

# CCSM PINE TREE

VOL. 69, #4 | SPRING 2020 • ONLINE

*This edition of the Pine Tree will be online only as the Bay Area continues to be on orders to shelter in place as of March 16, 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic; the printing, folding, and mailing team is not able to gather. Obviously, CCSM is not able to host its usual on-site events—not even to gather for worship. However, there is still much going on in the life of the church to share, and there is also good reason to try to capture and archive a bit of this historic time for future generations to ponder.*



## SUNDAY WORSHIP DURING SHELTER IN PLACE

Because we are all sheltering in place, CCSM will not have in-person worship services until further notice. Though we cannot be physically present, beloved community is here for you! Services are broadcast

live on [Facebook](#). You do not need a Facebook account to access CCSM's Facebook page. If you can't join us at 10:30, don't worry! You can watch later; as the services are archived on our [Sermons](#) page, as well as posted on Facebook.

## From Your Moderator

### Greetings, CCSM Members!

I began 2020 with a list of action items as your Moderator. The list included seemingly very important items related to budget, endowment, building improvements (including the possibility of solar), board oversight and development, and, yes, even a senior minister's sabbatical. Nowhere on that list are the following action items:

- **Shelter in place**
- **Adhere to physical distancing guidelines**
- **Flatten the curve**

So, out with the old and in with the new! My new list is quite short and only contains two, bold action items:

- **Support CCSM staff and congregants as we "shelter in place" and protect ourselves and others via "physical distancing measures" in order to "flatten the curve."**
- **Contribute to CCSM's vitality, relevance, agility and flexibility.**

As my "to do" list suggests, CCSM remains as vital and relevant as ever and we are flexing our operational muscles around agility and flexibility. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the herculean efforts by our ministers and



[click to continue to p. 6](#)



[Click to hear Penny's message](#)

## CCSM IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC

Dear beloved community,

I hardly know where to begin because I can't find the words to describe the reality of the last two months. Instead of a long article, I decided to [record a video message](#) since that is the main medium through which I have been communicating with you for the last seven weeks, and I am fairly sure we will continue in this mode far longer than we initially anticipated.

CCSM in the time of **p-a-n-d-e-m-i-c**. Here is what I know to be true. Our **purpose** is unchanging, in fact, we may be clearer about it than ever—to be a voice and presence of progressive Christianity, to deepen beloved community in our care for one another, and to be the hands, feet and (masked) face of God. We are living these priorities out boldly, albeit in different ways now. As **always**, your generosity and care for the most vulnerable has been a shining example of what it means "to be church" in this time. Even though we may have felt discouraged at times, we have **never doubted** that CCSM would weather this pandemic and come through it stronger in ways that we can't even imagine yet. Our **dedicated** staff and lay leadership has been a steady and faithful presence, leading with devotion and love. We have done our best to deliver online services with authenticity and **excellence** (streaming and buffering

[click to continue to p. 2](#)



Congregational  
Church of san mateo

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# FROM JORGE

Dear Sisters and brothers,

First, I miss seeing you all on Sundays and during the week. I miss working from my office at church and enjoying the beautiful tree in our church garden with the squirrels running around. I miss praying in person with many of you. But I know that we are doing the right thing by staying in our homes as much as possible, as challenging as that is for us. And I know that we will overcome this time in our lives and find ourselves breaking bread once again with our loved ones and with one another. Together we will continue to show up for one another, and together we will overcome this crisis.



I want to take this opportunity to share with you some of the challenges our folks from the Wednesday gatherings—Latino and Latina members from CCSM—are experiencing during this time. Let me start by saying that 100% of our sisters and brothers from the Wednesday service

don't have jobs that allow them to work from home, and at the same time, most of them, except for a few, have been let go or laid off from their jobs. Meanwhile, most of them struggle with access to technology, such as their children not having laptops to do their work, not knowing how to access Zoom to stay connected, or no internet at all in their homes, and they don't know who to turn to in order to be informed. Facebook and searching



online don't always provide the best information. Also, the high cost of housing in the Bay Area has kept them in crowded apartments. Some of these are families, and others



are just a group of adults trying to make ends meet living together. Because of that, for many of them it is hard to isolate and quarantine themselves.

Overall, our folks from the Wednesday gatherings are ill-prepared for their battle against the

coronavirus (like many of us are in different ways and for different reasons), a crisis that threatens to leave many of this already vulnerable community sick and destitute. Because of a combination of factors, including working in

# CCSM IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC

(cont. from p. 1)

issues aside). We are cherishing more than ever our gathered community and we dearly **miss** being in each other's physical presence. We have learned at a cellular level that there is no such thing as an individual because we are **interconnected** and our well-being is inextricably linked to each other. Even though we are practicing physical distance, we remain **connected** to one another, and that connection is the greatest gift we can offer each other.

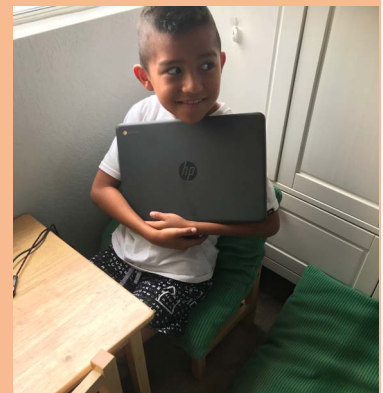
Penny



low-paying frontline jobs and a lack of savings and health insurance, Latinos are shouldering a disproportionate burden of the pandemic. Finally, because they are migrants and not documented, they aren't seeing a penny of the stimulus checks many of us are receiving, so many of them have shared with me that

they are looking for any work, even if there really isn't anything out there right now. The majority of these families are flat-out poor, working-class at best, and while they are strong and resilient people, something has to change.

Thankfully, CCSM's assistance fund has alleviated some of the concerns about the coronavirus crisis for the members of CCSM who attend the Wednesday gatherings, such as providing chromebooks



to some of the children who didn't have them so they can now do their homework. We have been able to provide a desk to one of the children who was doing her homework on her bed and on the floor. Now she has her own desk! And Safeway gift cards have allowed most of the families not to worry if they are going to have enough groceries to feed their families. I am grateful that CCSM is able to help reduce some of the anxiety and panic this crisis is bringing to many of our families from the Wednesday gatherings. They feel loved and seen, and most important, not forgotten. May we continue to be a light in each other's lives.

Peace and blessings!

Jorge

## youth news...

by Sheryl Johnson

During this strange season, I have been so moved by the way that our church community has really come together and is adapting so quickly to new ways of being and connecting! This has been a particularly challenging time for many of our families, as parents are either working from home, out of work, or must still go to work—all while kids are home. The way that families are adapting and supporting one another in this difficult time is inspiring.

In terms of children's programming, **we are staying connected with kids in a variety of ways.** Lily Gonzales has been mailing lovely cards and coloring sheets to preschoolers. Shannon McEntee is offering Godly Play via Zoom to kids of any age, and that has been working quite well! It is wonderfully grounding to see familiar faces and hear Bible stories about Jesus' life and ministry. Libby Barnard has also been offering Kids' Liturgical Arts—sometimes recording videos and sharing activities with parents and at other times having Zoom gatherings for kids. It has been so touching to hear about the kids' thoughts, reflections, and worries at this time. Many are expressing appreciation for school in ways that are surprising even to them!

**Other offerings for kids have included both evening and daytime gatherings** for stories and prayer with me, lots of e-mails to families with **suggestions of things to do and faith formation activities**, including a "Holy Week at Home" guide with an activity, Bible reading, and **discussion questions for each day.** Colleen Castillo has prepared activities for Wednesday families and is also mailing packages to all of our Wednesday kids with fun things they can do. I have also mailed out Easter cards and some other resources. On the Saturday before Easter, we hosted a kids' Easter celebration with a focus on celebrating new life in this strange season and the joys and blessings this time can bring. On the whole, it has been a wonderful chance to connect with different kids (as some now have a lot more free time than usual!) and in different ways.

For youth, we have also been experimenting with **new and different ways to gather.** We have primarily been focusing on having a **social gathering every Friday night and a discussion time after church every Sunday.** Some social activities have included playing games online, watching a movie together through NetflixParty, and going on a scavenger hunt for items around our homes that match different descriptions! Our conversations have also been rich with lots of time to make connections between the season of Lent and what we are experiencing with sheltering in place, connections like feeling disoriented, scared, uncertain, contemplating mortality, and missing our friends. It has also been a life-giving time with the chance to spend time with family, learn new skills, and think about who we are outside of our usual patterns of activities. We have been trying to gather youth who attend on both Wednesdays and Sundays particularly for our social activities, and that is another blessing that this time is offering. Bill Dunbar, Dave Olson, and Laura Keating are

offering excellent leadership and support.

For parents, Kibbie Ruth has been reaching out in particular to find ways to **support parents in this time as they experience challenges**—particularly to homeschool and support their kids' education. I have also been in touch with a number of parents, looking to find good resources that can help ease the burden and connect parents so they know they are not alone.

On the whole, our approach so far has been to try multiple and diverse strategies: online gatherings, do-at-your-own-pace activities, postal mail packages, one-on-one check-ins, and more. I put out a survey early in this time to learn how best to support families and got really varied responses; it seems that different families are really looking for different things. Some are trying to limit screen time, while others really appreciate the chance to get something else done while their kids participate in a program online. Some kids have a lot of school work to do, others have a lot of free time. So it has been an experiment, but a life-giving one. It has been a blessing to connect deeply with many families and to really hear what they are going through and how they are making sense of everything; how they are struggling to be both honest with their kids but also hopeful and age-appropriate.

As we look to summer, it is difficult to know for certain what that time will bring or how our programming will be impacted. But I know from what we have experienced so far that our families and our leaders are creative, resourceful, and resilient. New life and new patterns of being and relating are emerging, and many of them are very hopeful. A lot of learning about Sabbath, living more locally, connecting with family, and focusing on what really matters. So what a gift, in some ways, this experience has been—even as it is also very challenging and difficult.

— Sheryl



*what sheltering in place feels like sometimes...*

## MUSIC TO SOOTHE THE SOUL

by Lynnelle Bilsey, Director of Music

I know many of you have been inspired, lifted and energized by the wonderful music both Angela and Melanie are providing during our Shelter in Place (SIP) restrictions and physical distancing protocols. I want to start with a HUGE SHOUT OUT to both of these musicians for their fantastic musicmaking under difficult circumstances which they are providing for our faith community. Their selections have been perfect and their music is touching so many hearts as I can attest, during our streaming services on Wednesdays and Sundays, Facebook postings, comments/sharings and responses to my "Song of the Day" emails which have featured their artistry. Your comments and responses to their music are very meaningful to them and they love hearing from you. When you've responded to me, I've shared that with them as well.

The music of our lives has changed in that what we're so accustomed to experiencing as a church family is not pos-



Melanie Dresbach singing "All of My Days"

sible now. I miss the sounds and vibrations of the organ music which begin and end church in a very physical way; working with our musical ensembles and just the pure joy of making music.

I know many of you have shared how much you miss singing and hearing music in person – whether it's the choir, the ensembles or just being in the

community when singing a hymn or a song. Something special happens when we make music together and the sounds of music wash over us in vibrating waves. For me, the yearning for music has actually grown now that I'm living in a time when it's difficult (but not impossible) to do. The blessing of music for many of us has become more meaningful. We find comfort in some pieces; we can allow our feelings to be fully experienced in others. We may have our hearts and our spirits lifted by some, and others tickle our funnybone, or bring an unexpected smile. When Rev. Penny said "sing out" on Easter Sunday, those

**When Rev. Penny said "sing out" on Easter Sunday, those were just the words I needed to hear...**



Angela Kraft Cross playing her composition "St. Bede's Voluntary"

we were just the words I needed to hear... I opened my patio door, cranked up Melanie's intro to the hymn and sang in full voice to my lagoon. I was expecting someone to slam a door or window loudly, but I didn't care – it was Easter morning and it felt great to sing out loud! The funny thing was no one did... whether folks in my complex could hear me or not I have no idea, but it was super quiet as far as human activity goes. Who I ended up singing to while the service was happening though were about seven little finches who came onto my patio, and a bunch of ducks and birds in the lagoon who meandered closer to my open door. I hadn't quite embraced the adage "Sing like you think no one's listening" before... it is really empowering.

**Moving forward – here are a few ways I invite you to be in community through music:**

**SONG OF THE DAY:** I started several weeks ago sending out a "song of the day" email first to just choir, then bells and choir, then Penny listed it on one of her email blasts, so several folks from CCSM joined my email group and it's continued to grow. If you would like to join my email group (I send these out 'bcc' to protect people's privacy) please send me an email at: [ltbmusings@gmail.com](mailto:ltbmusings@gmail.com) and I will add you to the group.

**SONG OF THE DAY POSTING:** In addition, a musical "song of the day" posting is being created, so if you've missed any, you can check out the previous selections. I try to mix these up: some days are about comfort, relaxation

and release, others are spiritual in nature, some are joyful and on occasion, some will make you smile. I try to change around different styles as well – so hopefully every week there is a little something for every taste from classical to contemporary and a little of everything in between. Check out

the posts at [tinyurl.com/Songs-of-the-Day](https://tinyurl.com/Songs-of-the-Day).

**FAITH IN FILM PROJECT:** I am starting a weekly movie group while we are experiencing SIP. I have selected a few films to get us started which a number of folks have told me they hadn't seen. They are spiritual in nature, but not heavy handed... smaller films that didn't get a wide release, but that will touch your hearts and, I think, inspire some interesting conversations. Here's how it will work:

—cont. on next page—

## FAITH IN FILM PROJECT CONT.

• Sometime in the next week stream the movie at your convenience for discussion. You know me – there will be some conversation about the music in the film as well as the general film itself!

• Join me for a Zoom meeting (listed below) for a conversation about the film. Note – Zoom is a free online video conferencing platform. You can also call into the meeting if you are not comfortable on the computer. No Zoom account is necessary to participate.

**WEEK 1: MILLIONS (2004)** Available on YouTube, Amazon Prime, Google Play, Disney+ and others

**Discussion date:** Saturday, 5/2, 1:30 pm.

**Zoom Link:** [Click here](#) (also will be sent in Penny's Connections email)

**Summary:** When 9-year-old Damian (Alex Etel) finds a bag of money in his back yard, he and his brother Anthony (Lewis Owen McGibbon) decide to try to spend it without telling their father (James Nesbitt). Seeking advice from the imaginary saints with whom he converses, Damian struggles with his own morality, and attempts to spend his money in a more altruistic way. News of the mysterious loot inevitably attracts attention, however, and Damian is faced with an increasingly hairy situation.

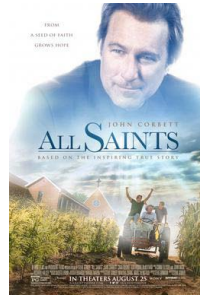


**WEEK 2: ALL SAINTS (2017)** Available on YouTube, Amazon Prime & Google Play

**Discussion date:** Sat., 5/9, 1:30 pm

**Zoom Link:** [Click here](#) (also will be sent in Penny's Connections email)

**Summary:** Michael Spurlock (John Corbett) decides to trade in his corporate sales career to become a pastor. Unfortunately, his first assignment is to close a country church and sell the prime piece of land where it sits. He soon has a change of heart when the church starts to welcome refugees from Burma. Spurlock now finds himself working with the refugees to turn the land into a working farm to pay the church's bills. Based on a true story and filmed on location at the church where this took place.



## WEEK 3: AMAZING GRACE (2006)

Available on YouTube, Google Play, Hulu, Amazon Prime and others



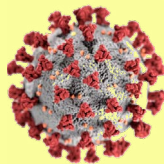
**Discussion date:** Sat., 5/16, 1:30 pm

**Zoom Link:** [Click here](#) (also will be sent in Penny's Connections email)

**Summary:** In 18th-century England, House of Commons member William Wilberforce (Ioan Gruffudd) and his close friend and a future prime minister, William Pitt (Benedict Cumberbatch), begin a lengthy battle to abolish Great Britain's slave trade. Though Wilberforce's legislation is soundly defeated in 1791, his growing affection for Barbara Spooner (Romola Garai) inspires him to take up the fight once more. The title is a reference to the hymn "Amazing Grace". The film also recounts the experiences of John Newton as a crewman on a slave ship and subsequent religious conversion, which inspired his writing of the poem later used in the hymn. Newton is portrayed as a major influence on Wilberforce and the abolition movement.

### WHAT'S GOING ON OUT THERE?

What's going on out there?  
One single sneeze,  
And people will stare!  
Stay at home I must,  
For that is mandatory,  
But what about my inventory?  
Toilet paper cleared off the shelves,  
people only care for themselves.  
All these panicked buyers  
Don't you think that's enough?  
Use that up before it expires!  
We must stay inside,  
It's only for the best,  
What makes you so different from the rest?  
How dirty your hands can be,  
With all sorts of bacteria that you can't even see!  
Empty streets and silent days,  
Just glad we don't have to write any essays.  
We really need to find a vaccine.  
We're coming for you, Covid-19!



Written by Vy Tran  
Melanie Dresbach's 7th grade student, Stonegate School

### CALL US!

Did you know that you can still call the Church Office at 650-343-3694?

All calls to that number are directly forwarded to Chase Montara, Director of Operations. If you have a need, a question, or just need to chat, please do not hesitate to call!



## From Your Moderator (cont. from p. 1)

staff. I could write a very long paragraph for each minister and every staff member who continues to demonstrate, individually and collectively, extraordinary agility and flexibility. On behalf of the entire board and various board committees, I offer our heartfelt appreciation and deep gratitude to our ministers and staff as they pivot in reaction to new challenges and overcome technological hurdles. Do me a favor and reach out to them and offer encouragement and support.

As I have been working at home and sheltering in place, I must admit that I've spent more than my fair share of time on social media. Commonplace on these platforms, of course, is the ubiquitous "meme". My favorite meme (and there have been many) thus far during this crisis is:

### **"The church is not empty, just deployed."**

I strongly agree. Our pews may be empty, but, rest assured, CCSM is fully deployed.

Your board of directors continues to stay connected and remains committed to supporting not only our staff members but the peninsula community in which we all serve. I am so very proud to serve as your moderator during these difficult times.

We keep hearing the terms "unprecedented" and "uncharted waters" with respect to our current circumstances, and while I can certainly agree with the sentiments, I must remind myself that there is precedent. These waters have been charted. I asked our church historian, Anne Fuller, to dig into our church archives and see if she could discover any documentation pertaining to the 1918 influenza epidemic. I couldn't help but picture her dressed up as Indiana Jones as she pored through decades of dusty church records (yes, my active imagination has not diminished). Here are a few of the highlights from her expedition:

- In CCSM's "Church School Financial Records 1915-1941" there is a small line item in red lettering next to one of the 1918 entries that notes "Schools closed October 20 to November 17 inclusive on account of Spanish Influenza."
- CCSM's teachers kept minutes consistently every month, starting in 1915; however, there is a gap that coincides with the influenza epidemic. More specifically, the final minutes of 1918 (October 8) contained no mention of anything out of the ordinary. Minutes resumed in 1919 (March) with no explanation of absence.

Even with such little information, we can, perhaps, deduce that there was some form of "sheltering in place" with similar "social distancing measures" by CCSM leaders that resulted in the school (and church possibly) closing for an extended period of time (NOTE: If there are any members who heard stories from this era, please do share with our historian so she can memorialize such for our records). Although the numbers from 1918-1919 are grim and sobering, we can look to the century-old influenza pandemic to remind us that CCSM has been through this before and persevered. This portends favorably for CCSM of 2020.

I did some digging into local newspaper outlets. From the San Mateo Journal's 2018 reporting on the 100th anniversary of the great flu of 1918, journalist Clifford offers the following:



Failure to wear a mask during the 1918 Spanish influenza pandemic could result in imprisonment and a large fine. —Library of Congress photo

- During one year of the pandemic, the average life expectancy in the U.S. dropped by 12 years
- Bay Area's first reported case was September 4, 1918 and only three weeks later the entire Bay Area was in the midst of a full-fledged epidemic.
- Recordkeeping techniques were marginal, at best, so with that in mind, here are few mortality statistics related to the 1918 influenza epidemic:

World:	50,000,000
United States:	675,000
California:	13,340
Bay Area counties:	6,000
San Mateo County:	131

(Sources: Report of the State Board of Health for 1918; San Francisco Examiner from 1976; December 1918's Journal of the American Medical Association)

To put the above mortality statistics in context, I offer you the following:

- WWI: 16 million deaths around the world (*Wikipedia*)
- AIDS: 659,000 Americans deaths (*Wikipedia*)
- Influenza/pneumonia kills roughly:
  - 6,000 Californians a year (*source: CDC from 2014-2017*)
  - 106 San Mateo County residents a year (*source: CDPH from 2014-2016*)

In conclusion, my dear CCSM friends, we have endured much since our humble beginning in 1864, including the devastating 1918 global pandemic. With your continued support<sup>1</sup> and tenacity, CCSM remains not only extremely vital and relevant, but increasingly more agile and flexible. I predict that we will not quite be the same in 2021 as we were in 2019 and the transformation continues as of this writing; however, I know for certain that not only will we endure and persevere, but we will thrive! What makes me so certain? Because I know this congregation. I know you. We are in this together.

Stay strong.

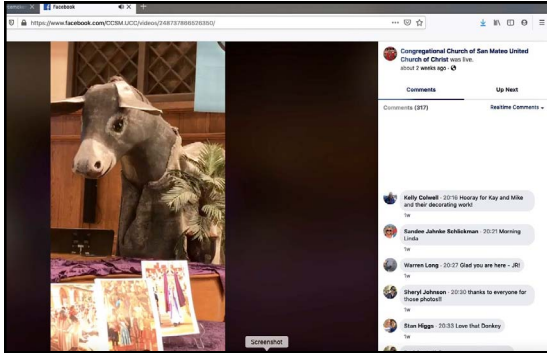
Stay healthy.

Stay home....and wash those hands! ☺

Dave Chandler  
Your Moderator

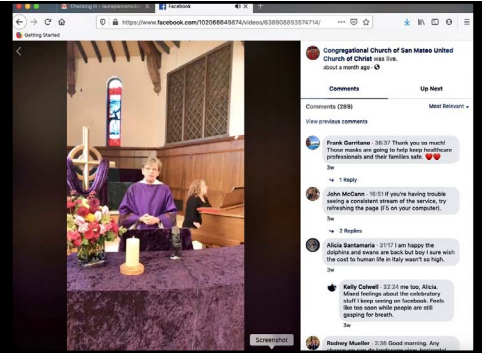
I I'm positive that Treasurer Veril Phillips would like me to emphasize the importance of your continued financial commitment. You can mail in your check, pay by text, or [donate online](#). Please contact Veril if you'd like some helpful tips for giving as we shelter in place.

# PALM SUNDAY DURING SHELTER IN PLACE!



CCSM members waving their palms on Palm Sunday, physically distant and spiritually together!

These palm photos were printed and shared by Penny during the Palm Sunday livestream of the service.



# HOLY WEEK DURING A PANDEMIC...

## DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME TURNED INTO THE TWILIGHT ZONE

by Kay Harris, Liturgical Arts Ministry lead

Lent and Easter are always busy liturgical arts seasons. This year LAM planned a DIY banner workshop and Easter's bodacious floral installation that would be ready to go upon my return from our vacation to Savannah and Charleston. On February 28th, Mike and I left town after properly depleting our paper goods and emptying the refrigerator. We would shop and restock when we returned on March 10. Instead, we returned to the Twilight Zone.

Emails had warned me that church would be different on March 15th. News reports mentioned the hoarding. And there were several awkward phone conversations with Chase when I tried to reschedule Liturgical Arts activities. My mind just couldn't wrap around an ALL CHURCH Lockout. Every day came with a new edict of don'ts.

I wish we had thought to take photos of re-staging the Chancel for Facebook video streaming, but we didn't. Mike worked with Penny on how to handle the sound with a different type of microphone. Everyone involved relocated the organ, piano, cross and the communion table several times. Then the empty choir chairs were draped with dark cloth to provide a backdrop. Eventually our stage came into focus revealing how to use the depth of Facebook's narrow view space.



As we approached the first Facebook service on March 15th we realized that our Liturgical Arts team members were in a "high risk" category. Slowly I realized that I needed to let go of all our plans for Holy Week and Easter and look for opportunities for something unexpected. Maybe even a miracle.

Each week presented a challenge to find ways to visually support Penny's message. As we approached Holy Week, Mike and I were reminiscing over breakfast about CCSM's famous donkey, JR (Jesus's Ride). What if we surprised Penny from behind the organ? Her ears must have been burning. That's when the email pinged requesting palm leaves and perhaps a JR visit. Mike came up with the idea to use a ladder as JR's interior support. We positioned him nodding at Melanie over the piano and the small palm tree in Zoe's office hid the mechanics. Voila! A Palm Sunday surprise for the kids and young at heart. The photo shows us returning JR to his stable over Kloss Hall.



Traditionally for Easter we collect hundreds of calla lilies for our floral bouquets. This year Pam Ridelhuber's pink dogwood was in full bloom and we decided to bring in Spring colors on a traditional white table cloth. Unfortunately, Facebook videos react to white and washed out during transmission. Ouch! For the rest of the Easter season we will use a green tablecloth to facilitate a better viewing experience on Facebook. Lesson learned.

The whole worship team has been coping with the unexpected. Learning new ways to support Penny's efforts to use the sacred space differently and technology tools to keep our faith community connected. It has been challenging and full of surprises. Who knew Annlee was a talented videographer in the making!



**Resurrection Prayers of Praise, Blessing and Celebration**  
Based on PRAISE Song for the Pandemic  
by Christine Valles Painter, *Abbess of the Arts*

**Lord's Prayer**  
Our God (Father, Mother, Creator), who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.  
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,  
for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

**Scripture Response** We Will Rise Again  
We will run and not grow weary for our God will be our strength, and we will fly like the eagle, we will rise a-gain.

**Scripture** John 20:1-18  
**The Resurrection according to the Gospel of John**  
Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they..."

Screenshots from Easter Sunday's livestream

**Congregational Church of San Mateo United Church of Christ** is live now.  
10 minutes ago

Comments

- Sheryl Johnson THANK you for this foretaste of many resurrections to come!
- Linda Skromme Happy Easter Everyone!
- Isabel Stenzel Byrnes Thank you so much for this. I live further away and love this live-streaming. Blessings to you all for this Easter. Lovely message...
- Veril Phillips Yes -- it's good to see you in our "normal" setting. Thanks Penny.
- Replying to Isabel Sheryl Johnson Happy Easter!



## BEING THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

By Kelly Colwell

Hearing about how many grocery gift cards we've been giving out to our community members and neighbors really drove home how differently this pandemic is affecting some people than others. Thanks to all of your generosity and love, I'm still employed—I'm working from home, teaching from home, and Sheryl and I are able to pay our rent and buy our groceries. But there are so many among us who are not so fortunate. There are so many members of our community who are not able to work, who are not able to continue meeting their needs. This is what being members of one body means: I recognize that it's no fault of someone else's if they need help right now, and I believe that we all belong to each other. That's why it was so frustrating this week to see the stimulus checks begin to appear for people. Although I'm glad the government is doing something, I recognize that for some people, that \$1200 is too little to make a dent in supporting a family through a period with no income, while for others like me, my income has changed a little but not enough to put me at risk. I wish we could have planned to do something more equitable as a nation, but although I can't make that happen, I can do something with what I have. That's why Sheryl and I have decided to give our stimulus money to CCSM's assistance fund, to be given to those in need in this time. We don't need it as much as others do, and we want to participate in the kind of beloved community where we give according to our ability and receive according to our needs.

For some of us, that stimulus money is going to be an essential part of what gets us through this challenging period of instability. But for others, like me, it's not essential. If you're still employed, able to work from home, or still receiving the same retirement benefits you were before, I invite you to join me. Would you prayerfully consider giving your stimulus funds to the assistance fund so we can continue to support those of our members and neighbors who need our help? If you have extra, or if your income is high enough that you won't receive the stimulus funding, I invite you to consider donating some portion of your income to the assistance fund. What would it feel like to donate a day's wages to the fund? A week's wages? Let's commit to getting through this as a beloved community, taking care of those in need, in recognition of all the gifts we've been given. Thank you for being church together and by showing me what a church can do.



## IT'S SCHOLARSHIP TIME!



Once again, CCSM is privileged to support the post-secondary education of those in our community! We offer scholarships for graduating 12th graders as well as graduate school students. The amount of the scholarships will depend on the applications received. **The application deadline is May 1, 2020.**

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Warren Long (longlake15@sbcglobal.net).

Download information below.

[CCSM Scholarship program 2020](#)  
[Bullis-Graduate-School-Scholarship-2020](#)



Sawyer with his basket after the at-home Easter scavenger hunt

# THE FACE MASK BRIGADE

by Chase Montara



It started with a simple email on March 19, 2020 from Betty Till. Betty forwarded an article from the Courier and Press about people sewing face masks for health care workers and others at risk of contracting the corona virus. Like me, Betty is not a seamstress and she was going to ask one of her daughters to sew some masks for her. But she wondered if the Blanketeers would like to consider taking on such a project.

The rest, to be honest, is a bit of a blur to me. Those first few weeks, after the church office closed and I was making the transition to working from home, were challenging. I felt as though I had just made the long, slow climb up the learning curve in my new role as Director of Operations, like I was really starting to get the hang of things. Then, as if playing a game of Chutes and Ladders, I slid back down to the bottom of the learning curve as I tried to reconstruct the church office in my tiny home in Half Moon Bay. During those first days of sheltering in place, I contacted Lani Leydig to see if she knew of any seamstresses I could contact.

And now, the Face Mask Brigade has grown to 20 women, including Rosemarie Pero, Lorna Groundwater, Christine Grabow, Candace Nagare, Genel Morgan, Susan Campo, Linda Brockett, Natalia Tsoi, Diane Musgrave, Linda Skromme, Kayte Bishop, Carolyn Kiely, Mary Anne McKay, and Jennifer Jacoby-Yeh. And thanks to Brigade member Jane Hazlett, we have two women joining us from the College Heights UCC church, Sammi Wartmann and Susan Hasse. Together, this fine group has already made more than 200 masks that have been distributed to health care workers in and around San Mateo. Penny has also handed out masks to church members who, due to age or health conditions, are at risk. To maintain the required distance, anyone wanting a mask knocks on Penny's office window and she comes out and places a mask on a chair, where it is retrieved. It's a strangely "speakeasy"-type operation. But what is not strange during this time?



Our masks have also been delivered to the farmworkers in Pescadero via Puente Community Resource Center. We will be doing outreach to skilled nursing facilities, hospitals and dialysis centers to see if they need this type of protective equipment. The Face Mask Brigade has had to be very resourceful—much of the materials needed to make masks were not available as all over the country people scrambled to meet the needs of front-line workers in this grassroots way. When someone lays their hands on a spool of elastic band, a collective cheer can be heard around San Mateo. One intrepid member even cut open a bungee cord to see if the elastic inside could be scavenged for the ear pieces. At times these circumstances conjured the civilian war efforts of World War II.

One of our members, Natalia Tsoi, did not know how to sew when she asked to join the group. I dropped some fabric, pins and needles at her home, and she got busy and taught herself by watching youtube videos and sewed her first masks by hand (see Natalia's wonderful article). Soon, she had purchased her own sewing machine and she was off and running. She recently demonstrated for the group her techniques for making a removable filter insert. Genel Morgan has faced many challenges with sewing machines (yes that's plural) breaking down on her mid-mask. But she has persevered and is now in full production. Christine Grabow began making masks the day after being released from the hospital and is busy sewing most every day, in between home-schooling her son. Linda Brockett is our procurement expert.

I hope you can tell I am more than proud of this amazing group of women. We meet weekly on ZOOM to discuss new research on the best styles of masks, to share supplies and needs, and to encourage each other on this journey. And we would love for you to join us! You don't have to be a seamstress, there are many other ways to contribute. It's not just about masks; it is about knowing that when this storm has passed—and it will pass—we can look back and know we have made a difference, and for some, made new friends. And it all started with a simple email.

Find out more at [ccsm-ucc.org/masks](https://ccsm-ucc.org/masks).



# FINANCIAL INFORMATION DURING THE PANDEMIC

## A WORD FROM VERIL PHILLIPS, TREASURER

We are very fortunate to be part of the wonderful community that is CCSM—both in terms of the people and in terms of our finances. This statement holds true even in the face of serious challenges during the current pandemic. This article focuses on our financial position.

I remember telling the Congregation at our meeting in January that 2019 was a great year for CCSM financially. We ended the year with a surplus—our revenue exceeded our expenses by nearly \$60,000. In addition, we had, and continue to have, healthy cash reserves that allow us to weather a fiscal storm. That's the good—NO, call it great—news. But it will come as no surprise that the economic impact of the pandemic has created uncertainties in our finances.

Based on our healthy financial position early in 2020, the Board of Directors agreed to continue the full compensation of all our employees for as long as we are able. This applies to those who are working (mainly from home) more hours than usual as well as to those who have little or no work while the building facility is closed.

In order to remain fiscally prudent, the Finance Committee and the Board are closely monitoring our revenue during this time, knowing that some of our members are not able to contribute as much as they wish because they have suffered severe loss of income during the pandemic. In fact, contributions to our General Fund (whether for pledges or not) during the three-week period ending April 10 fell behind contributions during the same period in 2019 by more than \$28,000. If that rate of lag continues for a long time, we will develop serious fiscal problems. Because of the uncertainties, CCSM applied for a low interest loan under the Payroll Protection Program—part of the \$2.2 trillion stimulus package (the CARES Act) offered to religious organizations and other small businesses by legislation that took effect on March 27. As we were about to publish this edition of the Pine Tree, Boston Private Bank notified us that the bank and the SBA have approved our loan in the amount of \$117,400. Some or all of the loan could become a grant. The two schools renting our facilities have also applied for such a loan.

If you anticipate any challenges in meeting your pledge commitment, you are invited to contact the Bookkeeper, Cheryle Matteo, for a confidential consultation. You may reach her at [cmatteo@ccsm-ucc.org](mailto:cmatteo@ccsm-ucc.org) or by calling the church office.



**How can you help?** If you are one of the fortunate ones who can, please keep up your contributions toward your pledge or make non-pledge contributions to the General Fund. That can be accomplished in any of the following ways:

**WRITE A CHECK:** Put "Pledge" or "General Fund" in the memo line and mail it to the church at 225 Tilton Ave., San Mateo, CA 94401.

**ONLINE:** Direct your web browser to the church website, [ccsm-ucc.org](http://ccsm-ucc.org), click on the word, "Donate," in the upper right corner, scroll down and click on "Give Now," and select "General Budget" as the fund. If you have an account at myCCSM, you will be invited to sign in, but you may continue as guest if you prefer. You will receive an email confirming the gift.

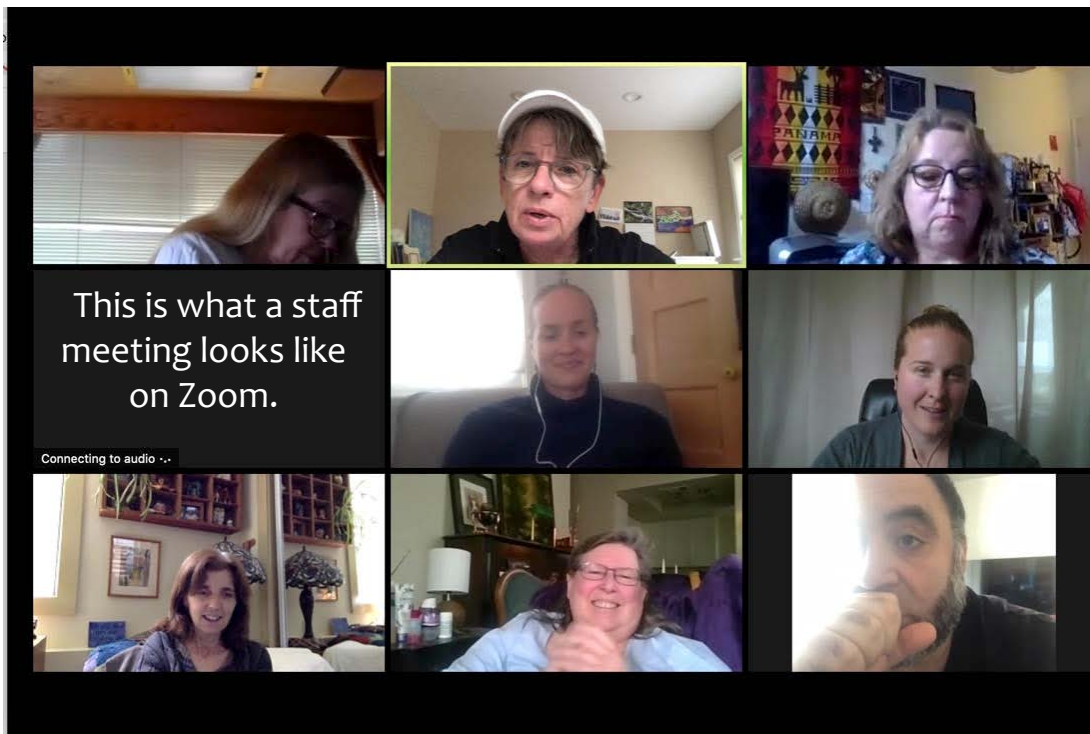
**SEND A TEXT MESSAGE:** Send a message to the "phone number" 73256. The message should say, "CCSM General \$AMOUNT" using whatever amount you wish to give. The first time you give by text you will receive a response to click on, where you provide the information for your bank account or credit card, as well as the amount to contribute. The second time you give to CCSM by text, you will not need to enter this information unless you want to use a different account for the contribution. In all cases, you will receive a text message confirming the gift.

Indeed, CCSM is fortunate in many ways, including our strong financial position. With your help, we can limit the negative impact on our General Fund. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at [veril.phillips@gmail.com](mailto:veril.phillips@gmail.com) or 650-579-4627.

## A SHELTER-IN-PLACE STORY FROM TONY GALLO

We had a gathering in front of our house with appropriate distancing measures taken. One of the neighbors brought some chalk and we had everyone color a few boxes on the sidewalk. The results were quite good!





EVERYTHING is different now. We all keep getting used to "new normals" which continue to be in flux, making newer new normals... meanwhile, the staff at CCSM continues to meet however we can to find ways to serve this community.

## ENERGY, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MINISTRY UPDATE

As people around the world continue to reel, adjust and figure how to live through the coronavirus pandemic, our Earth continues spinning on its axis. And, through physical distancing and the benefits of Zoom, the Ministry of Energy and Environmental Justice continues our mission.

Our solar project team, led by Jim Schwandt and Gene Summerville, continues the complex task of assessing and planning a solar array to produce electric energy at CCSM for meeting the goal of becoming a sustainable congregation without a carbon footprint. As we learn more, we will share project details with the congregation in conjunction with the church leadership on strategy to move forward. We are partnered in this effort with California Interfaith Power and Light, a non-profit faith-based environmental group.

Our solar project funding and congregational engagement team is researching ways to fund the solar project and learn how other UCC congregations are becoming sustainable and "green." If you are interested in creating and participating on a Green Team at CCSM, you are welcome. Contact Warren Long for more information.

The planned "Inconvenient Lent" sermon series and education programs during Second Hour have been on hold as a result of the pandemic, but will resume. We are coordinating with Rev. Penny Nixon and our clergy staff to determine the best timing for regaining our momentum and planning services and programs to educate and inspire us all to be more aware and active about climate change and its implications. Gary White leads that team and offers "food for thought" to think about the parallels between the coronavirus pandemic and the climate change crisis, especially in terms of awareness, the repercussions of delayed action, and implications on society and social justice.



## REFLECTIONS ON COVID-19

By Anne Fuller, CCSM Historian

I am thankful for the online services and those working behind the scenes who make it happen. Thanks to Penny, Annlee, Angela and Melanie whose online presence instills in me a sense of hope and connection.

Perhaps the hardest part of "sheltering in place" is the lack of face to face meeting on Sunday morning. I miss the "passing of peace" moment at the beginning of the service, the children and the choir. Other things currently missing in my CCSM life are the wonderful monthly Music and Art programs that bring the beauty of music and art into our lives. I also

miss the fellowship of the small group that gathered each Friday to prepare the Sunday bulletin.

On the other hand, Lynnelle's song-of-the-day emails have brought me much needed peace. Making regular phone calls to touch base with church members has made me realize the amazing resilience of our members.

Several months ago I agreed to make some wooden candle boxes for the Liturgical Arts committee. Working on them has given me purpose and the "shelter in place" directive gave me the time to do something I love.



# CONNECTING WITH THE CCSM DIASPORA

by Kelly Colwell

One lovely aspect of this time has been connecting with members of what we've started to call the CCSM Diaspora, beloved former members who've moved away. We've had participation on our Virtual Coffee Hour from Seattle, Salt Lake City, Nevada, North Carolina, and even England! Because I'm relatively new, most of these people are new to me—but it's been a joy to meet them and to witness the pleasure of reconnecting among other members of this community. I've also loved seeing people help each other troubleshoot tech issues and talk through problems with sewing machines, parks to walk in, and ways to stay active. I've heard recommendations for chair yoga programs, stores that seem to have better selection, and plumbers who take good precautions. It's been beautiful to witness community across the internet as we're all sheltering in place.

I've also enjoyed hosting evening gatherings over Zoom twice a week. Sometimes it's just one or two other people, sometimes eight or ten. We talk about the experiences we're having, the people and places we're worried about, the things we're struggling with. We ask for prayer for each other and then pray together. Sometimes someone brings a poem or short reading to help ground the group. It's been really precious to me to get to know a few people better that way.

We're shifting to a new schedule starting next week: instead of Tuesday prayer, we're going to do Monday "Story Potluck" modeled on the storytelling community program The Moth Radio Hour. We'll announce the theme each week in Penny's Connections email, and we'll post it on Facebook too. People will be invited to share five-minute stories that are loosely related to the theme. You're welcome to come even if you don't have a story to share, but I encourage you to share if you have one! I am looking forward to getting to know your stories.

I've also loved having some one-on-one Zoom meetings and phone calls with congregation members. I've met with people that I know really well and people that I had hardly ever talked to before. Each time is a precious opportunity to build community, to connect heart-to-heart, and to learn more about this community. I've met people's dogs, roommates, kids, and stuffed animals. I've seen into living rooms, dens, and backyards. I'd love to have more conversation, so if you're feeling a little isolated, wishing for someone to talk to, let me know! I'd love to make tea and sit down for a talk.

I also thought you might enjoy a few pictures that people posted to facebook about their online communion.

From Ivan and Natalia:



And from Christine Gregg:



And from Leslie and Krystal Burndon:



## WHILE IT WAS STILL DARK

Penny Nixon's  
Easter Sunday sermon

The resurrection story begins like this: “while it was still dark.” While it was still dark, Mary went to the tomb, that place of death, her eyes still swollen, her heart heavy with grief, her hopes dashed. While it was still dark, she went alone and afraid, unsteady for her world had been turned upside down. While it was still dark, she went, when Jesus was quarantined in the tomb. In that early morning, when the first light of dawn began to change the sky, all she saw was that the stone had been rolled away. I think, friends, this is where we enter the story. In our time, in our place, in our reality. Mary was in a liminal place, that place in between, the neither here nor there place. I don't know about you, but sheltering-in-place feels like a liminal space to me. The world is not as we knew it and we don't know what it will become. I mean, even the everyday things are different—how you get a cup of coffee at Peet's, and Safeway—they now have one-way aisles, I feel like I'm driving my car, not my cart in the grocery store. Everything feels slightly familiar but so different.

Katherine Collins talks about liminality and she says there are three rules for liminal space, as she sees them: 1) We are not allowed to stay—liminal space is not permanent. 2) We can't go backwards, only through. 3) In liminality, amazing things are possible. Liminality, to me, is almost like those times when the veil is thin, when the space between (as we call it) heaven and earth, is smaller. When we feel more, see more, perhaps, where we linger. In liminality, in impossible times, impossible things become possible. That's the resurrection story, then and now. It's Mary's story and maybe it's our story today.

So my question is, for us this Easter, how can we show up to the possibility of resurrection while it was still dark? How can we show up to the possibility of resurrection while we're still in a liminal space? I was just going to ask you “Are you with me?” but then I realized no one is here to answer me. So I'm hoping you say “yes” on the Facebook comments. I was reading an article this week by Emily Esfahani Smith, she's a researcher and for over a decade she has researched how people deal with extreme stress, how people cope in times of adversity, and basically she ends up saying this: right now, in this time of adversity, the studies they are doing, the polls they are taking, say that about 45% of peoples' mental health is being affected by all that is going on. And so she says “How do we cope?” It's almost counter-cultural, as we are told to pursue happiness. But she says that how people cope and how you are resilient is to find meaning, to look for meaning. In fact, she quotes Victor Frankl, the Holocaust survivor and psychiatrist from Vienna, who talks

about “tragic optimism.” Tragic optimism, he says, is the ability to maintain hope and find meaning in life, despite its inescapable pain, loss and suffering. For me, tragic optimism as he talks about it means facing reality head on, finding the daisy pushing up through the crack in the cement, finding the good, the true, the just, even the slightest gesture of kindness in the midst of pain. Searching for those moments of gratitude in the midst of uncertainty, the slivers of light that we can find in the darkest night.

Now let me say really clearly, when I am talking about finding meaning, it does not mean that this pandemic is a gift. It does not mean that this is the will of God or the punishment of God. In fact, do not succumb to any bad theology in this time. I can imagine many of the Easter sermons being preached across the nation will convey a lot of bad theology today. It doesn't mean that you have to smile or be “Polly-Anna” to find meaning in this time. You know, when I read that article what I found is that it was true to my own experience, and to my own theology. Because during the AIDS epidemic, standing up Easter after Easter, I scraped meaning together from wherever I could and that meaning shaped me profoundly. As I searched for meaning, and longed for it, it began to widen my soul. It began to help me to see people that before were previously invisible to me. It helped me let my heart ache. And in that aching and in that brokenness, it helped me to love more, more deeply. It helped me to stop being afraid to love, because the fragility of life was so real in each moment. It helped me understand and experience the “with-ness” and the presence of God, however you name God. Meaning. Good Friday without Easter would have no meaning because there would not have been an abiding community to give Good Friday meaning.

In this time, beloved community, we have to be good stewards of our pain, be good stewards of what's going on, so that we can move through it with resolve. Because while it was still dark, Mary showed up, trying to make sense of what had happened. In the depth of her grief and her uncertainty, she showed up. That's her story. And we all have different stories. So our meaning will not all be the same. Our meaning will be different. I mean Peter and John (John is the “other disciple”—most people think it's John because when John writes his own gospel, he calls himself the one Jesus loved, because if you write your own gospel, you get to say that) Peter and John raced to the tomb in their famous foot race. John gets there first. Peter comes and runs headlong into the tomb. John waits, but he's the one who believes. But just think about all the other disciples, they're still back, sheltering-in-place, in their locked room, in doubt and in despair. You know what? Here's what's true: we had different stories going into this virus, and the coronavirus may have only magnified some of your struggles; it may have amplified your pain, your loneliness, your depression,

your addiction. We have different stories right now. Some of us are able to work from home, others of us have been furloughed or lost jobs, some parents have kids that love being at home all day and others rebelling against it at every turn. You may feel in this moment some despair, some doubt that you can even celebrate Easter. But that's ok, too. Mary Oliver says about those in doubt, disbelief and uncertainty: “I have lit candles, though I am not ready, I am willing. Oh, nobody runs so hard as doubters running across fields crying out for faith, looking for it in the high places and the low places. Looking for it everywhere. Oh, see how I run.”

So no matter what your story is, you can show up to this moment, to this time and you can even show up to the possibility of resurrection in your life, in our communal life and in the life of the world. Now just because I found meaning in the years I described a few minutes ago, does not mean that I did not have days of great doubt... that sometimes grief didn't actually bend me over, that sometimes hopelessness made it really hard to get up. But we continue to show up, because showing up is faith. Even in doubt, it's faith. Mary showed up and it is what we are asked to do.

Before I wind down here, I want to point you to one more detail in the story. When Peter went into the tomb, it was empty. And this detail struck me so clearly this year: the linen grave cloths were folded neatly, that little detail. And I think the meaning that I'm gaining from that is that the trappings of death had been laid aside. And the trappings of this virus will be laid aside and we will lay aside our masks eventually, but not today. So while it is still dark, we look for it, we long for it and yes, when we are willing, we can expect it. My mother used to say to me when I would go through hard times, *Never doubt in the darkness what you have known to be true in the light.* **Never doubt in the darkness what you have known to be true in the light.** There have been many Easters when I've stood here with you and we have been lifted up, inspired, rejoicing, and we believed in our own way in the light of day. Remember that, because that hasn't changed. While it was still dark, the possibility of resurrection is ours.

I preached a sermon years ago, I can't remember where I got the quote, but it said Let your setbacks become your setups for your comebacks. Let your setbacks—and we are in a pretty major one—become your setups—in this liminal space—for your comebacks. You know what, last year's resurrection won't work the same way for this year's Easter, but remember, it was Jesus' frail body that held the power of resurrection. And resurrection is undaunted by circumstance. And the power of God works best in impossible situations. So, while it is still dark, while we are in a liminal space, and while we're connecting online, remember that resurrection isn't virtual, resurrection is real, is intimate, is personal. And it breaks into our lives and into our stories, even when it's still dark. Amen.



## An Earth Day Top Ten

**1. Demand Climate Action From Our Politicians.** Start by sending a letter to all party leaders and the candidates in your district, telling them that your vote depends on bold action. Up until the election, you can also call or visit your candidates, volunteer for a candidate or organization that you support and talk to friends and family about the importance of voting for climate action. Make sure you are registered to vote. On Election Day, show your support for climate solutions by voting for a party with a strong and credible climate action plan.

**2. Use Energy Wisely—And Save Money Too!** Consider making some or all of these small changes (together, they can really add up):

- ◆ Change to energy-efficient light bulbs
- ◆ Unplug computers, TVs and other electronics when you're not using them
- ◆ Wash clothes in cold or warm water (not hot)
- ◆ Hang-dry your clothes when you can
- ◆ Install a programmable thermostat
- ◆ Look for the Energy Star label when buying new appliances
- ◆ Winterize your home to prevent heat from escaping and try to keep it cool in the summer without an air conditioner (e.g., upgrade your windows from single pane to double pane glass, add weather strips to doors).

**3. Eat For A Climate-Stable Planet.** The decisions we make about food can have a profound effect on the environment. Here are four simple ways you can make your diet more climate-friendly.

- ◆ Eat more meat-free meals (e.g., start with Meat Free Mondays). The meat industry generates ~1/5 of greenhouse gas emissions.
- ◆ Buy organic and local whenever possible
- ◆ Don't waste food
- ◆ Grow your own

**4. Green Your Commute.** Reducing your transportation emissions will also make you healthier, happier and save you a few bucks. Whenever and wherever you can:

- ◆ Take public transit
- ◆ Ride a bike or advocate for bike lanes in your community
- ◆ Car-share
- ◆ Switch to an electric or hybrid vehicle
- ◆ Fly less (if you do fly, make sure you offset your emissions)

**5. Consume Less, Waste Less, Enjoy Life More.** Focusing on life's simple pleasures — spending time in nature, being with loved ones, making a difference to others — provides more purpose, belonging and happiness than buying and consuming. Sharing, making, fixing, upcycling, repurposing and composting are all good places to start.

**6. Invest In Renewables And Divest From Fossil Fuels.** Even if you can't install solar panels or a wind turbine, you can still be a part of the clean-energy economy. Select local renewable energy options whenever available (e.g., Peninsula Clean Energy). Speak to your financial adviser about clean energy/technology investments. Let them know you care about climate change by meeting with your bank or investment adviser to make sure your investments do not include fossil fuels. And make sure your workplace, pension fund or university doesn't invest in fossil fuels either. If they do, join or start a divestment campaign.

**7. Support Or Join Youth-Led Movements.** Young people have the most at stake when it comes to climate change. Their futures are on the line if we can't meet the 2°C cap on warming. All over the world, kids, teenagers and young adults are taking matters into their own hands in inspiring ways. Help them grow their movement by joining and supporting them however you can (e.g., Fridays for Future). Find a group in your home community and ask how you can help. If you're an adult, be careful not to take over. Be humble. Listen. Let the youth lead.

**8. Become A Citizen Scientist.** Participate in Earth Challenge 2020. Earth Challenge 2020 will engage millions of global citizens to aggregate and collect more than one billion data points in areas including air quality, water Wild-coast quality, biodiversity, pollution, and human health. Through Earth Challenge 2020, citizen science volunteers will learn about their local conditions, and leverage information to inspire collaborative action and influence policy decisions. Learn more at: [earthday.org/campaigns/earth-challenge2020](http://earthday.org/campaigns/earth-challenge2020).

**9. Plant A Tree or Donate To Plant A Tree.** Deforestation contributes to species extinction, poverty, and is responsible for up to 15% of the global greenhouse gas emissions causing climate change. Planting trees is one of the easiest and most important ways to fight climate change. In just one year, a mature leafy tree produces as much oxygen as 10 people inhale! Visit the [Canopy Project](#) or the [Arbor Day Foundation](#).

**10. Reduce Wildfire Risks In And Around Your Home.**

Limiting the amount of flammable vegetation, choosing ignition resistant building materials and construction techniques; along with regular exterior maintenance, increases the chances your home will survive a wildfire. [Check out this easy-to-follow checklist and guidelines](#) that can make your home safer during a wildfire. Stay informed about local emergency alerts by [signing up for San Mateo County Alerts](#) (via email or text).

**Top Rated Environmental Protection and Conservation Non-Profits in CA as rated by Charity Navigator**

Acterra • As you Sow • CA Native Plant Society • Coral Reef Alliance • Earth Island Institute • Earth Justice • Environmental Defense Center • Island Conservation • Marine Mammal Center • Orange County Coastkeeper • Rose Foundation for Communities & the Environment • San Joaquin River Parkway & Conservation Trust Seacology • Sierra Club Foundation • Solar Cookers International

# AN EXALTATION OF GRATITUDE

By Chase Montara

## A HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO MELANIE DRESBACH

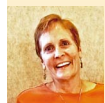
After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music. —Aldous Huxley



We are certainly facing a time of great uncertainty, the impact of which is pretty inexpressible. Every day, we are called to make new adjustments in our expectations and daily routines. It can feel disorienting to have to catch myself multiple times a day with reminders that the familiar patterns are interrupted. That is one reason why I am so grateful to you, Melanie, for offering your familiar presence on Sunday mornings. The Sunday services have been wonderful, Penny has done a wonderful job continuing to minister to us all. Melanie, your presence has offered something inexpressible to those services for me, and I suspect, for all of us. And I think I can speak for Penny when I say that your presence has been a touchstone. You have filled an otherwise mostly empty church with the spirit of song. The choice of songs has been very meaningful, filled with relevance and hope. And your voice, strong and true, has uplifted us all. So thank you, Melanie, for your faith, your willingness, your gifts and talents, and for sharing your unique presence with the CCSM community during this unprecedented and challenging time. May God bless you and keep you, “all of your days.”

## THANK YOU, ANNLEE MCGURK!

I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy. —Tagore



I know I speak for the entire congregation when I offer my gratitude to Annlee for her service to the church and wonderful contributions to the online Sunday Services during this time of sheltering-in-place. Much of what you have done has been “behind the scenes,” filming the service on your iPhone and supporting Penny as she meets the technological and spiritual challenges of virtual ministering. Above and beyond those contributions, it has been such a great pleasure to hear you read the poignant poems and scriptures with a calm and reassuring voice during worship. Thank you for being such an important part of this “new normal.” Thank you for serving.

## LITURGICAL ARTS MINISTRY, A BLESSING TO CCSM

We want to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it. —C.S. Lewis

Let's give a shout out to the Liturgical Arts Ministry for the important impact they have had in helping to create the scene for our livestreaming FaceBook worship during this time. (Please see Kay Harris' article about the process of bringing online worship to life.) Thank you to Alice Morrison, for donating camellias from your garden for the altar. Thank you also to Pam Riddlehuber for your floral and design expertise. As CCSM made the shift from in-person to virtual Sunday services, it became clear that visual imagery would be vital to communicating our message of hope and connection. It is curious how a simple draped cloth and an elegant floral arrangement can speak to our souls. The beauty unites us in ways that evade words. And knowing personally the hearts that are behind that beauty, helping to evoke the mood in creative ways, further unites us. Thanks to Kay and Mike Harris for your ingenuity and for “thinking outside the box.” You were able to animate JR, the donkey, in some mysterious way that delighted us all. Your generosity and talents are very much appreciated.

## ANGELA KRAFT-CROSS IS A GIFT

Music praises God. Music is well or better able to praise God than the building of the church and all its decoration; it is the Church's greatest ornament.

—Igor Stravinsky

What a joy it has been to listen to Angela play the preludes and postludes on Sunday morning, and throughout Holy Week. I have appreciated the opportunity to not only listen but to see Angela embody the music as she plays. The camera angles and position of the organ have let us glimpse another side of Angela's playing. Watching her lean into the music, to lift up and move in, her shoulders and head movements telling the story of the notes, has been a delight. Her music ministers to us always, but perhaps during this time of fear and uncertainty, it is more important than ever. I know there have been challenges with sound and video processes and I want to also thank Robert Cross and John McCann for their herculean efforts to bring worship to us. And special thanks to Lynnelle Bilsley for her work in providing weekly emails filled with delicious music, humor and grace. (Please see Lynnelle's article for her musical perspective on sheltered worship.) We are finding more and more ways that we can be together during this shelter-in-place. For though the building is closed, the church never closes. And music is a pivotal way we stay together.



## A VOICE IN THE DARKNESS: CALLING ALL MEMBERS (CAM) TEAM

Love intentionally, extravagantly, unconditionally. The broken world waits in darkness for the light that is you. —L.R. Knost

When the church building closed on March 9, 2020, Penny's first priority was that the congregation remain connected. Toward that end, we recruited about 30 volunteers to the “Calling All Members” team, who were assigned a segment of the church members to contact regularly. We gave them each a list and a sample “script” they could use or not, to help them get over the initial nerves of contacting someone they might not know personally. For many, it has been a joy to “meet” new people in this way. The team has made hundreds of calls in the past month. Our aim was three-fold: to assure the flock that CCSM is still here, to determine if there were any needs for housing, food, technology or pastoral support that we could help to meet, and to offer assistance in connecting to our online worship. Through our calls, we have updated many people's contact information and added many to Penny's weekly email blast list so that all can be connected to her message and updates.

It also became clear that we would need some volunteers who could do some grocery shopping and errands for those who were unable to leave their homes. I want to thank the shopping volunteers for their generosity and kindness. One recipient has called her shopper her “guardian angel.” Friendships have developed that might not have if not for this difficult time.

There is always grace borne of hard times, in my experience. It simply requires a willingness to look for evidence of it. The CAM team members are too numerous to mention individually. But I want you all to know that it is a joy to work with you. I appreciate getting to know you all a bit better through this process. Thank you for sharing “the light that is you.”

We are in need of additional team members, so if you have even an hour a week to spare to make some phone calls, I hope you will join the team by contacting me at [cmontara@ccsm-ucc.org](mailto:cmontara@ccsm-ucc.org).



## A MESSAGE FROM MSJ

Food insecurity is real in the Bay Area. One in ten residents have received food from Second Harvest at some point. With school closures and unprecedented lay-offs and work furloughs, it has become more of an issue since mid-March.

MSJ would like to support Samaritan House and local neighborhood food pantries by collecting any excess non-perishable food items (or pet food, paper towels, cleaning supplies, etc). They will be distributed to support local efforts to help address the crisis.

If you have donations and would like us to come by and pick them up, please call Chase @ 650-343-3694 to arrange a pick-up. Or you can drop off your items on the Loggia. If you don't want to shop, but prefer instead to make a monetary donation you may do so on-line at [ccsm-ucc.org/give](https://ccsm-ucc.org/give). Choose "Miscellaneous Fund" and note in the "optional memo" section that your donation is for the "Charitable Assistance" Fund.

### Welcome to Congregational Church of San Mateo

#### Giving Details

Give  to   [+ add more](#)

E-mail Address

—Carole Wilson

## MINI GREENHOUSE PICK-A-PARTY OVER ZOOM

By Sandra Soto-Grondona



Who would have thought I would be teaching over Zoom! In times of such uncertainty, I was, as many of you, in a freezing mode, a step that typically shows up with dramatic changes in our lives. Life is change... but we frequently forget. So when Chase encouraged me to go ahead with my scheduled Pick-A-Party via Zoom, all the quotes that start with: "You are never too old to..." came to mind. Every

time I am teaching a class or tutoring children, I am ready and open to learn from them before I say anything. And every time I speak about our planet, I get courage from nature itself.

The subject seemed so appropriate: *Climate Change and Children*. It was the first time I would teach something to kids over a screen. I am not much of a technology-savvy person—not because I don't like it, but because I am a sensitive person who is nourished by the energy of children, who needs to smell the fragrances, to see the ocean, and to feel the breeze on my walks. Instead of using PowerPoint to show how children around the world are impacted by climate change and how they are coping with it, I decided to keep children only as my audience. Therefore, I used books to show images and created simple diagrams to make my

points. Then, I tried to convey issues of climate change through making a mini-greenhouse, explaining basic concepts, such as photosynthesis and the water cycle, talking about energy while we all ate a snack, addressing sustainability through the seeds kids chose to put in their mini-greenhouse, and showing Carbon Dioxide in a quick balloon experiment. Of course, the presentation was not perfect, I missed portions, I was awkward at times, and one child kicked her laptop so I could only see the ceiling of her place for a little while, but luckily, I had the help of my teenage son, who picked up the things I forgot to mention, corrected my grammar errors or wrote the actual CO<sub>2</sub> chemistry equation (which we did not use because the kids were very young) and reminded us all the reason we were using a plastic bottle for the mini-greenhouse. Yes...he said: "because plastic bottles take about 450 years to disappear from the Earth." Also at the end, I wanted to show some other projects kids can do with recycled materials, such as toys. Many children around the world create their own toys because they are poor and have no money to buy them.

courage starts with showing up and letting ourselves be seen... —brené brown

Well, I hope the children who participated enjoyed the pick-a-party. My son and I definitely did, and I was reminded again that everything new takes risk, and in the words of Brené Brown "courage starts with showing up and letting ourselves be seen." Possibly, I am still not too old to learn

new ways of teaching, tutoring and continuing learning from children and our precious planet Earth.

## WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

by Melanie Dresbach

**In solidarity with members of the Muslim community, I offer these comments by Maha Elge-naidi, founder and director of ING, in a message that she delivered on March 24, 2020 for the webinar: Islamic Network Group, Coping with Crisis Webinar. I think that you'll find her message both compelling and comforting. May peace and the Light of the Creator and the warmth of the Spirit be with you and yours.**

*The Muslim response to the coronavirus pandemic is to turn to the Qur'an, the unblemished word of God and the Hadith, the compilation of authenticated sayings and activities of the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.*

*One familiar Hadith discusses pandemics: when his wife Aisha, a foremost scholar of Islam asked him about plagues, he said, "They used to be viewed as a punishment from God, but after me (the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him) God made them a mercy and a blessing to the believers." The same Hadith also tells us that anyone residing in a land afflicted by plague who remains patient and hopes for a reward from God knowing that nothing will befall them except what God has decreed, will be given the reward of a martyr. Now know the two conditions here: that people remain in their home, and that they bear the situation with patience and this is amazing to me that a 1400-year-old Hadith exactly reflects a Shelter in Place policy that we have today from the CDC and World Health Organization. The prophet also referred to tribulations such as plagues, as a mercy to the people of faith because they are difficult periods of time that pull the veil back from our false reality and enable us to see the true nature of this world, to see things as they are, thus enabling believers to be patient with what God sends.*

*For people who don't practice Islam or any other religion, crises such as pandemics provide to them a renewed opportunity for them to turn back to God who will show them a new reality if they seek it. For everyone, this crisis offers us an opportunity to reflect and reset our priorities, consider where we are in our lives, and perhaps to do things differently. Tribulation also is an opportunity to renew our faith, to increase and strengthen our devotion and worship, and even to repent before God and turn over a new leaf if that is what is needed. If the crisis inspires us to do these things, we will come out of this as better people and strong believers.*

*Also interesting is that in this new technologically advanced world this crisis is also an opportunity to recognize that despite all of our scientific advancements, something as small as this virus can make us utterly vulnerable as human beings. It reminds us that we're not just physical beings but beings with a soul that is able to experience God and His presence in our lives. We can also be grateful that the crisis has forced us to put aside distractions such as sports, celebrity cultures and other frivolities that we waste our time on, and we're seeing this across the world where humanity is being forced to stay home, to be with our families, to reflect, to re-evaluate and to press that reset button.*

*The Qur'an tells us repeatedly that nothing will harm us except what God has decreed for us and that he is the best disposer of our affairs. This gives believers the certainty in faith that keeps us from fear, anxiety, panic, and grief as so as believers we need to inspire others and to be the calm in the storm for others.*



### Prayer for a Pandemic

*This poem was shared during the very first online Sunday service.*

May we who are merely inconvenienced  
remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors  
remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home  
remember those who must choose between  
preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care  
for our children when their schools close  
remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips  
remember those that have no place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money  
in the tumult of the economic market  
remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home  
remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country,  
let us choose love.

During this time when we cannot  
physically wrap our arms around each other,  
let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace  
of God to our neighbors. Amen.

—Cameron Wiggins Bellm

# Joys and Concerns

## CCSM Pastoral Care Team

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

### PRAYERS OF JOY

Two centenarians to celebrate this month! **Thelma Kromhout** turned 101 on April 15, and **Clare Naegle** turns 102 on April 30. Please let them know you're thinking of them!



A note of gratitude from **Jerri Handy**: "Please do share with the wonderful people of CCSM that I have accepted the position of Interim Co-Minister at First

Christian Church, Eugene, Oregon. I am looking forward to ministry in a local church again. I want to thank you for all of the love and support you so freely gave while I learned and served in ministry with you. —Jerri" [www.hearttofeugene.org](http://www.hearttofeugene.org)

**John and Susan Duty** are so grateful that their son, **Steven**, is better after his 3-week COVID-19 illness. Thank you to all for CCSM's prayers and expressions of concern for his recovery.

Prayers of joy that **Carolyn Shaw's** 27-year old nephew who was sick with the virus in New York City is out of the woods now.

**Pam McCarthy** offers prayers of gratitude that Nick arrived home safely from Turkey and is now living at home with his parents.

**Lynnelle Bilsey** is grateful for all the prayers after her foot injury.

Prayers of gratitude for the **40 N95 masks** donated by 4 people in the CCSM community which have been delivered to healthcare workers on the frontlines, and for the **Face Mask Brigade** and others sewing cloth masks.

Little **Filippo Maeillo Lind** was born March 24 in Bangkok, Thailand, 6.2 lbs., to happy parents **Andrew Lind** and **Margherita Maeillo**! Proud grandparents **Betsy Woodward** and **Phil Lind**.

Prayers of joy and gratitude that **Christine Grabow** has recovered well from a bout with pneumonia.

### PRAYERS OF LOVE AND STRENGTH

Prayers of comfort for the family of **Jennifer Bock Hughes** whose father, **J. John Bock, MD**, passed away unexpectedly on April 7th. Prayers of solace as they were not able to be with him due to the pandemic.

Prayers of comfort for **Karin Albright** whose brother **Warren "Buck" Larson** passed away on Easter Sunday after a long fight with cancer. Buck and Karin went to CCSM as kids and Buck was confirmed around 1964. It was just a year ago Easter that Karin lost her mom.

**Ed Bastille**, former CCSM member and husband of beloved former CCSM pastor **Louise Bastille**, passed away on Palm Sunday, April 5. As a Vietnam Vet, he had many health issues related to Agent Orange exposure. He was in the hospital on Saturday and told his family he would be going home on Sunday, which he did. Louise was with him. There is a full obituary at [wilkinsonbeane.com](http://wilkinsonbeane.com).

Prayers of love and strength for **Louisa Shaul's** sister, whose husband **Bob Phillips** who passed away unexpectedly on Easter Sunday.

Prayers of comfort for **Debbie Chang's** family friend **Paolo Guisti** who lost his wife to COVID-19 in NYC.

Prayers for the loved ones of long-time friend of CCSM **Bob Goudy**, who died on March 19. His wife **Susan Goudy** was a CCSM member since 1947; she died in 2018. A memorial service (not through CCSM) will be held at a later date.

**Genel Morgan's** cousin **Dorothy DeTar** recently passed away. She was 95 and lived a long wonderful life. Prayers for all her loved ones.

**Chase Montara's** friend, **Robin C.** passed away from the coronavirus. Prayers for his wife and children, and all those who loved him, including Chase, as they grieve his loss.

Prayers for those grieving the loss of **Helène Aylon**, a pioneering feminist

artist and dear friend of **Zoe Mul-lery's** for 40 years. Helene died of COVID-19 in NYC on April 6.

### PRAYERS OF SUPPORT AND HEALING

**George Cintel** is very ill and will soon be in Hospice care. Cards welcomed.

Prayers for healing for **Teo Praslin**, a physician's assistant and **Gail Evans'** cousin who is on a ventilator for COVID, and in renal failure. He is only 40ish and lives in Pasadena.

**Lynnelle** asks for prayers of healing for **Wilson Payne**, 18-year-old graduating senior and son of her fieldwork instructor for Music Therapy battling COVID-19; also for **James Tobias**, a longtime friend from grad school diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer.

Prayers of peace and strength to **Ruth Black** and family as Ruth is now on hospice at Brookdale Assisted Living with MS and dementia. Ruth's daughter **Kim** let us know.

Heartfelt prayers for **Elise Leung** and her family as they endure difficult health challenges.

Please pray for **Eddy Xu's** cousin Andy, who is working at a COVID-19 testing site in Brooklyn NY. Also pray for Eddy's parents who live there as well, and are in their 70's.

Prayers of strength for **Rev. Penny**, who was scheduled to be on sabbatical right now, as she shepherds this wonderful flock forward.

Please pray for **Melodie Lew's** daughter-in-law's sister, **Shelly**, who is a doctor at Cedar-Sinai, and for **Brenna, Jennifer and John's** cousin, who is a nurse in the ER at SF General Hospital.

Continuing prayers for **Alice Morrison's** daughter **Rebecca Schaefer**, who is in need of support over the recent death of her son Max.

Please pray for **Carolyn Shaw's** sister **Kathryn Anne**, who is locked in her room in a Los Altos senior facility where there has been a case of the virus.

## Joys and Concerns cont.

Prayers of healing and strength for **Gail Evans'** friend **Michelle**, battling Stage 4 cancer.

Prayers for **Debbie Chang's** 81-year-old parents sheltering in place in the national epicenter in NYC.

Prayers for **Gene Chelberg's** 99-year-old grandmother who continues to be isolated in a care center in Texas, and for his mother who normally visits every day.

Prayers for **Patty Burns, Jeanne Back's** best friend (of 40+ years), who was recently diagnosed with metastasized neuroendocrine cancer. Prayers for strength and healing.

**Sue Hill** had surgery a few weeks ago and is recovering well. She will be undergoing radiation therapy. Prayers for strength and encouragement for her during this time.

Prayers for **Nikko**, son-in-law of **Mary Ann McKay**, who is a pulmonologist on the front lines in SF treating the really sick COVID-19 patients.

Prayers of healing for **George Parker** who has recovered from pneumonia but cannot return to the Atira due to the virus outbreak there. Please pray for **George, Cari**, and family as they work through these challenges.

Prayers for **Rev. Kelly's** brother and sister-in-law **Ken and Christine**, who are sick at home in Seattle with COVID-19. May they recover well without needing intervention.

Prayers for **Chase Montara's** mother, **Ellie Noyes**, who is in a Memory Care Unit in Massachusetts.

**Kirsten Smith's** father-in-law, **Paul Smith**, is now back home at his ranch with round-the-clock care in the hope this will help him with his recovery. Please continue to keep him in prayer.

Prayers of peace and strength for **Martha, Laura Pierce-McKenzie's** mother, recovering from surgery for breast cancer; and for Laura and the whole family at this difficult time.

**Angela Lee** asks for prayer for a strong spirit and smooth treatment for her sister **Norither Lee**, recently diagnosed with Stage 3 breast cancer.

**Bill Melis** fell and broke his leg. He is struggling with a number of health issues so is at home and appreciates prayers for continued healing.

**Sue Bullis** is having health issues and needing prayer.

Prayers for **Mary, Robin Hansen's** mother, continuing to struggle with

memory issues, and prayers of support for **Robin and Rolf** as well.

Prayers for **Stan Higgs'** friend **Deborah**, continuing to recover after a heart transplant.

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

Prayers for **scientists, disease experts, and epidemiologists**—including some in our midst—who are working tirelessly on vaccines and testing mechanisms. God, we thank you for giving them knowledge and wisdom that is vital. We pray for their endurance, for breakthroughs, and for resources. God, you are the Great Physician, so we pray for healing for the **victims of COVID-19**. Spirit of God, you are the Comforter, so please comfort our troubled souls. We pray for the hearts of our **public officials**. We pray you guide them with wisdom and strength and discernment.

Prayers for **those sheltered in the rooms in nursing homes**, that they be granted endurance and patience and that they are well cared for especially during this time when they are not allowed visitors.

For **parents working from home** and trying to offer guidance, comfort, and love to their children: may they be given enough patience and creativity to get through.

For all the **doctors, nurses, patient care technicians, hospital and long term care workers**, and other providers of care in our congregation, and for all their colleagues in the health care system: may our actions to distance and shelter in place slow the tide of ill people needing care so they are not overwhelmed, and may they have the materials they need to keep them safe and healthy so they may do their work of compassion and healing.

For **owners of small businesses**, both in our congregation and in the

wider community, who are facing difficult decisions in the face of this unprecedented economic situation: may they feel our love and solidarity, and may we swiftly act to support all those losing work.

For all **those whose history of trauma** makes this time extra difficult: may we all have patience with each other and with ourselves.

For **expectant families** who face the unusual challenge of having to reschedule appointments due to Shelter in Place and who have the added concern of exposure during the pregnancy. Engulf them with the Love and security of the Light and Spirit and hold them in divine mercy. And for **those who are struggling with fertility**, worrying about whether this "pause" will spell the end of dreams of family: may they be surrounded by love.

Prayers for **those struggling with economic pressures and those seeking to keep healthy**. Special prayers for the **imprisoned immigrants and families** at the border. Prayers also for all **those in prison or jail and their worried families**, as well as those who work in prisons: grant them a safe environment, bring comfort and encouragement to their families and friends, and afford them increased opportunities to draw closer spiritually to one another though separated physically.

We pray for **essential workers**, who risk their lives—often for low pay—to keep our society going. We pray for the **homeless** who are exceptionally vulnerable to this disease, and who seem to often be the last to receive the attention and resources they need. Prayers also for **those who work with the homeless** and other vulnerable people, and who seek to advocate on their behalf.

Spirit of Wisdom, Author of Love who knows no limitations, be close to **youth of the LGBTQ community** as they have been taken away from the safety of being with their friends and members of their community at this time.

Prayers of protection and comfort for **those sheltering in place with an abusive person**.

And for **all of us who are looking for hope** in these times: may we look at each other's faces, even at a distance, even virtually, and remember that we are the ones for such a time as this, and that we have among us all the creativity, all the intelligence, all the compassion, and all the love we could ever need.

Usually, the Pine Tree newsletter is chock full of the busy, engaged activities in the life of the church, its brimming calendar, reflecting the church’s involvement in spiritual growth, social justice, community life, children and youth, music, etc.; a neverending flow of activity in and through the church building and around the community.

This edition, of course, is a little different. Since there are no in-person events or gatherings, this issue is more of a magazine, with articles reflecting on life during a pandemic. Even sheltering in place, there is no lack of energy and love flowing through the CCSM community. Perhaps there will be something in these pages to encourage you or touch your heart. Please share your thoughts and responses when you can; it’s good to stay connected!

## IN THIS ISSUE

<a href="#">Sunday Worship during Shelter in Place</a>	1
<a href="#">From Your Moderator</a>	1
<a href="#">CCSM in the Time of Pandemic – Penny Nixon</a>	1
<a href="#">From Jorge</a>	2
<a href="#">Children, Youth &amp; Families News – Sheryl Johnson</a>	3
<a href="#">Music to Soothe the Soul – Lynnelle Bilsey</a>	4
<a href="#">Faith in Film Project</a>	5
<a href="#">What’s Going On Out There? poem by Vy Tran</a>	5
<a href="#">Call Us!</a>	5
<a href="#">Palm Sunday during Shelter in Place</a>	7
<a href="#">Holy Week during a Pandemic – Kay Harris</a>	8
<a href="#">Being the Beloved Community – Kelly Colwell</a>	9
<a href="#">It’s Scholarship Time!</a>	9
<a href="#">The Face Mask Brigade – Chase Montara</a>	10
<a href="#">Financial Information during the Pandemic – Veril Phillips, treasurer</a>	11
<a href="#">A Shelter-In-Place story from Tony Gallo</a>	11
<a href="#">Your Staff on Zoom</a>	12
<a href="#">Energy, Environmental Justice Ministry Update</a>	12
<a href="#">Reflections on Covid-19 – Anne Fuller, historian</a>	12
<a href="#">Connecting with the CCSM Diaspora – K. Colwell</a>	13
<a href="#">While It Was Still Dark: Penny’s Easter Sermon</a>	14
<a href="#">An Earth Day Top Ten</a>	15
<a href="#">An Exaltation of Gratitude – Chase Montara</a>	16
<a href="#">A Message from MSJ – Carole Wilson</a>	17
<a href="#">Mini Greenhouse Pick-A-Party over Zoom – Sondra Soto-Grondona</a>	17
<a href="#">We’re All in This Together – Melanie Dresbach and Maha Elgenaidi</a>	18
<a href="#">Prayer for a Pandemic – Cameron Wiggins Bellm</a>	18
<a href="#">Joys &amp; Concerns</a>	19



Phyllis Lunardi’s daughter Susie sent this photo from New York City to give us an image for our inspiration.

**NEVER DOUBT IN  
THE DARKNESS  
WHAT YOU HAVE  
KNOWN TO BE  
TRUE IN THE  
LIGHT**