

NOVEMBER 2021

# 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 November is: *Stewardship*

Most Christians believe that **God gave human beings a special responsibility within creation to cultivate it, guard it and use it wisely.** This is called stewardship. Man has to work within creation and to look after it.

Stewardship is our annual opportunity to re-think our support of our church. This facility and the people that it serves are our responsibility to "cultivate, guard, and use wisely". There are many ways that we show our stewardship, not only to our own congregation, but also to the other congregations and folks who use our property for their good works.

We are grateful to Louise and Lenny Anderson who came in from Gig Harbor, WA to lead us in worship and communion last Sunday! Rev. Lenny preached his first sermon and was ordained in this church. It was inspiring to have him share with us about the Lord's Table. We are also grateful for their prayers, advice and sharing during this time in the life of our church.

Rev. Lorraine Bailey will be leading us in worship at our next service on Sunday, November 14. Rev. Marcia Hoffman referred her to us as she is new to the area. We look forward to hearing her message.

Deaconess Sharon McCart, a seminary classmate of Rev. Lenny's, has agreed to lead us in worship through the four Sundays of Lent and Christmas Eve. She has led us in worship before and we are honored and pleased that she has agreed to be with us during the special season.

November is not only Stewardship month, it is also Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving. A warm thank you to all our service folk – past and present. And an opportunity for us to remember how grateful we are for the many blessings we have. Including our church family!

Blessings!

Sue Stewart, Moderator



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## Special Dates

- All Saints' Day, *November 1, 2021*
- Daylight-Saving Time ends, *November 7, 2021*
- Veterans Day, *November 11, 2021*
- Stewardship Sunday, *November 14, 2021*
- Thanksgiving Day, *November 25, 2021*
- Hanging of the Greens, *Saturday, November 27, 2021*
- First Sunday of Advent, *November 28, 2021*

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## Honoring Our Veterans

Veterans Day has its roots in what was called Armistice Day, when a peace agreement ended World War I on November 11, 1918 at 11 am. President Wilson proclaimed that Armistice Day was to be marked with solemn pride in heroism and with gratitude for victory as well as the “opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice.” In 1954, the remembrance was renamed Veterans Day to honor all U.S. military personnel. It’s a reminder to pray for and honor all who serve and sacrifice, to support and assist their families, and to pray that God will bring peace on earth. TheNewsletternewsletter NOV2021.



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## Worship Update

Our next Worship service will be Sunday, November 14 with Loraine Bailey, a friend of Rev. Marcia Hoffman’s, preaching.

Advent begins on November 28<sup>th</sup>. Join us in the Sanctuary or on Zoom every Sunday of Advent (11/28, 12/5, 12/12, 12/19, and 12/24). Deaconess Sharon McCord has agreed to stay with us for all of Advent, including Christmas Eve!



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## **Stewardship Sunday: *Rooted in Love***

*They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in the season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that **they** do, **they** prosper.*

Psalm 1:3

Stewardship Sunday is November 14<sup>th</sup>. Please bring your pledge cards to the service, or mail them to the church office if you are unable to attend. Thank you for your generosity, sacrifice, and love.

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## **Holy Action/Council Meeting**

The Holy action/Council meeting will be on Sunday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, following worship.

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## **Trustees Meeting**

The Board of Trustees will meet on Monday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, at 7:00 pm, via Zoom.

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## **A New Thanksgiving Tradition**

At Thanksgiving, we give thanks for things (food, home, clothing, work) and loved ones (family, friends, and pets). But if the people we name aren't present, they may never know how precious they are to us. This November, start a new tradition by writing notes of thanks to people you appreciate.

Follow Paul's model of starting letters with thanksgiving: "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world" (Romans 1:8, NIV). Notice how he thanks his addressees

by thanking God for them. Paul is specific too, not writing, "Thanks for everything!"

Expressing genuine thanksgiving to God and another person, you might write something like this:

*Dear Judy,*

*This Thanksgiving I'm thinking about special people in my life. You are one! I thank God for our friendship, for your strong witness for Jesus and for your willingness to lend a hand as a substitute teacher. (Your chocolate cookies are icing on the cake!) I praise God for you!*

*Sincerely, Joan* TheNewsletternewsletter NOV2021.



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## **Hanging of the Greens**

Calling all of Santa's helpers! We will be preparing for the season of Advent on Saturday, November 27th, at 10:00 am. We need help hanging the wreaths, bringing out the candles, and decorating the Christmas trees. Please come lend a hand and join your church in saying *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*.



## A Season of Waiting

Our oven recently bit the dust, and the needed replacement part is no longer manufactured. Due to an appliance shortage, we had to wait eight weeks for a new oven! Yet even amid inconvenience, I see God's purpose. We were thankful to have a grill and slow cookers in the meantime. We creatively attempted to cook favorite meals in different ways. And though we craved anything baked in an oven — cookies, casseroles, even chicken nuggets — we realized that waiting eight weeks for an oven isn't truly a trying time.

Many of us wait for much greater milestones and miracles: physical healing, the return of a prodigal child, an end to financial struggles. Paul offers us hope as we wait: "May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had" (Romans 15:5, NIV).

When you're in a season of waiting — including Advent! — consider what you're thankful for and what you crave. Tell God how you're feeling and ask for endurance while you wait.

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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 on UCC clergy and 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 who have given so much to our church. We will be collecting for this offering on Sunday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, and at our Christmas Eve Service.**

