

# BEHOLD!! SMYRNA

## April 2022



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

### Transition Team Forming to Aid Interim Process

At our March Council meeting, Pastor Janet explained the rationale behind forming a Transition Team to conduct a number of tasks that need to be accomplished before the Search Committee takes up its work of finding our next settled pastor. The Transition Team:

1. is a group of trusted individuals selected by the Council to work with the Interim Pastors to guide the congregation in addressing the three core questions of the interim period: Who are we? Who is our neighbor? Who is God calling us to become?
2. guides the interim process with the Interim Pastors, while other leaders continue the ongoing leadership functions of running the faith community
3. is the group that writes the Local Church Profile for the search process.
4. the group who recommends when the congregation is ready to begin the formal search and call process led by the search committee.

The Transition Team is not the Search Committee but will include 2-3 individuals from the Search Committee to ensure continuity and a smooth transition to the work of the Search Committee.

Members of the congregation are invited to recommend names of people to serve on the Transition Team. If you would like to

recommend someone (or to volunteer) for the Transition Team, please contact Moderator Rick Gano ([rgano@canby.com](mailto:rgano@canby.com)). From the list of recommended names, between 3-5 persons will be selected by Council to serve on the Transition Team in addition to 2-3 members who will be drawn from the Search Committee.

*We would appreciate it if everyone would prayerfully consider whom they might suggest to serve in this critical role during the interim period, keeping in mind the following qualities needed in Transition Team Members:*

1. Trusted and respected by the congregation
2. Prayerful and spiritually wise
3. Able to listen to all perspectives
4. Regular attender and contributor
5. A couple of members of the team need to be good writers.

As you consider who might be a good fit for the Transition Team, keep in mind that ideally it will be representative of the congregation in its diversity, including age, gender, sexual orientation, etc. plus a mix of long-term and short-term members and theological viewpoints.

We look forward to receiving your recommendations for the Transition Team, via email to [rgano@canby.com](mailto:rgano@canby.com)

Sincerely,

Rick Gano, Moderator  
Rev. Dr. Janet Parker, Interim Pastor

**Ministers:** All members of the church

**Ministers:** Rev. Cat Allard; Rev. Janet Parker

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**31119 S. Highway 170, Canby, OR 97013**



Pastor Cat



Pastor Janet

## Smyrna Scholarships Are Available

The Smyrna United Church of Christ/Glenda Yoder Sano Scholarship Committee will be accepting applications through *May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022*. The applications are available by contacting Rick Gano, [rgano@canby.com](mailto:rgano@canby.com). Eligibility **Requirements** are:



the applicant must be a current or recently graduated high school senior in a post high school program making satisfactory progress, and the applicant must be an active participant in Smyrna UCC with active participation during the past year in the life of Smyrna

UCC (Examples would be participation or assistance with the worship, Sunday School, grounds cleanup, Strawberry Social, Chili Cook-off, Oktoberfest booth, Canby/Marquam highway cleanup, Vacation Bible School, etc.).

This is the 18<sup>th</sup> year that Smyrna has provided church members scholarships for furthering their education after high school. The church scholarship is granted in memory of *Glenda Yoder Sano*, a 1963 Molalla High graduate and a long-time member of the Smyrna Church family, who, as many of you know, was instrumental in starting and continuing many youth programs in our church.

Rick Gano,  
Smyrna UCC Scholarship Committee

## Library shelf ...

The theme of the Lenten series sponsored by UCC's Central Pacific Conference (CPC) Palestine Israel Network is "Embodying the Way of the Prince of Peace" and features Palestinian and Israeli speakers who, in spite of personally loss caused by conflict in Israel and the West Bank, have committed themselves to peacemaking and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians. Books **recently added to Smyrna's library have been recommended by members of the CPC's Palestine Israel Network as resources for learning more about this conflict in the Holy Land.**



Blood Brothers by Elias Chacour, Archbishop of Galilee for the Melkite Greek Catholic Church. Baker Books, 2013. A **Palestinian Christian who struggles with Jesus' call to love our enemies and be peacemakers in a broken world** invites us to join him in the way of the Prince of Peace. Archbishop Chacour has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three times.

The Hundred Years' War on Palestine by Rashid Khalidi. Picador, 2020. **Khalidi's great-great-uncle Jusuf Diya al-Khalidi was a mayor of Jerusalem during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Rashid Khalidi begins his book with his family's role in the history of Palestine and Israel. "It's the first general account of the Palestinian- Israeli conflict told from an explicitly Palestinian perspective."** (Bookcover)

The Lemon Tree by Sandy Tolan. Bloomsbury, 2020. Adapted from an award-winning adult book and geared to readers ages 9 to 11, this is a true story of a friendship between an Israeli Jew and a Palestinian Arab that transcends political tensions and violence.

Whose Land? Whose Promise? by Gary M. Burge. Pilgrim Press, 2013. **"An excellent introduction to the complications of geography history, and geopolitics that have wounded and weakened both Israelis and Palestinians. But above all this book challenges us to love—and to love concretely."** David Neff, retired editor, Christianity Today magazine

## in **YOUTH** Action **Free Film in April, "Youth v Gov"**

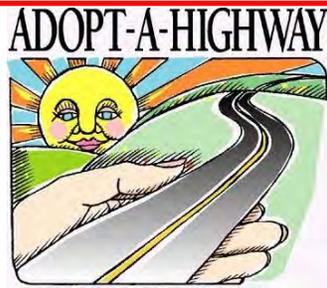
follows the story of 21 young people taking the government to court for creating the climate crisis and endangering their constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property. They are fighting for the future of all generations. The film team has offered congregations the opportunity to screen this award-winning film to groups between April 11 – May 1. Plans are being made for church group showings in-person and via zoom in the Portland area. National Interfaith Power and Light will be hosting a webinar about the film on April 27 which will include two youth plaintiffs from the film and the filmmaker. More information will be sent out with dates and times of group film showings that you can join and the registration link for the webinar on April 27<sup>th</sup>. Contact Ann Clites ([ann.clites@verizon.net](mailto:ann.clites@verizon.net)) if you would be interested in Smyrna UCC having its own virtual viewing group.

## Easter "Bunny Bag" Give Away

Christian Nurture will have treat filled Easter "Bunny Bags" available for pickup at Smyrna UCC all day on Friday, April 15 and Saturday, April 16, 2021.



Smyrna's Spring Road Clean-up along the Canby/Marquam Hwy (a.k.a. Highway 170) in front of the church will be on April 30<sup>th</sup> at 9 am.



Meet in the church parking lot to check-in before starting. Safety vests, trash bags, and "litter grabbers" are provided. Dress for the weather! The more the merrier (and the quicker the job gets done.).

### Mission and Outreach:

I am pleased to let you know that our church has donated over \$3,300 and some of our members have donated directly to the UCC for Ukraine relief efforts.

### Children for Change:

During April we encourage you to give money or food items which will go to our local food bank in Molalla. We also encourage your continued support of Habitat for Humanity. The first home being built in Silverton is almost complete and the remaining 2 acres that was purchased is now being planned for additional homes.

### One Great Hour of Sharing

Smyrna will collect donations for One Great Hour of Sharing on Sunday, April 3.

Thank you for all your generous support.

### Reading with the Book Club

Smyrna Reading Group is currently reading How Not To Act Like a Little Old Lady by Mary McHugh. It is a short, easy-to-read humorous memoir of Ms. McHugh and her advice for keeping mind, heart and body creative and active. Sorrows in her life are included and give depth to this book that reminds us that we are never too old to learn and do new things.

Reading Group discussions are shared on a Facebook page that is private. If you prefer discussion via email, that option is also available. Discussion questions and comments posted on Facebook are shared via email. Email group comments are posted on Facebook. To join the Facebook group or email group email Audrey Yoder at [yoderstore@canby.com](mailto:yoderstore@canby.com).

**PUZZLE**

**EASTER MORNING**  
*message*

Early Sunday morning, some women who followed Jesus encountered a great surprise. Solve the puzzle to see what the angels told them.

*Directions: Cross out every other letter in the maze. Write the remaining letters in order to complete Luke 24:5-6, NIV.*

LUKE 24:5-6, NIV



**“What medications do you (or does your loved one) take? How much and how often?”**

A joyful heart is good medicine.  
Proverbs 17:22, ESV

These can be very hard questions to answer, in an emergency, yet health care providers and emergency responders may NEED this information, to ensure safe and effective care. What to do? Having a list that is up to date and easy to access is key! If you have a smart phone, consider using a medication app, such as Medisafe, MangoHealth, or EveryDose. Or, write your medications and dosages on a colored index card, and keep it in a conspicuous place in your wallet or purse. Be sure to update your lists regularly!

### LONELY? Medical issues? Need Help?

Please visit the Smyrna Resource page. On Smyrna's website, [www.smyrna-ucc.org](http://www.smyrna-ucc.org), just click the Resource tab ....



Answer: "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!" Luke 24:5-6, NIV

Me (sobbing my heart out, eyes were swollen, nose red):  
"I can't see you anymore. I am not going to let you hurt me like this again!"  
Trainer: "It was a sit up. You did one sit up!"

## A Message from our Conference Minister, Tyler Connoley

We're all struggling with how to worship after Omicron. What's the right balance of precaution that will mean caring for one another and caring for our community? How scared should we be? How bold should we be? We thought we had a plan, and the Omicron sneaker-wave knocked us onto the rocks. Can we ever trust a plan again?

Take a deep breath.  
Take another.  
We've got this.

Remember, we have a lot more tools than we did two years ago. We have a lot more information than we did two months ago. We also have our values, and our call to love, which has not changed. If we lead with the questions, "What does it mean to love our neighbor in the age of COVID?" and "What does it mean to love one another in the age of COVID?" I know we'll find a good path forward.

### Loving Our Neighbor

The Delta and Omicron waves made it absolutely certain that the pandemic is only a pandemic for adults who are unvaccinated. In both waves, our hospitals were filled to capacity, almost entirely with adults who had not been vaccinated.

For those of us who are healthy and have access to vaccines, the best way we can love our neighbors who work in healthcare is to get vaccinated, so they don't have to care for us. The best way we can love our neighbors who need hospital beds is to get vaccinated, so we don't take a bed from them. The best way we can love our neighbors who can't get vaccinated is to get vaccinated, so we reduce the risk of giving them a potentially dangerous disease. Please get vaccinated, and please treat this as a moral matter, because I'm convinced it is.

In the last two waves we also learned that the most-important factor in our community is hospital capacity. When the pandemic wave was crashing, and hospitals were full, it was essential that everyone do anything we could to flatten the curve of the wave and reduce hospital admissions. As we prepare for future waves, this also helps us know how to better love our neighbors.

The CDC has recommended that we key our responses to community transmission to the capacity of ICU beds in our local hospitals, not to positive test rates. An example of this is the CPC Board's decision that three weeks before any in-person gathering we will look at statistics for ICU beds in the state in which that meeting is happening. If ICU beds in the state are 85% full (especially if the trajectory is not falling), we will cancel the in-person meeting. There are lots of places to find hospital-capacity data for counties, but the CPC Board has chosen to use CovidActNow -- <https://covidactnow.org/?s=30651923>

As we lurch from the pandemic phase to the endemic phase of our relationship with the novel coronavirus, you will naturally begin to adopt behaviors that are more-risky (singing with masks, worshipping unmasked, having potlucks). That's good and proper, especially in churches that are highly vaccinated. As I've said before, our highly-vaccinated churches can be test communities for what the world could look like in the endemic stage.

However, you will also need to watch for waves. To do this, I recommend you follow the CDC advice and look at ICU beds as an indicator that a wave is coming. When you see a wave coming, take precautions to help flatten the curve, and not overwhelm your local hospitals. This is what resilience looks like when you live close to a place where waves crash. You don't stop walking on the beach, you just learn to pay attention. This is what it looks like to love our neighbors in the age of COVID.

### Loving One Another

This is where I can't give you a recommendation that works for all of our churches. As we experiment with what life and church looks like in endemic communities, you will necessarily need to find what works for your local church. The right worship practices depend entirely on your members, your comfort levels, your risk factors.

However, I will offer a piece of advice from my time working as an AIDS peer-educator: Get more comfortable with talking to one another.

As we live with communicable diseases, it's important that we normalize talking about our comfort levels and our risk factors. I can't know what you need unless you tell me. And I may not tell you what I need unless you ask. I also have a duty to tell you information that puts you at risk, (for example, if I recently traveled to St. Louis but I still want to go to coffee with you, then I need to tell you that so you can make an informed decision).

At my home church, Waverly Heights UCC, we've begun wearing color-coded beads that cue people to our comfort level around contact. Red means, "Please don't touch me or come within my six-foot bubble." Yellow means, "You can enter my six-foot bubble, but please don't touch me." Green means, "You can ask if I want a hug." The first time I went to church after I had COVID, I was

feeling very vulnerable and contagious. Even though I knew intellectually that I was well-past my quarantine date, I still wanted to walk around shouting, "Unclean! Unclean!" I don't know if I would have gone to church that first Sunday, if I hadn't known I could put on some red beads and people would respect my need for space.

I'm not saying you should adopt a bead system. I'm saying you should talk to one another and figure out what will work for your community. Maybe you have some families with very young children who need everyone to mask so they can feel safe bringing their children to church. Maybe you have folks whose depression is severely exacerbated by continued isolation, and who must have some kind of in-person coffee hour, no matter the risk.

Whatever the makeup of your community, you must communicate your needs and wants and risk factors. Loving one another means trying to accommodate one another's needs, and sometimes giving up our wants, and it means allowing informed consent when you're putting someone at risk. That's how we love one another in the age of COVID.

Keep Practicing

None of this is easy. Learning to watch for waves often begins with hyper-vigilance, but we eventually learn to judge the tides, currents, and weather. We'll do the same with the COVID waves. Leaning into conversations about our needs and wants and risk factors often feels vulnerable and awkward at first, but I can tell you from experience that it gets easier with practice.

You will make mistakes. That's part of living in novel times with a novel coronavirus. However, if you lean into love, I know you'll continue to learn and grow and move in the right direction.

And you'll continue to be the church for this time and this place.

Thank you, as always, for that.

Blessings,

Tyler

The survey below, seeking parishioner input about in-person worship COVID protocols, was handed out in worship on March 20 and an electronic version of the same survey went out on Heartline March 22. If you missed these opportunities to give input please contact Barb Daniels.

1. Are you ready to attend church in person now without a mask? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No
2. If you answered "no" to the first question, would you be ready to attend church in person without a mask by late April, if there are no new COVID surges in our region? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No
3. If you attend church in person, would you be comfortable singing in worship:  
with masks on? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No  
with masks off? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No
4. When would you like to see the congregation resume coffee hour in the building? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Please feel free to share other thoughts and perspectives with us regarding our COVID safety practices in our building and particularly related to Sunday worship services.



### *Decorate Smyrna's Easter Cross*

**Bring flowers to church on April 17 for Smyrna's annual tradition of decorating the Easter Cross.** It will be in the Sanctuary prior to worship for the congregation to add their flowers.

## A Note from Pastor Cat regarding acknowledging the ending of Pastor Deb's Ministry

Dear Smyrna Friends,

**Pastor Deb's last Sunday leading worship as your Pastor was January 2<sup>nd</sup>.** The following Sunday you had planned to say good-bye with a celebration after worship. We did not meet that Sunday because the number of covid cases and hospitalizations were soaring, and community transmission risk was considered **high. Though you were still able to honor Pastor Deb's ministry and bless her with a beautiful flower arrangement and generous financial gift, and she was able to express her thanks, Pastor Janet and I wondered if there were any feelings of loss or incompleteness in regard to Pastor Deb's ending that it would be helpful to address before we begin the work of preparing you to search for your new pastor.** We brought our wondering to the Church Council meeting on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

While there was a predominant feeling of closure with the ending of Pastor Deb's ministry (accepting the acknowledgment of it as another thing that didn't go as initially planned due to the pandemic), there were other feelings shared. After some discussion, and taking all expressed feelings into consideration, it was decided that we would a) continue to respect the boundary of separation that former pastor and congregation are now almost 3 months into, b) include in this issue of Behold! the UCC's Ritual of Blessing and Release that I (as the worship leader and as a member of the Central Pacific Conference's Committee on Ministry) had planned to incorporate in the January 9<sup>th</sup> worship service to acknowledge the ending of Pastor Deb's authorized ministry with you, c) incorporate some of the content of the Ritual into our prayer time during the Heritage themed worship service on March 27<sup>th</sup>, and d) offer an invitation for written notes of gratitude or other things that folks may have hoped to say to Pastor Deb after worship on January 9<sup>th</sup> and didn't get the opportunity to express.

The purpose of sharing the Ritual of Blessing and Release (below) is so the community has an opportunity to be aware of and to integrate this "missing piece" into your experience of pastoral transition – if it's helpful. Because release and blessing did happen in other ways, a couple of months have passed, and the community is already engaging with new ministers and embracing the work of transition, there was consensus that calling Pastor Deb to come back for this ritual would not be helpful. She was ready to participate in it on January 9<sup>th</sup> and was informed that we would be holding these sentiments in prayer on March 27<sup>th</sup>. Pastor Deb is grateful for the thoughtfulness and intentionality evident in the decisions Pastor Janet, I, and those present at the Council meeting made with the help of the Holy Spirit on March 17<sup>th</sup>. This was what we had prepared for January 9<sup>th</sup>:

### ENDING AN AUTHORIZED MINISTRY

A Ritual of Blessing and Release

Rev. Catherine Allard

In 2013, Smyrna United Church of Christ in Canby called The Rev. Dr. Deborah Patterson as Pastor and Teacher. She began her ministry here on December 1, 2013.

Rev. Dr. Deborah Patterson

I thank Smyrna United Church of Christ, its members and friends, for the love, kindness, and support shown me these last 8 years. I give thanks for the ministry we have done together. I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made. I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been accepted. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here and all the relationships and moments we have shared.

People

We receive your gratitude, offer you our forgiveness, and accept that you now leave to minister in new ways and in new places. We express our gratitude for your time among us. We ask your forgiveness for our mistakes. Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.

Rev. Deborah

I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.

VOWS OF RELEASE

Rev. Catherine

*addressing the congregation*

Do you, the members and friends of Smyrna United Church of Christ release the Rev. Deborah Patterson as Pastor and Teacher?

People

We do, with the help of God.

Rev. Catherine

Do you offer your encouragement for her ministry as it unfolds in new ways?

People

We do, with the help of God.

Rev. Catherine

*addressing the authorized minister*

Do you, Deborah, release this local church from turning to you and depending on you?

Rev. Deborah

I do, with the help of God.

Rev. Catherine

Do you offer your encouragement for the continued ministry here and on the relationship with those who will come to serve?

Rev. Deborah

I do, with the help of God.

Rev. Catherine

On behalf of the Central Pacific Conference and the United Church of Christ, I witness to the words spoken: words of thankfulness, forgiveness, and release. The member churches of our Conference hold each of you in prayer. We pledge our support in the transitions signified in this service.

PRAYER

People

God, whose everlasting love for all is trustworthy, help each of us to trust the future which rests in your care. The time we were together in your name saw our laughter and tears, our hopes and disappointments. Guide us as we hold these cherished memories but move in new directions, until that time to come when we are completely one with you and with each other. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

# April 2022 at Smyrna

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**No matter who you are,  
or where you are on life's  
journey, we welcome  
you.**

# SMYRNA



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST  
a just world for all

Please hold in prayer:

- David Schriever
- Virginia Yoder
- Jo Algiers
- Ione Jensen



If you know anyone who should be on the prayer list in the Behold, please let Jeannie or Elaine know. If they would enjoy receiving cards notify someone in the Diaconate.

## **Mission Statement**

**Smyrna United Church of Christ is striving to be:**

- ♦ A place of peace, where we offer to all an extravagant welcome wherever you are in your life journey regardless of your ethnicity, marital status, religion, gender, race, age, disability, national origin, or sexual orientation, and where we teach the stories of God's love and call on our lives.
- ♦ A spiritual haven, where we accept and care for all people and God's creation in an outreach of grace.
- ♦ A lighthouse of God's compassion, where worship, teaching, learning and spiritual growth take place in community, powered by thought and action.
- ♦ A Christian people, working for God's realm in ecumenical harmony with other people of faith and conviction.