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Rev. Dr. Curran Reichert, Minister

Notes from the Pastor

Is It Worth It?

Poetry is what you find in the dirt in the corner, overhear on the bus, God in the details, the only way to get from here to there. Poetry (and now my voice is rising) is not all love, love, love, and I'm sorry the dog died. Poetry (here I hear myself loudest) is the human voice, and are we not of interest to each other? — Elizabeth Alexander

I was taken aback at a recent gathering of the Sonoma Valley Ministerial Association (SVMA) when the President of the group asked why it is that we meet and if it is worth it.

I admit that sometimes it feels like just one more meeting in my calendar, but when I really think about the worth of this group it is clear that indeed this is time well spent each month. Here are a couple of reasons why:

- I recently sent out a plea on behalf of the Sonoma Overnight Support (SOS) Board asking members of the SVMA to write letters to Supervisor Gorin encouraging funding of the winter shelter. Because I know the ministers in our group stand behind the mission of SOS, I knew they would write those letters. Those letters will matter to Susan Gorin.
- When I met with the Gay-Straight Alliance group at the Sonoma Valley High School and heard from one student that *their* parent was having a hard time accepting *them* based on the mother's faith as a Catholic, I was able to wholeheartedly suggest a meeting with myself, the student, the student's mother, and the Priest from one of the local Catholic Churches. I know him because of our monthly SVMA meetings and even though our traditions may not always see eye-to-eye, I know the shape of the Priest's heart, and he mine. I trust that we could come together in support of this - or any young person - over almost any issue.

The work the SVMA does is not the kind of frontline work that I sometimes wish it did. We will not necessarily agree on everything that matters to me or to the congregation I serve, yet when it comes down to the important stuff we have each other's backs and that is worth its weight in gold.

At our last meeting we talked about bringing in the new Sonoma Mayor and the new Sonoma Valley Unified School District Superintendent in the fall. Not just because we want to hear what matters to them, but because we want them to know about the people who matter to us. And while that isn't a collective rally against guns, or everyone wearing pink pussy hats, it is a unified front without using words.

So, the answer is *yes*. Relationship building, even when it looks like not much is happening, is worth it. The poetry that makes up everyday life and the rhythm that runs through our calendars tell us something about the people we trust, the ones we turn to when we need a bit of encouragement.

When the fires hit last October and the call went out to the Ministers in town to show up at the Sonoma High School shelter, a Rabbi, two conservative Christians, and a queer progressive stood in a circle in the gym and sang goofy camp songs together to cheer people up. That happened because we know one another. That happened because we have put in the time to get to know one another, and in the end that is the stuff that matters most.

- Rev. Curran Reichert

Updating our Articles of Incorporation with the Secretary of State and Obtaining Tax Relief

First Congregational Church is currently being taxed as profit-making in buildings other than our Sanctuary. Treasurer Susan Kelchner has been leading the efforts to have those areas occupied by the preschool acknowledged as nonprofit. Burlingame Hall and the Thrift Store will not qualify as nonprofit, but the preschool rooms will. If we successfully make this change to designating the preschool areas nonprofit, there will be a couple of thousand dollars' positive impact on our budget. The next step is to verify to the State the Church's nonprofit status, which requires both a Council and a Congregation resolution to confirm the Church's nonprofit status in perpetuity.

Congregational Meeting

This is formal notice that we will call a very brief Congregational Meeting following the June 10, 10:30 a.m. service and before the ice cream social. By resolution we will confirm that First Congregational Church of Sonoma is irrevocably dedicated to religious purposes and upon dissolution, all assets of the Church would be distributed to the Northern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ, an organization irrevocably dedicated to religious purposes.

FCCS as a "Thick" Organization

Some organizations are thick, and some are thin. Some mark you and change you, and other organizations you pass through with scarcely a memory. A thick organization is characterized as engaging the whole person: head, hands, heart, and soul. Thick organizations benefit from the contributions of its members who share their time and talents willingly for the good of the whole. Thick organizations draw you in, encourage your participation, and ultimately change you. For the good. We are so fortunate that our church is blessed by many gifts of time and talents that have come to make FCCS a thick organization.

Some People to Thank for Making Us Thick

A few people deserve recognition here for significant Springtime contributions:

- Reverend Curran for planning and organizing our Sunday afternoon *Spirit Cafes*
- Jan Edwards and Caring Friends for supporting our members and Rudy Doormann in particular
- Joan Howarth and 20-some volunteers for hosting Rudy Doorman's funeral
- Kathy Jewell for initiating the new Friday Taize services
- Virginia Bertelson and her Earth Care sub-committee for the multiple ways we are supporting Our Children's Trust, including plans to go to Eugene for the October 28 trial.
- Cindy Lindh and Susan Kovalik for organizing the Monarch Butterfly Habitat Project
- John Donnelly and Brian Smucker for leading the monthly nature and bird watching hikes
- Joan Howarth, Nancy Ladd, and Kirsten Mickelwait for the inspiring worship installations
- Alan Kelchner for teaching the *Bible* study class
- Brian Smucker for sorting out our sanctuary sound system
- Taras Lumiere for regularly offering his special music for Sunday celebrations
- The Pope, for focusing the world on his message that protecting our planet is our most pressing need today.

Stewardship: Why I Give

One of the great gifts I have received from the Church this year is the chance to write thank you notes to those who have donated to the FCC fire relief. What an eye-opener this activity was for me! Individuals and congregations from around the United States gave generously to those they have never met. To date, we received \$49,576.00 in the form of gift cards and checks to help cover the needs of those impacted by the devastating firestorm. That impressive total combined with the Pastor's Discretionary Fund and the funds in the Navigator Program totaled \$ 87,141.00 available as support. In the words of Susan Kelchner, "The generosity of our local and extended church community is palpable." As spontaneously as the fire happened, so too did the response of the members and friends of FCC who made it our mission to help those in need.

While giving is important to maintain our historic structure and provide a living wage for our Minister and employees, giving also ensures that the missions of the Church continue. What are the missions of FCC? Three missions that come to my mind all fall under the category of helping others:

- The Dalai Lama teaches, "Our prime purpose in life is to help others." Helping and giving is a principal mission of this Church, one that extends far beyond the walls of the Sanctuary. Through the efforts of our Social Action Team, FCC is actively engaged in supporting and serving in the larger community. Our Church is a leader in participating in the Gay Pride Parade each year. We are an ongoing presence in the Latino community where issues of deportation threaten to divide families. We give food to F.I.S.H. and work with the Redwood Empire Food Bank to provide for hungry families.
- The West Spain Thrift Shop is another mission of the Church that provides for others by offering quality used clothing and household items to those in need at the lowest prices in town. The shop not only benefits those in need, the proceed from sales go to benefit charitable organizations in our community such as Sonoma Overnight Support, the Teen Center, Teen Parent Support, as well as others.
- A third significant mission of the Church is in caring for the Earth. Through the adoption of the Earth Care Covenant the Church pledges to minimize our environmental footprint; encourage individuals to lead an *earth caring* lifestyle; support regional, national, and global efforts to care for God's earth; and proclaim our Church commitment to sustainable life on this planet. The annual Earth Care Festival is an increasingly popular community event designed to highlight partners in earth care as well as educate the community about the need to embrace individual efforts to lead an earth care lifestyle. Leaving the world in a better place for our children and grandchildren is what "Earth Care" is all about.

FCC is a church that does good in the world. That's why I give.

Membership Team

by Dotty Abbott

Here's the Scoop

Please join us for a community ice cream social on Sunday, June 10, after the 10:30 service. We will celebrate one another and the start of summer.

Meet us at the Market

Another opportunity for fellowship is at the [Tuesday Night Farmer's Market](#) where we meet by the Rose Garden at 6 p.m.



REMEMBERING RUDY

Value your family and friends; show them they are loved
 Embrace Life! Challenge yourself, take risks, be bold, encourage others
 Make your home your nest; welcome everyone
 Be vulnerable
 Ask for help when you need it; give it when you are able
 Embrace more joys than regrets
 Be generous in every way
 Express gratitude
 Be kind...always

Special Dates

50% off all clothing and linens

Thursday, June 21

50% off everything - Saturday, June 23

75% off everything - Thursday, June 28

Fill a Bag \$2 - Saturday, June 30

The shop will be closed for the month of July, re-opening Thursday, Aug. 2.

Earth Care Committee

by Virginia Bertelsen

- Save Saturday, September 8 to join FCCS Earth Care advocates in San Francisco for the huge “Climate, Jobs, Justice March” spearheaded by 350.org (May Boeve, Executive Director!). This march is to push Gov. Jerry Brown to stand up to Big Oil and to prioritize a just transition away from fossil fuels on the eve of his hosting the “Global Climate Action Summit” in San Francisco, Sept. 12-14. Earth Care Committee is making plans for carpooling to San Francisco.
- Join us in planning a carpool to Eugene, Oregon in late October to participate in solidarity rallies for the 21 youth plaintiff’s Federal lawsuit, Juliana vs. United States, starting October 29 in the U.S. District Court in Eugene. Sign up on YouthvTGov (www.youthv.gov) for updates and events on this strategically important legal action for restoring science-based climate action measures by our Federal Government. Earth Care Committee is making plans for carpooling to Eugene.
- “I pledge allegiance to the Earth, and to the flora, fauna and human life that it supports, one planet, indivisible, with safe air, water and soil, economic justice, equal rights and peace for all.”
 - *Women’s Environment & Development Organization*

Hospitality Committee

by Linda States

Our thanks to all of the Fellowship Team members who are creating a warm and welcoming time after the 10:30 a.m. service each Sunday. Here is the schedule for June and July:

JUNE

- 3 Team One: Ellen LaBruce, Janice Mattison, Janet Volkman, Sara and John Donnelly
 10 Team Two: Alexanne Bassett, Pat Noel, Randy and Linda States, Gitte Cochrane
 17 Team Three: Margie Mitchell, Bev Pearson, Bill Hutchinson, Kim Pack, Elizabeth and Bob Griego
 24 Team Four: Patricia Henley, Taras and Diane Lumiere, Kathleen Gray

JULY

Starting July 1 through the end of August, Fellowship offerings are much abbreviated and food is not necessary. There will be iced tea and iced water; there might be lemonade and iced coffee as well. Please check the cupboard and the little refrigerator for supplies provided by Hospitality.

- 1 Team Five: David and Susan Berry, Lory and Eugene Campagna, Mary Beth Halsey
 8 Team Six: Janet Engelbrecht, Elizabeth Palmer, Lori Barron, Dotty Abbott, Marge Evans, Susan Harris
 15 Team Seven: Cozette Shenks, Kit Conforti, Kathy Jewell, Joan Brady, Lori Anderson, Cheryl Franzini-Pegan
 22 Team Eight: Joan Howarth, Nancy Ladd, Jan Edwards, Alan and Susan Kelchner
 29 Team One: Ellen LaBruce, Janice Mattison, Janet Volkman, Sara and John Donnelly

**FOURTH • OF • JULY
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!**



Each year we charge to park in our lot on the Fourth of July. People are grateful for the convenient parking opportunity and the Church makes more than \$2,500. Everybody wins, but we need your help to pull this off. It takes a lot of volunteers – lining the field, directing parking, bringing people in, collecting fees, etc. We provide every volunteer with a nifty red hat and a red apron! After dark, you also get a yellow safety vest.

We are so grateful to those of you who have faithfully worked at this event for years, and we hope you will do so again. We also need more people to get involved. Please let us know which shift you are able to work this year:

Morning (parade)	8 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	7 people needed
Evening (fireworks)	7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	7 people needed
Exiting	10:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.	3 people needed

In addition we need a few people to sign-up for a couple of hours during the day, between 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. Last year, Susan and Alan Kelchner stayed and discovered that people come and go throughout the day, which led us to collecting more than \$400 in between the big events.

To volunteer, contact Lori Anderson at lorirenee1618@outlook.com, 707-974-5780. See you on the 4th!

- Lori Anderson

FELLOWSHIP

**Sonoma United Methodist Women Luncheon and Speaker
Tuesday, June 19**

Sonoma United Methodist Women invite the women of the First Congregational Church to join us in our Annual Salad Luncheon on Tuesday, June 19, at 12:30 p.m. in our Social Hall (109 Patten Street). Our speaker for the afternoon will be Jean Hopeman, a volunteer at Teen Services Sonoma. Please join us! For questions or to RSVP please contact Ginny Leavitt (ginleavitt@att.net).

**Garen and Dianne Patterson's "70's dance-funk-and-housewarming party"
July 15, 1-6 p.m., 500 S. 4th Street, Rio Vista**

From Garen: By July 15 both Dianne and I will have morphed into seventy-year-old people! AND....we bought a great old house in Rio Vista (Sacramento River Delta, an hour away from Sonoma), so we're having a party! It's a drop in event, so come any time! We'll have food, bbq, and beverages. If you wish, you may bring something yummy or "quench-y," and you are encouraged (not required) to dress in 1970's style, perhaps even channeling a specific character reminiscent of the era. Please bring a partner/friend!

We LOVE our 1915, craftsman-style house. Also, our new home represents TURNING THE CORNER on some medical issues!! (BIG reason to party!!!) If you are a friend who has always wondered about our relatives, you will have a chance to meet them! If you are feeling ambitious, there's a sandy beach and boat launch 5 minutes away (Sandy Beach County Park). Plus the town and neighboring areas are really fun to explore! Hope to see you July 15! RSVP appreciated, not required: Garen (707-337-2313), Dianne (707-738-7000).

**Kathy and Veda ask you to SAVE THE DATE!
Renewal of Vows, Sunday, July 29**

Kathy and Veda invite the congregation to join them after worship to celebrate 40 years of togetherness and 10 years of marriage. Renewal of vows in the Sanctuary followed by food and fun in Burlingame Hall from noon to 2 p.m. Please RSVP if you plan to attend (aanestad@sonic.net, 707-935-6690. God bless Edie Windsor, may she rest in peace.

A Warm Welcome to FCC's Newest Members

Dan and Cathy Ferrarese

[(Fair-are-ess-E) LOL... hard to pronounce for some so we thought we'd help!] Dan and Cathy have been married almost 40 years, have three beautiful and accomplished daughters, and just recently had their first grandbaby. Dan has worked as an Executive Chef for the past 30+ years and Cathy is a costs controls specialist for the international engineering firm, Jacobs. They have been on a long spiritual journey over the last 15-20 years and find Sonoma UCC a warm and welcoming new home. They lived in Redding, CA for 27 years before moving to Sonoma 4.5 years ago. While in Redding they raised their three daughters and had their second restaurant. Dan also has a commercial art site where he sells his art pieces.

Cathy is an avid lover of all things quilting and is currently finishing up her Doctorate in Psychology, conducting her research in the field of quilting. They are looking forward to establishing meaningful relationships, and spiritual support and service.



Michelle Dench

Michelle is a mom to her 4-year-old son, Dylan, a financial advisor for the past 15 years, and a community builder. She is the Founder of Soul Sister Enterprises LLC and the Community Capital Fund. Michelle has been an advisor and educator, helping people transform their relationship with money, and worked with hundreds of clients, looking for their wealth to become impactful. Michelle guides clients in understanding their basic needs and seeing ways to use their abundance for social and environmental impact.

Her current vision of creating the Community Farm School is built on a deep desire to turn her experience as a mother and financial advisor into a new career path for creating community-based solutions to housing, education, and child care. As a mother, she has lived in Sonoma County and raised her son, finding living and balancing a healthy life in direct conflict due to the high cost of housing, education, and childcare. This challenge created a vision for a new model of housing, education, and living that supports low-income families in the county and addresses the needs of children faced with trauma. Through her experience with children and trauma, she found that nature and farm life is healing for children, and the idea of the Community Farm School was born.

July Grapevine submissions
will be accepted until noon on
Thursday, June 21.



**Happy
June
Birthday!**

15 – Stephanie Ozer

17 – Linda States

22 – Grant Woods

23 – Emily Webber

30 – Todd Evans

*If you know of a birthday that isn't listed,
please let Angela know.*