



## **Little Brown Church of Sunol**

United Church of Christ – Congregational

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### **October 2020**

We continue to provide our worship services online while waiting until it is safe to meet again in person. Please see below for updates from our minister and council chair.

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#### **October-November Calendar**

Saturday, Oct. 31 ... Halloween

Sunday, Nov. 1 ... Daylight Saving Time ends

Tuesday, Nov. 3 ... Election Day

Thursday, Nov. 26 ... Thanksgiving Day

#### **A special message from Pastor Mary**

Being a pastor-at-a-distance has been a new and unique experience. On a day-to-day basis, some of the work is no different – for example, facing an empty computer screen on a Monday morning with a sermon to have completed by the end of the week. I have my Bible and my news feeds (it used to be the newspaper). I then do my best to attempt to discern what the congregation needs and to preach and teach the Gospel in this unprecedented time in American life. Pastoral care happens over the phone, via text, and six feet apart, socially distanced, face-to-face meetings. Council meetings and the business of the church are handled by Zoom and email. And when Sunol was threatened directly with the wildfire and evacuation orders, I was grateful for the many different electronic ways to communicate and the offers of support from members and friends who live outside of Sunol. That was church in action.

My world as a hospice chaplain has been altered dramatically as well. No families or non-nursing personnel are permitted into any facilities. Family members have been devastated by the fact that they cannot visit their frail, elderly loved ones. I am permitted in the buildings only at the end of life but hardly look like the comforting pastor. I look much more like a surgeon in

gown, gloves, face shield, and mask. Our hospice team gathers electronically once a week and I have not been inside the office in Dublin for months.

In this time when the levels of fear and anxiety, political upheaval, and a sense of being overwhelmed are extraordinarily high, it is a time more than ever that we need each other in and as a community. But we must follow the dictates of science and the brains God gave us. At this time, we still cannot gather safely in the traditional worship setting. To sing, to hug, to share our joys and concerns, to worship God inside our beloved sanctuary is simply not safe to do yet.

No UCC church in the Northern California/Nevada Conference has considered opening the doors yet on a Sunday morning. But that does not stop us from being church and from being Christians in the world we find ourselves living in. When it is medically safe to do so, cooler in temperature, and the air is consistently cleaner, we will figure out how to meet in the courtyard safely. When it comes time for Thanksgiving and Advent, we will think outside the box and do what we can to be a face-to-face community. But for now, all UCC churches have found ways to function online and LBC will continue doing the same.

Sincerely,  
Pastor Mary

#### **Greetings from Council Chair Allen Cook**

As this year continues to be a little crazy with the Covid-19 pandemic stretching out, wildfires throughout the state, and 100+ degree temperatures in late summer and early fall, we nevertheless have lots to be thankful for. Barbara and Mary continue to post the weekly Little Brown Church online worship email to keep ties with our church community while state restrictions prevent in-house church services. Little Brown Church will be there when we can reopen safely for services inside. With the majority of our attending congregation being well over 60 years old, we must be extra cautious. Until then, I, for one, appreciate the weekly online sermon.

Blessings to all,  
Allen Cook

#### **Helping with Wildfire Relief**

The 2020 California wildfire season has been awful. As of September 11, a total of 7,718 fires had burned 3,354,234 acres, more than 3 percent of the state's roughly 100 million acres of land, making 2020 the largest wildfire season recorded in California history, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

The Conference Disaster Response Committee has distributed each of the 27 Disaster Cleanup Buckets that had been prepared to assist those affected by the fires near Vacaville (13 buckets) and Grass Valley (14 buckets). If your congregation is interested in this mission project there are grant funds and instructions at: <https://app.smarterselect.com/programs/64870-United-Church-Of-Christ>.

Our Conference Disaster Committee approved \$500 toward gift cards to address short-term emergency needs of persons affected by the Berry Creek Fire. We anticipate that there will

continue to be short-term emergency needs and long-term rebuilding needs submitted to the conference office. Persons are encouraged to send donations to UCC Disaster Ministries or to the Northern California Nevada Conference Disaster Response Fund by donating to the conference and using the comment box to say it is for the wildfires.

Another way you can give (and the way I'll probably be giving) is to pay it forward by giving to One Great Hour of Sharing through your local church. That money goes 100 percent to things like this, and that offering was much smaller than usual this year because it came at the beginning of the pandemic when we were scrambling to meet online.

For me, the relief of knowing money was long-ago earmarked by God's Love for our wildfires has been immense. I'm so grateful to the people who gave to OGHS before they knew I needed it, and it will make me happy to give that same relief to someone in the future by giving to OGHS now.

The Rev. Dr. Ken Moore  
NCNC Conference Disaster Committee

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**LITTLE BROWN CHURCH OF SUNOL**

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