



The Pine Seed

CCSM's Children, Youth, and Family Newsletter



CCSM Dia de los Muertos Memorial Altar

Advent and Christmas are Coming!

We have many special ways to engage in this special season

It's hard to believe it's here already! Here are some of the special things that are taking place: kids will participate in our "Living Advent Wreath" on the 4 Sundays of Advent (Dec 1, 8, 15, and 22nd), our K-5 kids will make Advent wreaths and have other Advent-related activities on Sunday Dec 1, kids will leave their shoes outside their classrooms on Sunday, Dec 8th for St. Nicholas to fill with treats, on Monday, Dec 16 at 7pm families are invited to participate in our Las Posadas Advent event, and on Sunday, Dec 22 we will have a no-rehearsal Christmas pageant in worship! Our mid-high youth will help to write this year's pageant.

On Christmas Eve, our family service will be a 5pm (followed by an 11pm service). This is an important season and I hope that it is a meaningful one for you and your family. I also know it can be stressful, at times under-whelming, and can bring up difficult memories as well. Know that we are here for you whatever the case may be, wishing for moments of light and warmth to find you and the mystery of the season to surprise you in moments of wonder and joy.



Decorating sugar skulls with frosting at the Dia de los Muertos event



Youth out for lunch after visit to Catholic Mass



Kids writing Thanksgiving prayers during liturgical arts class

Youth Update

Our youth programs are going well! In November, our Sunday mid-high class focused on learning about other Christian denominations and visited a Catholic and an African-American church. We had lots of time for conversation and discussion about the similarities and differences between churches. The kids seemed to really enjoy being off-site and experiencing other ways of worshipping and being church.



Parenting workshop on youth mental health

Our mid-high class focus for December will be on Advent: helping to write the script for our Christmas pageant, filing shoes on St. Nicholas Sunday, and more.

Our Sunday youth groups have also had some great gatherings. Highlights have included lunch at a Mexican restaurant (after Catholic mass) and working on the Christmas Collection Drive for Open Cathedral. The youth have been very reflective about what people who are unhoused or under-housed might most appreciate as well as the many reasons why poverty exists. We have also been able to connect our focus on mental health with this, considering the ways that mental health and other forms of marginalization too often intersect and what society could do to support all people better.

The Wednesday evening youth programs are also going very well! The youth are really connecting well with one another and appreciating having their own space in Kloss Hall to gather for games and discussion - as well as to do homework! On Wednesdays we have a new staff member, Colleen, working with our kids (unfortunately Mariska found the commute from Berkeley to be too much). She brings many skills to the role, including experience with directing a children's drama and with physical education and health. If you are able to help on an occasional Wednesday, you would be most welcome (high school aged or adult!). Thank you!

YOUTH RETREATS AND CAMPS FOR KIDS AND YOUTH!

Please let Sheryl know asap if you are interested in participating any of these so we can begin to arrange carpools, transportation, chaperones, funding, etc. Many of these events are supported/organized by the wider UCC so we know they will be well-organized and based on progressive Christian values.

Mid-Winter Retreat: Jan 18-20 (Mid-High) - Community of the Great Commission in Foresthill (Dec 18 is the deadline for early bird registration - \$200, scholarships available)

February Camp: Feb 15-17 (High School) - Monte Toyon in Aptos (Jan 15 is the early bird deadline)

NCNC Camp Cazadero: This is a beautiful camp located near Guerneville, CA. There are camp weeks for kids in grade 1-3 with a parent/adult (July 10-12), grade 3-6 (July 12-18), grade 7-9 (July 19-25), and grade 10-12 and CIT program (also July 12-18).

United Church of Christ National Youth Event - July 22-25 at Purdue University in Indiana (with possible service project in Chicago before/after) for grades 9-12.

Youth Christmas Collection Drive

Our youth have taken on the ambitious goal this year of collecting items to fill 100 bags for Open Cathedral - which will be distributed at Christmas time to those they serve. We are very grateful for all of the contributions thus far!

The youth are still hoping to collect reusable or single use water bottles, rain ponchos, small treats (i.e. granola bars, candy), shampoos/soaps, and other useful items that can go in the bags. Please consider what you could contribute!

If your workplace has “swag” maybe you could bring some extras in for us? If you can’t bring 100 of something that is okay too - not all bags need to be exactly the same. Thank you so much for supporting this initiative.

We will assemble the bags on December 15, so please bring in any items on that Sunday or before.

Finally, please let me know if you aren’t getting my texts or e-mails! Another way to stay in touch about youth programming is through Social Media: Facebook (“Youth Group at CCSM”) and Instagram (@ccsm.hi).

Kids learning liturgical dance



YOUTH GROUP IN DECEMBER

Sunday, December 1: No youth group due to Thanksgiving long weekend

Saturday, December 7: 6pm-8:30pm: Mid-High pizza and movie night! Come out to relax watch a Christmassy movie with Libby, Angel, and Sheryl. We'll play a game or two as well!

Sunday, December 8: 11:45am-1:30pm: High School youth are invited to join in the congregational Christmas carolling outing! Mid-high youth can also participate with their families. Lunch will be provided!

Sunday, December 15: 11:45am-1:30pm: Mid-high and High School youth group work to assemble 100 gift bags for Open Cathedral! We'll also have lunch and a pre-Christmas celebration with some fun activities!

INFANT, TODDLER, AND PRE-SCHOOL GATHERING IN DECEMBER

Sunday, December 8: 9:30am-10:20am: Parents/guardians are invited to come for an informal time before church to connect with other parents, enjoy breakfast, coffee/tea, connect with Lily (our awesome preschool teacher), and of course play with the great toys in the Muslim Children’s Garden Preschool Room! All are welcome - feel free to invite neighbors and friends. Dec 8 is also our St. Nicholas gifting Sunday - kids leave their shoes outside during their classes and at 11:30 they will find them filled with treats!

