



We are a sharing, loving fellowship of Christian believers, rooted in biblical faith, that actively seeks and celebrates God. We desire to praise, love and serve with all our hearts in our faith community and to reach out to our neighbors, continuing the work of Jesus peacefully, simply, together.

In God we find the source of all our joy. Hallelujah!

April 2021

Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren

Vol. 47, No. 4

From our Pastor...

On February 28, the Executive Committee of our church met to discuss if and when our congregation might be ready to gather back in-person for worship and other events. There were a lot of factors to consider: How many in our congregation have been vaccinated? How many in the community have been vaccinated? What are the comfort levels of our members in terms of outdoor worship versus indoor worship? What are the guidelines and recommendations from LA County Public Health for houses of worship? Do we have the energy to resume in-person worship services while we are also spending much of our time and focus on packing and leaving our current building? As you can see, it was not a simple conversation.

We asked for our members to submit a survey (anonymously, if they chose to) regarding their own vaccination status and their comfort levels about in-person worship. The responses fell on the entire continuum: from those who would be ready to gather back in person ASAP to those who still preferred a few more months of virtual worship, to everywhere in-between. We also have members of our congregation who have been fully vaccinated for weeks, and others who do not expect to receive the vaccine for weeks or even months. It was clear that we were not of one mind on the topic of in-person services.

As your pastor, I have also been keeping abreast of the recommendations from LA County Public Health. Helpfully, the County holds regular tele-briefings for houses of worship, where faith leaders can hear directly from health officials and ask questions about what is safe. Right now, the recommendation from the County is that houses of worship continue with either virtual or outdoor services until more of the population has been vaccinated, and any outdoor services must still be masked, distanced, and not include singing or refreshments.

Overall, on February 28, the Executive Committee made the decision to continue worshipping on Zoom, but will reevaluate for any outdoor or indoor services based on two factors: 1) congregational vaccination rates and 2) changes in LA County Public Health Recommendations. The Executive Committee did not take this decision lightly and knew that while some would be disappointed, others would be relieved. The pandemic has also made our church's transition time so much harder. Experiencing our final year on Orange Grove Avenue almost entirely virtually has been disappointing, frustrating, and sad.

However, when I am feeling especially upset, I try to remember Jesus' call to love our neighbors as ourselves. I also try to remember the Apostle Paul's instructions to the Philippian church: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (2:3-4).

This is the intention of our virtual church, my friends. We will gather back in-person one day. And in the meantime, we follow the biblical call to love and look out for the best interest of others by not creating opportunities for increased risk. Thank you for loving God and loving our neighbors in this way.

Pastor Lauren



...those limited or confined for health reasons: **Cathy Banks, Faith Eikenberry, Marcheta Pletcher.**

We also uphold these members, friends and family members of our congregation who have prayer concerns:

**Judy Brooks
Bill Lemon
Rochelle Lovelace**



**Wanda Lacy new (cell) number:
626-636-6577**



BIRTHDAYS and ANNIVERSARIES

BIRTHDAYS

- 11) Janet Short
- 11) Bethany Uranga
- 25) Faith Eikenberry (turns 100!)
- 26) Gabriel Uranga

ANNIVERSARIES

- 16) James & Karin Herndon 1994

District Prayer Calendar – April

- Apr. 4 Celebrate the joy of Easter and the promise of Christ's Resurrection
- Apr. 11 Glendale Church of the Brethren
- Apr. 18 Brethren Benefit Trust which provides pension, insurance, and investment services as a ministry to our churches
- Apr. 25 Glendora Church of the Brethren

Future Zoom Meetings

Love Feast: Thursday, April 1, 5:30 p.m.
Service & Outreach: Wednesday, April 7,
10:00 a.m.
Stewards: Wednesday, April 7, 6:30 p.m.
Music & Worship: Thursday, April 8, 11:00 a.m.
Executive Committee: Thursday, April 15,
6:30 p.m.
Church Board, Thursday, April 22, 6:30 p.m.
Congregational Business Meeting, Sunday, April 18,
after worship



Our Maundy Thursday Love Feast will be held virtually on April 1 at 5:30 p.m. Although it won't be the same as in years past, Pastor Lauren and the Deacons are doing their best to make it as familiar as possible. Linda Hart will be preparing beef and broth, which will be delivered, along with communion bread, to local congregants. Peggy Redman, and Paul Lovelace will get a tub of meat and an envelope of communion bread to you. You will need to provide your own bread for soup or sandwiches, and also your own juice. (If you are out of the local area, we're sorry, but you will need to provide all of the pieces for your household!)

The Maundy Thursday commemoration of Christ's Last Supper is a Church of the Brethren tradition. We look forward to sharing this special time together.

~~~Diane Deal  
Deacons

*Banner* articles are due on April 20



### **Update on Pastor Lauren's maternity leave:**

In case you haven't heard, Pastor Lauren and Jason are expecting their first baby! Our congregation is very excited about this news, and we also know that a little planning ahead is necessary. On March 11, Executive Committee met with Pastor Lauren and Russ Matteson, Pacific Southwest District Executive Minister, to agree on a plan for Pastor Lauren's maternity leave.

To summarize: Pastor Lauren has been approved for a 13-week maternity leave which would begin when the baby arrives. For planning purposes, the due date is July 12 so this would look like a maternity leave in the general timeframe of mid-July to mid-October, yet as we know babies come when they are ready, not when we are ready! And of course, while Pastor Lauren plans to work up until the baby's arrival, there is always a possibility that that could change, in which case the timeframe would look slightly different. Let us pray that all goes well for both Pastor Lauren and the baby's health over the next 15 weeks and beyond.

In the meantime, Russ Matteson will be working with a small team from our church (Acia, Janet, Richard, and Pastor Lauren) to call an interim pastor while Pastor Lauren is on leave. The interim pastor will be responsible for preaching, worship leadership, and emergency pastoral care situations. We hope to have this person named by May. Please also hold in prayer this process.

~~~Pastor Lauren

Announcement: New Office Space!

As our congregation prepares to transition out of our building at 875 Orange Grove Avenue, we are still in the process of finding our new long-term church home. We know (thanks to COVID-19) that we can continue to worship over Zoom if we need to, while our Logistics Team (Paul Lovelace, Janet Short, George Spicer, Linda Hart, Jason Cohen, and Pastor Lauren) explores where we might worship temporarily when it is safe to resume in-person services. But the question remained: where could our church office move to until we know where we'll be in the long run?

Have no fear! The Logistics Team has recently signed a lease for a commercial office space near downtown Pomona, where our administrative assistant, Acia, and Pastor Lauren will each have an office, as well as an area where we could have small in-person meetings. The office is in a commercial office building that also serves as the home to several law offices, nonprofits, and other businesses. The address for our temporary church office is:

**363 S. Park Avenue
Suite #202
Pomona, CA 91766**

(phone number and email remains the same)

Our lease starts April 1, and we will be transitioning from our current office into the new office not long after that. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to Acia at office@mypomonachurch.org or Pastor Lauren at pastorlauren@mypomonachurch.org.

~~~Pastor Lauren

**Farewell Events for 875 Orange Grove Avenue**  
**Mark your calendars!**

Brought to you by the Spiritual Transitions Team  
(Laura Lovelace, Diane Deal, Bill Lemon, Yvonne Belcher, Pastor Lauren)

As our time at 875 W. Orange Grove Avenue draws to a close, we would like to invite you to events that are planned to give closure as we leave the property where we have worshipped since 1948.

**Open House**

**Tuesday, April 13      12:00pm-4:00pm**  
**Wednesday, April 14      4:00pm-8:00pm**  
**Thursday, April 15      10:00am-2:00pm**

Designed for you to have the opportunity to walk through the building, visit rooms that hold special memories, and say goodbye to this beloved space, there will be 3 Open Houses hosted by Pomona Fellowship members. No reservations needed, but facemasks are required. Keep in mind that we are in a state of transition, and things may not be just as you remember them. If none of the above times suit you, call or email the church office to arrange another time: 909-629-2548 or [office@mypomonachurch.org](mailto:office@mypomonachurch.org).

**Virtual Organ Concert**

**Friday, May 14 at 7pm Pacific on YouTube**

Our congregation has discerned that we will not be bringing our organ with us when we move and we are searching for a new owner of this beloved instrument. To help us honor the many memories of our church organ, and to celebrate the beautiful music it has given us over the years, we are hosting an organ concert, featuring Cody Smith, our director of music, and Shawn Kirchner, minister of music at the La Verne COB. This will be a virtual concert, streamed to YouTube and available to watch at that evening and at any time in the future. Along with music will be recollections connected with the organ. No RSVPs required, and the exact link will be shared closer to the date.

**Virtual Farewell Service**

**Sunday, May 16 at 10am Pacific**

Join us during our virtual morning worship as we officially honor and say goodbye to 875 Orange Grove Avenue. Pastor Lauren will be speaking from the sanctuary, and the service will include scripture, songs, memories, and a historical review in photos. Due to COVID-19 and to allow family and friends from across the country to join us, this worship service will take place over Zoom. If you do not currently join us for Zoom Worship, please RSVP to [office@mypomonachurch.org](mailto:office@mypomonachurch.org) or by calling 909-629-2548 and you will receive the Zoom link before the service. Help us give thanks to God for our over 70 years of ministry and community in this place.

**Possible Brief In-Person De-Consecration Ceremony in May**

More information forthcoming

## April Giving Emphasis

Brethren Disaster Ministries has been affected by the pandemic as so many other disaster organizations have. Even though we have had floods, hurricanes, wildfires and tornadoes, we have not been able to respond as we would like to. To meet the needs of the communities, the COB has implemented a Disaster Fund Grant Program so churches can meet the humanitarian needs in their communities. The grants are supporting aid such as food distribution, feeding programs, rent and utilities, childcare programs and help with medical bills. Even though we cannot do what we have done in the past, we as Brethren are doing what we can to help our churches and communities and still adapt to the Covid restrictions.

Children's Disaster Services has also been hit hard in not being able to go to the shelters and provide our support to the children in need. The Red Cross has asked that we still provide for the children but not with face to face contact. To meet their needs we have developed individual Kits of Comfort that are being distributed to the children who have been displaced. The toys, games, art supplies and activity suggestions fit in a small bag that the children can keep with them. This is one small way we can still help the children but keep their health and safety in mind.

The volunteer trainings have been put on hold also. The last training CDS was able to conduct was in the La Verne COB early in 2020. The one scheduled there for April 2021 has been postponed.

Even though we haven't been able to go out to the people in need, Brethren Disaster Ministries is still doing everything they can to meet the humanitarian needs in our communities. Our April giving is designated for Brethren Disaster Ministries because even though we are in the midst of difficult times, we still can respond in some way where we are needed.

~~~Shirley Ness

PFCOB STEWARDSHIP INFORMATION Through February 2021

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 2021 Annual Budget | \$220,891.00 |
|---------------------------|---------------------|

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Giving '21 | \$15,480.00 |
| Interest & Other Income '21 | \$8,247.20 |
| Total Budget Income thru February | \$23,727.20 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Total Budget Expense thru Feb. | \$(27,7434.60) |
| Plus Budget overage from 2020 | \$4,224.32 |
| Budget Balance thru Feb. | \$216.92 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| February Special Non-Budget Offerings | |
| Capital Fund | \$620.00 |
| Women's Fellowship | \$125.00 |
| Inland Valley Hope Partners Beta | \$280.00 |
| Sharon Maldonado DACA Support | \$1,575.00 |

The *Banner* is published by the
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Services & Activities

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Sunday Worship over ZOOM | Sunday, 10:00 a.m. |
| Bible Study over Google Meet | Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. |

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Rev. Lauren Seganos Cohen | Pastor |
| Janet Short | Moderator |
| Acia Jernigan | Admin. Assistant |

The *Banner* is published once a month. Articles and announcements to appear in the next issue of the *Banner* are due in the church office by the 20th of each month.