

August 24, 2020

Dear members and friends of Community Church of the Verdes,

Given the unprecedented times we are living in and uncertainty about events here in the fall, and in lieu of our usual printed summer newsletter, we have decided to update you on the church in this letter from the Board of Trustees of the church and the pastor. The Corona Virus (COVID-19) has changed our lives and what we are able to do. We pray that everyone is safe and able to enjoy some summer activities with family. It is difficult not to be able to socialize and enjoy fellowship as we have in the past here at the church. Further, our hearts break for those separated from their loved ones due to the pandemic. Spouses with a spouse in a care home or hospital who can't visit them, maybe waving through a window or having a Facetime call; we can't imagine.

Those of us who have stayed in place here in the Verdes are enjoying the hottest summer in years breaking all kinds of records including the number of days temperatures reached 115 degrees or more. Wild fires have popped up around us from time to time. But thanks to the Rio Verde Fire District, we have stayed safe. Our Fire Chief is also leading a weekly conference call with community leaders regarding the virus to keep us informed and safe.

The church office has remained open throughout the pandemic, and after a short time closed and with only staff present to lead worship, we were able to open the sanctuary for Sunday services, though we require face masks and social distancing. We purchased 2 hand sanitizing stations for those attending services to use. In addition, our AV team set up Sunday service live streaming. Since the mask requirement has been in place, attendance at the service has averaged around 30 people with over 100 additional members and friends viewing the service on line. **The Technology Committee** has also done some necessary work in upgrading the office server. **The Worship Committee** has continued to provide members to be lectors, ushers, flower providers, and serve at the communion table.

The Education Committee reports that all the events for next season are dependent on the COVID-19 restrictions. These restrictions will have an effect on our ability to meet together and enjoy the scheduled events. The Scholarship Committee, a subcommittee of Education, has had 2 of the 3 recipients delay their education and therefore, they will not be receiving any funding at this time. The Committee has since found another qualified candidate to receive funding. Bible studies will continue this fall.

The Fellowship Committee has had to stand down due to the pandemic. We hope this will change soon, but at this time we have no plans to begin fellowship until we have the all clear. The Welcome Back BBQ, planned for November 16, 2020, is still on the church calendar but no steps will be taken to finalize details until we are closer. We will continue to follow directions from the county, state and CDC.

The Facilities Committee reports that the facilities are in good shape. We did complete some noteworthy projects this summer. We contracted with a tree company to prune, thin, and adjust the irrigation on the trees on the church grounds and in the Memorial Garden. It was very much needed. Last spring, we had some roof leakage problems in Founders Hall which were repaired this summer. We also repaired and sealed several of the Founders Hall parapets. One troublesome issue was that we had bats find their way into Founders Hall in July. We found and will seal off the entry point for the bats when they leave to hibernate. We currently have no bats. We also set up procedures for dealing with Cintas on fire alarms. We have a list of people on the Cintas call list in case of an emergency.

The newly constituted **Memorial Garden Committee**, a subcommittee of Facilities, has contracted with a service provider (Homecoming) for all our urns, name plates, and facing stones in Garden 1 and Garden 2. In addition, they are the service provider for the opening and closing of the niches in Garden 1 as well as the installation of the Memorial Wall plaques in Garden 1. We are working with them to upgrade the appearance of the Memorial Garden. Things such as faded lettering, grouting, possible water damage, etc, are in need of maintenance. We also want to improve the appearance of the Memorial Wall and the entrance to the Memorial Garden, including a new dedication plaque near the entrance.

The Mission Committee continues to receive food for Extended Hands Food Bank. The committee also funded supplies for seamstresses for mask making, and those seamstresses have now made over 4000 masks. Some were distributed here in the Verdes and Trilogy, but the bulk have been delivered to various mission agencies.

The Membership Committee has continued to “reach-out” to prospective members, mostly to those who are new homeowners in our area. These are usually notes of welcome sent a few weeks after Pastor Cathy has made her initial contact. We continue to place “Worship with Us” highway-signs at three choice spots, coming toward Rio Verde. These signs are placed by 10:00 am Saturday and removed right after our Sunday service. They have attracted visitors to our service. Fall membership week remains on the calendar in November and will be evaluated as we get closer to the date.

We cannot finish this communication without thanking you for your continuous financial support of the church. Your contributions allow us to maintain full staffing and perform necessary maintenance on the Church Campus. Thank you! In that regard, our Treasurer reports to the **Finance Committee** that our year to date contributions are \$444,807 vs budget of \$374,518. Our disbursements actual vs. budget are \$371,651 vs \$357,518. Year to date contributions ahead of budget; of course, there is still concern due to the uncertainties. We are over budget in landscaping for some much needed tree trimming, security, and fire monitoring, all of which are needed. Excess receipts over disbursements are \$73,156. We have been blessed with some one time single large contributions about every month to keep up in a very strong position going forward. Thanks for your continued support of our amazing Community Church of the Verdes.

Our pastor reports that this summer has been challenging for her because a vital aspect of her ministry is usually pastoral care, particularly visiting people in care homes and hospitals. She cannot do that now due to pandemic restrictions. She also can't regularly visit folks in their homes. Telephone visitation is hard for those who can't hear well, and email communication is just not the same. She very much misses all this pastoral care. Due to the temporary loss of these opportunities, she has turned her attention to mission activities, delivering masks and volunteering at agencies we support. This is something we all can do, turning outward to serve, as God calls us.

God is good, all the time. All the time, God is good.

Bob Dietsche
President, Community Church of the Verdes, Board of Trustees

Cathy Northrup
Pastor, Community Church of the Verdes