



HILLCREST
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2020

WWW.HILLCRESTUCC.ORG

SERIOUS BUT NOT SOLEMN

As I write we have completed our “Spiritual Connections: With Laughter” worship service here at Hillcrest on Sunday January 26. Many of you commented to me how you “enjoyed” and “liked” the service and how you “really got something out of it.” Some of you pointed to me and said, “you had me fooled” for a moment or two with some of the pre-planned mix-ups that happened during the service.

What Jesus did is no joke. And all that we do together to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ and of God’s love in and for the world is certainly no joke. It’s serious business. And we are serious about it. But we’re not solemn.

When I googled “solemn” just now, the first things that came up were “formal” and “dignified.” Hmm. I know I like to think of Hillcrest as “dignified”; I hope others see us as dignified.

I wonder what Jesus would have thought about being “solemn” and, as google suggests, “dignified” and “formal”? This is the same Jesus who according to our lesson for this past “Laughter” Sunday announced his ministry with these very serious words, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

Well, for anybody who was anybody at that that time, those words would have come across as undignified, and certainly not formal. Formally, there was only one kingdom or empire around, and that was Rome. No self-respecting spiritual movement or religion would use “kingdom” or “empire” to define or describe itself. That was Rome’s purview, thank you very much.

And as for being dignified? How *could* you dignify a spiritual movement with such an earthly title—“kingdom” or “empire”? And how could you expect to be considered with dignity by any of the political authorities or religious authorities who were careful not to use such language for religion or spirituality for all the obvious reasons?

Jesus was serious. Perhaps it was a sense of humor that led him to present his ministry in this way. Perhaps it was something far deeper than humor. Either way, one can’t respond to Jesus’ call—even now—without recognizing both how serious it is for life, whole life in our world *and* without recognizing how out of step it is with “common sense.” No wonder Jesus’ first word—even before he gets to the whole “kingdom” thing—is “repent”; that is, “think different.”

Sisters and brothers, our life together, our mission together, and our work *and* play together as Hillcrest is very serious business. And because we take it so seriously, we also have fun with it, and with each other. For God’s sake. And for the world’s. And for ours. AMEN.

Blessings,

Rev. Fred

Hillcrest Congregational Church NEWS February 2020



February 2020

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|--|---|-----------|---|---|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 9:30 am Christian Ed. 10:30 am Worship Service 11:45 Fellowship 4:00 pm Korean Church | 3 8:00-5:00pm AARP Tax Aid | 4 7:00 pm Trustees (16) | 5 | 6 | 7 6:00 pm Family Movie Night Harriette Tubman (FH) | 8 |
| 9 9:30 am Christian Ed. 10:30 am Worship Service 11:45 Emeritus Reception 4:00 pm Korean | 10 8:00-5:00pm AARP Tax Aid | 11 9:00 Healing Touch (ME) 7:00 pm Council (16) | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 9:30 am Christian Ed. 10:30 am Worship Service 11:45 Fellowship 4:00 pm Korean Church | 17 8:00-5:00pm AARP Tax Aid Presidents Day Office/ Food & Clothing Room Closed | 18 2:00 pm Gifts and Memorials (16) | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 3:00pm -6:00pm Organ Concert Sanctuary |
| 23 9:30 am Christian Ed. 10:30 am Worship Service 11:45 Fellowship 4:00 pm Korean Church | 24 8:00-5:00pm AARP Tax Aid | 25 9:00 Healing Touch (ME) | 26 Ash Wednesday Service 12:00pm | 27 | 28 | 29 |

Notes from our Moderator

On Sunday January 12, 2020, we had Mr. Jim Phalon, of the Contra Costa Fire Prevention Department give a presentation on fire prevention, evacuation and preparedness.

Wow, did we learn a lot; we learned how to make our homes safer by having smoke/radon detectors, safe kitchen cooking procedures and use fire extinguishers. We also learned how to prepare a plan for evacuation.

We received many positive comments on this presentation, and hope to have more informative events in the future.

Rico Duran



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New Logo for a New Decade

The Communications and Promotions Committee is pleased to introduce you to the newly updated Hillcrest logo. After working with a graphic designer and reviewing various possible logos, the committee determined that our A-frame church on the hill is iconic within the community and something that can and does reflect Hillcrest. Further, with recent and upcoming work along the Gregory Lane corridor—including new lighting—it is something that we hope will become even more of a beacon calling people to Hillcrest as a place for faith and action in our community.

The revised version of the Hillcrest logo incorporates the recognizable A-frame church on the hill with stained glass windows but adds an updated look to the previous graphic. We hope you like the new logo, updated for a new decade!

Hillcrest Congregational Church NEWS February 2020

Dear Hillcrest members and friends,

On Sunday, January 26, 2020, the Hillcrest adopted our annual budget at a congregational meeting – with unanimous approval of both the General Fund budget and the Endowment fund budget. Thank you for your patience and support through the process.

The annual budget projects revenue of \$293,949 and expenses of \$312,825 for 2020. For pledges received by January 15, 2020, pledge commitments were up almost \$7,000 or about 2.9% from 2019. Still, the General Fund budget reflects a projected deficit of 5.24%. While this projected deficit higher than we would like, the budget reflects important investments in our church campus, staff and programs. Thank you for continuing your support for Hillcrest! Please know that Hillcrest continues to operate efficiently on a very lean budget, primarily due to the great efforts by our committed staff and volunteer leaders of our Ministries. Hillcrest has a long history of maintaining fiscal discipline while concurrently seeking to continue our faithful service to members, friends and the broader community. This year will be no different.

At year-end 2019, the Endowment Fund budget principal was a healthy \$1,275,128, with retained earnings of \$270,081. The Endowment Fund was established in 2000, with the intent that contributed monies could create a permanent source of income (through interest/earnings) that would be usable for special projects, with the idea of not ever having to touch the principal balance, and only a portion of the retained earnings in the Fund being spent in any given year. Historically, the Endowment Fund was used predominantly for Church purposes that were not funded through the annual general fund budget, though gifts were often intended to supplement programs and ministries.

For 2020, like 2019, the Church is tapping the Endowment fund for contributions to building maintenance, grounds maintenance, property taxes & licenses, property insurance and custodial services. The Congregation also previously voted to support a large expenditure from the Endowment Fund (\$40,000) for Church Improvements that are getting under way. The Endowment Committee remains vigilant and will continue to invest the Endowment Fund funds in a prudently diversified portfolio of assets, aimed at achieving the goals stated above.

In closing, our approved General Fund budget and Endowment Fund budget reflect our financial values and priorities. On behalf of a grateful church community, thanks to all for sharing your time, talents and treasure in supporting Hillcrest and seeking to help our congregation continue to thrive and continue to expand our services to our congregation and the wider community.

Sincerely,

David Durant

Hillcrest Board of Trustees



February 26
Worship Services at Noon and 7 p.m.

We celebrate the beginning of the season of Lent with special worship at noon and 7 p.m. on Ash Wednesday February 26. We celebrate this holy season and we celebrate our lives and life itself. We, all of it, is holy.

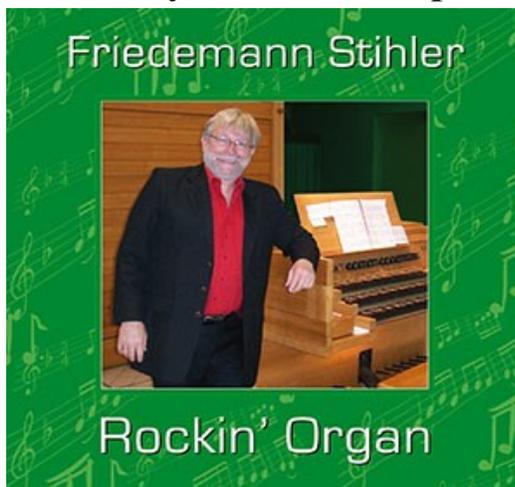
Each service is, for the most part, the same. So pick one (or, if you'd like, both).

We reflect on this season, on our lives, and on our relationship with God through music, readings, reflection, the receiving of ashes (or, of you'd prefer, clear oil), and holy communion.

Please join us for this meaningful worship experience.

Hillcrest Congregational Church NEWS February 2020

A Rockin' Organ Concert Saturday Feb. 22 at 4 p.m.



Virtuoso organist, Friedemann Stihler, is on a brief tour of the Bay Area and will be gracing us and giving our organ a workout with what he does best—a great, fun concert including classical organ works as well as "rockin'" ones.

Will he play his "Mozart in New Orleans"? Or "The Nutcracker Meets Santana"? Come, be entertained, and find out.

All are welcome. A free will offering will be accepted.





IN THE HILLCREST SPOTLIGHT



CONCERNS

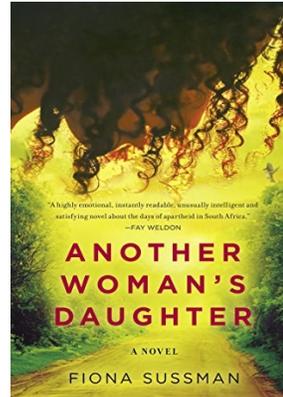
Carol Albright
 Ryan Anderson
 Web Beadle
 Lynne Beller
 Mitsuka Bude
 Bob Cameron
 Debra Cass
 Kylie Chen
 Cara Clark
 Joy Davis
 Nancy Hammill
 Eldon Harwood
 Grant Hawkes
 Scarlett Henley
 Vicki Hernandez
 Soonhee Kim
 Charley Lamb
 Frank Laemmlen
 Alix Sahlin
 Dana Sparks
 Jeanne Walker
 Dennis Sasaki
 Ian Ewing
 Family of Linda Rondeau
 (friend of Kathy Colbath)
 Flor Cruz
 Bob Wooldridge
 Pat Curran
 Ann Dillard (Friend of Bob
 Sartin)
 Stephen Mueller (Brother of
 Carolyn)

We remember friends and members in residential and continual care:

Betty MacKenzie
 Mary Rinehart

**Please help us keep these lists updated. If you do not see a name you expected to see, or an event that you would like us to post, let us know. please contact us at the Church office.

Hillcrest Book Club



We will meet on February 9, 2020, our selection to start this new year is "Another Woman's Daughter" by Fiona Sussman. The novel is set against the tumultuous background of apartheid in South Africa. This is a powerful and moving story about family, sacrifice, and discovering what it means to belong.

Hillcrest Congregational Church NEWS February 2020

A SPECIAL SUNDAY TO HONOR TWO OF OUR FORMER PASTORS

Please plan to be with us on Sunday Feb. 9 as we honor two of Hillcrest's own:

Rev. Dr. William G. "Skip" Holliday
Senior Minister Emeritus
February 9, 2020
In Recognition of Extraordinary Ministry

Hillcrest Congregational Church UCC
Pleasant Hill, CA



Rev. Ray L. Welles
Associate for Eldering Ministries Emeritus
February 9, 2020
In Recognition of Extraordinary Ministry

Hillcrest Congregational Church UCC
Pleasant Hill, CA

On Sunday Feb. 9 we will celebrate with Skip and Sally, and Ray and Jackie:
During the worship service, we will formally bestow on Skip and on Ray the title "Emeritus."
Following worship, we will enjoy a reception together.

Please honor them, and us, with your presence!

Christian Ed

The new year got off to a bit of a rocky start for Christian Ed, with more than a few people coming down with colds. We all know Christmas season and Easter season, but we often forget to mark Flu season between those two on our liturgical calendars. Nevertheless, we soldiered on, and even had time to plan some exciting projects and events.

Firstly, we will be celebrating Black History Month with a Family Movie Night revolving around Harriet Tubman. If you or your family can, please join us on Friday February 7th at 6pm in the fellowship hall to watch an animated film about the famous American hero, followed by a craft. Pizza will be provided, all ages are welcome. Bring your Friends.

Also, after church on Sunday the 16th, we will be going on our much anticipated ice skating outing. Of all the things we discussed doing this year, ice skating was by far the most popular, so be sure not to miss it. We will be leaving right after church, transportation will be provided.

We've been continuing to have lots of fun in our Sunday school program. Over the past few weeks, we have been continuing the story of Moses and the Exodus, completing our timeline of the first part of the Bible. This group of kids has been keeping me on my toes, asking very good questions and not being afraid to question what they are hearing and to speak their minds. I happen to believe that wonder and curiosity are an important part of faith, and to that end, I am trying to think up a special project for some of my older kids to keep them thinking about the Bible and what it means to be Christian.

In the services, we have been talking about the season of Epiphany and the ways in which the light of Christ comes into the world. This has meant learning new ways to pray and to connect with God. During our Children's Moment, one week we spoke about prayer candles and what it means to bring light into the world. The next week we laughed together and asked whether laughter could be a kind of prayer.

I look forward to Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent that is rapidly approaching. Since I was in Sunday School myself, Lent has always been my favorite season. It is nice to take a step back, turn my focus inward and sit with that more somber energy, knowing that the Joy of Easter is just around the corner. I look forward to going on that journey with my kids, and am currently thinking of some Lenten discipline that we as a Sunday school can take on.

Until then, we will keep laughing, keep celebrating, and keep on taking our vitamin C.

Allison Kuechle



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday
9 a.m.-12 noon;
1 p.m.-2:00 p.m.

(Closed for lunch 12-1 p.m.)

Church Office Phone (925) 689-8260

Website: www.hillcrestucc.org

Food Room Hours:

Mon., Wed., Fri. 9 - 11:45 a.m.
 3rd Saturday of the month, 9 - 11:45 a.m.
 (925) 686-3663
 No appointment needed. I.D. required.

Clothing Room Hours:

Mon., Wed. & Fri. 9 - 11:45 a.m.
 3rd Saturday of the month, 9 - 11:45 a.m.
 (no appointment needed)

Jim Flagstead's Hours:

Financial Secretary
 Mon. & Thurs. 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

We Have a New Phone System

Extensions are as follows

1001 Main Office
1002 Office Manager
1003 Senior Pastor
1004 Jim Flagstead
1005 Kitchen
1006 Narthex

Hillcrest Congregational Church *NEWS*
United Church of Christ
404 Gregory Lane
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

MAILED: 1/31/2020

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Hillcrest Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
 404 Gregory Lane Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
 Phone: 925-689-8260
 Website: www.hillcrestucc.org
 Senior Minister: Rev. Dr. Fred Weidmann
 Pastoral Associate: Allison Kuechle
 Accompanist & Choir Dir. : Joshua Feltman
 Children & Youth Ministries: Mya Terry
 Nursery Coordinator: Shelby Pickett

Worship Service schedule
10:30 Worship Schedule
9:30 a.m. Education Hour

Deadline for the next *NEWS* is **Friday**
February 24th, 2020

Please e-mail all articles to:
hillcrestucc@att.net or put them in the news
 folder in the "News" office box — include
 the source of the article and your phone
 number.