

THE IVY VINE

January 2023

God is Still Speaking Volume 18 Issue 1



Dear Church family & friends,

As we begin a new year together, I am grateful for the ongoing assurance that God is the source of all we need to help us as we journey through whatever we encounter on the adventure ahead.¹ God's guidance and help for whatever we experience in life is offered to us as a gift for every moment of our lives. The choice will always be up to each of us whether or not we accept this gift. With this in mind, as we anticipate the year ahead, I invite you throughout the month of January to join me in praying the following prayer written by Joan Stott:

Listening God, you hear us when we call on you - whether we are in need or we are celebrating the joys of life – and for this blessing, we give you our thanks and praise. All-Compassionate God, today we bring our prayers to you, as we recognize and are challenged by the troubles of our world and its nations; and for all its peoples: God, be fullness of life – to all who are depressed, distressed, bewildered or tormented; God, be freedom - for all peoples who are oppressed, persecuted, abused or exploited; God, be healing - for all who are ill, injured, damaged, broken or frail in mind or body; and God be a refuge, a safe haven and a sheltered harbor - when life's storms engulf us.

God, you alone are our hope when our reserves of inner strength are empty and we have reached rock-bottom - when life seems overwhelming, or we are too stressed to cope. God, be serenity – for all those who are anxious or troubled in any way; God be quietness – to people who are overwhelmed by the noise and stresses of life; God be tranquility and calmness – to people overcome by violence or who live in fear; God, be a companion and comfort - to all people who are grieving or experiencing loss; God, be hope - for people who believe there is no hope, expectation or future for them; God, be rest and respite - for people who feel weary, drained of energy, or exhausted; God, be hospitality and a welcome – for people who have been rejected or abandoned.

God, our Rock and our Redeemer, the One who is steady and secure, when all around us seems brittle; and the usual foundations of our life are shaken and about to crumble. All-Loving God, today we bring our prayers to you, because we know there are people for whom life is an unbearable burden; and who think there is never help for them: God, be strength and effectiveness - for all who are elderly, weak, fragile, aged or infirm; God, be their security, protection and confidence – when people are frightened or scared; God, be a home - for people who are homeless, refugees; displaced and stateless peoples; God, be presence – for people who are lonely and isolated; who feel they have been abandoned; God, be faithfulness and steadfast love – for people who feel weak, lost or shattered; God be peacefulness – for those who are nearing or at the end of life's journey or are accompanying someone who is.

O God, our God, you are our hiding place, our secure rock, our fortress and our only hope. And you, O God, are the one we depend on to go with and to guide us through the unknown of the new year ahead. Amen.²



With blessings and love,
Pastor Jen

Special Congregational Meeting November 13, 2022 Summary of Discussion

The meeting was held after Sunday worship and coffee hour.

Total participants = 17 (of which 7 joined via Zoom, including our Legacy Coach, Rev. Kelly Colwell)

Our financial timeline, with “business as usual,” is predicted to be no more than 3 years (less, if we consider potential costs of legal assistance and preparing the property for sale, as well as separation compensation packages for church employees). Should the decision be made to close the church, the process will require approximately 18 months.

Suggestions for “growing our church” and other ways of increasing income that were offered were as follows:

- We need to share with the community who we are and what impact we are having on our community; “We need a good Public Relation’ person. This will help us be noticed in our community. We should concentrate on the way our church is “open” to everyone. We could build on the UCC’s “Still Speaking” materials that are readily available. **DeeAnne Thom** is willing to help with this effort; contact her at: DeeAnne@landesign-inc.com or (612) 670-6705.
- Might there be other faith groups (or other organizations) who would like to share our facility (which is relatively un-used 6 days per week)? This could bring rental income. **Roy Domke** offered to lead a team wishing to look into other groups using our facilities; contact Roy at (707) 758-6282 or email runabout@aol.com
- Increase participation by offering a meditation service (Taizé or similar) once a month, or meditation classes. **Marilyn Michelin** is willing to help with this; contact Marilyn at (707) 894-2849 or email maril.mich@comcast.net
- The historical aspects of our church’s beginnings (including the Methodist churches in town) are interesting to many, as is the historical nature of our sanctuary. It is possible that grants for maintaining historical buildings might be available. **John Phillips** (707) 494-9086 or email wkuout2@aol.com) and **Mimi Domke** (707) 758-6282 or email mimimailbx@aol.com) are glad to have others join an effort of organizing our historical information and finding out how it can be used.
- Solicitation of donations via the Internet is being explored by **Joné Wesele**; contact Joné at (707) 295-4591, email jonebwesele@yahoo.com if you would like to help explore or assist with this effort.
- Would the Thrift Shop bring in twice the income if it were open 4 days per week instead of 2? This would require more staff to receive, sort, and price donated items, as well as to staff it during hours it’s open.

Rev. Kelly Colwell’s comments on the strategies we’ve discussed (including those from the October 16 congregational meeting; see November [Ivy Vine](#)) were as follows:

- *Some of these ideas need to be acted upon immediately. It takes time to see whether new efforts have been effective at church growth or improved finances.*
- *Investigating new ideas and trying them out has to be initiated by lay people in the congregation; **don’t wait for current church leaders, committees, or church staff to act**; they already have enough to do without taking on more tasks.*

In the event United Church decides to close, a question asked was “What would we want our legacy to be?” Members mentioned many ways in which we have served our community of the years, including these: our early adoption of our “Open and Affirming status within UCC congregations; founding the Food Pantry; providing low-cost clothing and household goods via Heaven’s Closet Thrift Shop; initiating the Oktoberfest celebration; offering music programs for infants, children, youth, and adults; the high school breakfast and scholarship programs; and our camp programs at Camp Cazadero and Camp Tamarack.



5th Sunday Service

In 2023 the calendar shows a fifth Sunday in the months of January, April, July, October and December. Plans are being made to have a service of worship, prayer, meditation, contemplation, reflection, etc. on those Sundays. It will be in the place of the regular 10:00am worship service. There will be readings, music, and time for silent reflection - a time for personal worship and communion with God.

All people are invited to attend, regardless of religious affiliation or belief. The first service will be on Sunday, January 29, 2023. Please, invite your friends and neighbors and come together in the sanctuary of the United Church of Cloverdale, on zoom, or via You Tube on that Sunday at 10:00am.

Pennies From Heaven

On the 3rd Sunday of each month during our worship service we collect an offering we call "Pennies From Heaven." Many of our church family save up their loose change each month to bring to church, all the monies collected are then used to support Heifer International. With our donations we help families all over the world!

COVID & Flu Season Updates:

- ⇒ **Masks are Required**
- ⇒ **Please be mindful of social distancing and hand washing and/or sanitizing.**
- ⇒ **If you are feeling sick or experiencing any symptoms, Covid, flu, etc. please refrain from coming to the church campus.**
- ⇒ **If you or a household member test positive** for Covid please quarantine for 10 days from onset of symptoms and do not return to church campus until you and other household members all test negative.
- ⇒ **Please notify the church office, Pastor Jen and/or one of the moderator team** if you learn you have or might have exposed others, or you have been exposed to covid yourself while on church campus or when off campus at a church related activity.
- ⇒ **Communion continues** during worship on the 1st Sunday of each month.
(pre-packaged elements are being used at this time)
- ⇒ **Office will remain by appt. only**

*Thank you for helping us maintain our commitment
to provide a safe place for all!*

heaven's Closet

thrift shop at the united church of cloverdale

Can you work a shift in the Thrift Shop?

Or do you want to help sort items?

We always need helpers !

The sign up sheet is available in the Thrift Shop on Thursdays and Saturdays 10-3pm!

Or call the office to learn more!

In February the thrift shop will be returning to pre-pandemic hours of 10am to 3pm on Thursdays and Saturdays! Many of you may have heard the news that Goodwill has closed and we anticipate more donations and more business coming to our shop! As a result we will need more volunteers to help sort and move the things we can't sale either North or South to other organizations .If you can help, contact the office by phone 707-894-2039 or by email at uccoffice@sbcglobal.net.

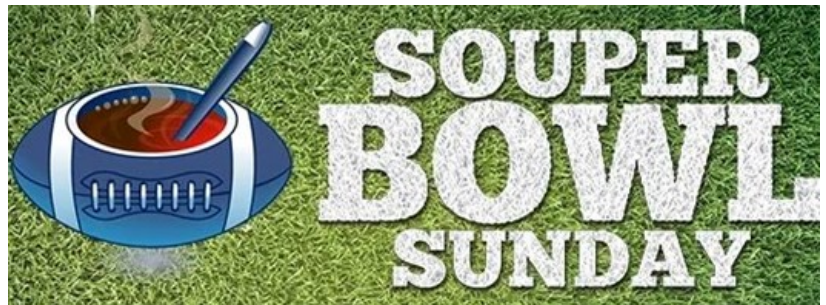


We will be holding our annual "Souper Bowl" drive on Sunday February 12th, immediately following worship.

Don't limit your contribution to just soup, any canned goods (preferably with pop-tops) will be most appreciated and will be given out at the Cloverdale Food Pantry.

We will have more details in the February Ivy Vine!

The Annual Congregational meeting will be held on Sunday February 19th after out morning worship!
If you have a report to submit for the Annual Report please submit by January 23, 2023



PLEDGES for 2023

Good news for the budget. Our congregation has pledged 115% more for 2023 than was pledged in 2022 even though the number of members making this commitment to the church is less than the past year. Our pledge total at mid- December stands at \$81,500. Thanks to all who have taken this step.

If this was PBS, we would offer a video or tape or book to entice the final pledges to come in, but we will instead offer a prayer for all considering a pledge to follow through on that impulse and we will give praise as we start the next year. Thanks to all who are still considering their commitment.

CALENDAR

- 1/18 Legacy Team Meeting, after worship
- 1/22 Council Meeting, After worship
- 1/23 Annual Report Submission Deadline
- 1/25 Health & Safety Team Meeting 10:30am, Fellowship Hall
- 1/29 5th Sunday Special Worship Services



Sebastian Madrigal 1/8
Oliver Magnusen 1/8

Weekly Activities

- Thursdays & Saturdays Thrift Shop Open 10-2
- Wednesday- Silent Prayer 10am (all are welcome to join in-person or in spirit)
- Tuesdays & Fridays NA Meeting 7:30pm Education Bldg.
- Sundays In-person Church Services, 10am in the sanctuary (also available on Zoom and our YouTube Channel)

Looking Ahead

- 1/23/2023 Annual Report Deadline
- 2/12/2023 Souper Bowl
- 2/19/2023 Annual Meeting
- TBD Bible Study Group
- TBD New Members Class



If you have a story you want to share and/or any photos please submit to uccoffice@sbcglobal.net We would love to share it in the next newsletter!



Subscribe

Hold In Prayers

We continue to hold in prayer *The Lile family; Mary Dixon; Carolyn Crandall; Kathy Truelsen & family; The Wolter family; Lynn Gertenbach; Tracey Grose; Norma Reilly; Ukraine and all those impacted; United Church of Cloverdale and all members & friends of our church*

Cloverdale Food Pantry Fridays 11am to 1pm

202 Commercial Street
(Commercial at Second)
Cloverdale , CA

Everyone is welcome to access the food Pantry
No ID or income verifications required!

Ivy Vine Contact Information

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Articles for The Ivy Vine? submit to the uccoffice@sbcglobal.net by the 20th of the month preceding the publication date. Articles submitted after the deadline without prior approval will be published the following month.