

The Communicator

October 2020

Community Congregational Church of Pacific Beach
United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation

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HELLO OCTOBER

From Our Pastor:

Grant Us Wisdom for The Facing of This Hour.

Lord, open unto me

Open unto me – light for my darkness.

Open unto me – courage for my fear.

Open unto me – hope for my despair.

Open unto me – peace for my turmoil.

Open unto me – joy for my sorrow.

Open unto me strength for my weakness.

Open unto me – wisdom for my confusion

Open unto me – forgiveness for my sins.

Open unto me – love for my hates.

Open unto me – thy Self for myself.

Lord, Lord, open unto me! (Howard Thurman)



In January I stated that we should all be prayerful, because we were going to witness one of the most contentious political seasons in recent memory. I had no idea that we would witness such rancor. As I am writing this (September 22, 2020) I don't know what to think. I am not so naïve as to believe that politics is not filled with discord at times. I am aware that politicians at times don't tell the truth. It comes with the "game". I know that politicians will do what is in the best interest of her/his political party, while attempting to do what is in the best interest of their constituents. What a sense of accomplishment one must feel when a political victory is won. When this happens, rivals should be able to shake hands and return to work on behalf of the American people. Believing that both parties have done her/his best to act with honesty, and integrity and mutual respect. This is no longer the case.

It is a sad state of affairs. We have witnessed many of our leaders compromise their ethics and values in a manner I thought would never happen in this country. With this kind of glaring malice there are no winners, we all lose. As we approach Election Day, a dark shroud has been placed over our democratic and legislative process. One of the most noteworthy expressions is a maritime broker's motto - *Dictum Meum Pactum* - "My word is my bond". It is used to indicate that one will always do what one has promised to do. It dates back to 1801 and in 1923 was added to the London Stock Exchange Coat Of Arms, "where bargains are made with no exchange of documents and no written pledges being given". The recent proceedings in our legislative branch of government have muffled these words. I am concerned that for the first time in this nation's history we may not have a peaceful transition of power. We must develop a faithful response with a sense of urgency.

We are faced with two pandemics. We are still faced with the Covid-19 pandemic which has seen nearly 200,000 Covid-19 related deaths. The Corona virus has adversely impacted our quality of life in countless ways. It has impacted our daily routines, our health care systems, and our human relationships. There are so many people who feel isolated due to quarantine restrictions. We have seen our city in particular shut down and open back up, and we are on the verge of another shut down. My heart aches for those who are hurting economically and have seen their hopes and dreams crushed. This problem should transcend politics. This is

a public health issue, and should be treated as such. When the Corona Virus is referred to as the “China Virus” it only divides people and causes deeper pain and frustration. Language is powerful and we must be aware of how we use it. Let’s continue to pray for all the medical professionals who continue to work to end this pandemic. In addition, prayers are flowing for all of the hospital environmental services workers who clean and sanitize medical facilities, all the grocery store workers, those who harvest our food and those who give technical support to all of the distance learners.

This brings me to the second pandemic that we are facing, the pandemic of racism, the original sin of the USA. The summer of 2020 has become known as the summer of racial reckoning. It is still difficult for many of us to talk about the problem of race in America. Over the past several weeks I have participated in a weekly ZOOM meeting with members of the United Church of Christ. These meetings have been helpful. The conversations have not always been easy or pleasant, but they have been honest and heartfelt. The only way that we are going to move forward in eliminating the race problem is to talk about it, and find ways to embrace diversity. James Baldwin said, “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing be changed until it is faced.” If there is going to be peace and unity, we have to face the viciousness of racism head on. The Zoom meetings on race take place on Wednesday’s at 1:00pm pacific time. It is open to anyone who would like to a part of the conversation.

Every Wednesday at 1 pm (Pacific Standard Time)

Our “Conversation on Race” continues to take place on Wednesdays at 1 pm.

Below is the Zoom link:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86914922263?pwd=SDcvWVFXQjdmMUdESnA0aXhvTVE2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 869 1492 2263

Password: 521870

Finally, we are people of faith. Let us keep the faith and continue to trust God to heal our land. It is in times like this that I have had to ask God to increase my faith and to help me to trust God even more. Part of my spiritual practice has been to not only sing the great hymns of the church, but often pray the hymns of the church when I can’t find the words to pray. One of the hymns that come to mind was written by Henry Emerson Fosdick

1. God of grace and God of glory,
on thy people pour thy power;
crown the ancient church's story;



bring its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.

2. Lo! the hosts of evil round us,
scorn thy Christ, assail his ways!
From the fears that long have bound us,
free our hearts to love and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the living of these days,
for the living of these days.

3. Cure thy children's warring madness,
bend our pride to thy control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
lest we miss thy kingdom's goal,
lest we miss thy kingdom's goal.

4. Set our feet on lofty places;
gird our lives that they may be
armored with all Christlike graces,
pledged to set all captives free.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
that we fail not them nor thee,
that we fail not them nor thee!

5. Save us from weak resignation
to the evils we deplore;
let the search for thy salvation
be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
serving thee whom we adore,
serving thee whom we adore.

Peace and Blessings.
Pastor Elvin
BLACK LIVES MATTER



From Our Pastor (2):

Dear Members and Friends

I hope that we continue to adjust to what is facing us in terms of the pandemic and our current world affairs. While faced with uncertainty and all that comes with it, I am grateful that our church council continues to function, to ensure that the business affairs are addressed. Yes, there is a business side of the church and the council functions in part to address issues and concerns facing the church. The council met on September 13, 2020 and after the meeting several questions were raised via email. The questions are significant and pertinent, not only for council members but for members and all who concerned about the future of the church. The questions are as follows:

All of this is not easy for anyone. As our lives, neighborhoods and society changes I want our church to change too.

What is our purpose?

What can we agree on as a church?

Do we want this church to survive?

How can we survive?

Who do we serve?

What do you want to do as pastor?

Who will do that which you can't or don't want to do?

This was my response:

September 16, 2020

Hello Council

I have received the questions that were sent to me and a copy sent members of the council. These are legitimate and valid questions. These are some of the questions that I have raised myself. I don't believe that these can be sufficiently answered in an email. I would, however, like to give a general response and hopefully, in the near future, the council and members of the church might be able to address them together.

As you know since being called to be your Minister, we have faced several challenges together. Some of these have been the expected challenges that a congregation and new Minister face. Some of these challenges have been unexpected ones.

Even before I was officially called to be the Settled Minister, I tried to convey that it is not the role of the Minister to arrive at a congregation and implement her/his vision without consulting the congregation. The role of the Minister in any church is to help the congregation to discern who God is calling the congregation to be. When I was installed as the Pastor of this church we entered into a three-way covenant. That covenant is between God, People, and Pastor to labor in ministry together. This covenant is to be honored by all.



I am well aware that this has been one of the most difficult if not the most difficult for the modern church era (Covid-19 Pandemic). From the beginning of my ministry here I have had an open door for members and friends of this congregation to express their joys and concerns with me. I have offered opportunities for the congregation to discuss together who God may be calling us to be or not to be. If any church is to thrive it must open itself to being led by the Spirit of God.

Suffice it to say all of us would like this church to not only survive but to thrive and grow. I am not sure how healthy it would be to dwell on events of the past; however, I would like to remind us that “Envisioning Our Future” was the topic for FFA for the entire month of October. The average attendance was three. Shortly after that, the church was asked to participate in a survey about our church growth and development. Less than five were returned. Many members told me “they did not know what to say” I have made several proposals and recommendations that I believed would help in the growth and development of the church. Some of these have been fully embraced and some not so much, which is to be expected.

I’m proposing that we resume our Thursday ZOOM meetings and instead of these meetings just being for the sake of checking in with each other, they would rather serve as working meetings to develop a strategic two-year plan for our church. Before the pandemic, our average attendance was 12-15. I would hope that we could have at least 8 members and friends to commit to this work. If so, I would like us to begin on September 23, 2020. Please share with me your thoughts. One of the most distressing things that can happen in a church is when members don’t share their concerns with the leadership of the church, but these concerns are shared with everyone but the leadership.

I do believe that all of us have the best interest of this church at heart. Let us remain prayerful and open to the spirit of God.

Peace and Blessings,
Pastor Elvin

BLACK LIVES MATTER



After reflecting upon the questions and my response, I would like to actually organize a working team to develop a strategic two-year plan for the church. If you are interested in being a part of this team please email me at Rev.Elvinharrison@gmail.com or you may call the church office at 858-274-6600. Thank you.

Faith, Formation and Action

October 4: League of Women Voters

A representative from the League of Women Voters will be our guest. She will discuss propositions that will appear on the November 3, General Election. This is a non-partisan presentation. You are welcome to bring any questions that you may have about the propositions. Given the vital nature of the presentation we will begin PROMPTLY at 9:00 am



October 11: National Hispanic Heritage Month

National Hispanic Heritage Month is from September 15 to October 15. During this time we celebrate the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. The observance began in 1968 under President Lyndon Johnson as Hispanic Heritage week. This year's theme ***Hispanics: Be proud of your past, Embrace the Future.***

October 18: Environmental Justice

Environmental justice emerged as a concept in the United States in the early 1980's. It focuses on the "fair" distribution of environmental benefits and burdens. We will discuss how Environmental Justice impacts the lives of all of us. We will also discuss Creation Justice within the United Church of Christ. Should our church consider becoming a Creation Justice Church? Is there a local environmental injustice issue our church could address, as part of our Christian Witness? We will also learn about Environmental Justice Trainings offered by the UCC.

October 25: Freedom of Speech

Congress shall make no respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

What does freedom of speech mean for us in 2020? What are some of the restrictions of free speech? Over the past several months there are some who believe that our right to free speech is declining. We will examine the type of speech that is protected and that which is not. Within the context of current events what kind of peaceful assemblies have violated this amendment and how have the rights of those assembled been violated.

October Birthdays



17 Emma Davies
24 Bev Shaffer
26 Carolyn Snelling

Prayer and Bible Study

No Bible Study during the month of October. Please see information regarding our weekly digital meetings.

BIBLE STUDY

Biblical | Challenging | Relevant



GET INTO THE WORD!



Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. 1 John 3:18

Emplumada

BY LORNA DEE CERVANTES

When summer ended
the leaves of snapdragons withered
taking their shrill-colored mouths with them.
They were still, so quiet. They were
violet where umber now is. She hated
and she hated to see them go.

Flowers born when the weather was good –
this she thinks of, watching the branch of peaches
daring their ways above the fence,
and further, two hummingbirds, hovering,
stuck to each other,
arcing their bodies in grim determination
to find what is good, what is given them to find.

These are warriors
distancing themselves from history.
They find peace
in the way they contain the wind
and are gone.





SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 AA 7pm	2	3
4 FFA 9am Worship 10:30am	5	6	7	8 AA 7pm	9	10
11 FFA 9am Worship 10:30am	12	13	14	15 AA 7pm	16	17
18 FFA 9am Worship 10:30am	19	20	21	22 AA 7pm	23	24
25 FFA 9am Worship 10:30am	26	27	28	29 AA 7pm	30	31

Notes



From Our Church Moderator Carolyn Snelling

Loneliness is Silent

Evidence points to the fact that relationships are so vital to your physical well-being. The kind of bond you have with people, how close you are, how connected you feel to others impact our physical health. What really matters most is feeling the emotional security through family and friends. As we share time with meaningful interaction and meaningful conversations with others, our lives will minimize loneliness. When in isolation, social distancing, or self-quarantine for a long period of time, it will put the body into a state of stress. This means the immune system will be compromised. Check in on your friends, loved one, and family members through texting, email, or a telephone call. There are studies that indicate younger people (born 1948 – 1965) are no more likely to think of themselves as lonely as older people (born 1920 – 1947).



The following is a devotion which I read many times over from All God's Creatures. It really moved my heart.

A Friend from Above

“I’ve heard of a flea circus before, but I had never known anyone who claimed to have a pet fly... until my mother-in-law, that is. Clare lived alone. Her beloved cat was no longer alive, and she wasn’t sure she was up to the task of caring for another creature.

Then one day she became aware of a particular fly who seemed as if he wanted to be noticed. He’d land near her and say very still. She began talking to him and he didn’t appear to exhibit any fear. One day at lunch she separated a piece of macaroni from her dish and offered it to him. He didn’t try to land on her plate but accepted the portions she placed before him.

He wasn’t particularly fond of the newspaper, but he loved to land on the bathroom mirror and watch her as she prepared for the day. At night he’d sit on the lampshade and observe her from his warm perch. Once he landed on her knee and just stared at her for a while.

Several days went by before he reappeared. It seemed that he was moving more slowly, and declined the offer of dinner. It was almost as if he just stopped by to say goodbye, for she never saw him again. Clare was an artist and a photographer, and she documented her time with this fly through photos and notes, gathered into a small booklet to share with her family and friends. This is how we knew that she was not just imagining her relationship with this very tiny insect.

God knew her loneliness and understood her desire for companionship. There was no doubt in our minds that it was He who sent this fly to her. And He delighted in her delight at this most unusual friendship.”

After the passing of my nephew, Jonathan, I learned the severity of his loneliness. I wish my nephew had a pet fly.

Deuteronomy 31:6: Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you.

Digital Worship at CCCPB

We are again offering two digital venues in which you can participate and fellowship with the congregation:

Sunday Morning Worship Service on Facebook

We are streaming a live worship service on our Facebook page – UCC Pacific Beach – every Sunday morning at 10:30am. You can join us by simply going to the face book page and clicking on Elvin’s live stream. The video is saved on the Facebook page so you can watch it later if you choose. Here is the link to our Facebook page:



https://www.facebook.com/UCC-Pacific-Beach-103130421371544/?modal=admin_todo_tour

Weekly Zoom Meeting On Racism



Every Wednesday at 1 pm (Pacific Standard Time)

Our “Conversation on Race” continues to take place on Wednesdays at 1 pm.

Below is the Zoom link:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86914922263?pwd=SDcvWVFXQjdmMUdESnA0aXhvTVE2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 869 1492 2263

Password: 521870

Covid-19 Guidelines



We are asking everyone attending our Sunday morning services to please wear a face mask and observe the six feet distancing policy. Masks and hand sanitizer are available to those who need them. Some pews have been taped off to help with distancing. We will be singing in our worship service and ask you to participate at your discretion. Please do not remove your mask during this time.

Online Giving

Please note that on line giving is available through Tithely on our church website www.uccpacificbeach.com. Please take a look and follow the simple instructions.



CCCPB Strategic 2-Year Plan



If you are interested in participating in a *working group* to develop a strategic two-year plan for the church, please email Pastor Elvin. Rev.Elvinharrison@gmail.com or you may call the church office 858-274-6600. As of today, we have had 1 person interested in participating.

A Note from the Editor:

Please send your submissions for the Communicator by the 25th of each month to secretary@cccpb.org. The deadline for the November 2020 issue is October 25th.

Terry Hendricks, Editor
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United Church of Christ
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Community Congregational Church of Pacific Beach (UCC)... is an open and affirming congregation.

- We welcome all people who are sincere in their desire to know and serve God and God's people.
- Since we are all called to love God and each other, in the spirit of openness we welcome all of God's people.
- People of every age, ethnicity, economic status, ability, gender, and sexual orientation are invited and encouraged to fully participate in the life and work of our community.
- We welcome and celebrate all who sincerely seek the experience of God's unconditional love and care.

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Published monthly by
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