



Dear Church Family,

I pray this finds you and your family well. Winter has a way of weighing on a person's spirits; I hope that you have plenty of sunshine to keep you cheerful.

The new year started with great hope and cheer. The shooting in Arizona quickly reminded us that the new year did not magically make everything new. We continue to live in a world filled with darkness, with anger and hate; we live in a world that needs the healing presence of God. I am not one who believes the world will come to a crashing end in the next months or year because our current circumstances are so dark. I do believe that in the dark times we are called to be light.

When the circumstances around us are so dark we can feel overwhelmed. It is easy to believe that there is nothing one person can do in the midst of so much that is wrong. One person fired the shots in Arizona; those shots touched the lives of most of the people of our nation. If one person's evil act can touch so many lives, why would we believe that one person's good and selfless act can't do the same thing?

Good is very much more powerful than evil. A single smile can change the entire day and maybe the entire life of the person on the receiving end of that smile. I know a woman who had made a plan to end her life. She was on her way to the place she had chosen when she met someone she saw from time to time but didn't really know. This person greeted the woman warmly, smiled at her and wished her a blessed day. The ray of sunshine that smile and those words brought touched the life of the woman. She actually was able to smile in return. She went home, not to her death. The struggle with depression didn't end there but the struggle went on. The woman is still alive today and is doing quite well.

The smile of a stranger in the life of a desperately unhappy person doesn't make headlines, it doesn't even get noticed, but it changes lives.

In the midst of these times, there are things you can do to make our world a better place. Notice the people around you; smile at them; say hello. When you get a chance to talk to someone, ask how they are, then LISTEN to their reply. Pray for those in hard or dark places but share the joys and the good news you hear. Choose to smile no matter how you feel; that smile may be a life saver to someone you meet and it will make you a healthier person. Let the people you love know that you love them.

None of these things will cost you a penny. None of these things will make national or even local headlines. All of these things will be part of changing our world into the kind of place we pray it would be. You/We are the ones God will use to change our world. Try it; you may find it is fun!!!

May God bless you with joy that overflows to a smile on your face and cheer in your voice.

Pastor Natalie



Birthdays & Anniversaries **in February**

- 2 **Wanda McCloud**
- 6 **Carl Robinson**
- 8 **Everett Johnston***
- 11 **Jan Moffett***
- 11 **Carroll Cotten*(ordination)**
- 12 **Beverley Lewis***
- 12 **Brockman David Morris**
- 12 **Barbara Schrader***
- 14 **Randy Duran, Jr.**
- 14 **Allen Prowell***
- 17 **Kirsten Morris***
- 17 **Kathleen Fuller**
- 17 **Jennifer Hallier**
- 24 **Amber Bui**
- 24 **Bill Hallier**



CWF/Women's Ministries

The Women's Love Luncheon will be held Saturday, February 12, at noon at the church as a salad potluck. The guest speaker will be, Sharon Stanley, from FIRM (Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries). All women are encouraged to come, bring a salad, and share in the fellowship. Please RSVP to Natalie Hodgson so we will know how many to prepare for.

There will be NO group meeting in February because of the Love Luncheon.

Save the Dates!

Mental Health First Aid
Feb 21 & 24, March 1 & 3
9-12:30pm

Ash Wednesday
March 9 at 6 pm
Worship Service

Mondays

Lenten Soup Suppers
March 14- April 11

Regional Elders Meeting
March 26 at 8:30 am

Annual Block Party
May 7



Honored Member

Joan Collins was born on August 22, in Fowler, Indiana. Her father was a grain farmer and her mother was a stay-at-home-mom. She has one brother and one sister. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree at the Minnesota Bible College in Minneapolis. She became a church secretary in Ohio and then was a bookkeeper for the Manhattan Bible College in Manhattan, Kansas.

She married and raised two daughters, Michelle and Sherrie. She has three grandchildren who live in Eureka, California. Sherrie attends church with her here at United. After she moved to California in 1974, she was a stay-at-home-mom while her husband worked in the hotel/motel/property management business.

Volunteering has always been a priority in her life. She worked with the Kiwanis Special Olympics in District 5 which includes California, Nevada and Hawaii. They provide lunch for all the athletes at the Special Olympic events. She spearheaded the campaign to have a challenged child in the Pasadena Rose Parade and her own Sherrie was the first child to do so in 1996. After her husband's death, Joan remained active in volunteer work and became the chair person for the Torch of Excellence banquet at Fresno State. When Fresno hosted the United Cerebral Palsy Telethon, her daughter, Sherrie, was asked to appear on stage with the entertainer/ventriloquist Shari Lewis and Lamb Chop.

Her hobbies include sewing, embroidering, reading and computer work. She has traveled to 41 of the United States.

Joan grew up in the Christian Church and was baptized by a Disciples minister. She has taught Vacation Bible School and Sunday school. While in Indiana she helped choose the property where a Christian youth camp was to be built. They named it "Hanging Rock".

Her caregiver, Alicia Vogland, brought her to Paul Kulich's memorial service here at United and she and Sherrie have attended since and both recently joined our church.

Sherrie Collins was born on October 28, 1972, in Santa Maria, California. Her interests include attending Special Education programs during the week, crocheting, working puzzles, watching TV, bowling and dancing. She has been involved in the Break the Barriers program for many years. Please welcome our newest mother-daughter duo.

Submitted by Dorothy Shuck



KNXT Channel 49/38

Pastor Natalie just finished recording 2 different segments to be aired on Channel 49/38.

Topic:
Mental Illness: Walking Alongside People with Mental Illness

Airing dates: 3/14/11 at 9:30 pm
 3/18/11 at 11:30 am

Topic:
Mental Illness: Reconciling Theology and Science

Airing dates: 3/7/11 at 9:30 pm
 3/11/11 at 11:30 am

A week after the program has aired it is available online at youtube.com/knxt1.

KNXT is interested and seeks comments or suggestions. Go to knxt.wordpress.com and join in the discussion on what people of faith can do better to respond to the mental health needs of the community.

Missions

Joy to the World

Did you know that United Christian Church gives 12% of our regular offering to missions, reaching out locally and around the world? 8% is given to the Disciples Mission Fund through our Regional Office. 1% is given for Higher Education. 1% is given to Home Mission that do not receive funds from the Region. 2% is given to Local Organizations. We were blessed to have an increase of mission funds in 2010 and were able to increase the amount of donations and add more organizations. The following recommendations were approved by the Ministry Council:

Higher Education:

Chapman University, Scholarships	\$400.00
Disciples Seminary Foundation	400.00
Northwest Christian Univ., Scholarships	310.00

Home Missions

Yakama Christian Mission	811.00
White Swan, WA	
All Peoples Christian Center	300.00
Los Angeles, CA	

Local Organizations

Fresno Interdenominational	600.00
Refugee Ministries (FIRM)	
Stone Soup Fresno	400.00
Fresno Rescue Mission	400.00
Marjaree Mason Center	400.00
Hope Now for Youth	225.00
Steward's Inc.	200.00

From our doorstep to our community and the world,
Eddie Lou Kester, Missions Chair

Easter Offering

The Annual Easter Offering supports the General and Racial/Ethnic Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, your daily partners in witness and service from your doorsteps to the ends of the earth. In 2011, as part of the Easter Offering promotion, the General Ministries would like to journey with you during the 40 Days of Lent.

Lenten Devotional Available On-Line

Lent starts with Ash Wednesday. This year Lent starts on March 9. It is still more than a month away but you might want to check out the available resource.

One of the special opportunities to deepen your faith and further understand the work and witness of your general ministry partners that is available is the chance to sign up to receive a daily email that will include a devotion, story or prayer from an Easter offering partner at www.disciplesmissionfund.org.

Mission Reminders:

- Roeding – Fresh & Easy receipts. We're collecting them through the 2011 calendar year. Collection envelope is in the hall.
- Food Pantry-The first Sunday of each month. Collection for the food bank.
- Travel bags- for Larry are still needed. No luggage please.
- Pen-Pals – remember to write, don't disappoint your child.

Missions



Another Pentecost Project

You may recall hearing about the Pentecost project of one of our members. She puts together and carries with her bags meant to minister to our homeless neighbors. This project helps those on the streets and it does so without giving cash.

You may want to make some of these bags to give out or you may want to help by supplying some of the needed items. If we can gather the items, we would like to have a group gather on Wed. Feb 16 at 5:30 pm, in the classroom, to put bags together.

Please, bring to the church **Upper Room devotionals** that you are no longer using. This is a no cost way to help put these bags together. She lists other items that are needed:

- Gallon Zip-Lock bags
- 5 to 7 packets of Austin crackers (\$1.94 at WalMART for 12.)
- UPPER ROOM OR EQUIVALENT
- NEOSPORINE OR SIMILAR TUBE
- Band-Aids I get the good ones or they do not stick.
- Foot powder (99 cent store) Very important in the summer
- 1 or 2 pairs of socks
- Hard candy Usually three kinds and I make up little packets of 30 pieces.

- little boxes of juice in the summer
- small jars of peanut butter at \$1 store
- Viennese sausages in a can.
- Winter: Caps, gloves, scarves, thicker socks

If I find these cheaply:

- good safety pins
- little sewing kits
- hand cream
- tooth brush/paste (small)
- Kleenex-small
- baby powder, especially if I cannot find foot powder

I never buy things like aspirin, pain relievers, etc.

I don't get all of these things in every bag. I put in what I have on hand. I try to buy as I go and see things that would be appropriate and will fit in a gallon bag.



Remember there is always an opportunity to give to Week of Compassion. Write a check to UCC and put WOC in the memo line.

Missions

Christmas 2010 Was Good at UCC

God is so good to us. The wonders of God's provisional grace have been overwhelming this Christmas season. We provided Christmas gifts of clothes, bikes or both to at least 25 children. We supplied food to 5+ families and we made sure some of our incarcerated members were remembered as were some of our adult members without families.

Karen Kroske, our long time friend at PALs, made many of these gifts possible. She also funneled a large amount of new clothing to us from WalMart. This meant that many of those receiving gifts for Christmas also got underwear, socks and pajamas.

Our Helping Hands fund, the money available for the pastor and elders to help those in need, was used to provide some of the food and gifts. The amount of money that came into the Helping Hands fund exceeded what was actually needed. That means the Helping Hands fund has a healthy balance to start the New Year.

Several hundred dollars worth of toys and wrapping paper were taken to Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries (FIRM) for them to use as gifts at their annual Christmas event for those they serve. These toys were especially welcome as some of their usual sources of toys dried up.

The Christmas Offering was \$107.00 this year. This offering goes to support regional ministries.

Our congregation is incredibly generous. God has been good to us and we, in return, are good to our neighbors and our world. God bless the givers!!!!!!



CWF – Service Project

The service project for the Christian Women's Fellowship for the next few months will be gathering small bottles and containers of shampoo, hair conditioner, lotion, bars of soap, deodorant, toothpaste and toothbrushes. These will be donated to the St. Agnes Holy Cross Center for Women which is in need of these items. There is a basket in back of the sanctuary.

We are still collecting Campbell's soup labels, and also labels from Pepperidge Farm, Goldfish Snacks, Spaghettios, Swanson Broth, Prego and V8 products. Please cut out only the UPC bar code as they will not take a full label. These will be sent to our church affiliated home for the developmentally disabled at Woodhaven in Missouri. Please place these labels in the jar on the turn-around. Thank you.

Dorothy Shuck
Service Project Chair

Church Women United

In these hard economic times, the Church Women United Scholarship Committee decided in 2010 to use the Scholarship Fund to award seven young women with scholarships to continue their educations. To help provide scholarships in 2011, please, come to:

Stairsteps to Education

Luncheon and Fashion Show
Church Women United
Scholarship Fund Benefit
Saturday, February 5, 2011
Doors open at 11:30 A.M.
First Congregational Church
2131 North Van Ness Blvd, Fresno, CA
Tickets \$20.00 each
For tickets, call Marilyn



Financial NOTES

December 2010

General Funds	\$250,134
Designated Gifts	4,926
Memorial & Honor Funds	7,452
Designated Outreach Funds	<u>4,451</u>
Total Checking & Savings	\$266,963

Monthly Offerings (includes 12% for Missions)

Total Dec. 2010	\$ 7,967
Total Dec. 2009	<u>8,302</u>
Below Prior Year	(\$ 335)

Year-to-Date Offerings (includes 12% for Missions)

To Dec. 31, 2010	\$ 111,234
To Dec. 31, 2009	<u>80,192</u>
Above Prior Year	\$ 31,042

Income & Expense Jan .1-Dec. 31, 2010

Receipts	\$126,919
Expenses	<u>147,703</u>
12/31/2010	(\$ 20,784)



Regional Executive Committee

accepting applications

Under the new Regional constitution, the Regional Board has been reconfigured to be an Executive Committee. On-line you will find more information about the positions and also applications. The deadline for applications, including references, is Feb. 28. There are copies of information and applications available in the church office and on the turn around.

Ministry Council Cleanings

The new Ministry Council for 2011 had their first meeting on Tuesday, 1/11/11.

The council voted to co-sponsor the Interfaith Scholar Weekend again this year with a donation of \$100.00.

Tithe of the \$30,000.00 anonymous offering in 2010: The tithe was distributed as follows: 8% to the Regional Office designated for New Churches, to be used for Primera Iglesia Cristiana Discipulos de Cristo De Fresno, 1% to Higher Education, 1% to Home Missions and 2% for Local Outreach.

General Assembly: Pastor Natalie will be attending the General Assembly this year which will be held in Nashville, July 9th - 13th.

Miracle Day: Our church has been chosen as one of the recipients of Miracle Day. The proposed date of the event is October 8th Pastor Natalie, Mary-Ann and Mike Edens will be attending the first planning meeting in Sacramento on January 22nd.

Block Party: The date of the block party has been set for May 7th from 9-Noon. Once again, Tina McCallister-Boothe will be facilitating this exciting event.

With God's help in all we do, we look forward to an exciting and challenging year.

Mary-Ann Edens
Chair, Ministry Council



Pastor Natalie's days off will be changing effective February 1, 2011. Her days off will be Friday and Saturday.



Transforming Worship

In order to enhance the ministry of UCC, the music in worship seeks to edify our worship experience. In the future, you will see a few changes in the focus of the music and in the role of the choir. We have changed the name of "special music" to "message music." Pastor and I have always picked music that would emphasize the message of the scripture of the day. In order to emphasize the message, we have put the message music right before the sermon. By calling the song "message music," it is hoped that the music will allow the congregation to be more of a part of worship.

The role of our church choir is to support worship, expressing the message of the scripture. We are really worship leaders. At times, members of the choir will lead in other parts of the worship, such as the praise song. Often, the choir will help the congregation participate in the music. We hope to allow worshipers to use their gifts more fully. All are welcome to join the choir. All that is required is that you desire to praise God.

The choir, in their role as worship leaders, do lead in worship. Our role is not to entertain the congregation as a performance. We sing in praise to our Lord; we pray that you will experience worship through the music. Because the choir uses their voices as an offering of praise to God, they would prefer that the congregation not applaud. They do recognize, however, that some traditions applaud as a way of offering praise to God, as well. The Choir is asking that you refrain from applauding, at least for the time being. If you feel you need to clap, please talk to me or a member of the choir.

In Christ's service,

Sister Mona White, Minister of Music



Chapman University is turning 150 years old this year and a central campus celebration will be held at our 28th Annual Founders Day, March 18 - 19, 2011. The two day event held on the Orange, CA campus has many strong options for participants to enjoy under the theme, ReNew:

More information is available at the website chapman.edu/churchrelations/founders.asp or you can contact the church office.



Dear church members:

Just a note to share a bit from the Youth corner.

A New Year has started and the youth "brain stormed" together about activities we hope to get involved in in the coming months. We are planning for a very exciting year! We'll meet one Saturday a month for a well planned activity; and we will continue to prepare for our next presentation of "The Messengers"...

For now we have a huge request from each and every one of the members of the congregation... We beg for your daily prayers for us! We want to know more about the Lord; how to be obedient to God; how to reach other kids for the Lord and how to become the leaders this church needs to continue begin a strong presence in this community.

With your help, and God's blessing, we know we'll do it!

Thanks in advance!




The Youth of the church.

February 2011

* Every Friday morning custodial service is being done in the Church and the Church office.

☺ Deadline for Bulletin material is noon, each Wednesday.

All meetings are at the church unless otherwise stated.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday*	Saturday	
		1 10:00 am O.A. 5:30 pm New Beginnings Committee Mtg.	2☺ 11:00 am Staff Meeting (Office Closed during meeting) 7 pm Choir	3 10:00 am O.A.	4* <i>Pastor's day off</i> PIC 6:00 pm Spanish Service	5 <i>Pastor's day off</i> 8:00 am Men's Prayer Breakfast 9:00 am Regional Board Meeting 9:00 am O.A. 10:30 am O.A. 7:00 pm A.A.	
	6 <u>†9:15 am Sunday School</u> <u>†10:30 am Worship Service</u>	7 7:15 Bible Study at the Hodgson's	8 10:00 am O.A.	9☺ 7 pm Choir	10 10:00 am O.A.	11* <i>Pastor's day off</i> PIC 6:00 pm Spanish Service	12 <i>Pastor's day off</i> 10:30 am O.A. Noon - CWF ♥ Love Luncheon 7:00 pm A.A.
	13 <u>†9:15 am Sunday School</u> <u>†10:30 am Worship Service</u>	14  St. Valentines Day 7:15 Bible Study at the Hodgson's	15 10:00 am O.A. 6:30 pm Elders Meeting	16☺ 5:30 pm Pentecost Project Assembly <u>Newsletter Articles Due</u> 7 pm Choir	17 10:00 am O.A.	18* <i>Pastor's day off</i> PIC 6:00 pm Spanish Service	19 <i>Pastor's day off</i> 10:30 am O.A. 7:00 pm A.A.
	20 <u>†9:15 am Sunday School</u> <u>†10:30 am Worship Service</u>	21 7:15 Bible Study at the Hodgson's  Presidents Day	22 10:00 am O.A. 9-12:30 pm Mental Health First Aid Class	23☺ 6:00 pm PIC/UCC Partnership Meeting 7 pm Choir	24 10:00 am O.A. 9-12:30 pm Mental Health First Aid Class 6:30 pm PPW Homeowners Association Mtg.	25* <i>Pastor's day off</i> PIC 6:00 pm Spanish Service	26 <i>Pastor's day off</i> 10:30 am O.A. 7:00 pm A.A.
	27 <u>†9:15 am Sunday School</u> <u>†10:30 am Worship Service</u>	28 7:15 Bible Study at the Hodgson's.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Elder on call: Pam Pigg</div> 