



Here Comes the Sun

In 1969, George Harrison of the famed band, The Beatles” wrote the popular song, “Here Comes the Sun” at a particularly difficult time in the band’s history. Harrison’s words on the first verse were *“Little darling, it’s been a long, cold lonely winter; Little darling, it seems like years since it’s been here. Here comes the sun doo, doo, doo; Here comes the sun; And I say it’s all right.”*

As we enter the spring of 2021, Harrison’s words seem to capture the mood at Atherton. The arrival of COVID-19 in 2020 changed the world and this rippled into Atherton in a very large way. For most of the year we restricted visitors, reduced activities, and added safety precautions to keep people safe from the COVID 19 virus. We became familiar with wearing masks, practicing social distancing and washing our hands regularly. Through most of the year our efforts were successful as Atherton had very few cases of the virus and when they were identified, we were able to isolate, trace, and treat those who were infected to avoid a spread of the infection among staff or residents. However, during the months of December and January, a surge of the virus in southern California caused more disease than we had previously seen in Skilled Nursing. This was a very sobering time for us and Harrison’s words *“a long, cold lonely winter”* seemed very apropos.

But starting in 2021, we began to see the sun dawning as the vaccines to fight the SARS-CoV-2 virus became available to Atherton residents. Our residents and most of our staff were enthusiastic about receiving the vaccine, and now that the vaccination process is finishing around the campus, we are beginning new activities and planning to resume indoor dining, gatherings, and outings. We are allowing more visitation on campus as families and friends begin to visit and gather. We are still not back to normal, but there is a feeling that things are better and the promises and hopes for living in a senior community are beginning to return.

The virus has certainly left a mark on our world and Atherton and even raised questions about living in a senior community. Is this kind of congregate setting the best value for senior adults? Do the dangers outweigh the risks? Interestingly, I do not think my answer has changed, even though I have lived through this pandemic. I still believe that a senior living community serves an important role in society, and our mission has not changed. Senior communities like Atherton can concentrate a variety of resources which are needed for senior adults as they age. Issues like mobility, illness, medication management, isolation, social activity, and housing upkeep are met at Atherton in a way that unburdens families and solves some practical problems of aging. We provide consistent resources that makes living easier and better. Our mission is to be *“a senior community rooted in Christian values which seeks enriching lives and honor all.”* It is through our values of faith, kindness, gratitude, and joy that we seek to fulfill our mission and meet the real needs of senior adults. Though our methods had to change during the pandemic, our mission remained the same and now as our world and our community are recovering, we are looking forward to the next chapter of our community. We hope that you will keep Atherton in your future plans. We still believe that we are a great place to “age well.”

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Craig Statton