



The Pine Tree

The Congregational Church of San Mateo
United Church of Christ

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Notes from Penny

Experience Lent

Lent is a time to take an inward spiritual journey along with members of your faith community. It is a time of preparation, a time of *hallowing* space in your own life so that at the end of 40 days, you may experience transformation and resurrection.

The staff and I have prepared for Lent with great intention, hoping to create an environment for all of us to be touched by God and to be transformed by spirit. Our theme is *An Altar in the World*. It is based on Barbara Brown Taylor's book that seeks to give meaningful practices of bringing the eternal into everyday life.

Once Taylor was asked, "Come tell us what is saving your life now." Her book reveals her answer to that question. She says, "What is saving my life now is the conviction that there is no spiritual treasure to be found apart from the bodily experiences of human life on earth. My life depends on engaging the most ordinary physical activities with the most exquisite attention I can give them. My life depends on ignoring all the touted distinctions between the secular and the sacred, the physical and the spiritual, the body and the soul. What is saving my life now is becoming more fully human, trusting that there is no way to God apart from real life in the real world."

Real life in the real world—it is my prayer that together we will journey in Lent to discover what this means for each of us.

Taizé returns to CCSM

Build an altar in your heart this Lenten season and take an hour on **Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.** to come and sing, meditate, chant and pray in a serene setting. The repetitive and haunting music of Taizé will help center you. I am hoping that many of you will come and try this prayer service at least once during Lent. For parents of young children, I invite you to each take a turn at coming and spend an intentional time praying for your children.

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, February 17th is Ash Wednesday and begins the season of Lent. We'll meet in **Kloss Hall at 7:00 p.m.** for a beautiful service of singing, praying, creating a spiral to walk as a symbol of our journey inward. There will also be imposition of ashes for those who desire.

Fabulous Four Concert

Come hear the Fabulous Four return for their fourth annual two-piano recital on **February 21 at 4:00 p.m.** **Bonny Armacost, Angela Kraft Cross, Vija Norkvesta, and Cari Parker (above)** will perform works by César Franck, Samuel Barber, Witold Lutoslawski, and the premiere of "South American Dances" by local composer Sondra Clark. Suggested donation: \$15 general, \$10 seniors and students, and free for 12 and under.

February 16, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper!

Lent is just around the corner and so is Shrove Tuesday Supper. Our version of Mardi Gras, or Fat Tuesday, is to eat up all the fat in the house before Lent. So join us for a delicious supper of buttermilk and blueberry pancakes accompanied by turkey-ham and fruit. Invite your spouse or partner, your kids and grandparents, and your neighbors and friends. A special treat will be Lenten games during our meal!



Youth & Family News

Church School News

Church School Valentine Outreach!

Yesterday, our church school children were busy at work sharing love all around. Our 3-6 grade youth created 57 valentines to hang on the doors of Pilgrim Plaza seniors. Our 1-2 grade class and 5-8 grade youth created valentines for specific people on the pastoral care list. This is a wonderful outreach for the children and a heartwarming opportunity for our seniors who cannot come to church to be connected with the children. Thank you for your valentine donations!

Our 2010 Confirmation Class has begun!

We have six students who will be on their journey together, learning about God and faith. In late February, we will travel to Jhos Singer's congregation to share dinner and a Shabbat service. They will be celebrating his 10th anniversary as their rabbi. We welcome our confirmands: Christina Ashbaugh, Lindsay Block, Katie Burnham, Harrison Enright, Sarah Henry and Andrew Loudon. Confirmation Sunday will be **June 6th**.

Lenten Children's Festival Sunday, February 21

On this Sunday, our church school classes will meet in Kloss Hall for a Lenten children's festival. These festivals allow us to have an interlude in regular classes to focus on one theme. For Lent, the focus will be on *prayer*. Our children will have the opportunity to create prayer boxes, praying hands plaques, open-hand prayers, Lenten pretzels, (hands folded in prayer) and beaded necklaces. Please invite friends and neighbors to join us for the festival. It is a great time to visit and get a taste of CCSM's children's program.

Pineridge Rez Outreach Trip 2010 Update

By Steve Naylor

We are going to the Rez to build houses with the organization re-member.org and stand in solidarity with the people living on the reservation. I have worked with Re-member two times and have never found an organization more in line with our values than Re-member. There is also extreme poverty on the Rez that can only be described as third-world. Here is a statistical glance at why we know this is a place to support.

Unemployment rate of 80-90%, per capita income of \$4,000, eight times the U.S. of rate of diabetes, five times the

U.S. rate of cervical cancer, eight times the U.S. rate of tuberculosis, alcoholism rate estimated as high as 80%, 1 in 4 infants born with fetal alcohol syndrome or effects, suicide rate more than twice the national rate, teen suicide rate four times the national rate, infant mortality three times the national rate, life expectancy on Pine Ridge is the lowest in the United States and the second lowest in the Western Hemisphere. Only Haiti has a lower rate.

We are going to discover hope within ourselves and within a neglected but resilient community.

Mid High News

February 16, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Mid Highs will be baking pancakes again for our Shrove Tuesday pancake supper. This is a fun way to get involved in the church community and enjoy a yummy breakfast-for-dinner before Lent. Come help out!

Sunday, Feb. 28, 9:30 a.m. We'll pack lunches for SF Night Ministry before church. Come enjoy bagels and help our church reach out to San Francisco's homeless.

Sunday, March 7, 6:30 - 8 p.m. Mid Highs will gather at church to discuss our Lenten commitments, make prayer pouches, hot cross buns, and share what is sacred to us.

Make sure to keep these dates in mind! Email Joliene (joliene.wade@gmail.com) if you have questions.

Senior High Schedule

Feb. 14, 10:30 a.m., 60 Minutes with Mike Mullery

Feb. 21, 6:30 - 8 p.m., Fellowship Youth Room:

Learning from Native American Spirituality 101

Mar. 7, 6-8:30 p.m., Fellowship Youth Room:

Learning from Native American Spirituality 102

Mar. 21, 9:30 a.m., Prep Spaghetti Lunch

Mar. 28, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Outreach Trip students are **blest in service** before **60 Minutes with Mike Mullery**

Apr. 3 - 9 Outreach Trip to Pine Ridge Reservation
www.re-member.org

Senior High News

The Senior High Youth Ministry is grateful for everyone's support in our fundraising efforts with pizzas and flamingo flocking. We raised \$1000 with the pizzas and are just starting the *flamingo flocking season*, and have already raised \$1500. The goal with the flamingo flocking is to have fun, raise awareness, and share what our Youth Ministry program is doing. We want to share this message with those in our church and those connected to our church such as friends and family. Spread the Flamingo Flocking love and we'll see how contagious this outrageous fundraiser can be. For questions email ccsmflamingos@gmail.com



Create A Caption!
Create the best caption for this photo and the Senior High Youth Ministry will Flamingo Flock whoever the winner desires to be Flocked! Send captions to ccsmflamingos@gmail.com.

Soup-er Sunday!

Instead of our usual coffee hour on **Sunday, February 28**, stick around after church for a bowl of CFE's famous Minestrone soup and some good conversation. We guarantee you will meet someone you do not know. We'll have macaroni and cheese for the kids, plus bread and salad too. And don't worry, there will still be cookies!

CCSM Concert Series Presents:

The Carillon Ringers & Friends Concert

Sunday, March 7, 2010 at 4 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

CCSM's Carillon Bell choir will be featured for the first time in the church's concert series.

If you are one of the many congregation members who enjoy hearing the bells ring in church, you simply must mark March 7th on your calendar to come attend the CCSM Bell Concert. The concert will explore the sound of handbells *in concert* with other instruments and voice. The Carillon Ringers have invited a number of special guest artists to join them for this performance. These guests include Julie Berk, Marge Boyd, Alice Daniels, and Peter Bassford to list just a few.

There will be pieces by the full bell choir, small ensembles and solos. Join Handbell Director Lynnelle Bilsey and the members of the Carillon Ringers Handbell Choir for an afternoon of joyous tintinnabulation.

March 20 Spring Fling Progressive Dinner

Save the date for this fun adult social on **Saturday, March 20**. Enjoy a three-course meal in three different CCSM homes—all within walking distance in the Foothill Terrace neighborhood of San Mateo! Sign-up at the Welcome Table in Kloss Hall after church now until March 7. Space is limited! You will receive a potluck assignment when you sign-up. Childcare may be available depending on interest. Questions? Lauri Floresca (lfloresca@gmail.com)

MSJ 2009 Connections and Outreach

By Doris Godinez Phillips, Chair MSJ

CCSM's generosity allowed us to serve:

- Sudanese students, David and Jacob: tuition, room and board for their studies in Uganda.
- Mother of Peace orphanage Zimbabwe: sent \$8,4560 for emergency needs.
- "Adopt a Family:" provided 71 gifts to children and adults and donated \$245 for further help.
- "Adopt a Box:" 50 Easter boxes for the CALL Primrose Center.
- Open and Affirming: funded a member to attend a UCC conference and sponsored the Gay Pride parade.
- Home and Hope Rotating Homeless Shelter (Interfaith Homeless Network, IHN): hosted the shelter five times. Approximately 70 members volunteered to its success.
- Fundraising: rummage sale, art auction. Your generosity allowed us to fully fund all our budgeted benevolences: Shelter Network, Pacific School of Religion, Kyros Ministry, Peninsula Interfaith Action, Homework Central, Homeless Central, Habitat for

Third Time's a Charm

By Steve Naylor

This is the third time I have been called to serve the Congregational Church of San Mateo, United Church of Christ. The third time, we have had congregational meetings where you have asked me to leave while you discuss and vote on whether you want me to serve as one of your pastors. The congregational policy of calling a minister has been a humbling experience for me every time I have walked down the center aisle knowing you will be voting on me and then coming back each time to standing applause. The experience of walking back in is like no other in my life. Maybe someday I will walk down the center aisle with my wife to applause, but until then I have no experiences to compare the celebration and sacredness of this moment.

The experience is humbling in that you, as a congregation, have chosen me to serve and walk beside you in our lives together. We have only been together two years, and in that time you have called me to be a minister, trusted me to walk with your children, and be with you in the most intimate places of struggles, weddings, baptisms, and funerals. This is a profound opportunity for us to grow together and deepen our spiritual lives of cultivating mercy, justice, and faith in the whole world.

I deeply believe that my third call here is a charm in that I hold and respect this position as a precious and sacred trust. My hopes are to serve God in the best ways I possibly can, to grow as a leader, to continue to claim my prophetic voice, and to deepen my relationships with all of you. I love thinking about the possibilities of our lives together. Whose weddings will I officiate at? How many 20/30s can we squeeze into our church? How can we continue to share this progressive Christian message that resonates with so many souls?

On a personal level, the past two years have been filled with growth, some of which I hope you have seen. As for the future, I am faithfully curious to see what lies ahead. What kind of preacher will I become? How deep can our spiritual lives go? I serve you with humility and stand with you in solidarity as all of life's ups and down roll through our transformative community.

—Faithfully your pastor, Steve

Humanity, and our UCC Churches Wider Mission. We also sponsored a village school library in Nepal.

To love is to care . . . to care is to do.

Lent 2010

Each year, beginning on Ash Wednesday, many embark on a “Lenten Journey”—a spiritual passage traveled during the 40 days preceding Easter. Symbolic of the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, it is a period of reflection and “soul-searching.” Embarking on a journey is usually exciting, and we expect it to hold progress and the promise that we will end up at a different, hopefully “better,” place than where we began, that we will be “altered” in the process. Sometimes journeys take lots of preparation and entail detailed planning to go “somewhere else;” but how would you like to go on a journey that involves simply “finding the sacred beneath (your) feet?”

Worship Opportunities

Wednesday, February 17, 7:00 p.m., **Ash Wednesday**
Worship, Kloss Hall

Sunday, February 21, 10:30 a.m., **Worship: The Practice of Saying No**, Rev. Penny Nixon preaching

Wednesday, February 24, 7:00 p.m., **Lenten Taizé**
Worship, Sanctuary

Sunday, February 28, 10:30 a.m. , **Worship: The Practice of Living with Purpose**, Jerri Handy preaching

Wednesday, March 3, 7:00 p.m., **Lenten Taizé** Worship,
Sanctuary

Sunday, March 7, 10:30 a.m., **Worship: The Practice of Walking on Earth**, Rev. Penny Nixon preaching

Wednesday, March 10, 7:00 p.m., **Lenten Taizé** Worship
Sanctuary

Sunday, March 14, 10:30 a.m., **Worship: The Practice of Getting Lost**, Rev. Penny Nixon preaching

Wednesday, March 17, 7:00 p.m., **Lenten Taizé** Worship,
Sanctuary

Sunday, March 21, 10:30 a.m., **Worship: The Practice of Being Present to God**, Rev. Steve Naylor preaching

Wednesday, March 24, 7:00 p.m., **Lenten Taizé** Worship,
Sanctuary

Sunday, March 28, 10:30 a.m., **Palm Sunday** Worship:
The Practice of Feeling Pain, Rev. Penny Nixon preaching

Holy Week Services

Thursday, April 1, 7:00 p.m., **Holy Thursday** Service,
Kloss

Friday, April 2, 7:00 p.m., **Good Friday** Service

Lent Adult Education Class

Adult Spiritual Ed: *An Altar in the World*

Sundays, 9:30 a.m. beginning February 21 to March 28

Marge Boyd will be leading an adult education class based on *An Altar in the World*, as a “companion” experience to the Lenten sermon series; each week participants will look at the concepts Barbara Brown Taylor lifts up in a selected chapter and upon which the sermon is based.

For example, on **Feb. 21**, Penny will preach on *The Practice of Saying No—Sabbath* (Chapter 8). During the education hour before worship, through reading and discussion, those gathered will explore:

Honoring the 4th Commandment:

“Remember the Sabbath day and keep it Holy.”

Lighting the two Sabbath candles which announce:

Made in God’s image, you too shall rest

Made in God’s image, you too are free

Doing nothing but being in divine presence

Developing a “Sabbath vision”

Practicing “living in God”

On subsequent weeks, the “journey” will cover territory such as:

The Practice of Living with Purpose—Vocation, Feb. 28

The Practice of Walking on Earth—Groundedness, March 7

The Practice of Getting Lost, March 14

The Practice of Being Present to God—Prayer, March 21

The Practice of Feeling Pain—Breakthrough, March 28

This adult education opportunity is but one direction a *Lenten Journey* may take, one of many ways of “waking up to God,” as Barbara Brown Taylor says. Choose the sunrise that most beckons your own light.

Additional Educational Opportunities

Celebrate a Passover Seder with Jhos Singer
Monday, March 22, 6:30 p.m., Kloss Hall

Lenten Festival for Children

Sunday, February 21st, 10:30 a.m., Kloss Hall

Lent Social Opportunities

February 16, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper!

Children’s Festival Sunday, February 21

Spring Fling Progressive Dinner on Saturday,
March 20.

Join an Affinity Groups Music and Art Circle

We will meet **Friday, February 19, at noon** to celebrate the art of poetry. We'll read and share literary treasures for inspiration, laughter and stimulation. Bring a sandwich to the Buckham Room at noon; dessert and beverages are provided. Guests are welcome, and should call Nancy Lee Jalonen at 581-1237.

Blanketeers

Our first meeting of the year will be on **Feb. 20, 1-4:00 p.m.** in the Buckham Room. We will start a new project as a group (similar to our Churn Dash quilt). Bring your cutting mats, rulers and cutting blades. If you want to learn how to quilt, we will get you started. Please consider joining this fun, dedicated bunch of folks. Call Linda Skromme if you have any questions at 578-8655.

Monday Night Book Group

We will meet **February 22 from 7:30-9:00 p.m.** in the Fireplace Room. Dan Brown's new book **The Lost Symbol** is our discussion topic. It is an intriguing mystery situated in Washington DC. You can find this bestseller on sale at most bookstores. Join us for an evocative discussion.

Kaleidoscope Women's Group

Kaleidoscope Women's Group's welcomes Melodie Lew as guest speaker for its March meeting, **Monday, March 1 at 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.** in the Buckham Room. Melodie will speak on *Glimpses of Nepal*, stories from her two trips to that very interesting country. Our program will start around 8:00 p.m. Please join us and bring a quick and easy dish to share for dinner. Call Shirley McKinnie if you have questions at 650 349-3663.

Reclaiming A Space for the Spiritual Man

In collaboration with Al Chamberlain and J.W. Lowrie, we are seeking out any and all men who are interested in starting a monthly breakfast that meets once a month on **Saturday morning**. We will have guest speakers and discussion topics about spirituality and our lives. This breakfast is available to all men in the church. Email Rev. Naylor (snaylor@csm-ucc.org) if you are interested in being a part of this.

**Save the Date: Sun., Mar. 21, Noon
Spaghetti Lunch & Auction**

Joys & Concerns

Prayers of Joy and Gratitude

Longtime member **Sue Miller** celebrated her 93rd birthday on January 26! **Elaine Zollner** celebrated her 92nd birthday on February 1 and **Bob McCune** celebrated his 91st on February 4. Congratulations to all three!

Zoe Mullery is enjoying her family leave as she and her adopted daughter, **Gigi**, get settled in their new life together. Zoe sends greetings to all at CCSM!

Prayers of Comfort

Mason Blodgett, long time friend of CCSM, passed away on Thursday, January 15, surrounded by the love of his family, **Sandi, Katie, and Sarah**.

Long time member and loyal friend of CCSM, **Martha Osborn**, passed away on Wednesday, January 14, 2010.

Ethel Fox, Genel Morgan's mother and grandmother of **Matthew and Rebecca**, passed away on Saturday, January 16, 2010 with her loving daughter Genel by her side.

Caroline Reinke's cousin, Alan Fitzjohn, passed away January 8, 2010 in Devon, England.

Elsie Phillips new address: 1400 Montego #148, Walnut Creek, CA 94018. Phone 925 933-9437. Hello cards are welcome.

Prayers of Healing and Support

Eric Errichson is in the critical care unit at Kaiser Redwood City. Prayers for comfort for Eric and **Ronnie**.

Lynn Marie Coye's father, Stan Glaiser, is still struggling with multiple health issues.

Evelyn Johansen has moved from Peninsula Extended Care to her son's home. Please keep **Evelyn, Bob and Robin** in your prayers.

Bob Jarmuz has been fighting bronchitis for three weeks. Prayers for a return to health.

Gay Kocmich is back at The Peninsula Regent and on hospice care.

Gary Steele starts his radiation therapy this week.

Continued prayers for **Zee and Cliff Larrew, Margi Stone, and Scotty Scott**.

Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC)

The Pastoral Relations Committee has two primary functions. The first is to advise clergy on their development plans when they seek input. The second is to nurture relationships among clergy and between clergy and the congregation. This includes providing a framework to deal sensitively with conflict. If any CCSM member or friend has concerns, he or she is encouraged to contact one of the five PRC members, John Fyfe, Kristi Spence, Doug Henton, Susan Stoddard-Phillips and Judi Powell, who will work collaboratively and confidentially, if requested, to come to resolution on any issues.

Haiti Update

By Jerri Handy,

My heart was broken and my mind reeling as I heard the news of the earthquake in Haiti.

It is a deeply emotional moment in life when something so devastating as an earthquake interrupts something you have worked on for several years. I wanted to be there, and yet I knew it was not the time to go. Civilian flights had been canceled, hotels had been leveled and CONASPEH (our Global Mission Partners in Haiti) headquarters and school had been demolished.

In the midst of this overwhelming loss, Haitians gathered in the streets and sang songs of lament and praise. While we have heard stories on the news about looting and other frightening things, these are not the norm. The norm is the sense of community and caring for each other. The struggle for food, water and shelter drive motherless children to join with now childless mothers. They gather in makeshift tents because they are afraid to return to buildings damaged by the quake. The people seek comfort and assurance from each other. Local pastors are at the center of each small community, providing as much support as they can. CONASPEH has become a distribution center. Leaders from CONASPEH went to the airport and claimed water, blankets, food that was sitting on the tarmac. Our Mission partners began to be a mobilizing force for the local pastors.

The tragedy is unthinkable. The CONASPEH building where we were to stay is now a pile of rubble. A whole class of nursing students remains buried there. Key leaders of CONASPEH board also are among the 60 who were known to be in that building. In the midst of this great loss, plans are being made for the future of CONASPEH. A tent has been set up on a new piece of land and is command central for the relief efforts.

The Haitian people are beginning to emerge from the initial shock of the quake and are beginning to realize the impact of their loss. They are asking for help in this grieving process. Felix Ortiz, director of Global Ministries, called me to say they have suspended all work trips into Haiti because they are not ready as, they need to grieve. He asked if I would be willing to come and do some grief work with our mission partners. The training for skills in dealing with trauma is so needed at this point in time. "Jerri," he said, "I want your team to be the first ones to go in. They will need help in figuring out what to do to help them in this process. Pastors will need help in helping their people in local churches."

In March I will pack my bags once again and board an airplane bound for Haiti. It will be a much different trip than what I initially planned but it is a place where God has called and equipped me.

I was so deeply touch to hear of the number of you who called to check on my safety when you heard of the earthquake. Now I ask for you to pray for me as I lead the team going into Haiti in March. Pray for safety, strength, open ears, open hearts, and open hands. We tell people every Sunday, at CCSM, that God has no hands but our hands, no face but our face, no feet but our feet. I believe that, as we travel to Haiti pray for it to be the love of God that comes through our hands, our words, and our eyes. I thank you all for your support.

You Are Invited to No Homework Tonight Friday, March 5, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

It is a wonderful evening and annual fund raising event for Homework Central at CCSM celebrating our outreach program in the neighborhood. There will be delicious food created by chef Greg Graves, a fun auction and inspiring comments from students and tutors. Join us to celebrate 12 years of giving back to the community. For more information, please speak to Greg Graves, Judy Hemmer, Betsy Woodward, email hwcexecdirector@aol.com, or call 343-3423 with questions.

Volunteer Now! Sat., March 13 NCNC's Church Leadership Day 9:00-4:00 p.m. at CCSM

This is an energizing day filled with workshops for UCC Lay leaders. UCC folks from churches in the area will join us for this day of learning how to make our churches more vital!

Workshops will be offered for moderators and musicians, youth leaders and pastoral care teams. Since we are the hosts, *we want to be the hostesses with the mostest!* Rosemary Pero and Betsy Woodward are organizing teams of volunteers who would be CCSM guides for the day, part of the lunch crew, or children's program leaders. Please talk to Betsy or Rosemary if you would like to volunteer!

Office Schedule: Church offices will be closed on Feb. 15 on Presidents' Day. Pearly Masters will be on vacation from Feb. 15 to Feb. 19.



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A newsletter for the families & friends of the
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