



First Congregational Church of Santa Barbara + United Church of Christ

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CHURCH LIFE

SEPTEMBER 2025



MARTHA'S MODERATOR MESSAGE

What's Going On?

August was a month of warm weather, a short warm rain during Pride, some warm fellowship at Solvang's Theaterfest, and some warm "thank you" messages extended to our Search and Building teams. As we enter September, look for an uptick in activities around the coalescence of our congregation and WayCo as well as musings about the meanings of "membership."

We had a great time at the Pride Festival this year. Thanks to Tim, Mary Howe-Grant, Gail Gillies, Martha Peyton, and Robin Rickershauser who put in time at the booth. As usual, it was a joyous time. "A little taste of heaven on earth" is how Tim described it. Maybe next year you can join us too.

Sometime in September we hope to commission the joint team (members from FCC and WayCo) that will begin to sort through and solve the issues surrounding our two congregations uniting into one community. It's not too soon to begin praying for that group now! They have much to discuss and our prayers can help them stay focused on the big picture without overlooking the important details.

Shane's services may begin using a different email address. Whenever that happens, we will provide the new contact information to all who need it.

Sometime before the rainy season (whenever that comes this year) we are hoping to smooth out and repave the alley we all use to exit the parking lot. Advance notice will be given about when the work will commence, and while the alley is not available we will use American Avenue to exit the parking lot. Stay alert for more information as it comes!

Thanks to everyone who responded to our appeal for the Samaritan fund. It's never too late, in case you still want to give a few dollars.

We still have the famous "red cards" and they are available for any member who wants to distribute them to targeted people in their circle. Just ask. The ICE raids continue and happen in our own town.

Please remember to write up the events you know of and want to share in Church Life. Whenever you think "There should be an article in Church Life about this!" just sit down, write it, and send it in. Thanks.

I will be visiting our daughter in Germany for 3 weeks during September, so please bring any concerns or questions you have to Johanna or Tim. When I return, I will be eager to hear what has developed at FCC during my absence. I bet you will do some amazing things!



THOUGHTS ABOUT MEMBERSHIP

One topic that has come up multiple times during Mission Board meetings is the concept of "membership" in a church. For some people, membership is not important: they come on Sundays because they like to hear the preacher, or the music, but feel no need for a long-term commitment. And in fact, what does it even mean to become a "member" of a church? You can attend every service, worship freely, take communion, and even get baptized without officially joining a church. So what does membership get you?

Membership with a particular church community means entering into a relationship with it. A member asserts: I am a part of you and you are a part of me. We join our hands together to help build a world according to a common vision. In the UCC, membership includes "covenant," a word vital to the UCC since its formation. Here's one definition of covenant, by Wolfgang Roth and Rosemary Radford Ruether: A covenant is a communion between partners, solemnly initiated, binding the partners into a new pattern of life and letting them mutually define each other.

At FCC, becoming a member involves just a few simple elements: a desire to walk with other members in faithfulness and love, a public statement (usually during a Sunday service), and a commitment to support the work of the congregation in whatever ways the member is able.

Membership bestows one right to an individual, a right that is especially important during this time when FCC is making decisions about its future: the right to vote.

If you have any desire to take the step into official membership, please contact Martha or Tim. We encourage anyone who has interest in the work and direction of FCC to join into covenant with us.



AUGUST TRANSITION HOUSE MEAL

FCCSB's Transition House FoodTeam prepared a nutritious meal and made next-day lunches for the residents of Transition House's shelter on Tues. Aug. 11th. Although there were 28 adults & teens along with 23 children in residence, we saw only about two-thirds of the older group along with the children in the dining room.

First to the shelter was Lynn Stewart, who arrived early, ~ 4:30 pm, to cook some veggies and make a salad. Bud Kayser and granddaughter Haley Cook, just back from her year abroad in Greece, were unloading their car when Peter Ford and I arrived about 5:20 pm. By the time I got into the kitchen, Haley was already working w/ Lynn and Bud and Peter F. were setting up lunches. Chris, our Evening Volunteer, had the tables set, etc. Peter Brown joined us a little after 5:30 and Anne Shaw stopped by to drop off a rice dish. All preparations were underway and we found ourselves ready to serve well before the residents were called down for dinner at 6:15.

After our quick prayer of thanksgiving, Peter B., Bud, Haley and Lynn served slices of warmed French bread (the Browns), oven-BBQ'd chicken pieces,* rice w/ tomatoes & turmeric (Anne), black beans w/ corn and salsa,* hot veggies (Lynn) and/or green salad (Lynn) along with orange slices,* and watermelon (found on the premises) pieces. Butter* was out on each of the tables; sliced, pickled jalapenos, grated cheese* and salsa* were on a side



table near the serving counter for people to help themselves.

Once dinner was well underway, I passed pieces of Nancy Chase's choc. chip cake—always a dessert favorite! The servers gave out seconds for those that wished to have them, filled 10 plates for late comers and then, minus Peter B., who left us, sat down for their own meal. Peter and I picked up the leftover food and departed to have our dinner at home and complete the clean-up there.

A very big 'Thank You!' to all June FCCSB Foodteam Members. Whether you gave financially, furnished food, purchased supplies or worked at the shelter, your assistance was truly appreciated. Every month it is very obvious: This Outreach cannot be done by one or two persons. It takes a dedicated Congregation!

The next opportunity to participate as a FCCSB TH Foodteam Member will be on Tues. Sept. 9th. Please contact Sharon Kayser to volunteer. (I expect to be away.)

Mary Howe-Grant, Monthly TH Meal Coordinator

* Purchased using money from FCCSBUCC's TH monthly meal funds.

THANK YOU LETTERS

Thank-you letters from our FCCSB Social Justice Scholarship recipients

We were pleased to receive from the Santa Barbara Scholarship Foundation heartfelt thank-you letters from Julia and Clara.

Just Peace Working Group Scholarship Committee



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Summer 2025

Robin Rickershauser
First Congregational Church of Santa Barbara
3515 Chuparosa Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93105

Dear Robin,

Life-altering results would not be possible without donors like you who recognize the need for higher education and prioritize supporting local students through your generosity to the Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara. I am so grateful for the individuals, businesses, organizations, and foundations whose consistent giving makes positive impacts that change the trajectory of students' lives. So often we see the ripple effect of higher education attainment; when one student achieves their dream, they inspire peers, siblings, and extended family members to follow the path they created.

Your generosity enabled over 2,000 deserving students to pursue post-secondary education.

It truly warms my heart to read the essays written by our scholarship recipients. To summarize, I believe that awarded student Manon says it best:

"With an extremely grateful and humble heart I thank you for believing in me and for honoring me with this incredible scholarship. I promise to make you proud today and always."

Your scholarship gives students more than money. It gives them hope, and a vote of confidence from their neighbors that their lives are worth community investment. As scholarship recipient Thuy says:

"Winning this award is a validation of my hard work, perseverance, and commitment to my education and future career. It shows that there are people who believe in my potential and are willing to invest in me."

On behalf of the 2,125 awarded students, please accept my deep gratitude for your generosity. I am pleased to share this letter of thanks from the student(s) who will benefit from your thoughtful donation in the upcoming academic year.

With your loyal support we can continue investing in students and changing lives...one scholarship at a time.

Sincerely,

Melinda Cabrera
Melinda Cabrera

P.S. We are already making plans for the Community Leaders Luncheon on December 5th, so save the date in your calendar and we'll see you there!

CC: Mary Howe-Grant

805.687.6065

www.sbscholarship.org

info@sbscholarship.org

P.O. BOX 3620, SANTA BARBARA, CA 93130-3620

facsimile: 805.687.6031

Dear First Congregational Church of SB Social Justice Scholarship Fund,

It is an honor to be the recipient of the Social Justice Scholarship Award for a third year. I am incredibly grateful to receive such support, not only financially but also mentally, since the First Congregational Church of Santa Barbara has graciously welcomed me with open arms and encouragement. This award truly is a gift, and your generosity is ever more appreciated. I will be embarking on a great opportunity to study abroad in Barcelona, Spain, for my third year of college this fall. Your continued investment in my academic career further motivates me to excel in my studies. Thanks to the financial support of this scholarship, during the last two years, I have been able to further explore other avenues of my Criminology, Law, and Society major. This past academic year has been especially enlightening as I've felt like I've finally scraped the surface of my major through my constitutional and criminal law courses. In such rigorous courses, I was able to put all of my energy into them without a great financial burden on my shoulders. This scholarship has allowed me to reach beyond what I had previously thought I could, including having the time to study abroad and even consider law school after undergrad. It is with the confidence you have shown in my potential as a student and an individual that going deeper into such academic depths seems possible, and for that, I am incredibly grateful.

Sincerely, Julia Gularte

Dear First Congregational Church of SB Social Justice Scholarship Fund,

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for awarding me the First Congregational Church of SB Social Justice scholarship for the 2025-2026 school year. I am truly honored to be selected as a recipient, and I want to thank you for your generous support of my education.

This scholarship is not only a financial blessing, but also a strong motivation for me to continue striving for academic excellence and to give back to my community. I am going to be pursuing Viticulture and Enology at Fresno State University and this support will help cover essential costs such as tuition, books, and other academic resources.

Your generosity has inspired me to work even harder and to make the most of every opportunity. I am committed to succeeding in my studies and, one day, to helping others in the way you have helped me. Thank you once again for your investment in my future. I truly appreciate your support and kindness.

Sincerely, Clara Trenado

HAPPY SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS!



HAPPY SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Sep 6 FCCSB
Sep 14 Patrick Spencer
Sep 28 Frederick Janka

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