

# THE IVY VINE

November 2022

*God is Still Speaking Volume 17 Issue 10*



Dear church family and friends,  
With the month of November comes the time change, elections, shorter days of light, Thanksgiving, and the start of Advent (11/27). Whatever this time of year represents or might feel like to you, it is my hope that you will continue to be intentional about noticing God's personal reminders that God is present with you, every moment.



With God's enduring presence and help in mind, November is also a month when we place an extra emphasis on stewardship. For stewardship is ultimately our response of gratitude for all of God's blessings, both those received and those yet promised. As you consider your stewardship pledge, I invite you to prayerfully reflect on all the ways that God has blessed your life. As you do this, I also invite you to be open to how the Holy Spirit is leading you to express your gratitude to God through an ongoing pledge of your time, talents, and financial resources to support both the internal life and the outreach and missions of the United Church of Cloverdale.

No matter what the future holds for the United Church of Cloverdale, we are entrusted in the here-and-now to be stewards of the gifts that God has given to each one of us. God's work is ongoing and we still have the ability and opportunity to effect change by offering our gifts to God and allowing God to bless and multiply them in ways that we cannot even currently imagine!

With stewardship and the seasons of Thanksgiving and Advent approaching, please join me throughout the month of November in praying the following prayer by Rev. Donald Jansma:

*Let us give thanks to God our Creator for all the blessings we share this day. For all of those who have gone before, people strong and brave, willing to put their lives on the line for the causes they believe in, we give you thanks.*

**Grant us, our God, the courage to step out in faith for that which is true and right.**

*For freedom of speech and of the press, for the avenues open to express ourselves, and for opportunities to effect change, we give you thanks.*

**We pray for those who are voiceless victims of unjust governments and ideology.**

*For fertile soil, abundant rain, and seasons of refreshment, we give you thanks.*

**We pray for those whose land is parched and whose wells are dry.**

*For our families, friends, and the church, who provide us with food and drink for our journey, we give you thanks.*

***We pray for those who are hungry and tired, hopeless and wandering, finding no place to rest.***

*For strong bodies and minds, for opportunities that encourage us to grow and become more the servants of thanksgiving you call us to be, we give you thanks.*

***We pray for the sick and weary, and for all those who take the risk to dream or change.***

*Help us, O God, to be responsible stewards of your blessings, people who care for the earth and all its people. Keep us connected with all humanity, even though miles and cultures tend to separate us. May we always respond to your call with a true spirit of thanksgiving. **Amen.**<sup>1</sup>*

Whatever this time of year represents for you, know that I will be holding you in prayer. And if it's ever helpful to have a listening ear or the opportunity to chat throughout the month ahead, please don't hesitate to let me know.

I am grateful for each of you and all that you bring to my life and the life of our church!

With love, gratitude, & blessings,  
Pastor Jen



<sup>1</sup> Adapted from: <https://www.reformedworship.org/article/june-1988/service-thanksgiving>



## 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!

## Special Congregational Meeting October 16, 2022

### Summary of Discussion

#### **Facilitators:**

**Rev. Kelly Colwell**, appointed Threshold/Legacy coach, No. Calif. Nevada Conference – UCC  
**Richard Werner, Lavonne Blucher-Nameny, Bob Timm**, Co-Moderators

*Question to participants:* **What do you value about United Church of Cloverdale?**

*Responses by attendees:* fellowship and interaction within our church family; worship, and a mixture of traditional and contemporary; our sanctuary and pipe organ; our missions and outreach to others; we are a safe place, accepting people as they are; tolerance and openness for everyone; our variety of beliefs; our Open & Affirming stance; following Jesus' teachings; our past music program; raising our family in this church, and our programs for children and youth, including summer camp programs; our sacred space; the historic aspects of our church; our Thrift Shop; coming here and finding authenticity; willingness to change.

#### **The Legacy Process – Kelly Colwell**

Purpose: a process to assist churches in decline or crisis to intentionally plan for the future. We are starting early in the process of looking at the situation, so there is no need to panic. However, we need to take this seriously. This is NOT a drill. We are in an existential crisis. Many options are on the table for discussion.

The crisis is financial: Our income fails to meet expenses. We have 4 possible options:

**Growth and increase income:** sale of assets, property rental, connecting with former members for financial help, grants, fundraising (probably more effort and less yield).

**Decrease costs:** reduce staff, sale of building(s), less material goods

**Merge with another congregation, or share ministry** (not an easy solution)

**Closing** (dissolve the congregation). Can take about 18 months to accommodate legal and financial issues. If this is the decision, start early – you can't just wait until you are out of money. The No. Calif. Nevada Conference does have some capacity to provide legal help and financial advice.

#### **Financial Situation**

Our 2022 deficit is projected to be \$127,500.

With "business as usual," we project the 2023 deficit to be \$147,000.

Approximately 75% of our expenses are for personnel.

Only about half of our households make regular donations/pledges, resulting in income of about \$75,500. There's room for more giving, but doubling it will not make up our deficit. *Comment: This is nothing new; we as a church have always relied on major gifts (monetary, or real estate) from individuals, to solve ongoing annual deficits.*

Our finances are not sustainable. Projections show we can continue for about 3 years if nothing changes, at which point our endowment will be depleted.

### **Option 1 – Increase Income**

(Find out who has energy, is willing to dig in, and to get involved).

- Raise funds through the internet – Jone Wesele is looking into this.
  - Grants (including working with historical society) – John Philips is looking into this (We would need a committee to move forward toward writing and receiving grants.)
  - Offer our sanctuary as a second music venue in Coverdale. (To do that and to remain a church, we'd still have to meet regularly for worship, anything charitable that we do is probably OK, in terms of property tax law. It would also require a committee to organize this, and improvements would need to be made to the sanctuary.)
  - UCC online marketing effort to grow membership by increasing our social media presence – DeeAnne Thom is willing to help work on this.
  - Rent out the office/Thrift Shop building, classroom, and/or commercial kitchen (we are currently not making money with our rental to Flour Girl). Jilloni currently oversees rentals, but will need some help to update rates, rental forms, etc. (Our church's property tax for our multiple parcels is under \$1,000. Rentals might increase our taxes significantly. Increased building use would require some increased expenditure for building and equipment maintenance.)
- Open the Thrift Shop more days each week (this would require more volunteers).

### **Option 2 – Decrease expenses**

- Sell our building(s) and meet elsewhere
- Decrease staffing (One way to do this would be to meet less frequently for worship, thus reducing staff time. The UCC Conference only requires that churches meet “regularly” for worship.)

### **Option 3 – Merge with another church/congregation or share ministry**

United Church exists as the result of a 1979 merger between the Congregational Church of Cloverdale and the Cloverdale Methodist Church. A trust fund, from which United Church receives income, was established when the Methodist church property was sold. (Bob Timm has initiated discussion with the United Methodist No. Calif. Conference about whether they might be interested in “planting” a new Methodist church in Cloverdale in the near future.)

### **Option 4 – Closing /Dissolve United Church of Cloverdale**

We will want to anticipate this is a possibility, and when it might occur, so we can provide employees with appropriate severance packages. (Sale of the property could perhaps occur prior to dissolving the congregation; funds realized could be given to support other ministries and organizations in our community, such as non-profits, that do outreach. According to our constitution, upon church closure the property would revert to the UCC Conference.)

Comment from Marilyn Michelin (member for 61 years):

*I prefer a dignified end to the church as we know it, rather than a painful, drawn out process. Give it over with joy, positivity and celebration rather than tears, mourning, blame, or hard feelings. Let's celebrate who we have been and who we are and celebrate what we have learned by being a part of United Church of Cloverdale and the larger United Church of Christ. Each of us can continue to worship and carry our dedication to openness and affirmation of all people wherever we go in life. Continue to stand and work for justice, equality, and peace.*

*(Continues on page 5)*

## Final Comments

*Rev. Jen Collins:* Are we willing to do the hard work? Why are we here? Can we offer connection to those in our community? We all have to work together. Are YOU willing to get involved and include others?

*Rev. Kelly Colwell:* The process of gathering information has begun. Don't think in terms of success/failure. Instead, think, 'have we been *faithful*?' If you decide to close, do it without hard feelings. Take joy in what you have done and who you've been as United Church of Cloverdale.

(See pg. 6 for letter from Rev. Pamela Tinnin)



**Note: A follow-up Congregational Meeting is scheduled for Sunday Nov. 13 following morning worship.**

### COVID & Flu Season Updates:

- ⇒ **Masks are optional, But Highly Recommended**
- ⇒ **If you are feeling sick or experiencing any symptoms**, 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.
- ⇒ **Communion is back** during worship on the 1st Sunday of each month
- ⇒ **Coffee Hour** needs people to sign up to host the coffee hour after services. Please speak to Polly Lile if you have any questions.
- ⇒ **Office will remain by appt. only**

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



## Letter from Rev. Pamela Tinnin

(former pastor, Community United Church of Christ, Guerneville)

October 14, 2022

Wow, the letter with accompanying financial info about the status of the church was a bit of a shock. Of course, when we left for seminary in the fall of 1993, the church was pretty much packed every Sunday. There was an active Sunday School, and two choirs if I remember correctly, not to mention a variety of ministries. When I looked at the budgets for this year and next, I was even more shocked. The amount of income deficit seems to be about half of your annual operating expenses. You estimate that 3 years is how long you can keep it going without an influx of both people and funds. Certainly if the ratio of income to expenses doesn't change, continuing over the long term is not sustainable.

In a much smaller way, of course, that is what we faced at Guerneville. After most of the church buildings were devastated by the February 2019 flood, we sold the property in May. In July we found a small building two miles east of Guerneville on Highway 116. We managed to hold on there for the next three years, despite the pandemic which meant for nearly two years we were mostly an on-line church, and when we returned we had lost three people to death and others had disappeared during the pandemic. Finally the hard facts were that we could hang on until every dollar was gone or else we could close and share the remaining funds with other churches/non-profits and put the money to good use. That was our ultimate decision and the church was officially closed on July 15, 2022. It was an incredibly painful decision that broke our hearts, but we did find joy in giving generous amounts to local community programs such as the West County Community Health clinic, the Riverkeepers that work hard to maintain the health of the Russian River, VetConnect that serves local veterans, especially those who are struggling without shelter and with physical and mental health issues, the Northern California Nevada Conference of UCC, the Redwood Empire Food Bank, and quite a few other groups.

Of course, while your situation is much different, I would hope that some solution could be found. I suspect you sent the letter out to a wide group of folks. Perhaps it's a long shot, but it would be nice if some of the congregants who left during the pandemic would be inspired to return, especially knowing the church is truly struggling. What concerns me most is if the church closes, not only will it be so very sad for the people who are still active, but especially for the elderly people who've been there many years. We vowed that we would stay open until the few elders who were there passed on, all of them with fragile health. I presided at the funeral for the only remaining elder last fall. These were all people who had been part of the church since World War II.

There is another negative outcome. When Guerneville UCC closed, it meant there was no longer a progressive church presence in the community. The Metropolitan Community Church closed permanently during the pandemic. The only other churches are the Catholic Church, a small independent conservative "Bible Church," and also a pretty active church that is an offshoot of the Redwood Gospel Mission, also very conservative. That situation probably would be much the same in Cloverdale. With the way the country is going, we need all the progressive institutions we can.

I wish I had some incredibly brilliant ideas that would bring people back and also help the church be a more public presence once again. Of course, there are lots of suggestions people make—rent out space which you have tried with the commercial kitchen and upgraded buildings. Shared ministries are mentioned, but I'm not aware of what kinds of things other churches are involved in. Most of the churches have their own facilities, but I know there's a church that meets out in the Reuser's buildings south of town; there used to be a church that met at the Citrus Fair, but I understand they've closed.

I'll keep thinking and praying about this and perhaps an unexpected miracle will occur and some bright ideas will come to those of us who care about the church. I'll always be grateful to the congregation there. After all, you all sent me off to seminary.

Rev. Pamela Tinnin  
Cloverdale, CA

## Thrift Shop News

Our little shop of bargains re-opened to rave reviews and happy customers. We are loaded with new fall and winter clothes and household items. If you are in need of a light jacket or heavier coat, come on in. If the shop looks cleaner and fresher, it is due to our new gal Sherry who keeps it sparkling. Looking forward to seeing you. Submitted by Carolyn Crandall

## Cloverdale Food Pantry Update

We continue to be blessed with very willing and able volunteers. Our current and greatest challenge is that donations have greatly decreased. We are able to purchase canned and dry goods at very reasonable prices at the Redwood Empire Food Bank but the dairy, eggs and meat prices are skyrocketing. (no surprise there, I'm sure). Our monthly expenses continue to climb, also. (rent, utilities, gas and upkeep of our aging van...) In addition to these challenges, the Food Pantry is taking on the purchasing of the turkeys, hams and pies for the two traditional, community holiday giveaways. We are beginning to get the word out on social media and in our community.

If you would like to make a monetary donation, it would be most appreciated. Checks can be made out to the **Cloverdale Food Pantry** and sent to Cloverdale Food Pantry P O Box 1038 Cloverdale CA 95425 or can be given to Polly Lile. Thank you in advance for your generous support.



Pictures from October when UCC was running the food distribution and operations in the Cloverdale Food Pantry!



More food pantry photos on next page!



DONATE

WE LOVE OUR VOLUNTEERS



## Jordan and Jilloni's East Coast Adventure!

Jordan and I had such a once-in-a-lifetime adventure when we joined other students and parents from Jordan's school in June on our trip to Washington D.C. and New York! It was Jordan's 1st time on an airplane and thankfully a non-stop flight from SFO to Dulles International Airport in Virginia. Once we hit the ground it was non-stop we saw so many monuments, and memorials including Martin Luther King Jr., Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Lincoln, Vietnam, Thomas Jefferson, the Tomb of the unknown soldier and The changing of the guard's ceremony, President John F. Kennedy's gravesite, Airforce memorial, 9/11 memorial at the Pentagon, The Marine Parade, The Ford Theater, the Smithsonian Museums, and George Washington's Estate at Mount Vernon and that is just to name a few. We also visited N.Y. and there we went on the Staten Island Ferry by the Statue of liberty, we saw The Lion King on Broadway, hung around Times Square, and visited the 9/11 memorial and museum at ground zero, just to name a few of the things we did there! All that and more packed into 4 nights and 5 days!

Jordan and I would like to thank everyone who donated financially to make this trip come true!

We are so grateful and cherish the memories of this trip!

We can now say we have visited the east coast and that humidity wow, what an experience!



Left: Jilloni and Jordan at George Washington's Estate in Mount Vernon Virginia and Below at the top of the Rockefeller Center in New York City with Central Park Behind us. Above: The whole group in Times Square in New Your City.



## Choir Concert at Mendocino College

Mendocino College Choir and the Ukiah Symphony will be giving a concert in December.

The dates are:

Saturday December 3 at 7:30 pm

Sunday December 4 at 2:00 pm.



The pieces to be performed are:

Hiob by Fanny Mendelssohn ( the sister of Felix Mendelssohn)

And The Ballad Of The Brown King by Margaret Bonds. Text by Langston Hughes.

Three members of our church are in the choir: Bob Timm, Jean Craig and Holly Werner.

All the music is spectacular and you won't want to miss it!

## Come help put up and decorate the Chrismon Tree!

Each year we put up a Chrismon tree in our sanctuary.

The Chrismon Tree goes up on the Saturday before  
the first Sunday of Advent.

If you'd like to come help put up and decorate  
this lovely tree we are meeting on  
Saturday November 26th at 11:00.

With enough helping hands it won't take too long.

Hope to see you there

Holly Werner



**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 10-2pm!

Or call the office to learn more!

Each shift is 2 hours!

**FROM BREAD AND CUP TO FAITH AND GIVING.**



**For CHURCH RECORDS** Envelope # \_\_\_\_\_ (for office use)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

I plan to give \$ \_\_\_\_\_ each  week  month beginning \_\_\_\_\_

for an annual total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(date and year)

I understand that this commitment can be changed at any time by giving notice to the church officer.

I would like to talk with someone about including the church or church-related institution in my will.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**From BREAD and CUP to FAITH and GIVING**



**For YOUR RECORDS**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**With others in my congregation, I commit myself to give in proportion to what I have for the ministries of the church and the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ.**

I plan to give \$ \_\_\_\_\_ beginning \_\_\_\_\_ (date and year)

Each  week  month

Annual Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Stewardship is coming up quickly and we ask that you prayerfully consider being a steward to the church!

# CALENDAR



- 11/5 Saturday Breakfast 8am, Zini's Diner
- 11/6 Time Changes– Fall Back 1 Hour
- 11/13 Special Congregational meeting, 11:15am
- 11/16 Wednesday Breakfast, 8:30am, Zini's Diner
- 11/20 Stewardship Sunday, Thanksgiving Sunday and Pennies from Heaven
- 11/24 & 11/25 Office Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday
- 11/26 Decorate Chrismon Tree, 11am , Sanctuary
- 11/27 1st Sunday of Advent

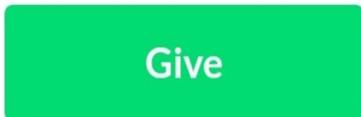
- Jean Craig 11/5
- Laurie Bilbro 11/7
- Cindy Wolter 11/7
- Jackie Cofield 11/14
- Jesse Timm 11/25
- Jen Collins 11/26
- Sarah Timm 11/26

## Weekly Activities

- Thursdays & Saturdays Thrift Shop Open 10-2
- Wednesdays Silent Prayer 10am
- 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

- 12/24 Christmas Eve Service 4:30pm in the Sanctuary
- 12/25 No Church Services



Online giving available thru our website at [uccloverdale.org](http://uccloverdale.org). Just click on the give button!

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



Subscribe

**Hold In Prayers**

*We continue to hold in prayer Carolyn Crandall & Family; Kathy Truelsen The Wolter family; The Lane family; Lynn Gertenbach; Mary Volper; Tracey Grose; Conny Welch; Christy Anne Latchford; Norma Reilly; All those impacted by wildfires, earthquakes and severe weather; Ukraine and all those impacted; United Church of Cloverdale*

## 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**  
 The United Church of Cloverdale  
 439 N. Cloverdale Blvd., Cloverdale, CA 95425  
 Phone: 707-894-2039 Fax: 707-894-4015;  
 Website [www.uccloverdale.org](http://www.uccloverdale.org)  
 YouTube Channel United Church of Cloverdale  
 Church Administrator: Jilloni Hopkins, [uccoffice@sbcglobal.net](mailto:uccoffice@sbcglobal.net)  
 Articles for The Ivy Vine? submit to the [uccoffice@sbcglobal.net](mailto: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.