

The Pine Tree

The Congregational Church of San Mateo

United Church of Christ

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A Word from Penny

As a progressive Christian minister, I rarely preach on or talk about sin. I guess I assume people have heard enough about sin to last them a lifetime, especially those of us that have come out of conservative backgrounds. It's not that I don't think about sin, or that I don't believe we all fall short, and do harm to others, intentionally and unintentionally. But, in reading an ordination paper this week of a seminarian I have worked with over the years, I was reminded of the famous theologian Paul Tillich's definition of sin. He describes it as: "Sin is a state of things in which the holy and the secular are separated, struggling with each other and trying to conquer each other. It is the state in which God is not 'all in all,' the state in which God is 'in addition to other things.'"

If you read the definition a few times, it starts to make sense. Sin is when we think we can be separate from the divine—whether that means in the world, in others, or in ourselves.

On Saturday last week my daughter Mercy took her breakfast out on to the front stoop and sat there eating by herself. I stuck my head out the door and said, "Do you want to be out here eating your breakfast all alone?"

She looked at me and said, "Mom, I'm not alone. The plants are here, the birds, the tree, the sun—I'm not alone. You know, people think they are alone when they're not. We are never really alone."

Wow— Paul Tillich couldn't have said it any better.



Penny at the Sea of Galilee



David Vásquez-Levy, PSR President, preaching here May 31. Following the service that day, come hear his presentation *On the Move: Conversation on Faith and Migration*. Details on page 5.

✧ SUNDAYS IN THE EASTER SEASON ✧

- April 26:** Earth Day Service—Joliene Wade Gatlin preaching.
- May 3:** *Not So Extreme House Makeover*. Bonnie Rambob preaching.
- May 10:** Mother's Day. Penny preaching.
- May 17:** Confirmation Sunday. Penny preaching.
- May 24:** Pentecost. Penny preaching.
- May 31:** *Second Helpings*. David Vásquez-Levy, Guest preacher
- June 7:** Penny preaching. Annual Meeting.
- June 14:** Spring Concert: *Wisdom of Old Turtle* (**NOTE NEW DATE**)

Children, Youth and Families



Godly Play

- May 3** Storyteller in the Youth Room
- May 10** Mary, the Mother of Jesus
- May 17** Confirmation Sunday (2nd grade and up stay in worship)
Work day for Pre-K - 1st grade
- May 24** The Story of Pentecost
- May 31** Jesus and the Twelve

Parents: please pick your child up from their Godly Play classrooms at 11:45am, which will give them time to hear the story, engage in their chosen art response, and have time for prayer and the closing feast. We ask that you do not interrupt the classroom if you need to pick your child up early, but to please touch base with the doorkeeper when you arrive and let them invite your child to join you in the hallway. *Thank you for supporting Godly Play!*

Summer Camps

The children and youth of CCSM are invited to join us again this summer for our wonderful NCNC Summer Camping Program up at Camp Cazadero. For more information on the camp itself, please go to: facebook.com/CampCazaderoUCC If your child needs a scholarship, please let Penny know.

To register your child, please go to the conference website at: ncncc.org/outdoor-ministries/.

- **Annual Gathering Youth Program, June 11-14**, at Sonoma State University (grades 7 to 12)
- **Cazadero You & Me Camp, July 10-12** (grades K to 3 with adult companion)
- **Cazadero Sr. High Camp, July 12-18**, (grades 9 to 12)
- **Cazadero Counselor in Training Camp, July 19-25**, (grade 12 or HS graduate)
- **Cazadero Junior Camp, July 19-25** (grades 3 to 6)
- **Cazadero Jr. High Camp, July 26-Aug 1**, (grades 6 to 9)



Worshipping at Open Cathedral, SF Night Ministry's service for the homeless



Celebrating Alex Kayser's baptism

Confirmation

Confirmands will join Bill Dunbar and Penny on their overnight confirmation retreat **Friday, May 1 and Saturday, May 2**. Part of the retreat will be preparing for Confirmation Sunday on **May 17**. We have an amazing group of youth being confirmed this year.



Celebrating Clara Alatorre's baptism

Senior High Costa Rica trip

Sunday, April 26

Hobbes for Brunch with the Palo Alto Youth Group (Daniel & Patrick)

Sunday, May 17

Meeting after Church with CCSM youth and parents (Kibbie Ruth)

Sunday, June 14

CCSM Blessing of the Costa Rica Mission Trip in worship service

Monday, June 15

Evening Carpool from CCSM to Airport

Welcome Back, Janet Bower and Bonnie Rambob!

by Jim Berthelsen (Moderator), Doug Henton (Personnel Committee) and Veril Phillips (Pastoral Relations Committee)

We are pleased to announce that the Board of Ministries has approved the following two familiar additions to our staff during this time of transition:

Rev. Dr. Janet Bower, Acting Coordinator of Congregational Care

Janet, a member of CCSM and an ordained minister, will be responsible for creating, training and coordinating a network of lay volunteers who along with our clergy will deliver congregational care to members in need. She will also partner with our Ministry of Care, Fellowship and Extravagant Welcome on various programs and manage our Wise and Wonderful Seniors group.

Many of you know Janet when she held a similar position with us in 2013/2014. Janet is beginning this week and can be found in the first floor office adjacent to the Memorial Garden (Jerri's old office).



Bonnie Rambob, Transitional Minister of Intergenerational Education



Bonnie will work with our Ministry of Children, Youth and Families to build on our existing programming, including Godly Play for our youngest members. She will also help us define the permanent position which will focus on spiritual leadership and programming for education of our children, youth, families and adults in pursuit of our vision of being a voice for Progressive Christianity, creating a beloved community and promoting social justice.

Bonnie was an intern at CCSM from June 2010 to May 2012 and launched Peace Village here in 2011. An educator in her previous career, Bonnie graduates from Pacific School of Religion this summer. Bonnie will begin on a part-time basis in May and start her full-time ministry with us in June. At the Annual Meeting in June, we'll have the opportunity to discuss and vote on this transitional position.

Please join us in welcoming Janet and Bonnie back to CCSM!

Janet Bower responds...

It is with great enthusiasm that I come back on staff here at CCSM as the Acting Minister of Congregational Care. In this transitional time, I will be engaged in most of the same ministries Rev. Jerri Handy was engaged in during her time here. Pastoral care and counseling are my passions and my new job responsibilities include what I love doing the most. In the past seven years that I have been affiliated with CCSM, I have developed a profoundly deep love and appreciation for our congregation. I cannot imagine a better place to do ministry. Thank you for your warm welcome. If you have a pastoral care concern or need, please contact me at jbower@ccsm-ucc.org or through the church office at 650-343-3694. Peace and grace to you all.

And another one...

CCSM is so pleased to announce that the Board of Ministries affirmed CCSM seminarian Joliene Wade Gatlin to be our 2015-16 PSR intern! Stay tuned to learn more, but congratulations are in order for Joliene.

Even before she officially begins her internship, she has created our **Earth Day service on Sunday, April 26**, and will be preaching her first CCSM sermon.



Joliene Wade Gatlin



On Sunday, April 12 we sent Jerri Handy and Marge Boyd off in style to their new life at Las Memorias



Ministry of Service & Justice

Now you can use CCSM-UCC.org to keep up with the latest opportunities to participate in our ministry to the community. On the website, click “Service and Justice” in the left column to see remarkable educational events, volunteer possibilities, material donations needed by our partner service agencies, and future service-learning experiences like the recent trip to Las Memorias in Tijuana.

Let's Learn...

- ...what the Home and Hope tent village looks like in Kloss Hall. Stop by after worship April 26 while our guests are out and imagine what it's like to live with your whole family in such close quarters that you have to vacate every morning.
- ...how to effectively recognize the signs of human trafficking and enslavement, better assess the specific needs of minor victims, and identify resources that may be available, all-day seminar, May 18, at San Mateo Police Department (registration needed).
- ...more about the history and issues related to immigration, May 31, at CCSM, led by David Vásquez-Levy, President of Pacific School of Religion.

Let's Bring...

- ...bags of donations to church. Local service agencies always need new underwear, socks, towels, diapers, children's books and shoes—but right now Samaritan House's Kid Closet is especially short on boys' clothes (2T and up). Check your closets!
- ...non-perishable food on the first Sunday of each month for Call Primrose to distribute to the hungry in our neighborhood.
- ...bicycles to be polished, repaired and donated to our neighbors without wheels.

Let's Play...

Want to lead children's activities and pass out books, toys, and school supplies at Puente's Día de los Niños (Children's Day), Friday, May 1? Volunteers are also needed to help with set-up and clean-up. The celebration is 6-8 PM at Pescadero Elementary School Multipurpose Room. To volunteer, contact Abby Mohaupt at amohaupt@mypuente.org.



Some Blanketeers with quilts they made for Vendome residents.



Phyllis and Dana on the Recology Field Trip to learn about recycling

Going Down!

According to the annual January count by the Human Services Agency (HSA), homelessness in San Mateo County dropped by 47% (full report out in May). CCSM has been a part of this good news. This new statistic reflects the impressive outreach and services of our partners: Home and Hope, InnVision, Safe Harbor (which houses over 90 single adults), and various housing initiatives.

HSA reported:

- No families with children are without shelter in the county.
- Fewer people live in shelters (emergency shelters, transitional housing, motels and institutions).
- Only 689 live on streets, in vehicles, or in homeless encampments (a decrease of almost half the last annual count).

The factors contributing to the lower homeless statistics may include:

- San Mateo County having the lowest unemployment rate in the state (3.5%).
- Measure A funds providing increased county investment to end homelessness.
- County Supervisors passing a county ordinance demanding that NO children will be homeless here.

Sadly, a serious factor may be people moving out of the county because it is so expensive to live here. Clearly more work must be done on local affordable housing, so our neighbors won't be forced into homelessness—or out of the county. This summer To discuss the issue and possible solutions, CCSM will sponsor an affordable housing forum with our County Supervisors, HIP, HEART, and other housing advocates.

Embodied Practice: Spiritual Exploration through Yoga

Mondays, April 27, May 4 & 11,
7:00pm • Buckham Room

Led by Yoga teacher and CCSM member Kate Joyce, this spiritual practice will be a gentle class for people with wide ranging physical abilities/limitations to participate fully. The class will also incorporate the week's scripture reading(s) and sermon topic into the practice. Come join Kate on Mondays!



Celebrating Jerri and Marge's commissioning on April 12

CCSM welcomes New PSR President David Vásquez-Levy on May 31



Rev. Dr. David Vásquez-Levy serves as President of Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California—a progressive, interdenominational Christian seminary committed to preparing spiritually and theologically rooted leaders for social transformation. A committed pastor, a nationally recognized immigration leader, and a sought after speaker, Vásquez-Levy leads at the intersection of faith, higher education, and social change.

David's will be our guest preacher on **Sunday, May 31**, giving a sermon titled *Second Helping* based on the story from 1 Kings 19: 1-8. Immediately following the service, we are also delighted to announce the presentation:

On the Move: Conversation on Faith and Migration

Migration is at the core of the biblical narrative. Adam and Eve must leave the garden of Eden; Abraham and Sarah venture out with nothing but a promise; Moses guides the people across the sea and into freedom; Jesus begins his life as a refugee hiding from Herod. Join David Vásquez-Levy, President at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley California for a conversation about the sustaining power of religious narratives that speak to our own stories of change—migrations across national or physical boundaries or beyond personal boundaries of belief and experience.

SAVE THE DATE!
2015 Pride Celebration - Beyond The Binary

JUNE 13, 2015
SAN MATEO CENTRAL PARK
11:00AM - 6:00PM

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
LGBTQ COMMISSION

SAN MATEO COUNTY
PRIDE
INITIATIVE

PRIDE@smcgov.org

San Mateo Pride 2015

Saturday, June 13
11am - 6pm

San Mateo Pride will be here soon. We are looking for volunteers to assist with the event on June 13 at Central Park. The time of event is 11am-6pm. Get involved with your community and let's make some great memories. Contact Janelle Bradford, angelique.smcpi@gmail.com

Planning for our Future...

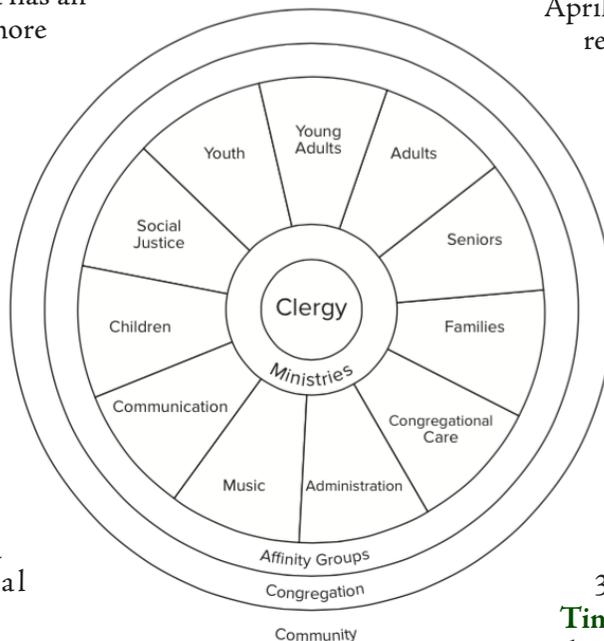
by Jim Berthelsen, Moderator

With Jerri Handy's call to Las Memorias, the **Organization Design Task Force (ODTF)** reconvened in December to help us plan for the future. Their charge was to determine how to best develop and align our organizational capabilities to fully realize CCSM's vision of being a strong voice for Progressive Christianity, a beloved community and a leader in social justice.

In January and February, over 250 church members and friends participated in the online survey or personal interviews conducted by ODTF members Doug Henton (chair), Jeanne Back, Barb Karlin, Alison Schwandt and Gary White. After considerable evaluation, including analysis of survey comments and results, demographic trends and comparisons with other thriving congregations, ODTF summarized their findings in preparation for the March Board of Ministries meeting.

The survey responses and their supporting comments reflect that people feel positive about CCSM overall. Specific findings reveal that:

- **Worship** is strong and Penny's leadership is highly valued.
- **Social Justice** has become an important priority for the congregation and the Ministry of Service and Justice (MSJ) is doing a good job.
- **Christian Education** core programming appears to be doing well in meeting our current needs for our youngest members and has an opportunity to serve even more children.
- **Mid High and Senior High programs** would benefit from a new approach to engage youth and their parents.
- **Young Adult programs** are essentially nonexistent and we need to develop a strategy to better meet the needs of this segment of our congregation.
- **Adult & Senior programs** need more attention, specifically in the area of expanding educational opportunities.
- **Congregational Care** should be reorganized and may not need to be a ministerial position. Members of the congregation and ministers could provide care, as appropriate, with a coordinator closely managing our efforts.
- **Affinity Groups** should be expanded. We need more ways to engage members of the congregation in activities of common interest.
- **Website** needs a major upgrade and could become a "portal" into all of the activities of the church using our newly acquired church management software to help guide members to opportunities for engagement, education and community.



CCSM as a Spiritual Hub

In March and April, ODTF met with the Executive Committee and Board of Ministries on numerous occasions. These discussions included a review of the survey results, ODTF's findings and observations, and specific recommendations that build on the visioning work CCSM completed in 2014. ODTF has also identified additional technology investments necessary to improve communication.

The Vision:

ODTF proposes a spiritual hub concept, with clergy at the center, which leverages technology to efficiently engage our congregation and the broader community in support of our vision.

Next Steps

We want to share the detailed survey results and specific recommendations with all church members and friends. This will be done in a number of ways:

- 1) **Congregation Survey Results on the Web:** The detailed survey results will be available for review on the CCSM website by Friday, April 24. These results include tabulated responses and graphical analysis for each of the 29 questions asked in the survey.
- 2) **Informational Forums** will be held on **Wednesday, April 29 (7:00 pm)**, and on **Sunday, May 3 (11:45 am)**, in the Buckham Room. These forums provide an opportunity for you to learn more about the recommendations and give valuable input to ODTF and Board of Ministries representatives about the proposed changes.
- 3) **Annual Meeting "Decision Time":** Should the recommendations result in additional staffing/budgeting changes for the 2015 church year or possible bylaw refinements, they will be discussed and voted on at the **June 7 Annual Meeting**.

As we look to our future, it is reassuring to know that so many of our members and friends have been involved in this process. You are helping us to make informed decisions and put plans in place that are based on a wide and inclusive circle of members, demographics, interests and perspectives.

Our future is bright!

First Tuesday Book Group

Tuesday, May 5 • 7:30-9:00 pm • Fireplace Room

Our May book is *Never Let Me Go*. A suspenseful, moving and beautifully atmospheric novel by the author of *Remains of the Day*. The book tells the story of three students at an exclusive boarding school in the English countryside. Years later, when Kathy is a young woman, Ruth and Tommy have reentered her life. Now, she is beginning to look back at their shared past and understand just what it is that makes them special—and how that gift will shape the rest of their time together.

We always have a stimulating discussion and often have varying opinions of the books. Bring your questions and thoughts. New readers are always welcome to join us. We meet the first Tuesday of the month from 7:30-9:00 pm in the Fireplace Room. Please email Susan Stoehr-s_stoehr@hotmail.com to be added to our email list and/or email Betsy Woodward bedsdc@comcast.net if you have questions.

Here are the books for the coming months:

May 5: *Never Let Me Go*, Kazuo Ishiguro

June 2: *The Women: A Novel*, T.C. Boyle

Sept. 1: *Against the Tide*, Elizabeth Camden

Oct. 6: *The Ghost Map*, Steve Johnson

Nov. 3: *The Rosie Project*, Graeme C. Simsion



Hillbarn Theatre actors presenting scenes from "Curtains," at the Music and Arts Guild luncheon April 17.

If you haven't noticed, there is something different about our campus. We now have directional signs to help our guests navigate our beautiful facilities. There are four signs strategically placed around the campus to provide guidance to the many rooms/programs available here at CCSM.

Big thanks to Linda Skromme and team for this much appreciated addition. This is a nice way to further extend our Extravagant Welcome to our visitors.



JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF JOY...

Rev. Jerri Handy and Marge Boyd, for their various ministries at CCSM and the love they shared. Also, prayers for their work and witness at Albergue Las Memorias in Tijuana, Mexico as missionaries of the Common Global Ministries Board of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

PRAYERS OF COMFORT...

Donald Singer passed away at the age of 100 on March 13. Donald was an active member for many years and moved to be closer to his children the past few years. Prayers of comfort are extended to his family and friends.

Margaret Good passed away at the age of 91 on Feb. 19th. Margaret was a longtime member of CCSM who participated in many activities and events. The family and friends of Margaret are held in our hearts during this tender time. Margaret's family thanks CCSM for being such a wonderful church to Margaret.

Ruth, grandmother of Laura Van Hagen, passed away Easter morning, April 5. Laura will be in Phoenix to be with family for the memorial as well as for her grandfather's surgery. Please pray for the family during this difficult time.

Claudia (Murphy) Anderson, aunt of Trisha Green, passed away April 4. Please pray for the family at this time of grief. There are children, grand-children and great-grandchildren who will dearly miss her.

PRAYERS OF HEALING AND SUPPORT...

Janice Kennedy, cousin of Margaret and Gordon Smith, has had a recurrence of cancer. Prayers of healing for Janice, who is undergoing treatment with an experimental chemotherapy, and prayers for comfort to all who love and care for her.

Shelia Cunnie, sister of Sharon Tobin, as Shelia heals from spinal surgery. May Shelia feel God's healing touch and the support of our church family as she regains her strength and mobility.

Paula, sister-in-law of Kirsten Smith, is battling multiple myeloma and has a tough road ahead for her and her three daughters. Multiple myeloma is treatable but incurable. Please hold Paula and all those who love and care for her in your prayers.

Travis Woodmansee is suffering from chronic pain and a lack of mobility. Prayers for Travis that he may have hope and that he is able to pursue God's purpose for him.

Trisha Green and Janelle Bradford request prayers for family and friends: **Linda Hudson, Richard Harris, Joyce Green, Margaret Fisher, and Terrance Kenny**. Please join in praying for health, strength and spiritual encouragement.

Please pray for: **Cathy Latta**, experiencing chronic debilitating migraines. **Chuck Charlton** in hospice care. **Rae and Tom Banks** as they continue healing from recent broken bones. **Janice Kennedy (cousin of Margaret and Gordon Smith), Deborah Brodhag (daughter of Tom Banks) diagnosed with lung cancer, Randy (nephew of Stan Higgs), Bill Daniels, and others** as they walk their unique journeys with cancer.

Continuing prayers for **Ruth Black, Betty Brookes, Joan Daschbach, Marjorie Griffin, Penny Gahagen, Martha Grannis, Lorraine Gustafson, Martha Imai, George Kromhout, Rosalee Lower, Jim Lowrie, Phyllis Mead, Adrienne Mitchell, Genevieve and John Parsons, Fred Petri, June Schutte, Betty Stout, Eva Thomson, Virginia Weir**.

The pastoral staff wants to thank you for sharing your joys and concerns with us. There are many that we pray for each week; some we can share with the congregation and some we are asked to hold in confidence. Please know that all of your joys and concerns are important. You may contact the church office or email care@ccsm-ucc.org if you need support during the week.

Happy 100th, Martha!

At this time of her 100th birthday, Martha Imai recalls a long life filled with family, friends, and church—all of which helped to sustain her through some of the most tumultuous events of the 20th century. A native San Franciscan, Martha was one of five children born to parents who emigrated to the U.S. from Japan. Following a brief business venture in SF, her family moved to Salinas, where her father became too ill to work, and her mother, a gifted educator, taught Japanese to the children of the workers. In an interview, Martha said, “She was a really good teacher. Some of the things she taught me in kindergarten I remember to this day.” After five years of suffering the hardships of rural life, the family was happy to move to Belmont, where her mother continued to teach Japanese.



photo by Drew Henry

Martha’s parents were devout Christians who attended Sturges Presbyterian Church in San Mateo while Martha and the other Sturges children came to CCSM for church school since Sturges did not have enough space. The family then moved to San Mateo, although they and other minorities were only permitted to live within a circumscribed area east of the railroad tracks. Martha graduated from San Mateo High School in 1933, attended design school in SF, then began a 25-year career working at Levy Brothers department store in Burlingame. In 1939, she married Yugi, a Stanford graduate and family friend, at CCSM with the Rev. Dr. Sidney Buckham officiating. Yugi was hired to teach at the Naval Japanese Language School, housed at UC Berkeley. After Pearl Harbor, the school was moved to Boulder, Colorado, where Martha and Yugi remained for the rest of the war, enduring ostracism. In the meantime, Martha’s parents were forced to leave the house they built in San Mateo and were sent to Topaz, an internment camp near Delta, Utah. Although Martha was in Colorado, she is thankful for the key role CCSM played in this time period, storing the belongings of the displaced Japanese in San Mateo—the result of Rev. Buckham’s advocacy and support of the Japanese community.

After the war, she and Yugi returned to San Mateo, along with their two- and six-year-old sons, initially living in her parents’ crowded house before building their own home in Burlingame. The family attended CCSM, where Martha helped with the very large Sunday School—there were more than 100 children in kindergarten alone! Every Sunday, the church was packed, shoulder-to-shoulder, in every pew. Martha joined the Plymouth Circle and worked in countless ways at church functions including rummage sales, while making friends that would last a lifetime.

Martha and Yugi were early residents of the Peninsula Regent. In fact, they signed up before the place was even built...before the first hole was dug. She is happy to be part of a group there that still attends CCSM.

Martha, Happy 100th Birthday!

by Carole Melis and Lee Mullery



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