**EPIPHANY SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS**

In Epiphany we are looking at the grounding virtues of connecting across difference. These come from Better Conversations by Krista Tippett and the On Being Project (see Resources on page 10).

Virtues are not the stuff of saints and heroes. They are spiritual technologies and tools for the art of living.

**JANUARY 19 • ADVENTUROUS CIVILITY. MLK Sunday. Penny Nixon.** The adventure of civility for our time can’t be a mere matter of politeness or niceness. Adventurous civility honors the difficulty of what we face and the complexity of what it means to be human. It doesn’t celebrate diversity by putting it up on a pedestal and ignoring its messiness and its depths.

**JANUARY 26 • VIOLINS OF HOPE Special Service.**

**FEBRUARY 2 • HOSPITALITY. Kelly Colwell.** You don’t have to love or forgive or feel compassion to extend hospitality. But it’s more than an invitation. New social realities are brought into being over time by a quality of relationship between unlikely combinations of people. When in doubt, practice hospitality.

**FEBRUARY 9 • WORDS THAT MATTER. Penny Nixon, in collaboration with Rev. Phil Porter.** The words we use shape how we understand ourselves, how we interpret the world, how we treat others. As technology reframes the meaning of basic human acts like making and leading and belonging, the world needs the most vivid and transformative universe of words we can muster.

**FEBRUARY 16 • GENEROUS LISTENING. Kelly Colwell.** Real listening is powered by curiosity. It involves vulnerability — a willingness to be surprised, to let go of assumptions and take in ambiguity.

**FEBRUARY 23 • BLESS THIS MESS! Guest preacher Rev. Molly Baskette.**

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Dear beloved community,

I want to share some good news with you. First of all, I am so grateful for this community and all the ways you have been generous with me over the years. This year is no different. I approached the Board of Directors last month with a plan for me to take some sabbatical time in the coming year. The kind of sabbatical I asked for was not the typical one, so we spent some time discussing what would be best for me and best for the church.

I have a number of months of sabbatical coming to me after 12 years—it has accrued over the years because except for 8 weeks in the summer of 2014, I have not taken any sabbatical time. Honestly, a number of moderators over the past years have encouraged me to do so, but the time never seemed right and I don’t like to be away from the church for too long. Also, though I’ve desired to take time away for an extended study program abroad, that hasn’t been realistic at this time in my family life. However, I do feel the need for some rest and renewal, as well as additional time for reading, reflection and discernment.

So after much conversation with trusted leaders, the Board has agreed to allow me a creative sabbatical. I will work half-time, starting in the beginning of February through September. We have built in a three-month review process to make sure this plan is working for me and for the church. During that time, I will be paid my full salary while working half-time, thereby using up much of my accrued sabbatical. This feels like a great win for everybody—because here is the good news: I’m still around!

And some more good news—Kelly Colwell, who currently works with our 20/30s and has preached a few times over the past months, has...
gratitude...

Thank you all so very much for all of your support and participation in everything in 2019! Since arriving at CCSM in June I have felt so very supported by everyone, children, youth, parents, volunteers, and so, so many others. We had a busy Advent season that included multi-age Advent preparations and wreath-making and kids helping to write and then participate in the Christmas pageant! Thank you so much to our many costume helpers and narrators and actors in the pageant and also to our generous donors and assemblers that allowed us to give out 100 backpacks filled with basic necessities and a few treats for homeless and under-housed people in San Francisco. Thank you! — Sheryl

WELCOMING LIBBY BARNARD TO THE CHILDREN’S MINISTRY TEAM

We are very excited to welcome Libby Barnard who will be leading the Kids’ Liturgical Arts class starting in January. Many of you may have met Libby already as she is a young adult who attends CCSM and has been volunteering a lot with our middle school aged youth! She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience working with kids. She is excited also to help build and strengthen connections between the kids and the rest of the congregation. Watch out for the kids writing prayers and interpreting scripture, creating visual art for use in the service, baking communion bread, maybe even making grape juice for communion, and much more!

Sanctuary family update

Our sanctuary guests could be joining us before the end of January. There are still some details to work out. Keep an eye out for a congregational email. In the meantime, please pray that David and Byron are reunited.

On December 22, the Boigues twins, Teresa and Moisés, were baptized by Rev. Grandma Kibbie during the joy-full Advent service.

Creativity and collaboration in church school!
Happy New Year, Church! I wanted the chance to introduce myself a little more fully and share a bit about what I’ll be doing around CCSM in the coming months during Rev. Penny’s half-time sabbatical. My name is Kelly Colwell, and I’ve been living in the Bay Area for the past three and a half years. I went to seminary in Toronto, Ontario, and graduated in 2013 with a Master of Divinity, an Old Testament honors thesis and a certificate in eco-theology. My focus in the thesis was on the role of non-human creation in the book of Daniel, and how the stories showed God’s resistance to the forces of Empire through the actions of non-human creation. I moved to Berkeley in 2016 to start a PhD in practical theology at Graduate Theological Union, which I’m still working on. I love hiking and spending time outdoors, I love working in our beautiful vegetable and fruit garden, and I love building diverse, beautiful community.

As you may have heard (from all my announcements!), in October I started to help convene events for the 20s/30s age group. We’ve had a few lunches and dinners as well as a camping trip, and we’ve started doing online conversation using Slack, which is an online platform for groups to keep in touch. If you want to join our Slack conversation, let me know by email or on Sundays in person and I’ll add you. We’re also active on facebook.

It’s a new year, and I’m in a new and expanded role! As you probably know, Penny is taking an extended half-time sabbatical, and I have the privilege of picking up some of the responsibilities she normally carries so that can happen. That means you’ll be hearing more from me in the pulpit, approximately twice a month, but it also means you’ll be hearing from me as part of the pastoral care team. I’m still getting to know all of you, so I’ll depend on you to help me know who might appreciate a call, email, or visit. I’ll still be keeping my particular role with the 20s/30s group, so keep those connections and introductions coming as well!

I’m always available by email: kcolwell@ccsm-ucc.org gets right to me, and I look forward to getting to know all of you better in the coming months.

Kelly

20s/30s Group

If you’re post-high school and pre-40s, keep up with the CCSM 20s/30s group on Facebook or in our Slack workspace. Just email Kelly at kcolwell@ccsm-ucc.org to get added!

Next Sunday, January 19, join the 20s/30s on our first monthly hike! We’ll carpool to Rancho Cañada del Oro Preserve for a moderate 5.8 mile loop and would love for you to join us. Email Kelly for any questions. (As always, we’re not checking IDs! You don’t have to be in the age range to join us!)

You’re invited to Kelly Colwell’s ordination service!

SATURDAY, FEB. 22 • 10:30AM
1ST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BERKELEY
2345 CHANNING WAY, BERKELEY

Because my home church is in Berkeley, and because of how the UCC works, I’m getting ordained there, although my ministry will be at CCSM. The ordination service will last about an hour and be followed by lunch, so I really hope some of you can venture across the Bay and join me for this joyful celebration! Whether you’ve attended many ordination services before or have never seen one, you’re very welcome. I’ve been waiting and working towards being ordained for over thirteen years now, and it’s because of the space that you’ve made for me here at CCSM that it can finally happen. I’m so grateful to be in ministry with you!
agreed to work for CCSM half-time, picking up some of my responsibilities. I will be in worship preaching twice a month and when I am not here, Jorge will be leading worship and Kelly will be preaching most Sundays. I will continue to do my top job priorities: continuing oversight of worship and as head of staff, working with the Board, and remaining the “public face” of the church.

I feel so blessed to be able to be around the coming year as well as take some needed time off. Right now, I feel very energized by a lot of things going on at CCSM. I believe 2020 will be a great year. I want to be fully present to that energy and renewed for the work that I know is ahead. I feel like this creative sabbatical will be a great time for CCSM and that we will find ourselves delightfully surprised at what might be birthed during 2020.

Please feel free to ask me questions—and also, I hope you’ll help me stick to my half-time hours. You know that “self-care” is not my strong suit!

With gratitude and abiding love,

Penny

P.S. The pastoral care needs of the church will continue to be met by the pastoral care team—Jorge, Kelly, and Sheryl—and Penny will continue to meet with the team regularly.
Let Us Count the Ways...  
Gratitude and Farewell for Marge

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH
LUNCHEON IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE SERVICE

Let us count the ways Marge has so graciously served us. Her many, many gifts have brought us wisdom, beauty, grace, deep spirituality and laughter whether she was organizing everything, listening deeply, preparing snacks, doing art projects, playing bells, or playing cello or preaching. Come and celebrate her with lunch in Kloss Hall. Dom Libonati will be our chef. **If you are willing to help with the celebration in any way, please let Penny know** by emailing her at pnixon@ccsm-ucc.org.

We will also be collecting a purse for Marge to show our appreciation and love. Checks can be made out to CCSM and dropped in the offering plate or in the office with MARGE’S PURSE in the memo. You can also donate online indicating the same thing, or call Cheryle with a donation. Please try and have donations in by February 2nd.

The Memorial Reception team provides support for memorials held at CCSM. It involves being at the church and preparing for receptions that occur after memorial services, monitoring during the reception, and cleaning up at the end. (The logistics are handled by the office staff in conjunction with the family.) It is a rewarding experience and much appreciated by the family.

If you have questions or might be willing to be a part of the team, please contact Diane Kalliam (415-469-7750 or dkalliam@gmail.com) or talk to Chase in the church office. We are looking to recruit as many new folks as possible so that the load doesn’t fall too heavily on a few. Please consider being a part of this worthwhile ministry.

Music and Art features special organ program

**JANUARY 17, NOON • BUCKHAM ROOM**

We will begin with the usual bring-your-own-sandwich/salad fellowship lunch. Beverages and dessert are provided. A devotional moment will follow as well as a short business meeting.

Members and guests will then adjourn to the sanctuary for the organ concert. **Angela Kraft Cross** along with good friend and concert organist, **Justan Foster**, Music Director of Greenbush Reformed Church, near Albany, NY will share the program. Angela will include her newest compositions Petit Messe d’Orgue: Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus and Agnus Dei, and Fantasie on Ubi Caritas. Justan will play Angela’s Messianic Longings and a few other pieces for the MLK weekend, including a Toccata on We Shall Overcome.

This will be a fantastic program. Invite your friends, and be sure to RSVP to susanjd52@gmail.com or call 650-533-6828.
CCSM is privileged to host one of several events which are part of the Violins of Hope San Francisco Bay Area (SFBA) program, presented in association with Music at Kohl Mansion, Burlingame California.

A collection of more than 50 string instruments once played by Jews in concentration camps during the Holocaust will be showcased. Lovingly restored by Israeli violin-makers Amnon and Avshalom Weinstein, the Violins are now touring worldwide.

This first West Coast appearance of the Violins of Hope commemorates the 75th Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

Violins of Hope will bring their healing music to our own sanctuary during the Sunday morning Worship Service.

You will not want to miss this inspiring and moving event!

Join us for a special worship service at 10:30am!

Sunday, January 26th
Mural Project Update

SOMOS CRISTIANOS – SOMOS UNA COMUNIDAD ESPIRITUAL – SOMOS INCLUSIVOS – SOMOS ABIERTOS DE MENTE – ESTAMOS SIEMPRE EVOLUCIONANDO – SOMOS CADA UNO LAS MANOS, PIES Y ROSTRO DE DIOS (we are God’s hands, feet and face)

At a Second Hour on December 15, the Mural Project Team summarized two important activities from their exploratory phase of their work. First, on a field trip to the Mission District in San Francisco they viewed inspiring examples of murals that build communities and express important cultural and historic messages. Second, they explained how the team is exploring CCSM’s Guiding Principles for possible mural images. The Team reiterated their charge from the Board of Directors to develop ideas that embody CCSM as a whole, including our Latino participants.

The 25 or so people in attendance posed questions, offered encouragement, and noted areas needing further research and consideration. The Mural Project Team is committed to following up on all of the thoughts expressed and to hold periodic forums as the project proceeds in order to update CCSM members and receive further input. Their meetings are also announced in the Pine Tree and Sunday bulletin.

Sandra Soto-Grondona is leader of the team, which also includes Jessica Gonzalez and Oscar Rivera, from our Wednesday congregation, and Kay Harris, Dawn Graves, and John Fyfe from our Sunday congregation.

Multi-Faith Climate Event

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8 • 10:00AM - 2:00PM IN THE SANCTUARY

Come to a special multi-faith climate event featuring the Rev. Jim Antal, Special Advisor on Climate Justice to the President of the United Church of Christ.

Rev. Antal is the author of Climate Church, Climate World, a ground-breaking book that outlines the steps churches and their individual members can take to address climate change.

Rev. Antal will address the gathering as well as moderate a panel of local faith leaders in discussion. Attendees will participate in group breakout discussions on climate activism.

The cost to register is $15 per person which includes lunch and beverages. (If you would like to attend but cannot afford the registration fee, please call Gary White at 650-346-1519.) You can register at eventbrite.com/e/climate-church-climate-world-tickets-88431329637.

Co-sponsors of the event along with CCSM are First Congregational Church Palo Alto, 350 Silicon Valley Direct Action, Extinction Rebellion San Mateo, & attendees.

I hope to see you there.

Gary White
Group Leader, Extinction Rebellion San Mateo
Founding Member, Energy & Environmental Justice Ministry – Congregational Church of San Mateo
650-346-1519
Big Thank You to All CCSM’s Talented Musicians

Please join me in saying a HUGE thank you to all the CCSM musicians and ensembles who made the Advent & Christmas Season so special this year: Carillon Ringers, Joyful Noise Choir, Chancel Choir and all our wonderful guest soloists. We are so blessed at CCSM to have such talented and dedicated musicians sharing their gifts with us throughout the year; but truly they made the air in the sanctuary sparkle as bright as the exquisite decorations the liturgical arts team provided.

In addition, a thank you to everyone who participated in the caroling and the Las Posadas celebration—the gathering of community and blending of voices for these events truly touched many members of the CCSM community. It’s always such a joy to hear CCSM’s community in whole singing from their heart on the beloved carols and seasonal songs.

All our musical ensembles welcome anyone who would be interested in participating with us. Please come talk with Lynnelle after service on Sundays or email lbilsey@lifemoves.org to learn more.

Lynnelle Bilsey
Director of Music, CCSM

CCSM VIRTUAL CONGREGATION

Here’s a note from one of our listeners online—CCSM has a larger audience than San Mateo and a growing “virtual congregation.”

Thank you!

Thank you for sharing your sermons online. For giving me the sense that I am not alone in being a practicing Christian who adores the teaching of Thich Nhat Hanh, of Buddhism. For many years, I’ve felt alone, isolated in my beliefs.

The Midwest has a highly Catholic (dare I say stubborn) mindset with unwavering regard for any thought outside of that of their own collective. Finding a like-minded congregation has been a challenge.

For the first time in my forty-something years, I truly feel that there are others who believe there is more than one way or one teacher. That practicing faith and spirituality is a journey…. and that I should not feel guilty about studying other teachings.

January Collection: BLANKETS

Help People Stay Warm!

The San Francisco Night Ministry needs blankets to distribute to people living on the street. Please bring to worship and place in the collection bins or bring to the church office during January. Thank you!

Jorge is on vacation and will return on January 27, 2020.

Music & Art Christmas Event at Pat Pepper’s home
Joys and Concerns
CCSM Pastoral Care Team

Please share your prayers with the pastoral care team: Rev. Dr. Penny Nixon, Rev. Jorge Bautista, Rev. Sheryl Johnson, and Kelly Colwell. You are invited to share your prayers, your hopes, and your lives. You may connect in the following ways: in person, by filling out a blue prayer card at Sunday service, by filling out a ccsm-ucc.org/prayer online prayer request, by contacting us via staff emails listed in your bulletin or on the website, ccsm-ucc.org. You may also contact the church office at cmontara@ccsm-ucc.org or call 650-343-3694, and Chase will make sure one of the pastors contacts you as soon as possible.

PRAYERS OF JOY AND GRATITUDE

Jim Berthelsen expresses his gratitude to the congregation for all the cards, calls and words of encouragement this past several months.

Thank you from Lynnelle & the Bilsey family to everyone who assisted with the service for Elrae Bilsey as well as all the cards, love and support. We are truly thankful and blessed to be part of CCSM’s loving community.

PRAYERS OF LOVE AND STRENGTH

Please pray for George Vail as he grieves the passing of his lifelong friend, Rosemary LeBailly, as well as for her surviving twin sister, Donna Terry.

PRAYERS OF SUPPORT AND HEALING

Prayers of healing and hope for Stan Higgs’ brother who was in the hospital in December.

Prayers for Mary, Robin Hansen’s mother, for improvement for her confusion and memory.

Frank Garritano’s best friend and companion, his dog, Buster, had to be put to sleep on December 29 at age 15 after a cancer diagnosis. Prayers for Frank and Vic as they find comfort in all the memories and joy he brought into their lives.

Continuing prayers of strength and healing for our beloved brothers and sisters: Dave McClure, Martha Grannis, Bill Melis, Dr. Jim Groundwater and family, Annette Daniels, Bill Daniels, Ruth Black, Marjorie Griffin, Thelma Kromhout, Adrienne Mitchell, Genevieve and John Parsons, Fred Petri, Rev. Travis Woodmansee’s mother Cathy, Melanie Dresbach’s brother Rev. Michael Dresbach, Mike and Kay Harris’ friend Mary Helen McMahon, Cathy Latta, Genel Morgan’s friends Marty and Steve, Dottie Scott, Veril Phillips’ granddaughter Eva, Deanna Riding’s friend and neighbor, and others as they walk their unique journeys with cancer and other health challenges.

First Tuesday Book Group

February 4 & March 3 • 7:30pm Fireplace Room

On February 4, we’ll discuss Delia Owens’ novel Where the Crawdads Sing, about a young woman who’s left to raise herself in the marshes of North Carolina when her family abandons her at a young age. There is so much to her story: romance, mystery, and a murder... and it takes place in the breathtaking backdrop of the South. Please join us.

Our March 3 book will be Little Fires Everywhere by Celeste Ng. Questions: contact Susan Stoehr at s_stoehr@hotmail.com

2020 Annual Meeting Recap

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Annual Meeting on January 12th! Thank you, also, to Veril Phillips and Jeanne Back – CCSM Board of Director Members – who co-facilitated the meeting on behalf of our moderator, Dave Chandler, as he attended to pressing family concerns out-of-state.

We are delighted to report that attendees overwhelmingly supported the call of Rev. Sheryl Johnson as our Minister for Children, Youth, and Family Ministries. Sheryl has been with us for over seven months in an “appointed” status. This call communicates our gratitude for and confidence in Sheryl’s ministry and is an indication of our long-term relationship and commitment.

The two main purposes of our Annual Meeting are to approve the budget and elect the leadership slate for the upcoming year. Our leadership slate includes the Board of Directors (officers and at-large members) as well as our Ministry Leads. We are pleased to report that both these motions were carried.

Also, we approved two small changes to our bylaws. The first moves the completion due date for the previous year’s annual report from January to the end of March, with no congregational “approval” of the report necessary. The second is a name change for the forum we use for ministry visioning and planning from “Council of Ministries” to “All Church Assembly.” Additionally, the updated bylaws stipulate that the Senior Minister is responsible for establishing the meeting schedule (versus the Board of Directors as previously worded).

Finally, Rev. Penny Nixon took some time at the end of the meeting to discuss her half-time sabbatical which will go into effect in February and continue through September.

Formal minutes will be made available shortly.
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Check out some of these
On Being Episodes to explore our
Epiphany themes in more depth
onbeing.org

BRENÉ BROWN
Strong Back, Soft Front, Wild Heart
CLAUDIA RANKINE
How Can I Say This So We Can
Stay in This Car Together?
FRANCES KISSLING
What Is Good in the Position
of the Other
LUIS ALBERTO URREA
What Borders Are Really About, and
What We Do With Them
RUBY SALES
Where Does It Hurt?
TRACY K. SMITH
love is a language /
Few practice, but all, or near all speak

VINCENT HARDING
Is America Possible?
JOHN A. POWELL
Opening to the Question
of Belonging
SARAH BASSIN &
ABDULLAH ANTEPLI
Holy Envy
REBECCA TRAISTER &
AVI KLEIN
#MeToo Through a
Solutions Lens
ELIZABETH ALEXANDER
Words That Shimmer
EULA BISS
Let’s Talk About Whiteness

DEREK BLACK &
MATTHEW STEVENSON
How Friendship and Quiet
Conversations Transformed a
White Nationalist
AMERICA FERRERA &
JOHN PAUL LEDERACH
How Change Happens, In
Generational Time
DAVID BROOKS &
E.J. DIONNE
Obama’s Theologian
RAMI NASHISHIBI &
LUCAS JOHNSON
Getting Proximate to Pain, and
Holding to the Power of Love