PLURALISM

Following the path of Jesus means, at its core, that the love of God, neighbor and self are practiced together in concrete ways. As progressive Christians, following the path of Jesus also means deeply honoring the wisdom and truth of other traditions. The heartbeat of pluralism is engagement in thoughtful dialogue and generous service with those of other traditions. This engagement not only strengthens our own faith, but also fosters more peace in the world.

In May, we will celebrate the important theme of PLURALISM.

MAY 13 More than 40: Families and Pluralism. Penny Nixon
MAY 20 Spiritual Pluralism. CONFIRMATION SUNDAY with Patrick Kane, Kibbie Ruth, and Penny Nixon
MAY 27 The Other Side of God’s Hat: Humility in Religious Pluralism. Amie Giordano

UPCOMING SERMONS:
JUNE 3 Call Me By My Name: The Spiritual Power of Destigmatizing Mental Illness. Penny Nixon

The Earth Day altar was absolutely beautiful, with all of the elements. 
OUR NEIGHBORHOOD LOOKS BETTER

Thanks to the 25 people who stayed after church on Earth Day Sunday to pick up trash on the blocks around our building. They carefully stepped over the messages to the earth that our children chalked on our sidewalks during Children’s Church. The church service even included Joyful Noise singing and encouraging us to treasure our earth, air, fire and water. What a celebration!

REGISTER FOR CAMP CAZADERO

Follow this link, https://ncnucucc.org/yomcreg/, to join the adventure of beautiful UCC camping along the Russian River. Will this year’s crowd be half as fascinating as the mid-high campers last year? (Haven’t these kids grown in a year?).

- **JULY 6-8** Caz “You and Me” Camp for entering 1-3rd graders
- **JULY 8-14** Caz Senior High Camp for entering 10-12 graders
- **JULY 15-21** Caz Junior Camp for entering 4-6 graders
- **JULY 22-28** Caz Junior High Camp for entering 7-9 graders

SIX CONFIRMANDS, TWO RETREATS

In the adult inquirer’s class, someone always seems to ask, “What are the requirements for joining CCSM?” This school year, six high schoolers discovered the answer was eating lots of frozen pizzas, sleeping on hard-wood floors, learning church history and Bible stories, playing serious four-square, talking about God into the wee hours of the night, and more. On Confirmation Sunday, May 20, you will meet these committed teenagers and hear why they choose to follow in Jesus’ way.

FOURTEEN TAKE FLIGHT TO THE UCC YOUTH EVENT

Every four years, UCC teenagers from eight conferences (from Arizona to Washington, Wyoming to Hawaii) gather for the Western Regional Youth Event—worship, workshops, service projects, and more. Conferences take turns hosting the event; this year’s is sponsored by the Hawaii Conference. Terrific! Except that you can’t drive to Hawaii. So, fourteen of our youth and Sarah Graves, one of CCSM’s young adults, need to fly there.

SUPPORT THIS ONCE-IN-A-LIFE-TIME ADVENTURE... EAT PASTA!

After church, May 6, come eat handmade sauces and pasta on real china plates with table service—the works! Gluten-free and vegetarian options too. The teens have made high quality pasta and sauces from scratch, with the guidance of gourmet Jay Cornwall of Pasta Pasta. Salad, bread and tiramisu will complete the feast. Tickets for the fabulous lunch are $15/individual and $40/family. Of course, extra donations are also welcomed! For reservations, email kibbie@ccsm-ucc.org or text or call 650-580-1797.

To each raise $200 on their own, the teenagers are “hiring out.” So far, tasks have included computer help, watering plants for vacationers, walking dogs, clearing out garages, building a storage shed, childcare, and weeding (with a bit of coaching so that the flowers stay put). Little by little, our youth are reaching their goal. Only $10,000 more to go. Thank you for helping us help you!

If you have a project for us, please send a note to kibbie@kyros.org or call her at 650-580-1797.
HE SAID “I DO”

Saturday, April 28, Patrick Kane became a married man. Wahoo! Earlier in the month, over thirty teenagers celebrated at Patrick’s upcoming wedding with a feast and surprise shower. So, that Patrick could practice for the wedding, the boys dressed Rebecca as a groom in three color-coordinated garbage bags and paper Rolex watch. Then, two “bridesmaids” escorted in the bride (Patrick in case you don’t recognize him), wearing a stunning dress of soft tissue. Yells of “kiss, kiss, kiss!” finally subsided after his sweet peck on the cheek.

Recycling Joy
by Sandra Soto-Grondona

On Easter Sunday, I was so happy to see children enjoying the abundance of recycled egg cartons, cups, and plates for them to make anything they wanted. It reminded me of my childhood—and of last summer, when I taught a “sustainability” camp which included science experiments about how to clean up the ocean after an oil spill, learning about renewable energy, and about debugging and robotics, all using Lego pieces and recyclables. I was amazed at their creations!

I hope this Earth Day you were inspired to reuse, recycle and refurbish what you can.

SAVE THE DATE:
CCSM Summer Picnic
JULY 15
Ryder Park

The Mid Highs enjoying last year’s Camp Caz retreat.
my office to talk and share their stories—often-painful stories—of feeling lost and uncertain of their future; my role was not to “fix,” but rather to listen and to guide individuals into an awareness and acceptance of their emotions, God’s presence, and the strengths they carried within themselves. These were “holy listening” experiences and “conversations about life in the light of faith.” This is the essence of Spiritual Direction and it felt like a calling; I was encouraged to receive formal training.

So began my work at Mercy Center in 2013 as I enrolled in the three-year Art and Practice of Spiritual Direction program. In the first year, we concentrated primarily on our own spiritual growth and health, how we make decisions, how we handle stress, what our “light” and “shadow” sides are and how they manifest themselves. I realized that it takes both intention and inspiration to truly be in tune with one’s human and spiritual selves.

The second year the program focused more on the “how to” (and “how NOT to”) of Spiritual Direction—we read many books and wrote papers digging deep into our discernment process for this work. We began meeting with directees and receiving supervision. In class, we worked in quads (a director, a directee, an observer, and a mentor) to practice and receive feedback. We clearly were instructed that Spiritual Direction is NOT therapy or counseling, although it may have some therapeutic benefits.

I took a leave of absence from the program from 2015 to 2017 in order to accompany my wife, Jerri, during her appointment as a Global Ministries missionary to Albergue Las Memorias, an HIV-AIDS hospice in Tijuana. Last fall, I entered the final year of the program, which ended with my graduation on April 21, 2018.

As a result, I may now register as a certified director. I am subject to the Spiritual Director International Guidelines for Ethical Conduct and must take care not to cross dual-relationship boundaries. Completing the program has enriched my personal and spiritual life immeasurably. I have met many incredible fellow students, instructors, and mentors along the way and, as the title of the song from Wicked says, have been changed “For Good.”

This excerpt from my final discernment paper expresses how I see the role of Spiritual Direction in my own life, as a calling, and in the lives of others:

I believe that for wholeness, one must cultivate, minimally, three things: a personal, private relationship with God (the counsel of a Spiritual Director facilitates this); a “sacred circle” of trusted individuals (“BFFs”) whose charge is to listen, support, and lend perspective; and a community of faith, that larger context in which one can most effectively be fed through worship and serve the world.

I am honored to do this work—but please know that directors are not spiritually “better” or “wiser” or “more holy” than directees. Directors listen to one’s stories and hold them sacred, helping to open the space where God meets us.
First Tuesday Book Group

ALL MEETINGS AT 7:30PM • FIREPLACE ROOM

MAY 1 • The Couple Next Door by Shari Lapena. It all started at a dinner party... A domestic suspense debut about a young couple and their apparently friendly neighbors—a roller coaster ride of lies, betrayal, and the secrets between husbands and wives. Anne and Marco Conti seem to have it all—a loving relationship, a wonderful home, and a beautiful baby... But one night when they are at a dinner party next door, a terrible crime is committed. Suspicion immediately focuses on the parents. But the truth is much more complicated.

JUNE 5 • The Woman in Cabin 10 by Ruth Ware. Lo Blacklock, a journalist who writes for a travel magazine, has just been given the assignment of a lifetime: a week on a luxury cruise with only a handful of cabins. The sky is clear, the waters calm, and the veneered, select guests jovial as the exclusive cruise ship, the Aurora, begins her voyage in the picturesque North Sea. Lo witnesses what she can only describe as a dark and terrifying nightmare: a woman being thrown overboard. The problem? All passengers remain accounted for.

(Thanks to Goodreads for the thoughtful descriptors.)

NOTE: NO MEETINGS in July or August. Get ready for our fall gatherings:

SEPTEMBER 4 • A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles

OCTOBER 2 • Bobby Kennedy: A Raging Spirit by Chris Matthews

NOVEMBER 6 • Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi

For more information: s_stoehr@hotmail.com

25th Annual Organ Recital

MAY 6 • 4:00PM • CCSM SANCTUARY

CCSM’s beloved organist Angela Kraft Cross will be performing her 25th Anniversary Organ Recital this May. Let’s fill the church in appreciation of Angela’s 25 years of service at the organ bench and most recently as composer. While our hearts and spirits are filled with the glorious sounds from our pipe organ, be sure to tell your family and friends that this is a concert you won’t want to miss!

In keeping with the annual organ recital tradition, there will be an ice cream social following the concert hosted by the Music Ministry Team. See you there!

Music and Art

FRIDAY, MAY 18 • NOON-2:00PM BUCKHAM ROOM

The Music and Art season finale will feature a potluck luncheon, social time and a brief business meeting. Bring the food item you signed up for at the April meeting to the Buckham Room. (If you were absent in April, check with Susan Duty when you RSVP to see which categories need additions.) Sign-up sheets for the 2018-19 season will be circulated, giving every member the opportunity to participate. Please bring your ideas for programs.

New members are always welcome and to be sure there’s a place at the table for you, email Susan at susanj52@gmail.com or phone (650)-533-6828.

In a recent worship service we heard a moving testimony from Estefany, who has been living in our church building as our sanctuary guest since September. She has found permanent housing with a friend in San Rafael. In two months she will receive her work permit so she will be able to be more and more self-sufficient. She wants to express her deep gratitude to the congregation for supporting her on her journey of transformation and continued healing. The staff was able to share some memories and farewells with her. Thanks to all who helped make this possible. Who knows what God has in store for us next?
A Note from a Neighbor

Penny received this lovely note and photo from our neighbor Georgia Morrow, who since writing this letter has been attending services here at CCSM:

March 28, 2018

Dear Dr. Nixon,

I live across the street from your church, on Tilton. I often see your congregation enjoying each other’s company on the lawn after services. It gives me pleasure.

Last Sunday I saw this scene (in the enclosed photo) from my living room window and took the shot. People stopped to check out the donkey. It was quite a scene.

I was reminded of Mary Oliver’s poem “The Poet Thinks About the Donkey,” so I have enclosed it for you. Most likely you already know it, but here it is.

Happy Easter to you and to your congregation. You all do good work every day.

Sincerely,

Georgia Morrow

Jorge likened the disciples’ experience to that of immigrants facing all of the challenges of making a way for their families in a new land, and the added risk of deportation at this time in this country. “In these moments the presence of the body of Christ makes us recover faith and hope…. The body of Christ, from the Sunday service and the Wednesday gatherings, …reminds us that Christ is alive and continues to work in our lives…. It is a reminder that none of us are truly alone.” Members’ of the congregation expressed strong emotions, encouraged both by the message of Christ’s continuing work among them and by the recognition of CCSM’s solidarity with them.
Enjoy CCSM fellowship and fun this spring

HERE ARE FOUR PICK A PARTY OFFERINGS YOU CAN ATTEND...

MAY 5: HIKE AND BOX LUNCH AT HUDDART PARK
A few spots have opened up for this morning hike in Woodside, led by Carol Henton. The trail is a 4.7 mile loop featuring in a pretty forest setting. From 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Good for all skill levels. Along the way, we’ll enjoy a box lunch from Copenhagen Bakery. Cost is $25. If interested, contact Carol at carolhenton@aol.com.

MAY 5: HIKE AND PICNIC WITH YOUR DOG
Only four spots remain for this fun activity which includes a hike on Sugarloaf Mountain in San Mateo followed by a picnic in Laurelwood Park featuring a gourmet box lunch plus dog treats. Cost is $25 per adult; $10 for kids over ten years; max. per family $50. The fun starts at 11:30 a.m. (about two hours). Contact Kathy Gallo at kgallo3119@yahoo.com to sign up.

RESCHEDULED: HIKE IN CRYSTAL SPRINGS WATERSHED AREA. NOW SET FOR MAY 19
This all-day hike has been moved to May 19 (due to rain in early April). It’s a unique hike experience on the western side of the Crystal Springs Reservoir and is part of the Bay Area Ridge Trail. Hike will be led by Malcolm Jones, a PUC trail docent. The distance is 13 miles, so seasoned hikers only. We’ll start south of Sneath Lane in San Bruno and hike to Highway 92 in San Mateo. You must confirm by May 5. Cost is $40 per person. Lunch is provided; you carry your own water. Time is from 8:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. If interested, contact Sandi Blodgett at blodgett@value.net or Malcolm Jones at Malcolmjones49@gmail.com.

JUNE 9 EVENING OF DESSERT, CHAMPAGNE AND CLASSICAL GUITAR MUSIC
How about an evening of classical guitar and conversation while enjoying delectable desserts and bubbly champagne? The featured musician will be classical and Spanish guitarist Claudio Tudisco. Plan to attend Jim Berthelsen and Kurt Neubert’s annual late-evening party on Saturday June 9. The fun gets underway at 8:00 p.m. Cost to attend is $25. Sign up with Jim at jbsmca@sbcglobal.net.

Affordable Housing in downtown San Mateo
by Penny Nixon

On Monday, April 16, the San Mateo City Council selected Mid-Pen Housing as the developer in San Mateo to develop public land in downtown San Mateo for 100% Affordable Housing. It is a real win for our city, and makes progress in providing more affordable housing available for the most vulnerable among us.

I was very proud to see CCSM represented in the voices of Chris Sturken and John Fyfe who spoke passionately about the need for affordable housing. We were the only faith community there. The council’s decision gave me real hope that we are starting to turn the tide and find a way to be a community for all people again. Thank you, CCSM, for showing up and advocating for justice and equality. We make a difference.

CCSM participated enthusiastically in the March for our Lives national anti-gun-violence demonstration in March.
CCSM Justice Network Is Up and Running!

Thank you so much to all of you who have signed up for the CCSM Justice Network! We currently have over 80 people signed up for the network.

This network is a powerful way for our larger CCSM family to stand up for justice and live out our calling as “God’s Hands, Feet, and Face” in the world.

HERE’S HOW IT WORKS:

PURPOSE: The CCSM Justice Network is for disseminating information about time-sensitive social justice actions, rather than regularly scheduled meetings/programs.

STEPS:
1) A point person steps up for a particular action.
   In order for a text to be sent about an action, we need a point person to step up for this action. This can be a CCSM member or staff person. The point person is committed to attending the action, and will designate the meeting place and time.
2) The point person texts information about the action to all of the CCSM Justice Network Admins.
   The point person will text the following information to the Admins:
   ✦ Name of social justice action
   ✦ Meeting time and place for sign-making (This is optional. There will be supplies for sign-making stored at CCSM. If desired, the point person can have people meet at CCSM to make signs prior to the action.)
   ✦ Meeting place and time at the action itself
   ✦ Their cell phone number

CONTACT INFO for CCSM Justice Network Admins:

George Snide (MSJ Chair):
415-577-5408

Carole Wilson (MSJ Member):
650-815-8225

Chris Sturken (MSJ Member):
650-454-7907

Amie Giordano (MSJ Staff Liaison):
415-577-1877

Penny Nixon (Senior Pastor):
415-269-2259

3) The first admin who is able to respond will send out the information for the action via group text. The point person’s cell phone number will be provided in the group text so people can contact the point person if they have questions about the action. If you are signed up for the CCSM Justice Network, but only have a landline, then you’ll receive a phone call rather than a text.

Interested, but haven’t joined the network yet? It’s not too late! Just send your name, phone number (with area code please), and the name of your cell phone provider to Amie at agiordano@ccsm-ucc.org.

Penny’s Gratitude

Thank you for all the love and prayers before, during and after my surgery on April 18. All is well and I am back on the road to complete health and will be back to full energy soon. My family and I felt your prayers in a tangible way. I felt incredibly peaceful the night before surgery, and the outcome couldn’t have been any better.

Penny
PRAYERS FOR ANXIOUS HEARTS

God, when I can no longer handle things on my own, help me to trust You more. When anxious thoughts creep in, help me to stop and relax. I trust You are with me. I will not live in the future, but in the love You give me now. I pray for You to show me a new way to handle my fears. No matter what issues I am dealing with, no matter how big the problems, Loving God, I lay them all at Your feet today. Amen.

SPECIAL MAY BIRTHDAYS

Katharine Boaden will turn 95 years young May 8th, 2018. We wish her God’s love and joy for the year ahead.

ENCOURAGING CONNECTION

If you have not seen a friend in church for a while, please call or visit them. Don’t put it off. Do it today. We all need a reminder we are missed.

PRAYERS OF JOY

Rachel Stoddard, daughter of Susan Stoddard-Phillips, was married to Lamar Harris-Walker on April 28th. We wish them all the joy and blessings for their lives together.

Sue Bullis is the proud grandma of Hudson Gregory Valine who was born at 2:03 a.m. on April 18. He arrived at 8 lbs. 12 oz., 22 inches long. Baby Hudson, mom Janine, and dad Corey are all doing fine. Cards may be sent to the glowing parents and grandma Sue at 270 Chapin Lane, Burlingame, CA 94010.

Kristi Spence and Bob Spence recently celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary. They were married here at CCSM 55 years ago. We wish them many more years of love ahead.

PRAYERS OF LOVE AND STRENGTH

- Prayers of healing for Fred Shaughnessy, who has been sick. We pray for his ability to return home. Prayers of love and strength for his wife Cindy and daughter Rachelle. Fred is at Brookside Rehabilitation Center.
- Prayers for a speedy recovery for Sue Hill, who had hip replacement surgery. She has returned home and is resting.
- Prayers of healing and recovery for Vija Norkvesta’s mother, Zina, who is undergoing three months of rehab after successful surgery.
- Lorna Groundwater shares some prayer concerns: for her friend Pam, seeking a diagnosis for her mystery illness; for her friend Kate’s brother Bill Steele, just diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer; and for the family of Sue Anderson Reif, mourning her death on Good Friday after a five-year battle with endometrial cancer.
- Prayers of strength and comfort for the family of Joliene Wade Gatlin as they grieve the loss of Joliene’s grandmother Ginny Kiely, aunt Billie and the family pet Wicket.
- Please continue sending cards and prayers of support for Andrew Lind and his wife Margherita Maiello who are in charge of the refugee camps for the Rohingya people in Bangladesh. There are 650,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Prayers for peace and safety for all the refugees in this time of devastation and crisis. Cards may be sent to The Lakes Condo, apt. 1102. 123 Ratchadaphisek Rd, Bangkok, 10110 Thailand.
- Continued prayers for Mark, friend of Judy Hemmer, who has cancer. We continue sending him prayers peace and healing.
- Ongoing prayers of healing for Ellie, 7-year-old friend of Lars Gustafson and Kate Joyce’s daughter Lois. She has a rare autoimmune disease.
- Prayers of healing for Deidre, niece of Rachelle Shaughnessy, who has been sick. We pray that she will know God’s love during this time.
- Healing prayers for Louise Avila, fighting cancer in three parts of her body. Please pray for her healing and recovery.
- Prayers for beloved member Dawn Graves who had another vertigo attack. Dawn asks for prayers of continued recovery.
- Continued prayers of strength and healing for our beloved brothers and sisters: Travis Woodmansee’s mother Cathy, Dave Karlin, George Kromhout, Julie Lenden’s cousin, Pico Soriano’s friend Alexandria Christakos, Dawn Graves’ mother Donna Stanger, Bill Daniels, Sandee Schlickman’s friend Mike, Jim Groundwater, Ruth Black, Marjorie Griffin, Cathy Latta, Martha Grannis, Phyllis Mead, Adrienne Mitchell, Genevieve and John Parsons, Fred Petri, Gordon Smith’s sister Janet Smith Roberts, and others as they walk their unique journeys with cancer and other health challenges.
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Home and Hope
May 27 - June 3

CCSM will once again be hosting homeless families through Home and Hope. Yes, this is a holiday weekend, but it is hoped that this will not discourage volunteers. Openings remain for:

« BRINGING A DINNER MEAL (or any portion of a meal) on Monday, Thursday and Friday. You don’t need to bring an entire meal! Just let Donna know which part of the meal you can provide. Dinner is served around 6:15. We do not know yet how many people will be staying with us. You will know as soon as we know.

« THE OVERNIGHT SHIFT (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 7:30pm - 7:10am). The responsibilities for the overnight volunteer(s) are to turn the lights out at night, wake the families at 6 (even though most are already up) see that the guests get breakfast and lunch, and send them on their way by 7. Last thing is to put the food away and turn the lights out. Pretty simple!

« SETTING UP at 3:30 on Sunday, May 27 and TAKING DOWN at 7:30am on June 3. These are two VERY important tasks.

« SUPPLIES OF FRESH FRUIT, A VEGGIE TRAY, OR COOKIES are always welcome. These can just be dropped off in the kitchen at any time.

If none of these options appeal to you, you might also just come around 6:00pm and HAVE DINNER WITH THE FAMILIES and get to know them, maybe help out in the kitchen. This is a great slot for youth needing volunteer hours.

Please contact Donna Lindsay, 650-345-8397 or releduc@sbcglobal.net if you can help.

Please contact Donna Lindsay, 650-345-8397 or releduc@sbcglobal.net if you can help.