

THE IVY VINE

September 2020

God is Still Speaking Volume 15 Issue 6

United Church of Cloverdale



**United Church
of
Cloverdale**
is an
**Open and
Affirming
Still Speaking**
Congregation
of the
United Church of
Christ
(UCC)

“Let your unfailing love surround us, oh God, for our hope is in you alone.” (Ps 33:22)

Dear Church Family,

It is hard to believe that it is September already and that fall is just around the corner. It is also hard for me to believe that over 5 weeks has already passed since I officially stepped into the role of pastor here at our church, the United Church of Cloverdale. During that span of time I have had the honor to speak with several of you and I am now looking forward to the opportunity to touch base with those of you I have not yet been able to connect with. Know that if you have not heard from me as yet that I will be reaching out to you during the month of September. If you have not heard from me by the end of this month please contact the church office to make sure we have your current contact information. In the meantime, know that you can reach out anytime to request support and prayers for you, your family, and/or friends.

Within this issue of the Ivy Vine we have tried to provide answers and information to questions that you have brought to our attention. If you have a question that has not been addressed...or this Ivy Vine generates a new question please do not hesitate to contact me, the church office, or Louise Graddy, moderator. It is important to us to keep you in the loop as best we can and to also be transparent with information, decisions, and needs.

The other very important hope and goal that I have is to continually point us toward Jesus' example and promises throughout the Bible in order to help us navigate the days, weeks, and months ahead. If you have not already had a chance to take a look at our new YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvjn9GopikI&t=38s>) I invite you to do so and join our just started sermon series entitled “Faith for the Journey

Ahead.” For indeed, I have to agree with Eugene Peterson, who emphasized in his book *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society* that “the Christian life is not a quiet escape to a garden where we can walk and talk uninterruptedly with” God...rather, “the Christian life is” about “going to God. In going to God Christians travel the same ground that everyone else walks on, breath the same air, drink the same water, shop in the same stores, read the same newspapers, are citizens under the same governments, pay the same prices for groceries and gasoline, fear the same dangers, are subject to the same pressures, get the same distresses, are buried in the same ground. The difference is that each step we walk, each breath we breathe...we know we are accompanied by God...and therefore no matter what doubts we endure or what accidents we experience” we can have the confidence of knowing that Jesus will be our comforter, guide, and source of hope every step of the way.

Blessings for the journey ahead,
Pastor Jen



PEDAL TO RESETTLE
★ 2020



RIDE FOR REFUGEES

Pedal To Resettle

We're all stressed. It seems like there are so many new challenges weighing us down (including the wildfires). And none of us can imagine the myriad of things that weigh down refugees and immigrants every day. So let's lift them up (and at the same time lift ourselves up), and take the World Relief September Challenge.

The United Church of Cloverdale team page is up and running and 2 people have already joined the team. Go to www.pedaltoresettle.org to check it out. Click on DONATE in the upper right corner.

From there, you can join the fun and REGISTER as a "Resilience Rider" yourself. Choose a challenge for yourself (physical, mental, or creative), and commit to it for the month of September. Let Lavonne know what your challenge is, include a photo if you want and some text explaining your challenge. Lavonne will make sure your page is posted on the site. And we will help you with a fundraising letter to send to your family and friends, asking them to help you support these vulnerable people.

If you don't want to be a Resilience Rider and choose a challenge, you can DONATE to our church team, or to a member of the team. Simply scroll further down the page to view the teams or individual riders and make your donation.

If you have questions, or are having trouble thinking of a challenge for yourself, give Lavonne a call 894-7540.

As we all know, immigrants and refugees face untold challenges every day. So we at UCC will also accept a challenge from World Relief. We have established a team United Church of Cloverdale. Everyone is invited to join the team as a "Resilience Rider" and to set a personal challenge (physical, mental or creative) for themselves and commit to it for the month of September. The challenge should be something you would enjoy. Some ideas include, but are not limited to:

- Physical: actually ride one of the courses in Sacramento on Sept. 26, set your own local course, ride a stationary bike for a set distance or time, hike or walk, swim
- Mental: learn a language, read a certain number of books or pages
- Creative: learn an instrument, finish a painting or sculpture, knit or crochet a certain number of baby blankets

If you join our team, or register as an individual, we will help you with your fundraising pages so that you can send a link to friends and family and ask them to support you in raising money for refugees. Vanassa Josey of World Relief has offered to assist anyone who needs help with registering (www.worldreliefsacramento.org or Mobile: 615-319-5878). Or you can give Lavonne a call at 894-7540 to talk about this exciting challenge.

Don't wait to sign up. Go to www.pedaltoresettle.org and register as a Resilience Rider, or join our UCC team, or simply donate to an individual rider or the UCC team in general. Although there is no fundraising requirement, we have listed our goal as raising at least \$3,000. (\$3,000 will cover 2 months of rent and utilities for a refugee family or furnish apartments for 3 families of five. \$5,000 will establish a fully staffed refugee women's education site.) Let's do this!

We are looking forward to hearing what you have set as your challenge for September.



Wednesday Prayer at 10 AM

- I invite you to pause wherever you are every Wednesday morning at 10 AM and join me (in spirit) for a few moments of prayer and/or silent reflection.
- As you pause I also invite you to join me by lighting a candle (electric or otherwise) as I light one in the sanctuary at 10 AM.
- This is an opportunity for you to use whatever form of prayer/centering/reflection is meaningful to you.
- Examples include but are not limited to: Prayer – silent, spoken, or written; meditation; taize songs or any other song that serves this purpose for you; artistic expression of prayer; dance/movement; look at a

picture; light a candle; say a mantra. Please contact Pastor Jen if you would like to discuss further.

- Please email Pastor Jen - revjencollins@gmail.com - before 10 AM on Wednesday if you have any prayer requests that you would like included.

Looking to the Future

In order to make it possible for our congregation and the wider community to make online contributions for the Church's Ministry and Missions, I am looking into a donation platform that would be on the UCC website and Facebook page. You will be hearing more about this.

I am working with Pastor Jen and Holly to research how the church can legally add print and audio media to our

YouTube postings.

Missions and Ministries

The Church has donated a little more than \$800.00 to Pedal to Resettle 2020.

Blessing to All,
Jean Craig



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is

Barbara Goepel celebrated the conclusion of her chemotherapy by ringing on Sunday. She rang it in 3 different sessions - 2 minutes each time. On the first ring, it lifted her up a bit. I helped her till she got the hang of it. After that, she wanted to do it herself. (Picture Below)





Worship Update

- Until worship services are held in-person again these weekly updates will serve in place of our bulletin.
- Updates will now be sent out on Friday afternoons.
- In the future, as our on-line worship service expands these weekly updates will include the responsive portions of our worship service; the Scripture reading; & lyrics to hymns.
- Any announcements you would like to have included must be received by Thursday at **NOON**.

On-line Worship

- **Check out and subscribe to our new YouTube Channel!** (Subscribing is free and doing so will notify you when new content has been added.) https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYFrPLra6ZVryg8ku5SrKZQ?view_as=subscriber or just Search on YouTube for United Church of Cloverdale.
- **The Worship planning team is working toward** adding additional worship components. Stay tuned for how you can be involved in front of and/or behind the lens!
- **If you do not have access to the internet** please notify the office if you would like a copy of the sermon to be emailed or sent in the mail (USPS) to you.
- **“Joys” and “Concerns”-** for any “joys” and/or “concerns” that you would like to have included on Sunday please call or email Pastor Jen or the church office by **NOON** on Fridays.
- **If you would like assistance in viewing our YouTube channel** please contact the church office.
- **Participants desired behind & in front of the lens.** Even if you have never participated before or it has been awhile this is an opportunity to help provide a sense of connection. Recordings for our YouTube channel can take place any time during the week and videos can be made wherever you are currently located. Call the church office or contact Pastor Jen to learn more!
- **In-Person Worship Services.** An update about our anticipated timeline to resume in-person worship services will be provided following our next church council meeting which will be held on September 20.

What is Your Favorite Hymn?

We would love to include your favorite hymn/s in our upcoming YouTube worship services. Please contact the church office or Holly Werner with your selection/s even if you do not know the exact title. We will do our best to help you identify the song you have in mind.

We also invite any of you interested to let us know if you would like to participate by either singing and/or playing the hymn yourself or by having a family member participate on your behalf (or with you).



Emergency Contact Information

- **The recent evacuation warnings** (up to Cloverdale's city limits) brought to our attention that we do not have everyone's most recent emergency contact information.
- **Please help us update our records** with home and cellphone numbers by emailing uccoffice@sbcglobal.net or calling the church office (707-894-2039) with your current information.
Even if you think we have your number/s please call to confirm they are correct.
- **Please let us know any contact information that is for emergency use only** and we will not publish those in any future church directory.

Church Office & Covid-1.

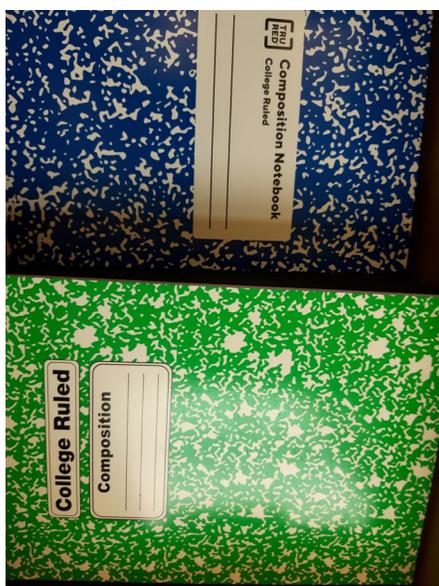
Per CDC, state, county requirements and recommendations we request the following:

- **If you are experiencing and/or have been around anyone experiencing ANY Covid-19 symptoms** (or anyone known to currently have Covid-19) **please avoid** coming to the church office or other facilities.
- **Please take your temperature prior to any visits** to any church facility.
- **Please help us to limit the traffic in the church office** by calling ahead to schedule a visit with Pastor Jen or other church personnel.
- **A mask is required** to enter all church buildings, offices, and rooms & whenever interacting with others (unless you have a health condition that prevents this).



Stock -A—Student Update

Linda Clapp has been hard at work shopping and gathering up a large quantity of school supplies! Below is a picture some of what has already been purchased with the donations we have received. There is still time if you would like to donate please contact the church office!



CLERGY/PASTOR HOUSING ALLOWANCE FAQ'S

“Q. What is a Housing Allowance?”

A. A housing allowance is a portion of clergy income that may be excluded from income for federal income tax purposes (W-2 “Box 1” wages) under Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code. To be eligible, the pastor/clergy must be a “minister of the gospel” and be ordained, licensed, or commissioned by a church, convention or association of churches.

Q. What types of housing related expenses can be included in the housing allowance?

A. While there is no list of allowance expenses provided by the IRS, it is understood that most reasonable household expenses can be included in the housing allowance. Some of these items include: down payment on a home, mortgage payments (including both interest and principal), home equity loan payments (assuming the loan proceeds are used for housing-related expenses), real estate taxes, homeowners’ association dues, property insurance, utilities, furnishings and appliances (including repairs), structural repairs, remodeling, yard maintenance and improvements, pest control, snow removal, maintenance items, and trash pickup.

Note that the cost of food and/or clothing may not be included in the housing allowance. Also, housing-related expenses can only be included in the housing allowance for the year in which they are incurred.

Q. What happens if the pastor doesn’t spend all of the designated housing allowance on housing expenses?

A. Any "unused" portion of the designated housing allowance must be included in the pastor's gross income when filing his annual tax return.

Q. Can the housing allowance resolution be adopted or amended mid-year?

A. Yes. The housing allowance resolution can be adopted or amended at any time. However, it can only be applied prospectively. That is why it is important for the housing allowance resolution to be adopted by the church council prior to each new calendar year and for pastors to accurately estimate their housing expenses in advance.

Q. Is the housing allowance also excluded from earnings subject to self-employment taxes (i.e. State Income Taxes)?

A. No. The housing allowance exclusion only applies for federal income tax purposes. By law, clergy are considered “dual status” employees. This, in essence, means that while pastors receive W-2s from their employers, they are considered self-employed for the purpose of paying self-employment taxes – unless they have opted out using Form 4361. Therefore, housing allowance must be included as self-employment earnings subject to the self-employment tax. (See IRS Publication 517).”



Happy Anniversaries

Bob & Cary Fraser 9/7
Denaire & Mike Nixon 9/17

As we move forward and start to think about what coming back together and re-opening might look like we have to think about cleaning and Sanitizing procedures and the supplies needed to do those things!

Here are some items we will be needing:

- Hand Sanitizer
- Hand Sanitizer Dispensers
- Sanitizing Wipes
- Lysol Disinfecting Spray
- Disposable Face Masks in the event a guest does not have there own mask available

If you can donate any of these items please let Jilloni or Jen know in the office and we can arrange a pick up or drop off day and time!



Laura Hall 9/2
Charlotte Lewis 9/5
Maya Biery 9/6
arl Westenberg 9/9
Conny Welch 9/19
Susan Cooper-Munger 9/20
Cary Fraser 9/20
Carol Romero 9/26
Lori Serrano 9/27
Carolyn Crandall 9/28
David Romero 9/30
Helen Smith 9/30

Hold In Prayers

Barbara Goepel and Her son Jim Goepel
Jeanette Hartwig & Family and
Her Grandson Koen
Lori Serrano , Jerry Huot & Family
Jone & Tui Wesele and Family
All the First Responders fighting
wildfires and Covid –19



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 by the 15th of the month preceding the publication date.
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