



August 11, 2021

Greetings,

If it's good to be together, it must be bad to be apart.

And yet: the truth is that life has always been a rhythm of separation and togetherness, exile and return. We may prefer the "return" bit, the "bring you back to this place" bit, but that doesn't mean separation isn't part of the story.

Experiences of separation are at least as old as the ancient stories of the Garden of Eden, the Israelites' exile in Babylon, and the parable of the Prodigal Son. Jesus and his followers were separated by betrayal and death, and then reunited by forgiveness and newness of life. Even on our most "normal" days, our lives are a rhythm of gathering and dispersing, coming together and going apart, calls to worship and benedictions.

This past year has been a profound experience of this ancient pattern, and as challenging as it's been, we can take solace in the knowledge that our ancestors, too, experienced seasons of exile. And here's the point: thanks to this history, over time our faith — and our church — has been built to help us live through such seasons with grace and hope.

At our core, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Chico is a community of reunion, homecoming, and return. Now more than ever, in a world full of exile, our congregation stands as a beacon of hope, welcome, and radical hospitality.

With all of this in mind, we invite you to join us in giving thanks for all the resources — spiritual, theological, physical, and financial — that support this indispensable work. Enclosed is an estimate of giving card. If you would, return the card either by mail, directly to the office or at any worship service or gathering between now and Sunday, November 21st. Together, we can celebrate God's beautiful gift of "a future with hope."

Blessings,

Barbara Mann,
Administrative Ministry

Barbara Mann

Jesse Kearns,
Pastor

Jesse Kearns

Gary Cantwell,
Moderator

Gary Cantwell