



"To Discover and Grow in God's Grace and Love"

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March



CHRIST IS RISEN!
WORSHIP WITH US ON SUNDAY, APRIL 4TH

Easter Sunday

An outdoor bbq will follow worship:
"Burn the Mortgage, Not the Burgers!"

From March 7, 1958 to today—we are paying off the
mortgage! We thank God for providing!

STAFF

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ANAHEIM

Dr. Jim Schibsted—Senior Pastor
Rev. Emily Miller-Todd—Associate Pastor
Tyler Robinson—Music Director
Angella Kissoon—Accountant
Linda Freud—Missions
Mike Austin & Chuck Pennington—J.O.G (Just Ordinary Guys)
Sandya Costa—Montessori Director

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It was the Best of Times and Worst of Times – One Church's Response to COVID-19

By Dr. Jim Schibsted

**Recently printed in a Welsh Congregational publication.*

Charles Dickens in the Tale of Two Cities writes “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the best of times and worst of times for our church in Anaheim. Sheltering in place, the closure of businesses, not worshipping inside together in person, racial unrest and political division has surfaced in our nation. Responding to these challenges brings out the best in our congregation.

We began using ZOOM for our Bible Studies and meetings for the first time. Utilizing “Facebook Live” has expanded our worship service to faraway lands with great response. Our church was home to eight different congregations speaking six different languages. Since COVID-19 only three of those congregations are meeting outside on our beautiful campus - the rest are meeting online. At least thirty five weddings were postponed and the Montessori school closed for three months.

COVID-19 caused many in our area to lose their jobs. Last April, Samoan pastor Taisi Aumua approached me about starting a food giveaway program (Operation Bless) at our facilities. Our church leadership approved his proposal. It began with distributing food to four families giving each of them a week's worth of groceries.

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Connect

Sunday Morning Worship

10:30am, Sundays

We are holding worship outside in person and on Facebook Live.

Church Facebook Page

“Anaheim Chapel at First Congregational Church of Anaheim”

Here, you may access Sunday morning worship and our encouragement videos.

Encouragement for Today

Pastor Jim, Pastor Emily and friends are sharing short encouraging videos on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday each week through Facebook Live.

Operation Bless Food Distribution

Wednesday, March 10th and
Wednesday, March 24th from
4:30-5:30pm. Set up starts at
3:30pm

Small Group Study: The Book of James

This will be a two part series. The first part, 7 weeks, will go through March 24th. There is no cost—materials are printed for those participating. It is not too late to join!

Email us to join a group:
fccaooffice@gmail.com

Tuesdays: 6:30-7:45pm
or

Wednesdays: 7:00-8:15pm

Easter Sunday

April 4th—10:30am Worship
Worship with us social distanced in person or on Facebook Live. “Burn the Mortgage, Not the Burgers” BBQ to follow worship! Celebrate with us!

FCCA Updates

Valentine's Soup and Songs!

On Sunday, February 14th, Marlen Landin and her son Miles blessed the church with "Soup and Songs" following worship. We gathered under tents set up on the basketball court for homemade soup and for music. It was a healing time to be together and enjoy each other over warm food and good music.



Small groups are studying the book of James!

We are studying the book of James in a 2-part series. The first series will be 7 weeks long, going through March 24th. Groups are meeting via Zoom—join us from the comfort of your home! It is never too late to jump in! Email the church office at fccaoffice@gmail.com to sign up for a group. Join us on Tuesdays from 6:30-7:45pm or Wednesdays from 7:00-8:15pm.

Operation Bless Food Distribution

The food distribution continues every other Wednesday. Setup starts at 3:30pm and food is distributed between 4:30 and 5:30pm. Drive thru for some food!

- Wednesday, March 10th from 4:30-5:30pm
- Wednesday, March 24th from 4:30-5:30pm

Carl Stadick Passed Away on January 15th

Catherine Stadick (Raworth) called to let the church know that her husband, Carl Stadick, passed away on January 15th at Temecula Valley Hospital. He fought COVID-19 and eventually died from a heart attack after suffering from the virus. Catherine and Carl were married here at the church in 1965. Catherine and her parents, Don and June Raworth, attended the second church service that was held here in the Griffith House living room. Our heart and prayers are with the family.

Burn the Mortgage, Not the Burgers!

An Easter Celebration



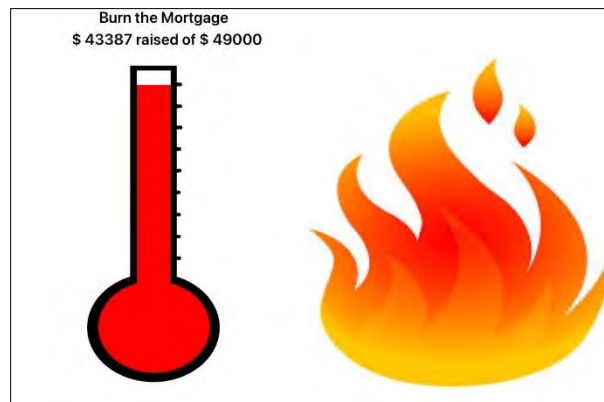
The balance left on the mortgage is currently: \$5,613.

Our goal is to pay off the mortgage by the time Eleanor Philipps turns 99 on April 10th! Eleanor has truly been a lifelong part of this church — she was at the very first church service held in the living room of the Historic Griffith House. We are playing the game NINE to pay off the mortgage by the time Eleanor turns 99. The game is to donate any amount with a “9” in it — 9 cents, 99 cents, \$9.99, \$999.

We are doing so well toward our goal, we are planning to have an outdoor BBQ after worship on Easter — Sunday, April 4th. Come join us on the lawn for a “Burn the Mortgage, Not the Burgers” celebration! We thank God for providing for us and pray for many more years striving to be the hands and feet of Christ for our neighbors and for each other.

If you would like to help us finish off the mortgage, you may give online, mark your offering on Sunday morning or mail in a check. Mark your donation “Burn the Mortgage.”

Give online at www.fcanaheim.org, or mail checks to:
515 N. State College Blvd.; Anaheim, CA 92806.



MISSION PRAYER CONCERNS

Linda Freud, Missions Chair

MYANMAR: Pastor Jim has been updating us on the political issue in Myanmar and encouraging us to pray for that country. Rev. Elvis Sa Do is the director of the Congregational Church of Myanmar which we support. This is a quote from Rev. Sa Do:

"We desperately need funds for relief efforts and ministries as well! We are already under Covid challenges and now due to this situation, no one can work for daily meal and for some of mission families and children, the church is now their safeguard, and they need more in our practical way of concern!"

Our Mission board approved an additional gift of \$500.00 and was informed that we can safely send it to them through the National Association.

TIJUANA: Continued prayers also for Panamerican Institute in Tijuana. This is the most recent update of their situation directly from Juana Santos:

"School continues with online classes Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM until 3:10 PM with two 30-minute recesses. There are more distractions at home than in a regular classroom; our teachers are challenged to find ways to keep students present in online classes as we adjust to a "new normal." Distractions include students who want to go back to sleep and students who pretend to have problems with their laptops, microphones, cameras or internet service. Some students are also distracted by sick relatives who are recuperating at home. A lot of our families have been affected by COVID-19 or have lost their jobs. We monitor students' needs during classes. At least once a month I contact the parents via WhatsApp text or phone call to find out their needs and to do our best to help them using donations given through the Adopt a Student Program. Needs usually include financial assistance for medications, internet service, food or school supplies."

PHILIPPINES (NACC) AND NIGERIA: Two other missions that our church has supported for many years, NACC Philippines (Symphony John Castillo) and Christ to the Villages Nigeria (Matthew Oladele) need our prayers for the personal well being of their directors and for the welfare of their missions. During this year of Covid-19, communication with these two missions has come to a standstill. We need to pray that God will sustain and protect them through these difficult times.

PHILIPPINES (MMP): Lastly we continue to pray for the well project (pictured right). Fruitful Life Learning Center with Mission Ministries Philippines began digging their well in February! We are so excited that we were able to provide funds for this project. They hit water 80 feet down. Last week, they continued to go deeper because the water is too thin at 80 feet. Please pray that this project continues to move forward smoothly so that Fruitful Life Learning Center, the church and the community will have a working well.



Highlight from Black History Month

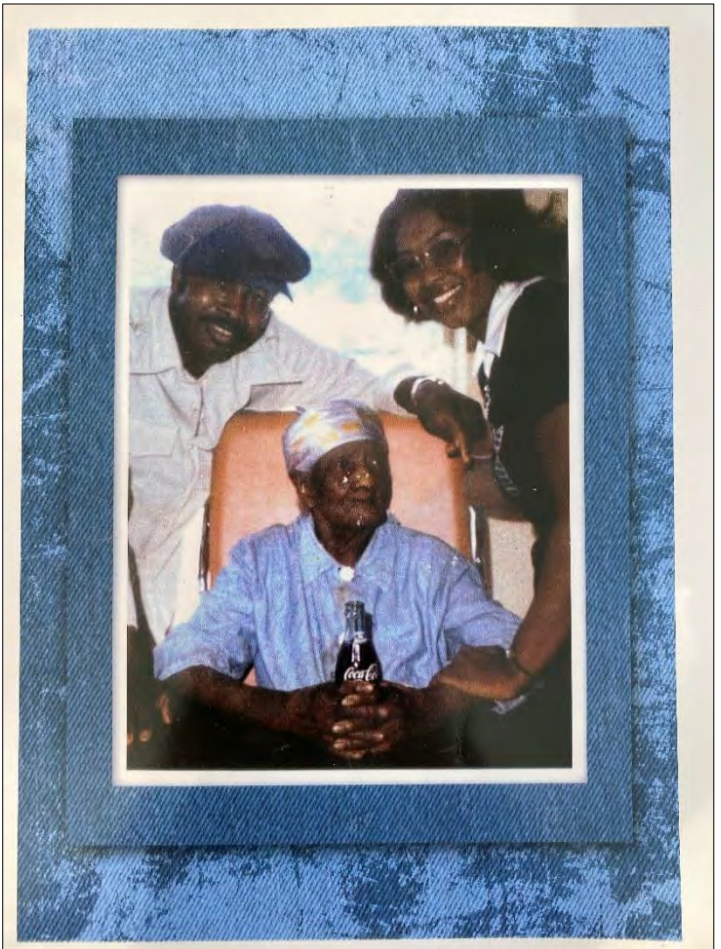
"Then and Now"

By Pastor Emily Miller-Todd and Robbie Robinson

I am grateful for the conversations that surrounded my discussion with Robbie Robinson about Black History Month last month. Robbie shared that it is important for people to know what others have been through. While individuals we highlighted last month in the enews are part of Black history, Robbie added, "I am also a part of Black history." "Knowing what others have been through is not only about race," he said. "It is about sharing stories that invite people to relate. Everybody has experiences in life that they need to overcome."

Robbie's great great great grandmother was still living when he married Marsha. He has a photo of himself and Marsha standing beside her while she is seated in her slave garb. When she was freed from slavery, she was given 5 acres of land and a mule. The Robinson family still owns the very same land she was given.

Robbie's grandfather owned the first Black-owned restaurant in Birmingham, Alabama and built the church where his family worshipped. He encouraged the family to build good marriages, to own a home and to get an education. His grandfather built a house called "Home House," where his children could live while they saved to buy their own home.



As a child in Alabama, Robbie remembers one day when his father came home soaking wet. He had to jump in the river on his way home to get away from Klansmen. Robbie remembers various injustices that surrounded him in his youth—for instance, he remembers when Black men were not allowed to wear white. Robbie's statement again comes to mind: "It is important for people to know what others have been through."

One of the verses I hear Robbie quote often comes from Ephesians 6:13... "Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand." It is a verse his family has lived, and it is a verse that can inspire us all.



March Birthdays

2-Mar Linda Freud

3-Mar Samuil Stanev

11-Mar Patty Todd

11-Mar Doug Ramsey

12-Mar Kevin Rapp

13-Mar Jim Weddell

24-Mar La Nona Hoke

25-Mar Rick Sudik

26-Mar Noel Hummel

28-Mar Rachel Haas

30-Mar Mariah Robinson

30-Mar Bev Aye

If you would like to have your birthday included in the CALL, please contact the church office at 714-776-0960 or fccaooffice@gmail.com.

“It was the Best of Times and Worst of Times” Continued...



As the need for food increased word went out for more volunteers and finances. There was a great response and now over four hundred people are given a week's worth of groceries every other Wednesday. Most of our food comes from a nearby food bank purchased at a discount. Food from a nearby bakery, people's gardens and nearby grocery chains have also donated to **Operation Bless**. It has been the best of times as our volunteers from our churches have partnered together.

Last summer we held a three-part series; “**Conversations on Race – A Multi-cultural Approach to Reconciliation**” with panel members from various cultural and racial backgrounds that was well received as we dialogued on these important subjects. Having a posture of listening brought new understanding and healing to issues that divide us.

These stressful times have been full of pain, but they also have been times of seeing people from various cultural backgrounds and ages serving together to impact our community with God's love. In those moments, it is the best of times.

Grace and peace,

Rev.Dr. Jim Schibsted

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ANAHEIM

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