



Pastor's Weekly Offering: Loving the Stranger Among Us & September Tidings 2010

Dear Friends,

There is a lot of debate going on about immigrants, specifically those who cross our border from Mexico and Central America desperately seeking work so that they and their families can survive. Many of them leave the people they love to come to work in our fields and do the backbreaking task of harvesting the food we put on our tables each day.

These farm workers work long hours in sweltering heat, often with little shade. Their pay is minuscule by our standards. They live in substandard housing and have no medical care. And yet, they deem this to be better than even worse conditions across the border. The issue of Immigration is a complex one and one of the hot button issues being debated in our culture. If you would like to examine one possible way to respond as a Christian, I invite you to go to Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform at www.faihandimmigration.org.

I would also encourage you to consider what the bible has to say about how people of faith are to treat those who are "aliens" and "strangers" in the land. Here are a few samples:

Exodus 22:21

"You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt."

Leviticus 19:34

"The alien who resides among you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God."

Hebrews 13:2

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some have entertained angels unawares."

This Sunday, we will reflect on the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Gospel of Luke 10:25-37) in which Jesus challenges his hearer's animosity toward certain "foreigners" by making the object of their animosity the hero of the story.

As part of our monthly Communion Sunday Offering, we will also focus on how we can support the National Farm Worker Ministry and their advocacy on behalf of those who are laboring in our fields under unjust conditions.

In preparation for Sunday, I invite you to meditate on some of the reflections below which can also be found on the National Farm Worker Ministry web site www.nfwm.org

Food is basic to life, and those who provide it enable us to live. Sharing food, the means to life and livelihood, is what a community does. Breaking bread implies that those of us who receive the food pledge ourselves to justice for those who provide it. from "Hands of Harvest Hearts of Justice" (a farm worker curriculum by National Farm Worker Ministry and NC Council of Churches), Session 1 "Food: A Sacred Exchange" theme written by Sr. Evelyn Mattern

We can [not] live harmlessly or strictly at our own expense; we depend upon other creatures and survive by their deaths. To live, we must daily break the body and shed the blood of creation. The point is, when we do this knowingly, lovingly, skillfully, reverently, it is a sacrament; when we do it ignorantly, greedily, clumsily, destructively, it is a desecration...in such desecration, we condemn ourselves to spiritual and moral loneliness, and others to want. from Wendell Berry, The Gift of Good Land

As we prepare to receive the bread and cup this Sunday, may we take time to reflect on the gifts we receive from the earth and our care and concern for those whose hands work the fields.

Blessings,

Rev. Laura

P.S. I also want to let you know a way we can learn about our Muslim neighbors this Saturday, September 4. I will be going and hope others from our faith community will join me. The community is invited to attend the 2010 annual Ramadan Open House at the Islamic Center of Alameda, Saturday, September 4 from 5pm-7:40pm. at 901 Santa Clara Ave., Alameda (cross street 9th Street). We will provide overview of the Islamic faith and practices and will have an opportunity to have our neighbors and friends ask questions from us. For more information please call: 865-2649 or 748-9052 or visit the website: www.icabayarea.org.

September and October Worship Highlights

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and with all your strength and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

"Put Your Whole Self In"

Sunday, September 5

15th Sunday after Pentecost

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Who is My Neighbor?

Leviticus 19:1-4; 9-10; 17-18

Luke 10:25-37

Communion Offering: National Farm Worker Ministry

Rev. Laura Rose, preaching

Sunday, September 12

Homecoming Sunday

16th Sunday after Pentecost

Heart, Soul, Mind, Hands and Feet

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Luke 10:25-37

Rev. Laura Rose, preaching

Sunday, September 19

17th Sunday after Pentecost
Put Your Whole Soul/Mind In: Worshipping
Many Members, One Body
1 Corinthians 12:12-13:7
Worship Team, sharing

Sunday, September 26

18th Sunday after Pentecost
Put Your Whole Heart In: Connecting
Finding One Another
The Parable of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin
Luke 15:1-10
Rev. Laura Rose, preaching

Coming Up in October

Sunday, October 3

19th Sunday after Pentecost
Put Your Whole Strength (Feet) In: Serving/Doing Justice
Advocating for Change
The Parable of the Widow and the Judge
Luke 18:1-8

Sunday, October 10

20th Sunday after Pentecost
Put Your Whole Mind/Soul In: Learning/Growing in Faith
Stretching Your Faith
The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus
Luke 16-19-31

Sunday, October 17

21st Sunday after Pentecost
Put Your Whole Strength (Hands) In: Giving
Special Guest Preacher
Ron Buford
Director of Development, Northern California Nevada Conference
Former Director, UCC God Is Still Speaking Initiative

Sunday, October 24

Consecrating Stewardship Sunday
Put Your Whole Self In
Rev. Laura Rose, preaching

Circle of Prayers

Prayers of Care and Concern for:

D. Mark Blank
Donna Danielson
Kitty Dankworth
Deborah Dunster & Family

September

Birthday Blessings

01 Tricia Lyall
Erika Lindstrom
02 Catherine Miller
03 Casey Miller

Jeanne Godchaux
 Emily Hirst
 Beth Kromer & Family
 Millie Mauldin
 Scott Meyerson
 Ruth Reynolds
 Jean Roper
 Larry Schulz

Prayers of Sympathy for:

The Family of Bob Whitney who passed from this life to the next on August 11.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held on Saturday, September 25, 10:00 A.M. at FCCA

Prayers of Blessings for Recent

Housing Transitions:

Lois Pryor as she settles into Cardinal Point
 Deg Powers as he settles into Water's Edge
 Bay Farm

Prayers for:

All who are seeking jobs
 All couples and families

All teachers and students as they begin school
 All our young adults at college

Church Office Note

Our Church Office Coordinator, Neil Genson, will be taking some vacation time the week of **September 19**. Please consider and plan your church office needs ahead of time. Neil will return to the office on Sunday, September 26.

All material for the October issue of Tidings is requested to Neil at neil@fccalameda.org by Monday, September 27.

Upcoming Dates

& Items of Note

Sunday, September 12

Homecoming/Recovenanting Sunday
 & Annual Ministry Faire

We begin our new program year, introduce our "*Put Your Whole Self In*" theme and series, and welcome the choir back from its summer

04 Patti Christian
 05 Danni Morgan-Pearce
 07 Linda Shively
 08 Matt Villa
 10 Beth Kromer
 Kyla McKenrick
 11 Nancy Adams
 Ella VandeKamp
 12 Donna Danielson
 14 Julie Bonachea
 18 Sarah Oddie
 19 Kian van der Meer
 21 Charlene Bissinger
 Sue Ann Yarbrough
 27 Lis Cox
 30 Deborah Casado
 Page Tomblin

September

Anniversary Blessings

03 Beth Kromer & Bill Smyth
 07 Eleanor & Dick Stallman
 20 Carolyn & Mark Villa
 22 Sylvia & Jeffrey Anderson
 23 Tricia Lyall & Tanya Webb

"The Pacific"

Newsletter of the NCNC UCC

The Pacific is the award-winning newsletter of the Northern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ. We encourage you to click the link above and see what is happening in our conference and the wider church. Look for the United Church of Christ link at the end of this newsletter for news on what is happening in our denomination.

Nursery/Childcare Position

Open at FCCA

We are looking for a nursery/child care attendant whose primary function is to provide nursery care for infants and small children during Sunday worship and fellowship hour. Attendants may also provide care as needed and agreed upon for other meetings or special events. These could include periodic weekend afternoon or weekday evening events. Please see a full job description on the information table in the social hall. If you are interested or may know someone who is please contact either Rev. Laura at 522.6012 x

break. Also, our fellowship time features our ever more engaging Annual Ministry Faire.

Sunday, September 19

Our Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, Jeanie Egbert, will lead us in another installment of our continuing series, *"What a Disaster!"* In this episode, the audience participation portion of our congregational training program will include a fire drill. Our Incident Response Team will lead us in practicing a safe exit from the sanctuary. Don't miss it!

Saturday, September 25, 10:00 A.M.

Service of Celebration for the life of Robert "Bob" Whitney in the Sanctuary

Sunday, September 26

Annual Church Picnic at Alameda's Lincoln Park following the mornings worship service. Look for sign-up sheets in the social hall during fellowship time.

21;

revlaura@fcalameda.org or Moira Darone at x 27; youthministries@fcalameda.org.

More Items of Note

SEEKING THE TECHNOLOGICALLY GIFTED

Rev. Laura would like to start a Tech Ministry Team at FCCA. This team will include people who know how to run an LCD projector, work our sound system, videotape services, edit DVD 's, use Power Point and download film clips, etc. If this is something you have gifts for or have interest in learning, please email Rev. Laura at revlaura@fcalameda.org.

This month's Emergency Preparedness Tip:

During hot weather, drink more liquids even if your not thirsty. Monitor children and the elderly for signs of heat exhaustion: rapid breathing, pale skin, dizziness or confusion.

Our Church's Wider Missions & Outreach Opportunities

September Communion Offering

Designated for National Farm Worker Ministry

Our communion offering on Sunday, September 5 will be designated for the National Farm Worker Ministry. In this faith based organization many churches and religious groups work together to stand with the farm workers in the struggle for justice. To learn more, please visit the [NFWM](http://www.nfwm.org) website.

Midway Shelter Meals

Upcoming Date: Friday, September 17

One of our ongoing ministries is preparing meals for the women and children at Alameda's Midway Shelter. On the third and fifth Friday and fifth Sunday of the month volunteer chefs from our congregation provide a main course, side dish/salad, fruit/veggie, bread, milk/juice and dessert for 25-30 people. You only have to sign up for one portion of the meal, and one or more people can share a portion of it, to keep expenses and work time down.

The sign up sheet is on the board next to the Outreach Ministry table, in the church social hall. If you have questions or would like more information please contact to Teri Kennedy, 523-0714 or tmkennedy325@gmail.com

Alameda Food Bank

Saturday, September 25

We will be joined by Trinity Lutheran Church in Alameda for the Saturday of food distribution for Food Bank clients at the trailer on Thau Way (right off Atlantic and Webster). This will require 7 volunteers each month to help with intake and food distribution directly to clients. We will meet for training from 10:00-11:00 AM, then distribute food from 11:00 A.M.-1:00 P.M.,

then clean up until 1:15 P.M.. You will be helping people choose their food for the month including perishable and non-perishable items. The Food Bank has seen an increase in need! Please sign up in the church social hall or contact Rosanna Roxas at SAXORR@att.net.

Message from Our Financial Secretary, Teri Kennedy

THE DIFFERENCE YOUR PLEDGE CAN MAKE

Pledges are an important component of the FCCA budget. Nearly half of our budget comes from pledges, so I am encouraging everyone to pledge, after prayerfully considering what to give. Your pledge is not set in stone--you can adjust your pledge at any time you need or want to. You can give weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually.

But Teri, you ask, How do I become a Pledging member of FCCA? I'm glad you asked! You can fill out a pledge card at any time during the year. Pick up a pledge card from the table in the Narthex or from Neil's office. Fill it out (note the starting date of your pledge) and leave it in my "Financial Secretary" box in the office or mail it in. You will be assigned a pledge number and will generate a year-end statement detailing all your giving for tax purposes. You don't have to be a member to pledge.

If you fall behind in your pledge or are unsure where you are: You can always ask me or leave me a message in the office. I print out quarterly statements **ONLY FOR THOSE WHO ARE BEHIND IN THEIR PLEDGES** so if you receive nothing from me, it means you're up to date. Pat yourself on the back for being consistent!

If you have pledged in the past but did not do so this year, you still have a pledge number and will still get a year-end statement. However, it is important to pledge **EVERY** year (see above). If you're not sure whether you are a current pledger, ask me.

If you want to pledge but writing those pesky monthly checks is a chore: You can ask your bank to set up regular giving. Your bank can send a regular check made payable to FCCA and mailed to the Church office. Individual banks can help you set this up. Several pledging households do this already.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at tmkennedy325@gmail.com

September 12 is the big day! Homecoming Sunday brings with it the start of a new Sunday School Year AND the return of our beloved Acolyte program!

Visit the Ark

Come on over to the Gallery area and check out "The Ark" then come down to the Ministry Faire in the Social Hall to discover what we love about working with the children and youth as well as what some of the upcoming events will be throughout the church! Stickers and smiles will be provided (as well as our usual coffee hour goodies).

Sunday School &

Y.E.A.H. Youth Group News

by Moira Darone, Coordinator of Children & Youth Ministries

Sunday School News

Welcome to The Ark! This year we begin with quite a few changes to our Sunday School Program. The Christian Education Ministry Team has developed a theme for our Sunday School and will be slowly integrating the Ark theme throughout the coming year. Keep an eye out for changes as the new school year begins.

As I've reported before, there will be a change in classrooms this year as well because we are creating a toddler class. This is how the Ark classrooms will be laid out starting with the Miracle Room and moving counter-clockwise:

Miracle Room = *Eagles* (8-11 year old class),

Small Classroom = *Lion Cubs* (5-7 year old class),

Large Classroom = *Bunnies* (2 ½ -4 year old class),

Supply Closet, Moira's Office/ Copy Machine, Nursery.

From now on, you will hear (and see) me refer to classes by their Ark names rather than by their age groups. This shift brings with it many decorating options that we are excited to begin implementing!

The painting project continues in both the Lion Cubs and Bunnies' classrooms, we had hoped to get things done a little sooner but sometimes things don't go as planned. New chairs have been purchased for the Lion Cubs and the Eagles-no more folding chairs with their pinching hinges! The Eagles are also getting new Bibles this year for their classroom as they have been working with very old Good News Bibles. The new Bibles are New Revised Standard Version (NRSV-the same as the Pew Bibles) and have much more "extra" information to help the Eagles to better understand the Biblical world from time-lines and maps to a comparison of the four gospels!

Y.E.A.H. News:

Youth Empowering All Hope is the youth group of First Congregational Church, Alameda. We are youth in 6th through 12th grade and we meet every Sunday after worship from about 12:15 to 1:30pm. We strive to serve and learn about God while sharing our daily lives together.

A new school year is upon us all, and while that means homework-it also means fun times at the church! This year, we want to do a mission trip of some kind. We haven't figured out what type we want to do, so stay tuned for more info! We will also be doing a DVD-based course on Courage throughout the year called, "Courage; Developing Character to Stand Strong." A schedule for this has yet to be set, but will probably be the third Sunday of each month during Sunday School and possibly into Youth Group time starting in September.

On-Going Small Groups for Faith Sharing & Fellowship

Women's Fellowship - Thursday, September 9, 12:00 Noon, Social Hall

After a summer break Women's Fellowship meets for its salad luncheon. All women of the church are invited to attend a reunion and planning for the Homecoming Sunday Ministry Faire. The cost is \$3 for those bringing salads or \$5 for those who do not. Call Eleanor Stallman at 521-2269 to let her know you are coming.

NEW THIS FALL

Scripture Study Group- 3rd Wednesdays, beginning September 15, 6:30-8:00 P.M.

We will study and discuss the Sunday Scripture Texts for upcoming worship services. On Wed. 9/15, we will discuss the Sunday Texts for 9/19, 9/26, 10/3, 10/10 and 10/17. (Scriptures can be found in the *Worship Highlights* section of *Tidings* or by clicking the Worship tab at www.fccalameda.org). We use the New Revised Version of the Bible which can be found at

www.devotions.net/bible/00bible.htm . All Worship Participants are invited. All Lectors and Worship Leaders are encouraged to attend. Childcare Available upon request with at least a week's notice.

Faithful Families - Saturday, September 18, 3:00 P.M., Crab Cove

Come and join the Faithful Families kick-off the new season with a fun picnic at Alameda's Crab Cove. Bring grass games, wind games, water games, blankets, and a shared snack. Start thinking of what events you would like to have planned this season. An Evite invitation has been sent out to those that are signed up for the group.

All families with children from newborn through elementary school age are invited to participate in our monthly events as we gather for fun and fellowship, and to share the hopes, joys and challenges of nurturing the spiritual life of our children. If you are new family not already on the Faithful Families email/invite distribution, or if you would like to be a host, or for more information about Faithful Families contact Amy Hersman at 749.0299 or ahersman@gmail.com.

The FCCA Fellowship Meal Groups

The FCCA Fellowship Meal Groups (formerly known as Supper Clubs) are back this year! This is a wonderful opportunity for people to fellowship around a meal once a month in a small group setting of 6. We encourage you to join as it is a great way to get to know one another better. Groups will start up in October and we welcome couples & singles of all generations! Look for our table on Homecoming Sunday during the Annual Ministry Faire.

WomenSpirit - 2nd Wednesdays beginning October 13, 6:30-8:00 P.M.

A monthly gathering for women to nourish the awareness of the Spirit in everyday life, to support one another and cultivate faith through friendship, and to share the spiritual practices that have sustained people of faith for centuries. Women of all ages are invited. Contact Pastor Laura for more info at revlaura@fccalameda.org. Child care available upon request with at least a week's notice.

First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
1912 Central Avenue
Alameda, California 94501
510.522.6012
www.fccalameda.org

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

The United Church of Christ



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