



ELK GROVE CONGREGATIONAL Newsletter



Volume 1, Issue 1

February 2014

Introducing Elk Grove Congregational Church's NEW Newsletter!

Welcome to the relaunch of Elk Grove Congregational Church's new newsletter! Many of you may remember when we used to publish a newsletter called the "Voice of the Valley." Since that newsletter has been out of print for years, a group of us thought it was high time to revive the concept, but with a style that fits our church today. Because everybody does not receive emails, a newsletter is an important tool to keep everyone up to date with

what's going on at our church and in our community.

As a result, we are looking for people who would like to contribute to the newsletter by writing articles! Topics could be long-term member profiles, new member introductions, upcoming community events, or highlights from our church's history. If being a contributing writer interests you, please contact the church office!

"What I See..." by Pastor James

What I see this month is a new level of commitment and engagement among all of the people in our congregation. We are becoming a "let's get it done" people. Preparations for a new preschool, planning for our renewal project, cooperation and sharing among all of our members, an increase in pledge amounts, people stepping up to lead in new ways, the addition of new members, and a stronger presence in our community are all signs of a renewed and stronger congregation.

This is great...yet, I wonder where this energy comes from? What is the impetus for all of this effort?

Of course, most pastors would like to think that when this happens, it is a result of their example (or preaching, or organizing skills). I doubt that is the case here. Is it a result of the work of our lay leaders, past and present? Perhaps. Is it the result of a concise, memorable, inclusive mission statement? No...we haven't reviewed that in a long time. So what, then?

This new spirit of cooperation and collaboration is what happens when a community gathers the energy of the young with the wisdom of their elders; the hopes

(continued on Page 2)

In this issue:

- "What I See..." by Pastor James, Page 1
- Name the Newsletter Contest, Page 2
- Church Revitalization Workshop, Page 2
- Moderator's Corner, Page 3
- Upcoming Events, Page 3

**No matter who you are
or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here!** 



Name the Newsletter Contest

How would you like to go down in history as the person who named our newly-relaunched newsletter? Well, **you** can! We are looking for a short, catchy name for this newsletter, and we are asking you to help. This newsletter is another tool to help our church leaders be as transparent as possible by communicating with everyone about upcoming events, council activity, notable church happenings, and so much more. The newsletter will be available via e-mail, but will also be mailed out as a hard copy to anyone who does not have an e-mail address.

Please submit your newsletter name suggestions via e-mail to rtinsman@gmail.com, mail them to the church office, or just drop them in the offering plate on Sunday. The winner will be announced in next month's issue!



"What I See..."

(continued from Page 1)

of our long-time members with the dreams of our newer members. These gifts, along with the Holy Spirit's guidance, are leading us to a renewal of vision and purpose that will take us to exciting places in our life together.

On Saturday, February 15th, we will meet as a congregation to share our hopes, dreams, and prayers for our church and its people. I sincerely hope each of you will attend and give freely of your ideas and wisdom as we begin a journey of renewal that will take us surely and confidently from our 90th year toward our 100th. I pray God's blessing on this and all that we do!

Pastor James

Council Happenings by Mary Kay Rose

Want to know what our council members have been up to? Here's what has been happening recently.

- Jim Addlesperger has been working hard on refurbishing the preschool rooms. The large room has been painted, and the floor is being prepared for carpet. He was able to obtain a carpet donation from Marsh's Carpet. There is enough carpet to cover the large preschool room in the Fellowship Hall as well as the Community Room. Members of the Preschool Task Force are working on a lease agreement, standardized questions to ask when interviewing potential candidates, and an information sheet about our church to give to the potential candidates. The Preschool Task Force would like

to have these items and the facility preparations completed prior to resuming the recruitment process.

- The Revitalization Task Force is off and running. A contract has been signed with Pastor Tracy Barnowe to shepherd us through this process. There will be a Congregational Revitalization Workshop on February 15. All members and friends of the congregation are encouraged to attend (see article below for details).
- The council will be forming a Budget Committee that will meet quarterly to manage the current budget and prepare a future budget for council approval at the end of the year. They are looking for people who have knowledge about budgets and accounting to serve on this committee.

Church Revitalization Workshop, February 15th

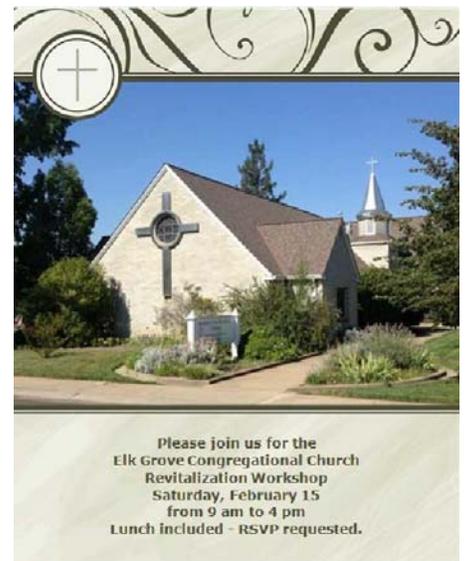
Did you get your invitation yet? By now, you should have been handed one at church, or one is in the mail to you this week. Please take a moment to RSVP to the member who gave it to you! Here are the details:

Join the most important meeting of 2014's revitalization drive. Everyone is invited - members and newcomers alike! It is time to let your voice be heard.

Throughout the day, we will explore ideas - maybe they are things we used to do, or maybe they are totally new to us, but the focus will be on growth: growing in membership and attendance, growing spiritually as a congregation, growing financially, and growing in outreach to Elk Grove.

If you've ever said, "Why don't we do this, or try that?" then this is the meeting for you to come to and

be heard! The session will help us create reachable goals for 2014 and beyond. At the same time, the results from the meeting will be part of our application for a \$20,000 UCC Revitalization Grant! This workshop is being led by Rev. Tracy Barnowe, and lunch will be provided free of charge.



Moderator's Corner by Dick Ober

The light has dawned on a new year. What kind of year is it going to be? Predictions abound for this unpredictable year. Who knows what will happen in our nation; in our world? Some of the possibilities are frightening. Some give hope for a brighter future. But who *knows* what will happen? Only God.

What kind of year will it be for you personally? It's really very much up to you, isn't it, whether you choose to live in the light of God, or fumble around in the darkness.

And what will this year be for our church?

Walking out of the garden, Adam said to Eve, "We are living in a time of transition." And that's where we are as a church. We are choosing to make this a year of transition; a year of revitalization. This is not some radical fabrication hatched up by two inexperienced upstart co-moderators. It is a process initiated by last year's Council, and begun under the able leadership and supervision of our predecessor, George Baladjay.

Whatever happens during this unpredictable year, we are not going to throw everything out and start over from scratch. We are going to build on all the great things about our church to soar into an even greater future.

As we move through this process, we will be looking for divine leadership. And an ongoing, unstoppable activity of God is to bring new dawns and new beginnings.

The word to us from Revelation 21:5 is, "Look, I am making all things new!" Note, God does not say, "I am making all new things." At the same time that newness is affirmed, there is an affirmation of continuity with what has been.

God is not going to make a new church to replace this church. God is going to make this a new church. Along the way, God will make all of us renewed and revitalized people.

As we move through this year – as I see new things happening – I expect I'll often be asking two questions: (1) Lord, what are you doing? and (2) How can I help? Often, we pray, "Lord, help me to (do whatever it is that I want or think is best.)" This year, I want to remember to pray, "How can I help in what you are doing, Lord?"

Remember the assurance we have from John 1:5: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out." *That* is the word of hope for us as we begin the year 2014.

Volunteer Spotlight

Jim Addlesperger (seen below scraping old mastic from the floor of the classroom) is Chair of our Trustees, and he spends countless hours at church working on projects to benefit us all. He has been preparing the preschool classrooms for rental, painting, ripping up carpet, fixing cupboards and cabinets, replacing electrical outlets, etc. In January, Jim's personal initiative resulted in a donation from Marsh's Carpet of 1,500 square feet of carpet tiles to the church to cover the floors! Much of his work goes on behind the scenes, such as replacing light fixtures, fixing the air conditioners, and fixing hardware (notice how you don't have to wrestle with the door to the fellowship hall anymore?) And he bears much of the incidental costs himself as his way of giving back to the God he loves. Let's shine the spotlight on Jim this month, and tell him how much we appreciate his work!



Upcoming Events

Please mark your calendars for the following February events.

Sunday, February 2 nd	Souper Bowl of Caring
Saturday, February 15 th	Revitalization Workshop, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Tuesday, February 18 th	Restaurant Fundraiser at Chili's
Saturday, February 22 nd	Men's Breakfast, 8 a.m. Work Day, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Friday, February 28 th	All Church Evening "Supper Club" Potluck, 6 p.m.



God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



ELK GROVE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
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9624 MELROSE AVENUE
ELK GROVE, CA 95624

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An Open and Affirming Congregation of the
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

9624 Melrose Avenue, Elk Grove, CA 95624

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Office phone: (916) 685-4825 and e-mail: egccucc@yahoo.com

Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Tuesday-Friday (please call ahead, just in case)

Sunday School: All ages, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Sunday Choir Practice: 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Sunday Worship: 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Wednesday Prayer Circle, Knitting Ministry: 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.