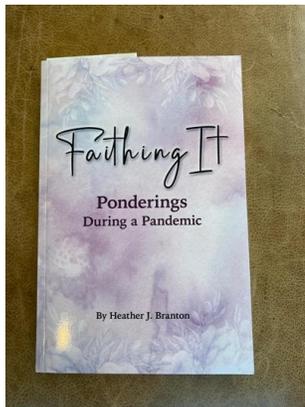


The Growing Our Community campaign aims to raise \$200,000 for facility improvements at Community Church. To date, we have raised over \$101,000. Thanks to those of you who have supported the campaign so far.

Our Drive Through Dinner was very successful, bringing in over \$2,000. Thanks go to **all** who helped with the dinner, especially to Alex Maxwell (Bethany's husband) who was head meat chef, and to Brenda May who took on most of the dinner planning, ticket sales, and food production. Our youth took on delivering dinners to diners, while having fun in the process.

Now Christmas is upon us and we have a couple of possibilities for your gift-giving.

We are currently running an online Silent Auction of artisan jewelry – **Gifts for Good** – and encourage you to check out the items at www.32auctions.com/CCA21. Here you can see some beautiful and dazzling pieces created by Christine Carlo and Kaye Rasband, who have donated them to the church for this auction. The silent auction closes at midnight, Dec. 8.



And Martha Staib developed the idea of taking Pastor Heather's Friday Prayers and her monthly newsletter ponderings and compiling them into a book. ***Faithing It: Ponderings during a Pandemic*** has now been published!

Pastor Heather will be present for a **book signing** on December 5, 1-3 pm, in the church parking lot. You can buy your copy for \$15 there and, if you wish, have it signed.

And there is always the option of making a cash donation to the campaign through our Financial Secretary, Marilyn Hamilton.

– Jeanne Miller & Bethany Maxwell, Campaign Co-chairs

Holiday Stress

The holidays are on us! After last year's pandemic limitations on travel and gathering with others, there seems to be an eagerness to participate in activities with family and friends. Even the most positive and joy-filled gatherings demand much from us emotionally and physically. In the midst of joyful reconnections, the ache of those not present can bubble up. Additional concerns about safety add to the fatigue and stretch energy levels. It's easy to feel the pressure to be happy and upbeat, even when overwhelmed, tired, and grieving.

Even Jesus, while celebrating at a wedding, got stressed. When his mother informed him that the wine had run out he snapped, *What's that got to do with me?* And at other times, when things got heavy, he took a break, went for a walk, walked on water.

Please remember to take breaks. It's ok to put limits on some of the interaction (or even food). Encourage yourself to get some exercise and rest. Allow some breathing room, tears, and even humor into the middle of the stress. And may the Spirit fill you with a presence of peace throughout this season of holy days.

Community Church begins Hybrid Worship

On Sunday, Nov. 28, we opened our doors and entered into a new phase as Community Church. We have begun worshipping simultaneously in two spaces: in person in the Sanctuary and online in our “Zoom Chapel”. We encountered a few bumps with the technology, but there was clearly joy as we worshipped in person and with those who joined on Zoom!

In terms of the pandemic, there is no end in sight. So, we are following some Covid-19 protocols to help everyone be safe indoors, which includes wearing masks and maintaining physical distance. For those folks who are still unsure about gathering in person, or who have mobility or health concerns, or who simply live further away, we will continue to have the option to participate on Zoom.



Bible Study

Each week we gather on Zoom to read and discuss the upcoming Sunday’s scripture. We delve into background and what meaning it has for us today (or not). Wednesday mornings, 9:30-10:45.

Conference Connections

Welcome Edith Guffey



Edith Guffey has agreed to join the Conference team beginning in January to address a number of administrative needs and projects. She comes to us as an experienced and effective leader in both national and conference settings, and we are grateful for her willingness to serve in a part-time, one-year position. Edith will help us manage the current transition as we prepare to search for a settled Conference Minister in 2022. Watch for more information.

What is a Land Acknowledgement?

The Seeking Justice Ministry Team of the SCNC Board of Directors invites local congregations to begin and continue learning from the indigenous people in the communities you serve.

If you’ve attended a justice-oriented march or rally in the past year or so, you may have noticed the event started with a land acknowledgement. This isn’t an opportunity for the mayor of a city to welcome participants and visitors. It’s a strategy and practice to actively disrupt the settler-colonial narrative, and honor Indigenous resistance. Often just a few sentences long, a land acknowledgment takes a moment or longer to recognize the indigenous peoples who were and still are the original caretakers of the land. This practice reminds us that we are all on stolen indigenous land. (To read more: <https://www.scncucc.org/post/2022-scnc-conference-directory>)

The Community Church of Atascadero, United Church of Christ recognizes that the area of so-called San Luis Obispo County is the ancestral homeland for Indigenous Northern Chumash and Salinan people and has been colonized through violent means including forced removal, attempted erasure, religious cleansing, and genocide. Furthermore, the United Church of Christ has passed a resolution calling for the United Church of Christ to repudiate the doctrine of discovery which authorized the genocide of native peoples and the theft of native lands.

Blue Christmas service

In a season filled activity and seeming joy, we need a space to pause and be still – a space where the complexity of our feelings is welcomed and we don't have to be "happy." This pre-recorded, reflective service offers rooms for whatever you're feeling.

Tuesday, Dec. 14, at 8:00 pm on Zoom. **OR** Thursday, Dec. 16, at 6:00 pm in the Sanctuary.

Christmas Eve service

We will have a simple Christmas Eve service with music and readings, accessible in person or on Zoom. 5:00 pm on Friday, Dec. 24.

3 Ways to Give Financially

1. Send a check to the Community Church: **5850 Rosario Ave., Atascadero, CA 93422**
2. Online at www.atascaderoucc.org
3. Mobile app Tithe.ly
 - a) Search "**Tithe.ly**" in the app store (Google or Apple). Download and install the Tithe.ly app.
 - b) Click "Give Now" to start and then, in "Find a church", enter "**Community Church of Atascadero**"
 - c) Enter the amount you would like to give
 - d) Enter a credit card or bank account to link to the app
 - e) You have the option to cover the fees: \$.30 for the transaction plus either 1.0% for a bank transfer or 2.9% for credit card.
 - f) Click "Give" and you have now successfully given to Community Church! (Oh, and you have the option to set up recurring giving.)

Thank you for the many ways you continue to help CCA be financially healthy!

Wreaths Across America

Each December on National Wreaths Across America Day, our mission to Remember, Honor and Teach is carried out by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery, as well as at more than 2,500 additional locations in all 50 U.S. states, at sea and abroad. Over 700 Veterans are buried in Pine Mountain Cemetery in Atascadero. There will be a ceremony with a laying of the wreaths at noon, Dec. 18. For more information: www.wreathscrossamerica.org/capmca.

Keep on your hearts & in your prayers...

Althea W., Belinda B, Joseph P,
Livia K, Stew T, Virginia C.

And all of the caregivers

Somewhere in each community, a voice is crying in the wilderness right now.

Somewhere on the margins, a messenger is urgently telling of Christ's way.

The voice may be hard to hear over the clamoring of the powerful.

But this Advent, may we open our ears to hear.

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

1 – Celia Bewley

3 – Heather Branton

4 – Anniversary – Jennifer Thorne

14 – Sally Thomson

17 – Althea Welling

26 – Eddie Hubbard

28 – Anniversary – Larry & Judy Anderson

ZOOM LINKS

To join via the internet (computer or smartphone), simply click on the internet link. To join with your telephone (*audio only*), dial **(1) 669 900 9128**. When asked, enter the Meeting ID and Password.

Sunday Worship and Midweek Fellowship	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/937257009?pwd=UGZVRHdoNVRYS09TWEIGcWlXQkVvdz09	MEETING ID: 937 257 009 PASSCODE: 528041
Church Choir	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81750412891?pwd=K2dt d3lwNmswUmRkOXlwZytiSStCZz09	MEETING ID: 858 1515 0012 PASSCODE: 202869
Wednesday Bible Study	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82952931382?pwd=dFcx N2RtQzVoUit4RXZac2RMbXdZZz09	MEETING ID: 829 5293 1382 PASSCODE: 303403

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			Dec 1 9:30am Bible study 3pm Fellowship online	2	3	4
Online jewelry	auction ---->	----->	----->	----->	----->	----->
5 10 am Hybrid worship 1-3 Book signing	6 Pastor's day off	7	8 9:30am Bible study 3pm Fellowship online ECHO meal please contact Celia Bewley	9	10	11
----->	----->	----->	Online auction ends			
12 10 am Hybrid worship	13 Pastor's day off	14 8pm Blue Christmas service (Zoom)	15 9:30am Bible study 3pm Fellowship online	16 6pm Blue Christmas service (Sanctuary)	17	18
19 10 am Hybrid worship 11:30 Council & budget meeting	20 Pastor's day off	21	22 9:30am Bible study 3pm Fellowship online	23	24 5pm Christmas Eve service	25
26 10 am Hybrid worship	27 Pastor's day off	28	29	30	31	Jan 1 Happy New Year!

Please note: Marth Thomson, our church administrator, will be on vacation through mid-December. Office phone and email will continue to be monitored.



**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

Community Church of Atascadero
5850 Rosario Ave
Atascadero, CA 93422



MARISOL'S CLEANING
Marisol Perez
Cleaner specialist
madrdsara23@gmail.com
mmargarita_0420@yahoo.com
(805) 975-4225
(805) 610-0276

The advertisement for Marisol's Cleaning features a collage of three images showing a modern kitchen with a white countertop and bar stools, a bathroom with a white bathtub, and a bathroom with a white sink and mirror.

Jeff Stevens
Registered Piano Technician
562.335.7142
Certified Piano Technician | University of Western Ontario

The advertisement for Jeff Stevens features a close-up image of piano keys. A circular logo for "THE PIANO TECHNICIANS GUILD" is visible, along with the text "Certified Piano Technician | University of Western Ontario".

Greta Peck Broker Owner
EQUITY
Real Estate Professionals
212 S. Main St., Suite 103
Templeton, CA 9346
(805)464-0400 office
(805) 674-2249 cell
gretapeck@msn.com
Lic #01298277



Selling real estate throughout SLO County since 2000

Ten percent of any referral that results in a closed transaction shall be donated to the Community Church of Atascadero.
Thank you for your referrals!