

The Caller

Newsletter of the
First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)

2026 Arrants St. ☩ Selma, CA 93662

MAY 2020

Edition LXIV, No. 5

*'Commit your work to the Lord,
and your plans will be established.'*

Proverbs 16:3

OUR MISSION IS...

...to grow our faith in Christ and share it with others,
to connect people to God and to each other through love, and
to create hope by providing opportunities for people to serve.

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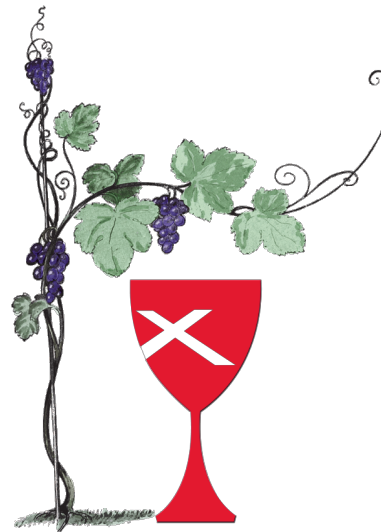
WEBSITE:

www.selmadisciples.com

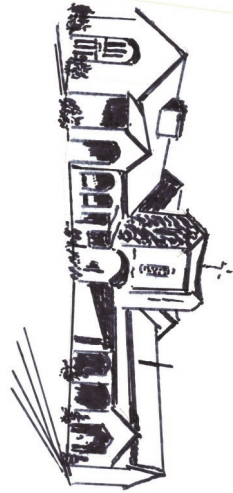
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STAMP



Names

Address

City, State Zip Code



www.selmadisciples.com

YouTube

"selmadisciples"



"First Christian Church
of Selma, California"

PRAYER REQUESTS AND GRATITUDE

Dear Christian Friends,

May God bless you all this Easter with His loving presence. Love, **Sylvia Wells**

Don Yingst's best friend **Karen Reed** passed on April 7th. **Don** followed her in death a week later. A memorial service will be planned when we are able to gather in person.

Clemente Gonzales is now at home recovering from his accident. **Yolanda** is still working but changed her hours to 2am to noon so she can better care for him. Thanks for your continuing prayers.

Phil "Red" Starr passed April 6th and is now with Dorothy in heaven. Please keep their children **Connie, David, and Terry** in prayer.

Prayers for **Jason Fuller** who recently lost his **Uncle Richard** as well as his sister **Beverly**

Prayers requested for **Becky Moreno**. Family members **Janeen and Janessa** are recovering from injuries suffered in a car accident. **Becky** is moved into her new home but is now battling bronchitis.

Please pray for **Dr. Jean Linder**, who covers a clinic with high risk COVID cases and is over 60.

Michael Gutierrez asks prayer for the **Firebaugh School District staff**. A staff person's family member has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Bonnie Murray and Kathleen Schales thank you for the prayers sent on their father's and grandfather's behalf. **Milton Bilderback** did have a heart attack. He is on oxygen, but has called her and she says he sounds good. They should have test results soon and hopefully talk to a doctor about his prognosis. Let us surround **Milton**, his **doctors**, **Bonnie and Kathleen** and the **whole family** in prayer.

Michael Gutierrez asks that we pray for his aunt. She was rushed to the hospital this past weekend and it isn't looking good for her right now. Please pray for her and for the family.

PRAYER CHAIN

Jennifer Earle is leading the prayer chain. You may send prayer requests to her at 559-896-2358 or jen4earle@sbcglobal.net.

Your donations are always greatly appreciated!



Thank you to all faithful supporters of the Food Pantry.

Distribution days are held on the first and third Thursdays at the SMART Center! During the month of **March** there were **79 bags** of food given out to **266 people**, and **April** there were **94 bags** of food given out to **334 people** served.

It's May 2020. How are you? While that's always been an important question, it's even more important to ask this question of our friends and our loved ones on a regular basis during all of the chaos that we are experiencing because of COVID-19. When you ask this question, be prepared to really listen to the answer.

This time of sheltering-in-place is difficult for many, if not all of us. Some have a lot of extra time on their hands, and extra people around. Others go to work daily, feeling like little has changed except that "everyone else" has free time and they don't. Most are concerned about their safety and the safety of others. Some don't seem to care about themselves or others. The responses to this unprecedented time are as varied as the people who you talk to and can turn on a dime. Try to be patient with yourself and with others. Show your love for others through your words. Check on those you care about. This stuff matters. Above all, stay safe and let's get through this together!

Jorge Flores
Isidro Martinez-Andrade
Kenneshae Murray
Abel Sandoval
Jessica Williams
Jordan Williams

♥ 'I'm so proud of you!' ♥



What do the names above have in common? You probably know some of the names really well. Other names may or may not be familiar to you. One thing I can tell you is that I am EXTREMELY PROUD of this group of Young Adults. Over the past 4 to 6 weeks since we have been sheltering in place, this group has worked together and gone above and beyond to bring you WORSHIP!! Yes, it's been different. Yes, there have been minor issues, but they have managed to make WORSHIP available to each and every one of us via Facebook since this whole thing began. Isn't that amazing?!?! They stepped up, took the reins, and ran with it. Thank you to each and every one of you for your dedication to bringing worship to our entire congregation. You've helped to provide a bit of "normal" in the weirdness of the world. It's been great to be able to have worship together even though we can't physically be together.

This further proves that WE are the church. The church is not a building. The church is a group of individuals who love God and love each other and care for each other.

GO OUT (once the shelter-in-place order is lifted) and BE THE CHURCH!

Leah

CAN I STILL TITHE/ GIVE AN OFFERING???

While we cannot physically give in the offering plate for the time being, we can still give what God calls us to give in order to continue moving forward as a church.

- ✂ Mail your offerings to the church (2026 Arrants St., Selma, CA 93662) or drop it off in the mail slot.
- ✂ Give online through our PayPal page (www.tiny.cc/fccselmagive).
- ✂ If you do online banking, you can give through the "Bill Pay" option through your bank.

Some of us may have drastic changes in our giving in the next few months (depending on our specific contexts) and that is okay. God may be calling you to give a smaller amount or in a different way during these times. Even if \$1.00 is given lovingly in faith and in Christ's name, God can use it and multiply it to advance the Kingdom.

I share with you all a prayer I adapted from Rev. Dr. Bruce Barkhauer, Minister of Faith and Giving for our denomination:

*God, you have become our light and our salvation –
let our gifts open the gates of joy
to all who hunger and thirst for Your holy presence.
May our offerings RING OUT our joys,
and demonstrate our delight, for Christ is RISEN!*

In His Name I pray, AMEN.

Happy Anniversary &
happy
Birthday
may your wish
come true

03: Alex & Patrice Dmitriev '97
07: Bonnie Murray
12: Gary Schales
19: Anna Armstrong
22: Tiffany Piper
28: Dorothy Babiarz
29: Sarah Dmitriev; Caden Linhoff

Have we missed your special day? Is something incorrect? Contact the church office and let us know!

Please call 896-2691 or email fccselma@sbcglobal.net

Hi Church Family!

First and foremost I would like to thank everyone for the prayers, phone calls, text messages and cards during the time of my illness and being in the hospital. They were greatly appreciated. I am doing a lot better. I love you all!

What a change there has been in the last month or so! We've had to make so many changes in our everyday life. I know one of the hardest things for me is not being able to hug everyone and see everyone at church, but we have to do what we need to do. This pandemic has changed our lives but we are learning to adapt.

Never in my life did I ever think the best thing to do is to be isolated except for the necessary things we have to do. I know there are people, essential people, who are still out there having to work. I want to thank all our essential people for their hard work and putting themselves on the battle field so to speak for the rest of us, and I know we all appreciate and thank you all very much! I know it's not easy but again we have to do what we have to do to keep everyone safe.

I want to assure everyone that we are in this together! God is with us and He is good! The Board still keeps in contact, have meetings via Zoom, texts, and emails when there's decisions to be made. Just because we are isolated we are still doing God's work to try to figure out what's best for our Church during this time.

I want to encourage everyone to make phone calls to each other, send cards, text messages, check on each other. I feel this has truly brought our Church family closer to each other. If we listen to God, he will take care of us.

I personally and publicly want to say thank you to all who are working hard and diligently on making sure we have a service via internet every Sunday. I know this is not an easy task, but you don't know how proud I am that we can still worship together during this pandemic. You all are doing a great job! I'd try to name you all but I know I'd leave someone out so I won't embarrass myself. lol And, yes, I still shed a tear or two listening and watching the service.

We also want to point out that we still have staff that's working, bills to pay, and I thank every one of you who are still tithing on a regular basis. We need to be diligent with this. It is different not to be able to put our tithes in the offering plate, but we can send it by mail, drop it off in the mail slot and/or via PayPal. There is still someone at the office during the morning Monday through Thursday.

I am so looking forward to the day when we can be back together worshipping together in our Church and seeing everyone! What a joyous day that will be of celebrating together and seeing how the sanctuary will look with the new carpet and floors done!

Until then, remember to keep in touch with everyone any way that you can, and I'm sure everyone is praying for this to be all over, whenever that will be, only God knows! We just need to remember to leave it in His hands and everyone stay safe! Virtual hugs to everyone!

Love in Christ!

John Terry



What is most meaningful in worship to you?

This question came up in one of the daily Bible Studies I have been posting. It's a good question. In a meeting of clergy some years back someone said, "A recent poll of churchgoers found that most go to church for the music." One of the older ministers

was shocked to hear this and responded rather hotly, "Well, MY people come for the sermons!"

If that is true for you, if you come for the sermons, then online worship is no problem. However, I doubt that's the case for many. Most of us attend because it is a community of like minded people coming together to worship God. We may have our favorite parts of worship - mine is the Lord's Supper. Some find joy in the music. Some are uplifted and comforted by the prayers. All of those things happen in online worship. And we are doing our best to provide meaningful worship services during this time of quarantine. But it's just not the same as coming together in the sanctuary on Sunday morning. We are just happy to see each other, for the opportunity for hugs and catching up. For some it is the only escape they have from their day to day cares and worries. All of us enjoy knowing we are not alone. That can be hard when we are worshipping in our homes.

I have no idea when we will be able to get together again - no one does. For now, for however long this lasts, we will continue to use every method we can think of to stay connected - phone calls, Zoom, Facebook, YouTube, emails, cards and letters - whatever.

In the meantime, **all** activities and calendar items inside the church building have been cancelled for May. The Board, Elders, Young Adults, and Sunday School are meeting online.

Please know that I am praying for all of us. The Elders are praying for all of us. And hopefully, you are praying for all of us, too. May God's healing love fall upon all of us today and all days.

Pastor Maria

WHAT'S LIFE WITHOUT CHALLENGE?

When my sister Jessica and I were younger, we'd always play Mario games on our Super Nintendo (and sometimes we still do)! As we progressed through any of the games, the levels would always become more challenging for us. Sometimes we'd redo stages over and over and over again until we finally passed—what a huge relief we felt as we got over one of those hurdles!

The church decided that the theme of this year is "Level-Up! 2020." We challenged ourselves to discern what God wants for our church; we rallied around Jeremiah 29:7 and began to take deliberate care of what God has given us—to "pray to the LORD for it because [our] future depends on its [wellbeing]." We were asked to level-up our faith...our stewardship... and we were encouraged to level-up in our Christian walk with each other and with God. Then, wouldn't you know it, leveling up, just like Jessica and I experienced, brought us some challenges. Some of us are stuck at home and some of us have to continually put ourselves at risk because of our jobs. Some of us have had our incomes take a hit yet some of us are able to continue work from home (thanks to technology).

Do not be afraid! Trust in God--we were asked to level-up our trust! This, too, shall pass. I know that, without a doubt, we are meeting these challenges head on as we continue to level-up throughout this year:

- ✓ Our worship is still happening (*thanks to our dedicated young adults*).
- ✓ Our ministry is still in action (*thanks to our dedicated leaders*).
- ✓ Our church is still moving forward (*thanks to YOU, the church body*).

My wonderful church family, I hope you are doing well amidst the crisis the world finds itself in. Stay in faith, stay in touch, and stay in prayer.

What a *huge* relief it'll be when we finally get over this hurdle.

God's Abundant Grace and Blessings to You All,

Jordan Williams

