

Valley Messenger

A publication of San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church. Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

I'm Falling In Love...

Dear SRVUMC Family,

At the writing of this article (on July 15-with the clock quickly ticking towards the deadline!), I find myself falling in love with this community. I know I'm only two weeks and a day into my appointment here at SRVUMC, but wow...the warm welcome, the sincere kindness, the exuberant joy, and even the heartfelt "grilling" has incredibly moved my heart. I have already shared with you that I am an "I" (Introversion) on the Myers-Briggs personality scale, but I am also a very strong "F" (Feeling). That makes me a romantic, and when it comes to ministry and pastoring, I tend to lead with the heart. My guess is you already sensed this about me through my preaching!

This is all to say that you have already won over my heart! These first two weeks has been an incredible whirlwind of learning the ins and outs of this very complex church; navigating some challenging ministry scenarios; attending countless meetings: unpacking and settling into my beautiful office; and trying to figure out where all the bathrooms are located! Needless to say, my days have been full and, to be completely honest, a bit of a blur as well. But here's what I remember—the beautiful faces, names and stories of our wonderful and blessed community. There are still many of you that I need to meet and get to know more deeply, but I have already had the opportunity for a number of candid and engaging conversations in my office or over a meal or even through a spontaneous encounter on our amazing campus. Thank you to each and every one of you that has made the time to connect with me and welcome me.

I am head-over-heels falling in love with you. And I expect that this love will grow even deeper in the days, weeks, and months ahead as I soon meet and get to know more of you! The

August 2023

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Next Issue: September 2023

Have something you'd like included in next month's Messenger? Please submit your articles to Lisa Jancarik at media@srvumc.org by

August 15, 2023.

Announcements

From Page 1

best is yet to come!

With a Heart Full of Hope,

P. Sam | syun@srvumc.org | Instagram: @revyunique

P.S. For those of you who may be curious, my full Myers-Briggs personality type is: INFJ. If you're not familiar with this personality test, you can figure yours out online at: https://

www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test. If you know your type, please share with me!



Photo: P. Sam meets the Stephen Ministry team here at SRVUMC...another bunch who "Feel" for those who need someone to listen.



Stephen Ministers Are Listening

Going through one of life's challenges? Our Stephen Ministers provide high-quality, one-to-one, confidential, Christ-centered care to people in the congregation and the community who are carrying an especially heavy load. **Contact Al Banisch at albanisch@comcast.net** to learn more.

Did You Know? New Celebrations Protocol!

Check out the Celebrations page for August: There are a LOT of folks to honor this month! Recently, Michelle Cooke in our office kindly worked with me to bring Church Center into the newsletter's toolkit for developing the monthly list of celebrants.

It does make me wonder, though...how many of us still need to update our presence in the online directory? *Did you know that you can choose which information to share with the church community in Church Center's online directory?* So, even if you input your anniversary or summer mailing address into the system, *you get to decide* whether or not to make it visible in the directory. Church staff needs to maintain and access all your pertinent information, but members looking at the online directory only see content you've permitted. —*Editor*





Lunch with Friends

Tuesday, August 15 Wesley Center, Noon

End of summer BBQ in the courtyard (weather permitting)! Guest chef and award-winning BBQ expert Greg Lane will be grilling his perfect tri-tip steak, and we'll be serving all the great BBQ sides—Mike Mill's baked beans, smokey mac and cheese, creamy cole slaw and s'mores for dessert! **Contact** Nancy Benvenuto with questions at nancybenvenuto.gmail.com.

Then, mark your calendars for **Tuesday**, **September 19**, when we will be celebrating Mexican Independence Day (officially September 16) with homemade chicken enchiladas, taco salad, and all the good Mexican cuisine standards.



Grill & Chill

Thursday, August 3, 6 p.m. SRVUMC Courtyard

Hawaiian holiday—join the luau! Enjoy a ukulele serenade to set the mood. Admission is free, although a donation of \$15/person or \$25/family is always welcome.

Please sign up <u>here</u> or look for the QR code around campus.



The Harvest Festival Craft Fair 2023!

November 4, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Crafters, It's Time To Start Thinking About Your Table!

It's time for all crafters to get their creative juices flowing! This eagerly anticipated event and church tradition showcases quality, handmade items, perfectly timed as a Christmas shopping destination.

Don't miss this fun social event, church fundraiser and good opportunity for outreach to the community! You, your friends and family can take part. *Please contact Shannon Dever at shannon-dever62@gmail.com* for more information.





The Receiver Is Grateful for Help By John Greene

The temperature was ramping up this Friday in mid-July. Tomorrow was expected to top out over a hundred degrees. Needing to get outside, I drove over to walk the Bishop Ranch trail. The trail is a favorite walk of mine. The perimeter is 2.5 miles, 3.5 miles if I include the interior around the lake.

As I drove to my parking spot, I passed a man pushing a two-wheeled cart. He was in the bike lane across the street. I noticed, but I could not read the sign he had affixed to the front of the cart. I thought he was a person conducting a long and challenging trip to support a cause, cure cancer, or cure AIDS, etc.

I parked and entered the trail. It was warm, but much of the route was under tree cover. A half-mile into it, I came across the man with the cart. He was resting and rearranging his goods at a shady spot with a yellow bench. I often stop here at this pleasant setting.

He was in the 45 to 55 age range, clean-shaven from his shoulders up. I noticed the redness on his head from the sun he was moving through. I greeted him, and then I saw his sign. It told of his being homeless, and in small print said any amount of assistance would be appreciated. He had a quiet manner, easy to talk with. I offered a donation, but after patting my pockets I realized my wallet was in the car. He told me it was the thought that counted. I resumed my walk, but I realized I wanted to know more of this man, and I backtracked to him.

To my questions, he answered he spends nights in a couple of places, sometimes in a park in Walnut Creek or another in San Ramon. He has an arrangement with a local health club where he showers and washes his clothes. I asked if he frequents Trinity Center in Walnut Creek. He used to go to Trinity, but he does not anymore. He told me he has progressed to what he called, "third level from the bottom," the bottom being where one still uses drugs/alcohol. He was proud of his progress.

I mentioned our church prepared meals and faith-sharing time for several years at Trinity. He asked what church, and I answered, "The Methodist Church in Alamo." Surprising me he asked, "The San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church?" and I smiled that he would know us.

He went on to say, "I loved those meals. Your church served the best-tasting lunches, and I did not miss a Friday! Your church people were the so kind, always smiling, always with a good word to everyone.""

He asked, "Did you know Horace?"

"Oh, yes, Horace is a legend, and he was a very close friend."

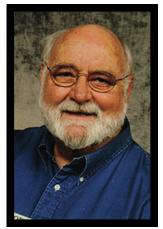


Photo: Horace Crawford. If you're too new to SRVUMC to have met him, ask someone about him.

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From Page 4

He stated, "Horace did so many kind things, so many special ways to help me and others. I loved that man!"

We shook hands and expressed our appreciation for our time together, and we continued our journeys. I kicked myself for not giving my hat to him. I was concerned for him in this heat. I returned to my car and drove a few blocks around where he may have traveled, but I didn't see him again. I wished I had my wallet that day. I think of him every day since we met. I pray he is moving forward towards that fourth level.

Carole Contemplates Cairns By Carole Johnson

Hopefully this "pile of rocks" shown in the bottom left image is a familiar "Signpost" icon to you. The image is used on the SRVUMC website to introduce a <u>series of videos</u> offering a "Free Spiritual Practices Course" so one can "[l]earn how to do Christian spiritual practices to grow your faith..." produced by Sarah Stribling, our Director of Social Media and Online Ministries. It is especially helpful as an introduction to living as a Faith-full person, but it's also a great review of disciplines, worship tips, and background for being a Christian and a United Methodist. (Note: you can find these videos on the "I'm New" drop-down menu, but you don't actually have to be new to Christianity, United Methodism or even SRVUMC to draw wisdom from them.)

In the second video Sarah identifies a "cairn" (pronounced Karen) as a pile of stones that marks a trail: When you see it you know you are on the right path. In Gaelic, the word translates as "heap of stones." A cairn is a signpost made by people who have gone before you. It says, "this is the way."

The picture of that cairn resonated with me as a blueprint and a challenge to replicate. Our Johnson

cairn marking "The Way Home" was made from rocks from the church's Camp Lodestar in the Sierra foothills. They were obtained years ago to provide bal-





last for Don's truck on the return after delivering plywood for a United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) worksite. Steve Elliott was the project leader. Besides appreciating the review of spiritual practices and the remembrance of friends (next page), it reminds

Left: The cairn from the into to Sarah Stribling's spiritual practices videos. Right: Carole's own cairn, inspired by the videos.



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me of the new church signs added along San Ramon Blvd. Do they also represent to you a welcoming community built on the shoulders of the many who established and invested their time, talent and money in creating our church?

Don and I decided to think of them as a "Signpost", per Sarah's lessons, to renew our commitment to John Wesley's "Rule of Life": Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you can." The Johnson version of the "can-can"!

Remembering Brad McWilliams at Mount Everest

Originally Appeared in December 2016 Valley Messenger



Photo: Lyn Arscott places the Danville pebble on the cairn at the base of Everest at an elevation of 17,600 feet. Everest is in the background and the formidable Kumbu Ice Fall is clearly shown in the foreground. On October 26, 2016, Lyn and Chris Arscott built a cairn at the Everest Base Camp and placed on top a pebble that was carried all the way from Danville. This was in memory of Brad McWilliams who passed away before he and his dad, Dean, were able to make the same journey to the base camp that they had been planning. When Dean learned that Lyn and Chris were planning to make this trip, it brought back memories of the time when Dean and Brad were making the same plans. He asked Lyn to take a small pebble from Danville as a memorial to Brad.

Whenever our church members see a picture of Everest they might remember that there is a small piece of Danville at the base, a memorial to Brad and a symbol of the spirit of SRVUMC.

Have You Noticed?

Your familiar church newsletter has been printing more 300+ word articles like John's and Carole's. Don't worry: *The Valley Messenger* will still contain announcements, but maybe we'll also find some food for thought. Which topics would you like to see explored in more depth? Church history? More about missions? A profile of some small group or church tradition? Let's share our collective wisdom.



Walk to Emmaus: A Pilgrimage of the Heart By Bill Rust

Last April, I took a spiritual pilgrimage in the South Bay. It recharged my exhausted spiritual battery. Next October, you can take that same pilgrimage, if you want to, right here at SRVUMC. You're invited to learn more.

"Walk to Emmaus" is a national ecumenical movement of The Upper Room Ministries of The United Methodist Church. It's not new. Emmaus and similar programs in other Christian traditions have been recharging spiritual batteries of run-down church leaders since 1949! The program is especially for weary church leaders worn down by the daily grind of administrative tasks and deadlines that demand attention. We forget what our ministry is all about.



© The Upper Room

A "Walk" is a four-day weekend retreat designed to nurture these leaders and others who are spiritually hungry, who need a time to pause, to remember their sacred story, and to refocus on growing into that story. Then, the administrative tasks that await will be enriched as we, refreshed, again see the ministry embedded in them and how they help our community live into our sacred story and invite others to do so as well.

The Walk is a time to remember our story, who we are and what we're really about. The Walk is designed to remind us when the grind has made us forget. It is grounded in the biblical story. (The name "Walk to Emmaus" refers to <u>Luke 24:13-35</u>, when Jesus appears to disciples walking together to Emmaus on the afternoon of Easter.) You will be gently guided back into your sacred story by presentations of skilled pastors and lay people, and especially by the design and content of the Walk itself.

Twice a year, a Walk brings together active church leaders and participants from faith communities around the region with diverse faith expressions and life experiences (but all wanting to walk the way of Jesus as it speaks to them!). It's a great way to be with other spiritual people, most not from SRVUMC. We have a great time with good company, lots of fun and laughter, singing, worship, learning and, of course, great meals!

It's a time to awaken in us the powerful themes that ground our Christian tradition. These themes can speak differently to us when new voices of skilled pastor and lay presenters open them up for us to see again, as if for the first time. The Emmaus program scripts the talking points for national uniformity, but each speaker gives them a particular "voice" and style; plus, follow-up sharing and learning with new friends around the discussion table adds to the diversity of voices we experience.



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The Walk is a pilgrimage of the heart. It's about community and reconnecting to a bigger story. In the afterglow of my April Walk, I felt really good about the experience. I came home feeling, "Love was in that room!"

Are you ready? The next Walk is at SRVUMC October 19 through 22 for men and 26 through 29 for women. A first-time pilgrim pays nothing; the costs are borne by the movement's supporters and the pilgrim's sponsor. For more information, contact Bill Rust or Lindsay Hiratzka.

Save the Date! 2024 SRVUMC Women's Retreat February 2 to 4 Villa Maria del Mar, Santa Cruz

Pastor Dan Sturdivant leads a retreat with the theme "JOY Through the Back Door."

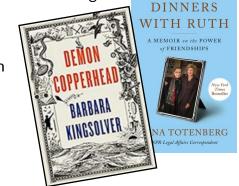
Our friend and frequent guest pastor Dan says, "The most profound and enduring joy any of us are likely to find arrives through our failures, losses, disappointments; in short, through grief. We can't get there, however, without trusted companions to help us see our lives clearly." We hope you'll join us in 2024. *Contact Nancy Garnick*, *Linda Jimerson*, *Linda Albertoni Engman*, *or Priscilla Wolfram for more information*.

Book Club Summer Plans Monthly, 1 p.m. Church Library

August 21—Dinners with Ruth by Nina Totenberg. Memoir of Ruth Bader Ginsburg and her friends. Very pertinent to the current events involving the

Supreme Court and the court's ethics. Sharon Ross leads.

September 18—*Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver. A modern take on *David Copperfield*, with a look at current support of children and adults' experiences. *Peggy Crawford leads*.



Spiritual Growth



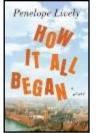
August is upon us, and that means that half of summer is gone. Have you enjoyed the warmer weather, perhaps by boating, fishing, hiking, swimming...or in a comfortable spot with a good book? To catch up on reading gives one a relaxed feeling and a sense of accomplishment. That is what the library committee wants its readers to do. Look for some unread books, read them, and return them to the library. Meanwhile, the committee is sorting through books, and then discarding some old ones to create more room on shelves. In September, Between the Bookends will feature some new additions for our readers. Continue reading!

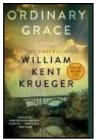
Overdue Books

A Thread So Thin. Marie Bostwick. Time to check under your quilts for this romance! Woman in the Library. Sulari Gentill. Oh, the irony of this title being overdue...

Missing Books

I don't remember *How It All Began*, but the library committee started to give me more than *Ordinary Grace* if I want to use cheesy puns and visual humor to get the message out about these two missing books! Please keep looking, or I'm going to have to come up with something more creative for September! —*Editor*







The book cart's library checkout box and unofficial mascot with an important reminder to fill out and drop off the library card inside any book you borrow. This step helps prevent an overdue book from becoming a missing book.



Dixie Fire Recovery Underway

2021 was a devastating year for wildfires. The largest and most destructive was the Dixie Fire in the Sierras. A record million acres burned, destroying more than 1,300 homes and businesses. It virtually wiped out the town of Greenville and other small communities.

We are pleased to report that the recovery is underway but with a long way to go. A few businesses have reopened. Survivors are slowly beginning to rebuild. Public infrastructure is being reestablished.

Our mission trip in June 2023 moved the process along. We deployed to Greenville to prepare the housing for volunteer teams coming to rebuild homes. The hosting site will be the Coppercreek Camp. Coppercreek has a longstanding local tradition as a youth summer camp. Most of the camp survived the fire, and volunteers for these rebuilding missions will be housed in renovated cabins.

Our mission team came from three Tri-Valley churches—Asbury UMC in Livermore, Lynnewood UMC in Pleasanton, and San Ramon Valley UMC in Alamo. We worked on updating the vintage cabins marked for volunteer housing for a week. We installed new siding, insulation, flooring, doors and windows, and ceilings. New electrical, heating and air conditioning will complete the renovations later this summer. The goal is to be ready to house teams by this fall.

While the work was interesting and enjoyable, what was most rewarding was helping to complete a key step in the recovery preparations. Our evenings included reflection on why we do what we do: put our faith into action.

We look forward to returning in a few months to help survivors with their rebuilding. For many, it will be three to five years until they can settle into their new home. That is a long time to wait for stability in their lives. Disaster recovery just takes time.

In Mission Together,

Steve Elliott, Roger Everett, Dick Crawford, Bob Hoffman, Steve Wilson, and Doug Huey





Youth and Adults Volunteer at White Pony Express

White Pony Express began as a food rescue program, connecting surplus food with organizations serving those in need. They collect and distribute more than 22 million pounds of food annually. Today, they do more than distribute food. White Pony Express offers clothing assistance as well. Clothing assistance clients can fill out a form with size, age, sex, and favorite colors, and the organization will make an appointment to assist that client with clothing. They also make gift packages for hospital and people with functional needs. They also collect and distribute furniture, games, clothing from birth to adults. This year, they expect to deliver over 1.7 million articles of clothing, books and educational toys, as well as emergency supplies.

Learn more about this organization and how you can help, too, by clicking here.









Top Left: New youth leader Justin Byers with the youth volunteer team. Top Right: The full SRVUMC crew! Bottom Left: Pastor Andrew learns to sort food at White Pony Express. Bottom right: Checking donated food. (Photos: Jerry Ricker)



August Communion Offering Supports Monument Crisis Center



Based in Concord, Monument Crisis Center offers nutritious food and other resources to families in Central and Eastern Contra Costa County. Last CrisisCenter year, Monument provided about one million meals to its clients.

Monument began in 2003 with a small group of concerned citizens.

Startup funding came from Safeway Foundation, the Salvation Army, Soroptimist International of Pleasant Hill and independent donors, while enthusiasm came from area high school students. On their first day of operation, they distributed food to 84 families. Today, Monument distributes food to more than 15,000 households per year, and each distribution serves between 130 and 180 families. The group purchases food from the food bank, but it also receives private food donations, taking in 12,000 lbs. of food in donations every month.

Monument's core effort is food distribution, but it is not its only program. For example, its Youth Enrichment Program offers after-school tutoring, a teen center and summer camp for school-age kids. We've participated in the annual backpack drive for years, too, recently concluding for 2023.

Monument also hosts a resource fair annually, acquainting visitors with employment, health and well ness, and English language classes available to them. Periodically, Monument Crisis Center has offered nutrition and cooking workshops with another local nonprofit, Cooking Matters, to expand nutrition education and improve access to healthy foods in low-income communities. Finally, Senior

You Can Also Always Donate These Items at Monument Crisis Center

- Cereal and oatmeal
- Tuna (canned)
- Peanut butter (no glass jars)
- Canned meals
- Non-food items like toiletries and diapers (especially sizes 4, 5 and 6)
- Fruits and vegetables
- Pasta
- Mac & cheese
- Soups
- **Beans**
- Rice

Moments provides lunch and bingo, as well as health screenings and some groceries with this opportunity to socialize.



Left: 2019 Senior Moments volunteers. Right: Boyd Hasik volunteering at the 2022 food drive.



Are You Ready for Action? The Preschool Is!

Things are still relatively quiet here at the preschool. It is August, and we are beginning to get ready for the 2023-2024 school year. Our incredible teachers are winding down their summer vacations and activities and shifting their focus to getting back to the classroom. Our hearts are full of promise for what this new year will bring; new students, new relationships, new opportunities, and of course, new reasons to rejoice and celebrate!

We have some wonderful new additions to our incredible staff and look forward to sharing our journeys with you throughout the school year. There will be much discovering, laughing, learning, playing, relating and overall enjoyment. We simply can't wait to get to



know all our new families and reconnect with returning families! The preschool years are a time of such growth, wonderment and joy. We are grateful to be a part of this amazing community and to share in the everyday experiences of our young students.

If you know a child between the ages of two and five, and you'd like to hear more about our preschool, please contact us: We look forward to connecting with you!

We can be reached by telephone at 925-837-2788, or by email at cpezza@srvumc.org or preschool- office@srvumc.org .

Warm regards,

Pastor Kim Preschool Scholarship Thank You

Thank you to all who donated to the SRVUMC preschool scholarship fund in honor of Pastor Kim. Over \$3000 was received, a robust start to helping families who would like to attend yet need some financial assistance!



Creativity is using your imagination to do something new!

Week One

Creation: Genesis 1:2-3

God created you so you can be creative.

Week Two

We are God's creation: Ephesians 2:10

God created you for a purpose.

Week Three

Joseph and the plan to save Egypt: Genesis 40-41 You can use what God gave you to solve problems.

"We are God's creation. He created us to belong to Christ Jesus. Now we can do good works. Long ago God prepared these works for us to do." —Ephesians 2:10, NIrV

Week Four

The Tabernacle: Exodus 25:8-9; 28:1,3; 31:1-11, 35:21,25,34; 39:42-43

Use your imagination to honor God.

Nursery Thru Grade 5 Summer Sunday School

Classes begin at 10 a.m.

- Our Tot Spot for infants through age four is temporarily meeting in Wesley, room 102, across from the preschool building.
- TK through grade 5 Join Laura Roy upstairs in Wesley, room 203.

Fun for Everyone!

Fall Fun! Children's Movie, Popcorn and Pizza Night: Friday, August 18, 5:30 to 8 p.m. in Wesley Hall. Movie TBD. Watch for details! *Please RSVP to Laura at Iroy@srvumc.org*.

Youth Fun!

San Ramon Olympic Pool movie night. Friday, August 4, 7 p.m. *Top Gun: Maverick.* \$1 movie night at the pool under the stars. Recreation swim starts at 7 p.m., so be sure to bring your pool floats and enjoy everything the pools have to offer. Once the sun starts to go down, settle into your deck chair, get cozy on your blanket or watch the movie from the pool. It's sure to be a splashing good time! *Registration recommended: Click Here.*

Youth Fall Retreat—Watch for more information so you can RSVP to Laura Roy at lroy@srvumc.org!

Celebrations

Birthdays

1 Don Carlson Chuck Clark Chris Hagebush Marti Sketchley

2 Susie McKnight Evelyn Rossini

3 Kim Maddux-Perry Tammy Webb

4 Alina Begley Teresa Merchant Christian Smario

6 Michael Dandridge Emma Sandoval

8 Jean Crane **(96)**Kelli George Sagar
Max Kennedy
Jerry Osborn
9 Allyson Cerda

10 Jim Bunker

Cadi Stephenson Carol Warnock 11 Brian Beck

Gary Swanson

Sarah Warnock

12 Julie Klug

13 Kimberly Cattarusa

14 David Bain
Bette Smith
Andrew Tullis
16 Holly Mariella

Andy Mathis
Jenny Swanson

17 Dominic Albertoni

Sun Hee Kim (wife of P. Sam)

Thomas Mathis

19 Bill Gsand Merilyn Milam

Marla Schleicher

Barbara Usher

20 Robin Hammond

21 Kim Bridges
Pam Dominici

23 Chris Kelly

24 Mandy Bain

Megan Bain

Armen Boyd

Alyssa Guan

Ron White

25 Tyler Herting

26 Emily Kaye

Justin Kaye

Melinda Love

Duncan Miller

Anna Ten Elshof

27 Carole Lynne Keller

Marilyn Mathis

29 Tom Roy

31 Sean Greenwood

Sheila McClelland (96)

Cale Porteous Jennifer Sharpe

Anniversaries

3 Gloria Holleman & Gary Osterhout

Mary & Bill Nelson (66)

Beth & Jack Robertson

7 Alexis & Niles Bybel 8 Gemma & Tom Sepull

17 Sharon & Dennis Greene

Heather & John Morgan

Nancy & Al Tiedemann

19 Susie & Doug Barton

20 Barbara & Don Carlson

21 Maggie & John Stienstra

24 Carol & Jim Warnock

Karen & Larry Watson (60)

27 Julie & Bill Dastic (63)

29 Millie & Terry Sherman (59)

30 Carole & Don Johnson (65)

31 Joelle & Todd Johnson



Health Concerns

Bob Brown Judith (Debbie Byers' mother)

Liz Field Barb McWilliams

Kay Jones Marti Sketchley

Andy (Susan Madden's husband)

Continued Prayers For

All those who live with long-term illness, unemployment, life decisions, and sickness in their families, Shana Carroll, Joan Lee, Ann Schroeder.

We continue to pray for those in our community impacted by COVID-19 and recall that testing ourselves is caring for everyone. Please test if you are not feeling 100%.

Our Christian Sympathy

To the Webb family as Dave Webb passed in June. Dave's memorial service honors him on August 5.

SRVUMC

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