

# The Pine Tree

The Congregational Church of San Mateo

United Church of Christ

225 Tilton Avenue • San Mateo, California 94401

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## Sacred Moments: Advent Sunday Celebrations

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take  
but by the moments that take our breath away.

**12/21 ADVENT 4: SACRED MOMENTS OF SURPRISE.** Expect the unexpected – Penny preaching; Caroling following service.

**12/24 CHRISTMAS EVE**  
**SACRED MOMENTS OF KEEPING WATCH**

5 pm: Family service  
7 pm: Las Posadas  
11 pm: Candlelight service



**12/28 CHRISTMAS 1: SACRED MOMENTS OF WISDOM.** CCSM College Students return and share their faith journeys with us.

## Epiphany 2015: Testify to Love

Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public. —Cornel West

**1/4: LOVE MEANS GOING TO GREAT LENGTHS.** Baptism and Communion. *Story of the Magi*

**1/11: Love Means Freedom.** Human Trafficking Awareness Sunday. Testimony—San Mateo Judge Elizabeth Lee. *Baptism of Jesus*

**1/18: Love in Many Colors.** Feast of Martin Luther King, Jr. *John 1:43-51*

**1/25: Love Beyond Ourselves.** Congregational Meeting. *Mark 1:14-20*

**2/1: Love Brings Healing.** Healing Service and Communion. *Mark 1:21-28*

**2/8: Searching for Love.** *Mark 1:32-39*

**2/15: Love is More Powerful than Fear.** *Mark 9:2-9*

For as long as I shall live, I will testify to love.  
I'll be a witness in the silences when words are not enough.  
With every breath I take, I will give thanks to God above.  
For as long as I shall live, I will testify to love.

(Chorus of *Testify to Love* by Avalon)

## Jerri's Next Step of Faith

Jerri Handy shared these words in worship on November 30: "I am especially grateful for the past 6 years of ministry in this place. For the last five years Global Ministries has offered me, and Marge, the opportunity to serve in various positions. **We have decided this year it was time to say yes.** We will be serving in Tijuana,

—cont. on page 5—



Marge and Jerri with Las Memorias leaders José Antonio, José Sergio, Pastor Tony, and Jessie, discussing hard-to-define job descriptions. This was a solidifying spiritual discussion of Spirit leading me to work in partnership and presence with them. I will also be in partnership with CCSM so you will hear from us and Las Memorias and we hope to receive visitors from CCSM.

## Justice is what love looks like in public

by Penny Nixon

This Epiphany season we will explore JUSTICE—WHAT LOVE LOOKS LIKE IN PUBLIC. Using the stories of Jesus primarily from the gospel of Mark, we will see all the ways we are invited to "testify to love." Throughout Epiphany, we will hear the song *Testify to Love* sung by different groups of people. We will light a social justice candle each week and also provide opportunities for all of CCSM to lift up the ways we are all involved in service. It is going to be an uplifting and inspirational time together, and there are many involved in the planning of this special theme.

# Children, Youth and Families



## Godly Play in the New Year

**January 4** Godly Play work day: come ready to be creative and to play with the sacred story of your choice!

**January 11** Epiphany

**January 18** Baptism

**January 25** Parable series begins: The Sower (Matthew 13:1-23)

"EPIPHANY is a Greek word that means "to go forth." The date of its celebration is January 6th. It was originally concerned with the commemoration of the Baptism of Jesus and later became associated with the Magi (3 wise ones), an emphasis of the Latin Church of the West. Today it is often thought of as the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles." (excerpt from the intro to the Godly Play Story of Epiphany)

## Godly Play Workshop with Di Pagel Saturday, February 21 at CCSM

We have been invited to host a regional Godly Play training event here at **CCSM on Saturday, February 21**. Led by Godly Play Master Storyteller and Trainer, Di Pagel, we will enjoy a workshop full of stories, of sharing resources and of interacting with other Godly Play teachers from all over the Bay Area. Mark that date and make plans to come—it will be a wonder-full day!

## CCSM 2015 Youth Mission Trip

2015 will be a big year for our Senior High youth. We are planning an international mission & service trip to San Jose, Costa Rica in June. We will travel with our friends from the First Congregational Church in Palo Alto. Our host in San Jose, CR will be *Ruta Verde* (The Green Way) a local company that offers service projects and environmentally educational experiences to youth and young adults.

We will be raising money this winter/spring and sharing our excitement about the trip with our church family. In January we will sell envelopes for \$1 all the way up to \$144 (and all the numbers in between). It is our hope that everyone will choose to participate—and receive an invitation to a special party when we return, when we will share about our experiences and serve delicious desserts and Costa Rican items we have brought back. There will be a dinner/auction in March, and we are happy to receive any donations for that event that you might want to share with us.

Our Senior High mission team is still forming, but we hope to take at least ten youth and several youth leaders with us. We will work hard for various ministries there, such as *Hogar Belen* (a home for teenage mothers and their babies) and *Hogar Un Buen Samaritano* (hospice care for men with HIV/AIDS). Other places are in the works.

Please stop by our envelope table **January 11, 18 or 25**, and ask the youth



Costa Rican flag



Rehearsing to be Angels



## Youth Calendar

**December 21:** BE OF SERVICE! Go caroling after worship with your church family!

**December 24:** Come to celebrate Christmas Eve at 5PM, 7PM or 11PM

**December 28:** SERVICE PROJECT: Make lunches for Open Cathedral during Church School; it's also College Sunday in worship!

**December 28-January 4:** WINTER BREAK! Happy New Year!

**January 11:** 60 MINUTES; Sr High Youth Mission Team MEETING (planning fundraisers)

**January 17-19:** Mid High (grades 6-8) NCNC MIDWINTER RETREAT

**February 1:** COMMUNION in worship; CONFIRMATION meets

**February 8:** 60 MINUTES; Sr High Mission Trip Team MEETING with youth from Palo Alto

**February 14-16:** Senior Highers to NCNC FEB CAMP at Monte Toyon in Aptos, CA – Sr High Mission Team should participate!

**Save the Date: February 17:** SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER FOR THE CHURCH. Start your Lenten season off with us!

about their trip. We are practicing our Spanish and learning all about the amazing cuisine of Costa Rica (coffee, chocolate, pineapples, black beans and many other delicious items!) Thank you!

## IN PLAIN SIGHT

by Penny Nixon

For the past year I have convened a group of clergy now called the Anti-Trafficking Faith Leaders Coalition. One of our goals is to raise awareness about human trafficking in San Mateo County. On **January 11**, our worship service will be lifting up the issue of human trafficking, and that afternoon CCSM will also be the venue for a big event sponsored by a number of faith, non-profit and civic organizations. I hope a number of CCSM people will come out and learn more about this important justice issue.

I am also pleased to report that we were awarded a \$5,000 grant from Silicon Valley Community Foundation to help fund this event. Bonnie Rambob has been working on this with me.



**IN PLAIN SIGHT**  
STORIES OF HOPE AND FREEDOM

Learn about modern day slavery in San Mateo  
**SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2015 | 4:00 PM**  
Documentary Screening ◊ Meaningful Dialogue ◊ Reception  
Congregational Church of San Mateo ◊ 225 Tilton Avenue, San Mateo, CA  
(Childcare will be provided)

## EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME APPRECIATED

The November 30 worship service featured experiences from eight CCSM members who visited immigrant communities around the county. What a special day of touching stories and delightful music! Afterwards our visitors from Half Moon Bay repeatedly commented on the warm acceptance and comfort they felt among us. Thanks to each of you, CCSM truly embodied "no matter who you are... you are welcome here."

To our visitors' surprise later, they received two-thirds of your generous offering that Sunday (half of that two-thirds for ALAS, the children's performance group, and half for the mural in memory of Yanira Serrano-Garcia). Belinda Hernandez Arriaga, our coastside liaison and director of ALAS, wrote:

"Thank you so much! We were very touched and moved by the entire service and congregation. It was amazing and we are still inspired and reenergized by all of YOU! And your gift to our efforts! That is wonderful.

"We have a young girl whose father left to Mexico to go and see his mother who was very ill, and it turns out that he can't return as he thought because he has gotten detained at the border trying to cross now three times. So the mom and her three children have been here struggling alone. ALAS has been there for them, so it's been a gift that they have been in our program and vice versa. But they can't pay for their class or costumes or anything, so your gift will go to support them for this year.

"Also, we have a new girl who just arrived from Mexico—a wonderful young girl. She is having a hard time in school as she doesn't know English, but she danced ballet folklorico in Mexico. Now she is coming to our ALAS Ballet Folklorico class and so feels connected to home. Thank you so much! So it will be great to be able to support her as well.

"Also—the gift for the mural [honoring Yanira]. That is amazing, and we so appreciate it. This money will go directly to the artist Ernesto Olmos.

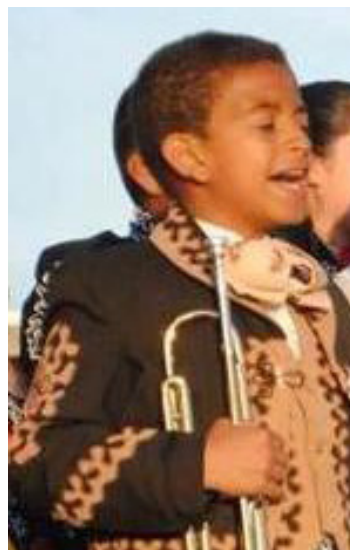
"What a blessing you all are to us!"



## Successful HOME & HOPE Week

During the week of November 30 through December 7, Kloss Hall was home for 4 families. Those sixteen adults and children ate, played and slept in a warm, dry place thanks to your generosity—both of your time and your money. It was a great week. Many thanks to those of you who volunteered and cooked those great meals. Mark your 2015 calendars for April 19-26, June 14-21 and September 27-October 4 as that is when HOME & HOPE will return to CCSM.

—Donna Lindsay  
HOME & HOPE Coordinator



*This boy sang and played the trumpet in the Encuentro service*

# Raise Your Hands!

- **HAVE A SPECIAL CAUSE OR PASSION?**

If so, raise your hand! MSJ participants include **MEMBERS** who facilitate CCSM's service and justice efforts, **PARTNERS** who are our liaisons to various non-profits (like Donna Lindsey to Home and Hope), and **ADVOCATES** who are passionate about a particular cause (like Veril Phillips and immigration). The list of those who work (or want to work) for justice is growing. Add your name!

- **LIKE SURPRISES?** If so, raise your hand!

Sundays (any day actually) people drop off contributions for the **2015 RUMMAGE SALE** on the Kloss Hall stage, then Tuesday mornings volunteers sort the donations. You never know what you'll discover (please, no stuffed animals, skis or exercise equipment) but it's never boring. Proceeds from the March 13-14, 2015 rummage sale will fund justice projects locally and around the world. Come help!

# MSJ



Ministry of Service & Justice

- **GOT WHEELS?** If so, raise your hand! Many of our undocumented neighbors in San Mateo County lack transportation and are eager for their own wheels. If you have an **UNUSED BIKE**, one of our justice partners would be glad to pick it up and "recycle" it.

- **WANNA CROSS THE BORDER?** If so, raise your hand! **March 20-24** a group from CCSM will **EXPLORE IMMIGRATION ISSUES ALONG THE BORDER** nearest Tijuana. From *Centro Romero* we learn more about the two most serious border concerns: human trafficking and unaccompanied minors.

- **INTERESTED IN AN EXPERIENCE?** If so, raise your hand! In the next few months, MSJ will sponsor "**FIELD TRIPS**" to meet the homeless and hungry CCSM helps. Join us for visits to the InnVision shelters, Night Ministry, Puente or Samaritan House sites—or do a personal ride-along with a Peninsula Food Runner

To "raise your hand," just email [msj@ccsm-ucc.org](mailto:msj@ccsm-ucc.org) or call the church office (650-343-3694). We're eager to hear from you.

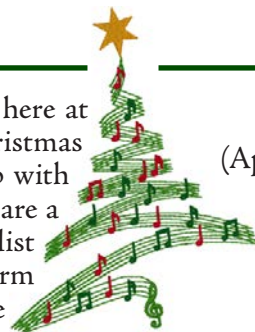


*Hark, the Herald Angels Sing!  
The handsome and talented  
CCSM Choir*

## ALL CHURCH CAROLING

O Come, All Ye Faithful and all the new folks here at CCSM. Every year we gather together to go Christmas Caroling to our folks who can't get out to worship with us. On December 21 following worship, we will share a quick meal, divide into teams, each with their own list of places to stop to bring Christmas cheer and warm greetings from CCSM. All carolers return to the church for hot cocoa and Christmas cookies.

Sleigh Bells Ring, are you listening? Yes we have bells to ring, so come ring a bell and join in the fun. This is for everyone, babies to grammies. Let us know you are coming by sending an email to [care@ccsm-ucc.org](mailto:care@ccsm-ucc.org) or call the church office.



(Apologies to *Over the River and Through the Woods*)

Over the hills and through the streets  
to senior houses we go.

Google knows the way to guide our car  
to each home assigned that day.

Over the hills and through the streets  
to senior houses we go.

We'll have lots of fun as we greet everyone  
for it's almost Christmas Day.

# San Mateo County Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Monday, January 19, 2015



## 16th Annual Celebration

**8:30 a.m. - San Mateo Downtown CalTrain Station - 385 First Avenue, SAN MATEO**

Following the Celebration, ride the CalTrain from the January 19, 2015 San Mateo County MLK Day Celebration to the SF MLK Walk and Celebration.

City Sponsors:



Contributing Supporter

2015 Honorary Chairperson  
**Rev. Mary Frazier**

2015 Honorary Group  
**San Mateo Union High School District  
Black Parent's Association**

**The Annual Dorothy Boyajian  
Honored Teacher Award**

Arts Pre-Program at 8:30 a.m.  
Celebration & Continental Breakfast at 9:00 a.m.

*No Cost for the Celebration,  
Everyone is Welcome!*

Tickets for the 10:05 am CalTrain, at regular CalTrain rates for adults, children and seniors can be purchased during the celebration at the San Mateo Downtown Caltrain Station. Clipper Cards can be used on this regularly scheduled CalTrain.

**As one of the ten original Congregation Sponsors who organized the original San Mateo County MLK Jr. celebration, CCSM will be honored as a Founding Congregation Sponsor.**



## BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING 2015 Stewardship Campaign Update

by Jim Lindsay, SFO chair

Thanks to everyone who has made a pledge to the church for 2015. Knowing the income that can be expected is very helpful and important in putting together the 2015 budget. We have not yet met our goal of \$570,000 in 2015 pledges. Presently, we are at 86 percent of our goal, and your pledge counts and is important to CCSM.

So if you have been thinking about pledging and have not done so during this busy season yet, please fill out a pledge card available in the pew racks or on the church's website and place it in the offering plate on Sunday or mail it to Pearly in the church office. It's easy to simply call Pearly at 650-343-3694 and let her know what you are willing to give in 2015. If you wish to discuss the meaning of pledging or how much to give, please feel free to call Penny. The 2015 budget will be adopted by the congregation at the annual meeting on January 25, 2015. We are a blessing and as we give we are truly blessed.

## Jerri's Next Step from p. 1

Mexico with our Global Mission Partner, Albergue Las Memorias. CCSM is already partnered with this HIV/AIDS Hospice center. With Marge and myself commissioned to serve there, CCSM's partnership will also be strengthened.

"My last Sunday with CCSM as paid staff will be April 12, 2015. This is the Sunday after Easter. That is a long way off. We have work to do together in this place, and saying goodbye to this community will be difficult, so, we will not be holding any goodbye events until at least March. Let us live in this present moment.

"With a mixture of great joy and sadness and a deeply grateful heart, I submit my letter of resignation."



Family Worship / Bible Sunday

## FAMILY WORSHIP AND BIBLE SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2014

The worship service was led by our fifth graders who also received their bibles as a gift from the church.



## Wise and Wonderful Seniors (WiWoS)

Ever wonder what Wise and Wonderful Seniors do on the second Wednesday and fourth Thursday of each month? Here is the line up for 2015.

WiWoS are great fun and you don't need to be Wise or Wonderful to join in the fun... You don't even need to be a senior. Wherever you are on your life's journey, you are welcome to join us for any or all of these activities.

### 2nd Wednesdays in the Buckham Room

- 1/14 10:30-12:00 *Hopes for the New Year*
  - ✦ Bring one idea for a project Wise and Wonderful Seniors (WiWoS) can participate in being the Hands, Feet and Face of God in our communities.
- 2/11 10:30-11:30 *A Parker Palmer experience.*
  - ✦ Poetry and image support knowing our own wisdom.
  - ✦ Facilitator: Rev. Dr. Faye Orton Snyder
  - ✦ Bring notebook and pen.
- 3/11 10:30-11:30 *What is a member portal?*
  - ✦ Bring your ipad, tablet, smartphone or notepad and pen. Veril Phillips will be supporting us through an hour of learning how to access our online church directory.
  - ✦ We will have some extra tablets, etc, available.
- 4/8 10:30-11:30 *Out with the Old*

✦ A time for sharing with Pastor Jerri and send-off to Mexico.

5/13 10:30-11:30 *In with the New*

✦ A time to regroup and look ahead.

**4th Thursdays:** Please sign up in church office to make reservations. This helps us to create carpools—more fellowship, less cars. **Each 4th Thursday we gather at CCSM at 10:30 a.m., and leave at 10:45.**

1/22 *Jack's Restaurant*, El Camino Real and Highway 92.

2/26 *CuriOdyssey*. \$6 parking per car at Museum, and lunch at Poplar Creek. 1700 Coyote Point Dr.

3/26 *Barbara's Fish Trap*, north of Half Moon Bay on Hwy 1.

4/23 *Paul's Diner*, 4000 S El Camino Real; free parking on north side of building.

**Sunday, January 18, 9:15 a.m. in Church Kitchen: Making Open Cathedral lunches.** All materials for sack lunches are provided. Come join in the fun of creating 100 lunches in less than an hour.



Photos from the Volunteer/Senior Tea in December



## Connect and Care

**CONNECT:** a sense of belonging, being valued; someone knows your name.

**CARE:** not alone, a helping hand, a smile a card, a visit. *Connect and Care* ministry connects people who would benefit from a deeper connection. We have only a handful of folks who are still awaiting partners. If you are new to CCSM and would like to share visits with some of our older and or homebound folks, this is a great way to step into the life of the church. Conversations will be rich and meaningful.

If you are interested, please email or talk to Pastor Jerri. She would be happy to help you get your Connect and Care partner.

For those of you who already have Connect and Care partners, please send an email to [care@ccsm-ucc.org](mailto:care@ccsm-ucc.org) to let us know you have had contact via phone, card or visit.



## First Tuesday Book Group

January 6, 7:30 pm, Fireplace Room!

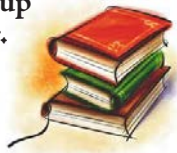
The First Tuesday Book Group is taking a hiatus in December.

January's book will be bestseller *The Orphan Train* by Christina Baker Kline, a gripping story of friendship and second chances. Penobscot Indian Molly Ayer is close to "aging out" out of the foster care system when she accepts a community service position helping out an elderly woman.

In February, we will focus on *The Silkworm* by Robert Galbraith (aka J. K. Rowling). Her newest series features a private detective, Cormoran Strike, and his young assistant Robin. A compulsively readable crime novel with twists at every turn.

In March, we'll read *The Elegance of the Hedgehog* by Muriel Barbery. This engaging story is set in France where the lives of Renee, the concierge of an apartment building, and Paloma, a 12 year old resident, become intricately connected. A bestseller in France!

All are welcome to join us! Please contact Susan Stoehr to be added to the email list ([s\\_stoehr@hotmail.com](mailto:s_stoehr@hotmail.com)) or Betsy Woodward for questions ([bedsdce@comcast.net](mailto:bedsdce@comcast.net)).



## Joys and Concerns

### Prayers of Gratitude...

90+ and home bound birthdays this month: **Marjorie Griffin** 12/14; **George Kromhout** 12/16.

Our Global Ministries personnel **Rosalind Gnatt (Germany)**, **Xuyen Dangers (Laos)**, **Joel Cooper (Lebanon)**, **Alison Stendahl (Turkey)**, as they serve along side our mission partners around the globe.

**Jimmy and Joyce Green, parents of Trish Green**, celebrate their 51st wedding anniversary.

**Mark Grossheider and Michael Griffin** exchanged vows in a beautiful wedding ceremony on November 16. Congratulations and may your marriage bring joy to you, your families and friends.

**Carolyn Eidson and Kristine "KP" Poggioli** exchanged wedding vows on November 22 in a beautiful touching service. We celebrate with you in this new life together.

**Betty Brookes** fell last week on her way into the church. She is doing well and her daughter Linda thanks CCSM for all the prayers and support shown to her mother and to Lourdes her caregiver. Betty has 3 tiny stitches but other than that all is well.

### Prayers of Comfort

**Harvey Moder, father of Sue Mennear**, passed away December 1, 2014. Sue will be traveling to New York for the memorial service. Please pray for Sue and the extended family.

**June S Palmer, mother of Ellen Palmer**, passed away November 16, 2014. Ellen was able to be with her mother and her sister, sharing loving tender moments. Ellen's partner **Mindy** lost her mother just a couple of months ago. Please pray for Ellen, Mindy and the girls as they grieve this loss.

### Prayers of Healing and Support...

**Syd and Ann Lambertson** are home while Syd is on hospice care. Please send prayers of comfort as Syd's health has declined in recent days.

**Tom and Rae Banks**, members of CCSM who spend summers in Maryland, were unable to return as Rae has declined and is unable to travel. Tom also broke his hip in early November. He is hoping to have the news that he can increase the weight load as he continues to improve. Tom thanks CCSM for our prayers.

**Lorna Stroy, mother of Carol Boes**, is now in hospice care and nearing her final days. Pray for a peaceful transition. May these last few days be filled with love.

**Ruth Black** had surgery last week and is recovering at home.

**Bill Melis** had back surgery on 12/12. Please pray for a speedy recovery.

**Chuck Charlton** has entered hospice care. Please pray for him and the family as they walk this journey together.

**Lauretta Flaherty, mother of Len Flaherty**, fell and broke her hip. Her recovery is going well; she has been cleared to return home. Len and Deb will be visiting her soon.

**Prayers for Jessie Kane & Robert Cowell, extended family of Mel Thrash.** Jessie has had surgery for pancreatic cancer.

**Shirley Kavanaugh, mother of Janet Bower and Louise Coughlin, mother of Phyllis Lunardi**, need our prayers.

**Angela Castro, friend of Janelle Bradford**, dealing with chronic pain.

**Dazore Bradford, daughter of Janelle Bradford**, facing challenges of college. She has been experiencing anxiety. Pray for peace of mind and heart.

**Larry Handy (brother of Jerri Handy), Michelle (friend of Gail Evans), Chris Williams (family member of Jeanne Back), and others** remain in our prayers as they walk their unique journeys with cancer.

PLEASE KNOW THAT ALL OF YOUR JOYS AND CONCERNS ARE IMPORTANT. You may contact the church office or email Rev. Jerri Handy [jhandy@ccsm-ucc.org](mailto:jhandy@ccsm-ucc.org), if you need support.

# Save the Date! Annual Meeting January 25

Please plan to come to the budget discussion right after worship.



New members who joined the CCSM family in November



## The Pine Tree

A newsletter for the families & friends of the  
Congregational Church Of San Mateo, U.C.C.

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# Las Posadas

Wednesday, December 24, 2014 • 7:00 pm

Beginning at the Front Lawn of the  
Congregational Church of San Mateo  
225 Tilton Ave, San Mateo

Following the musical procession around the blocks of Tilton, San Mateo Drive, Monte Diablo Avenue and N. Ellsworth Avenue there will be a pinata to break, tamales, buñuelos, champurrado, and punch to celebrate.

Please join us in community for this wonderful time of year.

**FREE PUBLIC EVENT!**

For information: 510.684.8529 | [jbautista@ccsm-ucc.org](mailto:jbautista@ccsm-ucc.org)



## Christmas Eve at CCSM: *Sacred Moments of Keeping Watch*

Staying awake to  
experience the coming of  
the Christ in our midst

5pm: Family service  
7pm: Las Posadas  
11pm: Candlelight service

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