



# ELK GROVE CONGREGATIONAL Newsletter



Volume 1, Issue 2

March 2014

## “What I See...” by Pastor James

Why do people attend church? This is a question worth asking! If you ask two people this question, you'll probably get at least three answers. The Gallup poll asked people this same question in a survey, and here are their results:

1. **23%** - for spiritual growth and guidance
2. **20%** - keeps me grounded/guided
3. **15%** - it's my faith
4. **15%** - to worship God
5. **13%** - the fellowship of other members (the community)
6. **12%** - believe in God/religion
7. **12%** - brought up that way (tradition)

I'm pretty sure that for most of us, it's a combination of two or more of these reasons, or maybe all of them. I'm also sure that these reasons are not very good descriptions of the real motivations that bring us to church week after week.

Yet, when we talk about the life of church, it almost always falls into four categories, what I call the “Four Corners” of church: worship, learning, serving, and community. Almost everything we do in church touches on all four of these activities.

It's my guess that when we get tired or bored with our time at church, it's because somehow, one or more of these are absent. No matter what we're doing – laying carpet squares, cleaning the sanctuary, planning events, coming to worship, or attending Bible study – we can find worship, learning, serving, and community there when things are working well.

Our challenge, then, is to find ways to experience all “Four Corners” in everything that we do. If we can sense that cleaning the kitchen is worship, we will feel good about it. If we find fellowship in a meeting, we'll come back. If we find learning as we take donations to the food bank, we'll do it again.

Once we start meeting in our revitalization committees, it will be good to remember the “Four Corners,” and make sure they are designed into everything we do. Even our standing committees can bring the “Four Corners” to their meetings and activities. I invite you to look around the church next week and see if you're experiencing the worship, learning, serving, and community that feeds your spirit and compels you to

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## We put the Fun back in Fundraisers!

You are invited to enjoy a St. Patrick's Day Dinner Fundraiser benefitting Elk Grove Congregational Church, UCC on Monday, March 17<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. at the home of Roger Tinsman and Steven Hurley.

St. Patrick's Day commemorates Saint Patrick and the arrival of Christianity to Ireland. We'll celebrate with a typical Irish dinner, including dessert and (of course) green beer!

**RSVP**- Space is limited for this event, so please RSVP as soon as possible. Full payment is required to confirm. See Steven Hurley to sign up (or call him at 916-479-5522).

**Price** - \$30 per person.

**Prize** - For the person who wears the most green!

**Address** - 3601 East Island Court, Elk Grove, 95758



### "What I See..." (continued from Page 1)

come back. If so, let's talk about it...if not, let's talk about it! Either way, this is my prayer for all of you; that you will rest on the "Four Corners" in all that you do!

*Pastor James*

## Name This Newsletter!

We've received a lot of name suggestions for this newsletter! Many thanks for all of the creative ideas. With so many to choose from, we're asking you to vote now for your five favorite names. Once those votes are gathered, we'll have a run-off vote with the top 3 to get the winner. Here are all of the suggested names:

- Church Crier
- Church Family Forum
- Congregational Times
- Connecting With You
- Connections Between Us
- EGCC ~ The Good Word
- EGCC ~ Peace of Mind
- EGCC ~ Jesus Juice for the Soul
- EGCC Crier
- EGCCetera
- Get Connected
- GISS What? (*a play on "God Is Still Speaking"*)
- Glad Tidings

- Grace Notes Monthly
- I Witness News
- JESUS and His LOVE Newsletter
- Monthly Tidings
- New Life
- Sharing the Good News – one heart at a time
- Speaking of...
- Spiritual Connections
- Steeple and People
- Tell It To the World
- The Corner Church News
- The Elk Grove UCC Times
- The Good News
- Together We Are Speaking
- What's Up?

Please send an e-mail with your top five choices to Roger at [rogertinsman@gmail.com](mailto:rogertinsman@gmail.com). In next month's issue, you'll have the final three names to cast your final vote on our #1 choice! Thanks again for your help!

## Council Happenings

- The Council is testing the use of a "Consent Agenda" to maximize the effectiveness of the monthly meetings.
- Budget item allotments were verified for the Pastor's conferences and retreats needs of \$783 in 2014. They were found to be in place and available in the approved budget.
- The start of Children's Story Time has moved slightly based on parent feedback, and will no longer conflict with Choir participation. The children will now exit the sanctuary immediately after the Children's Moment.
- "Adult Sunday School" has changed the format to an Adult Discussion Group called "Coffee with Jesus," which is focused on Gospel readings as they apply to everyday life.
- Upcoming Christian Education events: Vacation Bible School on the Saturday of Easter Weekend (April 19), with a Fundraiser Breakfast (to purchase VBS kits) on Easter Sunday Morning, and an Easter Sunday Egg Hunt at 9 a.m.
- Deacons are looking for potential new deacons to add to their numbers. Please contact Pastor James or Roxanne Fisk if you are interested.
- An updated Church Directory has been approved, and is being compiled with current addresses.

## Co-Moderator's Corner by Roger Tinsman

When I thought about this year at EGCC, I had a lot of conflicting ideas that ranged anywhere from exciting to scary! But something has shifted inside of me. I'd say that the balance moved dramatically into the EXCITING category at our all-day workshop on Revitalization this February. Many who were there felt the same thing, I'm sure. Obstacles didn't melt away, but I started to see them in a new light.

It's true that we have a lot to do, but "Big Jobs" become manageable when we break them down into simple steps! A Bible verse that keeps coming back to me is Luke 11:9, where Jesus speaks to his followers: "Here's what I'm saying: Ask and you'll get; Seek and you'll find; Knock and the door will open. Don't bargain with God. Be

direct. Ask for what you need. This is not a cat-and-mouse, hide-and-seek game we're in..." (The Message)

God wants, more than any of us, for our church to thrive and prosper, and to grow in service to the community. So let's look at this year's revitalizing work through God's eyes and claim the positive outcome awaiting our efforts! Let's ask for what we need - let's pray! Pray that God gives us the good sense to follow the Holy Spirit's leading as we plan. Pray for exactly the tools we need. Pray for energy. Pray for enthusiasm. Pray for endurance, and pray believing in God's desire to answer. Because if God promises to "make all things new," then why don't we take God up on the offer and see what's out there?



## Revitalization 2014

A special thank you goes out to everyone who attended the *Revitalization Workshop*, and shared their ideas and suggestions for our future. In total, 33 people attended the meeting held on February 15<sup>th</sup>.

What's next? During the month of March, some people who have volunteered have been asked to do research on possible Community Outreach projects which were suggested. Then, March through May, there will be a series of shorter meetings with Pastor Tracy to finalize ideas and plans for our main growth areas: The Worship Service, Interpersonal Outreach, Spiritual Growth, Financial Growth, and Community Outreach. Several people have already volunteered to attend those meetings, but anyone who is interested and willing is invited to come. Stay tuned for more details.

Thank you again to all who could be there!

*The Revitalization Task Force - Steven Hurley, Mary Kay Rose, Dick Ober, Ely Palisoc, George Baladjay, Winnie Llamera, and Roger Tinsman!*

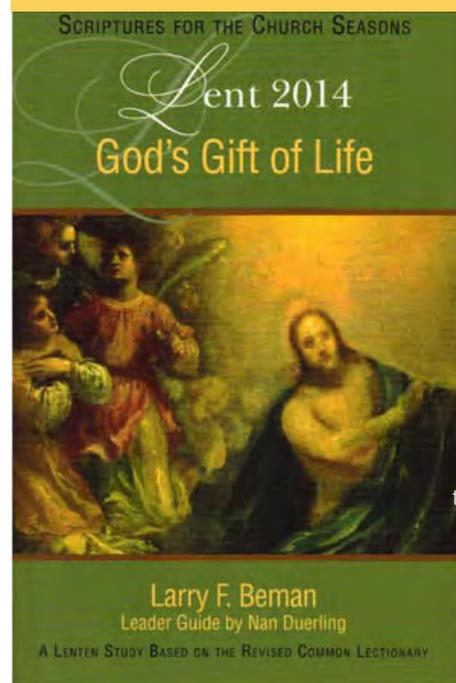


*Photograph of Pastor Tracy Barnowe leading the Revitalization Workshop in February.*



## Our New Lenten Study is Coming!

What better time to look into our hearts, our scriptures, and our stories than during Lent? And what better time to commit ourselves to our faith formation than during our time of revitalization? All of these things will come together in our new book study using the text "*God's Gift of Life*." Author Larry Beman brings a relaxed and invitational tone to the study of the Scriptures, and includes personal stories that will help us apply them to our daily lives in  
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## Volunteer Spotlight



Jennifer Bossi, our accompanist, has served this church for over 15 years. She was paid staff until last summer, when our renter (Montessori) left. Knowing our current financial difficulties, she has since then offered her services without pay. The joy her gift of music brings, the difference it makes to the worship service, and the giving spirit that she embodies have earned her this month's Volunteer Spotlight - thank you, Jennifer! By the way, when she isn't playing the piano, she keeps herself busy by working full-time as an Environmental Engineer for a large engineering firm, and enjoys spending any other time with her husband, Vince, and their two children.

## Changes On The Horizon For E.V.O.O.

by Mary Richardson Kosko

The Church Revitalization workshop, with its focus on four growth areas, has made the ministries of the E.V.O.O. (Evangelism, Outreach, Open and Affirming) committee clearer and better organized.

Evangelism, as Pastor Tracy explained it, is a part of all of the outreach we do by bringing the Gospel into the world in a real way, and inviting people to come be a part of our faith community. Evangelism does not need to be a separate ministry in this new understanding.

Outreach to the Community will be a real growth area for us in the coming year. We are already developing work and continuing ministries, such as LGBT/Pride involvement (headed by Steven Hurley), a social events committee

that both Steven Hurley and Roger Tinsman are involved in, and continuing both the Knitting and Fiber Arts Ministry and the Marshallese Ministry.

I am personally excited about the work we have committed to doing, and the emerging new leaders who will organize and lead. Thank you for your support of me in the past, and I pray that you will give your new leaders the same generosity of spirit you have shown me. I have often said I am a placeholder, and with the revitalization efforts, I can now joyfully turn my place over to others. Smooth transition of leadership is an art, and I pray that this is an opportunity for us to experience this.

*Blessings,*

*Mary*



## Our New Lenten Study is Coming!

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preparation for our celebration of Easter and Christ's resurrection.

We will meet each Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m., starting with a brief session after our Ash

Wednesday service on March 5<sup>th</sup>. The class will conclude on April 16<sup>th</sup>, the Wednesday before Easter. Please let Pastor James know if you would like to join in, and he'll be sure to get you a copy of the book!

## Upcoming Events

Please mark your calendars for the following March events.

Sunday, March 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Worship Committee meets after worship
Wednesday, March 5 <sup>th</sup>	Ash Wednesday Service, 7 p.m. with Lenten Study following
Saturday, March 8 <sup>th</sup>	Scrapbooking, 10 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Sunday, March 9 <sup>th</sup>	After-Worship Potluck Lunch
Wednesday, March 12 <sup>th</sup>	Lenten Study each Wednesday, 7 p.m., through April 9
Saturday, March 15 <sup>th</sup>	Men's Breakfast, 8 a.m. Revitalization Team Meetings, 9:30 a.m.
Sunday, March 16 <sup>th</sup>	Convalescent Worship, 1 to 3 p.m.
Monday, March 17 <sup>th</sup>	St. Patrick's Day Dinner Fundraiser, 6 p.m.
Friday, March 28 <sup>th</sup>	Supper Club, 6 p.m.
Saturday, March 29 <sup>th</sup>	Revitalization Team Meetings, 12:30 p.m.
Sunday, March 30 <sup>th</sup>	Deacons meet after worship



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





ELK GROVE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
9624 MELROSE AVENUE  
ELK GROVE, CA 95624



ELK GROVE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
*An Open and Affirming Congregation of the*  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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[www.elkgroveucc.org](http://www.elkgroveucc.org)

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