

CCSM PINE TREE

VOL. 65, #10 | DECEMBER 2016



All Are Welcome at the Manger by Julie Rodriguez Jones

SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS

ADVENT 2016: GOD IN THE STILLNESS

December 18 ADVENT 4: *Christmas Pageant, Special Music:* Joyful Noise Children's Choir. *Advent Reflection:* Dakota Brown.



December 23 LAS POSADAS, 6:30-9:00pm
Las Posadas (Spanish for "the inns") is a re-enactment of Mary and Joseph's difficult journey to Bethlehem to find shelter for the birth of Jesus. This is a participatory liturgy, and a time to enjoy tamales, pan dulce, ponche, and a piñata. ALL are welcome.

December 24 CHRISTMAS EVE
5 pm: Family Worship
11 pm: Candlelight Service

December 25 CHRISTMAS DAY
Reflection: Kibbie Ruth

EPIPHANY 2017: WHAT UNITES US

- January 1** New Year's Day / Epiphany / communion.
Reflection: Penny Nixon.
- January 8** Penny Nixon preaching. Sermon: *Guiding Principle: Christian.*
- January 15** MLK Sunday. Penny Nixon preaching. Sermon: *Guiding Principle: Spiritual.*
- January 22** Angela Kraft Cross preaching. Sermon: *Guiding Principle: Open-minded.*
- January 29** Congregational Meeting. Penny Nixon preaching. Sermon: *Guiding Principle: Diversity / Evolving.*

A Word from Penny

On Sunday November 27th, I met with the Ministry of Service and Justice (MSJ) and some of their partners. There were 25 people present. The meeting was focused on what social justice might look like at CCSM given our new political reality. I had planned to meet with them in January as they had a desire to move from service into more areas of justice, and also a desire to work more closely in alignment with some of the issues I have been working on. However, given the current circumstances, I asked that we meet sooner.

I began by asking people what they were most concerned about in the coming year. They listed a number of things: Immigration, Environment/Climate Change, Education, LGBT Rights, Protection of Women's Rights, Health Care, War, Violence, Hate Crimes/ i.e. Muslims, Racism, Relationship with World Leaders, Housing, Homeless, Inequality Gap.

We also talked about what internal work we needed to do, how we needed to change, and how we needed to ready ourselves for the days ahead.

Then we moved on to what some of our responses might be. A lot of ideas surfaced. I then shared some of my ideas and we came to consensus as a group.

Here are three responses we want to put in place in the early months of 2017:

1. Deepen our relationships with the

—cont. on page 3—



Congregational
Church of san mateo

225 TILTON AVENUE, SAN MATEO, CA 94401
650 343-3694 | CCSM-UCC.ORG

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Church School Spotlights:

Shannon McEntee and Lili Gonzalez



Shannon participating in Peace Village

We are happy to announce that **Shannon McEntee**, storyteller for grades 1-3, has completed all three training courses in Godly Play and is now fully certified. We are so fortunate to have Shannon contributing to the spiritual development of our students in Church School. Congratulations, Shannon!

Congratulations to **Lili Gonzalez** on celebrating 14 years of service in Church School here at CCSM! Lili teaches in the Nursery in the CE building, and is a warm and nurturing caregiver for the youngest members of our congregation. She is well-loved



Lili in the nursery

by children and adults alike. Thanks, Lili, for all that you do! We are so grateful for your continued support with our littlest ones.



HOLIDAY SERVICE PROJECT

This holiday season at Church School, the children and youth of the church will be creating Christmas cards that will be included with the sandwiches CCSM gives out for Open Cathedral on Christmas Day. Thank you to all of our children and youth from preschool to Grade 12 who will be collaborating to bring some holiday cheer to people who might not otherwise receive many holiday greetings.

SPECIAL DEAL!



If you do think our children are special, I have a deal for you! If you are willing to miss 40 minutes of one worship service to greet and enjoy

our children, you will receive a CD of the entire service and a link to watch Penny deliver her sermon online. All you have to do is welcome a small class of delightful children and be with second adult in the classroom until church is over.

Take me up on this special offer! Email kibbie@ccsm-ucc.org

MLK NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE

Think it is time for solidarity and action? On Martin Luther King's Day, over 400 Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and other volunteers will work side-by-side developing deeper relationships while contributing to over 20 family-friendly projects. Children ages 5+ are welcome to participate in most of the projects.

Volunteers must sign up in advance at penmlk2017.eventbrite.com. Projects will fill up quickly, so please register promptly. Free breakfast!



FROM YOUR MODERATOR: EXCITING NEWS!

Dear Friends,

Each year, San Mateo County honors an organization with its Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration, Honorary Organization Award.



This award recognizes organizations that make significant contributions to furthering Dr. King's vision of equality and justice.

This year San Mateo County planning officials have chosen the Congregational Church of San Mateo (in collaboration with Clergy Together for Housing) for this honor.

The Planning Committee cited that it chose CCSM because of our "long history of inclusiveness particularly with CCSM's work with LGBT rights and for our leadership in engaging community members and other congregations around housing affordable to people at all income levels."

Committee Member Maya Perkins, who is the legislative aide to San Mateo County Supervisor Warren Slocum, shared with me some praise for Penny, in particular, as well: "Reverend Nixon has

gravitated towards difficult and important issues of equity and justice, demonstrating great leadership and a phenomenal ability to speak the truth in an inclusive way that can be heard by all."

Penny will be accepting this award on CCSM's behalf and has been asked to say a few words at the annual Dr. King holiday celebration on **Monday, January 16th at San Mateo's CalTrain Station**. We will be sharing specifics once they are available.

So mark your calendars! And, congratulations to everyone as we continue to strive toward our vision of a strong voice for Progressive Christianity, a beloved community, and a leader in social justice.

With gratitude,
Jeanne Back
CCSM Moderator



A Word from Penny... cont. from p. 1

Muslim community, starting with the Muslim Garden School. Organize a potluck with their families and ours, sharing a meal and getting to know each other. Abeer, head of MGS, is very excited about this. Stay tuned for the date.

2. In February, delve into our internal work by exploring together our own unconscious biases and the racism that is part of the air we breathe. The group committed to being a part of this educational series and to encouraging others to do so.

3. The group also was very interested in exploring the new sanctuary movement. I brought some information on this movement that the UCC has recommitted to. The new administration will probably move on immigration legislation very quickly, particularly in rescinding the DACA executive order, which will leave many dreamers (including a lot of CSM students) vulnerable to deportation. The group was unanimous in wanting to explore this further.

Rev. Deb Lee, who leads the Human Integrity Movement, will provide an informational session on the Sanctuary Movement on January 8th following the church service.

On Wednesday, November 30, 2016, twenty-five faith leaders representing Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Unitarian Universalism and Christianity responded to a call to meet for a working lunch at CCSM to discuss *Leading in Difficult Times: Conversations Among Faith Leaders*.

The room was electric with people sharing their fears and hopes, and deeply listening to one another. I've been on the Peninsula for almost ten years and I have never felt this kind of energy from a group of faith leaders. The energy was present in our conversations and from that arose a real passion and commitment to work together, shoulder to shoulder, in relationships of mutual solidarity, addressing our most pressing social issues.

My dream is that CCSM be a leader in whatever movement arises on the Peninsula. In January, we will receive the MLK award from the county. While happy about this, I also feel a sense of responsibility to live up to this award and have our actions reflect the spirit of MLK. I hope you'll join me.

Peace,
Penny

God has no hands but *your* hands...



...no heart but *your* heart

SO FAR THIS YEAR YOU HAVE... fed the hungry, sheltered the homeless, given bikes to those without transportation, built a house for a poor family in Mexico, cleaned up the Bay and the blocks around the church, encouraged quality education locally and globally, and donated clothing, books, supplies and more to struggling families.

IN ADDITION, YOUR PLATE OFFERINGS HAVE:

- ◆ Supported Intercommunal Preschool for low income families
- ◆ Helped Homework Central encourage students to succeed in school
- ◆ Bought hundreds of gift cards for Samaritan House's Kids Closet so children would have new shoes for school

- ◆ Developed a school (DAR) with services for the community in a poverty-stricken section of Guatemala
- ◆ Added a wall to the struggling school in crisis-stricken South Sudan
- ◆ Gave scholarships for our children to attend UCC Camps and Peace Village
- ◆ Encouraged the cultural appreciation program of ALAS (remember the dancing farm workers' children)
- ◆ Supported the impressive efforts of LifeMoves to help families and individuals move toward stable housing and lives
- ◆ Sheltered homeless families with Home and Hope
- ◆ Refurbished the bedrooms at Your House South, the shelter for runaway youth in Redwood City.
- ◆ Fed homeless worshipping at San Francisco Night Ministry's Open Cathedral
- ◆ Funded Swords to Ploughshares special services to homeless veterans on the San Francisco streets
- ◆ Repaired a dilapidated house in the neighborhood through Rebuilding Together (both with funds and people-power)
- ◆ Supported Peninsula Food Runners' effort to distribute food in the community
- ◆ Helped CALL Primrose provide food and other resources for our economically-stressed neighbors
- ◆ Protected victims of domestic violence through CORA
- ◆ Protected frail elderly in long term care facilities through Ombudsman Services
- ◆ Applauded diversity by sponsoring the county's Pride Celebration
- ◆ Supported orphans and rescued victims of human trafficking with Nepal Youth Foundation
- ◆ Helped the Bay Area Anti-Trafficking Coalition coordinate efforts to end slavery in the area
- ◆ Encouraged residents of Las Memorias (Tijuana) with funding, a visit and fresh paint
- ◆ Helped Save the Bay
- ◆ Supported the many programs of our local core service provider Samaritan House and the many programs of Puente de La Costa Sur, the core service provider to farm worker families in the Pescadero area
- ◆ Collaborated with the Peninsula Multifaith Coalition on the Martin Luther King Day of Service projects throughout San Mateo County
- ◆ Responded to natural disasters and other relief work of the UCC through One Great House of Sharing and Neighbors in Need



Girls giggle with Santa at the party we helped host Wednesday for unaccompanied minors from Central America. Festivities included a feast, live band, games, lots of presents, and photos with Santa. What a celebration with these brave children!

AMAZING GENEROSITY

How could we ever count all the volunteer hours given to CCSM and the projects we support? Or all the in-kind donations? That could be a fulltime job—and still it'd be impossible to capture all the thoughtfulness.

- ◆ Piles and piles of jackets and coats kept homeless warm in San Francisco and our Samaritan House diners last winter. Holding a sign asking for money on Third Avenue, John called out to Kibbie last week to remind her to say thank you to the church for his down coat.
- ◆ 159 pairs of shoes went to Soles for Souls for people barefoot because of natural disasters.
- ◆ 174 toothbrushes, 50 tubes of toothpaste and more went to Call Primrose and Las Memorias in Mexico.
- ◆ Over 73 handmade quilts went to the VA hospital, Home and Hope and LifeMoves.
- ◆ 716 adult and baby diapers and five packages of baby wipes went to New Creation Ministries in East Palo Alto for new single moms.
- ◆ Three boxes cleaning supplies and more went to shelters run by CORA and First Step.
- ◆ Three boxes of shaving cream and deodorant went to Swords to Ploughshares for homeless veterans.
- ◆ One hundred and two backpacks went to Puente children on the coastal farms.
- ◆ 290 pairs of socks went to homeless in two counties.

- ◆ Eight huge garbage bags of women's clothing when to PARCA and another nine went to the Women's Gathering Place in San Jose.
- ◆ Undergarments went to Be a Dear, Donate a Brassiere.
- ◆ 181 towels and 29 wash clothes went to LifeMoves. The thank you note raved, "You made First Steps' day! Towels are a super-hot commodity."
- ◆ 72 families feasted on Thanksgiving dinners you donated the ingredients for.
- ◆ Ten families will celebrate Christmas (95 gifts) this year because you "adopted" them.
- ◆ Pam is still counting all the donated children's books for Samaritan House.

Overwhelmed reading this incomplete list? Imagine how overwhelmed with appreciation all these recipients are!



MARCH ON JANUARY 21

Marches on January 21 in San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose and Washington, D.C. will send a bold message to our new administration on their first day in office, and to the world, that women's rights are human rights. In the spirit of democracy, dignity, and justice, we want our presence to show our numbers are too great to ignore: women, immigrants of all statuses, those with diverse religious faiths particularly Muslim, people who identify as LGBTQIA, Native and Indigenous people, Black and Brown people, people with disabilities, the economically impoverished and survivors of sexual assault. We stand together in our diversity, recognizing that defending the most marginalized among us is defending all of us. Already seven women connected with this church are going all the way to Washington, and more are welcomed to join. If you would like to walk with the grandmothers, mothers and daughters (and men) on January 21, please email kibbie@ccsm-ucc.org.

To find out about joining a local march, go to womensmarchbayarea.org/#join-a-march where there is information about various local efforts. The San Francisco march is scheduled for 4-9pm, the Oakland march for 10am-3pm, and the San Jose march also 10am-3pm. To volunteer, go to womensmarchbayarea.org/volunteer/

When the whole world is **SILENT**, even one voice becomes **POWERFUL**.



Update from the Latino Ministry Team

THIS PROJECT IS EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL FOR A LATINO MINISTRY IN OUR CHURCH in multiple ways. We are communicating CCSM's desire to connect with our Latino neighbors through inviting them to events such as Las Posadas, Día de los Muertos; offering workshops such as immigrants' rights and family financial management; and participating actively with them in Faith in Action advocacy work. Jorge has done extensive outreach work and has built an increasing number of pastoral and personal relationships with people.

Jorge has also begun to experiment with various worship and fellowship activities, generally including a meal, in order to learn what activities seem to respond best to people's needs and interest, what timing works for people, and whether a significant and growing number will be drawn to participate. Ultimately, we think that these 'real-life experiments' are the best way to learn. Of course, some will work well and others not so well.

Jorge first held worship and fellowship gatherings on several Friday evenings. But when participation proved to be very limited, he ended that experiment. After talking with those who had participated, as well as others, he concluded that too many families had other activities on



Friday nights.

For the past few weeks Jorge has held similar gatherings on Wednesday evenings. The initial response has been encouraging, with six to ten participants each time. Over the next few weeks we will learn whether participation holds steady and grows.

One other development is very encouraging. **Six Latino residents of North Central San Mateo have agreed to become part of a core group** to work with Jorge in planning activities oriented to the Latino community and inviting others to participate. We believe that the emergence of such a core group is a major step forward for a project like this.

Unfortunately, four of those six people received eviction notices immediately after the failure of Measure Q, the rent-control proposal, in the November 8 election. Most of them have been told to vacate the day after Christmas. Consequently, we do not yet know whether they will be able to continue living in San Mateo and participating in the project. Most of all, we are concerned about these neighbors, and Jorge and others are trying to help. But if several end up leaving the area, it will set back the project significantly.

—*Latino Ministry Team (Sandra Soto-Grondona, Cristina Summerville, Valerie Wong, Betsy Woodward, Mike Mullery, Julien Phillips, Veril Phillips, Javier Ruiz)*

Pick A Party: so how'd we do?

Our 18th annual Pick A Party brought in over \$21,000, which demonstrates continued popularity of this beloved CCSM fundraiser. There were terrific new offerings any many long time favorites. Special thanks to our party hosts -- your generosity is what makes Pick A Party a success year after year.

Some parties still have openings; if interested contact Carol Henton. Near term openings include: **Wizard of Oz Dinner & Movie** on January 7; **Dinner & Deuces** on January 7; **Organ Camp** on January 15; **Game Night & Mexican Dinner** on January 29; **Tea Party for Children** on January 28; and **Super Bowl** on February 5.

Finally, if you have thoughts for how to make Pick A Party even better next year, we are open to your suggestions.

—Jennifer Jacoby-Yeh and Carol Henton

Music & Art

DECEMBER 16 • NOON
AT PAT PEPPER'S HOME
325 WEST BELLEVUE, SAN MATEO

Special Christmas music will be on the program with pianists Bonny Armacost, Mary Ann Notz and Cari Parker. A carol sing-along will follow. Do bring your own sandwich/salad; beverages and dessert are provided. Guests and new members are welcome and should make their reservation by calling Susan Duty, 650-533-6828 or email susanjd52@gmail.com.





Solstice on the Labyrinth

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 7 P.M.
AT THE LABYRINTH**

Join us the night before Winter Solstice for a Solstice Eve gathering by the labyrinth to tune in to the magic and beauty of Winter. For people throughout the ages, from the ancient Egyptians and Celts to the Hopi, midwinter has been a significant time of ritual, reflection and renewal.

Betty Till and Annlee McGurkwill lead us as we co-create and cultivate a deeper connection to nature, the earth and the season by remembering that our lives are part of a larger order, always changing, always renewing. Participants are asked to bring a small object found in nature.

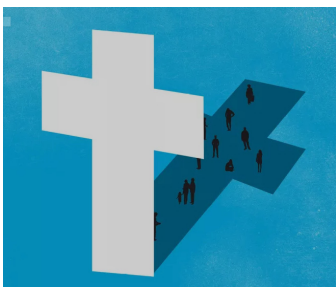
Las Posadas

Our **fourth annual Las Posadas event** will be celebrated this year on **December 23 from 6:30-9pm**. Please join us as we continue the annual celebration of Mary and Joseph's search for lodging. Last year we had over 80 people attend the celebration and this year we expect more people to attend, not only from CCSM but also from our neighboring communities. As always, we will have food, drinks, music, and a piñata. All are welcome and keep an eye out for more information, as we get closer to the date.



SPECIAL CCSM FORUM WITH REV. DEB LEE: The New Sanctuary Movement

JANUARY 8 • NOON IN THE BUCKHAM ROOM



Rev Deb Lee will lead an informational session on the new sanctuary movement that is growing in the Bay Area. She will answer

questions about what sanctuary means and why it is particularly important right now for houses of faith to consider their role in welcoming the stranger.

The Rev. Deborah Lee is the Program Director of the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity, which believes that every person is sacred across all borders and works to inspire faith communities to shape public policy, and actively engage in solidarity and accompaniment of immigrant communities. Growing out of the long-standing work of the Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights, Deborah continues to educate and organize faith communities to respond with solidarity to the urgent and long-term transformational work to treat all people with fairness and dignity regardless of national origin and immigration status. She is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ.

Peace Village Unity Murals

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8 • 2:00 - 4:00 PM

PENINSULA TEMPLE BETH EL
1700 ALAMEDA DE LAS PULGAS, SAN MATEO

After last summer's Peace Village camp, many expressed an interest in expanding the program, adding events throughout the year. Therefore, we are happy to announce our multifaith mural painting event on Sunday afternoon, January 8. Participants of all ages will paint large canvas murals they can bring to their home congregations — celebrating religious and ethnic diversity, friendship, peace-making, and healing of our planet.

Open to adults and youth of all congregations affiliated with Peace Village and Peninsula Multifaith Coalition.

RSVP to facilitator and art educator Nancy Gittleman, GittlemanN@gmail.com, by January 2, 2017 (feel free to contact Nancy with any questions).



Click to play video (tinyurl.com/peace-vil-video)

Please send your name, number attending, and affiliated congregation.

A donation of \$5 is suggested for materials, at the event (no one turned away).

Come! Wear clothes that are okay to get paint on. Have fun meeting friends of other faiths and traditions, as we build positive community together through art.

Invitation to join the Peace Village Team

At this time of year, San Mateo Peace Village starts preparing for next summer's camp and other projects throughout the year. The heart, energy and spirit of Peace Village has always been our wonderful partner congregations, staff, campers and parents! We invite you to join the Peace Village team at any suitable level, from volunteering to leadership. To discuss your interests, contact us at: olga@villagerelations.com or Raj Rambob at raj@villagerelations.com

With friendship and warmest regards,

Olga and John Poole

Peace Village Partners: Congregational Church of San Mateo, Peninsula Sinai Congregation, Yaseen Foundation, Muslim Children's Garden School, Peninsula Temple Beth El, San Mateo Buddhist Temple; instructors from other bay area faith groups. Together we promote appreciation of our diversity and common values, and teach peace-making skills in our community.

Videos: a San Mateo Peace Village program: <http://tinyurl.com/peace-vil-video>

Explore other Peace Village programs worldwide: peacevillageinc.org/peace-village



Companion Ministry 2017

In 2017 CCSM is starting a new visiting ministry. If **you would like rides** to or from church on Sunday because you don't drive anymore, or a regular **visit at home** from someone at church to keep you up on the latest church news, please contact Rev. Dakota Brown, 415-244-3696 or call the church office at (650) 343-3694 for information. Your church family wants to stay connected to you.

Poinsettia Time!

Poinsettia Delivery is Sunday, December 18. Please join in this fun church tradition of delivering poinsettias to church members who live near you. After service go to Kloss Hall and pick up a Christmas poinsettia and get instructions for how to deliver it. Fun and easy!



Wise & Wonderful Ones



*All things bright and beautiful, All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful, The Lord God made them all.*
(Cecil Frances Alexander)

In the New Year we have much Fun and Fellowship planned.

JANUARY 11, 10:30-12 AT CCSM

Let's start the new year with what to put in our emergency kits and about organizing important papers.

JANUARY 25, 10:30-12, BUCKHAM ROOM

Soup and sandwich lunch and board games.

COMING UP IN 2017: W&W PROGRAMMING

Most months we meet the **2nd and 4th Wednesdays** with occasional exceptions. Upcoming workshops and speakers include:

- Aging well: making your home fall-proof
- Advanced directive workshop
- Don't fall for computer scams
- How to better use your computer: questions and answers
- Fitness: getting and staying active; exercise while sitting down
- Yoga for wise ones
- Understand community services available to you before you need them, like Meals on Wheels or ride share services
- Watch and discuss movies about faith
- Build a legacy project with stories / photos for families

CHURCH GROUP OUTINGS

- ◆ See a matinee at San Mateo Performing Arts Center
- ◆ Gather in lunch groups
- ◆ Get our flu and pneumonia shots. HOORAY! Shots day!
- ◆ Go to the MOMA Museum in San Francisco on a guided tour with a docent
- ◆ Visit Peninsula Museum of Art in Burlingame
- ◆ Visit the San Mateo County History Museum
- ◆ In June, go to the San Mateo County Fair
- ◆ In September, attend Belmont Greek Festival at Church of the Holy Cross in Belmont
- ◆ Go to the beach and have lunch

Contact: Rev. Dakota Brown,
dbrown@ccsm-ucc.org
or 415-244-3696

Learning and Growing



By Joliene
Wade Gatlin

As I start wrapping up my third semester as PSR Intern at CCSM, I am so grateful for the opportunities for learning, growth, and connection that I have as a part of this

community. This has been a busy semester for me as I have started working on more pastoral care and have been given opportunities to serve and create in different ways. It has been such a privilege to get to know some of this community through pastoral care. I feel so grateful to be welcomed into homes and hearts as I get to know folks in this large community. Getting to know people at such different places in life has continued to impress upon me how caring and big-hearted people at CCSM are. In our struggles, our diversities, and despite the varying challenges each of us faces,

I see the divine reflected in each of us and in our struggles toward better lives and a better world.

This past month has given me many opportunities to help lead and comfort. In the wake of such a divisive election, I was proud of CCSM for offering a prayer vigil that I was grateful to help lead. It was a powerful evening in which we opened our space to the community for prayer. It was inspiring and needed; I was lifted up by seeing how people at CCSM and beyond came together to support each other and reach toward spirit at a time when this nation needs so much healing. I saw us come together and begin that work. I was also blessed to gather with the young women at this church during worship after the election to talk about the many feelings and concerns that our youth are experiencing. Their wisdom and big hearts were inspiring and give me great hope for our future. Talking with them and hearing how young people have experienced this election also helped me to better understand how important it is that we continue to have important and sensitive conversations that can feel uncomfortable. What happens in politics affects our youth, especially when language around our diversities has been so

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Joys and Concerns

CCSM Pastoral Care Team

Please share your prayers with the pastoral care team: Rev. Dr. Penny Nixon, Rev. Jorge Bautista, Rev. Dakota Brown, and Intern Joliene Wade Gatlin. You are invited to share your prayers, your hopes, and your lives. You may connect with us in the following ways:

- in person,
- by filling out a blue prayer card at Sunday service,
- by filling out a ccsm-ucc.org/MyCCSM online prayer request,
- by contacting us via staff emails listed in your bulletin, the website, or the Pine Tree newsletter.

You may also contact the church office or email Dakota at dbrown@ccsm-ucc.org or call 415-244-3696 if you need support during the week, and Dakota will make sure one of the pastors contacts you as soon as possible.

SPECIAL BIRTHDAYS

Marjorie Griffin turned 93 on **December 14**. **Jim Ingwersen** turns 91 on **December 15**. **George Kromhout** turns 99 on **December 16**. **Arnold Duncan** turns 90 on **December 29**. **June Schutte** turns 96 on **January 6**. **Mary D'Anna** turns 95 on **January 18**. We wish them all happy birthdays and a happy new year!

PRAYERS FOR THE WORLD

God of hope, who brought love into this world, be the love that dwells between us.
God of hope, who brought peace into this world, be the peace that dwells between us.
God of hope, who brought joy into this world, be the joy that dwells between us.
God of hope, the rock we stand upon, be the center, the focus of our lives always, and particularly this time of Epiphany.

PRAYERS OF JOY

Prayers of gratitude and joy for all the many voices in the choir and for the musicians that lead us. You are truly a blessing to our ears and hearts each week.

Prayer of congratulations to **Deb and Len Flaherty** who celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary.

Prayers of joy that **Pico Soriano** joined us for church recently. We are joyful for his life and pray for his continued recovery.

Prayers of gratitude for **Linda Hodges** that she has found permanent housing. We wish her a great new year in her new home.

PRAYERS OF COMFORT

Lorraine Gustafson's daughter called to let us know that Lorraine died on Sept. 8, 2016, at age 102. We hadn't been in touch with Lorraine for awhile as she had moved to Novato. She was a long-time member of CCSM, having joined in 1953, and was involved in Women's Fellowship

for many years. Lorraine passed away peacefully after a long battle with Alzheimer's. Please keep her loved ones in your prayers.

A service in celebration of the life of our friend **Harry Dehlinger** was held on December 10 at CCSM. Harry passed away November 12, 2016 at Mills Peninsula Hospital. His loving wife **Olga-Barbra** and youngest son Michael were at his bedside. We send our love and prayers to Olga-Barbra and to their son **Steve Dehlinger**, daughter-in-law **Kate Dopheide**, and son **Michael Dehlinger**. Please call or visit Olga-Barbra to offer support.

PRAYERS OF HEALING AND SUPPORT

Prayers for healing, pain relief, and recovery for **Todd Bower**, who will be having back surgery on Dec. 20 after being in a lot of pain. The doctors believe he has an inflamed nerve next to a bone spur near his spine. He will return home the same day as his surgery.

Prayers for **Elaine** (friend of **Angela Lee**). Elaine is asking for more prayers during her fourth chemotherapy. We pray for that everything will go smoothly and for her body to receive the medicine without side effects.

Prayers for **David Bior Kur**, a young man from South Sudan who grew up in a refugee camp for 13 years. Over the past ten years, David has expressed his extreme gratitude for prayers and financial assistance from CCSM that enabled him to get a high school education in Uganda, followed by a 2 ½ year course in the petroleum industry. David gets very little to eat each day—a cup of tea for breakfast, no lunch and a very small amount for dinner.

Please pray for **Kay Harris'** nephew **Eric Selindh** in Denver. He has a blood clot close to the femoral artery. He is stable and will have some surgeries to clean the arteries. He came through the first surgery well.

Prayers for our beloved **Betsy Woodward** who suffered a stroke recently and is in a rehab facility in Vallejo. She is in intense rehab therapy three times a day. Right now, no meals are needed. **Phil** is in Vallejo most of the time and handling a lot of details. Please hold him in your prayers as well. Once she is home, meals will be

ADVENT REFLECTION

This Advent our theme was “God in the Stillness.” Each week we enjoyed beautiful and inspirational music from our Bell Choir, our Chancel Choir and the CCSM Chamber Singers. This has been my favorite and most meaningful Advent at CCSM. The stillness is just what we needed and we as a community have been able to stop and reflect together in the midst of a tumultuous time. I hope you found this season meaningful. We will conclude with our theme on Christmas eve as we experience the stillness of the holiest night of all. —Penny



JOYS AND CONCERNS, CONT.

organized.

To date Betsy has received over 110 cards and flowers from family, friends, and members of the congregation. “Each one is heartfelt and brings tears to our eyes as we read the words of support and encouragement. We appreciate them more than you can know. It is hard to describe the love that we feel from this incredible community.” Betsy is improving and will return home on Thursday, December 15. Betsy’s dear friend, **Kay Harris**, has kindly agreed to answer questions and give you any updates. Her email is communications@me.com

Prayers for **Trudy Duncan** who had surgery in San Francisco. Prayers are requested for healing and a quick recovery.

Drew Henry’s mother, **Ann**, has been suffering from Alzheimer’s for the last few years and is entering the final phases of this terrible disease. She has been a member of San Jose Friends Meeting for decades and, consistent with her pacifism, a sign-carrying protester of every war or military action since Vietnam. Please be holding Ann and her loved ones in prayer as they approach this significant transition together.

Prayers of healing for the father of **Lorna Groundwater’s** beloved son-in-law. We pray for his immediate healing.

Continued prayers for **Mark’s** healing, friend of **Judy Hemmer**. We pray that Mark’s cancer will leave his body. We believe in your capacity for miracles, and ask for this on his behalf.

Prayers for **Jill Carson**. God give her the wisdom she seeks to explain the world to the smart beautiful children she helps at Homework Central. May her time with them provide them and their families a safe and loving place to learn and build community.

Prayers for **Everly, Genel Morgan’s** cousin’s little girl. She is a fighter but needs prayers for continued healing. We pray for her healing and for her family.

CONTINUED PRAYERS OF LOVE AND HEALING

Please pray into the new year for **Donna Stanger** (mother of **Dawn Graves**), **Janice Kennedy** (cousin of **Margaret and Gordon Smith**), **Bill Daniels**, and others as they walk their unique journeys with cancer.

Continuing love and prayers for **David Long, Lee Shaffer** (**Dottie Scott’s** grandson), **Mike** (friend of **Sandee Schlickman**), **Sheri** (sister of **Dawn Graves**), **Travis Woodmansee, Jim Groundwater, Anne McEntee, Ruth Black, Marjorie Griffin, Cathy Latta, Martha Grannis, Martha Imai, George Kromhout, Phyllis Mead, Adrienne Mitchell, Genevieve and John Parsons, Fred Petri, Janet Smith Roberts** (sister of **Gordon Smith**), and **June Schutte**.

LEARNING AND GROWING (cont. from p. 9)

divisive and hurtful to many of us. While they may not be able to vote yet, I am strengthened by how mature, supportive, and caring the young women in our church are.

While I have been gifted by my time with our young women, I am also lifted up by my first opportunity to minister to a very different moment in life. I was blessed to be able to create and officiate at a memorial service for a wonderful family whose mother attended CCSM for a time as she was able. Getting to know her, her life, and her family helped me to place these transitional times in a larger perspective. Crafting a service for her family impressed upon me how weaving the spirit into our lives helps sustain the work we do in the world. It has helped sustain many of the long, important, service-filled lives that have gone before us and continue to inspire our work. The small, private moments I am able to spend with people, coupled with the moments I am able to help lead larger groups of us, show me how God is active in our lives in large and small ways-- among the youngest and oldest members of this community and beyond it. I feel so blessed to be part of weaving the fabric of our community-- the fabric that warms us and holds us together in difficult times and is woven larger each day to grow our circles of compassion wider.

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Office Closed DEC. 26 - JAN. 2

If you have an urgent pastoral need, call the church office and go to Dakota's, Jorge's, or Penny's voicemail and your message will be forwarded to the pastor currently available.

Mark Your Calendar!

Congregational Meeting after worship
Sunday, January 29, 2017



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CCSM PINE TREE

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of the Congregational Church of San Mateo, UCC

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"The Nativity" by Brian Kershnik

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Can you believe that Christmas falls on a Sunday? Once the packages are opened, if you are still standing, **come on to church for a special family service.** Then you can go back home to the mess of paper and task of preparing dinner. Wouldn't it be wonderful to take a break in the excitement of the day to actually celebrate its real meaning?

STAFF LOVE OFFERING

On Christmas eve, you will have an opportunity to give a special offering to the staff as a thank you for their hard work this year. There will be envelopes for that purpose. If you are away on Christmas, you can always send in something ahead of time and mark it as staff love offering.