

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ANAHEIM
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The Call

First Congregational Church of Anaheim

“To Discover and Grow in God’s Grace and Love”

Vol. 378 No. 12 Published Monthly December 1, 2025



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- Christmas Caroling
- Operation Bless Food Distribution
- Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



“Grateful for the past — Hopeful for the future”

A Letter from Pastor Emily



This past month offered us beautiful reminders of the gift it is to share a campus with other congregations. Our Thanksgiving Combined Service on November 23rd brought together Unlimited Church, United New Life Church, El Buen Samaritano, Oasis Christian Church, and our own FCCA family. Each church helped lead worship, and Pastor Juan Carlos Facio and his son James graciously translated the service. TrinityMercy Aumua and Eseneiaso Lole blessed us with an Island Praise Dance that set a beautiful worship tone. I felt contagious joy rising as we worshiped side by side.

Following worship, we enjoyed a feast in the hall and out on the back 40—complete with a bounce house for the kids. We are grateful for Penny Schibsted who organized the feast and for the MANY volunteers from all churches who made the day a true celebration. Alongside traditional Thanksgiving dishes, individuals contributed delicious homemade foods that reflected the rich diversity of our campus. It truly was a privilege to be together.

November brought rich moments of fellowship through our smaller gatherings. JOG: Just Ordinary Guys welcomed Pastor Juan Lopez from Unlimited Church. Women gathered at Gini Castellano’s home for a warm and meaningful luncheon. Finally, a small group completed *Tame Your Thoughts* by Max Lucado. (Cont. Pg. 7)

Connect

Sunday Morning Worship
Sunday, 10:45 a.m.

Sunday School for Kids
Children are welcome to leave with the teachers before the sermon, and meet in the first room of the Griffith House. .

Staff
Dr. Jim Schibsted — Senior Pastor
Rev. Emily Raasch — Assoc. Pastor
Susan Fraker — Office Assistant
Tyler Robinson — Music Director
Angella Kissoon — Accountant
Linda Freud — Missions
Chuck Pennington — J.O.G.
Sandy Costa — Montessori Dir.

Other Ways to Connect
Facebook: Anaheim Chapel
at First Congregational Church
of Anaheim.

YouTube:
First Congregational
Church of Anaheim

Instagram: FCCAnaheim

Website: www.fcca.org

FCCA email:
fccaoffice@gmail.com

FCCA Office Phone:
714-776-0960

JOG: Just Ordinary Guys
December 8th, 2025
12-1:30 p.m.. (See page 5)

Food Distribution
Led by Unlimited Church
December 10, 2025
4:00-7:30 p.m.

Festival of Carols
Sunday, December 14th, 2025
10:45 a.m. Worship
Come enjoy a service full of
music! Lunch to follow.

Christmas Caroling
Sunday, December 14th, 2025
Contact fccaoffice@gmail.com
for more information.

Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service
Wednesday, December 24th
7:00 p.m.

Pastor’s Letter Continued... (Cont. from page 2)

Now we turn to Advent, the season of anticipation—celebrating Christ’s birth as we also watch and wait for His return. Advent began November 30th, and this year our Sunday School children will light the Advent wreath each Sunday. We are especially excited for our Festival of Carols on Sunday, December 14th. Joe Cristina is arranging the music, and we look forward to hearing Sinai Rodriguez sing, Tyler Robinson share his extraordinary piano gifts, and I will join on violin. We also plan to have another guest musician. After worship we will have a church lunch (rumor has it we will have pizza), and all who wish to go caroling are invited to join as we carpool to local church members’ homes. Please call the church office if you’d like to participate.

This month also brings opportunities to serve. Unlimited Church will host a food distribution on Wednesday, December 10 from 4–7:30pm. Volunteers are needed for setup, distribution, and cleanup. All are welcome to receive food on a first-come, first-served basis.

Finally, we look forward to our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on Wednesday, December 24th at 7pm—a cherished tradition that helps us enter Christmas with hearts centered on the true reason for the season. Together we will sing beloved carols, light the Christ candle, hear a message of hope, and close the night in candlelight, singing “Silent Night.” We hope to see you often in this beautiful season of worship, fellowship, and joyful expectation. —Pastor Emily

December Birthdays

• 1-Dec	Joshua Williams	• 21-Dec	Cooper Hoke
• 4-Dec	Maria Doyle	• 23-Dec	Vito Di Camillo
• 5-Dec	Robert Sayers	• 23-Dec	Evelyn Hoke
• 14-Dec	David Hoke	• 25-Dec	Jesus Christ*
• 17-Dec	Ryan Rolnicki	• 27-Dec	Craig Rowe
• 19-Dec	Natalie Garis	• 27-Dec	Cindy Ramsey
• 20-Dec	Maria Caicedo	• 28-Dec	Stephana Williams
• 21-Dec	Bruce Edwards		

FCCA Calendar & Updates

Thanksgiving Worship & Feast

On Sunday, November 23rd we had a wonderful time of worship alongside four churches that share the campus with us each week: Unlimited Church, El Buen Samaritano, Oasis Christian Church and United New Life Christian Church. It was moving to worship through songs led by the various churches and to have a special Island Praise Dance shared by TrinityMercy Aumua and Eseneiaso Lole.

Operation Bless Food Distribution (Led by Unlimited Church)

Wednesday, December 10th from 4:00-7:30 p.m.

All are welcome to drive thru for free food.

Volunteers Needed: Contact the church office if you would like to help with setup, distribution or cleanup.

Festival of Carols

Sunday, December 14th

10:45 a.m. Worship, Lunch to Follow

Join us for a morning filled with Christmas worship! Joe Cristina is arranging special Christmas music and will lead worship alongside Sinai Rodriguez (voice), Tyler Robinson (piano), Pastor Emily Raasch (violin), and friends. After service, we will have lunch for all in the library (rumor has it we may have pizza).

Christmas Caroling

Sunday, December 14th; Following Lunch

Following the all-church lunch on Sunday, December 14th, anyone who would like to go Christmas caroling will carpool to local church members' homes. If you would like to participate, please contact the church office.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Wednesday, December 24th; 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

During our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service we light the center Christ Candle of the Advent Wreath, hear a sermon meditation and sing traditional Christmas carols. The service closes as we pass the light of the Christ candle around the congregation and sing "Silent Night" together.



FREE OPERATION BLESS
FOOD DISTRIBUTION
WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 10, 2025
4:00pm-7:30pm
Drive Thru or Pick Up
Location: First Congregational Church of Anaheim
515 N. State College Ave., Anaheim, CA 92806
AVAILABLE FOR ORANGE COUNTY RESIDENTS
FIRST COME FIRST SERVED WHILE SUPPLIES LAST
For More Information Call: 714-986-4206 www.unlimitedchurch.org
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Mission Corner

Each Christmas season we support the Panamerican Institute, a mission school in Tijuana that serves low-income students. The students at the school are roughly equivalent to middle school age in the United States. Christmas break can be hard on families, so each year the school provides families with a Christmas Food Basket thanks to donations from churches like ours. They often have stuffed animals for younger siblings to choose from, which is a fun treat when families come to pick up their food. If you would like to give, please mark your offering online or in person "PAI Christmas Food Basket."

See page 4 for a recent update from the school that was in a newsletter from our national association of churches (NACCC). (Cont. on Page 4)



PANAMERICAN INSTITUTE
SCHOOL FOUNDED BY THE LATE REV. EDGAR S. WELTY IN 1962
Christmas 2025
Christmas Food Baskets
Continuing our tradition for the 54th consecutive year.
Support a family during the Holidays for **\$60 per basket.**
Each basket contains:
Pinto beans, rice, wheat flour, sugar, salt, canned tuna and vegetables, margarine, cereal, cooking oil, tomato sauce, cookies, pastas, gelatin, jelly, toilet paper, soap, tooth brushes and paste.
Send your donation designated to PAI to NACCC/MOMC P. O. BOX 288 OAK CREEK, WI 53154
Laura Ramirez, President
Laura.Ramirez@paischool.org
PanamericanInstitute@hotmail.com

In Loving Memory of Linda Taylor

Linda Taylor

April 30, 1941—September 22, 2025

Linda Taylor, Jim Taylor's wife, passed on September 22nd after struggling with health issues for a long time. Linda was a beloved wife and mother to their children and to the many foster children they cared for over the years. Jim and Linda were married for 56 years. Linda was known for her sense of humor and was joking around with the nurses caring for her even in her final days.

Jim Taylor and his family gathered with a few close friends on Saturday, September 25th at Jim's home to celebrate Linda's life with a taco feast.



Below is a flyer about the Panamerican Institute that was included in a recent newsletter from the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC).

Panamerican Institute

NACCC Mission Partner Spotlight

November 2025

Visit www.paischool.org to learn more!



The Panamerican Institute is a fully-accredited technical secondary school that provides scholarship-supported education.



The Panamerican Institutes prepares students to enter the workforce in Mexico with integrity, purpose, and a foundation rooted in Christian values.



Through donor contributions, they are able to offer top-notch educational opportunities as well as healthcare and nutritional support.



Their Christmas Basket Program shares the joy and spirit of Christ by supporting families in need during the holiday season.

JOG: Just Ordinary Guys (& Gals)

Meet Ernie Rodriguez



Ernie was born in Mexico, and when he was 3 the family moved to Monterrey Nuevo Leon, 60 miles south of McAllen, Texas. He had his first church experience there and remembers walking with his grandma to church. After asking the priest a question, he was yelled at and lost interest in continuing at that time.

In 1960, the family moved to the suburbs of Chicago. There, Ernie started to go to church more often. It was not about faith for him, yet. It was because the girls were there, but God

started to work on his heart.

This began Ernie’s journey with God. It was off and on for most of his life. Every time he forgot about God, he would hear a small voice in his head ask, “Are you sure you want to do that?” “Are you sure you want to be here?” To which Ernie would reply, “Aw come on, it’s fun.” Ernie would reluctantly obey and often discovered there was a reason God led him out of those situations. His journey was like this most of his life.

One day, after his second divorce, Ernie went outside and looked at the stars. He remembered Matthew 7:7—to ask and it will be given to you. So he prayed, “God, I have been married twice and they failed. Now I’m asking for the woman I am supposed to be with.” He left it at that.

God started working quietly in the background of Ernie’s life, preparing him for his future. Come hear the rest of the story—how God has transformed Ernie, provided for him and continued to be an integral part of his life!

Monday, December 8th from 12:00—1:30 p.m.

Location: McKenzie Hall

Cost: \$12

First-time Visitors: Free