



# 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 Church Family & Friends,

"Happy New Month. May the grace of GOD locate you where you are!"

Happy May to all of you!

The month of April took a different twist this year. We lost a long-time friend Mike Macres on April 10th. Mike and his wife, Tricia, were long time members of this congregation. They also provided flowers for our sanctuary for many years. And sometime in April, we lost our new Youth Minister, Sally Schacht. Sally was here on Palm Sunday helping pack hygiene kits for Ukraine. She didn't show on Easter Sunday, and we heard sometime that following week that she had been found unresponsive in her bed. Her nephew said they were doing an autopsy, but we have not heard anything further. For the short time she was with us, she brought enthusiasm to our youth.

On a happier note, warm thanks to the Castillo Family for providing another terrific egg hunt after Easter Services for our children and youth! And thank you to the Castillos, Piper & Bridgette Aquino, Steve Hough, Jim Weuve, Sue and Jim Stewart, and especially Rev. Gary Barmore and his wife Marti for our Maundy Thursday Dinner and Service. The soup was

delicious. The service allowed us all to be active participants and celebrate with both music and scripture that Holy Evening.

On Mother's Day (May 8<sup>th</sup>), we will be worshipping with Rev. Cisa Payuyo from the Interfaith Staff at Chapman University. On May 22<sup>nd</sup> Rev. Lorraine Bailey will be our worship leader. Both of these ladies have been with us before and always bring a good message to enrich our spirits.

There will be some kind of a Sunday School plan for our children/youth. At the moment, it looks like it will be some kind of packet. I'm searching to make sure that it will be both educational and engaging. Our children/youth are important to us!!!

Both our website ([www.firstchurchsa.org](http://www.firstchurchsa.org)) and our front sign now reflect that "We're trying a new thing." Our services will be the second and fourth Sunday of each month. Please join us! Invite your friends and neighbors! We continue to be blessed by the various worship leaders who have all brought us strong messages of faith and future.

And remember, "The grace of God (DOES & WILL) locate you where you are!"

Blessings!

Sue Stewart, Moderator



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## Special Dates

- National Day of Prayer, *May 5, 2022*
  - Mother's Day, *May 8, 2022*
  - Armed Forces Day, *May 21, 2022*
  - Victoria Day (Canada), *May 23, 2022*
  - Ascension Day, *May 26, 2022*
  - Memorial Day, *May 30, 2022*
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## Fixed Hours of Prayer

As summer approaches, you may look forward to a more relaxed routine. But don't discard all your good habits and commitments! For soul care, try fixed hours of prayer. Simply expand the concept of praying at set times (such as before meals and bed) into praying regularly each morning, midday and evening. Set an alarm on your watch or phone and commit to engaging with God at the specified times. You can do this on your own or with family or friends.

You can pray using Scripture verses, devotional guides, the *Book of Common Prayer* or a resource such as *ExploreFaith.org*. (When I'm tired or overwhelmed, it's helpful to pray someone else's words.) You might want to pray the same prayers morning, noon and evening for a week or a month. This practice isn't meant to replace spontaneous prayers. Instead, use fixed hours of prayer to nurture a consistent habit of conversing with God.

—Janna Firestone

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## Easter Season Worship

This Easter season we are returning to our second and fourth Sundays of the month for Worship. Our Sunday Services this month will be on Mother's Day, May 8<sup>th</sup>, and Sunday May 22<sup>nd</sup>. We'll have something special for all our Mothers!

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## Holy Action/Council Meeting

The Holy action/Council meeting will be on Sunday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, following Worship.

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## In-Carnation



The official flower of Mother's Day is the carnation, the favorite flower of the mom of the holiday's founder, Anna Jarvis. Over time, the custom arose of wearing a white carnation on Mother's Day if your mother has died and a red one if she's living.

In fact, many carnation colors have special meanings. Pink carries the richest Christian symbolism. According to legend, carnations first appeared on earth as Mary wept while watching Jesus carry his cross. Where her tears fell, there appeared pink carnations, symbolizing a mother's undying love.

According to one theory, the English word for carnation comes from *carnis*, Latin for flesh. From the same root comes *incarnation*, God's coming to earth in flesh. Thus, carnations remind us of our loving mothers as well as our loving Savior.

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## Trustees Meeting

The Board of Trustees will meet on Monday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 7:00 pm, via Zoom.

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## God's Hands

Exactly a century ago, Irish physician Alexander Irvine published *My Lady of the Chimney Corner*, a book dedicated to his saintly mother. The protagonist, Anna, lives and ministers to others as Irvine's own mother had done.



In the story, Anna visits a neighbor who has just lost a son at sea. After talking for a while, Anna suggests they pray together. With heads bowed, she reaches to place a loving hand on the grieving mother's forehead. Afterward, the woman says, "I think I felt his touch upon my brow," referring to God.

Anna says, "God is everywhere looking for hands to use. Sometimes he takes the hand of a doctor and uses it in healing. Sometimes he takes the hand of a mother to soothe the brow of a fevered child. And sometimes he takes the hand of an old critter like me to bring a bit of help and comfort to a neighbor. But they are all God's hands, and God is everywhere looking for hands to use."

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May 17<sup>th</sup> - Jim Housley

May 24<sup>th</sup> - Steve Hough

May 26<sup>th</sup> - Zachary Castillo

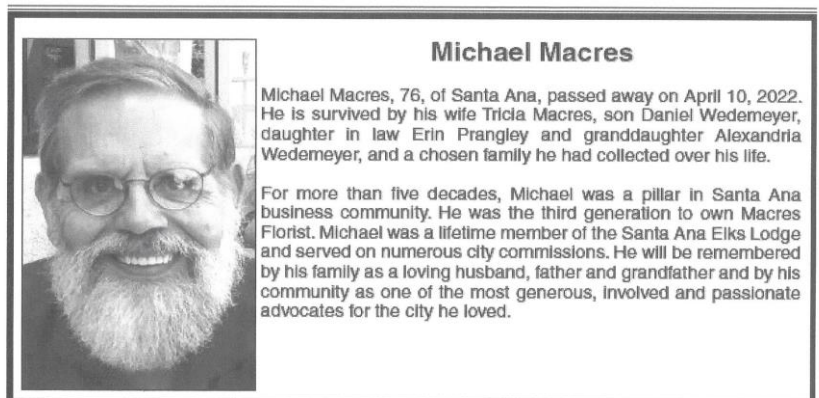


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## Our Friend Michael Macres

Church family and friends, it is with a heavy heart that we share the passing of Michael Macres. He was a long-time friend of the First Congregational Church of Santa Ana. He provided our Sanctuary flowers for over 40 years. No service is announced (see the obituary below), but if you would like to send your condolences to Tricia, we're sure she would appreciate the warm thoughts.

Tricia Macres  
522 N. Sherry Lane  
Santa Ana CA, 92701-4482



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## We Remember

More than 150 years ago, Memorial Day took shape amid the backdrop of the U.S. Civil War. Before it ended, women began decorating the graves of fallen soldiers. In 1868, when May 30 was designated as Decoration Day, loved ones placed flowers on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers alike.

By 1882, Decoration Day became known as Memorial Day, and soldiers who died in other wars were honored too. Over time, it became a day to remember all loved ones who have died — in war and otherwise. In 1971, Congress declared Memorial Day a national holiday to be observed on the last Monday in May. On Memorial Day, we pause to remember people who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country and for our freedom. We also pray for those who continue serving, especially those in harm's way.

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## We'll Miss You

Church Family and Friends –

It is with a heavy heart that we pass the news of the passing of Sally Schacht. She had been our Youth Minister for less than 4 months. We have no details as of yet, but this is what we do know. Sally was 62 years old. Neighbors had not seen her for a few days and requested a "well-being visit" from the Whittier Police Dept. They (the Whittier police) found her, in bed, and non-responsive. According to her nephew, they are doing an autopsy today to try to find the cause of death. We will let you know if we find out any further details.

As most of you know, Sally was at church on Palm Sunday. With the help of the Boy Scouts, they assembled donated goods for hygiene kits for the Ukraine. When she did not show up on Easter Sunday, we tried to reach her with no success. For the short time she was with us, we

celebrated Shrove Tuesday for the first time, and many of you donated supplies for the hygiene kits for the Ukraine. She was a positive and enthusiastic voice for the youth of our congregation. We will miss her.

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## Strengthen the Church Special Offering

The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. **By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ.**

As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults. We will receive the STC offering on Sunday, June 12, 2022.



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## UCC Annual Gathering 2022

*Learn. Love. Act.*

Join us for this year's Annual Gathering 2022, June 17<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup>! After two years interrupted by the COVID pandemic, we are thrilled to present the Annual Gathering 2022 as a hybrid event. Join us from multiple venues, all connected with one another through the power of virtual presence:

- Sonoma State University: This is our primary venue. If you've missed the power of in-person community at our "AG home," you'll want to register for this site. Hear our keynote speaker live, have the opportunity to interact with one another "in 3D," participate in a variety of workshops, and enjoy ample indoor and outdoor spaces for social distancing.
- Zoom Rooms: We will have at least two opportunities for joining together in smaller groups in our Zoom Rooms. These are remote facilities hosted by Local Churches in our Conference where you can be engaged and active with our Annual Gathering in a smaller setting closer to home. This is great for individuals who aren't ready for the full crowd of Sonoma State, and who cherish the opportunity to be fully present once again.
- Remote From Home: Individuals who have medical concerns that preclude their ability to gather in any size group will be allowed to join in our programming from the comfort of their own home space. We will be limiting this kind of registration to a maximum number of 25 individuals. This includes the immunocompromised and those who are medically excluded from receiving vaccination, as well as those who test positive for covid within 10 days prior to the event. We will not be opening registration for individuals for whom joining from home is simply a convenience or personal preference; you will need to attest that you meet these requirements.

Registration is now open! Go to <https://ncnuc.org/annual-gathering/> to register and for more helpful links.

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## **A Preemptive Prayer**

*Becoming* angry is quite easy. The difficult part, as Aristotle observed, is "to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time



and for the right purpose and in the right way." That, he added, "is not within everybody's power."

But with God's power — and prayer — we can resist the pull of anger. Use these Scripture-inspired words: *"Teach us, O God, how to keep our cool when provoked, exercising patience and self-control so we can think wisely and creatively about how to handle stress calmly, after the heat of the moment has passed. Help us choose our associates wisely, avoiding those who are hot-tempered and easily angered. Help us choose your way of handling anger, rather than our own, so we might conquer harmful impulses by doing good. In the name of Christ, who showed us how to use anger for good rather than evil. Amen."*

