



THE CHIMES

FEBRUARY 2019



Rev. Elizabeth Aguilar
Senior Minister

New Year, New Opportunities!

I cannot sufficiently express how thrilled I am to have started a new year knowing I have the entire year to get to know our congregation! It has only been a few weeks since I have begun to serve here and yet I feel it has been much longer, namely because of how certain I am that God truly brought me here. That certainty brings comfort, joy, excitement and deep gratitude to God and to all of you, as well. I feel honored to have served you during this past Advent Season and now to serve during this New Year!

With Advent and Epiphany behind us we can now focus on the new year and its many opportunities it provides for us to continue to grow as disciples of Christ in our homes, our places of work, play, worship, and in our communities.

Valentine's Day and African American History Month are both celebrated in February. What do those two things have in common, and why am I bringing them up here? They both remind me of the importance of honoring one another with Christian love; understanding that we are all different and yet are all beloved children of a great God. As such, I will continue to take the time to get to know you in order to understand who you are and what is most important to you as individuals and as families. I will plan to continue to lead our congregation, staff, and worship services. I also look forward to the opportunity to journey with you in the highs and lows of your life, and to help you discover or re-affirm what your own vision and mission is for your life and the lives of your families. I am thrilled for this opportunity. I ask that you please continue to pray for me as I learn how this congregation works and how best to lead it and love it.

I end by sharing these scripture verses which serve as a call for us to continue to honor one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13: 34-35)
Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends... And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. (I Corinthians 13:4-8, 13)

My hope and prayer are that we continue to grow in love for each other, for this community of faith and for our surrounding community, as well. May we model what love between brothers and sisters in Christ looks like in all that we say, do and plan, together.

Thank you for allowing me to share and show Christ's love with you.

Sunday Greeters, Ushers and Readers

Date	8:15 AM Greeters/Ushers	8:15 AM Readers
2/3/2019	Judy & Jerry May	Jerry May
2/10/2019	Sylvia Campbell	Amber Ashford
2/17/2019	Norma & Frank Brainard	Norma Brainard
2/24/2019	Chris Dunn	Chris Dunn

10:00 AM

<u>Greeters</u> Jim Donahoo	<u>Ushers</u> Reuben Barrera Nathan Purificacion Melyn Limbo Abner Limbo
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10:00 AM Readers

2/3/2019	Ruth Jones
2/10/2019	Jesselle Limbo
2/17/2019	Nancy Holiman
2/24/2019	David Hand



BIRTHDAYS

Leo Cruz	3rd
Esperanza Macapugay	5th
Sylvia Espinoza	10th
Norma DeSaegher	11th
Hiel Limbo	12th
Janice Lambert	13th
Jordon Vasquez	17th
Roxanne Bowen	18th
Fran Atchison	18th
Mary Ardoin	20th
Vivian Henderson	21st
Marilynn Milligan	22nd
Mike Bishop	23rd
Joida Hebreo	27th



Sunday Morning Schedule

<u>1st Service</u>
7:30AM Fellowship
8:15AM Worship
<u>2nd Service</u>
10:00AM Worship
11:00AM Fellowship
<u>Sunday School</u>
10:00AM



Social Responsibility Committee

We all know of the crisis in San Diego County and across the border in Tijuana due to the large influx of migrants seeking better lives in the United State. As the UCC church closest to the border we are uniquely situated to help. We are happy to report that we have started to make a difference to at least some of these desperate people. Through Pastor Liz's connections, our church is in a relationship with a Baptist church called, Camino de Salvacion (Road to Salvation Church) in Tijuana. This small congregation has bravely undertaken to provide food and shelter for as many as 40-70 migrants at a time. This generous church receives no government subsidies but is wholly dependent on private donations. Pastor Liz has reached out on their behalf to the UCC community nationwide, resulting in donations from as far away as Massachusetts. We have already provided Pastor Jose Antonio Altamirano with \$725 in cash, which was used to provide essentials such as food, water and help pay utility bills. We will continue to ask you for donations of cash as well as new socks and underwear until May, at which time we will re-assess. (Please see flyer enclosed and feel free to share it with others.) The pastor of this church, Pastor Altamirano has already visited our church with his family, and we hope to have him share with you information regarding their unique ministry to and with the migrants. We know your compassion will result in generous offerings for these immigrants.

Closer to home, Earth Day will be celebrated on Saturday, April 6, 2019, from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm, at the nearby Chula Vista Memorial Park. Last year we were the only church to have a booth at the event. We intend to provide another fun-filled experience to introduce ourselves and Preschool to our neighbors. Volunteers will be needed to staff the booth, and more details will be provided in upcoming weeks.

Our committee plans to resume our journey with you to learn what the next steps are in the process of becoming an Open and Affirming Congregation. A public welcome by an ONA church sends a clear message to the LGBTQ community that they have a home in the United Church of Christ, and can help our congregation to grow. Your Social Responsibility Committee is excited to make this journey with you, and more details will be forthcoming soon.

We wish you all a very happy and healthy New Year!

PRAYER REQUEST

WE ARE HERE TO PRAY FOR YOU



Please call the church office and ask for Pastor Jim Donahoo, at 619-422-9263, if you have a prayer request. Our Prayer Chain Ministry is available for you, a friend, an acquaintance, or a loved one.

Blessings from your Church Family



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP: The February 13th Business Meeting starts at 10:30 AM in Bradley Hall. The 2019 Annual Dues (\$15.00) can still be paid. The Program will be at 11:00 AM, also in Bradley Hall. Following the program, at noon, a catered lunch is served. Cost is \$10.00. Reservations for the lunch can be made by calling Kay Rouse at 1-(619) 479-7676, by Friday February 8th, and cancellations need to be made by Sunday, February 10th.

PASTOR JIM DONAHOO
MINISTER OF VISITATION



Scripture Reading: Luke 4:21-30

Trying to be happy without a sense of God's presence is like trying to have a bright day without the sun. —A.W. Tozer

One of my favorite Bible verses is Jeremiah 29:13-14. Actually it's two verses. I like it so much, that it is my "Bible Verse for 2019." "When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the LORD."

These verses teach us that even before we seek God, God is seeking us. And as we search for God, God seeks us and wants us to find him. "If you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me."

Last summer, two of our grandchildren visited us with their parents. The girls, ages 5 and 3, loved to play "hide-and-seek." So, I would count to 10 while they ran and hid behind bushes or trees.

Then I opened my eyes and shouted "Ready or not, here I come!" And I began to look for the girls.

The trouble with 3 and 5 year olds who play hide-and-seek is that they can't stay hidden. Only moments into the search, I saw heads bob up above a bush or from behind a tree.

Quickly, the girls popped into plain view: "I'm here, I'm here!" They wanted to be found!

God's like that. God cannot stay hidden. When we seek God with all our hearts, God says, "I will let you find me" (Jeremiah 29:14). Isn't that awesome?

It's like God is jumping up and down trying to get our attention, "I'm here! I'm here!"

This year, you can know beyond any shadow of a doubt that God is seeking you even as you seek him. According to his marvelous grace, God will be jumping all around us shouting, "I'm here, I'm here!"

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: God of grace and mercy, thank you for seeking me. With my whole heart I will search for you, and you will find me. Thank you for your daily presence and guidance. In Jesus' name. Amen.

JUST A THOUGHT

By Erika Dennis

The sun never pierced the black clouds on New Year's Eve 2018. From morning till night one thunderstorm after another rolled in, leaving the deepest puddles soaking shoes and socks, but also bringing welcome relief from the drought, and washing the grimy roads and sidewalks clean. On New Year's Day 2019, the sun reveals a bright world inviting the adventurous to a brisk walk. Yes, this is the ideal setting for the first day of any new year. The sun rising in a deep azure sky washed clean of even the smallest white cloud. Sweet-smelling air once again fit to be breathed in deeply, with joyful thanks to God. Time to take that first walk with all senses ready to experience what nature is offering everywhere, high in the sky, at eye level, and down close to the ground.

The first song of a bird greeting the morning. An occasional car gliding by unhurriedly, with a pleasant hum. No aggressive noise of speeding vehicles proclaiming the big egos of small human minds. The absolute stillness that can be "heard" by the ear; not boring or empty but energizing the mind, allowing new thoughts and feelings to enter. Walking along the familiar streets not focusing on anything in particular, seeing as if for the first time, details that had always been there. Excitement and adventure waiting to be discovered in the old-familiar neighborhood. Many small wonders are waiting to be discovered by the open mind willing to find the unexpected.

That hedge suddenly bearing clusters of dark purple berries the size of small olives. Those trees with thin branches covered in drifts of hundreds of tiny light-green blossoms each smaller than the head of a straight pin. The glistening white peeking through a green hedge that needs a closer look to reveal snow-white roses. A sudden change in the quality of the air, a sweetness inviting to find the source: an orange tree at the side of a home. And at its roots, small succulents with red, yellow and bluish green leaves, attracting even more attention now with slender spikes of tiny bright red blossoms. Three-story-high eucalyptus trees with bark peeling off from the trunks, standing out at right angles, thin layer upon thin layer. A touch yielding one more surprise: the cream-colored layers are pliable, smooth and warm. These are but a few examples of the many small wonders waiting to be found. Unlike fiery sunsets, geysers, waterfalls, ocean surf crashing on the beach, demanding our attention unbidden, they require some effort to be discovered. Why, then, need we be concerned about such small details?

God appointed us stewards of his creation, and he expects us to be faithful managers. However, we cannot do the job properly unless we learn and understand every last detail about it. We know that nothing on this earth can exist in isolation. Any ill-effect on one part affects all other parts. Why should we have this awesome responsibility? Looking around, we can see that of all the creatures living on this earth we are best equipped to do the job. This is said in all humility. We know that we can make mistakes that have very serious consequences. But there is nobody else to do the job for us. Training our senses to learn, even to the minutest detail, how nature functions, will help us to make the right decisions that keep our planet the beautiful, livable place we have always known and loved. This year, instead of making the usual resolutions that are so soon forgotten, let us concentrate on a different one: to live our lives in harmony with the natural world.

REV. VICTORIA FREIHEIT
ASSOCIATE FOR SENIOR MINISTRY

Have you ever been in love? What is your favorite love song? “I’m in the mood for love,” “All You Need is Love”—You name it, there are hundreds of love songs. One from long ago: “I’ve found a lover, he loves me so, Jesus who died for me. Bears all my burdens, sorrow and woe, loving and kind is he.”

Chorus: “I’m in love, deeply in love, with the lover of my soul.

I will sing praise to my King, While the years of eternity roll.

His love is in my heart, never to depart. His blood has made me whole.

I’m in love with Jesus, he’s the lover of my soul.”

St. Teresa of Avila caught my eye while browsing the stacks in the Lancaster Seminary library—her love song to God is unforgettable:

“Majestic sovereign, timeless wisdom, your kindness melts my hard, cold soul.

Handsome lover, selfless giver, your beauty fills my dull, sad eyes. I am yours, you made me.

I am yours, you called me. I am yours, you saved me. I am yours, you loved me. I will never

leave your presence. Give me death, give me life. Give me sickness, give me health. Give

me honor, give me shame. Give me weakness, give me strength. I will have whatever you give.”

Augustine of Hippo: “Lord, I seek you with all my heart, with all the strength you have given me. I long to understand that which I believe.

You created me in order to find you; you gave me strength to seek you. My strength and my

weakness are in your hands: preserve my strength, and help my weakness. Where you have

already opened the door, let me come in; where it is shut, open at my knocking.

Let me always remember you, love you, meditate upon you, and pray to you, until you restore me to your perfect pattern.”

Hildegard of Bingen: “Holy Spirit, the life that gives life. You are the cause of all movement; You are the breath of all creatures; You are the salve that purifies our souls; You are the ointment that heals our wounds; You are the fire that warms our hearts; You are the light that guides our feet. Let all the world praise you.”

What happens when you love someone? You not only want to be with them as much as possible, you want to give them whatever you can—of yourself and of your possessions.

From Gerrit S. Dawson in *Heartfelt* we learn: Jesus told the rich young ruler (Matthew 9:16-22) who was seeking eternal life to “keep the commandments, love your neighbor as yourself, and sell all you have and give it to the poor. He turned away sad, because he had many possessions.”

We want to show our love for Jesus, the lover of our souls. So ask yourself these four questions: 1)What kinds of possessions, responsibilities, habits or activities block your following of Jesus? 2)What do you fear Jesus will ask of you? 3)What do you hope Jesus will ask of you? 4)From what demands would you turn away sad?

Let us lovers remember Psalm 63:1-4 “O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your name.” Happy Valentine's Day and every day we dwell in God's love.

Rev. Victoria Freiheit, Associate for Senior Ministry



From the Diaconate

We are in need of flower donations this year for our Altar. Please see Sylvia Campbell, or call the church office at 619-422-9263 to sign up.

**AFRICAN
AMERICAN
HISTORY MONTH**

**We are a Peace and Justice Congregation.
We are committed to love one another as
God has called us to do!**

The Mission Board would like to “thank” the Congregation for the blankets and jackets for the Salvation Army and hand towels with soap packets. We took them to Salvation Army on Christmas Eve. Another set of hand towels with soap, sweater, and sweat shirts were taken to Community through Hope.

We would also like to thank the members for their generous donation to the Fire fund. Besides the \$500.00 the Mission Board pledged, the congregation raised another \$518.00. It will definitely be put to good use.



Greetings from Thailand!

First and foremost, I want to wish you all a Happy New Year! I am excited to report my last few months of service with you all and can't say enough how happy I am to be coming home soon! As expected, the last few months of service have been jam packed with last projects, close of service conferences, and emotions of saying farewell to my community. Here's a look at my final run!

Close of Service Conference

Group 129 Peace Corps Thailand attended their final conference in November of last year. The conference kicked off with a Thanksgiving luncheon hosted at the US Ambassador's Residence in Bangkok. Thereafter, the conference continued at a Resort near the coast of Thailand. During this time, volunteers were given the opportunity to reflect on service and develop a plan to wrap things up at site, develop re-entry strategies (back to America) both professionally and personally and enjoy quality time with one another for one last time. Volunteers were also recognized for their service by the Country Director and given tools on how to tell our Peace Corps story.

A Wave of Gender and Youth Leadership Camps!

As mentioned in the previous email, I was working on my last project and well, we received the grant, and my community and I successfully hosted a four-day Gender and Youth Leadership Camp! This camp served 70 middle-aged youth that provided them with knowledge and skills in 6 areas: leadership, gender equality, self-esteem, strengths and weaknesses, responsibility, peer pressure, respecting others, goal setting and reaching. We also had a Thanksgiving celebration and had a lantern reflecting activity on the last night of camp. Thank you to those who made donations! Our community here in Thailand has strong leaders for a better tomorrow! In addition to the camp we hosted at my site, I also assisted with two other camps held by fellow PCVs. Enjoy the photos!

Loi Krathong

I celebrated my last holiday in Thailand. The exact date of the holiday is determined by the Thai lunar calendar. This holiday is known for floating baskets (also known as the Krathong) made out of banana leaves, flowers, and candles which then get released on a river. You make a wish and then send the Krathong into the water, to carry your wish downstream. It also carries away your troubles and offers up your wishes and prayers with the incense and glowing candle. The 3-day festival includes parades, shows, traditional vendors, etc. What an amazing experience!

Holiday Season in Thailand!

Unfortunately I was not able to come home for the holiday last year and even though Christmas is not considered a holiday in this country, Thai people truly know how to make you feel a part of home. I attended a Christmas and New Years celebration at a fellow volunteer's community. The students had performances and we even exchanged gifts. Hope you all enjoyed the holidays with loved ones!

You're all probably wondering when I'll finally come home. I officially touch down in San Diego February 25th! I will spend the last month and a half here submitting tons of paperwork such as close of service requirements, job hunting, and enjoying the company of my community. I will see you all very soon!

Here's to the last report! Thank you all for the thoughts and prayers, for following me on this amazing journey, and for all the support to my family near and far. God bless.

MORE PICTURES FROM THAILAND





COMMUNITY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ
276 F Street
Chula Vista, CA 91910
Phone: 619-422-9263
communitycong@sbcglobal.net

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Community Congregational Church (UCC)

"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey... you are welcome here!"

Mission Statement

- We strive to be a multi-generational, culturally diverse family of people dedicated to the principles of Christ, and the service of God in the world and local communities.
- Based on our open, loving relationship with God, we invite, through action and service, others throughout our changing community to join in faith and fellowship of our church.
- We strive to be a church where members are empowered to bring beliefs, skills, and passions. We strive to embrace change consistent with our sense of selves and our community.
- We seek to present our diversity of worship and program experiences based on interests, needs and concerns.
- We are a member of the United Church of Christ



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276 F Street,
Chula Vista, CA 91910
www.chulavistachurch.com

Senior Minister

Rev. Elizabeth Aguilar

Associate for Senior Ministry

Rev. Victoria Freiheit

Director of Youth &

Young Adult Ministries

Jamall Dalloway

Interim Leader for Sunday School,

Youth & Young Adults

Kennan Limbo

Minister of Visitation

Pastor James Donahoo

Parish Visitor

Erika Dennis

Director of Administrative Ministries

Amber Ashford

Church Musician

Lionel Jasmin

Healing Touch Practitioner

Val Jean Zieber

Parish Nurse

Luz Barrera

Memorial Service and Wedding

Coordinator

Sylvia Campbell

Custodian

Pelito Capistrano

Preschool Director

Kim Applegat