



Church of the Foothills May 2021 Sower

Church Staff & Leadership

Rev. John Forrest Douglas	Pastor
Eleanor Wilson	Moderator
Rev. John Martin	Pastor Emeritus
Elizabeth Helms	Music Director
Karen MacConell	Accompanist
Craig Rhea	Church Administrator
Marie Stauffer	Bookkeeper
Lena Martinez	Office Assistant
Jim Harris	Facilities Manager
Johnny Martinez	Facilities Assistant

Church Office Hours:

(Note: Our campus is slowly reopening and staff is in the office several days a week)

Rev. John Forrest: Tues-Fri & Sunday
pastor@foothillschurchinventura.com

Craig: Mon, Wed, Friday, 9am to 2pm
admin@foothillschurchinventura.com

Marie: Tues & Thurs, 9am to 12noon
6279 Foothill Road, Ventura, CA 93003
(805) 644-3036

After-hour emergencies: (805) 228-4167
www.churchofthefoothills-ventura.org

May 2021

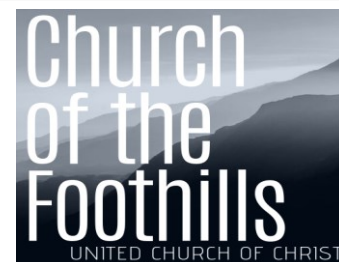
Ventura County has moved into the **ORANGE** tier of COVID restrictions.
Church of the Foothills is making progress toward reopening our campus
(see more info on page 4).

Please make note of these special dates:

Sunday, May 2	Drive-Thru Communion, 1pm to 2pm
Every Thursday	Zoom Choir, 7pm
Tuesday, May 11	Council Meeting, 7pm via Zoom
Friday, May 14 & 28	Group Walks are back, 4pm <i>(see details page 4)</i>
Sunday, May 16	Evening Vespers Service, 7pm <i>(more info to come)</i>
Wednesday, May 19	Together Women Rise, 5p – Marsi Backyard! <i>(see details page 4)</i>
Thursday, May 20	Drop-off Food, Book & Clothing Drive, 9am-Noon <i>(Note that clothing has been included; see details page 6)</i>
Monday, May 31	Memorial Day

Please continue to practice all COVID-19 guidelines and stay well.

The Church Council would like to remind you that the **Pastor's Discretionary Fund** will be used to address financial needs within our community as they arise. If you feel led to give in this way, please feel free to donate to the fund either online or by mailing a check to the church office.



Recordings of our past services can be found on our Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/foothillsventura
and on our website:
www.churchofthefoothills-ventura.org/
under the "Worship" tab.

You will find previous editions of the Sower on our website, as well, under the "Church Life" tab.



Sower editor: Linda Marsi



Dear Church,

I recently came across this photo of a family in Dublin, CA. It was taken during the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic. The entire family is outfitted in masks to protect from the virus. If you look closely, you can even see that some brave person managed to put a mask on the family cat! I see this as a hopeful image because we **know** that they didn't go on wearing masks forever. We know that eventually the threat of a pandemic dissipated. That will be true for us, too.

But it got me wondering. I wonder what they did do forever as a result of that season? I wonder what they learned? Did they actually hold their loved ones closer? Did they really learn to slow down? Did they get better at washing their hands? Did they appreciate the smiles of strangers for the rest of their lives?

I wonder what you have learned during this season of our lives? What will you carry with you? What do you hope to leave in this time? In what ways have you been changed during this time? I'd love to hear what you're thinking about. Email me and let me know. reverendjfdouglas@gmail.com

At the April meeting, the Church Council approved a target date of June 13 to return to in-person worship in our sanctuary. I hope you're as excited as I am to see each other in person. Many logistics are still in the works, so keep an eye out for specifics as the date approaches.

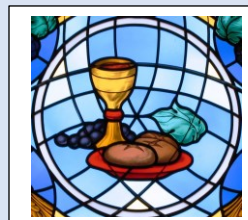
Blessings,
John Forrest



Remember in Prayer

Lilia Bucher
Karina D'Arcy
Doris Keyes
Jan Osborne

Carolyn Fogle Binnicker & family
(Whitney Hurley's grandmother)
Sharon Kamp (Sandy Artman's sister)
Bill Hinners (Janet Amos' brother)
George White (Dan Widney's cousin)
Wallace Balcerzak (Judi Balcerzak's
brother)



Join us on **Sunday, May 2nd**
1-2pm

Drive-Thru Communion

Please drive up to the church, roll down your window, and a volunteer in protective gear will give you a sanitary, disposable, and individually pre-packaged communion wafer and juice set.

Church of the Foothills Endowment Fund
Sustaining and Growing the Church's Mission, Legacy, and Other Gifts

*"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."
Philippians 2:4*

There is no greater joy than knowing we are making a difference and sharing our gifts with others. A gift to the Church of the Foothills Endowment Fund expresses that lasting love and faithfulness.

The Church of the Foothills Endowment Fund is a means of stewardship that helps with long-term support of our church's ministries and property. Donated funds offer a way to help sustain our church and its programs. These gifts are carefully managed and invested by the Endowment Committee with the support of UCC's United Church Funds who invest in socially responsible investments. Annual withdrawals from these funds help to support Outreach & Benevolence (for community-based services) and Trustees (for maintaining and restoring our church property).

Gifts can be given to honor or memorialize a friend or a loved one or they can be part of an estate plan. Contributions can include cash, stocks, bonds, real estate, or personal property. Other types of assets, like life Insurance, a 401k, or an IRA can also be given.

A brochure with details is always available in our church office and Endowment Fund committee members are happy to answer questions you may have.

Judi Balcerzak
Chair, Endowment Committee

Covid-19 Team Update

As COVID-19 infections have decreased, Governor Newsom has announced plans to reopen much of California by June 15. Piggybacking on this, the Church Council recently approved recommendations of the COVID-19 Team to continue moving back towards normal. Small groups of 20 or less are now starting to resume their normal meetings on campus, and we hope to resume most usual church activities and services by mid-June (barring unforeseen new developments). Although experts predict we may still be wearing masks for public gatherings like church services in the months ahead, it appears our very long COVID-19 year is finally winding down.

Dr. Nancy Merrick, MD - COVID-19 Team Chair



Our Friday Walks Continue!

Please follow current COVID protocol of masks and 6' distancing.

Fridays, May 14 & 28
4pm

Same location:
Riverview Linear Park
1950 Montgomery Avenue
Ventura 93004

Dining for Women has a new name:

TOGETHER WOMEN RISE

Outdoor Meeting at Linda Marsi's, Wed. May 19, 5pm
New Guests, please request evite.



May Grantees:

TERREWODE

Reintegration Program for
Obstetric Fistula Survivors
UGANDA



GRANDMOTHER PROJECT
Intergenerational improvement
of the health and well-being
between women and children
SENEGAL

NEXT STEPS FOR OPEN AND AFFIRMING INITIATIVE

Church of the Foothills' members voted almost unanimously to adopt a new Welcoming Covenant and we are now officially an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation, joining many other UCC church families. The UCC and our own website now list us as an ONA church.

In recognition that this was an especially important step in a longer journey, as the Covenant recognizes, we plan to conduct workshops to do the work to determine our next steps along the road to being an even more open and inclusive congregation. The Outreach and Benevolence Board will be sponsoring and leading these workshops in June. If you would like to play a part in determining what our church will do to "live into" our Welcoming Covenant, or if you would like to know more about the planned workshops, please contact Scott Marsi at scott.marsi@gmail.com.

CHURCH OF THE FOOTHILLS TO HOST SAFE SLEEP CLIENTS

Beginning May 1, COTF will be a host site for the City of Ventura's SAFE SLEEP program.

SAFE SLEEP provides a safe place for people that must sleep in their cars to park at night.

Participants work with a social worker toward permanent housing. Salvation Army manages the program and provides case managers.

A maximum of five participants will be hosted by Church of the Foothills.

Hours for participants in the program are 8 PM to 8 AM.

If you have any questions about our participation as a host site, please contact Scott Marsi or Pastor John Forrest.

Strengthen the Church

****Special Offering: *Strengthen the Church***
coming Sunday, May 30th **

A special offering will be collected on Sunday, May 30th. Offerings can be sent to the church office at any time.

Please join us in planting the seeds needed to grow and sustain our denomination by making a gift to
Strengthen the Church.

This special mission program supports the expansion and growth of ministry and local congregations to re-imagine and build the future of the UCC.

Your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults.

In Support of Our Hungry and Homeless Neighbors:

Additional Donation Opportunities at COTF Monthly Drive-Thrus

The O&B Board resumed collection of gently used adult clothing items last month. Items will now be donated to Project Understanding, Ventura Homeless Prevention (Family 2 Family), and other agencies that serve our homeless population. They are especially in need of gently used women's and men's clothing, maternity clothing, tennis shoes, socks, jackets and blankets.

We are also happy to report that the Outreach Board will partner with the UU church's "Move-In" program – a program designed for those who are homeless and transitioning to more permanent housing. Boxes are made up by UU volunteers for kitchen, bed/bath and office supplies to have ready for these new home dwellers. **Starting at our May 20th drive, we will also be collecting gently used bed and bath linens, workable small kitchen appliances or kitchenware, and general office supplies (paper, pencils, pens, etc.).** You do not need to make up a box of items (UU volunteers will do this) – just general donations are fine. Only request - bed linens labeled or tagged as to bed size (i.e., twin, full, queen or king).

We continue to collect non-perishable foods, fresh produce and hygiene products for Project Understanding's Food Pantry. In addition, any gently used books are welcome for Friends of the Library's book sales in support of our public libraries.

Any questions, contact Denice Barr at (805)794-8616. **Next Drive - Thursday, May 20th from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm.**

Same place: Church of the Foothills parking lot between church office and sanctuary.

Same process: Drive up to the designated area, pop your trunk or have a door unlocked and a church member in personal protective equipment (PPE) will unload your contributions. No need to leave your vehicle.

It's simple and will benefit those in need during these times. Even if you don't have any donations, come on up to the church drive through just to say "Hi". Even when masked, it's good to see everyone and have a little chat.

Thank you in advance for your generous contributions,
Your Outreach and Benevolence Board

Our Church Playground!

The playground is available for use by scheduling visits via an online sign-up. As well as individual signups, at this time we are also welcoming families to meet one another for a shared visit, but COVID safety protocols must still be strictly followed. I am the contact person for visits, and the sign up schedule is on a website I can share for those interested. Please contact Lena Martinez, laustin_0@yahoo.com or 805-509-2983.

Thank you!
Lena



Ginkgo Tree Planted

Approved by our Board of Trustees, Helga & Juergen Ohrt donated and had planted a Ginkgo tree on the hillside above the church parking lot on April 19th.

Juergen Ohrt, daughter Kirstin Ohrt, her husband Kurt Fritz, 8-year old grandson Hendrik Ohrt-Fritz, Jim & Alberta Word, & Jim Harris all participated in the planting ceremony.

Jim Word is on the Board of Trustees, and Jim & Alberta have known the Ohrts for about 40 years when they were neighbors.

Helga passed away on February 28, 2021. Her interment at COTF was on April 3rd (which would have been her 81st birthday).

Her outdoor memorial service at COTF was held on April 8th with 75 in attendance, plus an additional 25 on Zoom in Germany.

We thank the Ohrts for their generosity and remember them in our prayers.

