

CCSM PINE TREE

VOL. 71, #1 | 2022 • ONLINE / SEASON OF LENT



Finding Meaning in our Unlikely World

lenten worship series

SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS IN THE SEASON OF LENT

March 6	CELEBRATORY CREATURES	Sheryl
	<i>Introduction to our Lenten series using the themes from Sagan's book.</i>	
March 13	4,000 WEEKS	Penny
	<i>4,000 weeks is the average number of weeks we live. What are our weekly rituals; how we mark time; a weekly ritual like Sunday church.</i>	
March 20	REDO'S RITUALS	Penny
	<i>Confession/apologies, atonement and reconciliation... how we make these ongoing rituals in our lives.</i>	
March 27	COMING OF AGE: Maiden/Mother/Crone, Youth/Warrior/Sage	Jorge and Penny
	<i>Most every culture over the ages has had coming of age rituals—we'll look at the ones we have, and the ones we may need—like a ritual to honor or mark becoming an elder.</i>	
April 3	ANNIVERSARIES AND BIRTHDAYS	Penny
	<i>On an anniversary we are in the same place in relationship to the sun (earth in the same place)—we mark time AND we mark change; how to deepen our yearly rituals like this to have more meaning, more spiritual depth.</i>	
April 10	PALM BRANCHES AND ROSE PETALS	Penny
	<i>We are missing the Jewish ritual of Yahrzeit in Christianity; rituals around death; preparing for death... Jesus is preparing for death on Palm Sunday...they celebrate who he is before he dies.</i>	
April 17	EASTER! RESURRECTION RITUALS	Penny
	<i>How do we mark resurrections in our own lives? How do we let spring give us hope each and every year? What was remarkable about the meaning of the resurrection of Jesus that we can weave into our own lives?</i>	

FINDING MEANING IN OUR UNLIKELY WORLD

by Penny Nixon

This Lenten season at CCSM is all about bringing more joy, meaning and connection to spirit into our daily lives. Our sermon series is based on a book by Sasha Sagan (daughter of the famous Carl Sagan) entitled *For Small Creatures Such as We: Rituals for finding Meaning in our Unlikely World*. The title comes from something her mother wrote: "For small creatures such as we, the vastness is bearable only through love."

In Sasha's home growing up, there was no conflict between science and spirituality. Logic, evidence, and proof did not detract from the feeling that something was transcendent—quite the opposite. It was the source of its magnificence.

Sasha shows throughout her book that humans are very good celebrators, in fact, people are the best at it in the whole wide world. Other species "don't plan parties. They don't prepare feasts. They don't wear special outfits, put up special decorations, or say special words. They hardly even take the day off. In every inhabited corner of the earth, human beings have created rituals to give order and meaning to existence." She says,

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

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

These past months have been meaningful but also challenging for the children, youth, and family ministry, mostly because we were again forced to shift online for a few weeks in January. However, creativity prevailed and we hosted several game nights, movie nights, and online classes and discussions. We are so grateful to have been able to be together in-person for the Advent season. Special events included a wonderful Las Posadas event with many children and families from both Wednesday and Sunday in attendance, a creative Advent candle ritual each week where children and adults shared their own prayers of hope, peace, joy, and love, and special crafts, discussions, and service projects to mark the season.

Looking toward the season of Lent, we are so happy to be able to have our weekly programs in person on both Wednesdays and Sundays. Our Wednesday attendance has been very strong and we have begun integrating more thematic and discussion-focused components. A special event this spring will be a **guest speaker from the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity**. They have created a youth zine with a focus on stories of migration and will be coming to share their work with us and help the youth to create their own art and reflections about themes related to immigration and social justice in conversation with faith.

On Sundays, we continue to have programs for various age groups, namely **free play (pre-kindergarten), Godly Play (K-2nd grade), Holy Troublemakers (3rd-5th grade), Mid-High (6th-8th grades), and 60 Minutes (High School)**. Godly Play is a Montessori-based storytelling technique that allows children to learn the central Biblical stories and then creatively imagine and wonder about those stories, allowing them to deeply connect to these themes. They then are invited to use creative media like art supplies and the storytelling props to re-tell and respond to their stories themselves. Holy Troublemakers is a wonderful curriculum based on a book by Daneen Akers that profiles different important leaders in the movement for faith and social justice from all around the world. Each week, the kids get to learn the story of a different figure, ask questions, and then participate in activities related to their life and work.

Our **mid-high group** has been exploring the topic of **spirituality and mental health** as well as **faith and service** this year. They have explored different spiritual practices, meditation, yoga, journaling, art, prayer, and scripture in relationship to the demands and realities of their lives like stress, anxiety, isolation, and social

pressure. Service projects have also continued to be an important part of our programming with this group and it is very much connected to the theme of supporting mental health by serving others as a way to also support individual and collective wellness.



CCSM Kids Advent Program

Our **60 Minutes** group has been very focused on political, health policy, and educational issues this year. They have engaged deeply in questions of political divisions, health disinformation, vaccine policies, educational philosophy, and the lives they see ahead for themselves in the future. Each time, they choose their own topic and it is amazing to see how passionate they are about not only their personal lives but also issues in society and the world at large.

A new program we are hoping to offer this spring is called **Our Whole Lives**. This is a progressive sexuality education program created by the Unitarian Universalist (UU) Association and the United Church of Christ. It is highly acclaimed and helps people of all ages connect their values, faith, and sexuality in a way that is affirming, expansive, and rooted in respect for self and others. Our friends at the San Mateo UU church have been offering this program for many years and we are excited to partner with them this spring to offer the program jointly for the first time. There are specific curricula for all ages, but this year we will be offering the program for those in 5th and 6th grades. The program will meet for 5 weeks on Sundays, beginning this spring. Please contact Sheryl (sjohnson@ccsm-ucc.org) with any questions.

This is also the time of year that we invite our graduating high school seniors (and any graduate students or people entering graduate studies from the congregation) to **apply for scholarships**. We are so grateful to be able to continue to journey with our young people and to show CCSM's support for them in tangible ways by helping to fund their

—Continued on next page—



Guests from SafeSpace SanMateo sharing about youth mental health

FINDING MEANING IN OUR UNLIKELY WORLD ... from page 1

"We all need to mark time. We all need community. We all need to bid hello and goodbye to our loved ones."

She admits that the drawback to being secular is the lack of a "shared culture." I think what she means by that is that she is not part of an intentional community where rituals are performed together, enacted on a yearly cycle. It's tempting when you are part of a community, like we are at CCSM, to take our regular rituals for granted and sometimes fail to appreciate their power and meaning in our lives.

While we have these rituals as a community, what I hope in this Lenten series is to increase what there is to be joyful about in our daily lives—to mark some of the small things we do and recognize them as rituals so that our awareness of the sacred and transcendent might be more finely attuned. "We have been celebrating the same two things since the dawn of time," Sasha writes, "astronomy and biology. Our vast universe provides us with enough profound and beautiful truths to live a spiritually fulfilling life."

As we are moving into a different phase of learning to live with COVID, returning to less restricted lives, we are provided an opportunity to hit the refresh button—to do things a little differently, weaving into our daily lives some of the lessons we may have learned during these long two years of the pandemic. Sasha wrote this book because she "wants to create moments that make us feel united with other Earthlings, without the dogma that divides us."

This Lenten series flows from our Epiphany series—faith beyond belief, barriers, boundaries and borders. We look for connection to faith in our everyday lives, in rituals that we already practice and in some new ones we may create. Don't miss out on what we hope will be a meaningful Lenten journey for all of us!

Penny on Sabbatical

Penny is currently on sabbatical. She'll be back in worship on March 13.

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

—continued from page 2—

education. We will have an **informational session after church on March 6** (please RSVP by March 4th). Applications and information are available here:

tinyurl.com/2022-Grad-CCSM

tinyurl.com/2022-Undergrad-CCSM

As we consider spring programming, we are in the process of hopefully offering a **youth retreat** this spring as well as having a good contingent attend the UCC's **Camp Tamarack**. Here are the dates for the summer sessions:

Junior Camp (grades 4-6) July 17-23

Jr. High Camp (grades 7-9) July 24-31

Sr. High Camp (grades 10-12) July 31-August 6

Please do consider attending and please let Sheryl know if you decide to go so that she can help arrange carpools and make connections with other CCSM folks! sjohnson@ccsm-ucc.org

Other special events upcoming include:

Sunday, February 27 at 10:30am: Kids' Mardi Gras Party! Celebrate with seasonal games and activities and learn about how this day helps to prepare us for the season of Lent!

Sunday, March 6 at 12pm: 12th Grade CCSM Scholarship info session and lunch (contact Sheryl for more information/RSVP by Friday, March 4 to sjohnson@ccsm-ucc.org)

Sunday, March 20 in the afternoon: Youth hike in Edgewood Preserve Park (Redwood City)

Thursday, April 6: Youth help to lead Maundy Thursday service

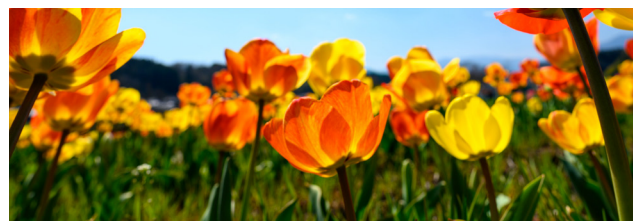
EVERY WEDNESDAY NIGHT!
7:15-8:15pm

crafts songs more
games friends activities

All kids and youth are welcome!

parents/guardians do not need to attend the Wednesday Spanish service

Adult volunteers are welcome - please contact sjohnson@ccsm-ucc.org for more information.



CREATING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY... WHAT CONNECTS YOU?

by Diane Kalliam

When I began attending CCSM the size of the congregation was overwhelming. I wondered if I would be able to make friends and develop a sense of community in such a setting. Fortunately for me I was invited to the Time Out for Lunch group and began signing up for Pick-A-Party events. Problem solved!

As the church begins again the process of re-opening to in-person events, I thought this would be a good opportunity for us to think/dream about ways we can connect/reconnect as a church family. What things from the past do we want to revive? Are there new programs we can create to draw us together? As the lead for Congregational Care I am looking for help. **I am hoping to get a few folks together to brainstorm and gather ideas about the coming back together process and how we can draw us together.** If you have ideas or might want to participate in such an effort let me know and we'll get moving. Please know that you are not signing up for anything permanent or long term. We are just looking for ideas and opinions right now.

You can reach me at dkalliam@gmail.com or at 415-279-1359. Thanks so much.



art by Carol Aust

INTRODUCING OUR NEW MODERATOR!

by Julie Lenden

Thank you for entrusting me as your Moderator. For those of you who don't know me, I grew up in Pasadena, CA and went to UCSB for college. My professional career then took me to Boston, where I worked for high-tech Public Relations agencies at the beginning of the Internet boom (1995). I met my husband Keith around this time and we moved to the Bay Area in 1999. While consulting for technology start-ups was exciting and a great learning opportunity, in 2001 I decided to transition to the non-profit sector, directing the fundraising and/or communications for March of Dimes, Arbor Bay School and most recently Stanford. One of my favorite parts of working for non-profits is building community amongst volunteers who are so passionate about the organizations for which they are offering their time and energy. And there's no one more passionate than the people who are invested in CCSM! I'm truly looking forward to serving as your Moderator. To connect with me or any of the 2022 Board slate, please send an email to cmontara@ccsm-ucc.org and Chase will direct it to the appropriate person.

I would be remiss if I did not share that Keith and I also experience great joy as the parents of two high-school aged girls: Claire is a Senior and Noelle is a Freshman. In my spare time, I love to hike, Zumba, summer in Northern Michigan, play games (our current rotation is Monopoly Deal, Azul, Anomia and Catan), read, and binge watch excellent television (Ted Lasso, and Maisel to name a few :).



JOB OPPORTUNITY AT CCSM

Marketing Communications Manager - Part Time

CCSM has posted a job opening for a part-time Marketing Communications Manager. Please spread the word to your network if you know someone you think might be a good fit. You can find more information on the [CCSM website](#).

Thank you!



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Here are the dates for CCSM's Board of Directors meetings going forward in 2022. The meetings are open and anyone who wishes to attend is welcome.

March 13	August TBD
April 10	September 11
May 15	October 9
June—no mtg	November 13
July 17	December 11



Energy + Environmental Justice

Your EEJ ministry is active in many ways:

- ◆ The Going Solar project has started with permit applications submitted to the City of San Mateo by our contractor Sandbar Electric. Upon complying with additional information requested, we expect to begin construction sometime this spring. Jim Granucci is the Going Solar project manager.
- ◆ Our Climate activist Gary White continues to lead and provide current, practical and inspiring information about what we can do as individuals and what we can do as a church to help mitigate the Climate Crisis. See *Climate Corner* in Connections and communication in church bulletins, and the *Becoming a Climate Church* column here in the Pine Tree. A prominent national leader on Climate issues, Rev. Fletcher Harper (the Executive Director of Green Faith, an interfaith environmental coalition) has accepted an invitation to participate in a second hour program at CCSM on April 3.
- ◆ Our senior high member, Zoe Neil is working on her

Girl Scout Gold Award which will involve environmentalism at CCSM. Stay tuned for updates from Zoe on her effort.

- ◆ EEJ is in discussion with Building and Grounds to analyze how our landscaping and plantings on our campus can become more drought tolerant.
- ◆ CCSM with support from EEJ is planning to participate in an upcoming We-Love-Earth-Day Fair on April 16. Stay tuned for more information.
- ◆ Rev. Dr. Sheryl Johnson, our environmental clergy liaison, is coordinating with EEJ and Rev. Penny Nixon for an upcoming sermon series and reading on Creation Care. Our UCC denomination is taking a lead among protestant denominations for environmental stewardship under the banner Creation Care.

Interested in learning more or in joining our ministry? For information, please contact Warren Long: longlake15@sbcglobal.net or Rev. Sheryl Johnson: sjohnson@ccsm-ucc.org

BECOMING A CLIMATE CHURCH

A COLUMN BY EEJ MINISTRY • VOL. 1, NO. 4

by Gary White

In this fourth installment of our ongoing Energy, Environmental Justice column, we would like to introduce an important interfaith organization that helps faith communities around the world address the climate crisis. Called **GREENFAITH**, the organization is among the world's oldest religious-environmental groups. It works in the areas of education and training, local organizing, and campaigning. It serves as a central informational resource and organizing hub for churches to build and expand their commitment to creation care. We are proud to announce that CCSM recently joined the GreenFaith community as an active climate church.

Established 30 years ago in 1992 and based in New York City, GreenFaith is led by the activist Episcopal priest, **Rev. Fletcher Harper**. As GreenFaith's Executive Director, Rev. Harper is a pioneer of the global religious environmental movement.

He helped spearhead the ongoing faith-based fossil fuel divestment movement and continues to organize faith turnouts at major climate mobilizations. Rev. Harper is a co-founder of **SHINE**, an international campaign that supports women in community-led renewable energy initiatives in Africa and India. Additionally, he is the author of the book, *[GreenFaith: Mobilizing God's People to Protect the Earth](#)*.

We are excited to announce that Rev. Harper has agreed to join us live for a **SECOND HOUR EEJ EVENT ON SUNDAY, APRIL 3**. He will share additional information on the work of GreenFaith as well as outline the many activities churches can coordinate to advance their climate work. Details on this special event as well as a registration form will be sent out in the coming weeks.

We hope to see you at this highly anticipated Zoom event. As always, we encourage readers to send comments and questions about each installment. You can email them to (gwhite2711@gmail.com). Thanks.



photo: Ryan Roderick, Bellar

YOUR TREASURER'S PERSPECTIVE

by Veril Phillips, Treasurer

Breaking News. Planning and patience paid off! At the congregational meeting in January, when reviewing the budget, we announced that we hoped for and expected funds from the Employee Retention Credit (ERC) program totaling about \$149,000. We are delighted to report that those funds arrived. Added to the \$63,000 received a few months ago, **our total revenue from this program is just under \$212,500.** ERC is one of the federal government's pandemic relief programs. The Congregation approved the 2022 budget, with its significant shortfall of about \$225,000, knowing the Board's plan to use significant cash reserves to fund our major goals for 2022. Now that the ERC funds have arrived, we will not need to dip as far into those reserves. Your patience and confidence in our Board and leadership team is appreciated and never taken for granted.

More about ERC. These funds were late in coming because of a huge backlog at the IRS in processing claims (and tax returns!) due to the pandemic. ERC encouraged small businesses, including non-profits, to retain employees. Very early in the pandemic your Board of Directors set a high priority to maintain all clergy and staff at full pay throughout this period. We are very pleased to receive this assistance in order to fulfill that commitment. We don't normally think of the church, our church, as a small business. But did you know that CCSM was incorporated as a religious organization under the laws of the State of California on December 12, 1892? We have been a small corporation now for 129 years! We are indeed regarded by most governmental agencies as a small business.

The Budget for 2023 and beyond. Receiving the remaining ERC funding helps us through the pandemic without question. But the Board and Finance Committee are not under the illusion that our fiscal issues are solved. The fact remains that those were one-time funds. They will not help us meet our goals long-term. For example, our hybrid services are a huge benefit for people, whether local or not, that we never envisioned reaching prior to the pandemic. Our entire community enjoys the ability to view recordings of services they had to miss and many members aren't in a position to return to the sanctuary in person. But conducting hybrid services is

an expensive undertaking – both from added personnel and added responsibilities for other personnel. During 2022, your Board will work to identify new sources of revenue in order to meet our goals while minimizing the alternative, which is to cut expenses. In the meantime, please know we have other programs that have benefitted from this type of temporary funding model in the past.



The 2021 financial year. After making a few year-end adjustments to the financial records for 2021, we ended the year with a shortfall (expenses exceeding revenue) of about \$10,500, compared to a projected shortfall of about \$82,500. We received a \$50,000 bequest from Adrienne Mitchell which helped the budget significantly last year alongside the generosity from our annual pledges. We also used about \$19,000 that had been set aside from earlier surpluses to achieve a lessor shortfall.

Our generous congregation. This congregation continues to be a generous, forward-looking, progressive Christian community. Your financial support is crucial. In fact, we will not meet our targets for 2022 unless we continue to receive General Fund donations at the same level as last year. We encourage you to pledge if you have not already done so for 2022—a pledge is not a contract, but a statement of intent to give to the General Fund a certain amount in 2022. Please contact Cheryle Matteo at cmatteo@ccsm-ucc.org to record your pledge. Or make a gift by clicking [here](#) and select General Budget and state "Monthly" or "Weekly" in the optional memo. Other ways to donate to the General Budget are available at our website [here](#).

Questions or comments? Please feel free to contact me at veril.phillips@gmail.com or 650.579.4627 for more information or to make comments about our church finances.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS AND GRADUATE STUDENTS

The Youth Ministry at CCSM is pleased to support high school seniors and graduate students with scholarships for the 2022-23 school year thanks to the generosity of CCSM members.

High school seniors and graduate students who are active members of CCSM are encouraged to apply for scholarship support. Information about the scholarships and application packets are on the [CCSM website](#). Applications with supporting documents and letters of recommendations are due by April 15, 2022.

The Congregational Church has been supportive of

education through our denominational history. In fact, many of the nation's oldest and prestigious educational institutions such as Harvard and Yale Universities and Bowdoin College were founded by the Congregational Church. CCSM follows in that important tradition of helping to educate our younger generation with scholarship aid.

Please contact Warren Long: longlake15@sbcglobal.net or Sheryl Johnson: sjohnson@ccsm-ucc.org if you have any questions.

CREATING SACRED SPACE EVERYWHERE: CALLING ALL ARTISTS!

The mission of the Liturgical Arts Ministry (LAM) is focused on using art to build bridges to the Sacred in our Worship services. Our new hybrid-Church environment is pushing LAM to evolve our thinking about what is Sacred space. How can we extend Sacred space beyond the walls of the Sanctuary? What new creative resources can we draw on to expand our vision?

As all of us move into Lent, we ask you to think about how your creative talents could help us realize a larger, hybrid-Sacred space? Do you sing, paint, sew, dance, write poetry, garden, build, or something else? We are **calling all artists** to share your creative thinking and skills.

Whether your work is the product of a hobby or professional grade, we would love to know what you do and if you are willing to share. Don't get hung up on the question of whether something is "art" – we want to celebrate our community's expressive work in all its forms.

Contact LAM lead, Laura Pierce-McKenzie—see directory for contact information. We can't wait to hear from you! (For those of you who weren't at the annual meeting, Laura has taken the helm of LAM after Kay Harris' six years of foundational leadership.)



BECOMING A TRULY HYBRID CHURCH

One thing that has become clear to the CCSM Board is that the "online church" and the "in-person church" are not distinct; we are one community. While we might be physically separate, we share the same mindset. Furthermore, we all benefit from having both an online presence and a physical presence. During the Omicron surge, we had the opportunity to hear from some of our new CCSM members who aren't local, Michele, Jenn and Gail. It is touching to hear about their connection to CCSM, and we encourage you to click [HERE](#) if you haven't watched it yet. While Covid19 has had many unexpected turns, there is a possibility that we remain hybrid for the long-haul, and we believe it is important to incorporate all of our members into the worship services.

The board is currently researching ways to incorporate our remote members directly into the live services. Imagine what it would be like to see one of our local elders who is not able to attend in person in the sanctuary reading scripture, someone who lives in another state reading a poem, or one of our community partners sharing a testimonial from the benefactors of our donations. As we plan for supporting truly hybrid services, we will be sure to consider both the needs of the in-person members and those who are remote. We all love the beauty of our sanctuary and want to minimize the intrusion of technology into the experience. However, some technology (likely a video monitor) will need to be added to make this a reality.

We love our traditional sanctuary and understand change is hard for some. As we consider adding technology to the sanctuary, we look to our Guiding Principles of being inclusive and evolving and are confident this is the right next step for CCSM to continue to grow and thrive in our ever-changing world.

FACE MASK BRIGADE ENDS A GREAT RUN

by Chase Montara

After two years of dedicated service in the form of mask making, our Face Mask Brigade has decided to end their ministry. The Face Mask Brigade was formed during the initial, crisis stages of the pandemic, when masks were something new to us, and in short supply. During their tenure, these dedicated seamstresses have made and distributed nearly 10,000 masks! In addition to the members of CCSM, the grateful recipients of their masks include the Samaritan House and Samaritan House Clinic, San Mateo County Health Clinic, Life Moves Shelters, St. Vincent de Paul, the Navajo Nation of New Mexico, Safe Sleeping in San Francisco, Redwood City Catholic House, Abundant Grace, Puente, St. Gregory of Nyssa in San Francisco, South Central Los Angeles Health Services, and the City of South San Francisco Recreation Dept.

It's in the spirit of this ministry that Genel writes: "We got out of it way more than we gave! It definitely was a ministry both to those we gave masks to and each other as we worked together ❤️ We became a family!"

I am so profoundly moved by these dedicated women, some of who worked through injuries and broken sewing machines, to complete their mission. As they close their doors, we send them along with our deep gratitude and profound thanks. You are an inspiration to all of us!



CCSM MUSIC NOTES

CHANCEL CHOIR

Choir rehearsals will be resuming on **March 9** (the week after Ash Wednesday). We rehearse **Wednesdays from 7:00 - 8:30 pm** in the Sanctuary.

If you are interested in singing with us or learning more about choir, please contact Lynnelle at ltbmusings@gmail.com.



CARILLON RINGERS

We are ding-a-ling-ing again! We resumed rehearsal mid-February and are looking forward to ringing again for some CCSM services very soon. If you are interested in learning to ring, or attending a bell rehearsal, please contact Lynnelle at ltbmusings@gmail.com.

Rehearsals are on **Thursday nights from 7:00 - 8:30 pm**.



SAVE THE DATE: 29TH ANNUAL ORGAN RECITAL WITH ANGELA KRAFT CROSS – MAY 15

The Music Ministry Committee is excited to welcome back our first in-person concert in over two years with a fantastic concert presented by Dr. Angela Kraft Cross. More info will be coming, but please save the date: **Sunday, May 15** in the afternoon.



SPECIAL INVITATION - MARCH 14

Burlingame Music Club is inviting members of CCSM to join them for a special event at CCSM on **March 14 from 1:00 - 3:00 pm**. The music club brings musicians from around the Bay Area for a performance and discussion about the art and you are very welcome to join them. For more information, please contact Karen Hutchinson at 650-576-2190.



music & art

**FRIDAY, MARCH 18 • NOON
IN THE BUCKHAM ROOM**

Music and Art will meet in person again this month! Remember to bring your own bag lunch. Beverages are provided and hostesses Linda Mallette and Pat Pepper will provide dessert.

Our program will be presented by CCSM member and Music and Art member, **Linda Brockett**. It is titled **Icons of the Pandemic**. Three icons will be featured: St. Joseph holding the Christ Child, Salus Populi Romani (Protectress and Health of the Roman People) and the Holy Virgin of Guadalupe, much loved and venerated saint unique to the Americas.

You will want to take advantage of this special opportunity, so **EVERY-**

ONE—members and guests— please RSVP your reservation to Susan Duty: susanjd52@gmail.com, or phone 650-533-6830.

All COVID protocol will be observed: N95 or KN95 masks will be worn except for when actively eating or drinking. We have a few extras if you don't have one. A limit of 5 persons per table will be followed and if you were not able to be present at the February meeting, we'll need to check proof of vaccination and booster shot. We continue to want everyone to remain healthy and COVID free.



SOUND BATHS IN THE SANCTUARY

MARCH 19 • 5:00 - 6:30 PM



the **logos method**

JOIN US for
SELF-CARE MAGNIFIED

Sound Bath
@CCSM Sanctuary
San Mateo
March 19, 2022
5:00 - 6:30pm

<https://tinyurl.com/logosoundbath>

by Chuck Rosenthal

Little did I know when I took the job at CCSM to produce the videos and live-streams that I would eventually get to re-start my healing work and hold sound baths in the Sanctuary. Prior to Covid, I had the honor of holding monthly breathwork and sound healing events in San Francisco and Los Angeles. These experiences are designed to help participants move from their sympathetic nervous system (flight or fight) to their parasympathetic nervous system (calm mind and body). When we sink into the deep peace inside it can help reduce anxiety and stress and open us up to tapping into creative channels.

The healing vibrations of sound coupled with the quieting of the mind allows participants to have profound spiritual awakenings, emotional healing, and even relief of physical pain. Some people set an intention, some just want to quiet their minds to recharge. Many are surprised by the outcome.

We have held three sound baths in the sanctuary and I'm honored that some people have attended all of them. They have shared with me via email or in person how much they enjoy them and why. I have been so touched that I asked Lynnelle if she would let me share her experience with you. This is one of many positive responses I have received from CCSM members and staff.

I have been fascinated by the concept of sound and how sounds wash over the body, evoke and impact our heart-rhythms and biorhythms in general.

In my studies of music therapy, the practice of entrainment is something I've incorporated into my work with clients, but harder to do with the self. Your sound bath experiences creates a variation of entrainment, slowing breathing and heart rates, encouraging release of stress and inviting relaxation and meditation as the sounds which fill the room wash over me.

I find myself drawn to the sound baths held in the sanctuary at CCSM; the wood walls and pews, the pipes of the organ and energy resonate with each other, along with and coupled by the late afternoon wash of light and color from the stained glass windows, making a complete aesthetic immersion for me. The blending of aural, visual and physical vibrations produced by the sounds connect me to a deep place within myself which day to day living often makes

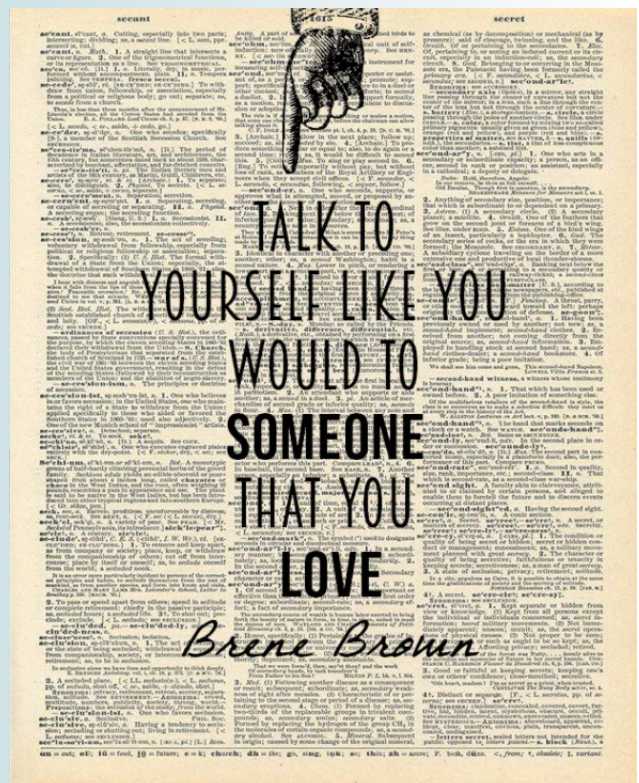
difficult to access. Not only does the sound bath help me unwind, I have also experienced temporary relief of pain in my body. I have recommended this experience to friends who are also attending regularly. Thanks for the gift, Chuck!

When Covid began, I grieved about having to stop hosting the monthly events I was running. Now I am thrilled to hold healing space for community again at CCSM. I have come to love this community and have enjoyed getting to know many of you via my work with the video production.

Of course, this would not be possible without the generous support and talent from Jordan, who runs the live-stream sound on Sundays. When I first told him about this work, he responded with enthusiasm at the idea of joining me to create live sound baths at CCSM. Jordan has spent countless hours with me in the sanctuary rehearsing and finessing the sound so everyone could have an immersive experience. Not only have we discovered that we make a great team together, we also have become good friends.

Since the response has been so overwhelmingly positive, our goal is to host Sound Baths in the Sanctuary once a month. The next one is scheduled for Saturday, March 19th, 5pm - 6:30pm. We offer a \$5 discount for CCSM members, \$15 plus eventbrite fees. Tickets are also available for non-members.

You can purchase tickets by clicking [HERE](#), and if you'd like to see a video introduction, watch one [HERE!](#)



WHAT I LIKE ABOUT GOD

This is a sermon preached by Chase Montara last summer, on July 18, 2021. Several people had asked for copies of it and it was intended to be included in the next edition of the Pine Tree, but it has been waiting until now. As the message is timeless, the change of season only ripens it! To watch Chase preach this sermon on video, click [HERE](#).

**And we know that God causes everything to work together
for the good of those who love God
and are called according to God's purpose for them.**

—Romans 8:28

I have always loved the saying “God draws straight with crooked lines.” It turns out that it comes from a poem written on Easter in 1969 by a man named Jeremiah Denton, when he was serving in Vietnam. This is an excerpt from that poem:

Her life with Him was full of signs
That God writes straight with crooked lines.
Dark clouds can hide the rising sun,
And all seem lost, when all is won!”

Drawing straight with crooked lines is one of the things I happen to like most about God. Oh sure, God can be inscrutable, confounding, seemingly absent at the most inconvenient times, and irritatingly silent. But I can always count on God to draw straight with the crooked lines of my life. I base my faith on the promise of this. And I keep my eyes open for the signs.

I am a member of Cursillo, a movement which began in Spain in 1944 for renewal of faith over the course of a weekend retreat. It began as a Catholic men's group, but now is for both men and women and, in the Bay Area at least, is open to people of different Christian denominations.

On the Sunday morning of the weekend, worship is separated into Anglican and Catholic services. Never the 'twain shall meet is a directive made very clear by the governing body. On my first weekend, in a kind of passive protest, I didn't endorse such a split and, so I sat in the stairwell, which happened to be situated right between the two services. I could hear both services in a murmur-y, muted sort of way. The voices comforted me in the same way the voices of my parent's bridge club comforted me from my post at the top of the stairs, when I should have been in bed. That day, my friend came and joined me in the stairwell, and we sat leaning against each other, eyes closed, feeling comfort in each other's presence, listening. As the services came to a close, each group began to sing a different hymn. But in some kind of magical alchemy, the two songs together created a third song that was much more beautiful, more compelling, mystical. Unbidden tears

rolled down our cheeks as we listened and silently apprehended together the beauty God was creating out of their attempt at separateness. God always draws straight with our crooked, divisive lines.

In confusing, fearful and complicated times, one thing I can always rely on is that God draws straight. I am reminded of that meme that illustrates first what we think the spiritual path will be—a straight line, slightly angled upward as we make steady, measurable progress toward piety. The second is what really happens on our spiritual journey. The second illustration is a tangle of lines that look like what a right-handed person in a cast would draw with a broken Etch-a-Sketch. Life being what it is, the path to holiness is never as straightforward as we plan. But our jumbled lives offer plenty of material for God to use to come up with that beautiful, straight line.

When I am in the midst of fear or chaos or confusion, it can be very difficult to remember that all of it is simply fodder for God's perfect line. This past year, well four years really, is a good example. Not to get too political, but on November 8, 2016 at 8 pm, I pulled my cable out of the wall like I was trying to start a resistant, old lawnmower. The resultant silence gave me time to re-group. The silence gave me time to remember that straight-line thing. And to remember, as Paul tells us, that the arc of eternity is always

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ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

MARCH 2, 7:15 PM
KLOSS HALL

This special bilingual service is hosted by our Wednesday Gathering, CCSM's Spanish service, and will include communion and the imposition of ashes.

What an incredible way to begin Lent, sharing together in worship and reflection.



WHAT I LIKE ABOUT GOD —from previous page—

bent toward the purpose of good. This is true, no matter what the Etch-a-Sketch says.

But witnessing all that followed November 2016 was challenging, to put it mildly. And as I was clinging to the rock of my spiritual foundation, the pandemic was tossed into the mix. And I felt exactly the same way I felt when I first saw *The Talking Heads* on Johnny Carson and I said out loud, “OK, now things have gone too far!”

The “In the Spirit of Sharing” group was born out of the challenges of the pandemic. We needed to connect with other people who were clinging to their rocks. We needed to hear from wise ancestors like Rumi and Hafiz, and the mystics, like Thomas Merton and Carryl Houselander. As you may know, Carryl Houselander is a Catholic lay person who had visions and wrote about them. One of her visions occurred on the subway, when she suddenly saw Christ within all the passengers, in her words: “living in them, dying in them, rejoicing in them, sorrowing in them.” And she came to see that Christ is entombed in everyone and that what we need to do is to have compassion for the Christ that is entombed within them. And when I read her account, I was given a tiny access point into finding compassion for those against whom I was building a pretty air-tight case. And I needed to do that, to find compassion and perspective. So that was important, an important insight. But perhaps even more important was that I saw that Christ is entombed within me, too. Within my fear, within my judgments, within my hard-hearted rejection of whatever “other” I happen to be blaming for the current state of things. But it’s important to remember that the tomb is not the end of the story, is it? Jesus lives. Resurrection is possible. All may seem lost, when all is won. God draws straight even with crooked, crucifixion lines.

I remember one of my favorite patients ever at the Adult Day Health Center, we’ll call her Ophelia. Ophelia was 96 years old, post-stroke, diabetic and the most spirit-filled person I have ever known. Let’s just say that Christ was not entombed in Ophelia. She wore her spirit on the outside of her body, the stone had done been rolled away. But after a grueling family trip of crooked lines criss-crossing California to celebrate Easter with various relatives, perhaps her last Easter with the family, Ophelia came back depleted, spent. She looked like one of those inflatables outside a car dealership, after the air machine is turned off. She was folded in on herself, inert. We spent her first day back trying to fluff her up. We gave her fluids. We adjusted her blood sugar. We sat with her, stroked her arms, and spoke words of encouragement to her. But she remained nearly catatonic, motionless, silent. Just as the bus was coming to take her home, I began to sing to her: “I don’t feel no ways tired. I’ve come along way from where I started from. Nobody told me that the road would be easy, I don’t believe He brought me this far to leave me.” And just like that, like her air machine was turned back on, Ophelia re-inflated. She sat up, opened her eyes and said “OH! Lord Jesus! How could I have forgotten? OH thank you Jesus! Thank you, Lord! Why did I ever DOUBT?” And a finer testimony to God’s ability to draw straight lines I have never heard.

The song lyrics are right, the road isn’t easy, has never been easy, and won’t be easy as we go forward, as we adjust to life after the pandemic, as we move further into climate change, as we grapple with what has crawled out from under the rock of racism. And it can be a temptation to doubt the promise of straight lines. A temptation to stay on our front porch of fear, sitting in our rocking chairs of worry getting nowhere. But as inscrutable as God is, as silent and confounding as God’s presence can be, as lacking in initiative and infuriatingly forgiving as God is, when I remember to hand God the brokenness and uncertainty, and I cultivate the patience and willingness to travel the eternal arc with God, God will always draw straight with our crooked lines. And that is what I like about God.



Joys and Concerns

CCSM Pastoral Care Team

Please share your prayers with the pastoral care team: 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. (Penny is on sabbatical until March 13.)

PRAYERS OF JOY AND GRATITUDE

Ryan and Ashley Schwandt welcomed a new bundle of joy on February 10: baby **James Bianco Schwandt!** Grandparents **Jim and Alison Schwandt** traveled to Kentucky to help out.

Prayers of joy and blessing to **Krista Enos and Laura Smith** on the baptism of **Cooper Timothy** on Epiphany Sunday, January 2, 2022.

Zoe Mullery wants to express wholehearted gratitude for CCSM's support for her sabbatical time.

PRAYERS OF LOVE AND STRENGTH

Prayers for the family of **Zelta Adams**, who passed away on January 18, 2022. Zelta was a member of CCSM for 66 years and was involved in many activities, especially the choir and Music and Arts. Cards may be sent to **Bob Adams** and family. A memorial service is scheduled for May 14 at 1:00 pm.

Our beloved **Thelma Kromhout** passed away peacefully at her home on January 16, 2022 at age 102. Thelma is one of the longest members of CCSM, having joined in February, 1953; she served as the church's first woman moderator. Given our COVID circumstances, the family has no immediate plans for a memorial service. Cards may be sent to the Kromhout residence.

Please hold in loving memory long-time CCSM member **Katharine Boaden** who passed away peacefully on January 14, 2022; she joined CCSM in 1954. In lieu of a memorial, Katharine's request is that people call up an old friend and share a meal together. Cards may be sent to **Paul** at the Boaden residence.

We recently received the news that **Lloyd Dale Schutte** passed

away in March 2021. He is survived by his twin sister, **Shirley Schutte**. The Schutte family has been associated with CCSM since the 1950's.

Prayers of comfort for **Linda Stoick** and her family as her **Aunt Kay** passed away from COVID on January 3, 2022.

We are saddened to share the news that **Carolyn Shaw** passed away unexpectedly on December 14. She will be missed. We pray for her niece, Martha Moore.

Prayers of comfort for **Dawn and Greg Graves**; Dawn lost her father **Rene F. Cardena** on 11/13/21. The Graves' also lost their beloved Brittany Spaniel, **Gabriel**, on 11/19/21.

PRAYERS OF HEALING AND SUPPORT

Please pray for **Stan Higg's** friend, **Pamela**, who has stage 4 ovarian cancer.

Prayers for **Melodie Lew's** daughter-in-law **Lindsay**, as she recovers from spinal surgery.

Cynthia Carley requests prayers for **John Gallegos**, as he fights cancer. And for the family and friends of **Bob Proctor**, who passed away on February 6.

Talbott Smith, who has Lymphoma and advanced prostate cancer, was discharged from the hospital and is currently at a skilled nursing facility. Prayers and cards of support are appreciated. **Carol Henton** can be contacted for updates.

Prayer request from **Ada Harrigan** who is part of CCSM's online community and friend of **Linda Stoick**. Ada's sister **Susan** has had a recurrence of cancer.

Sue Bullis asks for continued prayers for healing as she recovers from some recent health issues.

Michele Hale requests prayers for her lifelong friend, **Penny**, who

lost her husband recently, and is also caring for her elderly Mom who has dementia and broke her hip. She also shares prayers of gratitude that her friends' son **Parker's** emergency surgery was a complete success!

Rebecca Ruedy requests prayer for her mother **Nancy Ruedy** (89 yrs old) who suffered a serious stroke and is now at a Stroke Rehab hospital in Washington D.C. Due to the pandemic, she and Michael are not able to see her, but are hoping to travel there as soon as they may see her in person. Rebecca thanks everyone for their prayers on behalf of her husband **Michael Whelan's** mother **Jean** (92 yrs old) who had surgery last month and is recovering.

Please pray for **Donna Summers, Jeff Chandler's** mom and a faithful member of CCSM (now living in Kansas), as she is recovering after several falls resulting in broken bones and changes in mobility.

Continuing prayers of strength, encouragement, and healing for our beloved brothers and sisters: **Donna Summers, Clare Naegle, Susan Lake's** friend **Sanjana, Joan Kilroe's** son **Andy Cioci, Lee Mullery, Cari Parker, Jim Ingwersen, Janelle Sharp, sister of Krystal Burndon, Judy Holcomb, Malcolm Jones, Dorothy Gorman, Jim Dresbach, padre Michael Dresbach, Bill Melis, Dr. Jim Groundwater** and family, **Travis Woodmansee's** mother **Cathy, Cathy Latta, Dottie Scott, Veril Phillips'** granddaughter **Eva, George Vail's** friends **Donna Terry and Melinda Jones, David Meissner and Gene Chelberg, Chuck Ruthroff (Don and Jonathan's** brother), **Ruth Black, Gail Evans' friend Michelle, Martha Bronitsky's** mother **Bobbye Gore-nberg, Cheryle Matteo's** brother **Lou Matteo, Elizabeth Campbell, Michele Moffitt's** brother and his daughter.

As we enter the Lenten season, we'll explore a new worship series: *Finding Meaning in our Unlikely World*, based on Sasha Sagan's book *For Small Creatures Such as We*. We're glad to have the option of being in person again, and we are grateful for all the ways community is possible!



Click [HERE](#) or on the video above to meet some of CCSM's online community sharing about their experiences here. This is a wonderful introduction to CCSM life; share it with someone you know!

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Second Hours have returned! They'll be hybrid: both in person in the Buckham Room and on Zoom, following the service.

On **FEBRUARY 27 at 11:45AM** we are honored to hear from [Rev. Dr. David Vásquez-Levy](#), also our guest preacher, on the topic of *Spiritually Rooted Leadership for a Time of Change*. He is the president of Pacific School of Religion and leads at the intersection of faith, higher education, and social change. Click [HERE](#) for the ZOOM link or come to the Buckham Room.



Stay tuned for a Second Hour series led by Penny on *Spiritual Tools for Bridging the Polarization in America* in March.



And mark your calendar for an upcoming Second Hour **APRIL 3** with activist Episcopal priest, [Rev. Fletcher Harper](#), Executive Director of the interfaith environmental organization [GreenFaith](#).



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