

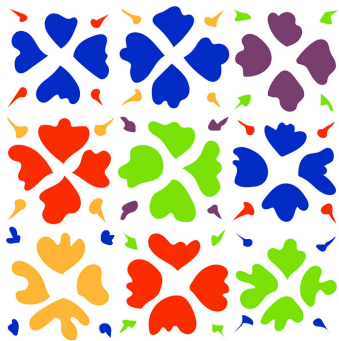
CCSM PINE TREE

VOL. 72, #2 | ONLINE | LENT 2023



HONORING REV. JORGE

Sunday, Feb. 26 was Rev. Jorge's last Sunday at CCSM. An outpouring of love and stories of the impact he has had on the lives of many people filled the service and overflowed into a time of honoring him afterwards. Many moving testimonies were shared and many tears shed. Click [HERE](#) for the just the photos or [HERE](#) for the full slideshow across Jorge's time at CCSM.



FAITH OVER FEAR

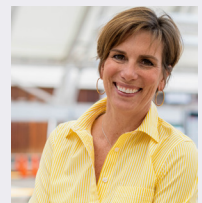
Join us at 10:30AM Sunday mornings in Lent!

Faith Over Fear is the theme for the 2023 Lenten sermon series.

Click [HERE](#) for a Lenten devotional for adults, or [HERE](#) for a family devotional.

FROM REV. MELISSA

There are always endings before beginnings, which is where we currently find ourselves in the life cycle at the Congregational Church of San Mateo. William Worden's Tasks of Grief sees grief not as linear feelings and emotions to move through but as simultaneous occurrences in which we engage to make meaning from our losses. These are the days to process and lament, to accept and commemorate.



On Sunday, February 26th, 2023, the Congregational Church of San Mateo released Rev. Jorge P. Bautista from his ministerial covenant with CCSM. Another sad day as beloved clergy steps away from CCSM. We become acutely aware 'they' are not ours to keep. God works in

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



Congregational
Church of san mateo

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

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

2023 has started off strong for our children and youth programs! Our attendance has been strong on both Wednesdays and Sundays and it has been so wonderful to keep up the momentum we built over the Advent season. On Sunday, January 8 we had a wonderful family play date with lunch after church where we decorated pillowcases for kids in LifeMoves Family Shelters. We had a good conversation about why kids might need a shelter and what messages we would like to share. Families enjoyed connecting with one another and one brand new family who attended that day for the first time even stayed to connect. During that time we also brainstormed hopes and dreams for our family programming this year as a church.

On Wednesdays, we have continued to have a wonderful group of kids and youth with us each week. Our activities have ranged with the various age levels but they have included reading some wonderful children's books about nature, creating our own books, painting, drawing, games, and more. Our youth continue to bring homework and enjoy games and conversation as well.



On Sundays our **Godly Play group** has been very strong for our multi-age K-5th grade group. Kids continue to amaze me with their insightful reflections on Bible stories and the meaning they see in these

ancient texts. We have also brought in some contemporary story books that align with the Biblical stories and the connections that the kids draw are amazing! Our preschool contingent continues to be large as well.

The middle school youth class has also been growing. **Our theme this season is "parables and play"** where we have reflected on the meaning of parables from the Bible, other religions, and also the "lessons" in board games. A lot of our youth enjoy various kinds of games and it has been great to have them bring in some of their favorites to share



together. Lots of interesting conversations have been had about the things we can learn about life from board games including: relationships are more important than who wins, some parts of success are related to skill but other parts are about luck, distraction can prevent us from reaching our goals, and, when playing a cooperative game, each person brings a different gift to the game just as they do to the world. I am always impressed by the meaning they find, and also the connections they draw to religious parables. We have also had good conversations about parables more broadly and why humans respond well to stories (and perhaps less well to rules!).



Our highschoolers continue to enjoy gathering for **60 Minutes**. In January we had a group of 11 discuss the future of the church. They offered a lot of interesting insights about the ways that churches are changing and ours specifically, and even brainstormed characteristics they would like to see in our new Senior Minister such as being a good listener, open to diversity, and willing to change and evolve with the church. Our discussion in February, chosen by the youth as always, will be about schooling, religion and education, and online vs. in person classes. Should be great!

For our highschoolers on both Wednesday and Sunday we are working to create a **youth peer leadership team**. This group will work to plan events, promote, and facilitate what we do together. This will be also a great leadership opportunity that can help to build skills and that youth can put on their college applications, resumes, etc. If you are interested, there is still time to join! Please contact me (Sheryl).

A special event in January was the **Martin Luther King Jr. Multifaith Day of Service**. Although the rains were heavy and caused a lot of park closures, CCSM folks of all ages enjoyed singing for seniors, sorting donated books, and doing some park clean up work. It was a great day and there are dozens of projects each year for people of all ages. Please mark your calendar and plan to participate in 2024 whether or not you have kids!

A group of our local UCCs is hosting a **Confirmation retreat for highschoolers** (8th grade and up) in mid-March. However, the Confirmation retreat is open to those who have already been
—cont. on next page—

confirmed, are not interested in Confirmation, are not sure, or are definitely in! The sessions will involve exploring faith, Bible stories, worship, and more and there will also be

games, a scavenger hunt, trivia, and more. This will take place at the Orinda UCC. Confirmation will continue after the retreat with monthly gatherings to cover some of what we don't get to in the retreat.

It also isn't too soon to be thinking about summer camp! **Camp Tamarack currently has July/August week-long sessions** scheduled for kids, junior high, and high school aged youth. Please let me know if you plan to go so I can help to arrange carpools, etc. We also have funds available to help with the registration fee.

Please do not hesitate to be in touch at any time with questions or just to connect!

—Rev. Sheryl

sjohnson@ccsm-ucc.org

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Sunday, March 5: 11:45am - Family Play Date! We'll gather after the service for lunch, community-building, and a service project. We'll decorate lunch bags for unhoused folks and create cards with encouraging messages to include with the lunches.

Sunday, March 5: 1-2pm - Youth are invited to help plan some multi-faith programs for youth in our area. This is a great chance to meet people from different faiths and help to design programs to get to know others!

Sunday, March 12: 10:30am - 60 Minutes conversation for youth led by Mike and Sheryl. Topic (chosen by our highschoolers) is current issues in the news.

Sunday, March 12: 12pm - CCSM Youth are invited to go to Foothills UCC to learn about Confirmation and meet other youth participating in the retreat. Lunch provided! After the conversation (around 1:15) youth are invited to go to a local arcade to play some games. Pick up is at 2pm. All high school-aged youth are welcome.

Saturday, March 18-Sunday, March 19 - Youth Retreat in Orinda! Our local UCC partners are again collaborating to offer Confirmation classes. However, this retreat is open to all youth in grades 8-12, even those who have already been confirmed (or who are not interested in confirmation). This retreat is a chance for highschoolers to learn more about progressive Christian faith, play games, and connect with other youth.

Sunday, April 2: 10:30am - Special Palm Sunday service featuring the donkey!

Sunday, April 9: 10:30am - Special Easter service with special activities for kids during the service and an egg hunt afterward!

June 9-13 - High school youth service learning trip to Los Angeles with other Bay Area UCC youth.

FROM REV. MELISSA cont. from p. 1

many ways for many reasons, yet unknown. In a recent The Daily podcast, I heard, Rev. Kevin Thompson say, "People always say thing happens for a reason, but they are wrong. Things happen for a thousand reasons." Rev. Thompson was clergy leaving his church community.

Sunday's worship service was evidence of the Tasks of Grief in action. The process of planning the service and attending the service informs the reality of acceptance; commemoration was a powerful closure and a milestone to reflect our gratitude for the relationships and sustain the memories created. Commemoration helps us process the time we had together, helping us to make meaning for how to move forward in the days ahead.

Grief is not easy. Based on our prior experiences with loss and change, we will all process it differently. Time and space, grace and mercy are the ingredients for healing. When we are ready, we will be able to see beyond the moments of hurt and loss. Changes will begin to move for-

ward with our outreach and ministries. Every experience is an opportunity to shape our lives into a more meaningful, purposeful existence. Treating every day as a day to grow into our best selves is God acting within us and bringing our soul into the light it is meant to share.

It is my privilege to walk beside you and hold hope as your grief changes to resolve and passion to carry the torch of God's love for and through CCSM.

Much like Rev. Penny, Rev. Jorge will be gone but never forgotten. We keep them in our hearts and prayers for their continued ministries to touch the lives of those whose paths cross. May their service continue to grow in faith and actions.

Peace and grace upon you,

Rev. Melissa Douaire

Thank you, Susan Ingle, for sharing this song, Come Alive (Dry Bones) by Lauren Daigle. Listen [here](#); let the breath of God be yours.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MODERATOR

I have been learning a lot from all of you, and I want to emphasize that building a closer connection with the board is a top priority. We acknowledge that we have made mistakes with communication and the rollout of the 2023 budget, and we are deeply sorry for any pain this may have caused. Moving forward, we want to improve our communication and rebuild trust with the congregation.

To clarify, while the 2023 budget has been approved, it still reflects a \$117,000 deficit, and more hard decisions may need to be made. The Board is facing a challenge of communicating our vision for the future while honoring the beloved staff who are still here and those who have been affected by the budget changes.

At our recent Board of Directors meeting in February, we discussed ways to repair relations and build trust with the congregation. We are currently working on several initiatives to accomplish this, including providing more regular financial updates, making budget updates available in the Pine Tree, and sharing BOD minutes through links in the Pine Tree. We also want to remind the congregation that both the BOD and Finance Committee meetings are open to anyone who wishes to attend.

Additionally, we are in discussions about partnering with the Spiritual Life Ministry to facilitate healing conversations with the congregation. This will provide a spiritual context and a safe space for the process of healing and reconciliation to begin. We have tentatively scheduled this conversation for March 19th after church.

We are heartened by the fact that there are 17 first-time pledgers in 2023, and 58 members increased their pledges. Thanks to Carol Henton, Martha Bronitsky, and Jim Lindsay's outreach, 20 members pledged since the budget meeting. Our stewardship totals are currently \$525,296. However, we are also saddened to report that five people have left CCSM since the budget announcement. This is expected during times of transition and when budgets are strained.

We ask that you keep an open mind and view our communications as coming from the heart, with the utmost care. The hard work we are doing now will set us up for a successful tenure for the next senior minister and will allow us to attract the next generation of CCSMers who will benefit from this amazing community, where our souls are healed and nourished so we can do good in the world.

—Julie Lenden, Moderator



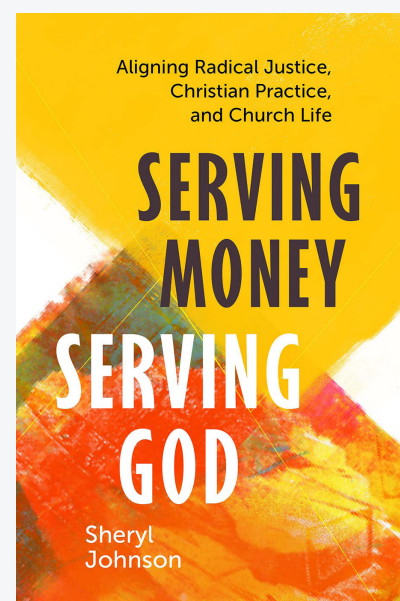
REV. SHERYL JUST PUBLISHED A BOOK!

Sheryl Johnson's book *Serving Money, Serving God* came out through Fortress Press this month! She will have copies for sale (and for signing!) soon — watch for more info.

This book is the first Christian stewardship and finance book written from an explicitly anti-racist, decolonial, feminist, ecological, and class-critical standpoint. Many churches espouse these commitments--as individual members, as congregations, and through their denominations--but pursue them as discrete initiatives, such as themes for study and worship, rather than as core organizing principles for congregational life.

Serving Money, Serving God offers a positive and constructive approach to the topic and is filled with inspiring examples for churches of all sizes. Case studies provide practical guidance and make the analysis concrete, relatable, and accessible. The book highlights the importance of creativity, imagination, and a sense of hope-filled adventure in engaging this work.

Congratulations, Sheryl!



JANUARY 2023 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

February 22, 2023

Veril Phillips, Treasurer

In an effort to provide more financial information to all members of CCSM, we are providing a financial summary on a regular basis. We invite your comments about this report and whether more information or less information would be helpful.

This report is based on revenue and expenses for the first month of 2023. We are reporting both for the month and for the year-to-date (YTD), which means January 2023 through the current month. Obviously, those are the same for January, but will be more important as the year progresses. Here is the summary for January 2023:



Category	One month actual	One month budget	One month difference	YTD actual	YTD budget	YTD difference
Donations to general fund	27,803	47,500	-19,697	27,803	47,500	-19,697
Total revenue for general fund	58,177	68,043	-9,866	58,177	68,043	-9,866
Expenses for general fund	72,024	85,643	-13,619	72,024	85,643	-13,619
Net revenue (revenue minus expenses)	-13,847	-17,600	3,753	-13,847	-17,600	3,753

Comments:

1. Some donors paid their entire 2023 pledge in a prior year. The donations reported above include all donations made in 2023 and a pro-rated portion of the 2023 pledge payments made in 2022.
2. Bear in mind that even with the staff reductions that were so painful to implement, our budget for 2023 has a shortfall (expenses exceed revenue) of \$117,000.

FROM YOUR MINISTER EMERITA...

Hi CCSM. A big thank for the farewell gifts of skis — I was finally able to find the perfect pair and have been out on the trails a few times this winter. The snow has been incredible this winter and I absolutely LOVE my new skis and the best part? Every time I put them on, I think of you all!!!

So many of you have been wondering — what is retirement like and what am I doing besides skiing? I am working full time now in affordable housing in two different contract positions. I am the Faith Director for the Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo (half-time), and the Faith Communities Housing Liaison for the County of San Mateo (one-third time). In addition, I still co-direct the Peninsula Solidarity Cohort.

And, I have finally started to do some pulpit supply in San Mateo and the East Bay. I decided I didn't want to forget how to preach!!!

Many blessings and love to you all—
Penny



LATINO/A MINISTRY UPDATE

by Julien Phillips

As our church community continues to grapple with the impact of our fiscal challenges and recent budget decisions, we are providing this detailed updated to ensure open communication, transparency, understanding, and continued compassion for us all.

After Rev. Jorge Bautista announced his resignation in both the Wednesday and Sunday services two weeks ago our Latino/a Ministry Planning Team met together to process, lament, and talk honestly about the impact of this news. Our Planning Team consists of eight members from our English-speaking congregants (Jeff Chandler, Kathy Gallo, Stephen Held, Lauren Mathews, Silvana Quintanilla, Pablo Quintanilla, Alicia Santamaria, and Julien Phillips) and eight members from our Spanish-speaking congregants (Oscar Acuna, Elvia Delgado, Reina Gonzales, Rosa E. Hernandez, Jose Angel Hernandez, Cruz Lopez, Manuel Lopez, and Otilia Rodriguez).

We had a long, candid, emotional, and loving conversation. Our Wednesday congregants spoke gratefully about the welcome they felt at CCSM, the inclusiveness and respect as equals, and the generosity of resources. They spoke about how much their children have appreciated participating in the children and youth activities during the Wednesday services, as well as the invitation to be part of Sunday school and Joyful Noise.

They shared how much they value CCSM's commitment to social justice for marginalized people, both the outreach and support for the local North Central neighborhood and as far away as the border. They expressed great respect and love for Rev. Jorge, and deep gratitude for all he had done for them as pastor, as counselor and as advocate on immigration and many other needs, and as encourager for them in expressing their own voice in local housing and other issues. They also expressed great sadness at losing Rev. Jorge, dismay about the budgetary decisions that precipitated his resignation, and concern that they had not had prior knowledge about the big decisions being made.

Our Sunday Team members expressed love and sympathy for our Wednesday brothers and sisters, and our own great sadness at losing Rev. Jorge. We mentioned ways in which our whole CCSM community is enriched with their participation, noting especially the value for our children and youth. We regretted that efforts to strengthen leadership development and relationship-building between Wednesday and Sunday congregants, stalled by the pandemic, had only recently re-started. We assured them that even though CCSM is going through a difficult period, the church remains committed to our Latino/a Ministry, our aspiration to be inclusive and

to work actively for social justice remains strong, and we expect the energy and joy to return.

In summary, we communicated that the CCSM budget provides for continued commitment, and that CCSM hoped our Spanish-speaking congregants would continue at CCSM. Although our deepest desire was to continue to work with them to sustain and build our Latino/a Ministry into the future, we acknowledged that only they could choose what they feel is best for them.

They indicated that they would like some time to think, pray, and consult with each other, and that they would let us know the outcome of their deliberations within two weeks. We concluded the meeting with expressions of respect and caring for each other, and with abrazos. Subsequently we let them know that we would work to create a contingency plan to keep Wednesday services going with guest pastors through March.

Two weeks later the leaders of our Spanish-speaking congregants met with Alicia and Julien, and they informed us that they had decided not to continue worshipping at CCSM. "Our decision was very, very difficult," said Reina Gonzales. "The church welcomed us and supported us. Jorge and Penny embraced us with such love, and there are many good people in the church. We are proud of the community we built here. But the budget decisions were a shock. Without Jorge, we just couldn't continue."

We assured them that they would remain in our hearts and that CCSM would welcome them back any time. And we encouraged their children to continue involvement in CCSM's children and youth activities.

For our Latino/a Ministry, this is a time of great sadness. It is also a time to appreciate CCSM's investment over years and honor what it took to build this robust Spanish-speaking congregation within CCSM, to honor the range of emotions and grief that people are feeling, to seek to learn from this journey, and ultimately to center ourselves in hope.

Over time we pray for new opportunities to offer a progressive Christian option for Spanish-speakers in our community, build relationships with our North Central neighbors, and work in solidarity with them and others toward greater inclusion and social justice in San Mateo.



UPDATE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

by Chase Montara

As most folks know, our beautiful facility has been posted on a site called Peer Space, which is a rental site for venues like Airbnb, since August 2022. We have been very successful renting out rooms for a variety of events, such as birthdays, gender reveal parties, baby showers, corporate events, etc. Using this platform is allowing the facility to generate income, which contributes to reducing the budget deficit.

What this means is that if you are hosting a CCSM-related event, you may need to share the space, including parking, with people who are paying top dollar to host their own parties. When scheduling, I try very hard to avoid any potential overlap that will impact CCSM events. And I ask that CCSM members keep in mind that it may require some flexibility on our part to ensure those paying guests feel welcome and free to enjoy the space.

Please remember that CCSM has a contract with the renters. If you have an issue with noise or anything else, please do not deal directly with our guests, but instead contact Chase at 650-533-4385 or let Oscar know and he will call me. I will be happy to mediate any concerns. Each party has an opportunity to post an online review, and we want



to ensure that our comments are favorable. And of course, I want to be sure that CCSM members are able to use their facility in comfort. So please let me know if you have any questions.

In other news, there will be a planned power outage at the end of April for several days as work begins on the Solar Project. This will impact the two schools, as well as Oscar and his family, who will need to relocate during the outage. We will begin emptying the fridge and freezer in the beginning of April. If you have any space in your freezer in your garage, we may call on you to share a little space. More on this as details emerge.

We are aware of the on-going leak in the Candle Room at the back of the sanctuary. Oscar will continue to work to seal up any remaining leaks as the roof and stairs dry out.

Please don't forget to check the front desk if you are expecting someone to leave something there for you. We sometimes have quite a build-up of envelopes and packages. The Office Volunteers will be grateful.

It is an honor to maintain this wonderful campus. If you notice an area we should focus on, please do not hesitate to let me know.

SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS



How can we connect with people with whom we have significant differences? How can we be peacemakers and contribute to a kinder society? The book **Now What? How to Move Forward When We're Divided (About Basically**

Everything) by Sarah Stewart Holland and Beth Silver can help us become careful listeners, show mutual respect, and develop a deeper understanding of the Other.

Spiritual Conversations meets every other Monday from 6:30-8:00PM (NOTE NEW TIME) on Zoom. Our next discussion will be **March 13**. Questions? Contact Chris Wuthmann at cwuthmann@gmail.com or Chase Montara at cmontara@ccsm-ucc.org.

MUSIC & ART: ANGELA KRAFT CROSS

We'll gather at **noon on March 17 in the Buckham Room** for our fellowship lunch. Remember—it's BYOL: Bring Your Own Lunch—beverages are provided and co-hostesses provide dessert.

We're thrilled to have our own **Angela Kraft Cross** as our performer, introducing original music from her new CD, *Passages on the Journey*, which was recorded at the Methuen Memorial Hall in Methuen, Mass. featuring the 1863 Walcker organ which was intended to be the organ for the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

On 2/27 Angela flew to Boston to play at Busch Hall on the Harvard campus on Thursday on E. Power Biggs' organ!!! We all enjoyed her 13 year old student, Andrew, play the prelude on 2/26. That's the really up-to-date info on our wonderful organist. I hope all members and guests will **please RSVP to Susan Duty, susanjd52@gmail.com or 650-533-6830**, so we can reserve a space at the table for you. We will, of course, move in to the sanctuary for the organ performance.



SCHOLARSHIPS FOR SENIORS AND GRAD STUDENTS

The Youth Ministry at CCSM is pleased to support high school seniors and graduate students with scholarships for the 2023-24 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 available at the following links: for the graduate packet, go to tinyurl.com/CCSM-grad-schol-2023, or for the undergraduate packet, go to tinyurl.com/CCSM-undergrad-schol-2023.

Applications with supporting documents and letters of recommendations are due by **APRIL 15, 2023**. Questions? Contact Warren Long, longlake15@sbcglobal.net, or Sheryl Johnson, sjohnson@ccsm-ucc.org.



PICK-A-PARTY SPACES STILL AVAILABLE!

If you're feeling a little unsettled with changes at CCSM, Pick-A-Parties are a great way to reconnect with CCSM members, whether it's enjoying the outdoors, learning something new, or just relaxing with old and new friends. There are still openings for the following parties: Gourmet Brunch with Mendelssohn (3/11 9:30-11:30); Huddart Park Hike (4/8 8:30-1 pm); High Tea (4/22 11 am); Book Lovers' Luncheon (5/20 11am-2pm); Cooks and Bakers Zoom party (date/time tbd). And stay tuned for the Carolands tour, which looks like it's shaping up for this summer! To sign up for any of these parties, contact Diane Kalliam, dkalliam@gmail.com 415.279.1359.



CCSM's Fundraising Events
2022-2023

TAIZÉ IN MARCH

EXPERIENCE THE PEACE OF TAIZÉ WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY IN MARCH:

- March 3:** 8:00pm at Mercy Center in Burlingame
- March 10:** 7:00pm in the Fireplace Room
- March 17:** 7:00pm in the Fireplace Room
- March 24:** Junior Bach festival (details coming)
- March 31:** 7:00pm in the Fireplace Room



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023 SCHEDULE

March 12
April 16
May 21
June 11
July 9
August 13
September 17
October 8
November 12
December 10

Meetings are most often held in the Buckham Room and begin after worship, approximately 11:45-2:00 pm. Anyone is welcome to attend.

Updates can be found on the Church calendar on our website at:

ccsm-ucc.org/events

BLESSING BOX CONTRIBUTIONS

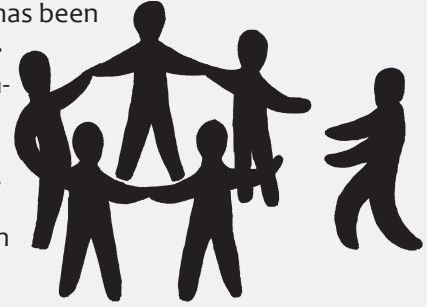
Our Blessing Box is located outside of the Tilton Ave. entrance to the sanctuary. Please donate non-perishable, unopened food to the container in the Narthex any Sunday. The need is great in our neighborhood. Bless you!



SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE

As was announced at the Jan 8 service, the Senior Minister position has been posted on the UCC website, and we have begun to receive applications.

Many of you may not realize that we work with our regional UCC Conference to post the position and receive applications. The Search Committee had to complete a UCC church profile template that in addition to church and community data included several long answer questions. What we wrote was guided by the survey, interview, and round table input we gathered in the fall, and we produced a hefty document (40ish pages). Meanwhile, candidates post their individual profiles with the UCC (20ish pages) and direct them to be sent to job openings that appeal to them. Our regional UCC liaison sends us the profiles in batches.



To help get the word out we are posting the position with seminaries and publications that are aligned theologically with our core values and pushing the posting to selected churches that also share our progressive vision. All candidates - regardless of how they hear about the position - will submit their profiles through the UCC system.

For those who are interested in the Search Committee's vetting process, here's a gloss of the first phase of our screening process:

- ❑ Initial Screen: all committee members read each profile and fill out an evaluation. We discuss these as a team and together decide whether to proceed with each candidate.
- ❑ 2nd Screen: Candidates who passed the initial screen are asked for a letter of interest, and the team watches sermons, does some internet searches and checks social media. These findings are discussed (again with a rubric to help ground us), and the next go/no go decision is made.
- ❑ Virtual Interview(s): this is an opportunity to understand candidates on a more personal level. We use a mix of standard questions and particular inquiries to address any issues that have arisen in the previous screening steps.

As we move into the more advanced phase of the search, we will keep you apprised of how we are making decisions and how we will eventually involve the congregation.

Meanwhile, some of you have wondered what the job posting looks like. Rather than inflicting 40 pages on you, we want to share the 2-page core job description. Its origins are in the document that had guided the Board's relationship with Penny, and we have revised it to reflect what we heard in September – particularly around growth, families, and collaboration. Go to tinyurl.com/CCSM-SrMinPost for the 2-page description.

We remain deeply honored to have your trust and confidence as we pursue this search. We know that somewhere there is a great match for CCSM!

—THE CCSM SENIOR MINISTER SEARCH TEAM

Jim Berthelsen
Leslie Burndon
Deborah Chang

Alexandra Gillen (co-chair)
Kenny Lee
Dave Olson (co-chair)

Rebecca Ruedy-Whelan
Sebastian Steinbach



Herby Dawkins Freedom Fund Gala
"Using Our Power to Define, Demand, and Defend Equality"

San Mateo NAACP 97th Annual Celebration

Sun, March 12 • 4:00 PM – 6:30 PM
Crowne Plaza - Foster City Hotel
1221 Chess Drive Foster City

This fundraiser is a major source of income for the San Mateo NAACP branch's yearly operating budget and supports its mission to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination.

Tickets are \$100 per person, \$50 for children under 12.

RSVP at tinyurl.com/NAACP-2023 by March 6

Keynote Speaker: The Honorable Charles E. Wilson II
-Associate Justice, 6th District Court of Appeals

Master of Ceremonies: Maurice Goodman
-Vice Mayor, City of Millbrae

Awards: Hon. Charles E. Wilson II, Ellis Schoichet, Kathryn Haysbert, Sergeant Michael Haobsh, Island United Church, Rev. Dr. Penny Nixon, Unitarian Universalists of San Mateo, William "Bill" Stewart

Special Guests: Tuck & Patti

CASAVANT LOVE

The “Casavant Love” Pick-A-Party was held on Feb. 11. It was nice to resume this event following the covid hiatus. Angela performed a beautiful concert including a couple of her original compositions and a piece from the African-American composer Florence Price. It is so enjoyable to hear Angela play from the chancel. Following an hour of wonderful music we went to the Fireplace Room for food, chocolate and drinks. It was a wonderful evening and we are so thankful to see this celebration of love, good music and friendship return.



MUSIC MINISTRY

by Melanie Dresbach

While I research and plan the service music for CCSM, I hope that you have been blessed by the theme of hope and healing in the lyrics chosen for five recent Sundays especially as we move through this time of transition. The service music for the month of March has been designed to invite people into the Lent journey, but on March 5, as we also celebrate the Women’s March, we sing three pieces composed by women: local artist Sr. Suzanne Toolan, pastoral minister and voice of justice Bernadette Farrell, and UCC composer Ruth Duck who has a compilation of her compositions called *Dancing in the Universe*.

Please join us in the Fireplace Room to experience the healing of the Taize experience on March 10, 17, and 31 at 7:00PM.



by Warren Long

The Energy, Environmental Justice ministry is pleased that construction for the **CCSM Going Solar project** is expected to finally begin in mid-March. Jim Granucci, our CCSM project manager, is coordinating with Sandbar Solar & Electric, our contractor for the installation of solar panels on carport structures in the parking lot of our campus. This project was initiated several years ago and has had a life of its own. A big shout out to Jim Granucci and others for their dedication to carry this project to fruition!

EEJ and Rev. Melissa and Rev. Sheryl are discussing a dedication ceremony to commemorate CCSM Going Solar on April 23. Stay tuned!

Earth Day Sunday is April 16! Mark your calendars for a service which will focus on our joy and responsibilities as Christians to respect and live in harmony with our beautiful home Earth.

On April 16, during the Second Hour, EEJ is showing an acclaimed film: [The Ants and the Grasshopper](#) (recommended by the Creation Care Ministry of UCC National). This film tells the story and dedication of two Malawian women dealing with gender bias and the impacts of Climate Change in their home country plus travels and visits with farmers in the US. It is an insightful and relevant film – we hope you can attend the showing.

We encourage all the CCSM community to continue your personal efforts to practice sustainability in your life. Please take to heart our individual and collective responsibility for doing environmental justice and serving as God’s heart, hands and feet with actions to honor and respect our beautiful planet — Earth. Thank you!

A PAGE OF POETRY AND QUOTES TO HELP YOU BREATHE...

FOR THOSE WHO NEED POEMS LIKE YOU NEED BREAD

SUBMITTED BY CHASE MONTARA

So you aren't Tolstoy or Saint Francis
or even a well-known singer
of popular songs and will never read Greek
or speak French fluently,
will never see something no one else
has seen before through a lens
or with the naked eye.

You've been given just the one life
in this world that matters
and upon which every other life
somehow depends as long as you live,
and also given the costly gifts of hunger,
choice, and pain with which to raise
a modest shrine to meaning.

"So?" in *Carrying On: New
and Selected poems* by
Leonard Nathan

**And the days are not full enough
And the nights are not full enough
And life slips by like a field mouse
Not shaking the grass.
--"And the Days are not Full Enough" in
Collected Shorter Poems by Ezra Pound**

The gesture of a gift is adequate.
If you have nothing: laurel leaf or bay,
No flower, no seed, no apple gathered late,
do not in desperation lay
the beauty of your tears upon the clay.

No gift is proper to a Deity;
no fruit is worthy for such power to bless.
if you have nothing, gather back your sigh,
And with your hands held high, your heart
held high,
Lift up your emptiness!
--"If You Have Nothing" in *Selected Poetry
of Jessica Powers*

"The divine mystery is not a collection of problems. As the mystics keep chanting, it is a light so bright that it blinds us, that we are bound to experience it as darkness. To become intimate with it, we have to "unknow" worldly knowledge. We have to give up our tendency to assault it as we would a problem, leaning to wait patiently for it to reveal itself as an intimate, at time even shy and vulnerable, lover. All this is very strange, yet unflinchingly invigorating. Take your troubles to God, pour out your soul to the divine mystery, wait attentively, and you will never lack for wonder. You will often, indeed regularly, find your perspective restored. You will gladly confess that, much more than you deserve, there comes over you an unearthly peace, at times even a taste of heavenly joy. I am no mystic, but even I can sign my name to this declaration. The mystery never fails to nourish and heal me. I know that my spirit has been made to contemplate it, to love it as the central reality and treasure of my being. It is my lever for moving the world." --
"How to Handle Trouble" by John Carmody

But come! Take a pick-axe
and break apart
your stony self

The heart's matrix
is glutted with rubies

springs of laughter
are buried in your breast

Unstop the wine-jar
batter down the door
to the treasury
of non-existence

The water in your jug
is brakish and low

smash the jug
and come to the river!
--"Eleven" (abridged) in
*Rumi—Fragments—
Ecstasies*, translated by
Daniel Liebert

Have compassion for everyone you meet
even if they don't want it. What seems conceit,
bad manners, or cynicism is always a sign
of things no ears have heard, no eyes have seen.
You do not know what wars are going on
down there where the spirit meets the bone.
--"Compassion" in *The Ways We Touch* by
Miller Williams

Poems from: *An Almanac
For the Soul: Anthology
of Hope*, edited by Marv and
Nancy Hiles
of the IONA Center
Healdsburg, California

Finally on my way to yes
I bump into
all the places
where I said no
to my life
all the untended wounds
the red and purple scars
those hieroglyphs of pain
carved into my skin, my bones,
those coded messages
that send me down
the wrong street
again and again
where I find them
the old wounds
the old misdirections
and I lift them
one by one
close to my heart
and I say holy
Holy.

--"The Healing Time" by
Pesha Gertler in
*Claiming the Spirit
Within—A Sourcebook of
Women's Poetry* edited
by Marilyn Sewell

It's like so many other things in life
to which you must say no or yes.
So you take your car to the new mechanic.
Sometimes the best thing to do is trust.

The package left with the disreputable-
looking clerk, the check gulped by the night
deposit, the envelope passed by dozens of
strangers—all show up at their intended
destinations.

The theft that could have happened doesn't.
Wind finally gets where it was going
Through the snowy trees, and the river, even
When frozen, arrives at the right place.

And sometimes you sense how faithfully
your life is delivered, even though you can't
read the address. --"Trust" in *Walking Before
Dawn* by Thomas R. Smith

Joys and Concerns

CCSM Pastoral Care Team

Please share your prayers with the pastoral care team, **Rev. Melissa Douaire** 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 an [online prayer request](#)**, by **contacting us via staff emails** listed in your bulletin, or through the website's Contact Us link, ccsm-ucc.org/contact. 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 JOY AND GRATITUDE

Ann and John Fyfe shared with joy that their first grandchild, a boy, was born on Feb. 13 in North Carolina to **Andy Fyfe and Chloe Smith**. His name is **Keleo Sebastian Fyfe**.

PRAYERS OF LOVE AND STRENGTH

Linda Skromme's brother, **Bill Gasow**, passed away suddenly from a cardiac event on February 19 while skiing at Mount Ashland, OR with family. He was 77 years young. Please keep Linda and the whole family in your prayers. Bill is survived by his wife **Susan Gasow**, his son **Andy Gasow**, daughter-in-law **Jana Gasow** and three grandchildren.

Ann Fyfe's mother passed away peacefully in Iowa on February 18 at the age of 97. Both Ann and John were with her in the days prior to her passing.

Please hold **Michele Merfeld-Hale** in your prayers as her husband **Larry** passed away on February 8, shortly after being placed on Hospice care.

Our hearts go out to the grieving families and loved ones of the 40,000 people killed in the **earthquake in Turkey** on February 6. Prayers for comfort and for sustenance and provision during the harsh winter season.

The Dresbach family are grateful for the many cards and messages of condolence after the passing of **Melanie Dresbach's** father, **Jim Dresbach** on February 2.

Please keep **JW, Tina, Carter, Bill and Peter Lowrie** and the whole Lowrie family in your prayers as

they grieve the passing of their brother, **Mikkel Frederick Lowrie**—brother, father and grandfather—on January 14.

We continue to hold in prayer the families and communities of those killed in the **mass shooting in Half Moon Bay** on January 23, as well as for those who died and were injured in the **shooting at a dance studio in Monterey Park, CA** on January 22.

PRAYERS OF HEALING AND SUPPORT

Prayers for **David Meissner** who had successful foot surgery and is in the process of recovery.

Prayers of transition for **Cecelia Perkins** who we recently learned has relocated to Sebastopol.

CONTINUING PRAYERS

Continuing prayers of strength, encouragement, and healing for our beloved brothers and sisters: **Tatyana's** family in the Ukraine, **Mike and Lee Mulery, George Vail, Krystal Burndon's** sister **Janelle, Lorna and Jim Groundwater's** granddaughter **Yalda, Frank Garritano's** friend **Alex Carr, Martha Pierce, Angela Kraft-Cross' friend Judy Holcomb, Mike and Sue Hill's** granddaughter **Maggie, Michele Moffitt, Rev. Susan Flemr, Ann Ritter, Mel Thrash, Ben Schroeter's** family, **Dana Scadden, Mary Ann Notz, Cari Parker, Judy Hermann, Mo Weimer, Andrew Lind, the Neil/Cinq-Mars family, the family of Kyle Caverly, Jo Buckham, Ruth Black, Gene Chelberg and David Meissner, Dorothy Gorman, Dr. Jim Groundwater, Clare Naegle, Dottie Scott, Gary Steele, Don and Jonathan's** brother **Chuck Ruthroff**.

Clare Naegle's 105th birthday is coming!

If we calculate correctly, our friend and CCSM's beloved (and perhaps oldest?) member, Clare Naegle, will turn 105 in April. We visit Clare every couple of months at her residence at the Magnolia in Millbrae. Clare recently moved to a new room which provides her with a little more care. The room is decorated with photos of Clare's family, as well as some of her paintings. Her mind and curiosity are as active as ever. Clare's favorite activity is her weekly painting class; she's still creating images of lovely scenery, birds, and her speciality: cats.

CCSM has been and continues to be dear to Clare; she never fails to ask about our church.

—Susan Stoddard-Phillips and Julien Phillips

Cards may be sent to: 201 Chadbourne Ave. #102, Millbrae 94030





NCNC MIDWINTER RETREAT

Five CCSM teens and Melanie attended the NCNC MidWinter retreat held at the beautiful and expansive First Congregational Church of Palo Alto on Saturday, Feb. 18 through Monday morning, Feb. 20. The theme was relaxation and mindfulness. We were encouraged to slow down, take our time engaging in activities, and step away from our usual driven mode.

IN THIS ISSUE

CLICK TO NAVIGATE TO PAGE

Honoring Rev. Jorge	1
Faith Over Fear: Lenten Series	1
From Rev. Melissa	1
Children, Youth & Families	2
A Message from our Moderator	4
Rev. Sheryl Just Published a Book	4
Treasurer's January 2023 Financial Summary	5
From Your Minister Emerita	5
Latino/a Ministry Update	6
Update from the Director of Operations	7
Spiritual Conversations	7
Music & Art: Angela Kraft Cross on 3/17	7
Scholarships for Seniors/Grad Students	8
Pick-A-Party Spaces Still Available!	8
Taizé in March	8
Board of Directors Meeting Schedule	8
Blessing Box Contributions	8
Search Committee Update	9
NAACP Freedom Fund Gala	9
Casavant Love	10
Music Ministry	10
Energy, Environmental Justice Ministry	10
A Page of Poetry to Help You Breathe	11
Joys & Concerns	12
Clare Naegle's 105th Birthday is Coming!	12
NCNC Midwinter Retreat	13

