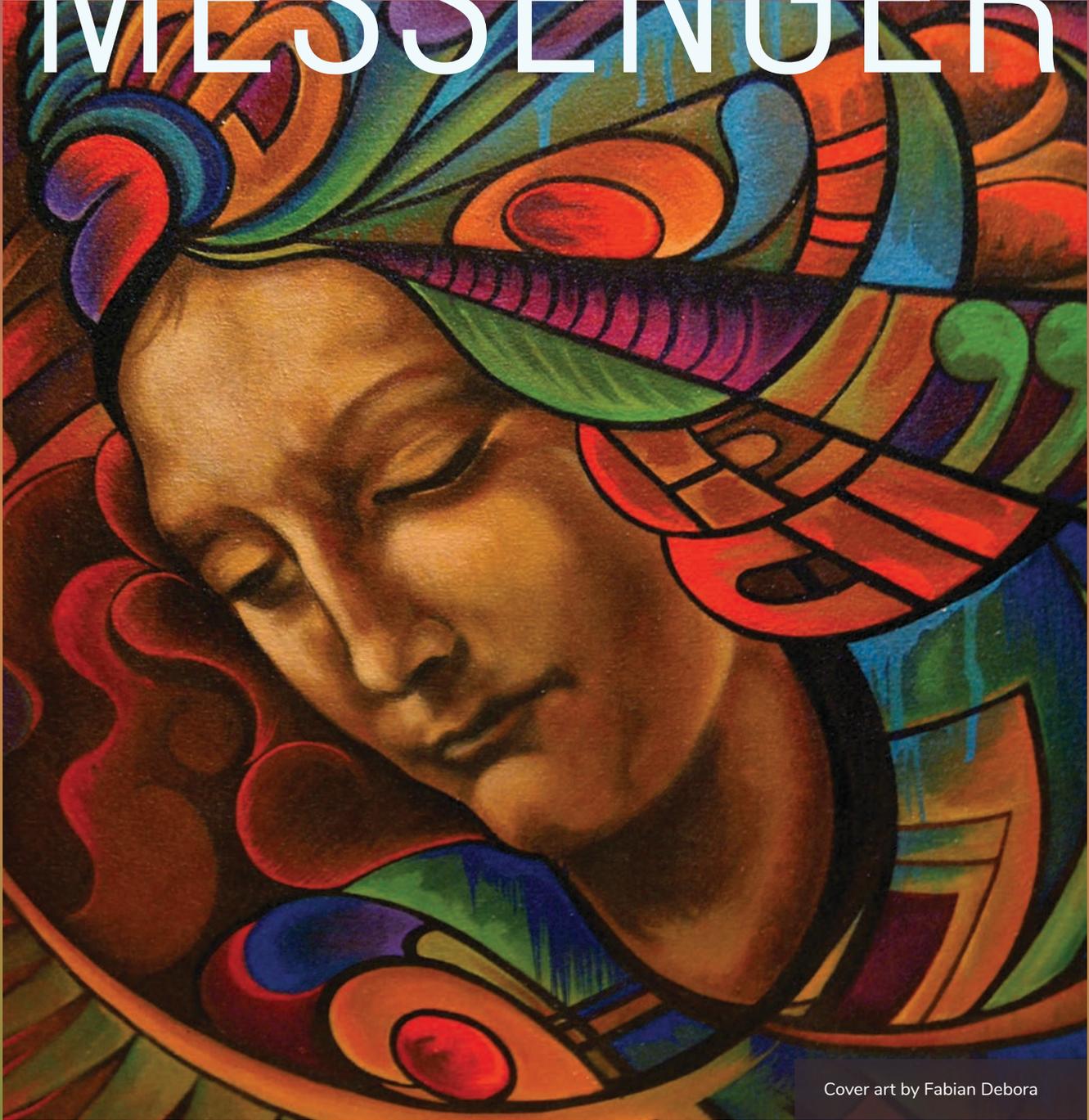


Spring 2023

# MESSENGER



Cover art by Fabian Debora

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A thank you to Tom from the FUMC Drama Community

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The gifts of Gary and Carol Tavis are more than musical

# Lent

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# Spring 2023



First United Methodist Church  
PASADENA

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Edited and Produced by  
Ashley Slade

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## Tender Mercies: Restoring Wholeness

My mother was not big on “pet names” but if she did use a term of endearment for me, it was “pumpkin” (presumably because I was born the day after Halloween), or she might refer to me playfully as her “caboose” (as I was the last of her four children). These names were fine, but my best friend’s mother referred to her as a “princess.” This seemed infinitely better, more beautiful, and precious than either “pumpkin” or “caboose.” Occasionally my friend’s mother would refer to both of us as her

“princesses” and my little heart would swoon, feeling extra special, seen and adored. This memory makes me smile now, even as it points to a deeper truth about the power of names to hold us, define our relationships and either honor or deny identity.

I believe our names for God have a monumental impact in how we live in relationship to God and to one another. Do we think of God more as a Judge or a Shepherd? Is God defined

## Letter from the Pastor

by anger and judgment or tenderness and concern for our well-being? Do we relate to God in fear of disobeying commandments, or more out of a sense of grace, trusting in a God who loves each of us unconditionally?



In the opening chapters of the book of Genesis, our tradition offers the fundamental teaching that we are all “created in the image of God.” So if we are all created in the image of God, how we imagine God shapes how we think of ourselves and one another.

If we believe that we are created in the image of an angry, judgmental God, we live in that shame and offer that angry judgment to others. If we believe that God is loving, joyful and merciful, our very essence and calling is to love, joy and mercy.

The Jesuit priest and founder of Homeboy Industries, Father Greg Boyle, often refers to God as the Tender One. Father Boyle works with gang members on the streets of Los Angeles—most of which have only lived in the hard realities of poverty, violence and abandonment by parents, schools and society. Where others approach these tattooed “homies” with condemnation and judgment, Father Greg seeks to reflect back to them their innate, eternal goodness as people created in the image of God. When these street-worn homies are seen with tenderness and love, the edges soften, and they begin to love themselves and one another as God has loved them from the beginning—with tender love, rejoicing that they are wonderfully made in the image of God. This is true not just for homies in street gangs, but for all of us. When we know, deep in our being, that we are created in the image of a good, loving and tender God, our hearts are made whole, our lives are restored

in this beautiful wholeness, and our communities can be transformed by the love we offer in the name of our Tender God.

During the season of Lent, we will be exploring these themes of tenderness, wholeness and the relentlessly redeeming love of God. We will be reflecting on Father Boyle’s teachings in a couple of classes and in worship. Father Boyle will also join us for worship on Palm Sunday. I believe that we are all called to this sacred journey of learning to love ourselves and love one another as God loves us. Let us walk a journey of loving tenderness, grace and joy together.



*Pastor Amy*

Rev. Dr. Amy Aitken,  
Pastor

## Editor's Note

# God is on the Off-Ramp

By Ashley Slade

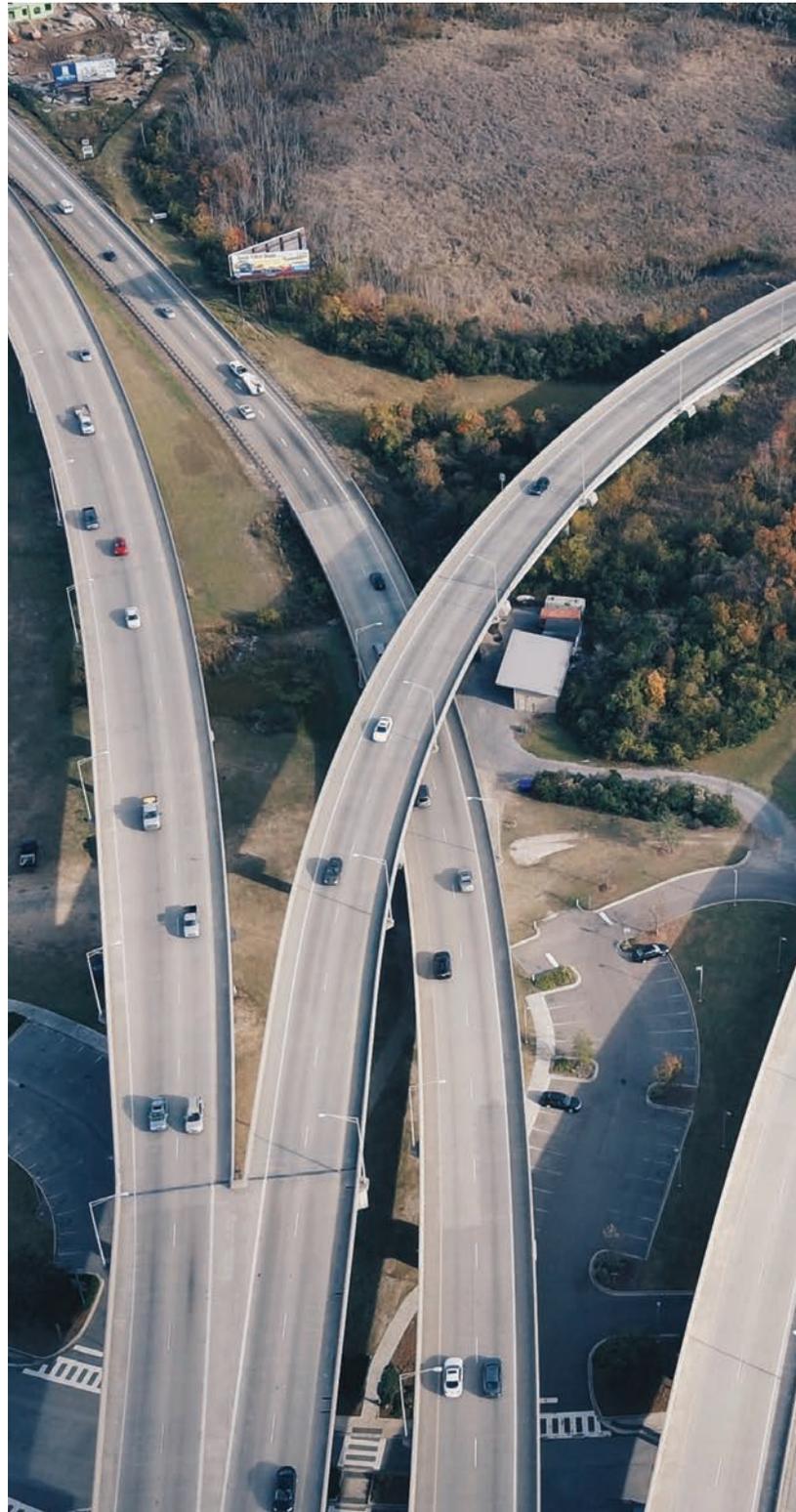
If you've ever driven in Washington DC, chances are you have encountered the Capital Beltway, a 64-mile interstate loop around the city. This highway is a nightmare of "inner-loop" lanes and "outer-loop" lanes with multiple exit options on each side. If you miss your exit, the next exit may take you so far away from your destination that often the better choice is to go all the way around the 64 mile circle to find your exit again.

The experience of getting stuck on the Beltway, circling over and over again for miles, is a terrifying rite of passage for those living in the DC metro area. Even a seasoned Los Angeles driver wouldn't handle the experience of missing an exit, driving over 60 miles to get back to that exit, then missing it again very well.

As you can tell I've been one of the many sucked into the Beltway void, sitting in my car praying for Jesus to quite literally "take the wheel" as angry drivers barreled down the lanes around me.

"If I could just drive straight for eternity," I thought, "I wouldn't have to deal with the messiness and fear of pushing my way across the many lanes to my exit." For a moment, sitting in the discomfort of going around and around the city felt easier than having faith in my driving abilities and trusting my turn signal.

This act of staying on the road when it's hard to exit is the kind of false-safety logic we use when we are unwilling to let go of anger or resentment towards ourselves or others. It feels like we have more control when we ruminate on the horrible thing that person did, the evil ideology that group stands for, the illness that



# Editor's Note

won't leave our body, and the discomfort we've felt when confronted with our own wrongdoings.

But driving in circles is a form of self-imprisonment. If you choose this path, you aren't punishing those who did you wrong. Instead, you'll be trapped in your own hurt and you'll stay trapped until you ultimately run out of gas.

I know what it means to be hurt, angry, and feel that an injustice has been dealt towards me. I know what it feels like to realize that I've hurt someone. All of this is painful, and yet it can feel so much more frightening to release what has happened to God than relive our grievances or mistakes over and over again.

But the tenderness of grace and redemption that Pastor Amy calls a "return to wholeness" just might be worth taking your exit.

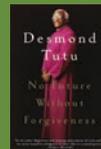
Grace and forgiveness require you to check your blind spots, change lanes, and exit to a new path. It's not easy; it's scary. And, yes...there are accidents. I'm sure Father Boyle can attest to the many false starts, fender benders, and full-on wrecks that are involved in forgiveness and redemption work. But when you are able to reach the other side of resentment, new paths, new communities, and many forms of love will be revealed. The lives of the Homeboys you will read about in Father Boyle's work this Lenten season is a testament to that.

I am no preacher, psychologist, or expert

in forgiveness. I can only speak from my own experience. Every time I've exited the loop of rumination and anger towards myself or others, God has met me on the off-ramp with open arms.

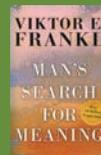
## Books on Forgiveness, Grace, and Redemption

There are many wonderful books exploring the vast topics of forgiveness, grace and redemption. A few are listed below to add to your spring reading list.



### **No Future Without Forgiveness**

by Desmond Tutu



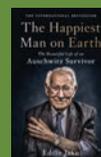
### **Man's Search for Meaning**

by Viktor E. Frankl



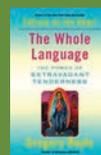
### **What Happened to You?: Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing**

by Bruce D. Perry and Oprah Winfrey



### **The Happiest Man on Earth: The Beautiful Life of an Auschwitz Survivor**

by Eddie Jaku



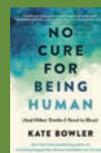
### **The Whole Language: The Power of Extravagant Tenderness**

by Father Greg Boyle



### **Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption**

by Bryan Stevenson



### **No Cure for Being Human: (And Other Truths I Need to Hear)**

by Kate Bowler





Lent

# The Lenten Season

The Lenten season gives us time to reflect on the habits, beliefs, and behaviors that prevent us from fully loving God, our neighbors or ourselves. How do we learn to give ourselves grace? How do we open ourselves up to those from different walks of life? In what ways can we truly embrace community? This year's Lenten Study will help us navigate these questions and more.

# Lenten Study

## Forgive Everyone Everything: Transform Pain Into Power

Beginning March 1, Mikala Rahn (Chief of Research, Evaluation, and Strategy at Homeboy Industries, founder of Learning Works, and church member) will facilitate our Lenten Series on the book *Forgive Everyone Everything* by Father Greg Boyle with art by Fabian Debora.

Father Boyle (founder of Homeboy Industries) spends his days accompanying ex-gang members as they rebuild their lives. *Forgive Everyone Everything* is a powerful collection of his most poignant writings based on decades of experiences of loss and pain, redemption and renewal in his work. *Forgive Everyone Everything* collects some of the best of Father Boyle's writings from his three previous books: *Tattoo on the Heart*, *Barking to the Choir*, and *The Whole Language*. His reflections, accompanied by stunning street art from acclaimed artist and ex-gang member Fabian Debora (Executive Director of the Homeboy Art Academy and board member of Learning Works), come together as a modern-day devotional that provokes and inspires readers from all walks of life.



The cover art and the art on these pages was created by Fabian Debora. Born in El Paso, TX, he began his career in 1995 as a member of the East Los Angeles Streetscapers. He was mentored by many Chicano artists and muralists. Fabian's work has been showcased in solo and group exhibitions throughout the United States and abroad, including Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, Kansas City, Brooklyn and throughout Latin America.

Each session will begin at 6:00 p.m. with a traditional Lenten Bread and Soup Fellowship then lead into a discussion at 6:30 p.m.

Sessions will feature guest speakers from Homeboy Industries, scripture readings, discussion of Father Greg's writing, and reflections on the amazing art within the book.

The series schedule is as follows:

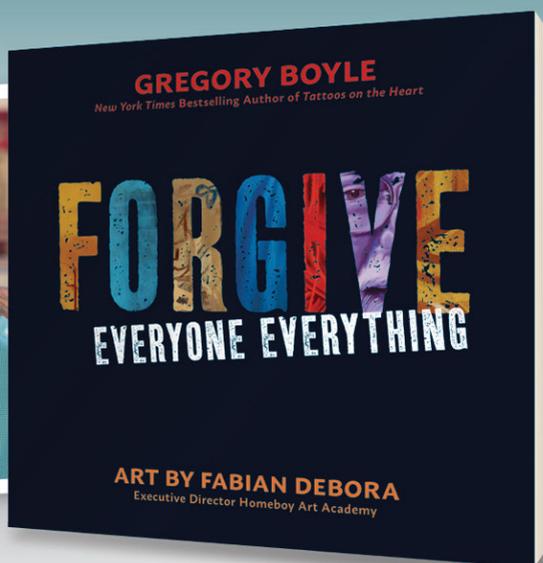
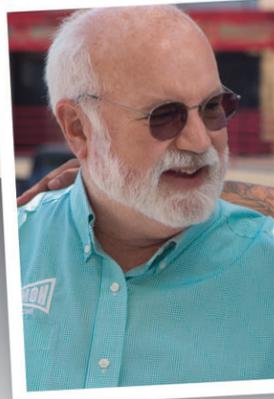
**March 1:** Rejoice in Everything (pgs. 1-25)

**March 8:** Love All the Time (pgs. 26-49)

**March 15:** Kinship (pgs. 50-75)

**March 22:** Grateful Heart (pgs. 76-101)

**March 29:** Fabian Debora with Healing Circle



# Meditation Garden

On Ash Wednesday, we invited the community to join us on the Colorado Patio in our Meditation Garden—a place for prayer, reflection and the receiving of ashes. There were several stations where people could participate in various contemplative practices. If you missed this event, we'd love for you to “wander” through this print version of the garden and meditate on your own.

## *Centered in God*

Spend some time in prayer, and if you'd like, to light a candle representing your prayers.

Your prayer may be a prayer of gratitude, concern for a loved one, offering to God your intentions, or simply a silent, centering prayer.

Whatever you'd like.

God is always present.

## *Taking up a New Practice*

In this Season of Lent, we focus our attention on tenderness and healing, seeing the whole person as created in the image of God's goodness, and the importance of belonging and inclusion in community. What attitudes or behaviors do you want to adopt, bring into focus, or incorporate into your life? Write your intention on a piece of paper or object. Hold it in prayer and keep it as a visual reminder.

## *Letting Go*

Here, you are invited to reflect on what you might like to let go of. Perhaps you'd like to let go of an old anger or resentment, a cynicism that leads to negativity or a sense of powerlessness, a habit of gossiping, or a focus on consumerism and consumption. The idea of “giving up” something for Lent is about stepping into new spiritual or personal practices that more closely align with the love of God, neighbor or self that we need in our lives.

## *Prayers for Our Common Life*

You are invited to write a prayer for the life we share together here in Pasadena, for our nation and for our world. This may just be a word or two, or much more. You may bring your prayer to the church office to join other prayers in our community prayer jar or keep your prayer at home for your own reflection.

## *Life's Journey: A Labyrinth*



Take a few moments to trace this labyrinth with your finger, reflecting on the journey of your life, or the particular time you now find yourself in on your spiritual journey. Wherever you are in your life, know that God's love and grace is always with you.

Lent

# Fat Sunday Funday

It was quite a treat to feast and fellowship with our community on “Fat Sunday” — a modified version of the traditional Fat Tuesday celebration. We donned our masks and beads, ate lots of pancakes, and enjoyed each others company as we prepared to enter this season of Lent.



# “The Lord is Risen!”

## Holy Week Events

April is just around the corner. Soon we will enter into the holiest week of our Christian year—a time of remembering the Passion, the last days of Christ’s life and most importantly, his resurrection. There are several services that make up this important time of year. We invite you to worship with us at any or all Holy Week events and look forward to singing “Alleluia” with you!

### April 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15

#### *Palm Sunday - April 2*

**Sanctuary (10 a.m.)** - Holy Week begins with a procession of palms recalling the story of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem.

#### *Good Friday - April 7*

**Chapel (7 p.m.)** - Christ’s Passion is remembered in a service of darkness, using the ancient liturgy of Tenebrae and music of the Taizé Community in France.

#### *Maundy Thursday - April 6*

**Chapel (7 p.m.)** - This service commemorates the institution of the Last Supper and Jesus’ command that we love one another. Included are a celebration of Holy Communion and choral music by the Chancel Choir.

#### *Easter - April 9*

**Sanctuary (10 a.m.)** - New life is the focus of this festive service that includes choirs, brass ensemble and pipe organ. An Easter Egg hunt for young people will follow the service in front of the church.

# A Tribute to Tom Bowman

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.” - Philippians 2:3

Tom Bowman’s tireless leadership of the Drama Committee and the FUMC Summer Musical Program exemplifies this verse from Philippians. Tom has humbly served and supported the building of the Summer Musical Program for more than two decades. His efforts have been out of the pure love of building community; seeing children, youth and adults grow and build relationships and bringing the joy of theater to FUMC and the greater Pasadena community. He has brought the program from an FUMC youth-focused summer activity into a thriving intergenerational program serving over 50 participants each summer—reaching into the community to bring people in, change lives and connect them with our church.

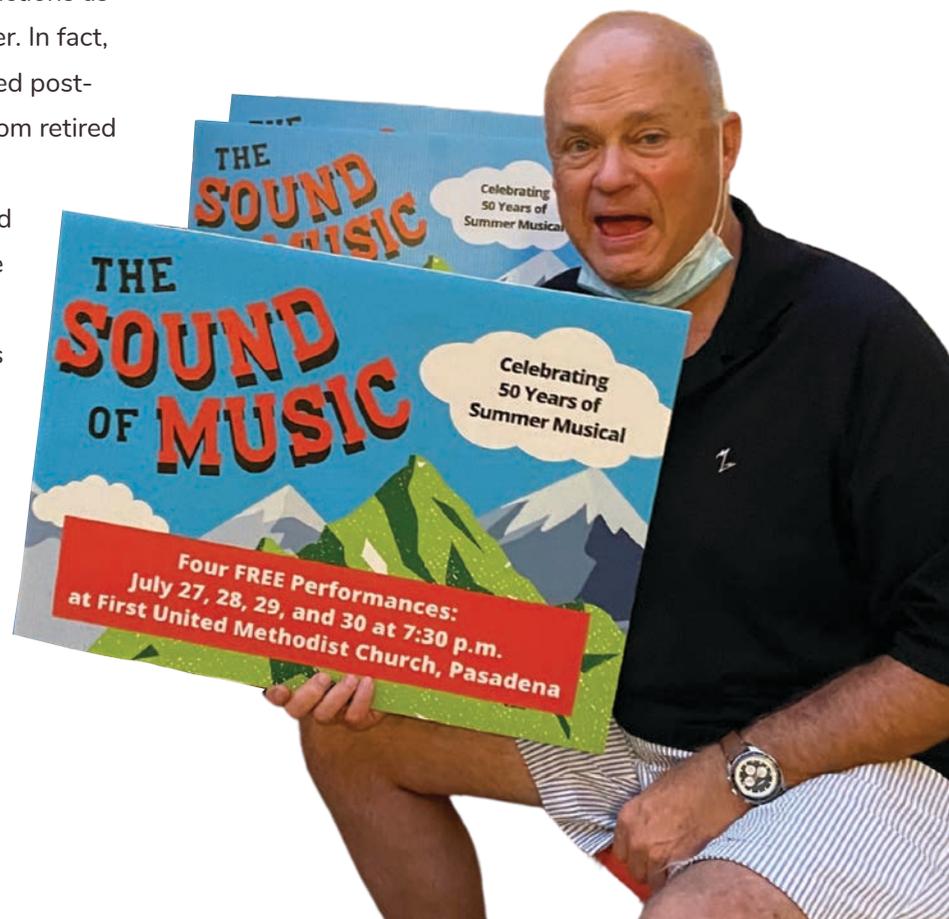
Tom has been synonymous with FUMC’s Summer Musical, leading the drama committee productions as chair, for as long as most of us can remember. In fact, completing our 50th year with a long-awaited post-COVID production of *The Sound of Music*, Tom retired from his drama work at the end of summer 2022. He has the gratitude of the church and all the youth, children and families who have participated in making the summer musical happen each year. Even with the challenges posed by COVID, Tom provided support and care ensuring that we made it through to our 50th year.

Even though retiring from active committee participation, Tom’s support of

the Summer Musical has continued and his work is leading us into our next 50 years. Shortly after closing night of *The Sound of Music*, Tom submitted grant applications for funding so that we can continue this vital and well-loved ministry. Tom’s tremendous gift of love and support for the program and the fruits it bears in both individual lives and in creating community will continue to inspire us all.

Tom, we all thank you for your humble and selfless service to the drama program. You have been and continue to be our cheerleader extraordinaire.

With our love and gratitude,  
**The FUMC Drama Community**



# Get to Know Our Scholarship Singers

By Scott Lehmkuhl

If you have been attending our services, either in person or online, you may have noticed several young people regularly singing in our choir. These young musicians are part of a scholarship program that has been in existence at FUMC for decades. Funded by our foundation, our church seeks out students who have an interest in becoming church musicians and award them scholarship funds in exchange for their participation in our music program. We thought you might like to know a bit more about these students, who are vital contributors to our worship services.



**Alyssa Simons** is originally from Austin, TX and recently moved to Los Angeles to pursue a Master of Music in choral conducting at Cal State. Her primary studies were in music with an emphasis in Worship Arts at California Baptist University, where she also participated as a singer in the University Choir and Orchestra. She has spent time in both modern and sacred church music settings and worked as a music director for various Evangelical groups networking musicians, directing music, and building programs.

**Rachel Tan** is from Arlington, TX and graduated from USC in December with her Bachelor of Arts in Choral Music and Psychology. In her five years with the USC Chamber Singers, she has sung with the Eagles, collaborated with VOCES8, and toured Ireland. She has loved conducting the undergraduate-run choir and singing with Exilio, an octet that performs works by underrepresented composers. Rachel has also enjoyed combining her passions for psychology and music through her research at the USC Brain and Music Lab. This fall, she will be heading to Columbia University to pursue her Master of Science in Social Work and hopefully join a professional choir in New York.



**Koji Sakano**, baritone, is a singer studying for a Bachelor of Music in Choral Music from USC. Originally from Pennington, NJ, he developed his love for choral singing a few minutes down the road at the American Boychoir School, singing under the tutelage of Fred Meads and Fernando Malvar-Ruiz. Currently, at USC, he sings with the Chamber Singers and studies voice with Professor Jennifer Kampani. He is a founding member of the student ensemble Exilio, an octet performing repertoire by underrepresented groups. After graduation, he hopes to audition for professional choirs in Los Angeles and the east coast.

**Daniel Voigt**, from Milwaukee, WI, is currently a sophomore at USC completing his Bachelor's Degree in Vocal Arts. Daniel was introduced to the world of classical singing as an eleven year old at a New Jersey boarding school with the American Boychoir. Continuing his newly found passion, Daniel progressed his studies of classical singing and opera at Interlochen Arts Academy in Northern Michigan. Daniel has expanded his repertoire making his debut in musical theater as the role of Jack in *Into the Woods* and Daniel in *Once on this Island* in USC Musical Theatre productions and his debut in pop performance with the Music Industry division at USC.



# Pathfinders: Connect with the Young-at-Heart

By Marilynne Wilander

Who are the Pathfinders? We are a young-at-heart fellowship group, generally 60-85 years young, that provides an opportunity to enrich the friendships and worship experiences that we enjoy at FUMC.

After a short hiatus during the pandemic, we are happy to reunite once again!



Most recently 28 of us gathered together on a rainy Saturday night to celebrate Epiphany. We didn't let a few raindrops stop the fun.

Our next gathering will be a potluck and book discussion of *Perestroika in Paris* by Jane Smiley on Saturday, March 11, at 6 p.m., at the home of Ann and Steph Burke. *Perestroika* is a spirited racehorse who escapes her cage and is adopted and hidden by a young boy. How long can he keep the horse a secret? Read along with us to find out.

If you are interested in an opportunity for fun and Christian fellowship, we would enjoy having you join us. Please contact our host Ann Burke (church members can call the church office for her contact information) if you plan to come to the March 11 event. We will also be planning additional activities for the rest of the year. New ideas are always welcome.

For additional information about Pathfinders you can contact Marilynne Wilander, current leader of Pathfinders, or the church office at 626-796-0157.



# A Pantry with a Personal Touch

By Aisha Figilis-Williams

The FUMC Food Pantry has provided food, hygiene supplies, clothing, and blankets to our unhoused, food-insecure, and low-income community for over 20 years.

While we hope to return to one-on-one service with our clients and volunteers soon, we are still implementing COVID protocols for the safety of all we serve. Our safety measures haven't stopped us from finding creative ways to add a few personal touches to our Tuesday morning program. In mid-2021, we started Coffee and Conversation with Rev. Jen Chapman, her pup Lucy, and Rev. Kyle Sears, Senior Pastor at La Canada UCC. Recently, Ann Burke, Amanda Lynn-Paul, Mary Gilbert-Palmer, and others started being a part of this offering.

Clients are now able to enjoy a hot cup of coffee, tea, hot cocoa, and pastries, and spend time chatting with the pastors or having the pastors be in prayer with them. This program has blossomed into so much more than just a hot cup of coffee. Our clients feel part of a community with this small touch. It resembles friends meeting at a coffee bar to catch up. Clients have told us they enjoy this because there are few places that offer something as simple as a cup of joe and a chat.

Small additions to the program, such as Coffee and Conversation, make a big difference in the lives of our clients. However, the changing landscape of assistance programs is cause for alarm. During the pandemic, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) aid was temporarily increased to help millions of low-income, food insecurity Americans. Starting Mar 1, those

### *Food Pantry by the Numbers*

- In 2022, we had over 185 new clients. Our numbers continue to grow.
- From March 2020 to the present, our volunteers have filled and distributed over 5,760 bags of groceries
- Over 1,560 volunteer hours have been served in the pantry in just one year
- 108 cases of water are distributed each year = 2 pallets

individuals enrolled in this program will see those extra funds cut. Quoting J.J. McCorvey and Rob Wile from NBC News: "Research by the Urban Institute, a Washington-based nonpartisan think tank for economic and social policy, found that the enhanced SNAP benefits kept 4.2 million people above the poverty line in the final quarter of 2021, lowering overall poverty by 10% and child poverty by 14%. The study also found that the emergency program helped reduce poverty rates most steeply among Black and Latino recipients."

With food, housing, and utility prices on the rise, some of our clients will have to decide what their priorities are; keep warm, keep a roof over their heads, or eat. We anticipate our client numbers will increase as they did at the beginning of the pandemic. Through the grace of God, and the loving donations from our church and community, our food pantry will continue to do its utmost to provide services for our clients. The Bible tells us, "Put your hope in God who richly provides us with everything" (1 Timothy 6:17).

# Why We Give

By J. P. Harris

Have you ever wondered why giving an offering is part of our worship service? Ever felt like too much emphasis is placed on money in the church?

Both are legitimate questions. So why do we give? Let me tell you why Diane and I give to support the ministries of the church.

Many, many years ago I was invited to a church pastored by a woman and her husband. The woman I knew well, but I did not know her husband at all. The church's theology was, shall I say, not exactly aligned with the United Methodist Church. But what happened to me that night resonated deeply with me then, and to this day. The co-pastor's husband was making a point about God's ownership of everything. To emphasize this point, he repeatedly stated that God created everything, entrusted the creation to our care, and so, in essence, God is the "owner" of all that we get to enjoy. Once



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visit our giving page.

he felt he had made that point abundantly clear, he pointed his finger at me, sitting in the front row, and asked me, “who owns your car?” to which I confidently replied, “Well, I do.” He slowly shook his head and said, “We will need to do some more work on this one,” and moved on.

As I sat there, plenty embarrassed, I still did not fully grasp what he was telling me. God owns everything? Really? But as I was driving home that evening, the light came on just like it did for Saul on the road to Damascus. “Oh, I get it,” I thought to myself. Maybe it was the “ownership” part that I didn’t grasp. Used in his context, ownership meant *provided to me*, as in God has entrusted us with everything we own, possess, experience. Everything. No, God does not write us a check, or drop a car into our garages. But through creation, intellect, compassion and living generously together in community, God has provided for us a way to flourish in connection with one another. When we see ourselves as stewards of these gifts, then sharing our resources, God’s gifts, just naturally follows.

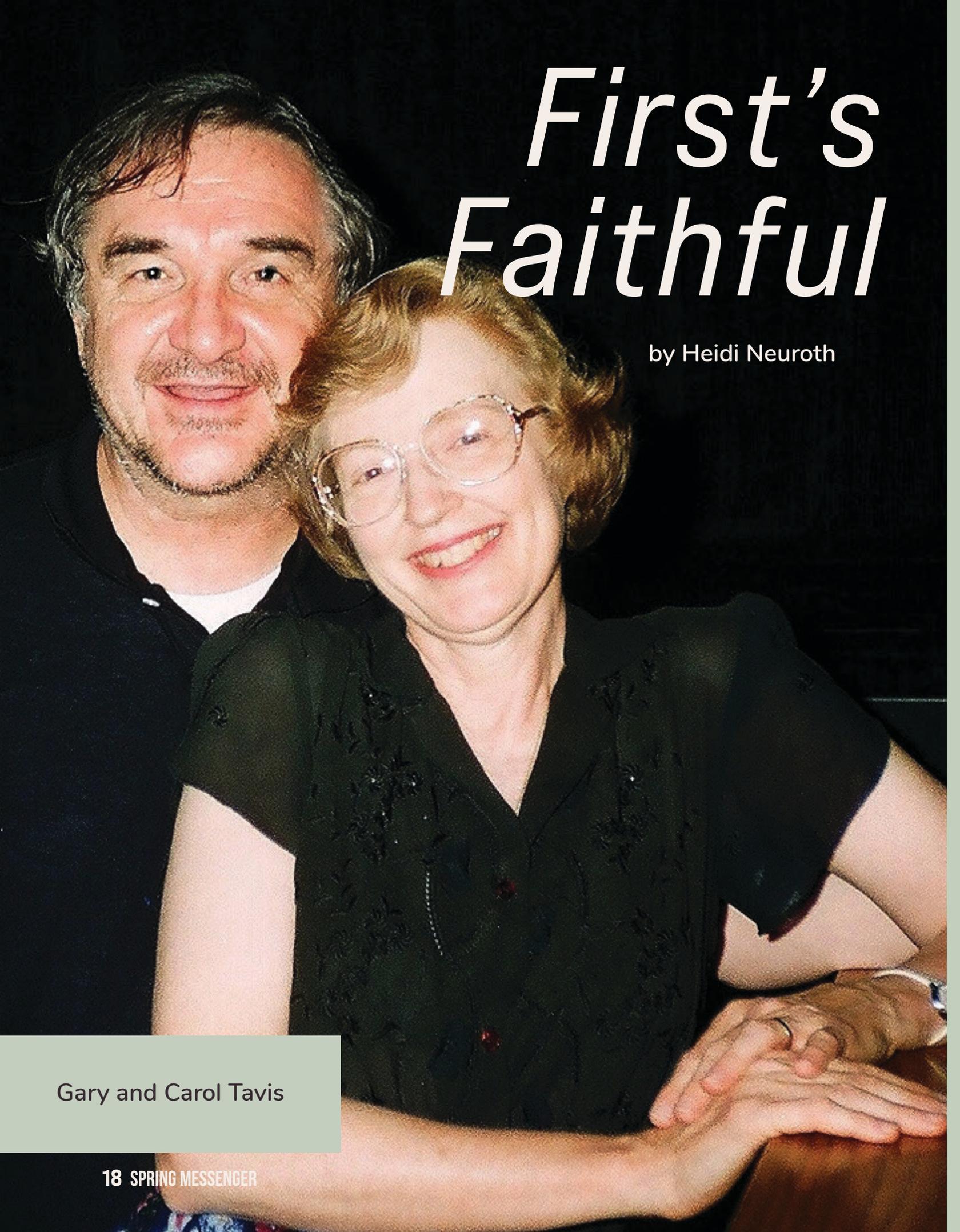
Diane and I are drawn to the sense of community here at FUMC. The people are warm and friendly, and the mission speaks to our desire to be of service

locally and around the world. We recognize the blessings being a part of this congregation provides and want others to experience those blessings as well. Generosity of heart and purse enhances our lives.

Some thirty years after joining the church, I am now the chair of our Finance team. Each year, we strive to create a budget that reflects the church’s deepest commitments to ministries we love and share with our community. Our budget is a theological statement of what we value as a church: our commitments to children, youth, music, worship, and the community of Pasadena. We also value our deep commitment to serving the hungry locally and supporting amazing ministries of the United Methodist Church. This year, our church budget is tight; in fact, it is underfunded. We are asking each person in our congregation to carefully consider increasing their regular giving to help us meet our financial challenges we face. You can set a regular, or increased pledge, on our website, through your online banking, or in our regular offering time each week.

However you choose to give, we thank you for partnering with First United Methodist Church to Christ’s love, joy and hope to Pasadena and the world.





# *First's Faithful*

by Heidi Neuroth

Gary and Carol Tavis

**We have been, for over a decade, celebrating the birthdays of our senior members (age 80+) with signed homemade cards. While working on this project, it became clear to me that many beautiful stories and memories need to be captured and celebrated through conversations with these faithful ones.**

**If you are interested in helping in this series of articles, please contact Heidi Neuroth at [hneuroth@outlook.com](mailto:hneuroth@outlook.com).**

Listening to FUMC adults one summer evening reminiscing about their youth experiences, I noticed everyone smiled when Carol and Gary Tavis were mentioned. Their memories included being accompanied during a concert, piano lessons, pit orchestra, etc. FUMC has a strong children's music program, and I was interested to meet the couple that had been an integral part of building it.

### **Family History**

Carol and Gary first met in east Los Angeles, transplants to Southern California from Royal Oak Michigan (Carol) and Hot Sulphur Springs, Colorado (Gary). They met towards the end of their undergraduate studies at Cal State, when Carol accompanied Gary's senior clarinet recital. Despite his consistently being behind the beat, the friendship grew.

Gary taught at Griffith Junior High School in East Los Angeles. Carol completed her graduate studies at USC in piano with Dorothy Jean Hartshorn (Bill Hartshorn was a former music minister at FUMC). Carol then taught at Stevenson Junior High School in Los Angeles and fondly remembers taking kids every Saturday to be part of the production of *La Boheme*.

Carol also taught instrumental music and choir at the Frances Blend Elementary School for the Visually Impaired. This was a highlight of her career. She recalls the Yamaha Company donating instruments. She even taught a couple of musical geniuses, including Lori Ruben (a globally known operatic soprano) and Juan Fidel (an instrumental musician). Carol had her own noteworthy accomplishments, such as recording all 32 Beethoven sonatas, the "Bravo" Award

from the Music Center, and both Gary and Carol received the "Music Educator Award" from the Hispanic Musicians Association.

While continuing their careers, Carol and Gary married and eventually moved to Covina. They had five kids (and now 13 grandchildren and four great grandchildren). Peter, the eldest lives in Chino Hills, Vincent recently moved to Idaho, Susan resides at Fort Bragg, Juliet and her husband, Eric Wolf (who she met during FUMC's production of *Fiddler on the Roof*) live in Upland, and Jenny lives in New York.

### **The FUMC Music Experience**

USC colleague, Dorothy Jean, asked Carol to conduct the Junior Choir at FUMC in 1968. With a smile, Carol reminisced, "It was wonderful; the students had a youth show and they needed an accompanist." Carol later took over as director of the choir and an accompanist for all of their shows.

**"Carol Tavis has been a wonderful fixture at FUMC for as long as I can remember. She accompanied our many choir tours when I was in high school (which was many years ago). I was always amazed when she could sit down and play anything on the piano."**

**- Mike Underwood**

**In elementary school Carol was my Cantate Choir director and she taught us John Rutter's "Angel's Carol." I got to sing the descant and learning this piece from Carol is definitely part of the story of how I fell in love with singing. I don't know how she taught such a rowdy bunch of kids that piece. I remember her gentle but effective teaching style so well. I loved learning not only how to sing from her but also how to love choral music.**

**- Megan Goldstein**

Summer choir tours included about 40-50 people and trips to San Diego, Seattle, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Arizona and New Mexico. Carol explains that sitting with different students on a bus made it easy to get to know kids during the trips. "It made me feel great when they were complimented on their music," she explains. The couple was also consistently dependable even when things didn't go as planned.

**Two days before we were set to fly away, I received a call from Steve Gothold (the Director of Music Ministry) informing me that the youth choir director was not going to be able to go on the trip, and that I needed to direct the choir. I had done an "interim" stint once before – but not with such little notice. The first rehearsal with the choir was after arriving at the hotel. Carol, who could have been stressed beyond belief, was calming, encouraging, and managed to be the foundation which held the music making together**

**- John Woodall**

The couple was also involved in several Summer Musicals. Gary shares that the first musical they saw was *Godspell*. Soon after, Gary became the backbone of the pit orchestra. The musical, put together in just one month, enabled kids of all skill levels to succeed.

**Gary has shared his musicianship so generously with the church and was always part of the Summer Musical pit band. He never made us feel our youth or inexperience, but rather made us feel part of the team. He has a gentle spirit that brings out the best in people.**

**- Holly Goldstein**

In addition, Gary Tavis was an usher at FUMC for many years, and likely you remember him this way if you were not directly involved in music.

**He was someone I always admired and enjoyed working with. He was good at making sure folks felt welcome and comfortable as they attended service. He loved hearing about how my son was progressing as he first picked up the trumpet, and then the baritone saxophone.**

**- Frank Carrera**

The opportunity to talk with Carol and Gary made me realize how important music teachers are within our lives. Not all of us will be professional musicians, but these opportunities for all kids to enjoy music at FUMC enables everyone to grow in spirit, connection and joy. Thank you to Gary and Carol for all of your continuous mentoring and commitment.





Carol and Gary on their  
Wedding Day



Gary and Carol  
in their  
Christmas  
Sweaters



Gary and Carol  
at the  
Bravo Awards



Carol at the Piano



The Tavis Family

# Father, Forgive Them...

By Rich Garner

As one of the “seven last words” of Jesus—his inviting forgiveness for those who arrested and crucified him—Jesus presents a crucial aspect of discipleship<sup>1</sup>. The entire “word” reads: “Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing’” (Luke 23:34). As one of several statements from the cross, Jesus indicates the presence and nature of God, even in such a terrifying time. Trust is a common theme in these seven last words, indeed throughout his life, and remains a call to us to act similarly in all situations.

One Greek word used for forgiveness is *aphes*<sup>2</sup> while a second prominent one is *charizomai*<sup>3</sup>. The New Testament use of these words follows the general concepts<sup>4</sup> encountered in the Hebrew scriptures. It is clear that forgiveness includes “gracious mercy” and an activity of being “sent away.” Thus, Biblically, forgiveness is a response of gracious mercy which sends away the hurt, the brokenness so that a new relationship can grow.

Perhaps the activity of South Africa’s Commission on Truth and Reconciliation<sup>5</sup> is most famous for its work of forgiveness. Recognizing the societal brokenness brought about by the violence of apartheid, this movement sought to foster a face-to-face meeting of the perpetrator with one who has been abused. Often it was a relative who received the request for forgiveness for the killing of a son or a brother. Time and again, the weeping perpetrator fell into the open arms of a mother who embraced the murderer, offering peace to both. Full reconciliation could come about only if the terrible act is to be mentioned no more—sent away from memory and covered over from view.

Most of our broken relationships are not as pernicious as those arising out of hate. Rather, thoughtless activity is frequently the source of separation one from another. The truth of the injury must be acknowledged and forgiveness offered and received before reconciliation and healing can occur and both be made whole again, at least in this relationship: “I did not realize that my words (or silence or act or failure to act or...) evoked such a memory, such a reaction.”

Importantly, Jesus would suggest a middle response is necessary as well. Mark records that following the temptation in the wilderness and the arrest of John the Baptizer, Jesus proclaims “the good news of God, [saying] ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news’” (Mark 1:15). John Wesley (one of the founders of the Methodist Reform Movement) understood that the sinner must turn from sinful activity and follow a new pathway if forgiveness is to do its reconciling, saving work, something required of both parties caught up in the injury<sup>6</sup>. Without repentance, forgiveness can only be replaced with “pardon” which is often more merciless amnesia than gracious accountability. The advice to “just forget about it and move on” rarely heals anyone.

How widespread is this need for forgiveness? Matthew shares a brief encounter between Peter and Jesus. “‘Lord, if another member of the church [or my brother] sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven [or seventy times seven] times’” (Matthew 18:21-22). Not only is the grace of forgiveness to be

limitless, it is of God, seven being a holy number.

The model and source for forgiveness is God in whom Jesus trusts, to whom Jesus cries out while suffering on the cross. God wishes to be merciful and to banish our sin so that a loving relationship can return and flourish. Will we take up such an invitation, this “commandment” to love even as we are loved?

Jesus teaches disciples to pray (in part) “And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,” “trespasses” being the King James Version of “sin”. Forgiveness affects all who participate in such reconciling action and then gracefully spreads further into the lives of others seeking models for living peacefully, joyously.

*Forgive Everyone Everything* is the call of Father Gregory Boyle in the book suggested for our congregational Lenten study. Such action is as daunting as it is necessary if we are to be God’s people. Who needs our forgiveness (besides us)? When will we offer it (and receive its grace as well)?

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> In referring to Luke, chapter 23, verse 34, one might note that in the New Revised Standard Version, this verse appears in double brackets which indicates that some ancient authorities, typically biblical manuscripts, do not include this statement. This is not the only case when double brackets are employed and reminds us there is a multitude of manuscripts available for translation purposes.

<sup>2</sup> Although many Greek words are roots for English usage, *aphes* is not one of them. The only cognate that is used in English language is “*aphesis*” indicating a word derived from another by the “sending away” of a first, unaccented syllable. Thus, through “*aphesis*”, “*esquire*” becomes “*squire*” and “*because*” becomes “*cause*”. Medically, this word is directly related to “*apheresis*” which is the “sending out” of platelets from blood, this *apheresis* being given over to others in need of it.

<sup>3</sup> The root of this Greek word is to be encountered in the religious term *chrism* (gracious gift) and in *charismatic* (gifted by grace) though a *charismatic* can be experienced anywhere on a spectrum from merciful to brutally dictatorial. The “gift out of grace” can be misused.

<sup>4</sup> Two Hebrew words for forgiveness *kaphir* and *salach* are translated as “cover” and “sent away” respectively. Thus, to rid the community of sin, these transgressions are symbolically piled onto the head of a scapegoat which is then banished from the community or ‘sent away’ to ‘cover’ over the misdeeds.

<sup>5</sup> It is significant that a leading force in this movement was Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the church being at the forefront of the need for forgiveness.

<sup>6</sup> Thus on Ash Wednesday as ashes are imposed upon the head, one choice of words spoken can be “Repent and believe the gospel.” Some would suggest that this may be more faithfully fruitful than the words “Remember that from dust you have come and to dust you will return.”

# Gabby: A Love Worth the Bites

By Steve Zeider



Viciously Cute

Gabby was three times an orphan. By the age of eight, three owners had passed on and left her. After her second owner died, she had been neglected by a relative who had no interest, stopping by once a day to feed her and let her out. After six months of this

treatment, Ed Sales, my father-in-law took her in. Ed was unfailingly

kind to her, as everyone who knew him would expect, but at age 97 he passed and Gabby came to us.

Gabby was untrusting. She had even bitten Ed a couple times, which he forgave. This was not just a nip. Gabby would bite and hold on, or bite repeatedly, drawing blood. She might be calmly resting in your lap, then out of nowhere rear up snarling, fangs bared eight inches from your face. We have to push her away in self-defense. Had she been larger, more capable of doing real damage, we would may have needed to put her down.

We had two other dogs, to which she was indifferent. Both were at least twice her size, but they dared not go for her food. Neither of them made trouble for her intentionally that we could see, but occasionally she would attack one or the other who had somehow given offense.

We worked to earn her trust. Always we spoke her name before touching her, or nudged her bed with a foot to ensure she was awake. She would then sometimes spring up and attack my shoe. After a while, I began to get on my knees and elbows, mimicking a dog's play posture,

something the other dogs never did with her. Remarkably, she would then approach and accept a petting. After some months, she began to mouth play very gently, lightly biting my fingers. With the larger of the other two dogs, I would play roughly, grabbing a leg and getting my wrist grabbed, then letting go and grabbing the other foot with my other hand, getting him to release my wrist and grab the other. Gabby was never up to that sort of contact sport, nor was I willing to push my luck so far. I learned her limits and we came to trust each other.

It took two or three years, but we salvaged her. A dog that we did not like but had taken in as a matter of filial duty became a beloved companion. She would even sleep peacefully under the covers between us. We had her for nine years. When she was 18, she became reluctant to walk uphill, so I started carrying her up the block and let her walk downhill. She was down to six pounds by then from her former robust weight of eight pounds. Very oddly, in her last year, she took to jumping. Up the curb, off the curb, off the steps, even across manhole covers! She reminded me of an old woman making up for lost time by taking up roller skating.

At 19, Gabby finally ran out of steam, and now lies with her pet predecessors Liberty, DuPont, and Charlie. The unwanted little girl took her place among the creatures I have loved, brave, strong, and loyal. It was worth the bites.



# Our Creative Community

One of the many pleasures of working at FUMC is discovering the tremendous talents of members past and present.

Ann Burke was gracious enough to share with me a folder of beautiful poetry by her grandfather and past church member, George F. Mays.

The poem below, *Keeping in Tune with God*, seems tailor-made for our focus this Lenten season on forgiveness, redemption, and connection with others. Mays writes of connecting with those that are often overlooked by society in a lovely meditation on what it means to be “in tune” with God’s grace.

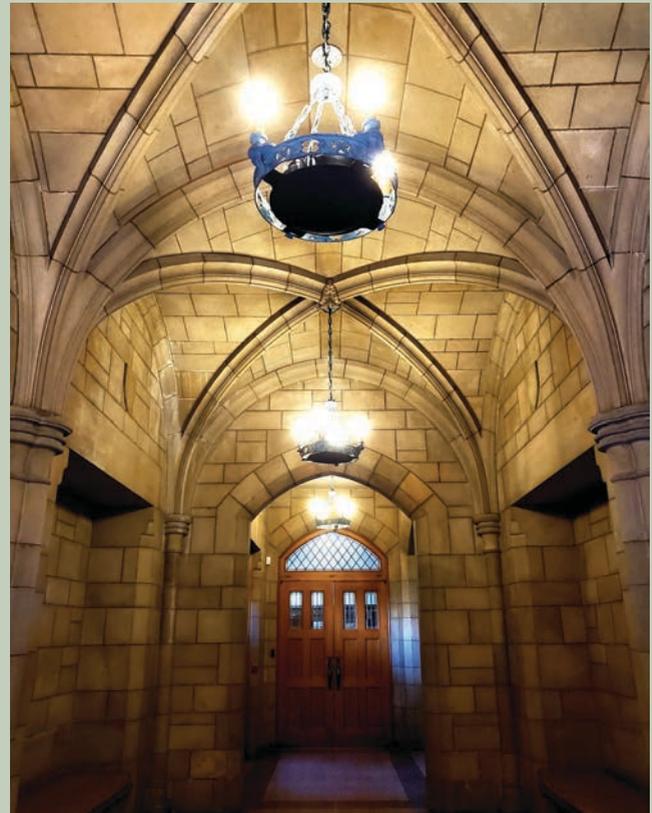
## Keeping in Tune with God

George F. Mays (1930s)

Let me WALK with the man on the lonely road  
Though strewn with many a stone  
For seeing how nobly he bears HIS load  
I seem to forget my own.

Let me TALK with the man in the dusty street  
As I see him slowly plod.  
For by speaking the language of those I meet  
I learn to commune with God.

Let me CLAIM as my friend the man who is down  
Cast out from societies door  
For a smile will do more than censure of frown  
To help him stand once more.



Another little joy is opening my email inbox to find photos from Sarah Wright. Her unique architectural photography gives the viewer a new perspective on the building where we gather to worship. It is often said that “church” is the people, not the structure. But, we are very lucky to have such a beautiful building to be in community within.



# New Support Ministry: Care for the Caregiver

By Rev. Connie Tamkin

Many of us are caregivers of an aging parent or relative. It can be frustrating, overwhelming, and challenging to navigate this season of care. However, it can also be a season of tenderness, depth and grace. **Care for the Caregiver** is designed to provide practical information and support your emotional and spiritual well-being.

Rev. Connie Tamkin and Jacqueline Burnson-Whall have designed this support group to cover a wide range of topics. Conversations will be tailored to participant needs.

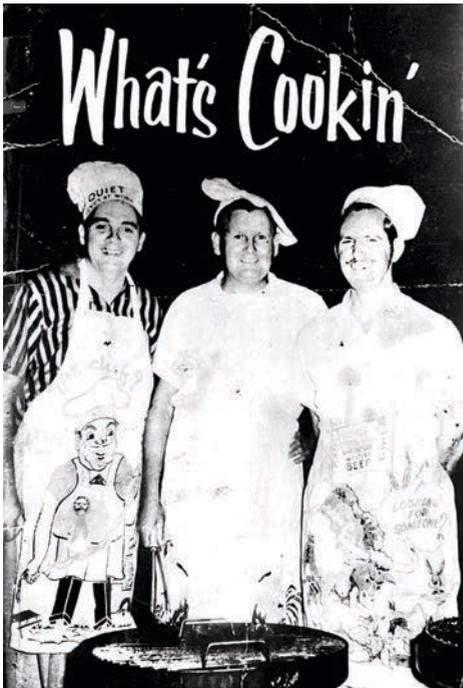
On the 3rd Thursday of the month (Starting March 16), 7:00 - 8:30 p.m., the group will meet in the Church Lounge and via Zoom. Registration encouraged, especially for those wanting to participate via Zoom.

Contact [connect@fumcpasadena.org](mailto:connect@fumcpasadena.org) to register.

**A love offering is suggested to support special guests.**

# Food for Thought

Linda Lucas stopped by the office recently with a “tasty” treat—The 1957 edition of the Aldersgate Cookbook. We thought it would be fun to share a few of the more unusual recipes that were shared by this fellowship group. *Bon Appétit!*



## Corned Beef Salad Mold

- 1 can corned beef
- 2 C. chopped celery
- 1 green paper (ground)
- 2 T. grated onion
- 2 pkg. lemon Jello
- 3 1/2 C. water
- 2 C. Miracle Whip
- Salt to taste

Prepare Jello with water. When slightly cool mix in other ingredients. Let stand until set, in refrigerator. When served, top with Best Foods French Dressing.

- Jane Brannon

## Green Limas & Mushrooms

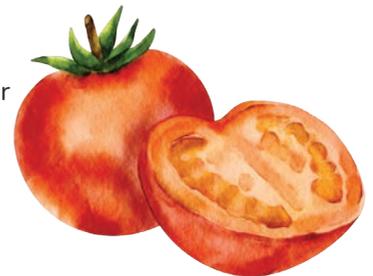
- 1 T butter or margarine
- 2 T finely chopped onion
- 1 4 oz. can of sliced mushrooms
- 2 C canned of frozen limas
- 1/2 C top milk or thin cream
- Salt, paper, & Paprika

Melt butter in a saucepan and saute onion & mushrooms gently for about 10 minutes. Add lima beans (cooked slightly) & top milk. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Let simmer about 10 minutes more. Sprinkle lightly with paprika. Chopped pimiento may be added just before serving to add color. Serves. 4.

- Mary Sales

## Tomato Soup Cake

- 1/2 C. Crisco
- 1 C. sugar
- 1 C. tomato soup in which 1 t. soda has been dissolved
- 2 C. flour
- 2 t. baking powder
- 1 t. cinnamon
- 1/2 t. cloves
- 1 t. nutmeg
- 1 C. raisins
- 1 C. chopped walnuts



Blend Crisco with the sugar. Add tomato soup and soda. Sift dry ingredients and add to the first mixture. Stir in nuts and raisins. Pour into a small tube pan or loaf pan and bake for 50 to 60 minutes at 350 °.

## Frosting for Soup Cake

Cream together one 3 oz pkg. cream cheese, 1 1/2 C. powdered sugar, 1 t. vanilla.

Spread on cake when it is cool. Let stand one day before cutting.

Don't be fooled by the name—this is a real treat.

- Zell Rust





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Red Cross Blood Drive, FUMC Parking Lot, March 19, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
To schedule an appointment please log onto [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org)  
enter sponsor code: **FUMCPASADENA.**

