

God is still speaking.

CONGREGATIONAL TIMES

Newsletter of EGCCUCC



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Farewell and Thank You from the Marshallese

Almost 157 years ago, the Gospel of Jesus Christ reached the Marshall Islands through missionaries on a ship called *Morning Star*. And on December 8, 2004, Gospel Sunday, the Sacramento Marshallese Ministry was established on the street called *Morning Star Street*, adjacent to 47th Avenue, Sacramento. God has really worked in mysterious ways!

We have heard stories of how it happened. We know, for instance, that the first Christian missionaries sailed the *Morning Star* and arrived on Ebon, the most eastern atoll of Marshall Islands, on the 5th day of December, 1857. We know that these missionaries included two young American couples: The Rev. George Pierson and Mrs. Nancy Pierson, and the Rev. Edward Doane and Mrs. Sarah Doane.

Though there were sometimes fights and deaths that resulted from actions of a few cruel and undisciplined foreign visitors, when these missionaries stepped ashore on Ebon, they were welcomed with happy enthusiasm by the people and their Paramount Chief, named Kaiboke. We believe that God had prepared the Marshallese for the introduction of the Gospel a year earlier, when a large storm threw 93 Marshallese men, women, and children off course in their canoes,

landing them on the island of Kosrae, which the Gospel had reached earlier.

When the *Morning Star* left for Hawaii, leaving the missionaries were on their own, they were not alone! They were surrounded by a group of new friends, who would become the first Marshallese Christians!

Now we fast forward to 2000. Many Marshallese began migrating to United States to make a better living, and one of the places that most attracted them was Sacramento ("Sacramento" comes from the word *sacrament*, a traditional religious rite).

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Committee Spotlight

The P.R.C. – What is it?

Our Pastoral Relations Committee (P.R.C.) is a unique group of volunteers here at EGCC-UCC. It is the committee that ensures an open relationship between all members of our congregation and the Pastor, relative to our mutual ministries. The committee helps church members and the Pastor express expectations, hopes, ideas, and varying interpretations of our church's mission. The committee is always available to every member of the congregation, and offers a setting for any church member who wants to express their feelings regarding our life together.

Feel free to contact the committee at any time you wish. They are committed to ensuring the greatest good for our church. Members of the P.R.C. this year are: Mary Kay Hosmann-Rose, Rob Champion, Marlene Inman, and Doris Loughner.



Thank You for Promise Gifts

The Stewardship Committee wants to thank everyone who gave over and above their regular giving as a result of the Promise Letter of appeal sent out in August! An additional \$2,700 was received from you to help bring our General Fund back on track! It has had a great impact, and is very much appreciated!

Council Happenings

- The council is working on the development of a "Safe Church Policy". Volunteers are being sought to help write this policy. We have a start on this policy, with a policy against bullying in place. This month, we wrote a policy against carrying guns or weapons of any kind on the church grounds. This policy was established in response to an incident that took place at the church.
- Bids are being taken for a fence in the playground area at the back of the church. It was

decided that it was too large a task for an Eagle Scout project, but the Scouts have offered to help with the construction as a service project for the church.

- Barbara Russell has been working as volunteer church secretary for a year. The council approved a motion to reimburse Barbara for her mileage to and from the church on days that she works.
- A nomination committee will be appointed to recruit volunteers to fill positions on the council and committees.

Farewell and Thank You from the Marshallese (continued from Page 1)

In 2004, a handful of Marshallese friends joined together to worship, thankful for being able to live in this country. It was on this Gospel Sunday, that the first Pastor, Rev. Tullensa David, preached his first sermon to that small congregation in that home on Morning Star Street. It has been many years now since the beginning of this Marshallese congregation, and it continues to grow with God's blessings.

We are grateful to Elk Grove Congregational Church UCC for having had a wonderful relationship over the last two and a half years. We took communion and Easter celebrations together, we gave gifts of music and enthusiasm, and your generous gifts of school supplies and warm clothing were very much appreciated. We can never thank you enough for the wonderful times and fellowship we have shared together, learning much from you all as well as Pastor James and Mary.

I like to compare the life of our church with the life of the Israelites when they were on that long journey to the Promise Land. They carried their tents and the tabernacle as they moved from place to place. Since the beginning of the Sacramento Marshallese Ministry, our small group

has increased in numbers. We have moved from one place to another! And we are thankful and grateful to all the churches which let us use their sanctuaries.

Now we are grateful for Rev. Kenneth Iha, who worked so hard and diligently to make it possible for our congregation to move into an empty church property where we can continue to conduct our worship services in our own Marshallese language. A memorandum of understanding between the Northern California Nevada Conference and the Sacramento Marshallese Ministry was signed on October 15, 2014, which formalized our new home and wonderful place of worship – much closer to where most of the members live! We hope and pray that this is our Promised Land!

"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise; be thankful unto Him and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations." (Ps 100: 4,5)

Rev. Julian Riklon
Sacramento Marshallese Ministry-
UCC

Moderator's Corner by Dick Ober

SANCTUARY

Sanctuary.

What is it?

Sacred space
where the Divine Presence is
experienced and worshiped.

A safe place
in the midst of
and away from
the turmoil of the world.

A place to be
in the Presence
renewed to live
in the world.

Doesn't everybody know that?
Doesn't everybody understand
that is what a church is? Isn't that
all just assumed? By most of us,
yes. I have, throughout my life,
experienced the church to be a
place where I am safe, accepted,
affirmed, encouraged, supported.
Not everyone has. Some people
have never experienced the
church at all. Some have been
hurt by the church. Some in our
congregation have been hurt by
other churches in their past.

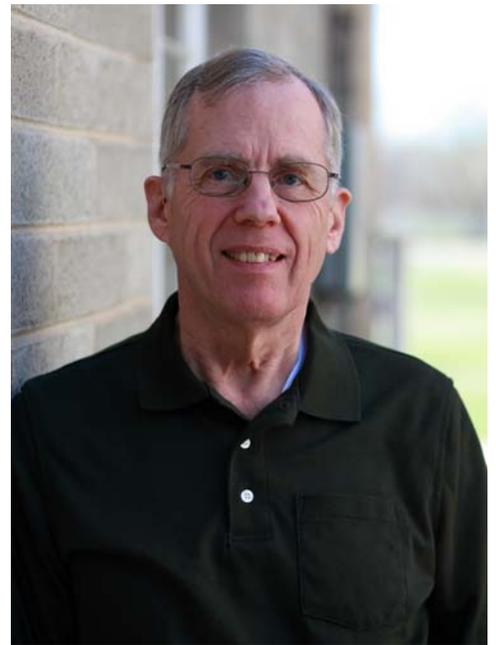
So we can't assume everyone
shares our assumptions about the
church—about *our* church.
Sometimes instead of assuming

something we need to say it out
loud. And we have said some
things out loud over the last few
years. We have said this is a
place where:

- Alcohol will not be served or consumed.
- People of different races, national backgrounds, sexual orientations, or anything else that some say sets them apart will be welcomed and affirmed.
- There will be no bullying.
- Weapons will not be carried or used.

There may be other things we
need to say out loud in order for
some people to feel this is a safe
place to be. At the October
Council meeting, we discussed
developing a comprehensive
Safe Church statement/policy.
Would you like to help develop
such a statement? Let me or
Roger know, so that we can put
your name on a list of people to
call together soon to get started.

We sing, "Lord, prepare me to
be...a living sanctuary for you."
That's what we want our church
to be: a living safe place to be in
the Divine Presence.



"What I See..." by Pastor James

*I was in the spirit on the Lord's day,
and I heard behind me a loud
voice like a trumpet saying, "Write
in a book what you see..."*
(Revelation 1:10-11)

You May Have Heard...

You may have heard that the
Marshallese congregation is
moving out. This is true! It's
certainly a wonderful thing for our
Marshallese friends to move into
the old Faith Community Church
building on Center Parkway in
South Sacramento. Here, they will
be able to store all of their supplies
and organize things just as they

like. It's within walking distance
from home for many of their
members, and it offers them an
opportunity to grow in ways they
couldn't here. We will certainly
miss their generous and loving
presence with us, and wish them
all God's blessings in this new
chapter of their congregation's
history.

You may have heard that a new
preschool is moving in. This is true!
While it's not new news, you can
see many projects being
accomplished to prepare for the
school's arrival. The old tire swing

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2015 Pledge Drive Results

The Stewardship Committee dedicated September as our 2015 Pledge Drive Month, and Pledge Cards were passed out on Sundays August 1st and September 7th, or mailed shortly after.

The results are in, and we received 24 pledges from families or individuals promising their support in 3 areas; Finance, Time & Talents, and Prayer.

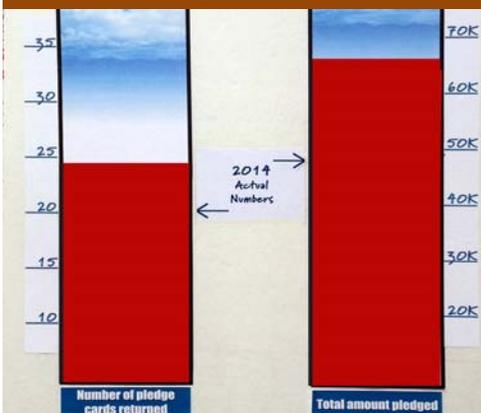
From the Finance perspective we received pledges totaling \$64,622, a 35% increase over last year! These financial pledges will help us in determining our budget for 2015.

Pledges of time and talent will let us know which committees or ministries can be strengthened in the New Year. And knowing you pledge to pray will help to sustain us through good or tough times.

Remember that a pledge is a personal commitment to our church. If at any point you feel you cannot keep that commitment, you only need to tell the Financial Secretary of the change.

Coincidentally, this same person (Rob Champion) is the only person who ever sees your financial pledge! Since the Stewardship Committee doesn't want anyone to fall through the cracks, in the month ahead we will follow up with members who did not turn in a pledge card to be sure that their wishes are not missed. Thank you all!

The Stewardship Committee



"What I See..." (continued from Page 3)

in the playground has been removed. New enclosures around the air conditioner units are being built. A new fence is being planned. The raised beds are being moved, refurbished and re-purposed. All of these things will be welcomed changes to the property so that Julie can set up a creative, welcoming, and safe playground for the children who will spend their days here. We certainly look forward to seeing this new venture thrive and grow, bringing even more vitality to our congregation in the process.

You may have heard that we have a new policy on firearms and weapons on our campus. This is true! After an unfortunate incident following church recently, I worked with our Church Council in collaboration with our insurance agent and the EGPD to determine the best way to address this. In order to create a safe workplace and a safe church, the Council voted to prohibit the use or possession of firearms and other kinds of weapons from the property. This is not a statement about private use of firearms in general, but an action to assure everyone's safety while at EGCC-UCC.

You may have heard that the Boy Scout Troop 288 is looking for another home. This is NOT true. There was some

miscommunication and misinformation going around for a bit, but please know that both the troop and the church have every intention on continuing our 40-year relationship and charter. There is a real possibility that the troop will be installing a storage shed behind the Fellowship Hall so that they can move their equipment and supplies into there, and out of the upstairs room. The Scoutmaster has expressed his gratitude for this meeting space, and is committed to an ever-improving relationship with us. We are grateful for all they do to make our facilities cleaner, more useable, and more efficient. We'll always "Be Prepared" to work with them on all aspects of our service to the community.

As we become more "re-vitalized" and have more and more activities happening, clear and accurate communication becomes increasingly important. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up." I encourage us all to be pro-active in seeking out and sharing the information that is helpful to our ministries, builds up our people, and reflects God's glory among us!

Blessed be,

Pastor James

Scrapbooking Fun Fundraiser

Barbara Russell, our volunteer Church Secretary, loves to help you put your memories on paper in creative ways! She provides beautiful supplies, in-depth knowledge, and un-intimidating inspiration. You bring personal photos and memorabilia and once there, enjoy snacks and beverages, games and prizes, and walk away with creations you'll cherish. It's even more fun when

you bring along a friend!

Meet in the Fellowship Hall on Saturday, November 8 from 10 a.m. on, the cost is \$20.00 per person to cover all supplies, food drink and prizes! Come one, come all for part of or all day and experience the fun of scrapbooking! RSVP to: Barbara Russell, 916-895-6718 or ladydragonfly3@yahoo.com.

Upcoming Events

Please mark your calendars for the following November events.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Sunday, November 2 nd | Daylight Savings Time Ends and Communion Sunday |
| Monday, November 3 rd | Fundraiser Dinner at <i>Rubio's</i> |
| Saturday, November 8 th | Scrapbooking, 10 a.m. (see article on page 4) |
| Sunday, November 9 th | Potluck Fellowship |
| Tuesday, November 11 th | Church Council, 7 p.m. |
| Saturday, November 15 th | Men's Breakfast, 8 a.m. |
| Sunday, November 16 th | Communion Sunday |
| Monday, November 17 th | Fundraiser Dinner at <i>B.J.'s Restaurant and Brewhouse</i> |
| Thursday, November 27 th | Thanksgiving Day |
| Saturday, November 29 th | Greening of the Sanctuary |

November Birthdays

November 1st – Luke Strom, November 2nd – Alissa Strom
November 11th – Giuliana Bossi, November 15th – Glenda Feraud,
November 20th – Mary Wenger, November 21st – Mary Lou Ober

November Anniversaries

November 16th – Pamela White and Jamie Ross

Save
the
Date



IN EVERY THING
give thanks
FOR THIS IS THE
WILL OF GOD
IN CHRIST JESUS
CONCERNING *you.*
1 THESS. 5:18

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

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

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.

Thursday Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.