

January/February 2022

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
ccaucppastor@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 can't believe it is a new year. I had been eager to see the end of 2021, but I felt a heaviness entering 2022. In the midst of a seemingly never-ending pandemic, the news tells me that our nation is even more divided politically and the economy is struggling. The metaphorical ground beneath me seems to be constantly shaking and shifting as the edges of anxiety become a constant companion. As I talk with people, I hear a lot of the same sentiments. It seems that we all long for times that are easier, more stable, friendlier.

For me, that can manifest in waiting. Waiting for the end of the pandemic. Waiting for the technology to get figured out. Waiting for the economy to stabilize. Waiting for.... This leaves me with a sense of inertia as I wait for someone to fix the mess, for things to settle down. And I carry an outwardly directed anger, blaming all of *Them* for the troubles of the world.

Oftentimes progressive Christians may wonder why we keep reading the bible. I think this is always a good question to ask, to keep challenging and exploring what grounds our faith. But for me the bible keeps offering me insight for my life at my point in time. In the Narrative Lectionary we have begun reading through the gospel of John. Even though we are early in the book, I have found it is giving me new thoughts and ways of experiencing God/the Sacred. It begins with light coming into the world... which makes me ask where I notice the light. It talks about a quiet gift of wine for a wedding celebration in danger of experiencing public shame... which makes me wonder when I have made a point of reducing others' shame and what gifts I have sent anonymously. It talks about a love that doesn't judge, but one that challenges us to look up at our own complicity in violence and evil... and I wonder how often I judge others' actions but am unwilling to face my own culpability.

Not everyone cares what I ponder. And I'm fine with that. After all, the real question is, *What are you pondering?* What risks do you take in looking at your own actions and interactions, in asking the hard questions? Where do you notice the Light breaking in?

Gratefully yours... heather



Growing Our Community

Our campaign to raise money for facility improvements continues. During the month of December we raised over \$500 through an online auction of jewelry donated by Christine Carlo and Kaye Rasband and we began sales of Pastor Heather's book *Faithing it: Ponderings During a Pandemic*, with over \$300 raised to date. Pastor Heather's book (\$15) is still available through our website, through Amazon, or by contacting Jeanne Miller to arrange to pick one up at the office.

Also in December, we sent a letter to members and friends, outlining our goals and requesting gifts to support this endeavor.

– Jeanne Miller & Bethany Maxwell, Campaign Co-chairs

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, 9:30-10:30.

IRS Giving Statements

If you did not receive your contribution statement or have questions, please contact Marilyn Hamilton at mjhamilton66@charter.net or phone (805) 221-5306.

Resettlement of Afghans to the Central Coast through SLO4HOME

The takeover of Afghanistan last July by the Taliban left thousands of Afghan citizens fleeing their homeland. The U.S. State Department has set up an Afghans Placement Assistance Program (APA) to help in their resettlement. Most Afghan nationals will be paroled into the United States through the APA program, which expects to serve 50,000 Afghan parolees across the United States. Through the APA, the Church World Service has set up a network of community partners to assist with the resettlement process; a new group out of San Luis Obispo has expressed an interest in supporting this effort.

This group of interested residents, churches, and other non-profit organizations has come together to form a 501.c3 non-profit organization named **SLO4HOME**. The group hopes to start bringing Afghan nationals to our area in the next few months. Ten committees are now forming to identify volunteer resources to provide basic core services to the families for their first 30-90 days on the Central Coast.

How can we support SLO4HOME in their efforts? Volunteers will be needed in each service area of the program as well as financial support. Families with young children could be a resource for Afghan families trying to enroll their children in school. Others might help locate housing and work opportunities. Drivers are needed to transport family members to medical appointments and to teach them the local bus system. English lessons would be welcome, as well as translators and cultural orientation. Donations of food and appropriate clothing would be appreciated. Financial donations can be made to SLO4HOME via Paypal or mailing a check to P.O. Box 1446, San Luis Obispo, CA 92306. Contact Lauren Brown (Lauren.brown@sbcglobal.net or 805-550-5686) to learn more and volunteer your time.

Martha Staib

Conference Connections

As our world continues to experience unparalleled trials and transition, our little corner of the globe in Nevada and Southern California is emerging from a time of unexpected challenge and change. As we know, change is usually accompanied by loss, and loss can make room for **new** ways of being. Here are some **new** developments in our Conference:

- We have a **new office location** (333 N. Santa Anita Avenue, Suite 5, Arcadia, 91006) which is more centrally located and has enough storage for all our files (so no more storage units!)
- We have **new roles** and responsibilities for some of our staff, and **new people** joining our Conference team – Libby Tigner handed the baton to Kris Bergstrom, who has agreed to serve as our Acting Conference Minister for the next year; Edith Guffey, a respected and

experienced former Conference Minister and officer in the National setting will join us in January on a part-time, remote arrangement to help us shape sound practices for our finances, properties, and camp program

- We are using a **new bi-monthly Conference Connections** message to communicate in a timely, relevant, and efficient manner
- Conference staff and members of the Board of Directors will begin a **new process of visioning** and reflection in the new year to provide the foundation for our settled Conference Minister search in 2022
- **New learning opportunities** will be created for clergy and volunteers serving on Conference and Association committees in an effort to increase our cultural competence and justice commitments as we endeavor to serve and support a beautifully diverse community in Nevada and Southern California

You make all this possible, and we appreciate your partnership. Your gifts of time, talent and treasure enable us to serve and support clergy and over 130 congregations. Your contributions help us partner in meaningful ways including the search and call process, conflict resolution, reimagining and visioning, and governance development.

Hybrid Worship

We have opened our doors for people to join worship in person – in addition to continue the option to join by Zoom! Our goal is that people can fully participate in worship from wherever they may be, to be accessible as well as open up possibilities for inclusion of people geographically distant.

There are many pieces to making hybrid worship successful. First: adequate use of the technology to enable people to hear what is said, whether from the pulpit or during prayer time – which is challenging with Zoom. Also of utmost importance: ensuring those joining in person do so safely (use of masks, ideally tightly fitted, and physical distancing while indoors. We ask people to sign in so that if there is the unfortunate outbreak of illness, County Public Health knows who to contact.

Hybrid worship is something new, so we ask for your good spirit as we adapt to new circumstances.

Call for Annual Congregational Meeting

The Annual Congregational Meeting of Community Church of Atascadero, when we elect officers, vote on proposed amendments to the Bylaws, and support a budget for 2022, will be held on Sun, Jan 30, following worship (11:00). This will (hopefully) be a hybrid meeting so that all members can attend. Please join us for worship and remain afterward to participate in the business of our church.

All City Yard Sale May 14, 2022

Opportunity is knocking again in a two fold way! Outside yard sale for us and a way to support Parents for Joy!! Please remember to save your things from closet and kitchen cleaning until time gets closer and we can use Fellowship Hall. Fundraisers we can continue are the Rummage Sales because they are outside. More information to follow. Plants and homemade goodies are welcome as part of our sale. Advertising goes out to the entire city, so this is a win-win!

Thank you each and every one for your support! You are all amazing and appreciated. You are why these are so successful. Let's make this one even better.

Thank you,
Brenda & David May and Sharon Whistenhunt

AWES Update

There has been a steady use of the Atascadero Winter Emergency Shelter in our fellowship hall. Usually 10-15 individuals arrive each evening and help set up the cots and dividers in the hall, and quickly bed down for the night. Each morning the equipment and supplies are put away, with help from the guests.

AWES is a service of El Camino Homeless Organization. But like businesses and organizations across the country, ECHO has had a difficult time filling staff positions. As a result, the shelter is now happening only Monday through Friday nights, ending on March 31 as originally planned.

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!

Keith Kania heading to World Robotics Championship

Help send Keith Kania to the world robotics championship this Spring in Houston. Buy a \$10 ticket and enter to win a \$500 gift card. Keith receives the full \$10 for each ticket purchased. Thank you for supporting his dream to be a representative for Atascadero High School Greybots!



Keep on your hearts & in your prayers...

Althea W., Belinda B, Joseph P, Livia K, Stew & Sally T, Virginia C.
And all of the caregivers

Birthdays & Anniversaries

January

5 - Marilyn Hamilton
28 - Justin Marchand

February

9 - Wilma Sparling
10 - Pat Cairns
12 - Denis Snow

13 - Lois Ramont
17 - Chuck Kania
18 - Myra Douglas
26 - Christine Carlo

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=UGZVRHdoNVRYs09TWEIGcWIXQkVjdz09	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
23 10 am Hybrid Zoom worship	24 Pastor's day off	25	26 9:30am Bible study 3pm Fellowship online	27	28	29
30 10 am Hybrid worship 11:00 Annual Meeting	31 Pastor's day off	Feb 1	2 9:30am Bible study 3pm Fellowship online	3	4	5
6 10 am Hybrid worship	7 Pastor's day off	8	9 9:30am Bible study 3pm Fellowship online ECHO meal please contact Celia Bewley	10	11	12
13 10 am Hybrid worship	14 Pastor's day off	15	16 9:30am Bible study 3pm Fellowship online	17	18	19
20 10 am Hybrid worship 12:00 Council meeting	21 Pastor's day off	22	23 9:30am Bible study 3pm Fellowship online	24	25	26
27 10 am Hybrid worship	28 Pastor's day off					



When you go to smile.amazon.com to shop, Amazon donates to Community Church! It's easy. Last year, CCA received \$250.34 from amazonsmile. Just choose Community Church

of Atascadero as your "Smile" recipient when you sign in to smile.amazon.com. While your individual "donations" may be minimal, those small amounts add up.

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**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

Community Church of Atascadero
5850 Rosario Ave
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MARISOL'S CLEANING

Marisol Perez
Cleaner specialist
madrdsara23@gmail.com
mmargarita 0420@yahoo.com

(805) 975-4225
(805) 610-0276

The image shows a clean, modern kitchen with a white countertop, a sink, and a stove. In the background, a bathroom with a white bathtub and a sink is visible. The overall scene is bright and well-maintained.

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

The logo of The Piano Technicians Guild, featuring a circular emblem with a piano keyboard and the text "THE PIANO TECHNICIANS GUILD INC." around the perimeter.