

FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF
ANAHEIM



The Call

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

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April



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ANAHEIM

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Rev. Emily Raasch—Associate Pastor
Susan Fraker—Office Assistant
Tyler Robinson—Music Director
Angella Kissoon—Accountant
Linda Freud—Missions
Chuck Pennington—J.O.G (Just Ordinary Guys)
Sandy Costa—Montessori Director

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STAFF

"Grateful for the Past—Hopeful for the Future!"

“Changed by the Empty Tomb”

An Article by Pastor Emily

It was a joy to celebrate Holy Week and Easter together! Each year I look forward to our Maundy Thursday Service in the Griffith House Chapel. The service is a time to reflect on the Last Supper that Jesus had with his disciples. The chapel in the house is an intimate space that helps me imagine Jesus and the disciples gathering in the Upper Room for what would be his final teachings and words to them. Voices reverberate in the chapel as we sing, highlighting that our worship is not a solitary experience. On Maundy Thursday, we tend to offer communion in a different style than our usual. We have one loaf of bread and one cup—each person in turn invited to come forward, break off a piece of bread and dip it in the cup. I find the closer connection to each other before God precious on a day that remembers Jesus’ intimate connection with the disciples.

Easter morning may have been rainy, but it was a beautiful day to celebrate that Christ is risen. A choir sang during worship thanks to Tom Mena’s leadership. Raffia Thomas sang “O Happy Day,” backed by the choir. It was a joy-filled experience! Choir rehearsed during part of the breakfast, but I hear Penny put on another fabulous meal alongside many helpers. Flowers donated in memory of and in honor of loved ones decorated the sanctuary as well as Susan’s gorgeous flower cross. Kids enjoyed an Easter lesson and egg hunt in the Griffith House thanks to Cindy Hamann. As we sang the opening worship songs, I felt an overwhelming gratitude for Jesus’ life, for this community and for loved ones who have poured into my faith over the years. *(Continued on Page 7)*

Connect

Sunday Morning Worship

10:45am on Sundays

Sunday School

Sunday School is held every Sunday in the Griffith House during worship. Teachers & students are dismissed from worship to go to Sunday School just before the message.

Connect Online

Facebook: Anaheim Chapel at First Congregational Church of Anaheim.

YouTube: First Congregational Church of Anaheim

Instagram: FCCAnaheim

Website: www.fcca.org

JOG: Just Ordinary Guys

Monday, April 8th

12-1:30pm, McKenzie Hall

Guest Speaker: Kevin Nangin

\$12, First-time guests free

Small Group Dinner

Wednesday, April 10th

6:30pm at Super Mex

250 W Orangethorpe Ave,

Fullerton, CA 92832

Worship at

Meridian Senior Living

Wednesday, April 17th

2pm in the Activity Room

FCCA Updates & Events

Holy Week & Easter: It was a wonderful Holy Week and Easter with the church family—He is risen! We have MANY volunteers to thank. Thank you to Penny Schibsted for organizing Easter breakfast, Susan Fraker for preparing beautiful flowers (and so much more), Tom Mena for leading an Easter Choir, Cindy Hamann for teaching Sunday School and all who came to help with setup, serving and cleanup for the breakfast! We continue to thank Mike Villa-Real, Shalend Krishna and Jim Weddell for operating the sound board, online video stream and projector. Tyler Robinson spoils us each Sunday with incredible piano music, Raffia Thomas joined the choir for a wonderful rendition of “O Happy Day” and Craig Rowe continues to be our tried and true drummer—always willing and ready to help us out. Thank you all—we are blessed by you!



Small Group Updates: Leading up to Easter, small group participants studied “Jesus the Provocative Teacher” by Bill Donahue. Participants and spouses are invited to gather for dinner on Wednesday, April 10th at 6:30pm at Super Mex in Fullerton to celebrate the end of the study. In May, small group will resume to complete the study begun in the fall, “Old Testament Characters” by Peter Scazzero. This is not a cumulative study—all are welcome to join regardless of previous participation. The last three chapters of the study are: 1) Esther: Saying Yes to God, 2) David: Loving Your Enemy and 3) Moses: Seeking Justice. We will meet at 6:30pm in Pastor Jim’s office or via Zoom on the following Wednesdays in May: May 15th, May 22nd and May 29th. Email fccaoffice@gmail.com to join.

Women’s Lunch: Thank you to the wonderful cooks who provided for our meal last month! We had cheesy potato soup, homemade cornbread & honey butter, wonderful salads, pistachio pudding cake and cinnamon rolls. Linda Freud brought Easter cards for women to write in that were given to women living in Grandma's House of Hope along with an Easter basket. Carol Peterson prepared an interesting quiz for Women's History Month that went through women in the Bible. It was wonderful to have Bev back home in California and with us for lunch—WELCOME HOME, BEV! Our next women’s lunch will be held in May. Watch the enews and May CALL for more information.

JOG Luncheon

Featuring Guest Speaker, Kevin Nangin



Kevin is the pastor and founder of Gospel Light Baptist Church in Mission Viejo, CA. He has been married for eighteen years and has four children with twin girls on their way any day now.

Kevin was a very troubled child and especially as a teenager. He was involved in drugs, alcohol, and gangs at a very young age. His mom hired bounty hunters to kidnap him and take him to a Christian boarding school. It was there Kevin learned about Jesus and got saved.

Kevin has a 20-year insurance career and currently is an Aflac (The Duck) agent. Come join us for a very uplifting testimony.

When: Monday, April 8th, 2024

12:00pm – 1:30pm

Where: First Congregational Church of Anaheim

515 North State College Blvd Anaheim, Ca 92806

(Located one block south of La Palma on the west side of State College in the city of Anaheim)

Cost: \$12

Enjoy the music of singer and guitar player Bob Goodrich, as well as the humor from Normandy Veteran, Jack Gutman, and football coach, Tom Meiss. We will have an excellent meal planned with tables always filled with good fellowship.

Please RSVP via email at chuck@penningtons-inc.com or

call Chuck at 714-350-8983

JOG



Of Orange County
Just Ordinary Guys

Meeting the 2nd Monday of Every Month

Mission Corner

A Note from Linda Freud, Mission Chair:

I received the following newsletter from Andrew and Karen Bush on Holy Saturday. I wanted to include it in this month's Mission Corner because getting an Easter greeting right from Bethlehem is so very special. Also, the message of HOPE is exactly what we need at this time. Andrew references his other mission in the Philippines which is different from the mission we support, but I wouldn't be surprised if he and Chona (whom we support at Mission Ministries Philippines) know each other. Someday I'll remember to ask. May the Spirit of our Living Lord which we celebrated on Easter always remain in our hearts. HE is with us forever. Amen.



*Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. **Stop doubting and believe**" . . . Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; **blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**" John 20.27, 29*

Dear Friends

Easter greetings from Bethlehem! We live just a few kilometers from Jesus' empty tomb. Thank God that we can say with confidence, He is risen! He is risen indeed! The resurrection of Jesus in which his earthly body was transformed into a glorified one never to die again is the guarantee that his kingdom will prevail in this world.

Yes, though wars, famines, and disasters are wreaking untold suffering for millions in the world

today, we know that the day will come in which wars will cease, suffering will end. Thank God that the world as we know it will not go on forever.

We also thank God for signs of His coming kingdom in our day. For example, our Educational and Feeding Program of the Harvesters Christian Fellowship congregations which we established in 1988 began years ago in an old rusty former vegetable stand. It was launched to feed the most destitute in Manila. Today the program is conducted in two locations, in the inner-city neighborhood of Tondo and a relocation area for the homeless in Bulacan on the northern edge of the city.

This last week the children had their graduation for the school year. This event is so important for the parents and children. I've been in little shanties in which the only thing on the wall is a photograph of their child in their graduation robe! I thought you like to get a glimpse of the graduation in Bulacan.



Here in Bethlehem we see signs of God's kingdom in the steadfast faith of the Christians, especially in the endurance of the hope of Christians in Gaza, in the care for the poor, and so much more.

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who . . . believe!"

Let us stand in faith with these brothers and sisters in the Philippines and here in Israel and Palestine that the God's kingdom of peace will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. May the joy and peace of the Lord Jesus be yours this Easter.

In Christ's love, Andrew and Karen



April Birthdays

- 5-Apr David Haas
5-Apr Diana Zavala
6-Apr Dick Purvis
8-Apr Sean Sham
10-Apr Eleanor Phillips
12-Apr Mike Austin
13-Apr Jim Taylor
16-Apr Rev. Sandy Freud
17-Apr Zenaida Reyes
20-Apr Leslie Aronis
29-Apr Jim Frannea
30-Apr Linda Taylor

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

(Pastor's Article Continued)

In the days following Easter, I caught myself reflecting on how it changes my life to believe that Jesus is risen. First of all, it changes my understanding of God. I do not serve a distant God through a set of rules and practices that seek approval. I respond with love to God who loved me first and continues to offer me living relationship. I am forgiven for my worst and loved into my best. I am championed by the Holy Spirit who is for abundant life for my soul and works to bring about a new self, my fullest self.

The love that God offers each of us changes the love we offer the world. Jesus did not come to judge the world but to save it. He reminds us that we are not called to judge the world, either. Jesus' final command before his death was that we would love one another—that is how the world will know that we are His disciples, if we have love for one another. We are asked to offer the kind of love Jesus has offered. Jesus kneels down to wash the feet of each disciple at the Last Supper, and he asks us to go and do likewise.

This kind of love and service sounds beautiful in theory...and then we step back into the messy realities of relationship. Quickly, we realize that to love *all* of our neighbors with the love of Christ may be our hardest and most meaningful calling in life. It's not always clear what love entails as we navigate difficult nuances and boundaries. Christian author, Bob Goff, shared the following just after Easter: "*The way we love the people in our lives who are difficult is the best evidence of whether the tomb was really empty.*" He added, "*Love difficult people; you're one of them.*" I laughed out loud as his comment hit home. His words have been rolling around in my head ever since. Maybe his words will give someone else out there food for thought as well. Grace and Peace, Pastor Emily

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