

CCSM PINE TREE


VOL. 70, #2 | 2021 • ONLINE / SIXTH SHELTER-IN-PLACE EDITION

#HATE IS A VIRUS

AAPI SOLIDARITY

— *Our Faith, Our Calling* —

SERMON SERIES: MAY 9, 16, 23



Sunday Celebrations

- May 2 **Mental Health Awareness Sunday** | Penny Nixon
- May 9 **AAPI Solidarity: Past** | Grace Yoo/Penny Nixon
- May 16 **AAPI Solidarity: Present** | Rev. Deborah Lee
- May 23 **AAPI Solidarity: Future** | Penny Nixon
- May 30 **Memorial Day**
- June 6 **Confirmation Sunday: Celebrating our Youth**
- June 13 **Who is my Neighbor?** | Penny Nixon
- June 20 **Re-story-ation** | Penny Nixon

CCSM begins outdoor services at 8:30am starting May 2!
See page 4 for more information.

AAPI SOLIDARITY

*OUR FAITH,
OUR CALLING*

May is AAPI (Asian American/Pacific Islander) heritage month and at CCSM we are dedicating three Sundays in May to celebrating AAPI Heritage. We will hear from a number of CCSM members and also from some special guests. We'll look at past, present and future and learn more about how to be in solidarity with the AAPI communities who have experienced a sharp rise in anti-Asian violence and rhetoric throughout the pandemic. The horrendous murder of six women of Asian descent in Atlanta recently is just one of many attacks this year on the dignity, humanity and safety of AAPI people in the United States. The violence in Atlanta is not an isolated incident, but part of a pattern woven into the fabric of this country that results in deadly harm for AAPI communities. Each act of violence, verbal or physical, opens a deep historical wound and brings up painful memories from our nation's history.

We in California bear an even greater responsibility—45% of the 3,800 anti-Asian hate incidents reported by Stop AAPI Hate in the past year have occurred in California. We know that anti-



Enjoying a rare moment in the pews during Easter Saturday's Resurrection Journey

[click to continue to p. 3](#)

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Our Children, Youth, and Family ministries continue to adapt and find ways to connect even as we enter into our second Pandemic Easter season! We have settled into a good rhythm with a lot of our programs: monthly **kids' music sessions** with Julie (plus her leadership of the Joyful Noise kids' choir which has re-started online!), **Godly Play storytelling class** with Shannon, **kids' programming** for our older kids led by Libby, **religion and media-focused programs** for (mostly!) middle schoolers, **60 Minutes thematic discussions** for our high-schoolers, plus **Confirmation Classes**.

We recently held a **virtual screening** of the animated film *Joseph: King of Dreams* for both our older kids and middle schoolers to begin to welcome some of our older kids into our youth programming. I really enjoyed seeing a lot of our kids and families in person at the **Resurrection Journey** we held at the church on Easter weekend! Kids participated in all of the stations—putting flowers into the cross, listening to music, etc., and then also hunted for Easter eggs, decorated the sidewalks with chalk, did Easter crafts, and planted resurrection seeds! What a wonderful anticipation of more in-person events that will, we hope, be coming very soon.

Our other programs have been going well. It is wonderful to get to see the kids and youth in their homes—lots of opportunities for showing us the books they are reading, favorite toys, etc. For example, in our **Godly Play class**, kids often act out the story or reflect on it with the things they have right around them - their own legos, dolls, sticker books, etc. In our youth programming, conversations often start by talking about the art on the walls and books on their desks.

The **religion and media-focused middle school group** has been really interesting. I have learned so much as we have reflected on why games like Minecraft are so popular (getting to design your own world and “play God” in a way!), the social justice themes in rap music like Tupac’s, and environmental justice in poetry like that of Amanda Gorman. We also had a wonderful special session with our youth to prepare contributions for our April Earth Month services. Youth wrote poetry, created visual art, brainstormed documentaries to screen, and wrote reflections to be used in the services related to the environment.

In **60 Minutes**, our discussions have continued to be focused on various pandemic-related themes: celebrating holidays during the pandemic, vaccine hesitancy and what to do about it, the pros and cons of online school, etc. The youth always have a lot to say both about their own lives and also public policy—and how those things intersect! It is such a wonderful program at CCSM.

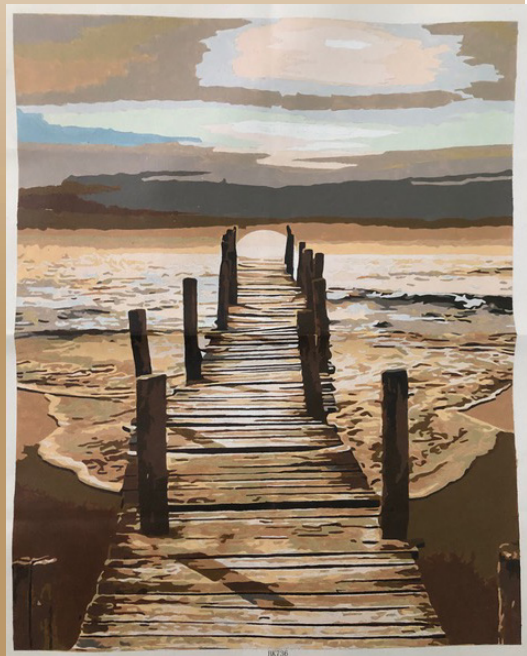
Click here for our **RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES** page to find lots of activities and ideas!

In **Confirmation Class**, we have also been delving deeply into important topics. These have included World Religions and how the UCC understands religious pluralism, the myriad of different ways to understand Jesus’ death and resurrection, and the history and identity of the United Church of Christ. The youth always have wonderful questions and it is great to be able to have both small group and large group conversations, as well as some wonderful one-on-one check-ins with youth and mentors throughout the process. It will be wonderful to celebrate Confirmation with the CCSM community in June.

In this uncertain time, it has been such a powerful touchpoint to continue to connect in different ways: mail, phone, Zoom, social media, and now distanced, in-person, with our children, youth, and family community. While in many ways I miss the way we did things before the pandemic and hope many of those activities can resume, it has also been wonderful to have youth still able to connect with us even when they are traveling, to have youth participants who are new to us from across the US, and to connect with our families in their homes and to really get to know more of what their lives and interests are like. So while this has been a strange year, there have certainly been many blessings as well. I have so appreciated the creativity of this time, the persistence of our community, and the support and commitment to people of all ages that CCSM values so deeply.

Sheryl

Sophie Mallette's paint-by-numbers, an activity she finds restful during COVID isolation



AAPI SOLIDARITY

from p. 1

Asian discrimination and violence are part of the long legacy of white supremacy in this country, and that racist rhetoric from the highest levels of government in 2020 reflects this longer legacy.

At CCSM we will have three powerful worship services reflecting truth about the past and present, and hope for the future as we honor the rich diversity of gifts from AAPI communities and educate ourselves on how to be in deeper solidarity at every turn.

Peace,

Penny

GRACE YOO is a CCSM member and a Professor in Asian American Studies at SFSU. She'll join with Penny in our **worship service on May 9**. Below, she shares some history to help kick us off and we'll dive deeper into this at our **Second Hour on May 16**. **Join us!**



Asian Americans represent over 30 diverse groups. The term Asian American originated in the late 1960s during the the Civil Rights and the Anti-War Movements of this era. This time period represents a crucial period in the formation of a racial consciousness among young Asian Americans. For the first time, Chinese, Filipino & Japanese Americans came together on college campuses and realized that they had a common experience of racism and discrimination. Together, Asian American

students from San Francisco State University would join with activists, students, community leaders began to form multi-racial and pan-ethnic coalitions to achieve greater opportunities for those in the community. A new group consciousness as "Asian Americans" and "Yellow Power" emerged out of these struggles. "Yellow Power" symbolized "a rejection of the passive Oriental stereotype" and "the birth of a new Asian, one who will recognize and deal with injustices." In 1968, an expression of this new consciousness emerged as third world solidarity in the struggle for ethnic studies at San Francisco State University. This movement stressed the idea of a shared oppression, Asian American, black, Chicano, and Indigenous students, through the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) at San Francisco State College. Lasting for 5 months, the SF State Student Strike was longest student strike in U.S. history and birthed the first school of ethnic studies. For Asian Americans, the San Francisco State student strike and the eventual establishment of the College of Ethnic Studies were prompted in part by the need to continually voice concerns over community health and social problems—including gangs, crowded schools, housing shortages, and the displacement of the aged—that had gone long unrecognized in San Francisco's Chinatown, Japantown, and Manilatown. Existing institutions—including higher education—had ignored the histories and experiences of Asian Americans.

Resources: densho.org/asian-american-movement

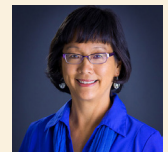
[AAPI Solidarity Resources](#)

SECOND HOUR • SUNDAYS AT NOON

Second Hour Sundays bring important topics for learning and discussion following the Sunday service. Still on ZOOM for now! (Click [HERE](#) for link)



- May 2** *How are you doing?* A conversation with Penny about how you are coping with the pandemic, how you are feeling about reopening, what are your hopes and dreams? A time to both share and listen to one another.
- May 9** Mother's Day! Celebrate with your mother, your children, or whoever is special to you
- May 16** Asian American History in the Bay Area with Grace Yoo. Grace is a Professor in Asian American Studies Department at San Francisco State University and a CCSM member.
- May 23** Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries (PAAM) of the United Church of Christ. Hear about the history, the vision and the impact of PAAM from two of its key leaders, Revs. Sharon McArthur and Dick Hom.



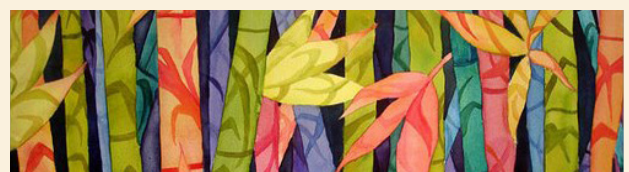
Grace Yoo



Rev. Sharon McArthur



Rev. Dick Hom



OUTSIDE 8:30AM SUNDAY SERVICE BEGINNING MAY 2!

Many of you have expressed your deep desire to be back for in-person worship. So **beginning MAY 2**, come gather with the local CCSM community on Sundays at 8:30AM for an outside service. We will meet on the front lawn, masked and social distanced. This will be a 40-minute service of music, prayer, reflection and communion (all safely done). There will be small flags placed on the lawn so you will know where to sit—**please bring your own chair**. (We will have chairs available for those unable to bring their own.) Please have your coffee, water, breakfast, etc. at home first so you can be fully masked during the service, and please use the restroom at home as much as possible. However, we will have the restrooms open in Kloss Hall should you need them!

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS! We need some ushers to help direct people. We also need people who are willing to come a little early and prepare communion, pouring juice into the small communion cups and cutting up the bread to be served. We ask that those who are serving in a volunteer capacity be fully vaccinated and if possible, be double-masked. All the leaders of the service, both pastors and musicians, will be fully vaccinated by May 2nd. Please let Chase (cmontara@ccsm-ucc.org) know if you are available to volunteer for this ministry and we will make a schedule so each service will be covered.

It will be so great to see some of you in person! Our 10:30AM livestream service will continue to broadcast.



WORSHIP WATCH PARTIES

Miss worshipping together? Here's an idea...

WATCH SUNDAY SERVICES WITH FRIENDS

One of the most meaningful parts of church is connecting with each other. We encourage you to invite a few friends to "attend" church with you, virtually. Here are the steps to make it happen:



- Schedule** a Zoom meeting to begin at 10:15 a.m.
- Invite** your friends to "join" you for church and email them your Zoom link.
- A little before 10:15 a.m. on Sunday, **queue up** the CCSM church service on your computer.
- In a separate Internet window, **log in** to your Zoom meeting and welcome your friends.
- Click** the green Share Screen button on the bottom of the Zoom window. A popup will let you select which application you want to share. **Select** the browser window that has the video in it. But wait! Before you click Share, look for two checkboxes down at the lower left corner of the sharing options tab. They're options to "Share computer sound" and "Optimize screen sharing for video clip." Make sure both boxes are checked. Now **click Share** and you're set.
- If need be, you can **adjust the volume** on the video player itself to make it easier to hear the other participants.
- Take a screenshot** of your watch party and we will feature it in the next Pine Tree!

If you have any questions or would like to test it out in advance, please call the church office and we will walk through it with you.

A NEW CHAPTER

David and Byron, our sanctuary guests, have embarked on an exciting new chapter of their lives. They moved back east last week! Some families from their village in Guatemala, who settled there several years ago, invited David and Byron to live with them. There is a full-time, well-paying roofing job awaiting David. Byron's new school has been full-time in person since last August. David is particularly happy that Byron will grow up with the people from his Guatemalan community who speak their native Q'eqchi language and share his values. It is our hope that David's goal of reuniting his entire family in the USA (his wife and two younger sons live in their home in rural Guatemala) will be easier to attain by living in a less expensive area with more consistent and higher paying work.

The move is such a great opportunity for David and Byron to be self-sufficient. We have done what sanctuary is meant to do—support people in their immigration journey and help them become self-sustaining.

Byron was recently awarded "Youth of the Year" by the Police Activities League, one of the non-profits that operates the learning hub where Byron has been logging on to school. Byron has also participated in PAL's twice-weekly after school soccer practices. Byron was chosen "Youth of the Year" because of the growth they have seen in him during this year of distance learning and because of his enthusiasm.



REIMAGINING CHURCH FOR THE FUTURE

In every age, the faithful have had to reimagine what church is, what church looks like, and what church means. We are in unprecedented territory right now, as we set our sights on returning in person to our sanctuary. The local community will gather in person, and will be joined by a growing virtual community.

When the pandemic first started and we broadcast the first service on Facebook live with an iPhone, we had over 200 devices signed in—it is difficult to know how many people that represents, because we have no idea how many people are viewing on one device. All the research shows that the data on online church attendance is “soft.” There is really no way to measure accurately how many people are connected to CCSM in any given week. However, we know that our audience has grown and we also know that many people have told us that they love

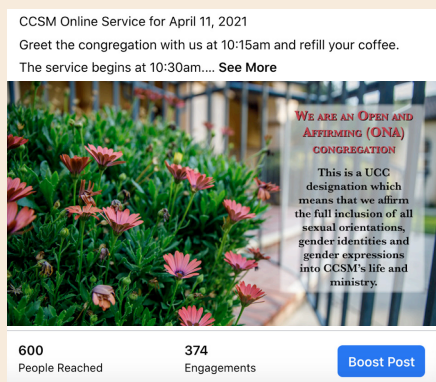
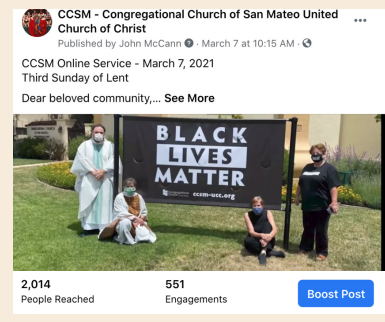
the convenience of the online services—that they are able to be much more consistent in tuning in. Over time, we have also noticed other trends. While the numbers in real time on Sunday mornings have

gone down, (except for Christmas and Easter of course) the number of views on Facebook and Youtube have increased. People are watching the services sometime during the week. In fact one person just told me this week that they take time by themselves and watch the service

when they can be really present—singing along with the songs, praying, being lifted up by the sermon, and enjoying the rich visuals each week. Our viewership has expanded dramatically geographically. We have people viewing from all over the country—at least 10 different states—people are sharing the services with friends. And we have people tuning in regularly from a number of countries now as well, including Australia, Macau, Taiwan, the Netherlands, Mexico, Sweden, the UK, Canada, Colombia, and more.

So when we come back in-person in September, we will be doing “**Hybrid Church**”—crafting a worship service that reaches the people physically gathered in addition to the people virtually gathered. “Worship” will be happening for people gathered and for people online.

We’ll be talking more about this over the next weeks and be assured that all the ministers and staff are working very hard to keep us connected and to plan for the adaptive change required for the church of the future.



HYBRID CHURCH CLASS

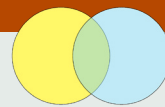
by Sheryl Johnson

Penny, Melanie and I have been participating in a really interesting seminar about how to do hybrid church—meaning church (not only worship but including that!) that involves both online and in-person options. This is something that I have been thinking a lot about as we have grown our virtual congregation which includes people not local to the Bay Area, people who live in the Bay Area but who find online programs more accessible and suited to their needs (due to disability, time pressures, long commute times, child-care responsibilities, etc.), and those who may participate in some things online and some things in person (i.e. who may travel at certain points in the year, who may find some online programs more convenient but prefer in-person programs

in some situations, etc).

Right now, with everyone being online for everything, there hasn't been much of a need to negotiate between these different needs, priorities, and interests. We haven't had to figure out how or whether to try to have some programs where some people are in the room and some are online, for example. But that time is coming and this course has been so helpful—even just to be alongside others from other churches working to figure out the very same things!

One concept that has been most helpful to me so far is to think about all aspects of the life of the church, from Sunday worship to pastoral care to small group book studies, and then think about them as falling into four categories: totally online, primarily online



with an in-person option, primarily in-person with an online option, and totally in-person. This doesn't mean that every program or part of the life of the church can only be offered in one way. We may have, for example, one book group that meets totally online and another book group that meets only in person. But it is very helpful to have these categories and to begin to think through how we will exist in a hybrid way as we go forward.

There may well be a lot of experimentation and negotiation as we strive together to figure this out—what is best suited to what format, which groups of people are primarily wanting to gather in what way for what purpose—but I am excited about the possibilities and very grateful for this course!

SHOWING UP FOR THE AAPI COMMUNITY

Dear sisters and brothers,

One of the strengths of CCSM is that it always stands united against racism. One of the ways we are doing this is with our sermon series in May focusing on Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI) solidarity. This sermon series is a response not only to what happened in March with the deadly shooting spree in Georgia against the AAPI community, but to the rise of hate against AAPI communities, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our sermons series in May is also in response to Asian American organizers and influencers that have been trying to sound the alarm over a dramatic spike in reports of anti-Asian racism over the last year, and have been frustrated by the lack of media and public attention.

Also, since those attacks in March, many Asian Americans have said their fears have largely been ignored by the mainstream media and by the general public. Many of my friends in the AAPI community have expressed frustration that it took the kind of shootings we saw in Atlanta in March for many outlets to even acknowledge that anti-Asian violence was on the rise.

I know I am grateful for Rev. Penny and for members in our church who are part of the AAPI community who have met, organized, and come up with the idea of having a sermon series focusing on AAPI solidarity. I am looking forward to hearing from their experience, and their expertise about anti-Asian racism. At the same time, I know this issue has so many layers and dimensions to it. As a community of faith we are just going to have to come back to this again and again, and I know that we will.

While the concept of a teachable moment can be very cliché since it's so often linked to real tragedies that cause death and suffering in communities of people of color, there is really no alternative but to use the racist attack in Atlanta as a teachable moment—starting with our sermon series—to be in better solidarity with the AAPI community.

The AAPI community has so often reminded me to see my own oppression or misrecognition as a window into understanding that the racism towards AAPI is systemic, as it is with the struggles in my own community, and therefore it requires solidarity of others if we want to change it.

So, sisters and brothers. I hope that many of us can show up for our sermons series in May, and make a big presence to show the AAPI members of our church that we stand by them, and that we strive to be in solidarity with them in every possible way.

I miss you all very much, and I am praying for the day where we will be embracing each other with open arms at church. Meanwhile, keep the faith and let us continue to pray for one another.

Peace and blessings!

Jorge



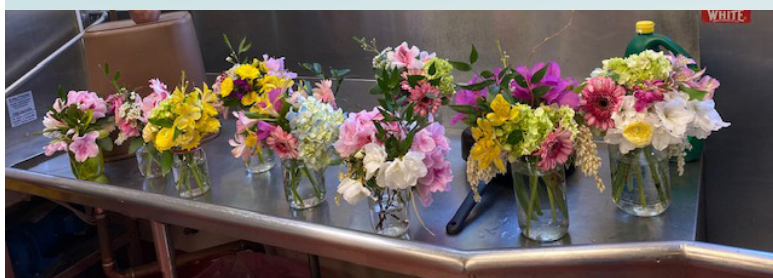
BUTTERFLIES AND FLOWERS SPREAD THE JOY OF EASTER

We hope you enjoyed the Easter butterflies and flowers this year. The Liturgical Arts Ministry (LAM) had a lot of fun setting up the kaleidoscope of butterflies in the chancel and spectacular floral arrangements. During the Saturday's Resurrection Journey the giant peonies added a touch of whimsy to the Memorial Garden. We couldn't believe how many flowers were brought by members to fill out the wire cross.

It takes many hands to fill the sacred space with beauty and love. Please thank this year's Easter Team: Marilyn Cintel, Alexandra Gillen, Kay & Mike Harris, Susan Lake Long, Laura & John McKenzie, Alice Morison, and Pam Ridlehuber.

Have you ever wondered what happens to all the flowers after the Easter floral extravaganza? This year the floral arrangements were broken down by Pam then redesigned by Alice

and Marilyn into beautiful posies. They delivered nine arrangements to CCSM members/friends. This is what repurposing looks like.



CCSM MUSIC NOTES

CHANCEL CHOIR REHEARSALS CONTINUE

We so miss making music together, and though online is not perfect, we are blessed to be together in community. Music is a healing gift for the mind, body, heart and soul, and whether you've been a regular choir member or are brand new to singing, all are welcome to join us.

We meet **Wednesday nights from 7:00-8:00 PM** on Zoom. Upcoming rehearsals will be on the following Wednesdays: **April 28, May 12, May 26.**

If you have any questions about how the rehearsals happen or would like to be added to the Zoom invitation and receive the music for the next rehearsal, please contact Lynnelle Bilsey at lbtmusings@gmail.com



Zoom choir rehearsal and send-off for Rolf and Robin Hansen in March

CARILLON BELL CHOIR

With the start of the in-person services, the Carillon Ringers will restart this Spring. Details are still being worked out and will be shared with the musicians as available. We will be having a "Ding-a-Ling" Social on **Thursday, May 13 from 7:30 - 8:30 pm on Zoom** to talk about plans and schedule. Please contact Lynnelle Bilsey if you are interested in participating with the bells at lbtmusings@gmail.com.

JOYFUL NOISE CHILDREN & YOUTH MUSIC

It was such a joy to see and hear the Joyful Noise choir for the first time in over a year during the April 18th service singing a special song for Earth Day. Joyful Noise will sing a special song in the **May 23** live-stream worship service. Children and youth are welcome to join the rehearsals with Children's Music Director Julie Berk. Please contact her at teach-julie@pacbell.net or 650.400.9808.

SONGS OF THE DAY BLOG

Music—as mentioned earlier—is a healing balm, especially during the extraordinary circumstances we've all experienced this past year. Music Director Lynnelle Bilsey began sending out a "Songs of the Day" email in March, 2020 just as the pandemic started, and is continuing to do so. If you've missed any emails or haven't had a chance to view them, you can check out the previous selections online at: tinyurl.com/Songs-of-the-Day. If you have any questions or would like to be added to the email distribution list please contact Lynnelle at lbtmusings@gmail.com.

EXCITING NEWS: CCSM'S NEW SANCTUARY PIANO

The music and leadership staff at CCSM were contacted by Lisa Mallette (Linda's daughter) via her arts organization City Lights Theater Company where a donor, Rita E. Sowash, had been a longstanding patron of the arts. Melanie Kimbel, Rita's daughter, was the executor of her mother's estate and knew that her mother had been interested in sharing her beloved piano—a mid-century Yamaha 7.5' grand—with an organization that would cherish it as much as she had. Melanie invited CCSM's music staff, Angela and Melanie, to visit and play the piano; they were immediately struck by the beautiful tone and quality of this fine instrument. Lynnelle coordinated the donation and project managed the move in collaboration with chair Alan Roby and the Music Ministry Committee.



Melanie Kimbel wrote to CCSM following the move sharing: "I hope your community enjoys many years playing and listening to the music of my mother's piano. She would be happy to know that it will be put to use for its intended purpose, entertaining the masses with its big, beautiful sound. I also hope to come to a performance at your church someday soon."

Many musicians have already enjoyed playing the new instrument and Lynnelle and Angela are coordinating a short series of piano recitals that will feature this wonderful donation in the coming months. Our beloved Steinway piano now resides in Kloss Hall and will be engaged with new musical adventures as soon as we are able to open up the church again.

—continued on next page—



From the Organ Bench



Lots of good news to share. ...

The Easter season was filled with beautiful music including the Good Friday Organ Meditation featuring a new composition by Angela "La Pieta." If you haven't had a chance to hear the mediation, it is still available on the CCSM's YouTube & Facebook channels.

Angela has been excited to be a part of the live-streaming team working with the staff on Sunday mornings since Palm Sunday. We now are enjoying cantored hymns with Melanie doing song-leading and Angela at the organ. Did you notice the new camera angles on April 18 during the postlude? What amazing pedal-work captured by Chuck, our videographer.

Coming this Spring, Angela will celebrate her 28th annual Spring Organ Recital. This will be an online concert and the date is TBD, so please be sure to watch CCSM's Connections for more information about the date, program and links. She is planning an all French music program this year.

In addition, both Nataly Pak and CCSM Organ Scholar Chase Olson are preparing Graduation recitals to share with the CCSM family. The dates for these are both TBD, but will be sometime in June and July. We will share more information as it's available. Both of these fine musicians are students of Angela's and both were accepted as Organ Performance Majors in the Oberlin Conservatory. In addition, they are also preparing to do double majors while at Oberlin.

MUSIC IN MAY HONORING THE AAPI COMMUNITY

by Melanie Dresbach, liturgical music minister

The 15 minutes of music before the Sunday service commences is called the "countdown music." The countdown music in May is selections from the AAPI community. This set of improvisations carries much meaning for me as my family has an extensive history in Asia. My mother was born in Kowloon to missionary parents and her first language was Chinese. Forced to leave China during the war, the family relocated to Manila where my grandfather, Leland E. Johnson, fostered the Pentecostal church movement. They were interned at Bilibid prison before being liberated at the end of the war. My youth was spent in Okinawa where my father had a position in radio and TV broadcasting with Far East Broadcasting Company. So, early in my life I was familiar with Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese languages and music. As a young adult studying music in college I served the St. Patrick Proto-Cathedral community. A large segment of that congregation were refugees from Vietnam. This inspired me to learn their language and music as a means of improving my communication skills with them.



So, following a couple of Bach pieces (as an introduction to our wonderful new piano), the countdown music for May honors the music of the Asian communities. I hope you will enjoy the Filipino love song "IKAW," "Malipayong Adlaw'ng, Natawhan," a piece by professor Elena G. Maquiso of the Philippines, and a piece composed by local San Francisco artist Fr. Ricky Manalo: "Ang Katawan ni Kristo." This is followed by a Chinese carol that we sang in Japanese as youth, and Japanese pieces "Sekai no Tomo," and "Mikotoba o kudasai." The final section are Chinese tunes: LE P'ING, HSUAN P'ING, and a Taiwanese hymn tune TOA-SIA.

The Music School

SING, MOVE, PLAY, & MORE...

THE MUSIC SCHOOL RESUMES IN-PERSON CLASSES IN JUNE!

That's right! After over a year of silence at the Music School, we will be singing, moving, and playing instruments once again OUTSIDE on the south lawn! Music Classes will be offered for children between the ages of 16 months and 8 years old. For more information, contact Julie Berk at teacherjulie@pacbell.net. or 650 400-9808, or at the Music School website at musicsschoolsanmateo.com.

SELF-ISOLATION DURING THE TIME OF COVID 19 (14" x 11")

BY CAROLYN SHAW

In July of 2020, after the pandemic shutdown, The Peninsula Museum of Art suddenly and permanently closed its doors in its beautiful space, and along with it, 23 artists' studios. At that time, I had been experimenting with the combination of cold wax and oil, a very malleable medium given to abstraction. This is one of the images that appeared.

The warm colors represent the encouraging vibrations I felt from the outside at the time – they are still on hold, but beginning to get stronger. —Carolyn



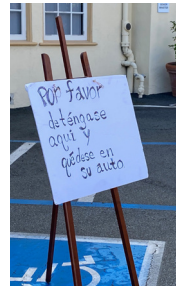
SATURDAY GROCERY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

by Melanie Dresbach

Thanks to the generosity of CCSM members, since the beginning of the pandemic we have been able to distribute grocery assistance and grocery gift cards to those CCSM members who are in need. Twice a month, Chase places an order for produce, beans, rice, milk, dairy products, and tortillas. When the goods arrive, they are placed into huge bags by David, Oscar, and Imelda in the CCSM kitchen. The CCSM parking lot is transformed into a pick-up and loading zone: a sign in Spanish is set out directing occupants of the waiting cars to stay in their vehicles. Volunteers set up tables to hold all of the bags and food products. When the cars arrive, the team of volunteers—Mercy Moyo, Melanie Dresbach, Linda Stoick, Penny Nixon, Annlee McGurk, Fred Kerwood, Diane Kalliam, Colleen Castillo, Sue Bullis, and Pablo Quintanilla, following the strict protocol of social distancing and mask-wearing—load the bags of groceries and the gift cards into the trunks of people in the program: completely contact-free!

At special times, such as Thanksgiving Day, Christmas, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and Easter, we've put together boxes of fun activities for the kids. We have been able to include supplies for online-education such as headsets, and most recently, water bottles and backpacks contributed by CCSM members as children return to in-person learning. These are distributed in addition to the groceries and gift cards at the Saturday Grocery Assistance Program.

The expressions of joy and gratitude on the faces of the recipients is priceless and makes this project so worthwhile. The CCSM community can be proud of the kindness and generosity they have shown during these difficult days of the pandemic.



THE INCREDIBLE WORK OF CCSM'S FACE MASK BRIGADE



The Face Mask Brigade has reached an amazing milestone of creating 5,000 masks for distribution during

the pandemic. This group of a dozen incredibly devoted seamstresses has worked tirelessly since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020. Genel Morgan and Jennifer Jacoby-Yeh meet weekly on ZOOM with the Brigade to keep the group productive, organized and supplied with materials. Although many offers of reimbursement have been made by the church, this group has been almost entirely self-sufficient apart from generous fabric donations from the Blanketeers. Linda Brockett and others have creatively sourced fabric from thrift stores and elsewhere, always being sure that the materials they use are of high quality. Members have viewed and shared numerous YouTube videos on the best mask patterns to ensure protection against the virus.

The Brigade recently learned that the Navajo Nation celebrated a milestone of their own, no new COVID cases and no deaths from COVID. Since the CCSM Mask Brigade has delivered hundreds of masks to the Navajo Nation, their efforts have contributed to this important milestone.

Masks have been donated to CCSM church members, Samaritan House pantry and clinic, Life Moves shelters, construction workers, Abundant Grace, Catholic Charities, Puente Farmworkers, Safe Sleeping in San Francisco, and other sites, including the South Central LA Health Clinic. And the requests for masks continue.

The Face Mask Brigade has been one of the most active ministries at CCSM during the pandemic and we applaud their dedication and generosity. A huge thank you to: Marian Faber, Jane Hazlett, Diane Musgrave, Christine San, Natalia Tsoi, Susan Campo, Rosemarie Pero, Linda Brockett, Jan Cavagnaro, Marilyn Cintel, Barb Carlin, Genel Morgan and Jennifer Jacoby-Yeh, and everyone who has contributed to this valuable ministry.

Marian Faber, on a visit from Jennifer Jacoby-Yeh. Marian has made 60 masks for the Mask Brigade and is getting so fast that she can now do 7-8 in a sitting, instead of her previous 4-5. She is enthusiastic about CCSM starting up outdoor services, and plans to come by shuttle from the Magnolia where she lives.



The "In the Spirit of Sharing" group has been meeting weekly since August 2020. We came together as a way to connect with ourselves, with Spirit and with each other, as we navigate the challenges of the pandemic. Each week, we listen to music selections, read a few poems, watch a short video and share our reflections with each other. One of our selections was a "This I Believe" essay, which was a project started in the 1950's by Edward R. Murrow. I asked the group to consider writing their own essays about what they believe. And since I never ask anyone to do anything I wouldn't be willing to do myself, I wrote my own "This I Believe" and here it is:

"I BELIEVE IN FRENCH PATISSERIE"

by Chase Montara

I believe that one single piece of French pastry can make you cry. It will have to be a chou a la crème and it will have to come from the French patisserie at the Santa Cruz Farmers Market. It will need to have a light pistachio crème and be served by the same woman who baked it, who speaks with a delicate French accent and wears a black and white striped apron. And just before, you will have been at the beach at Big Basin with your dog, a gentle, sweet and loyal dog, who could easily get 400 letters of reference for a job she is not quite qualified for. And it will help if the day is crisp and sunny, and gently caressed by a sweet onshore wind. And it will also help if it is before the massive wildfire that left the hillside scrub charred and smelling of smoke, but that is not requisite. What you will need is the willingness for your heart to open like a flower in slow-motion and a few heartbreaks in your past that still need healing.

I believe that the most compelling part of the human condition is our ability to tell ourselves stories, and to believe the stories we tell ourselves. And that knowing that this is true is pretty important information to have in order to get by in life. I believe pretty much everything is story, narrative, myth. When I remember that this is all story, I can pull myself back from the brink long enough to gather my wits like scattered baby chicks and encourage them, more or less, back to more orderly behavior. But I also know that the stories themselves are a penetrating reality, and can be as heavy and permanent as the cement shoes you might wear for a trip to the bottom of the East River, or as light and impermanent as your breath on a slow walk home from church while a gentle snow falls on a Christmas Eve.

I believe that when rats make themselves a massive nest in the engine compartment of your car, a nest that blocks the air hoses and causes it to lose power and leaves you



stranded on a dark road in winter, that this is quite possibly evidence that life is, once again, conspiring against you. I also know that this is not where life will leave you. Your friend will come and get you without having to be asked. She will bring with her a cup of hot herbal tea and two hard boiled eggs and hand them to you in a brown lunch bag, like your mother would if she were still able. And she will know you well enough to know that you can crumble under the weight of a broken-down car at the end of a long day and so, she will act swiftly and with love on your behalf.

I believe that your mother's dementia will come and burn off everything harsh that has ever passed between you, if you allow it. It will smooth away the rough edges of resentment on both sides, and settle the muddied pond water of history to a crystal-clear love. It will be like love reborn, pure and uncluttered, carrying with it a new, economical language that has no words for why or should. And while I believe that dementia is evidence that God is in over His head, I also believe that for the barriers we have constructed against love to break down, drastic measures are sometimes called for. However necessary it might be, I also know that I am not brave enough yet to contemplate going through a complete loss of memory myself in order to see who ends up loving me in the same way when all else is gone.

I believe that not every wildfire can be solved with a French pastry or every broken heart with a sweet onshore breeze. I believe that not every story is helpful, and that it is possible to unlace our shoes and step out of them. I believe that it can take a lifetime to get the stories right. I believe a loyal dog is as invaluable as a friend and a hot cup of tea on a dark night. I believe that erosion sometimes uncovers buried treasure. And that God might need a hand now and then. I believe that when your heart is open and not all the way healed, you are taking a risk every day just to be out in the world with the other humans. But if you can open your heart just a little, the pistachio crème will melt in your mouth like love.

VOICES FOR VISTA VIRTUAL CONCERT

MAY 6 • 5:30 - 7:00 PM

Experience an evening of music, song and spoken word in support of Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired. There will be something for everyone—opera, show tunes, and popular music, plus stories, poetry and more. The best part? You'll be supporting the critical programs that Vista Center provides to people who are blind and visually impaired. These programs and services, many of which are only available through Vista Center, include low vision evaluations, assistance with accessibility for employment and education, support groups and activities for people of all ages. You'll enjoy an evening of entertainment while you're making a difference in the lives of people in our community. Click [here](#) to get your ticket, or call 650-858-0202.



Music and Art was able to meet most months during this extended COVID pandemic via Zoom. Anne Fuller, co-chair, assisted the members with their electronic connections while

Pat Pepper co-chaired the meetings. In **OCTOBER** we all shared how we had been coping with sheltering in place to date. So many had read books which led to **NOVEMBER** being the month we all shared titles, authors and a brief sentence recommending it to others. Pat Pepper compiled the list and emailed it to the membership. We enjoyed the lovely voice of Cindy Vogt in **DECEMBER** as she sang solos of the Christmas season and ended with group singing of selected carols. In **FEBRUARY** we had a wonderful presentation by Angela Kraft Cross. She gave us details of how the final movement of her recent original composition ended up being performed by the Washington National Cathedral's organist as the Postlude for the Presidential Inaugural Prayer Service. For **APRIL**, violinist, Chris Yeh performed a wonderful program of solos by Bach, Massenet and Elgar, which was enjoyed by all. All meetings include a brief devotional and business meeting.

Our final meeting of the season will be held at noon on **MAY 21**. Plans are being finalized, so stay tuned, watch the Sunday Bulletin for the announcement and details and be prepared to join this wonderful Affinity Group of CCSM.

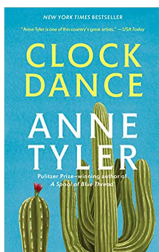
—Mary Ann Notz, Publicity chair

FIRST TUESDAY BOOK GROUP

First Tuesday Book Group meets on the first Tuesday of most months at 7:30 PM on Zoom. All are welcome. We are talking about meeting in person, but not driving at night has been fully embraced! We have worked to find titles that are readily available through the public library system through your local or town library, in spite of the Covid inconvenience. Get your requests in early... everything takes TIME. If you have any questions or concerns, let me know at s_stoehr@hotmail.com. In the meantime, Happy Reading.

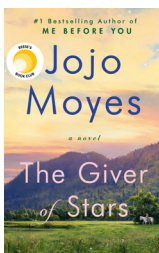
MAY 4: CLOCK DANCE BY ANNE TYLER

"In Tyler's effortless, uncluttered prose, the novel beautifully explores an older woman's search for meaning and agency in her life."—The Christian Science Monitor



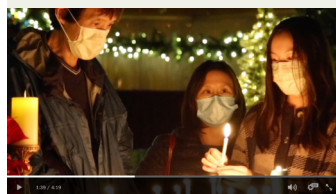
JUNE 1: THE GIVER OF STARS BY JOJO MOYES

"Rich in history, with well-developed characters and a strong sense of place... For fans of Sara Gruen's Water for Elephants or Catherine Marshall's Christy." —Library Journal (starred review)



ENJOY THESE AGAIN...

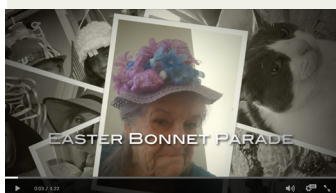
In recent weeks we have had some wonderful videos contributed to by members and friends of CCSM... a collage of our community caring for each other by wearing masks, put to the song "You Are the Face of God"; a Palm Sunday celebration; an Easter Bonnet Parade; and an Easter Resurrection Journey montage. Here they are gathered for you to click on and enjoy again. Simply click on the image to play the video.



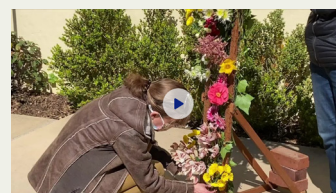
You Are the Face of God



Palm Sunday "Processional"



Easter Bonnet Parade



Resurrection Journey

WORD OF THE DAY: loggia | LOH-jə

noun; origin: Italian, mid-18th century. A gallery or room with one or more open sides, especially one that has one side open to the garden.

Example of *loggia* in a sentence: **After the pandemic, the CCSM community greeted each other warmly on the loggia on the way to Coffee Hour.**



THE EASTER RESURRECTION JOURNEY

The Saturday before Easter this year, April 3, many of you came to participate in an embodied (and socially distanced) resurrection journey. From putting flowers into the wire cross, hunting for Easter eggs, taking a "resurrection seed" to plant at home, pray and simply be in the familiar space of CCSM, this Holy Saturday was an unusual and special blessing as we moved towards our second pandemic Easter. Once again Chris Yeh captured the day in his beautiful photos.



Joys and Concerns

CCSM Pastoral Care Team

Please share your prayers with the pastoral care team: Rev. Dr. Penny Nixon, Rev. Jorge Bautista, and Rev. Sheryl Johnson. 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 online prayer request**, by **contacting us via staff emails** listed in your bulletin or on the website, ccsm-ucc.org. You may also contact the church office at 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 GRATITUDE

"We are happy to share the good news that we have our first grandchild! **Perry Prather Siami** was born on February 26 to our daughter, **Elizabeth** and our son-in-law **John Siami**. He was a big baby: 8 pounds and 15 ounces. We feel very blessed!" —**Alison Schwandt**



Laura Smith and **Krista Enos** are so thankful for the healthy birth of their son, **Cooper Timothy Enos-Smith** on 2/21/21.



Congratulations to **Leslie and Krystal Burndon** on the birth of their son, **Theodore Daniel Burndon** who was born on February 8th. All are doing well and they can't wait to introduce Theo to his church family!



Prayers of gratitude that **Oscar Rosa**, our custodian and dear friend, and his wife and our friend **Imelda**, have recovered completely after being extremely ill with COVID-19. Thank you, God!

Prayers of gratitude that the **Navajo Nation** recently celebrated zero new cases of coronavirus and zero deaths. **CCSM's Face Mask Brigade** has sent hundreds of masks to the Navajo Nation and so, has contributed to this wonderful outcome!

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Michele Merfeld Hale's nephew's infant son, **Trey**, has come through treatment for leukemia and is doing very well! Her college roommate **Catherine** in Fresno, who has been receiving treatment for ovarian cancer, is doing very well, too. Continue prayers for complete and ongoing recoveries.

Prayers of gratitude that **Rosemarie Pero** is recovering well after having broken her ankle.

PRAYERS OF LOVE AND STRENGTH

Prayers of comfort and strength for the family of **John McCann** as they deeply mourn the loss of John's father, **John McCann III**, who died April 19 after a short illness.

Prayers of comfort for **Karen Wigren-Hanna** who lost her mother **Barbara Wigren** on March 15th. Prayers also for **Kayla** and **James Hanna** who grieve for their grandmother.

Ivan Raikov asks for prayers for the soul of his father **Georgi Raikov**, who passed away from COVID on March 9. Prayers also for Georgi's wife **Lili**, who is now on her own, and for the rest of the family.

Prayers of final rest for **George Vail's** nephew, **Bill Montgomery**, who passed away on March 5 after suffering a massive stroke. Prayers also for George as he mourns this loss.

Prayers for the family of **Chuck Brown** (wife **Joan** and daughter/son-in-law **Kathy** and **Tony Gallo**). On March 1, Chuck passed away peacefully after a very brief stay at Sunrise of San Mateo while under Hospice care. Chuck was an enthusiastic member of CCSM and loved to be as close to the pulpit as possible!

Prayers for the family of **Katherine Creag**, friends of **Troy Grabow**, who died unexpectedly on February 10th. Katherine leaves behind three children and her husband, **Bill**, in New York City.

Prayers for **Sharon Tobin** and **Genel Morgan** whose dear friend **Dorie** passed away peacefully after a 20-year battle with cancer. Prayers for Dorie's family as well. Dorie was a bright light in this world.

PRAYERS OF HEALING

Prayers for the family members of **Carol Boes** as they face some health challenges.

Prayers for **Lynn Nieberding's**

cousin, **Mark Mackey**, who heads a Christian missionary school in the Ukraine. He fell, sustaining a serious brain injury. Prayers also for his wife, **Joanne**.

Prayers for **Chella Montes' grand-son Jacob** who is in Stanford Hospital and may be facing surgery.

Prayers for **Marcos Gonzalez**, brother of **Lily Gonzalez** (nursery mom, CCSM staff member) who has now had surgery and is recovering at home.

Continued prayers for **Don Mullery, Mike Mullery's** brother, and the rest of the Mullery family. Don entered hospice at his home in Illinois on March 15. Recently he is doing somewhat better.

Prayers for **Robert** and **Angela Kraft Cross' friend Marilyn VerMeulen** who was recently diagnosed with cancer. Please pray that the chemotherapy buys her some quality time.

Prayers of comfort and strength for **Genel Morgan's friend Shawn**, who has started treatment for the return of brain cancer after 5 ½ years.

Prayers for **Bill Daniels** as he recovers from the difficult side effects of the radiation process following his neck cancer surgery. He is recovering at home.

Continued prayers for **Julie Lenden's dad, Reggie Barnes**, who had surgery for stomach cancer on March 2. Prayers too for his wife **Suzanne** and also for Julie.

Prayers for **Cheryle Matteo's** oldest brother, **Lou**, who is fighting leukemia. The cancer is now in remission and he is hoping for a bone marrow transplant soon. Prayers for Cheryle as well.

Continued prayers for **Linda Stoick's friend Gail**.

Prayers for **Morgan Anderson**, niece of **Jim Berthelsen**. Morgan graduated college last summer and was diagnosed with stage two lym-

Joys and Concerns (cont.)

phoma in November. Prayers for full recovery.

Lorna Groundwater asks for continued prayers that **Jim** and all in his facility remain free from COVID-19.

Prayers for **David Meissner** and **Gene Chelberg** as together they face the challenge of David's Parkinson's disease through the foundation of their love for God and each other.

Prayers for **Chuck Ruthroff, Don**

and Jonathan's brother, as he is continuing to undergo cancer treatment; prayers for all their loved ones as well.

Prayers of peace and strength to **Ruth Black** and family as Ruth continues on hospice at Brookdale Assisted Living with MS and dementia.

Continuing prayers of strength, encouragement, and healing for our beloved brothers and sisters: **Bill Melis, Dr. Jim Groundwater and**

family, Bill Daniels, Marjorie Griffin, Thelma Kromhout, Rev. Travis Woodmansee's mother Cathy, Mike and Kay Harris' friend Mary Helen McMahon, Cathy Latta, Dottie Scott, Veril Phillips' granddaughter Eva, Oakley Hewitt, Morgan Anderson, and others as they walk their unique journeys with cancer and other health challenges.

CLIMATE CRISIS! WHAT CAN I DO? WHAT CAN CCSM DO?



Actually—you and we can do a lot! Action always starts with commitment.

First, CCSM's EEJ Ministry (Energy, Environmental Justice) asks that you make **a personal statement of commitment and commit to action(s)**. Please copy and put it somewhere as a reminder of personal action.

A PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY

I recognize the beauty of God's creation, the planet Earth, our home. I recognize that climate change is real, primarily human-caused and threatens our future. I recognize that the ecology of Earth is complex and interconnected, that humans are one of many species living on earth and that the quality of the environmental health of our planet is the responsibility of humans.

As a Christian and global citizen, I am committed to living a lifestyle that is sustainable and in the best long-term interests of global environmental health and respectful of all life on earth, current and future.

I WILL DO MY BEST TO:

- **acknowledge** that the resources of the earth are finite, not unlimited.
- **educate** myself about and practice environmental justice as a foundation of social justice.
- fully **understand** the consequence of my life-style decisions on resources and sustainability.
- **vote and commit** my resources of time and money to causes in alignment with my values.
- **tread lightly** on the earth leaving a minimal environmental trace.

SPECIFICALLY, I WILL DO MY BEST TO:

- **reduce, reuse, and recycle** materials and products used by me / my family.
- help **maintain clean air and water** and the natural condition of land.
- **reduce or eliminate using fossil fuels** and their products.

Second, EEJ is preparing in discussion with Penny Nixon and the Board of Directors **a collective CCSM resolution/pledge** for a congregational vote at the Annual meeting in June. Stay tuned for discussions of that proposal in coming weeks.

SOME RESOURCES FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ACTIONS AND FOR REDUCING YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT:

For Youth:

climatekids.nasa.gov/how-to-help

For Adults and families:

nytimes.com/guides/year-of-living-better/how-to-reduce-your-carbon-footprint

bbc.com/future/article/20181102-what-can-i-do-about-climate-change

en.reset.org/act/12-things-you-can-do-climate-change-0

If you missed Sheryl's April 18 sermon, **PROMISED LAND, PROMISED WILDERNESS**, you can read it [HERE](#); it is chock full of history and context for the climate crisis we find ourselves in today. (Or you can hear her preach it [here](#).)

This sixth pandemic Pine Tree finds us perched on the brink of once again being in each other's company. May will bring the first in-person outdoor worship services and Homecoming in September is our hoped-for date for full return. The word "hybrid" will be getting lots of use. Adventure safely!

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THE POSY POSSE DELIVERS JOY

The Ministry of Liturgical Arts is relaunching Posy Posse this spring. This outreach to members and friends of CCSM is a way to share beauty and connection.

There are several ways you can be part of the Posse:

- ❁ donating small vases or jars
- ❁ assisting with delivering posies
- ❁ making small arrangements
- ❁ contributing flowers from your garden

To help guide our deliveries, please call the church office about your celebrations as well as cares and concerns. Your calls will also help update the Sunday bulletin's Joys and Concerns.

We look forward to expanding the Posy Posse. Thank you for your support!

