



The

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Modesto Church of the Brethren

2301 Woodland Avenue, Modesto, CA 95358-9501 (209)523-1438

fax: 209-523-1469 ♦ e-mail: office@modcob.org ♦ web site: www.modcob.org

Pastor: Andrew Sampson

Ministers: Every Member of the Congregation

Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together.



Our church has long struggled to find ways to reach out to our immediate community. Through the tragic shooting incident last December near our labyrinth, we have an opportunity to minister to a family from our neighborhood in a unique and compassionate way. The relationships we build through this tragedy could have lasting effects for our church for years to come.

Several members of our congregation have been in contact with Darlene Ruiz, the mother of Trevor Seever, the young man who was shot. Ms. Ruiz has explained that she believes our labyrinth may have been a peaceful, quiet place that her son visited on more than one occasion. Since her son's death, Ms. Ruiz has visited the labyrinth frequently and has found it to be a place of comfort for her and her family, as well.

Ms. Ruiz and her family have expressed a desire to give a memorial gift to the church as a thank you for the kindness she has received and to mark the place as special to her son. She has also requested the use of the labyrinth area on April 24 to remember Trevor's birthday with family and the community.

At the church board meeting held on April 12, it was agreed that a delegation including Pastor Andrew Sampson, Elaine Forcier and Marye Martinez would meet with Ms. Ruiz to ask how the church may best serve the family for the birthday gathering. They will also discuss the possibility of another bench near the labyrinth as a memorial gift.

This is definitely an unprecedented, sometimes difficult and remarkable time in the life of our church. It has stirred many thoughts, ideas and opinions among us. The board will continue its conversations and welcome your thoughts as well.

Walking with you,
Kim Boardman, Board Chair
Andrew Sampson, Pastor



Please join us for worship on the Modesto Church of the Brethren Facebook page at 11 AM each Sunday

Visit
www.facebook.com/modcob
on Sundays at 11:00 PST for
worship! No account required!



From Pat Royer: Many thanks for the visits, calls, cards, prayers, and flowers I received during my recent stint in the hospital and rehab. I feel so blessed to be the receiver of such kindness and concern. And to the one who delivered irises to my door, you can come by to identify yourself and pick up your vase.

I am feeling well and regaining strength each day. Come by and see for yourself. My love to all. Pat Royer

Allison asks for prayers for her friend Candice with pregnancy complications, and her mother with cancer.

Tiffany P. asks for prayers for her job interview this week.

Sheri Sampson asks for prayers for her brother-in-law in the hospital with COVID.

Joann Ewert is thankful for successful cataract surgery, and asks for prayers for continued healing.

Sandy Whitby asks for prayers for her mom's cousin Jane Freed who fell and broke her leg. She is in San Diego with her son, hopefully healing fast.

Carole Greathouse gives praise that her brother Jeff Glass was able to come to California and see an excellent cardiologist. He underwent several tests on his heart and is doing much better, all without surgery.

Monique Sanders has joy for her family—her dad is home from the hospital and is on the road to recovery, She thanks all for the prayers in the past weeks.

Terhesa Gamboa asks that we continue to hold her nephew-in-law Eugene in our prayers. He is awake and talking and is doing physical therapy. Terhesa was able to visit him last week.



April Birthdays

Stephen Reddy - 1

Harold Mueller-19

Cooper Sampson - 19

May Birthdays

Michelle Beaton-6

David F Messamer-26

Jaime Farrar-31

Cindy Cearley-31

Please send me any other birthdays for any month! I know there are more!



Take-Out Meal April 21!

If you have signed up for the Wednesday night Take-Out meal, don't forget to swing by the church and pick up your dinner after 5:30 pm. Price is \$5.00 per meal. We look forward to seeing you.... Fellowship and Recreation Commission



As often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me.

This month, the meal that our church provides for the 9th & D Salvation Army Berberian Shelter every month was prepared by personnel from Modesto Junior College's Nursing Program. If you are interested in participating in this outreach project, please contact Pastor Andrew. The last meal of the winter season will be prepared and delivered on May 14.



A big thanks to this masked group of workers. A good day !!

Successful Spring Workday!

We had 19 folks come out for this year's spring work day. The gutters got their semi-annual blowing out. The solar panels got their semi-annual cleaning. The exterior office windows got a cleaning too. We had a special project this year and that was adding 3 more cubic yards to the labyrinth plant area and it looks good. A little more mulch will be added in time.

Welcome Statement

Believing that God's unbounded love and grace, as taught by Jesus, are offered to all and meant to be shared and celebrated by all, we embrace persons of every age, race, sexual orientation, ethnic and religious background, physical and mental ability, and economic means as vital and integral members of God's family. As an Open and Affirming congregation we welcome everyone to participate in the life and worship of our church

May peace prevail



The following article was published in the April 2021 Messenger. It is reprinted here for those who do not subscribe to Messenger.

A few days after Christmas, an emotionally distraught young man ran from police and into our church courtyard at Modesto Church of the Brethren. He was shot and killed there by a Modesto police officer responding to this family's frantic call for help.

Although the young man did not actually have a gun, information that he claimed to have purchased one may have influenced the officer's decision to shoot.

How sad and ironic that this violent and disturbing incident took place at our labyrinth site, the very place set aside for prayerful walking and meditation. Momentarily this peaceful place had become a killing place.

This very tragic act of violence inflicted pain on the community, not only for the victim's family but also for the police officer, his family, the police department, our congregation and the larger Modesto community.

Many in our faith community felt a strong need to respond and did so in a variety of ways.

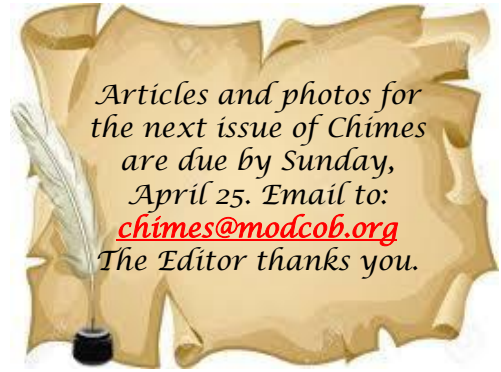
The message, "We grieve and pray with you," was posted on our church marquee. Letters were written to our local newspaper. Individuals in our congregation and beyond came to the labyrinth for private or group prayer.

A group of six met on a recent Sunday afternoon to pray, sing, and walk together. On the central rock, they burned a bundle of sage to symbolically release negative energy in a Native American tradition, and to reclaim this area as the sacred space it was designed to be. Freesia bulbs were planted to symbolize the hope of new life beyond death.

The victim's family held a small vigil in his honor, leaving behind a simple memorial. In conversation with the family, we learned that their son had come to the labyrinth several times earlier in hopes of finding peace in the midst of his emotional struggles. Later, they posted yard signs on our property requesting justice for their son. Willingness to share their contact information has opened the door to further connection with our congregation as needs rise.

Community organizations are now in the process of presenting a plan for establishing a police review board, working toward justice for victims, and accountability for police.

We don't know what the future may bring, but we have faith that our labyrinth can continue to serve its intended purpose as a contemplative place for quiet reflection. Hopefully, many will continue to be drawn to this peace.--Felton Daniels, Elaine Forcier, Linda Owen, and Andrew Sampson of the Worship and Spiritual Life Commission of the Modesto Church of the Brethren



Last year, before COVID confined us to our homes and few of us ventured out to visit the church, the Witness Commission sponsored an outreach project for the Shower Shuttle. We had boxes in the narthex into which members of the congregation put packages of socks to be donated to guests of the Shower Shuttle.

Like every church, restaurant, and most every other business, the Shower Shuttle had to close for part of the pandemic. But it is now back in operation on a reduced schedule. And the guests need socks! And underwear!

The Shower Shuttle boxes are back in the narthex, and this year, we are asking that members of the congregation donate not only socks, but—underwear! After a refreshing shower, guests of the Shower Shuttle need clean socks and underwear to feel clean.

As well as socks, the Shower Shuttle needs men's boxers, sizes Small, Medium, and Large (NO brief-style tighty-whitey's) please! Women's panties, sizes Small, Medium, and Large. Any style. (Please note: Most of the women guests tend to be on the smaller side)

Your donations may be placed in the Shower Shuttle boxes in the narthex if you visit the church. If you would like to donate, but can't get to the church, call Jim Costello at (209) 402-9191 or Luella Cole at (209) 402-2915 and we will pick up your donations.

The Stewardship Commission is concerned about the amount of giving to date. Please look over this giving report and consider your giving for this year.

Cash Receipts/Expenses 2021

January \$15,322.00

February \$14,191.00

March \$\$12,699.68

Total \$42,212.68 *

* This giving reflects 14.3% of our 2021 budget with 25% of the year elapsed. Our disbursements to date have been \$53,511.20.

Modesto Church of the Brethren

Board of Administration Minutes April 12, 2021

Present: Kim Boardman, Jim Boardman, Elaine Forcier, Felton Daniels, Karleen Daniels, Jim Costello, Bill Johnson, Andrew Sampson, Edie Ransom, Jim Martinez, Luella Cole, Leslie Wilkinson

Absent: Marye Martinez, Peggy Hoover, and Linda Hunter

- I. Opening Devotions: Felton Daniels - "Reflections on the Lectionary" - Our job as a church is to find ways to help raise people up.
- II. Approval of Agenda: M/S/P - Jim Boardman/Jim Martinez
- III. Approval of March 8, 2021 minutes: M/S/P - Felton Daniels/Bill Johnson
- IV. Treasurer's report: Edie Ransom - Total cash receipts: The cash receipts for March were \$12,699.68. Cash disbursements were \$16,219.24. March had a decrease of \$3,519.56. The cash decrease thus far for 2021 is \$11,298.52. Discussion: A quarter of the year is gone. We have only met 14.3% of the budget. M/S/P- Bill Johnson/Elaine Forcier
- V. Business:
 - A. Seever-Ruiz Memorial
 - Elaine gave an update: At the Board's request, Elaine spoke to the Seever-Ruiz family, who have felt very supported by our church. Elaine offered to have a memorial brick placed in Trevor's honor, in the courtyard pathway where other memorial bricks are already in place. The family said they would prefer to pay to have a bench with a plaque be installed for Trevor. After being informed that our church does not install commemorative plaques, it was noticed that there is an existing plaque for the Couchman family. At that point Elaine asked for more time for the Board to discuss the best course of action.
 - Marye Martinez has been in contact with the family regarding an open house near the labyrinth. This event commemorating Trevor's birthday has been scheduled for April 24th. His family, church members, and anyone in the community are welcome to attend. Before the event, the family will be cleaning up the existing memorial.
 - A church work day is scheduled on Saturday, April 17th. The Seever-Ruiz family has volunteered to come and help that day, working in the labyrinth area.
 - The Board has asked Elaine, Marye Martinez, and Andrew to meet with the Seever-Ruiz family for two purposes. First, to discuss how best our church can support their desires about the upcoming open house. Secondly, to discuss some type of memorial for Trevor. Following these discussions, Andrew, Marye, and Elaine will report back to the Board.
 - B. Laptop computer purchase for use with live streaming system: Andrew - The church's laptop is currently being used with the new streaming system. This laptop is also used by Andrew doing church business. A recommendation from Worship and Spiritual Life was made that a separate laptop should be purchased, one that is solely dedicated to worship and live streaming. The quote for a new laptop is \$932.67. Money from a grant from PSWD will be used to purchase the laptop. The recommendation was passed unanimously.

VI. Commission Reports:

- A. Witness, Luella Cole: First, Tamra is working alone at home with Family Promise. Second, a box at the church is available for socks or men's boxers. Third, One Great Hour of Sharing - \$300.00 was collected.
- B. Stewardship, Jim Martinez: We continue to encourage congregants to give offerings. An article was written in the *Chimes*. With COVID restrictions lessening, income from renting out our church may go up.
- C. Worship and Spiritual Life, Elaine Forcier: First, a thank you goes out to Andrew and the Worship Team for the Easter morning in-person worship. Second, Monique Sanders has agreed to be on the Worship Team. Third, an informational sign will be posted at the entrance of the labyrinth with suggestions of how to use it. The size of the sign will be 20 X 24 inches, and will be paid for out of the labyrinth fund.
- D. Member-at-Large, Felton Daniels: No report.
- E. Christian Education, Karleen Daniels: First, a virtual fun event will be held on April 23rd. Second, Peace Week is in the planning stages and will be themed "Peaceful Phoenix." Third, the high schoolers have met three times, with between 4 and 7 attendees. Junior Highs youth have met once.
- F. Fellowship and Recreation, Peggy Hoover: April 21st take-out dinner.
- G. Moderator, Linda Hunter: No report.
- H. Buildings and Grounds, Jim Boardman: First, work day is on April 17th. Tree trimming is deferred until dormancy. Second, we are still seeking estimates for painting the office area, and Bob Sesser has donated flooring that may be used. Third, a hot water pump has gone out, leaving no hot water in the classroom wing. The pump may need to be replaced.
- I. Deacons, Marye Martinez: Thanks to everyone who helped with the Maunday Thursday event.
- J. Personnel, Bill Johnson: No report.
- K. Pastor, Andrew Sampson: First, due to the article regarding Trevor in the *Chimes*, Andrew has received messages from various parts of the world saying that they are praying for the church. Second, Andrew will be having his second vaccination soon. He hopes to be able to conduct more in-person visits. Third, this year's Annual Conference will be held over Zoom. Andrew has concerns about the health of people sitting for extended periods of time while being online for long meetings.

VII. Other: Next Zoom meeting: Monday, May 10, 2021, at 6:30 PM. Devotions will be led by Marye Martinez.

Adjourn: 8:19 PM

Notes respectfully submitted by Leslie Wilkinson