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The Congregational Church of San Mateo

United Church of Christ

225 Tilton Avenue · San Mateo, California 94401

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Issue #1 • February 2016 Vol. 65



2/10, 7 - 8pm Ash Wednesday Service

SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS IN LENT

Lent 1: 2/14 Sermon: *In the Beginning...* Penny preaching. Bible Sunday for 5th Grade. Sermon: *How Do* Lent 2: 2/21 We Know What We Know? Bonnie preaching.

Sermon: God, Genes and Human Nature. Lent 3: 2/28

Penny preaching.

Communion. Sermon: Why God? Penny Lent 4: 3/6

preaching. Sermon: Quantum Faith: Quarks, String Theory Lent 5: 3/13

and Spirit. Penny preaching.

Palm Sunday Processional. Sermon: In the End... 3/20 What Happens? Penny and Bonnie preaching.

Holy Thursday. Holy Week Service for Families 3/24, 6 p.m.

(Communion on chancel at 7:30 p.m.)

3/25, 7 p.m. Good Friday service **EASTER SUNDAY** 3/27

Services at 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:

Lenten Souper Sunday/Panel of Scientists 3/6

3/13 The Jesus of Islam: Join Fatih Ferdi Ates of the Pacifica Institute as he leads a presentation on the Jesus of Islam. Many Christians do not

realize that Jesus is one of the key prophets of Islam. How does Islam view Jesus? Where are

Islamic views of Jesus convergent with those of Christianity's?

LENT 2016 THE GREAT PARTNERSHIP: SCIENCE. RELIGION AND THE SEARCH FOR MEANING

There is truth in the cathedral and truth in the lab. (John Polkinghorne)

Science is about explanation. Religion is about meaning. Science analyzes, religion integrates. Science breaks things down into their component parts. Religion binds people together in relationships of trust. Science tells us what is. Religion tells us what ought to be. Science describes. Religion beckons, summons, calls. Science sees objects. Religion speaks to us as subjects. Science practices detachment. Religion is the art of attachment, self to self, soul to soul. Science sees the underlying order of the physical world. Religion hears the music beneath the noise. (Rabbi Jonathan Sacks)

A Word from Penny

When Bonnie and I preached on coming to terms with violence and religion a few weeks ago I talked about "good religion" and "bad religion." What I didn't talk about was "true religion." Our Christian scriptures define true religion as "visiting widows and

-cont. on page 7-

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

IT'S A WONDER-FULL WORLD — CHURCH SCHOOL DURING LENT

While the adults experience a sermon series on The Great Partnership between Science and Religion, the children (PreK-5th grade) will experience the majestic wonder of the natural world as connected to spirituality and the Christian tradition. The Lenten journey in Church School will be lots of fun.

5TH GRADE BIBLE NIGHT

Wednesday, February 17, 6:30-8:00 pm in the Youth Room

What is the Bible all about, really? When it says so many weird things, why do we still use it? This is a night of fun games while we learn about this super old book. Fifth Grade Bible Night comes just in time for fifth graders to receive their own special **Bibles will be given in the worship service on February 21**. Fifth-graders, please sign up with Bonnie, brambob@ccsm-ucc.org.

Sneak Peek into April:

GOD AND SCIENCE FOR 10-12 YEAR OLDS Sunday, April 3, 12-3 pm in the Buckham Room

Children (10-12 years old) are invited to participate in a fun and provocative discussion about how science relates to faith and God. They will not only have an opportunity to hear how many scientists have been inspired or impressed by God's presence in nature and in the universe, but they will also have access to internet to do their own research on some scientists. Finally, guided and supported by our 4th-5th grade Lead Teacher, Sandra Sotogrondona and Bonnie Rambob, they will conclude with their own presentations, using Godly Play methodology. All of this topped with fabulous healthy snacks.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULTS

We are always looking for kind, welcoming adults who thoroughly enjoy the company of children. If you are interested in serving CCSM in Children's Ministry, there are many wonderful opportunities to share with you. Please contact Bonnie, brambob@ccsm-ucc.org.



Godly Play kids



Our Girl Scouts participated in a food collection for 29 families enrolled in the Intercommunal Preschool. They learned of the school's need in early December and quickly collected fresh fruits and vegetables for family use during the holiday break. Several Girl Scouts helped deliver the food on 12/21/15, and while there they created posters with the preschoolers to inform parents about the donation, and sang Christmas carols together in English and Spanish.



NURTURING THE SPIRITUAL CHILD: SECOND HALF OF A 4-PART SERIES Sundays, February 21 and March 6 6-7:30 PM, Buckham Room

Come and learn about a growing body of scientific research which illuminates the spirituality of childhood and adolescence as an



untapped resource in our understanding of how humans develop, navigate life's challenges, and find health and healing. This program is designed to be spiritually inclusive and is applicable for practitioners of all faith traditions or no faith tradition. Sign up with Bonnie, brambob@ccsmucc.org. Childcare is provided.

PEACE VILLAGE: Register NOW July 25-29, 2016

In a world with religious violence and in the U.S. with hateful speech, perhaps there has never been a more important time than now to raise our children to live as friends in a diverse community.

Peace Village is an interfaith peace education camp for children finishing 1st-8th grade. Every layer of the Peace Village community is collaborative and cooperative, from the youngest villagers to the high school group leaders to the adult volunteers. In developmentally-appropriate, interactive, fun ways, villagers learn how to practice non-violent communication; they learn about the well of peace found in multiple religious traditions; they learn

media literacy; they practice yoga and meditation and they express their hearts through music, dance and art.

Peace Village is a village of faith houses and peoples—CCSM is part of the village. The village is ready and waiting for your child/ren.

To register online: <u>www.villagerelations.com/sanmateopeacevillage</u>. Have questions? Contact Bonnie, brambob@ccsm-ucc.org.

ETHICAL WILL WORKSHOP

Wednesday, February 3 • 7:00 p.m. • Buckham Room

In *The Road to Character*, David Brooks distinguishes between "resumé virtues" and "eulogy virtues." Reflecting on the distinction, we will explore ways to share our wisdom and love with others through an *Ethical Will*. While the formats may be different depending on our writing styles and gifts, we will explore the kinds of narratives, wisdom, advice, and values we hope our lives communicate and that we wish to share with those we love.

If you have questions or would like more information, please email Joliene Wade Gatlin (joliene.wade@gmail.com).



Check out the video from Peace Village's inaugural year! youtube.com/watch?v=5itew5HxWUQ

BE MY VALENTINE!

Do you remember trading Valentines with your friends at school? The excitement of finding little white envelopes in your cubby

or a paper decorated for

Come to

and to Love thy Neighbor!

bag that you the occasion? Kloss Hall

after church on Sunday, February 14, and we'll have everything you need to make beautiful Valentine's cards for your neighbors. It's a great way to meet CCSMers in your neighborhood

Contact Teresa Rose for more information at 650 787-6527.



Our Blanketeers quilting group gathered sewing, quilting, needlepoint and knitting supplies and materials to help the women living with AIDS or HIV at Las Memorias, Tijuana, MX. Rev. Jerri is helping the women set up a sewing area and recently bought 2 sewing machines and is seeking donations to help offset these costs. Thanks to Lisa McCally and Susan Henry for gathering the donated items and transporting them with an in person visit by Lisa to Las Memorias which always welcomes our visits, love and prayers.

Ministry of Service & Justice

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES OF OUR SOUTHERN NEIGHBORS

FEBRUARY 7, noon-1pm • Immigration to the US, Lucy Lee • Buckham Room

Over eleven million undocumented immigrants live among us. To escape violence and poverty in their home countries, many have risked their lives to come to the U.S. Once they arrive, how do we welcome them? How does our country's legal process continue their living in fear, rather than sanctuary here? What can be done to ease the immigration crisis? Come hear some answers

Ministry of Service & Justice

from expert Lucy Lee, the Principal and Managing Attorney at Fallon, Bixby, Cheng & Lee, Inc., the oldest immigration law firm in San Francisco.

FEBRUARY 21, noon-1pm • Human Trafficking, Kibbie Ruth

The boys who knock on your door to sell magazines, the men selling strawberries on the corner, the women doing your nails. Sex workers you heard about during the Super Bowl. Many are trafficked, the today's version of slavery. You can actually help end this crisis, IF you are simply willing to make a phone call when something doesn't "seem right." Come hear some intervention success stories and how you too can prevent trafficking in our community.

MARCH 6, noon • Stroll through the Mission, Lisa McCally

The Mission District is a virtual outdoor art gallery full of vibrant murals. Throughout the neighborhood, hundreds of walls and fences are adorned with colorful works of art featuring themes ranging from cultural heritage to social political statements. Because the murals are best viewed on foot, we'll take an 8-10 block walk (wear sturdy shoes, bring water) with mural docent Lisa McCally for an up-close experience and conversation about Latino art, history and culture in San Francisco's Mission District. First a bowl of soup in Kloss Hall and then off to our adventure. Send an email to msj@ccsm-ucc.org if you can join us.

HOW YOU CAN HELP IN THE COMMUNITY

Would you like to:

- Serve dinners to our neighbors at Samaritan House's Dining Room (4:15-6:00pm Wednesdays)? Email Nancy Dieguez (nancy.dieguez@live.com)
- **Deliver ten meals** to shut-ins (3:30-4:30pm Tuesdays)? Email msj@ccsm-ucc.org.
- Sort donated children's clothes at the Kid's Closet?
 Email June brown (june@gmail.com)
- Tutor youngsters after school at Homework Central?
 Email Betsy Woodward (betsdce@comcast.net)
- Pick up excess food from restaurants, grocers and companies and deliver to shelters with Peninsula Food Runners?
 Email Warren (longlake15@sbcglobal.net)
- Teach shelter clients a life skills class like budgeting, parenting, interview skills?
 Email Lynelle (Ibilsey@ivsn.org)
- Advocate for seniors in nursing homes?
 Email msj@ccsm-ucc.org

As the hands and feet of God, **YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE** in our community.

FEET ARE MADE FOR WALKING...

In many developing nations, walking is the primary mode of transportation. Every day millions are exposed to unsanitary conditions in soil that lead to devastating diseases. When walking becomes unbearable because of illness or dilapidated shoes, children are prevented

from attending school and adults are unable to work. Without decent shoes, the cycle of poverty continues.

So let's wear out poverty in February by simply repurposing your gently worn shoes. Through Soles for Souls, donated shoes are sent to every state and 127 countries, particularly those hit by natural disasters



and war. And because 95% of the shoes produced every year are thrown in landfills, you will also help the environment with your donation.

STOP THE RAIDS

At the start of the New Year the Department of Homeland Security began raiding immigrant communities in



states across the country. The raids have swept up many including children and families from Central America who are seeking asylum. Many never received their court date and were unable to find adequate legal counsel.

Raids are an inhumane and unjust response to the humanitarian crisis that has caused thousands to flee the horrific realities of brutal violence and extreme poverty in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. In many cases our government is deporting people back to potentially fatal circumstances. These raids have left our neighbors in fear of being separated from their families, detained and deported.

Our faith calls us to walk with the marginalized—the poor, the rejected, the stranger—just as Christ did. Instead of deporting families seeking safety, the administration should assure they are provided adequate legal representation and should designate Temporary Protective Status to stop the deportation of Central Americans.

Call on President Obama to STOP the raids on Central American children and families! Click this link to send your email: **TAKE ACTION** http://p2a.co/0zHP1v4

SUPPORT GROUPS FORMING SOON

Two new support groups will be forming soon: a **relationship group for women** who are in the process of separating and divorcing, and a **grief group** for

people who have had a loved one die either recently or some time ago. Typically these groups have 8-12 people and meet every other week for 90 minutes for 8 sessions.

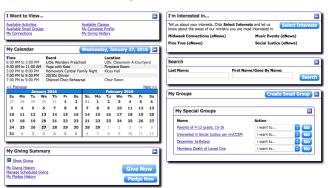
The purpose is to provide a safe and supportive environment to share feelings and experiences. The focus is to develop resiliency while enduring transitions, using spiritual and psychological resources and strategies.

These groups are led by Rev. Dr. Janet K. Bower, a certified pastoral counselor and chaplain. For more information, contact Janet at 650-483-2136 or jbower@ccsm-ucc.org.



A little girl in Half Moon Bay expressing gratitude for the bike she received via CCSM's bike donations

MYCCSM IS HERE!



Have you ever wanted to find a phone number or email for another church member? Have you ever arrived for an event and couldn't remember what room it was being held in? Have you ever wanted to easily make a donation to CCSM without having cash on hand?

You can do all this...and more... with my CCSM!

To sign up click <u>here</u> or click myCCSM on our website.

If you need help, read the instructions on the my CCSM webpage, watch the step-by-step videos also on the webpage or come see Veril, Jeanne and Jennifer during coffee hour on February 14 or February 28. A photographer will be on hand if you need help taking a photo and uploading it into the pictorial directory.

After you sign up, we'll verify your affiliation status with CCSM and in a few days you will receive an email confirming your full access to the directory.

Once you have your account set up, from your browser:

- 1. Verify and change your contact information at Home>My Profile
- 2. Upload your personal photo at Home>My Profile by clicking on the pencil to the right of your name and then clicking on the "Personal Photo" button in the upper right corner.
- 3. Look up your pledge history at Home>My Profile>My Pledge History. You can view your pledge summaries for 2015 and 2016
- 4. Can't remember how much you have given towards your pledge? No problem. Go to Home>My Profile>My Giving History

If you have a smartphone, download the Church Life app so you can look up people and events and conveniently make a gift to CCSM. Have questions? Send an email to migration 715@gmail.com and Veril will be happy to answer any questions you have.

DINNER WITH 20/30S AT CCSM

Wednesday, February 17 at 7:00 p.m.

Join us for dinner! 20/30s at CCSM gathers about twice a month for conversation and a meal. If you're in your 20s or 30s, please feel welcomed to join in. Email Joliene Gatlin for more information (joliene.wade@gmail.com). Our next dinner is at Hummus Mediterranean Kitchen, 150 E 4th Ave. in San Mateo.



The program, entitled "Viva Verdi!," will be presented by CCSM's own Arnold Duncan. Arnold's special music history talents will bring to life many aspects of this

majestic composer and his music. Reserve your space by calling Zelta Adams at 650-341-1644. Bring your own sandwich/salad. Dessert and beverages are provided. New members and guests are welcome.



February 7 & 21, March 6 & 20, April 10 & 24, May 8 & 22, June 5 • 12:10-1:00pm

The fall meditation group restarted in January and will continue until June 5 when it breaks for recess. We meet in the church library on the second floor, next to the choir practice room on alternate Sundays. The format is a 20-minute sitting, followed by either a discussion or a 30-minute video on "The Science of Mindfulness: A Research-Based Path to Well-Being." For additional information, email bobjarmusz@gmail. com or call (650) 787-8324.

SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS

Tuesdays, 7:00-8:30pm • Upstairs library

The book discussion group, formerly Hear, Reflect, Share, now Spiritual Conversations, meets weekly to discuss The Heart of Christianity by Marcus Borg. "A marvelous book that is both challenging and illuminating, and effecting exactly the kind of transformation that Borg describes so lucidly." —Karen Armstrong. The group is open to anyone interested in sharing ideas and experiences. Richard and Dorothy Kogl will continue as facilitators. For more information, email kogl@att.net or call 650-579-7272.

FIRST TUESDAY BOOK GROUP

March 1, 7:30 pm, Fireplace Room

Our March book is My Stroke of Insight by Jill Bolte-Taylor. She tells of having a stroke and subsequent recovery. Through the eyes of a curious scientist, she watched her mind deteriorate to where she could not walk, talk, read, write, or recall any of her life. Please read and bring your opinion of the book to our group. Anyone who enjoys reading is welcome to join us whenever you are able.

On April 5 we'll read *At the Water's Edge* by Sara Gruen. Contact Susan Stoehr to be added to the email list (s_stoehr@hotmail.com) or Betsy Woodward for questions (betsdce@comcast.net).

ADULT EDUCATION

BROWN BAG LUNCH BOOK DISCUSSION: KAREN ARMSTRONG'S

THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE

Palm Sunday, March 20 • 11:45-12:45 Fireplace Room

How's your faith? The question continues to reverberate in the chambers of our inner lives. Karen Armstrong's autobiographical book, *The Spiral Staircase*, illuminates an honest, authentic,



sometimes treacherous spiritual journey. Come, spiritual journeyers, to this conversation about Armstrong's responses to the question of faith. How does her spiral staircase connect to your own, or does it? Join Alexandra Gillen and Bonnie Rambob in a facilitated book discussion.

Save the Date!

NO HOMEWORK TONIGHT

Annual fundraiser for Homework Central Friday, April 8 • 6:00-9:00 pm at CCSM

Silent Auction, Music and Program Delicious Appetizers and Desserts a la Chef Greg Graves!

Come celebrate 18 years of providing homework assistance and family support to our neighborhood children.



Happy students from Homework Central played the Estimation Jargame here at CCSM. Emily from Sunnybrae, above, guessed correctly how many markers were in the jar and got to take them home!

A Word from Penny cont. from p. 1

orphans' (James 1:23). The prophet Isaiah says it like this: Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Recently at CCSM we have had a lot of focus on "social justice"—and it has been great to see all the various ways we can show up and serve. And that service doesn't just extend to our neighborhood or our partner organizations. The people in the congregation care for one another in so many ways. Service and ministry are offered every day to people within the congregation.

Whether it is praying with someone, visiting someone homebound, listening deeply to people's pain, serving food at Samaritan dinners, bringing warm coats and shoes for the homeless and underhoused, bringing non-perishable items on First Food Sundays, tutoring at Homework Central, providing meals to those recovering from an illness, writing notes of encouragement and cards of sympathy to those going through a difficult time or experiencing loss, offering grief groups to people in sorrow—all these things, and many more—are what I would call care, acts of mercy and service. And these happen every day at CCSM. The DNA of this church is to take care of one another.

We also work on social justice issues. Acts of mercy and care are for individuals. Acts of justice seek to change the system, to change policy, to right societal wrongs so that there can exist within our country more equality.

In some ways, it is a false dichotomy to have a ministry of care and a ministry of service and justice. We serve each other and our neighbors and friends in a variety of ways. The pastoral staff also spends a good portion of our time in all kinds of care ministry. And, most of us, in our own ways, work to change unjust and unequal systems that end up marginalizing people.

We at CCSM seek to respond daily and consistently to respond to the great call to "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God." At the end of the day, people are people and all deserve care and attention, and many are in desperate need of advocacy and solidarity. Let's not compare "care" and "justice"—let's just re-commit ourselves to be the kind of spiritual and faithful community who sees the deep humanity of all and continues to make a difference where we can.

Peace,

Penny

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Prayers of Joy...

Renee Ashbaugh and her husband Marc Staudenbaur announce the birth of their daughter, Sadie Brooks Staudenbaur, born in San Francisco on January 2, 2016. Sadie's proud grandparents are Roger Ashbaugh and Robyn Chamness and proud stepgrandparents are Carla Cornaglia and Steve Oshita. Blessings to each one of you as you celebrate your addition to the family.

Kristen Stelljes is grateful for her new job opportunity and for being a part of CCSM. Mike, Alex and Kristen will be moving to Massachusetts. Their last Sunday here at church will be February 7. We will miss you and carry you in our hearts. May God bless you as you settle into a new community.

Prayers of Comfort...

Herb Stanger, stepfather of Dawn Graves, passed away on January 26 at the age of 92. Please remember to hold Dawn's mother **Donna** and their family as they grieve and celebrate his life.

Penny Gahagen, mother of Scott Gahagen, passed away at her home on January 14, 2016 surrounded by her loving family. Penny and her late husband, Don, began attending CCSM 60 years ago.

Craig Block, Andy Block's brother, passed away on January 8, 2016, at the age of 55, with their mother at his side. Craig suffered from lymphoma for 15 months and endured many treatments. May Craig's loved ones feel God's tender mercies during their time of loss.

Melissa Gilpin's father, Joe Rodelo, passed away on Dec. 30. Please keep Melissa, her mother Maria and Melissa's family in prayer during this time of mourning.

Michael Peterhans, husband of Laura Peterhans, stepfather of Jean and Ralph Garcia and beloved grandfather of the Garcia children, passed away on January 5, 2016. May God's comforting presence sustain Laura and herfamily in the days to come.

Mike Mullery's sister, Joyce Clark, unexpectedly lost her husband, Jim, on December 30, following a routine surgery. Please remember the Mullery and Clark families as they grieve Jim. May God's abundant grace be with them

during this family transition.

Prayers of Healing and Support...

Lynn Blackie is at home resting after hip surgery. Lynn is in our prayers as she rests, exercises and regains her mobility. May God grant her a speedy and complete recovery.

Ramona Beukema Prince has had two serious falls, resulting in two separate surgeries. Although she is doing well, she has a long road to recover. May she feel God's healing touch and our love as her broken wrist mends and her health is restored.

Dr. Jim Groundwater, husband of Lorna Groundwater, is residing at the VA in Menlo Park and would appreciate receiving cards.

Shaun, friend of Genel Morgan and Sharon Tobin, recently had a brain tumor removed. Prayers for Shaun's continued healing, as he continues to suffer from seizures.

Please pray for Kate Engelberg (friend of Holly Allen and Camille Grant), Paula (sister-in-law of Kirsten Smith), Janice Kennedy (cousin of Margaret and Gordon Smith), Randy (nephew of Stan Higgs), Bill Daniels, Emily Tomasi, and others as they walk their unique journeys with cancer.

Continuing prayers for Linda Hodges, Tom Lohmuller, Anne McEntee, Ruth Black, Marjorie Griffin, Martha Grannis, Lorraine Gustafson, Martha Imai, George Kromhout, Rosalee Lower, Jim Lowrie, Phyllis Mead, Adrienne Mitchell, Genevieve and John Parsons, Fred Petri, Vera Pitts, Janet Smith Roberts (sister of Gordon Smith), June Schutte, Betty Stout, Eva Thomson, Virginia Weir and Travis Woodmansee.

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 jbower@ccsm-ucc.org if you need support during the week.

Find out more about CCSM and the possibility of membership



If you want to take the next step in your journey with CCSM, come enjoy lunch, conversation, and a presentation on who we are and what it might be like for you to be part of this spiritual community.

RSVP to Janet Bower at jbower@ccsm-ucc.org or the church office, 650 343-3694. Please let Janet know if childcare is a need.

SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER

Tuesday, February 9, 6:00-7:00pm • Kloss Hall

In keeping with the long-standing Christian tradition of feasting before beginning the fasting period of Lent, please join the Children, Youth and Family Ministry for our annual pancake supper. Everyone is welcome!

We'll have pancakes (there will be a gluten free option), sausage, bacon and drinks.

So put your pots away and come eat breakfast for dinner.

A \$5 per family donation is suggested to help with food costs.





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THE GREAT PARTNERSHIP

SCIENCE, RELIGION, AND THE SEARCH FOR MEANING

Stay in touch this Lenten season through daily prayer. Each day of Lent receive a brief prayer, written by Penny, texted to your phone at some random time (between 7am-7pm). Let the surprise of it be part of the mystery. Let prayer enter in at unexpected moments and let it be an invitation to stop, to breathe, to experience the Holy in the moment.

DAILY LENTEN "FLASH" PRAYERS

Text the word JOIN to 510.256.3366

(If you joined during Advent, you're already signed up!)

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