

STILL SPEAKING...

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF ATASCADERO



a just world for all

Community Church of Atascadero, United Church of Christ

5850 Rosario Avenue
Atascadero, CA 93422
(805) 466-9108
ascaderoucc@gmail.com
www.atascaderoucc.org

Hybrid Worship

Come in person or on
Zoom

10 am Sunday

**Fellowship on Zoom
3 pm Wednesday**

Church Office:

Carrie Portillo, Office
Manager

Office Hours:

9:30-12:30 Tuesdays

9:00-12:30 Wednesdays

9:00-12:30 Thursdays

AS I PONDER

REV. HEATHER J. BRANTON, PASTOR

We are solidly into 2025! We had our annual congregational meeting where we elected our officers for the year, approved a budget, and updated our bylaws. After the hard work preparing for all of that, I am ready to settle back into the normal flow for the year.

Except that this year is not normal. We now have a host of new federal appointments, many of them under- or unqualified or with seriously questionable ethics and financial mismanagement. Even as insurrectionists have been pardoned, immigrants are being arrested. Also under fire are renewable energy, any programs addressing diversity and inclusion – and pretty much anything to do with gender diversity, international aid, FEMA, and, well, California. Meanwhile in southern California, literal fires continue to burn, with people evacuated and some losing their homes.

That's just the short list. And it feels overwhelming. Sometimes I want to dig my head in the sand or retreat to a nice fantasy where people are nice, respectful, caring, and supportive. And sometimes – for a brief time – it's ok and even healthy for that self-care. After all, even Jesus would retreat for a little alone time to renew his spirit. But he always came back!

The road ahead may be bumpy and scary. It may have twists and turns, along with forks in the road. But as followers of Jesus, we are still grounded by loving our neighbor. We will keep doing that the best that we can. We may (undoubtedly will) make mistakes along the way. But we continue to live into our mission: to be a spiritual home where all are welcome and to promote justice and support healing in service to others.

So, let's renew our energy and refuel our spirits as we keep being the Church, together.

Gratefully yours... heather

LENT & ASH WEDNESDAY



Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent. It is a day set aside for us to remember that we are mortal. Lent offers an opportunity to be intentional. People have various practices to help them be more spiritually aware during Lent. These disciplines might help them be more aware of their own personal life or they might be something that helps them look outward. Some sacrifice something such as refraining from certain foods or activities. Some people add something to their life such as writing poetry or being intentionally grateful. For some people these disciplines may be serious. But they don't have to be somber. If you choose to be intentional about any changes in your life during Lent, may you experience joy and delight in the midst.

Our Ash Wednesday service offers an opportunity to focus on the reality that we are mortal – a life-giving gift. It will be a service of readings, music, reflection, and, if you would like, the mark of ashes. May you find it a meaningful start to a season of intentionality. 7 pm on March 5 (Hybrid)

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

For over 75 years, the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering (OGHS) has been helping American and Canadian Christians bring God's hope and healing to hurting people domestically and around the world. OGHS's mission is to support domestic and international development, fight poverty and its consequences, bring aid and relief to communities torn by war or ravaged by national disaster, advocacy and resettlement assistance for refugees and displaced persons, and combat injustice in its many forms. OGHS provides funding and hands-on assistance in collaboration with local and international partners.

Each year, OGHS is gathered by several denominations and Church World Service (CWS) under a single theme developed by the ecumenical OGHS Committee. This year's theme, **Be the Light**, reminds us that God's blessing is not one of passivity: Jesus makes clear that God's children are blessed and are to be a blessing to and for others. We do not have the option to sit back and watch events unfold. Rather, we are invited and challenged to be something and to do something. Followers of Jesus are transformed—from the inside out—as they receive the gifts of God's grace and are called to gift others with love, compassion, and generosity.

Thank you for supporting One Great Hour of Sharing for over 75 years. You continue to be light in places that need it. We will receive the OGHS offering on **March 30**.



BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY

BRENDA MAY, BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY CHAIR

We enjoyed great Fellowship Time taking down Holiday decorations in the Sanctuary and sharing in the Fellowship Hall.

UPCOMING CHURCH EVENTS!

- April 13 Palm Sunday
- April 18 Cross set up in place
- April 19 Cross Decorating
- April 20 Easter
- April 25-26 Rummage Sale supporting Parent's for Joy (City Wide Yard Sale) Setup 23-24.

SPECIAL EVENT

Be sure to attend worship on March 23 when our new Conference Minister, Rev. Rachael Pryor, will join us! It's a great opportunity to meet and hear from her about what's happening in the Conference and the work we do together in pursuit of a just world.



Peace With Justice Ministry will be having an organizational meeting on Feb. 23. If you are interested in the many ways we can promote justice, both locally and beyond, please plan to attend. We will meet in Fellowship Hall following worship.

NEWS FROM THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA NEVADA CONFERENCE

FROM OUR CONFERENCE MINISTER, REV. RACHAEL PRYOR

Our work to coordinate a disaster recovery response continues, and we couldn't do it without the generous support and leadership from our United Church of [Christ Global HOPE Team](#), especially Katie Howe (Minister for Disaster Response and Recovery) and Andrew Long Higgins (Team Leader). While we continue to encourage volunteers to engage with the response through L.A. Works, please be aware that at this time there are thousands more registered volunteers than there are opportunities. The time will come, and it will be a years-long effort, but now is a moment to begin imagining with your local church what it might look like to plan a work trip a year or two from now. Help will be needed long after this disaster is no longer in the headlines.

We have received many offers of chaplaincy support and we are now able to redirect these offers to [Rev. Heidi Worthen Gamble](#), Mission Catalyst at the Pacific Presbytery (PCUSA), who is coordinating this ministry through [ENLA](#). Please contact heidi@pacificpresbytery.org to participate. You may also register through [Abolitionist Sanctuary](#), with our thanks to Rev. Pat Langlois for sharing this resource.

Finally, we give thanks for the dozens of notes of care and encouragement we are receiving from around the world: from local churches and neighbors, denominational partners and interfaith allies. Just this week, we received a letter from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, offering condolences and recognizing the “enormous task of restoration and rebuilding” with “prayers that God will embrace all with love, hope, and strength as you walk through this season of trial.” In the past, the SCNC has been there to offer aid to our partners, including with a major portion of our collection at the 2024 Annual Gathering. Now, in our hour of need, that love and compassion is being multiplied in return. We are not alone, thanks be to God!

Information on assistance to individuals, communities, and organizations following emergencies and disasters: <https://enla.org>

SCNC Wildfire Aid 2025 – The Conference has created a fund to receive gifts that we will be able to distribute immediately to local communities.

Online donation: <https://www.scnucucc.org/> and click **Donate**

Checks: send to the Conference office with the memo “SCNC Wildfire Aid 2025”
333 Santa Anita, Suite 5
Arcadia, California, 91006

COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY: SHARING INFORMATION, CREATING BEAUTY

EILEEN O'GRADY, COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY CHAIR



BOOKS THAT INSPIRE US: A BOOK REVIEW FROM CCA READERS

Two Books for Troubled Times

If you're like me, you're looking for books that offer hope in chaotic times. The first book I strongly recommend is a novel, *Small Things Like These*, by Claire Keegan. Published in 2021, it tells a simple story about Bill, an Irish coal merchant, who works hard to support his family. When he makes a troubling discovery, Bill realizes that he needs to act. What sets Keegan's book apart is the lyrical quality of her writing. Only 114 pages long, this book is a magical read.

I also recommend *The Lightmaker's Manifesto: How to Work for Change without Losing Your Joy*, by Karen Walrond, also published in 2021. In this engaging book, Walrond shares her life-changing personal experiences and her interviews with a variety of activists: health care workers in Africa, hurricane relief workers in Houston, Black Lives Matter activists, etc. She also includes strategies to help readers discover their gifts and values, so they too can connect activism with joy.

Eileen O'Grady, Communications Ministry Leader

WHY I BELONG TO COMMUNITY CHURCH

MEMBER *spotlight*

When Community Church had a chime choir, I had the opportunity to join, even though I was not a church member. I played with the choir for a year when I decided it was time for me to join the church. I had not attended church for several years. I loved playing chimes, and I love other music in church—the choir, the band, the piano, the special music.

Music brought me to CCA, and music keeps me there. One evening of chime practice stands out. I lost my mother that morning and talked myself into going to practice. I was so glad I went. The support I received and the hug from Judy Anderson showed the warmth of the congregation. CCA is a welcoming, supportive place.

Marilyn Hamilton, CCA member

“Why I Belong” begins a series of short articles about the role of CCA membership in our lives. If you would like to contribute, please send your ideas to Eileen O’Grady at emogradey9@gmail.com.

KEEP ON YOUR HEARTS & IN YOUR PRAYERS....

CHERIE W, BELINDA B, LISA
K, JOSEPH P, & MARILYN H

THOSE WHO PROVIDE CARE
THOSE WHO ARE GRIEVING
AND ALL THOSE WHO ARE
ANXIOUS AND WORRIED



HISTORIAN'S CORNER

KENT KENNY, HISTORIAN

Annual meeting....1933

The clerks report at the 1933 annual meeting of the Community Church stated that 50 new names had been added to the membership role during the past year and that 14 baptisms for weddings and 15 funerals have been conducted by the pastor during the year, Mrs. CW Starkey reported regular monthly meetings of the diaconate from prayer and discussion plans for the spiritual development of the church and its members.

Judge Austin reported regular monthly meetings of trustees at which plans were made from material development of the church. The major project of the year he said, had been the landscaping and beautifying of the church grounds carried on by the labor and donations of some of the church members. Harry Gray treasurer, reported that the weekly average Sunday offerings had amounted to \$63.18 per Sunday, which, with receipts from other sources, had made the church income for the past year total of \$3570.07 despite the financial difficulties of some of the members. Miss Bessie Amsbury reported that the Church had contributed \$650 to missionary causes in the year of 1932 and Reverend Appel announced for the Sunday school an enrollment of 268, with 206 as highest attendance and 94 at its lowest.

Mrs. Frank Frandsend reported that for the women's council in addition to the regular monthly meetings, circle meetings, the big demonstration luncheon put on for the Swift and Company, the annual Mayday luncheon and the reception held for Mr. and Mrs. Frank Cole on their golden wedding anniversary.

In closing the meeting, after his very fine pastors report and personal message to the people. Mr. Jones expressed his appreciation of the work done throughout the year.

Early in March 1933, an impressive and unique memorial service was conducted by the pastor on a Sunday morning, honoring the memory of the church members who had died during the past year, following the singing of "crossing the bar" by the choir, the clerk, Mrs. MA Travis read the names of 24 to be remembered.

On the rostrum, just at the left of the pulpit stood a large purple heart enclosed in a frame of gold acacia blossoms and as each name was read from the purple folder, Margaret Davis placed a little bouquet of white blossoms in the center of the heart, then came appropriate words and prayer by the pastor and a Contralto solo "One Sweetly, Solemn Thought" beautifully Sung by Mrs DW Chamberlain.

The young people of the Community Church were awarded the prize at the County CE convention held in Paso Robles in March 1933. Mrs. Louise Boyd was called forward to receive, on behalf of the Atascadero group. A handsome trophy awarded them for the best all round program of helpfulness to the pastor, church and community carried on in the county CE union during the past year.



CAREGIVERS

The Caregivers Ministry shall consist of those members and friends of the Church who wish to participate in its work. The Ministry shall elect its own chairperson and representative to the Church council. This Ministry shall be responsible for calling on the hospitalized/homebound, serving communion to the hospitalized/homebound, arranging transportation for those who need it to participate in Church activities, providing flowers, meals, and cards to those in the church who need them, establishing and overseeing support groups, and such other work as shall be assigned to it by the Church Council.

That's the description in our Bylaws. But simply put, sometimes individuals in the congregation experience health issues or are unable to fully participate in the life of the church. So, Caregivers provides connection and care.



Let Your Voice
Be Heard!

Join the Sanctuary Choir

Community Church Choir

Have you been appreciating the choir? Or perhaps wondering if you can join? Well, you can!

Come join us as we have fun making music together.

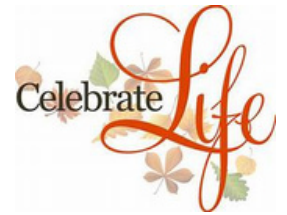
Rehearsals are most Sundays at 9 am. Follow the announcements for updated schedule.

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!

December/January Birthdays & Anniversaries



February 2025

- 3 – Carmen Baker
- 8 – Aiden Maxwell
- 9 – Wilma Sparling
- 10 – Pat Cairns
- 12 – Denis Snow
- 13 – Lois Ramont
- 17 – Chuck Kania
- 18 – Myra Douglas
- 26 – Christine Carlo

March 2025

- 9 – Anniversary – Danielle & Christiana Dilger
- 20 – Sharon Healy
- 22 – Larry Anderson
- 23 – Kaye Rasband



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=UGZVRHdoNVRYS09TWElGcWlXQkVvdz09>
MEETING ID: 937 257 009 → PASSCODE: 528041

Church Council:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81215310853?pwd=YldsNTUzdkx0NzJkcHZvamlyRjJodz09>
MEETING ID: 812 1531 0853 → PASSCODE: 481994

RECIPE CORNER - CHOCOLATE CHEESECAKE STUFFED STRAWBERRIES

Chocolate Cheesecake Stuffed Strawberries are filled with a lightly sweetened no-bake cheesecake filling, flavored with cocoa powder.

Ingredients

- 24 (681-908 g) + medium fresh, firm strawberries (1 ½ - 2 lbs, depends on how much you fill them)
- 8 oz (226 g) block cream cheese, room temperature
- ½ cup (60 g) powdered sugar
- 2 Tbsp cocoa powder
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- mini chocolate chips, for garnish (optional)



Instructions

- Rinse, drain and dry strawberries. Use a salad spinner, towel or both to remove all excess water.
- Cut the stems from the strawberries, so the strawberries can sit cut-side down.
- Cut a deep "X" from the tip down, being careful not to cut all the way through.
- Beat the cream cheese, powdered sugar, cocoa powder, and vanilla in a bowl with a hand mixer until nice and fluffy.
- Gently open up each strawberry and pipe the filling inside using a pastry bag and a star piping tip (Wilton 2D or 1M). Don't have a pastry bag or piping tip? Just cut off the corner of a zip-top bag and squeeze the cheesecake filling inside the strawberries that way.
- Top each filled strawberry with mini chocolate chips, as desired. These are best served after the strawberries have been chilled for at least an hour.

Notes

- Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator up to 3 days depending on how firm/soft the strawberries are. The firmer the berry, the longer they last.
- For large strawberries, alternately slice strawberries in half and serve them "deviled egg" style. Be sure to double the filling if preparing the strawberries this way.

Courtesy of [dessertnowdinnerlater.com](https://www.dessertnowdinnerlater.com) by By Amber Brady:

<https://www.dessertnowdinnerlater.com/chocolate-cheesecake-stuffed-strawberries>

February/March 2025 CCA Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
						1 - FEB
2 9 am Choir 10 am Communion Worship 11 am Fellowship	3 Pastor's day off	4	5 9:30 am * Bible study 3 pm * Fellowship	6	7	8
[Pastor Heather's Vacation 4-12]						
9 9 am Choir 10 am Hybrid Worship	10 Pastor's day off	11	12 9:30 am * Bible study 3 pm * Fellowship 4 pm Echo Meal 7 pm * Moderators	13	14 Valentines Day	15
16 9 am Band Rehearsal 10 am Hybrid Worship 12 pm Church Council Mtg.	17 Pastor's day off	18	19 9:30 am * Bible study 3 pm * Fellowship	20	21	22
23 9 am Choir 10 Hybrid worship 11 am (FH) Peace with Justice Mtg.	24 Pastor's day off	25	26 9:30 am * Bible study 3 pm * Fellowship	27	28	1- MARCH
2 9 am Choir 10 am Communion Worship 11 am Fellowship	3 Pastor's day off	4	5 9:30 am * Bible study 3 pm * Fellowship 7 pm Ash Wednesday Service (hybrid)	6	7	8
9 9 am Choir 10 am Hybrid worship	10 Pastor's day off	11	12 9:30 am * Bible study 4 pm Echo Meal 3 pm * Fellowship 7 pm * Moderators	13	14	15
16 9 am Band Rehearsal 10 am Hybrid worship 12 pm Church Council Mtg.	17 Pastor's day off	18	19 9:30 am * Bible study 3 pm * Fellowship	20	21	22
23 9 am Choir 10 am Hybrid worship	24 Pastor's day off	25	26 9:30 am * Bible study 3 pm * Fellowship	27	28	29 Conference Minister Installation
30 9 am Choir 10 am Hybrid Worship	31 Pastor's day off					

* These are Zoom-only events

POEM

BY REV. HEATHER J. BRANTON, PASTOR

I give thanks for this day.
God of our silent tears
Present throughout the years
Reach out with love
From below and above
To heal and renew us
And rebuild with justice
Open up our hearts
So we each do our part
To heal the earth
And bring rebirth
that this world of pain
might begin again
O God we pray
For a new day



A Breath Away

Community CPR and First Aid Training

To get on the schedule for training Contact
Instructor Cell: 805-859-4430
Admin Cell: 757-651-7187
charles.kania@gmail.com
lisalkania@gmail.com

Body Motion

A fitness class geared toward seniors
Led by Brenda May

9-10 am MWF
Community Church of Atascadero
5850 Rosario Ave