



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

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# January



Happy New Year,  
FCCA!

## STAFF

### FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ANAHEIM

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Sandya Costa—Montessori Director

### IN THIS ISSUE

CALL Article	2
January Calendar	2
FCCA News	3
JOG Flyer	4
Missions' Corner	5
Birthdays	7

## Watching for Signs of God

This Christmas season, my husband and I had the privilege of witnessing a Holy moment. We drove to Tijuana to help the staff of the Panamerican Institute with their annual Christmas food basket giveaway. Students are typically fed during the school day, so the Christmas break can be particularly hard on families. Laura Ramirez (PAI President) had told me about a new family at the school. They fled their home for their safety and arrived in Tijuana with only the clothes on their back. The school welcomed the children and offered financial support for their uniforms.

When the family (not pictured) arrived to pick up their Christmas food basket, I did not know that they were the same family Laura had told me about. On their way out the door, Laura stopped them and quietly ex-



plained a separate gift for them from a sponsor. The sponsor had given \$20 per child so that they could have something for Christmas. My husband and I could not understand what was being said in Spanish, but we could feel the emotion in the room. The mother and a couple of the oldest children were overcome with emotion, and tears welled in their eyes. I suddenly realized who the family may be. Ricky and I were both in tears as we experienced the tangible gratitude and the love in the room. I thought, this is what it feels like when God's love is shared in the world. (Continued on Page 7)

## Connect

### Sunday Morning Worship

*10:45am on Sundays*

Join us in person or online! You may join worship live at 10:45am on Facebook. Worship is also uploaded to our YouTube channel for you to watch during the week.

### Connect Online

**Facebook:** Anaheim Chapel at First Congregational Church of Anaheim.

**YouTube:** First Congregational Church of Anaheim

**Instagram:** FCCAnaheim

**Website:** [www.fccanaheim.org](http://www.fccanaheim.org)

### NorthEast of the Well

*Every Monday, 6-8pm*

**Dinner:** 6pm, Hall

**Worship:** 6:45pm, Sanctuary

### JOG: Just Ordinary Guys

*Monday, January 9th*

12:00-1:30pm, \$12 for lunch  
Featured Speaker: Ray Benito

### Women's Lunch

*Monday, January 16th*

11:30-1:00pm in the Library  
*\*We postponed our December lunch due to sickness and extending circumstances. We look forward to ringing in the New Year together instead!*

# FCCA News & Events

**Christmas at FCCA:** Thank you to all who made our Christmas season special!

We kicked off the season with a Christmas family movie night in the hall. It was a privilege to serve families in our congregation and from the Montessori Academy of Anaheim. We enjoyed a gorgeous sanctuary thanks to Susan Fraker, Linda Freud, Jim Taylor, and Jim Weddell. On

December 11<sup>th</sup>, Isy Martin, Jr. and Raffia Thomas led us into the spirit of Christmas with a service filled with carols. The Montessori Academy of Anaheim held a precious Christmas program in which the kindergarten class playfully argued about whether Christmas is about presents or about Jesus' birth. As a church family, we celebrated and reflected on Jesus' birth at our annual



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service and again on Christmas morning. We were grateful to look beyond ourselves this season, thanks to your generosity. The church was able to cover 4-5 Christmas food baskets for families at the Panamerican Institute in Tijuana, and members of the church contributed presents for individuals living at Grandma's House of Hope. Thank you, all, for loving Jesus and for loving your neighbors!

**New Members Class:** It has been a pleasure to connect with new individuals!

If you are interested in joining the church, we will have a New Members Class coming up in the next month or so. Contact the church office if you would like to participate. The class will be an opportunity to learn about the history of Congregational churches and to meet others who are also new to the church. We will welcome new members into the church family during a Sunday morning worship following the class.

# JOG Luncheon

Featuring Guest Speaker, Ray Benito



A native of the Philippines, Ray's family moved to the United States in 1986. Ray is a decorated twenty-four year veteran of the United States Navy. He served tours in Desert Storm, Desert Shield, and Iraqi Freedom. He moved to South Orange County in 1998. He has a master's degree in business administration. Ray is married and has seven children. He is the past president of the Mission Viejo chapter for the Christian Business Partners, Inc. For nine years he engaged in land investment and recently retired to devote his energies to full-time ministries. He is still an active investor in properties, yet his love for Christ directed him to become an ordained minister.

**When: Monday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
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](mailto:chuck@penningtons-inc.com) or Call Chuck at 714-350-8983 or Mike Austin at 714-425-2649



Of Orange County  
Just Ordinary Guys  
Meeting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of Every Month

## Missions' Corner

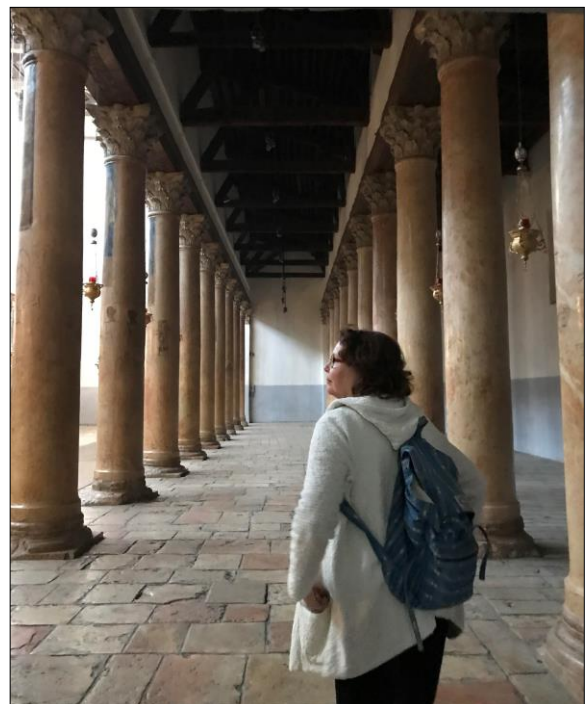


*Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. Luke 2:11-12*

### Dear Friends –

What great news for a longing world -- the birth of the Prince of Peace! The angels appeared to shepherds while watching their flocks in fields like these on the outskirts of Bethlehem. The heavenly messengers declared, Peace! That's what the world needed; that's what every heart needs today.

The Church of the Nativity was constructed under the direction of Helena, the mother of the Roman emperor Constantine in the fourth century (right with Karen). The large pillars convey the power of Rome and contrast with the humble space of Jesus' birth located in a grotto under the main level.



*(Continued on Next Page)*

*(Missions' Corner Continued...)*

We are trying to embody the peace of Christ in the East Jerusalem International Church by welcoming people of many nations. Two weeks ago, Christians from Estonia joined us. It is a blessing to see such diverse members of the Body of Christ gather in fellowship. Last Sunday two couples who are employed by the US Embassy in Jerusalem and young peace workers from Germany worshipped with the EJIC.

As we conclude this year, we are grateful for many blessings – for new international friends, for opportunities to relate in peace across religious barriers with Jewish and Muslim friends, for the joy of walking through the countryside around Bethlehem, and for the rebirth of the East Jerusalem International Church! We pray for the Lord's help and protection to the most vulnerable in the world.

**Karen and I pray that Christ Jesus will fill you with joy and peace this Christmas season! Thank you for helping us announce the good news of Jesus in Jerusalem!**

**Andrew and Karen**

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**Andrew and Karen Bush have served internationally for 35 years. They are career missionaries, serving the church in the Philippines, the United States, and Israel/Palestine. They seek to make the love of Christ Jesus known through servanthood in the way of the cross. Matthew 16.24**



## January Birthdays

- 1-Jan Salend Krishna  
3-Jan Rachel Rolnicki  
5-Jan Noah Torres  
11-Jan Greg Ramsay  
18-Jan Connie Phillips  
21-Jan Dennis Johnson  
24-Jan Jeffrey Williams  
25-Jan Andrew Ramsay  
27-Jan Kim Collier

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](mailto:fccoffice@gmail.com).

*(Watching for Signs of God, Continued...)*

The 12 days of Christmas follow December 25th and lead us to Epiphany on January 6th, when we remember the wise men who followed a star in order to meet the Messiah, the king of the Jews. They were watching for signs of God in the world around them. Their interior longing to encounter God led them to watch for signs of God and to respond to those signs with action. They made a long commute by camel from the East to Jerusalem in hopes of meeting Jesus. They had no guarantees, but they moved forward in faith.

Is there a longing in our hearts to know God more? I believe that stirring from within is in itself a gift from God as God calls us to himself. We were designed for connection with each other and with our Maker. That longing leads us to greater attention. How have you noticed God's love reaching out to you through signs in the world? Are there ways that God is calling you to move forward in faith as a response to what you have observed or experienced? We may not have camels, but interior longing, watchfulness and faith continue to call us, like the wise men, into the unknown as we notice the signs and the leading of God.

My prayer for our church this New Year is that we would continue to have a deep longing to notice God, to partner with God. I pray that we would be watchful and that God would give us signs of His calling. May we have courageous faith like the wise men that is willing to respond without guarantees.

On behalf of the Church Council and Staff, the First Congregational Church of Anaheim wishes you a wonderful New Year filled with signs of God.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Emily Raasch

## FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ANAHEIM

515 N State College Blvd. Anaheim, CA 92806  
phone 714.776.0960; email [fccaooffice@gmail.com](mailto:fccaooffice@gmail.com)  
Check us out on the web at [www.fccanaheim.org](http://www.fccanaheim.org)

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Member: Cal-West Association – Since 1964

Please consider sponsoring an issue of “The Call”.  
Your donation of \$50 can help offset the cost.  
Please contact the Church Office for details at 714. 776.0960