



The Good Newsletter

First Congregational Church of Santa Ana, UCC

A diverse Christian fellowship open to all and dedicated to singing God's praises, learning God's word, and loving one another on our journey of faith.

A Message from Our Moderator

Dear First Congregational Church Family and Friends -

Our word for December is: re-joyce, (*verb*)

1. feel or show great joy or delight.

December is a month for rejoicing! As we enter into this Advent Season (Advent means 'Coming' in Latin. This is the coming of Jesus into the world. We Christians use the four Sundays and weeks of Advent to prepare and remember the real meaning of Christmas.) We have so many reasons to REJOICE! We REJOICE that Deaconess Sharon McCart has agreed to be our spiritual and worship leader for this Holy Time! We REJOICE that our church continues to be a home for so many worthy folks and groups! We REJOICE in the stories, songs and traditions of Jesus and his birth in Bethlehem! We REJOICE with our friends and families as we continue our special traditions of the season!

Again, we have the opportunity to participate in the *Christmas Fund*, one of our "5 for 5" offerings as members of the UCC. The *Christmas Fund*

helps provide pension and health premium supplementation to low income retired church workers, emergency assistance to clergy families in need, and Christmas checks to hundreds of annuitants, as administered by the Pension Board. We will be collecting for the *Christmas Fund* on December 19th and on Christmas Eve.

We wish you and yours a very Blessed & Merry Christmas!

Sue Stewart, Moderator



Special Dates

- Second Sunday of Advent, December 5, 2021
- Third Sunday of Advent, December 12, 2021
- Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 19, 2021
- First day of winter, December 21, 2021
- Christmas Eve Service, December 24, 2021, **7:00 pm**
- Christmas Day, December 25, 2021
- New Year's Eve/Watch Night, December 31, 2021

If Only...

There are many of you ... who think to yourselves: "If only I had been there! How quick I would have been to help the Baby! I would have washed his linen. How happy I would have been to go with the shepherds to see the Lord lying in the manger!"

Yes, you would! You say that because you know how great Christ is, but if you had been there at that time, you would have done no better than the people of Bethlehem. ... Why don't you do it now? You have Christ in your neighbor. You ought to serve him, for what you do to your neighbor in need you do to the Lord Christ himself. TheNewsletternewsletter DEC2021.



Come, Let Us Adore Him

Advent has begun! Join us in the Sanctuary or on Zoom every Sunday of the Advent season (12/5, 12/12, 12/19, and 12/24). Deaconess Sharon McCord will lead us through all of Advent, including our Christmas Eve service!

11/28 First Sunday of Advent: **Hope**

Scripture: Luke 21: 25-36

Theme: We are in a time of preparing to be fruitful



12/5 Second Sunday of Advent: **Peace**

Scripture: Luke 3: 1-6

Theme: How can we prepare our hearts and our world for the coming of Christ?

12/12 Third Sunday of Advent: **Joy**

Scripture: Luke 3:7-18

Theme: We need to make a place for Jesus in our busy lives by clearing out stress, worry, and long to-do lists. We can let go of all the chores if we keep our eyes on Jesus.

12/19 Fourth Sunday of Advent: **Love**

Scripture: Luke 1: 39-55

Theme: Mary magnified God with her song. How can we magnify God?

12/24 Christmas Eve: **The light of the world, Christ** (white)

Scripture: Luke 2:1-20

Theme: Jesus serves wherever there is need. We are the Body of Christ.



They're back this year! We are selling poinsettias for only \$10 each. Order and dedicate your poinsettia by December 17th. Please send your order and dedication to the church office.

Holy Action/Council Meeting

The Holy action/Council meeting will be on Sunday, December 19th, following worship.

Trustees Meeting

The Board of Trustees will meet on Monday, December 27th, at 7:00 pm, via Zoom.

The Example of Mary

“We must look to Mary’s example to know how to deal with the glorious impossibilities of God,” writes Calvin Miller in *The Christ of Christmas*. “Look how she turned the world upside down by making one simple statement.”

Jesus surely could have come to earth without Mary’s aid. But God seems to prefer partnering with people to accomplish miracles such as salvation and healing. So God chooses Mary to carry the Savior. Later, Jesus often declares people’s own faith crucial to their healing. And today, God works justice through us, not apart from us.

God doesn’t force us into collaboration. Yet, notes Miller, “God needs only a little of our agreement in order to work mighty wonders.” Like Mary’s humble assent: “I am the Lord’s servant. ... May your word to me be fulfilled” (Luke 1:38, NIV). And like yours — for whatever partnership God invites you into. God will do the heavy lifting, for certain, but he hopes you’ll say yes.

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Family Update

Dear FCC Family,

Baby Lucy will be 2 months in a couple of weeks! Time sure goes by fast. Martin and I are taking parenthood day by day, learning and leaning on one another. Lucy has now outgrown 0-3 months clothing and moved on to 3-6 months clothing. Nights are not bad; she only wakes us up twice with 3-4 hours in between. Martin certainly is Mr. Mom. He is hands-on and does it all. I am still recovering, so he has been wonderful to have at my side. We hope to visit FCC soon for you to meet baby Lucy!

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year,
Lori, Martin, & Baby Lucy



How to Keep Christmas

Inspirational author Wilferd Peterson pondered ways to “best keep Christmas” and “defeat the little bit of Scrooge in all of us.” After reading his suggestions, add your own!

- By following the Star ... to stand again in awe and wonder before the Babe in the manger.
- By rediscovering the faith and simplicity of a little child.
- By being still and listening to the angels sing within our hearts.
- By quietly evaluating our lives according to the Master’s standards as set forth in the Sermon on the Mount.
- By resolving to give ourselves away to others.
- By using the light of Christmas to guide us through ... the coming year.

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The Christmas Fund 2021

“Good news . . . Great joy . . . All the people!” (Luke 2:10)

The past eighteen months have had a profound impact c
congregations--physically, emotionally, spiritually, and financially.



But because of gifts to the **Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross**, the people who have been affected the most have known they are not alone.

Last year, donations to the Christmas Fund helped pay the rent for low-income retired ministers and bridged the gap for one active minister's family when her husband lost his restaurant due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Christmas Fund gifts took care of the unexpected expense of a major car repair, helped a retired minister attend his brother's funeral, and assisted in paying for daunting medical expenses, prescriptions, and groceries.

Gifts to the Christmas Fund bring relief and hope to those who have dedicated their lives to serving our churches. By supporting the Christmas Fund, you make a huge difference and bring great joy!

The Christmas Fund provides Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks for retirees and those facing unforeseen financial hardship.

Join with others in the United Church of Christ to bring good news and great joy to those who have given so much to our church. **We will be collecting for this offering during Worship on Sunday, December 19th, and at our Christmas Eve Service at 7:00 pm.**

