



# The Viewpoint

News from the Forest Grove United  
Church of Christ

December 2022

## Practicing, “the sacred pause,” during the season of Advent.

*“Child of the light and love beyond all telling, fill our hearts with wonder and praise. Lead us to your light.”* —Taizé Chant

This verse comes from the introit we are singing during these Sundays of Advent as we await the birth of Christ and the emergence of that great love for all life and all beings to emerge from within our hearts. During the season of Advent, this season of waiting and watching, we remember the lessons of waiting for it to emerge.

One of the lessons of waiting is remembering to pause. When we pause, we discover the presence of that light right in our midst, but we have to slow down for it. On my recent flight to visit family in Boston, at the end of the long journey that included several delays, the woman next to me said, “I noticed this whole time you didn’t use electronics once. You just read your book or sat still calmly. Was that a conscious choice?” I was so surprised! It was not a conscious choice. I didn’t know that reading books out of an actual book and not a tablet, or sitting still for that matter, had become a countercultural act! But I guess unplugging and slowing down has indeed become something we might do less of nowadays. It’s during the busy season of Advent that our spiritual observance of the season reminds us to pause long enough to allow our eyes to adjust to the dark to see where light is emerging ... long enough to be in wonder at the simple gift and presence of life. That wonder and gratitude is always available to us when we do. It appears by itself when we remember to practice, “the sacred pause.”

Meditation teacher and psychologist Tara Broch speaks of the sacred pause saying, “The deepest expression of love is this non-doing presence because that’s when we are inhabiting who we really are.” It’s when we practice the sacred pause that we remember who we really are and what we are called to be. We see and remember the light of the world which is the life we wait upon during Advent. We remember that light as the name that has been given to us by the Christ child. We remember to see it in each other.

A beautiful way we practice the sacred pause during Advent is by lighting candles on the Advent wreath each week. I’d like to suggest that a beautiful way to practice the sacred pause during this season is by bringing this practice into our homes. We can keep an Advent wreath on our tables. We can light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love by ourselves or with friends and family members each week, taking a moment to pause by the light with each other and reflect or

read a poem or a scripture passage together. We can welcome the light into our homes in this way and honor the sacredness of the season. It's when we remember to pause that we welcome the light emerging from within.

Love, Pastor Brendan

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## Youth Group activities are starting up again!

After the New Year, monthly activities will be scheduled for our youth, 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade to engage in. Activities will include fun get-togethers as well as purposeful acts of service. Look for updates in your email and the announcements.

At FGUCC, we value our youth and support their spiritual journey through:

**Supported Growth:** It is essential for teens to acquire skills such as openness, vulnerability, emotional maturity, trust, and the ability to self-regulate their emotions. When it comes to encouraging our teenagers to step outside their comfort zones, Youth Group is a great resource. Teens should be challenged by a strong community to improve themselves. Our Youth Group supports each other, whether they require a change of perspective, a new skill or pastime, or a team of people to help them get through difficult circumstances.

**Sense of Purpose:** Teens who are characterized by strong levels of gratitude, compassion, and tenacity are more likely to develop a sense of purpose. These crucial traits can assist teenagers in setting and achieving long-term, rewarding objectives. Youth Group encourages teens to do something meaningful to them. Teenagers form their own personal views and values when they get a sense of personal fulfillment from taking action that changes the world.

**Secure Environment:** Let's be honest, we could all use a place where we can open up and feel secure. Don't we all yearn for the freedom to be who we truly are? We all want to be loved and accepted for who we are. Don't we all aspire to be enough? Few places like that exist in the world, and we cultivate our Youth Group to be a place where teens can ask honest questions, discuss true struggles, and deal with real concerns, and we invite them to a place that many of us adults also want—a place where we are loved as Jesus loves us.

**Youth Birthday Benediction** will be during Family Sunday on December 4. We will celebrate November and December Youth birthdays.

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## Children's Christmas Pageant

Children's Christmas Pageant will be Sunday December 18 during regular service. The children have been hard at work, and we are looking forward to the return of our first Children's Christmas Pageant since the pandemic.



**No Learning Community on Christmas Day, Sunday, December 25<sup>th</sup>.**

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## Women's Spirituality Gathering December 7, 6:30-8:00

### Christmas Ornament Decorating Class

You are all invited to a Christmas Ornament decorating class by Bette, Sandy, and Lori. All supplies will be provided. Please RSVP Sheila at [sheilaharter@hotmail.com](mailto:sheilaharter@hotmail.com) or Melissa at [4melissatimm@gmail.com](mailto:4melissatimm@gmail.com).

— Sheila and Melissa

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## Blessing Box Needs

We are currently asking for "holiday foods in general" i.e., sweet potatoes, soups and other canned goods with "pop top" lids, and sandwich meats, bread, cheese. Leftovers packed in plastic ware are also welcomed for the blessing fridge. Please mark the date and contents on lid. The Blessing Box Fridge and Freezer are always in need of food. If you have any food or prepared meals you can share, please do! The community thanks you!

## Volunteer Opportunity

Two or three people are needed to help collect food from Costco in Aloha and distribute it in Forest Grove. Collection days are Monday, Thursday, Friday, from about 10:30-1:30. Even one day a week would be great! The FGUCC Blessing Box will benefit in a small way from this food collection. Please contact Mary Mullen 503-608-0805 for more information.

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## Holiday Gift Drive



Second Home is doing a holiday gift drive for students they serve. They partner unaccompanied students with a volunteer host home in the community, helping them have a safe and stable place to stay while they finish out their education. They asked their students what their dream gift is, and they are reaching out to us to see if anyone would be interested in sponsoring a student. Send a gift directly from their Amazon Wishlist. See the link below:

<https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/genericItemsPage/28NOQA0FDVMAY?type=wishlist&filter=unpurchased&sort=priority&viewType=list>

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## Special Events in December



### Decorating our FGUCC Christmas Wreath

We are inviting everyone to bring items to hang on the Christmas wreath that will be in the FGUCC gallery space during Advent. These may be ornaments, photos, or other seasonal items. They should have a hook of some kind and be ready to be hung up. These items can be reclaimed after Christmas.

### Christmas Pageant—Sunday, Dec. 18 during worship

On Sunday, December 18 during worship we will be presenting a children's Christmas Pageant. All children and youth are invited to be part of this wonderful pageant. If interested, please join us for rehearsals held every Sunday after worship. The children can participate in a number of ways: singing, speaking parts or just dress up in fun costumes for the pageant. If you have any additional questions, please let Geneva Houx know. Thank you!



### Saturday, December 24, 8:00 PM

Please join us for this special service with Candles, Carols, hymns, and a big dusting of Christmas magic.

**All are welcome!**

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### Christmas Fund UCC Special Offering

In the midst of Advent's expectation and hope, we look toward the joy of Christmas just a few short weeks away. This United Church of Christ special offering provides hope and joy through financial relief to active and retired UCC pastors, lay church workers, and their families in need. In this season, we ask you to please remember the **Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund**. Please watch this brief video [Christmas Fund](#) and consider a generous gift to the UCC Christmas Fund this year! Your gift will make a difference!



United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you!

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. (article cont. on page 5)

Typically, we receive this offering during our Christmas Eve Candlelight service. If you are unable to attend that service, please consider sending a donation to FGUCC at P.O. Box 265, Forest Grove, OR 97116 or you can donate directly and securely at [www.christmasfund.org](http://www.christmasfund.org).

**Thank you for your support of this very important All-Church Special Mission Offering of the United Church of Christ.**

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## Parish Nurse Notes

**Covid Corner**—There are many active Viral Illnesses in our community currently, including Colds, and RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus). It can be difficult to determine which illness you may have contracted. Below is a chart to help. Always contact your Medical Provider if you have underlying risk factors.

 It's likely COVID if ...	 It's likely THE FLU if ...	 It's likely A COLD if ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Fever or chills*</li><li>▶ Sore throat and cough</li><li>▶ Shortness of breath</li><li>▶ Fatigue</li><li>▶ Muscle aches</li><li>▶ Headache</li><li>▶ Loss of taste or smell</li><li>▶ Runny or stuffy nose</li><li>▶ Nausea or vomiting</li><li>▶ Diarrhea</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Feels as if you got hit by a truck suddenly</li><li>▶ Fever and chills</li><li>▶ Muscle aches</li><li>▶ Sore throat and cough</li><li>▶ Runny or stuffy nose</li><li>▶ Headache</li><li>▶ Fatigue</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Comes on slowly over two to three days</li><li>▶ Runny or stuffy nose</li><li>▶ Sneezing</li><li>▶ Sore throat and cough</li><li>▶ Watery eyes</li><li>▶ Fever (rarely)</li><li>▶ Nasal mucus that starts clear but turns to white, yellow or green after two to three days</li></ul>

\*For adults over 65, a fever is considered one thermometer reading higher than 100 degrees Fahrenheit, multiple thermometer readings above 99 degrees or a rise in temperature greater than 2 degrees above normal body temperature.

### Ways to reduce your risk of illness or reduce seriousness of illness.

- ♥ Stay up to date on your Vaccinations including Boosters and Flu Vaccine. This can reduce your risk of Hospitalization by 94%!
- ♥ The CDC recommends waiting to get a Covid Booster 3 months after having Covid allowing your natural immunity to reset itself.
- ♥ Have a supply of Rapid Tests on Hand.
- ♥ Wear a well-fitting mask in public.
- ♥ Exercise, eat a good diet.

**Is Covid rising in our area?** One way to gauge this is to watch the number of Local Hospitalizations.

**If you are ill:** Test for Covid

**If positive:** Isolate for 5 days. If out in public, wear a mask day 5-10 days). Hydrate and Rest!  
75% of Covid deaths are in those over the age of 65.

Let's try our best to stay healthy, check in on your friends and neighbors. Reach out if you need help when you are ill.

The above information was recently printed in the Oregon AARP Bulletin.

**For Home Bound Covid Vaccinations:** If you are homebound and would like to receive a Covid vaccination, call Washington County Covid Team: 503-846-8123, and choose Covid Team Option.

**Alzheimer's and Dementia:** In continuing to Honor our beloved Ralph Brown, we want to provide ongoing information and support for families, caregivers and a community touched by Alzheimer's and Dementia. No one is untouched by this difficult disease. We all know someone who is dealing with Dementia and related diseases. Here are some ways to get information and Support.

**Call Alzheimer's Association** for 24/7 support. 800-272-3900. There's ALWAYS someone to talk to. They have a lot of information and many resources for support.

**OHSU** at <https://www.ohsu.edu/brain-institute>. They offer a lot of great information and support.

**Alzheimer's and related dementias.** Marjorie Memory Care Community, McMinnville Oregon: Call for information on current classes or support groups: 503-474-4222.

Please call me if I can be of any assistance or support: 503-887-0242.

Deva, your Parish Nurse

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## Stephen Ministry

Are you a caring, compassionate individual that loves helping others? The Stephen Ministry group is looking for you to join in our ministry to those that need a compassionate ear. We are planning on starting a training class after the first of next year so that you can help us help others. Through the training that is provided, you will be able to journey with your care receiver through the trials that they are facing in a supportive and loving manner. We are not there to "solve" the issue but to listen and be present. Your faith will be strengthened through this process, and you will be providing a valuable service to those in need. Join us in sharing Gods love and compassion to others. If you are interested, or have questions contact Pastor Brendan, Reneé Mills, or Ken Prickett.

— Ken Prickett, Stephen Ministry Leader



## Volunteer Opportunity to Kick off 2023



Forest Grove UCC has been offered the opportunity to help prepare and serve the pancake breakfast for the Oregon Road Runners Club annual Run-Walk of the year on **Saturday, January 7, 2023**. The last time we had this opportunity was January 2020, so we are very excited to participate in this event again! The ingredients are provided (and paid for!) — we just have to show up to make and serve the pancakes, orange juice, coffee/tea and hot chocolate. Last but not least, our **church receives \$1,000 for this fun effort!** Doesn't this sound like a great way to begin the New Year?

If you'd like to join Elena and a hand-full of other eager members of our church, please call, text, or email Elena Parker at 503-357-6960 email: [elena@fgucc.org](mailto:elena@fgucc.org). We need about twelve people to help with this event. Thank you!

— Elena Parker, Volunteer Coordinator

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## Sign up to host Fellowship Time

There's a sign-up sheet in the narthex to sign up to host fellowship time on Sunday mornings, (i.e., make coffee, put out glasses, cups and napkins). We are welcoming people to bring homemade goodies, fresh fruit, veggies, cheese, crackers, or whatever makes your heart sing. If you prefer, you can use the supplies that are stored in the church kitchen, so you don't need to prepare or purchase anything to host fellowship. If you have any questions, please talk to Terri Wyborny. Thank you!

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## Best wishes to all of you celebrating birthdays in December:

Chris Karge-Moritz—1  
Lexi Karge-Moritz—1  
Eric Canon—2  
Ken Prickett—2  
Faith Brown—5  
Sheila Harter—5  
Madeline Burk—6  
Patricia Spears—7  
Myra Beeler—12  
Barbara Strain—18



Joana Jones—18  
Jerry Frye—19  
Isaiah Lawrence—21  
Nikaya Frye—22  
Jeannine Murrell—22  
Carol Brown—24  
Emily Thursam—24  
Kyle Hoekstra—24  
Kathy Heisler—28  
Susan Shepard—28

## Joys, Concerns & Prayer Requests

**Sympathy**—Our hearts go out in deepest sympathy to the family of Margerette Cooney, especially her beloved husband Ralph, and children Alison, John, and Adam. Margerette was a long-time member of FGUCC. She passed away peacefully at home surrounded by family on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 24. If you wish to honor Margerette’s lifelong commitment to children and education, donations to your local public school or children’s charity are suggested.

**Lois Johnston Memorial Service**—A memorial service is planned for Lois Johnston on Sunday, **December 4 at 2:00 PM** with a reception to follow here at Forest Grove UCC.

**Continued Prayers**—Prayers of healing and comfort for all who have ongoing concerns, including Els Abma, Bob Browning, Ann and Russ Dondero, Paul and Stephanie Edwards, Lorren Fletcher’s wife, Beverly, Lillian Gimre, Max Grozmann, Stella Schrag, Yvonne Stacey, and any other friends and family of our church, not named here.

**Special Prayers Requested!** Continued prayers for Jennifer Wengeler for ongoing success in her ongoing mission trip in Botswana. Jennifer is a friend of FGUCC who used to volunteer regularly for overnight hosting of Family Promise during the time we were offering this ministry.

**Sharing prayers in worship**—If you would like your personal prayer concerns shared with the community during worship service on Sunday mornings, please submit them to the church office by 4:00PM on Thursday afternoons via email to [elena@fgucc.org](mailto:elena@fgucc.org) with the title "prayer request" in the subject line. For private prayer requests, please reach out to Pastor Brendan at [401-318-2447](tel:401-318-2447), or a Stephen Minister.

**Prayer Shawls**—Do you, or someone you know, need a prayer shawl? Please call Elena in the church office to make a request at 503-357-9121 or [elena@fgucc.org](mailto:elena@fgucc.org).

**Prayer Shawl Knitting**—Please join us for knitting this month via Zoom on **Wednesdays December 7 and 21, from 2-4PM**. The link to Zoom will be sent to everyone in the prayer shawl knitting group via email. If you’d like to participate, please call or email Elena.

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## To Keep Up on the Happenings of FGUCC

- Check out our webpage for up-to date information, classes and activities at [www.fgucc.org](http://www.fgucc.org)
- Like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/fgucc](http://www.facebook.com/fgucc)
- Subscribe to “This Week at FGUCC” (just send an email to [elena@fgucc.org](mailto:elena@fgucc.org) to indicate you’d like to subscribe)

## Auction Gratitude!

You people have done it again! This year's auction was a huge success because everyone donated, volunteered, purchased and partied! We were still influenced by Covid, but it was great, and we got our band, Castle Road, back! The food, decorations and auction were superb.

Our gross is now over \$25,500! A good showing!

We're going to get a new chapel floor! Many thanks to all who donated: Myra Beeler, the senior Fryes, Deva Harris-Williams, the Lacoeks, Michael Colvin and Susan Shepard, Loren & Dottie Waltz, Molly Siebert, Kristinoel Ludwig, Jane Romig, Charla Gladden, the Donleys, the Timms, Eric Murphy and Kirsten Thursam, Bev Maughan, Sheila Harter, the Truaxes, Phil Zapf and Bonnie McDowell, Chris Fletcher, the Bowers, Elena Parker, the Kidds, the Edwards, Maggie Dickerson, Marcy McDowell, Nicki Atman, the Lawrences, the Waibels, Carol Pauli, the Orrs, Terri Wyborny, Stephanie Lind, Michael Terhorst, the Houxes, Phillip Dungan and Adrienne Klein and especially... Dick Lane, who contributed the remainder! We will form a committee soon to determine our best choice.

Special thanks go to Elena Parker, Aaron and Laurie Frye, Blake Timm, Castle Road, Michael Colvin, Sheila Harter, Leo Barrett, Deena Barrett, Geneva Houx, Sandy Freeman, Bette Prickett, Lori Epler, John Davis, Elaine Foy, Jeane and Eric Canon, Tori Eaton, Adrienne Klein, Jane Romig, and Brendan Curran.

**Our hearts are full. Thank you, all!**

Bonnie McDowell, Deva Harris-Williams and Kathleen Lacock, Auction Coordinators

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## Auction Evaluation

For the past several years we have requested an evaluation of the auction. We listened and added a training session and bidding assistance. We're asking for your feedback again for future planning. Below are just a few questions.



1. Do you like the online silent auction? Why or why not? What would you change?
2. What was your favorite thing(s) about this year's auction?
3. What was your least favorite thing(s) about this year's auction?

We look forward to hearing from you!

Bonnie McDowell, Auction Coordinator

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## Childcare for Nursery

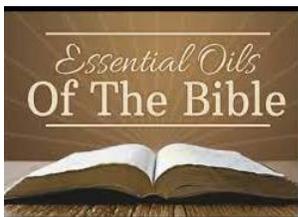
Childcare is available from 9:30-11:30AM for children ages 5 and younger in our church nursery. Our nursery attendants are Pacific University students Katie Gillam and Kelsey Harty.

## Busy Bags for our Children

We have “busy bags” in the basket on the table at the entrance to the narthex. The busy bags contain activities to keep children busy during worship.

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## Essential Oils of the Bible Class



**Sunday, December 18, 12:00-1:30PM**

Learn about and experience these oils for yourself. This class will be led by Jeane Canon and Renee Mills in Fellowship Hall, and is strictly educational, with no fee or obligation. The date is **Sunday, December 18, 12:00-1:30PM**. RSVP appreciated but not required. Please plan to bring your own lunch. Everyone is welcome!

## Dew Drop Workshops with Jeane Canon (in person and hybrid)

Jeane Canon offers workshops that include an Essential Oils Introductory Class a few times each month; they are held on occasional Tuesday evenings and one Saturday afternoon (the workshop schedule varies; see current calendar posted on bulletin board in fellowship hall\*). These workshops are great for beginners and often include make & take projects. Please contact Jeane right away to let her know if you would like to join a workshop via Zoom; Jeane will provide you with the Zoom link, workshop materials and supplies for projects in advance. \*You can find the most current calendar of upcoming Dew Drop Workshop sessions on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall, or contact Jeane for more information: [jeanecanon@yahoo.com](mailto:jeanecanon@yahoo.com) or 503-997-7228. Everyone is welcome to attend.



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## Annual Meeting set for January 29, 2023

Our Annual Meeting for the year 2022 has been scheduled for **Sunday, January 29, 2023**, immediately following worship. Please plan to participate in this important event in the life of our church.

## Deadline for 2022 Annual Reports

If you are the chair or leader of any church group, including commission, choir, etc., please submit a report summarizing what your group did during 2022, no later than **Monday, January 9, 2023**, so that we can have Annual Reports available for review two weeks prior to the annual meeting. Please email to Elena at [elena@fgucc.org](mailto:elena@fgucc.org). If you have any questions, do not hesitate to let us know. Thank you!

# BEST Team Recycling, Sunday, December 4

## Here's recycling we welcome:

- Real block and food Styrofoam, colored and dyes are okay
- #6 plastics, such as Solo cups and bowls, "to go" coffee lids, and some cookie trays
- Air pillows (Bonnie takes to UPS)
- Fluorescent light bulbs
- Batteries Candle wax (the Prickett family will use)



**Please Note:** #1 plastic TUBS can go curbside. Other CLEAR #1 plastics can now be recycled at **New Seasons at Orenco Station** and at events such as James' Recycling, but not on First Sunday. (**Note:** we will accept #1 CLEAR plastics starting this Sunday, Dec. 4.)

**New! We are now accepting #1 CLEAR plastics on First Sundays. We will take them to New Seasons for you.**

Be sure to check recycling # on your plastics before delivering them to church, and make sure everything is CLEAN. THANK YOU!

We can no longer take any packing materials except air pillows. Also, we are not accepting wine corks or planting pots at this time.

**Trash:** Frozen food containers, six-pack rings (cut up), soft or crumbly Styrofoam-like materials, other plastics that cannot go in the curbside bin.

**When in doubt, throw it out, to avoid contamination of other recyclables**

## We accept any time (in the boxes over the coat racks):

- Cell phones – (You can also take phone back to the store where it was purchased.)
- Printer cartridges (the church gets cash for these, or they can go back to the store where purchased.)

**Batteries:** Alkaline batteries can be placed in the trash as they are not considered toxic waste. So, if your battery says "alkaline" on it, Metro recommends you simply put it in the garbage. Other batteries are considered toxic, so please do not throw them in the garbage, but instead bring them to your FGUCC BEST Team for proper disposal at Metro. We will accept other batteries that are considered toxic, including hearing aid, lithium, normal and heavy duty as well as rechargeable. If in doubt, bring all batteries to us on first Sunday and we will sort them out.

**Special Notes:** If you're dropping off batteries, CFL's, fluorescent tubes or items for Metro please fill out the sheet provided for Metro.

**Further Resources:** If you need more information, please try:

- ❖ Metro Recycling Hotline (503-234-3000, [www.oregonmetro.gov](http://www.oregonmetro.gov))
- ❖ Waste Management (503-992-1212): give them your address and they'll tell you what you can recycle curbside. Ask specific questions.

## New Way to Donate to FGUCC



If you would like to make a donation to FGUCC, you can scan this QRCode which will take you directly to our FGUCC Paypal donation page. There you will have the option of paying with either a debit or credit card or PayPal. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let us know.

## Budget 2023 is Under Construction

It is budgeting time for 2023, and this is a friendly reminder to return your Pledge Card for 2023, if you have not turned it in to date. Pledges are a vital part of our planning for the next year. This is a great time to offer generous support for the future of this church!

Thank you — your help with this is very much appreciated!

—FGUCC Stewardship Team



## Pledges and Contributions

Thank you all for continuing to keep your pledges current. You can sign up for electronic giving with Vanco, which is a very simple option and setup, and fees are very low (let us know if you'd like more information). You can use PayPal on our church's website at [www.fgucc.org](http://www.fgucc.org). If you have questions or need more information, please contact Elena at [elena@fgucc.org](mailto:elena@fgucc.org) or (503) 357-9121. Thank you for your generosity and support!

## Year-round Fundraising made simple via Amazon Smile!



If you are interested in a simple way to benefit the church when you shop on Amazon, especially during the holidays, you can shop directly via the church's Amazon Smile account. In doing so, the church gets credited directly for any purchases you make. The following link will direct you to shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/93-0419356) and automatically generate donations for Forest Grove UCC. We also encourage you to bookmark this, so all your eligible shopping will benefit the church: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/93-0419356>. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let us know. Thank you!

## Can & Bottle Collection Fundraiser



Thank you for your steady support of the Can & Bottle Collection for our FGUCC Youth Ministry. **To date we have raised \$2,836.** If you want to participate in this easy fundraiser, blue bags are available to pick up in the church office. For any additional information please contact Elena at 503-357-9121 or [elena@fgucc.org](mailto:elena@fgucc.org).

## **Executive Board has approved the Covid Committee's recommendation of ending most of the church's former COVID-19 protocols on Nov. 13, 2022**

Dear FGUCC Family & Friends,

The last two-and-a-half years have been filled with challenges to try and keep everyone safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. While this time has not been easy for anyone, I am grateful for everyone who has been involved in evaluating the protocols we have used to try and keep our congregation as safe as possible.

Since we began to meet in-person again in Summer 2021, we have had varying levels of COVID-19 safety protocols in place. As much of the world returns to a new normal, our church's COVID Committee believes it is time for us to move more towards "normal" as well. As such, the Executive Board has approved the committee's recommendation of ending most of the church's former COVID-19 protocols.

This means we will start passing the collection plate again during worship. You can hold on to the microphone as you share your joys and concerns. And, as the worship team is able to recruit volunteers, return to having regular Fellowship Hours.

While we are sunsetting most of our protocols, we still acknowledge that we are still fighting a pandemic and that, unfortunately, COVID-19 is here to stay. As such, we will continue the following to help keep all of us safe:

- The back two rows in the section of pews nearest the choir loft will continue to be "Mask Only Rows." These rows are to provide a safe space for people who want to attend worship but do not feel comfortable sitting in close proximity with unmasked people. We will not pass the collection plates or microphones in the mask-only rows.
- Communion will continue to be served in the front of the sanctuary with people coming forward.
- While masks are not required, those who wish to continue wearing masks are welcome to do so.
- If you are sick, we encourage you to stay home. Whether or not you are ill with COVID-19, we want to keep the level of sickness to a minimum.

Should Washington County experience a severe increase in cases, the COVID Committee will meet again to discuss if safety protocols need to be put back in place.

I am grateful for our church staff and for the work of our COVID Committee in their work to help keep our community healthy and safe.

In Christ, Blake Timm, Moderator

## **Forest Grove UCC Staff**

### **Moderator**

Blake Timm — [blakertimm@gmail.com](mailto:blakertimm@gmail.com)

### **Pastor**

Brendan Curran — [brendan@fgucc.org](mailto:brendan@fgucc.org)

Phone: 401-318-2447

### **Learning Community Coordinator**

Adrienne Klein — [adrienne@fgucc.org](mailto:adrienne@fgucc.org)

### **Office Manager**

Elena Parker — [elena@fgucc.org](mailto:elena@fgucc.org)

### **Sexton**

John Davis — [sexton2862@gmail.com](mailto:sexton2862@gmail.com)

### **Parish Nurse**

Deva Harris-Williams — [fguccparishnurse@gmail.com](mailto:fguccparishnurse@gmail.com)

### **FGUCC Media & Tech Specialist (MTS)**

Chelsea Vadakin — [541chelsea.mae@gmail.com](mailto:541chelsea.mae@gmail.com)>

### **Stephen Ministry**

Renee Mills — [millsrenergy@yahoo.com](mailto:millsrenergy@yahoo.com)

Ken Prickett — [qkenbettp@gmail.com](mailto:qkenbettp@gmail.com)

### **Director of Sanctuary Choir**

Laura Frye — [lajenefrye@gmail.com](mailto:lajenefrye@gmail.com)

### **Service Music Musicians**

Paul Minor — [Pminor@easystreet.net](mailto:Pminor@easystreet.net)

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