

CCSM PINE TREE

VOL. 73, #2 | ONLINE | LENTEN ISSUE 2024



Greetings, Church!

It's hard to believe that Lent is upon us. You might be thinking, already? Lent is early this year, but not the earliest it could be. A fun fact for your next trivia night: Easter is a floating holiday that could occur between March 22-April 25. In the Western Christian tradition, Easter falls the first Sunday after the spring equinox. The beginning of Lent is 6 weeks prior to Easter

Sunday; well, 6 weeks and some change (the beginning of the season is marked on Ash Wednesday). Traditionally, Lent is a time of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. It is a period of preparation and reflection, all in an effort to bring us closer to God, or to "recenter" our lives on the Divine as we look towards celebrating resurrection on Easter Sunday.

This Lent, we are focusing on the life and faith of one of Jesus' most famous disciples: Peter. After Jesus, Peter is the most frequently mentioned individual in the Gospels

and the New Testament. He was one of the first disciples called, and he was a constant presence in Jesus' ministry.

Has anyone ever told you that you wear your heart on your sleeve? Well, the same has been said about Peter. He is passionate, and his emotions take the lead... which means his journey is not polished, or linear, or perfect. Peter is a normal guy, trying his best to figure out life as it comes at him. Through all the ups and downs, and curves in the road, Peter keeps going. And who was there at every turn? Jesus.

As we follow Peter's faith journey, we will reflect on the stages of our own faith journeys, as well as who has helped us and shaped us along the way. This Lent, I invite you to wander, learn, reflect and discover alongside Peter. Use this time to explore how God is still speaking to you. You may be surprised about what you find...

Blessings as we being this sacred journey together.

With gratitude and love,

Jessica



Congregational
Church of san mateo

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



Ash Wednesday

February 14

Worship at 7:15
Sanctuary

Followed by a
Potluck Dinner
Kloss Hall

Join us for this special service that marks the beginning of the Lenten season; a time of reflection and preparation. A time of turning back to God, and who God is calling us to be.

Rev. Álvaro Durán will offer a reflection and we'll share in communion and the imposition of ashes as we embark on this sacred journey.

Following worship, we hope you'll stay for our weekly Wednesday potluck dinner.

LENTEN PRACTICES



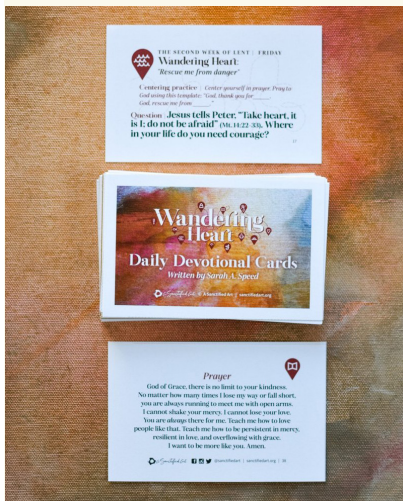
WEEKLY DEVOTIONALS

Beginning with Ash Wednesday, this weekly devotional, created by Sanctified Art, follows the scriptures of the Wandering Heart series through the Second Sunday of Easter. Each week offers: a commentary on that week's scripture, poetry, visual art, written reflections, hymns, and reflection prompts. **Devotionals will be available in the Narthex on Sunday, February 11.**

Our friends at A Sanctified Art have also provided a special e-reader version of this year's Lenten devotional, which you can access on your computer and mobile devices:

tinyurl.com/CCSM-WH-Devotional

In order to protect their work, please refrain from sharing this link or posting it on social media.



DAILY DEVOTIONAL CARDS

This collection of 62 daily devotional cards helps you mark each day from Ash Wednesday through the second week of Easter. The deck includes a weekly centering practice, along with a daily question for reflection, and a short prayer. You might place the stack of devotional cards by your bed to read and reflect on first thing in the morning or right before you sleep at night.

Cards will be available in the Narthex on Sunday, February 11.

Prayers by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org



LENTEN REFLECTION GROUPS

Join Rev. Jessica for a weekly discussion on the upcoming Sunday's scriptures and theme, Wednesdays from noon to 1:00PM and 6:00-7:00PM. The group at noon will meet over lunch, and the 6pm group will meet prior to our Wednesday worship service. You can switch between groups, join one week, or bounce in and out—whatever works for your schedule!

The weekly devotional and prayer cards will be your guide, so please bring a copy or one will be provided.

**WEDNESDAYS, 12 noon - 1:00 PM and 6:00 - 7:00 PM
FEBRUARY 21 - MARCH 27**

HOLY WEEK AT CCSM

SEE BACK PAGE FOR HOLY WEEK CALENDAR STARTING MARCH 24

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

by Rev. Dr. Sheryl Johnson
Minister to Children, Youth and Families

Happy New Year! Our children, youth, and families had an especially wonderful Advent and Christmas season. It seems to me like that was a long time ago now, but I think the key moments warrant repeating! Highlights included youth-led carolling after church at homes of several CCSM members (youth helped to teach the carols and to assist the kids in making crafts/cards to bring to the members), a special global Christmas celebration where the kids learned about different Christmas traditions around the world (particularly focused on Central and South America) including making mini-piñatas, learning the piñata song, and making alfajore cookies, a wonderful experience of Las Posadas, a multi-church UCC Advent youth retreat, and a youth-written Christmas pop-up Christmas pageant on Christmas Eve. Those are just a few of the many activities we did to learn about this wonderful season. On Sundays and Wednesdays, we explored the theme of a weary world rejoicing through the Advent themes of hope, peace, joy, and love. We explored the Biblical stories and read many wonderful kids' books that put a contemporary spin on the ancient tales. What a season!

As we moved into January, our kids have been exploring the theme of **following the light and sharing our gifts**, based on the Epiphany story. We have talked about the sources of hope and direction we can turn to when life is confusing or hard and the gifts we can bring to serve others. This particularly connected well to our celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King. We are so grateful to Lin Fenn who spent time with our kids to bring two special crafts to both Wednesday and Sunday attendees—beautiful night sky art and special night lights for the kids to take home. We had great conversation about how looking to the stars can remind us of how much more we as people have in common with one another and also how nightlights can be a reminder of God's love and care especially at night when we might feel lonely, scared, or unsure.

We are also using some great kids books about **people who have offered their gifts in service of faith and justice in the world**. These stories are wonderful starting places to then work with the kids to reflect on their own gifts and what they can do to be leaders in service of justice and peace.



This connected well also to our service projects on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Day as several families participated in the Peninsular Multifaith Coalition's Day of Service.

For families, we have continued our tradition of **playdates and lunch after church on the first Sunday of the month**. In January, we shared pizza, Christmas memories, and played boardgames. In February we will be engaging in community service. Families are always welcome to take the lead to host our events, or just share their ideas for what they'd like to do!

For youth, we had a wonderful **60 Minutes conversation** in January where we reflected on 2023 personally and in our world. The youth shared their proudest accomplishments and their hopes for the new year. This is an especially meaningful time as several youth are preparing to go off to college so they are anticipating a meaningful but very different year! This led to their choice of a topic for February where they chose to discuss regional differences within the US, exploring why those exist, if they are a problem, and what it might be like to explore living in a new region. Also, our youth have continued to offer leadership to our kids and for themselves as they have worked to plan several important events. The next will be a **special multicultural Mardi Gras/Carnaval/ Pancake Tuesday evening on February 11!**

Looking toward Lent, we will be engaging on both Sundays and Wednesdays with the wider church's theme of Wandering Hearts and taking a specific focus on prayer. **We will be writing prayers, praying in color, praying with our bodies, through music, and exploring how we can bring the concerns of our hearts to God** in this way. Lent is always a special season and a time to go deep with our children and youth, exploring our ancient faith and "still-speaking" spirit that is ever changing.

—cont. on next page

Also, looking toward summer, we are excited to learn that the UCC's Western Regional Youth Event will be taking place in Long Beach in June! **We will have some planning meetings on both Wednesdays and Sundays in February** so that we can put together a great group to attend. If you are interested, please let me (Sheryl) know. Both middle and high school students are welcome!

Here are a few other special events on our calendar:

SUNDAY, MARCH 3: Day-long service/ learning youth retreat in San Francisco!

We will spend the day learning, worshipping, and serving in San Francisco with our friends from Danville UCC and others. We will join Glide Memorial Church in worship and service and then have time with the San Francisco Night Ministry.

JUNE 23-27 Western Regional Youth Event: Join other UCC youth from across the Western US for service, learning, community, and time at Disneyland! We hope to have a great contingent from both Sunday and Wednesday services.

tinyurl.com/SWCUCC-WYRE-2024

JULY 2024: UCC Camp Tamarack Sessions. Please mark your calendar!

Senior High: July 14-20

Junior High: July 21-27

Junior (4th-6th grade): July 28-August 3

UCC WESTERN REGIONAL YOUTH EVENT



Long Beach, California

Save the Date!

JUNE 23 - 27, 2024

Join hundreds of UCC Middle and High Schoolers from the 8 UCC Conferences of the western half of the United States. We're gathering at California State University - Long Beach for a few days of workshops, service projects, music, worship, an adventure day at Disney and more!

- Sunday - Arrive & Evening Worship
- Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday- 3 days of Workshops, Service Project and an adventure day at Disney.
- Thursday - Morning Worship & Depart

Registration costs are still being finalized (somewhere around \$600) and will include housing, meals, and admission for one day at Disneyland. More info coming soon.

QUESTIONS? WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

Rev. Wally Hoeger | whoeger@firstchurchlb.org

UNDERGRAD SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



Thanks to Julien Phillips of CCSM, we've recently learned that there are opportunities for aid from our national UCC denomination: **scholarships of \$1000 to 10,000** for rising sophomore, junior or senior undergraduate students.

Applications are due March 1, and they require references (minister and academic adviser), so apply soon! For info, see the link on the ucc.org site: app.smarterselect.com/programs/93776-United-Church-Of-Christ.

Requirements are membership in a UCC church, active participation and contribution to the church

and answering questions in the application and a commitment to be active in a UCC church for at least five subsequent years.

Contact Sheryl Johnson, sjohnson@ccsm-ucc.org, or Warren Long, longlake15@sbcglobal.net, for help.

LATINO MINISTRY UPDATE

by Julien Phillips

In December our Latino Ministry celebrated four important milestones:

- ❖ **Rev. Álvaro received his work permit** from the federal Immigration and Naturalization Service.
- ❖ **The Silicon Valley Community Foundation made a grant to CCSM for \$40,000** to help support our community action and social justice work with our North Central neighbors and Latino/as throughout San Mateo. Most of this grant will help to pay for the share of Rev. Álvaro's time that is devoted to this work.
- ❖ **CCSM's Board of Directors signed a contract to employ Rev. Álvaro as our Transitional Minister for Latino Ministry for the next 11 months.** If we obtain one more grant, it will be extended to a full year. Rev. Jessica formally commissioned him at both Sunday and Wednesday services in January.
- ❖ **CCSM'S Scholarship Committee granted a scholarship to Emelin Perez to help support her studies at California State University/Fresno.** Emelin is the second member of our Latino community to receive a CCSM scholarship, along with her cousin, Ashley Lopez.



Commissioning of Rev. Álvaro on January 24, 2024



↑ Rev. Álvaro being commissioned on as Transitional Minister for Latino Ministry in the Sunday, January 21 worship service

↓ Affirmation of membership



A COUPLE OF DEGREES CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

A great way to lower your home energy costs is to go old school. Simply set your thermostat a few degrees lower during the rainy season and a few degrees higher during the summer. Wearing a sweater at home when the temperature dips and wearing lighter clothing when the temperature heats up will save money and carbon emissions.

ANNUAL REPORT UPDATE

by Veril Phillips

Treasurer, 2019-2023

More than 100 voting members of the Congregation attended the Annual Meeting on January 21, to receive an overview of our finances for 2023, consider the proposed budget for 2024, consider a few changes in the Bylaws, elect new lay leaders, honor those in our community whom we have lost this year, and hear from the Senior Minister and the outgoing and incoming moderators. The overview for 2023 finances and the budget for 2024 are highlighted below.

Having started 2023 with a planned shortfall of more than \$100,000, we were delighted to report that the year ended with a shortfall less than \$15,000 – a tribute to the generosity of the Congregation. Although expenses ran \$30,000 more than projected at the beginning of the year, revenue exceeded the budget by more than \$135,000.

The Congregation overwhelmingly approved the 2024 budget with its shortfall of slightly more than \$20,000, knowing that our

excess revenue over the years is more than sufficient to cover both the 2023 actual shortfall and the 2024 projected shortfall. More detail for both years will be provided in the Annual Report for 2023, soon to be published.

Let me take this opportunity to express appreciation to the Congregation for the trust you placed in me as Treasurer for the past several years. It has been an honor and privilege to serve in this capacity. I look forward to supporting the newly elected Treasurer, Martha Bronitsky, as well as the clergy, staff and other lay leaders as CCSM enters 2024 with renewed vitality.



See pages 8 and 9 for our updated leadership slate!

MUSIC & ART: CALLIGRAPHY

Music and Art will meet on Friday, February 16 at noon in the Buckham Room. As usual, bring your own lunch; beverages and dessert are provided.



We are privileged to have a program on calligraphy presented by Ms. **Billy Hutchinson** (friend of Tina Lowrie Schulkamp). She has a BFA degree



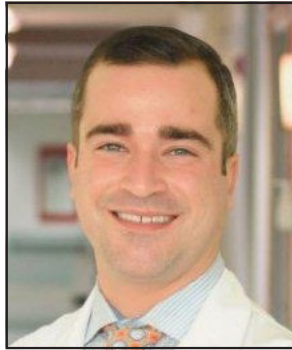
from the San Francisco Art Institute. She is primarily a calligrapher for special occasions and a lettering instructor at San Francisco Center for the Book.

Please RSVP to Don Harper at donaIdgharper@yahoo.com or phone 650-553-1800. Our presenter will need to know how many supplies to provide for our practice to assist in our creative experiences.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MEMBERS-AT-LARGE



Moderator:
Don Ruthroff



Vice Moderator:
Frank Garritano



Secretary:
Lauren Mathews



Treasurer:
Martha Bronitsky



Council of Ministries Lead:
Kay Harris



At-Large:
Valerie Leung



At-Large:
Dave Goulden



At-Large:
Robert Leung



At-Large:
Kerianne Steele

To contact the Board, email Board@CCSM-UCC.org

COMMITTEE CHAIRS



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Finance:
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Endowment:
Chris Yeh



Personnel:
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Pastoral Relations:
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Spiritual Life:
Dave Olson



Stewardship:
Ivan Raikov



Buildings & Grounds:
Jim Schwandt



Latino Ministry:
Julien Phillips



Connect & Celebrate:
Sandy McNabb



Congregational Care:
Melodie Lew



Engagement:
Alison Schwandt



Music:
Sue Bell, Katie Bylander



Service & Justice:
Genel Morgan, Sharon Tobin



Children, Youth and Families:
Troy Grabow, Kim Rey



Environmental Justice:
Gary White

To contact the Council of Ministries, email COM@CCSM-UCC.org



2024

REFLECTIONS OF A COFFEE HOUR COORDINATOR

By Lin Fenn

As many of you are already aware, in March, I'm stepping down from my service job as coordinator of the coffee hour that follows the church service. I loved the position and couldn't have imagined the perks that I'd receive in return.

A few years back, I began attending CCSM during the time when everyone wore masks and many functions were held outdoors. I was hoping to find a way to integrate into the social scene, but I didn't want to join any committees that involved going to meetings where people aired disagreements. I knew my weakness: in the face of inevitable conflict, I got terribly anxious. I asked myself, do I have the ability to be a cool, calm, and constructive committee member? My answer to myself was, "Not yet."

I decided I was better suited to a concrete, action-oriented service job. Although not exactly skilled in food preparation, inspiring others to add another task to their weekly to-do list, skillfully fielding feedback, and communicating well through spreadsheets and emails, I took on the task because Robert Leung emphasized the brighter aspects of the role. He said, "It's crucial that everyone has a place to relax and connect with each other. My mother always saw this work as essential to community building." And, he offered, "I'll help nearly every week." Soon after this conversation, Melodie Lew offered to work alongside Robert and me by facilitating smooth communications and inspiring people to sign-up to help bring in refreshments. She had a quiet personal approach that was very hard to say "no" to.

I accepted the position. The role helped me overcome shyness, a shortcoming that often left me feeling like an outsider. I also received needed practice in handling mild service-related issues with grace. I met a lot of church members and got to know them well. I received lots of encouragement. Gradually, I learned that there were many others who were also deeply immersed in service work, and I felt inspired by one of the overall goals of the church: To preserve unity and good-will to offset the stresses of life.

During this upcoming year, I encourage anyone who's interested in this work to let me know and our team will work with you for a month or so to help you experience success. I look forward to my next CCSM service job, whatever that may be. Now that I know you all better, I may be open to committee work although that may be pushing it.

Thank you to all who prepared food for coffee hour. Your willingness to help has been invaluable in keeping us all well-nourished and nurtured.



Lin Fenn, Melodie Lew, Oscar Rosa at Coffee Hour

NEW COFFEE HOUR COORDINATOR NEEDED!

CCSM's Coffee Hour is an important component of CCSM's community, ensuring that people have a place to connect and talk.

Tasks include:

- **Monitoring** the sign-up list, then **confirming** with that Sunday's volunteer;
- **Being available** as helper on Sunday mornings (when necessary with a new volunteer) or asking someone else to be (Robert Leung and Melodie Lew are often available and enjoy doing this);
- **Occasionally sending out an email** with the signup link to ask folks to fill empty slots.

Please contact either Lin Fenn or Melodie Lew. Thank you!

Kay and Raphaela at Coffee Hour



CONGREGATIONAL CARE MINISTRY

Thank you, Diane Kalliam, for providing great leadership to the Congregational Care Ministry. You have made it into an active and vital part of CCSM and we hope to build upon the good work you started. The Ministry works to build community within and support for our church family. In order to do this, members from the community itself are needed to provide empathic and compassionate care to each other.

I want to give a huge thank you to Lin Fenn. Under her ever-present, watchful eyes, Coffee Hour was re-started in 2022. With her gentle and sweet guidance, it has again become a warm and comfortable place for the church family to connect after morning worship. With her moving on to other ways to serve, we need someone to fulfill the Coffee Hour coordinator role. Please see the position description in this Pine Tree and contact Lin or myself for more information. For a more limited opportunity to participate, please sign up to provide goodies for one Sunday. Please contact Lin or myself to sign up. Coffee hour works best when everyone pitches in—much like in a family.

If you enjoy writing notes and in turn putting a smile on someone's face, please consider joining the "Month of Sundays" team. This is something you can do for a time limited and on your own time. Contact Genel Morgan or Sharon Tobin for more information.

Finally, this Ministry is contemplating how it can be a part of the Latino/a Ministry, and how the Congregational Care Ministry can learn from our Wednesday evening congregation to increase our supportive family aspect. Stay tuned for more about the Congregational Care Ministry.

—Melodie Lew, Congregational Care



CUETLAXOCHITL SUCCESS

If you saw the recent pictorial Pine Tree you saw pictures of some of the Advent season recipients of our plant deliveries. The joy it brings to our members is significant. In doing some reading I discovered some interesting facts about how this plant got the name that we use today... Poinsettia.

Joel Roberts Poinsett was an American diplomat, physician and botanist. At different points in his life he served as a member of the South Carolina legislature, the US House of Representatives, a Cabinet member, a US agent to Chile and Argentina, traveled extensively in Europe and was our first minister to Mexico. As a product of his time in history (early 1800's) he was a complicated man.

On the plus side: His interest in science and history led to the founding of the Smithsonian Institution, his travels in the southern hemisphere gave our country valuable information and contacts with our southern neighbors. He vigorously argued against the Nullification Act, opposed secession, and supported the "gradual end to slavery."

On the negative side: His reports were instrumental to the Monroe Doctrine's promotion of "manifest destiny," he owned 100 slaves, and he was the cabinet member responsible for the Trail of Tears and other efforts to relocate the indigenous peoples.

Since our plants are native to Mexico, maybe next year we'll deliver Flor de Nochebuenas (Christmas Eve flower) or Cuetzlaxochitls (from the Aztec language). Whatever name we use, the program will continue to bring joy to the recipients and the deliverers.

—Diane Kalliam



BANANA BREAD MINISTRY!

On January 17, Donna Lindsay delivered 37 small loaves of banana bread to the Vendome and HOT Team, and 28 double loaves to First Step for Families. Donna said, "Twenty-four people took the twenty-seven bags of bananas that I distributed on Sunday with three people taking more than one bag. It seemed to be fun even for all the bakers. It was one of the most fun things that I have ever done!"

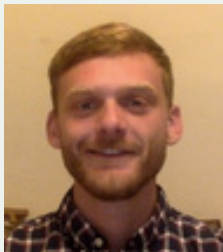


ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

by Gary H. White
*Lead, CCSM Environmental Justice Ministry
Climate Reality Leader, Bay Area*



One of the key alliances the CCSM Environmental Justice Ministry has established is with California Interfaith Power & Light (CAIPL). CAIPL was founded in 2000 at



Grace Cathedral, SF by Rev. Sally Bingham. California IPL is now an independent affiliate with the mission to grow the interfaith movement for climate justice here in California. Our contact person at CA IPA is Gregory Stevens. I recently

sat down with Gregory to ask about his background and to learn about the goals and priorities of his group.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND THAT LED YOU TO YOUR ROLE AT CAIPL.

I moved to California from Florida 13 years ago for graduate school at the Claremont School of Theology (CST) in Los Angeles. CST's theological approach is based on ecological thought, which understands reality as an interconnected vibrant web of ever unfolding and entangling relationality. After seminary, I found a home in Unitarian Universalism and greatly enjoy the multi-faith aspect of the faith. My position now at CAIPL blends interfaith work and climate justice. I educate faith communities on climate injustice and on how to bring about climate justice. We at CAIPL aim to equip our own faith communities with the

technologies available to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF CAIPL?

CAIPL's main goal is to inspire and mobilize faith communities to take bold and just action on climate change. We do this through educational programs, interfaith councils representing different municipalities across California, developing Resilience Hubs for climate-disaster preparedness, helping congregations install solar panels and other electrification projects, and through policy and lobby work.

IS THERE A PARTICULAR FOCUS FOR 2024?

In 2024 we are working on home electrification with our congregational members utilizing rebates and incentives available by governments. We partner with Peninsula Clean Energy (PCE) to promote renewable energy use in San Mateo County. As you know, PCE has lower rates than PG&E, 100% renewable energy to power your home, and rebates/incentives to help folks acquire clean technology in the form of water heat pumps, induction stove tops, and electric vehicles.

HOW DOES CAIPL WORK WITH CONGREGATIONS?

We provide training for congregations on issues such as the renewable transition from fossil fuels, building electrification, and other aspects of climate change. We offer support in connecting congregations with solar installers and solar finance non-profits so faith communities can access the funds needed to complete their electrification projects. Our most recent partnerships helped two churches establish Resilience Hubs with solar arrays and battery back up storage in South San Francisco and East Oakland.

THIRD CHANCE PICK-A-PARTIES!

SHARING FAITH, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS THROUGH PICK-A-PARTIES

Recent Pick-A-Parties focused on learning and sharing skills. Julien Phillips and Susan Stoddard Phillips hosted **an afternoon discussion with Reverend Álvaro**. Susan reported that their guests were moved by the story of Álvaro's life and faith. **Sharing knowledge about the Civil War** was the topic of Phil Lind's and Betsy Woodward's party, and everyone came away with a deeper appreciation for this critical part of our history. Our skilled quilters were out in full force for a fun and busy afternoon of **cutting, sewing, pressing and arranging quilt blocks**, hosted by Susan Bell. They plan to display the finished quilt for the congregation, and then donate it to a good cause. If these parties pique your interest in attending a Pick-A-Party, check out these Third Chance Pick-A-Parties.



CCSM Fundraising Event
2023-2024

If you had scheduling conflicts or just missed one or more of these during sign-ups, please consider signing up now. Contact Sandy McNabb (sandra.j.mcnebb@gmail.com, 650 678 5650) for sign-up details.

CASAVANT LOVE CONCERT • SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 4:00 PM

Come enjoy a beautifully performed organ concert in the chancel by CCSM's talented organist, Angela Kraft Cross, followed by fancy appetizers, chocolate truffles and wonderful wine and fellowship.

COOK THE PART – DINNER IN ATHENS • SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 7:00PM • FLORESCAS' HOME

Create and enjoy a fabulous Greek dinner with Renato and Lauri Floresca.

BRUNCH AND HIKE FOR ALL AGES • SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 9:00AM • LAURA PETERHANS' HOME

Enjoy a traditional German brunch at Laura's house, featuring fruit compote, cold cuts, German breads, croissants, Italian breakfast Strata, fresh filter coffees and teas. After the brunch, guests can discuss their options: a tour of the nearby Notre Dame de Namur campus, including a Bufano sculpture of St. Francis of Assisi and the exterior of financier William Ralston's mansion; and/or a drive to Water Dog Lake Park in Belmont to enjoy short hikes; or remaining at Laura's to enjoy more German pastries and conversation.

ROCK HOUNDER'S DELIGHT – PEBBLE PUPS WELCOME! SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 5:00PM BETSY AND PHIL'S HOME

Betsy and Phil invite guests to pick a geode from their "stock," watch it be sliced open with a rock saw, and then have it returned later — polished for you to treasure. Dinner is included, along with an opportunity to learn about rocks, fossils, and agates. All children will get a simple "rock journal."

LAUNCHING "CHURCH FRIENDS"

by Carol Henton

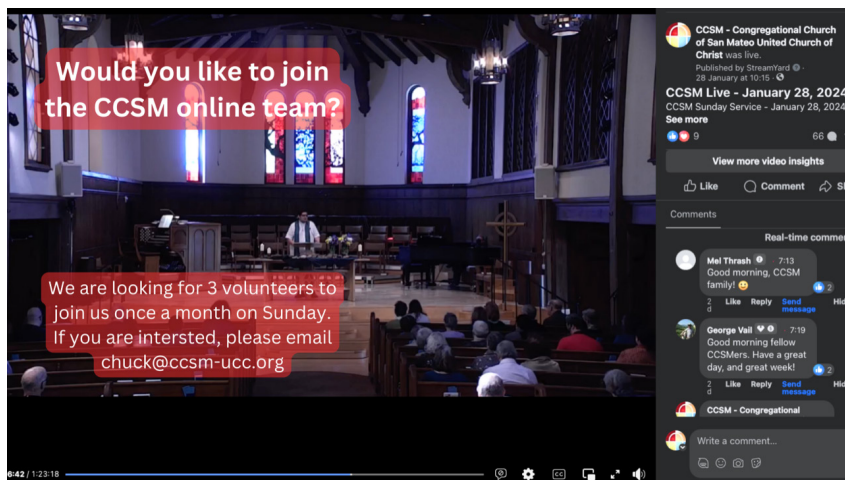
So, you ask, what's behind this new pastoral initiative to establish "Church Friends" at CCSM? Well, according to Rev. Jessica, Church Friends are people who will work with our clergy (pastoral care team) and Congregational Care Ministry to provide another level of care for our faith community. A Church Friend will support individuals during life's bumps and transitions, such as having a baby, receiving a concerning health diagnosis, the loss of a loved one, or any other life event when one might want some extra support. Melodie Lew (the new lead of our Congregational Care Ministry) and I are excited to launch this new effort, which we believe is a very good fit for CCSM.

If you are interested, you will be matched with

an individual who has reached out to the church staff for additional support.

Church Friends will not take the place of the Pastoral Care team, but will supplement it. "Friends" will commit to supporting individuals by checking in periodically for a period of six months, more or less, depending on the situation. If this sounds like something you wish to do, contact Carol Henton (650-544-75630) or Melodie Lew (650-573-9765) — or **attend a "Second Hour" gathering on Sunday, February 25 at 12:15pm** to learn more. We hope many of you will be willing to serve as God's hands and feet in this important endeavor.





SEEKING ONLINE GREETERS!

Do you attend our services online? Could you commit to being an online greeter one Sunday each month?

It's easy and really contributes to the online experience. Most of the duties are carried out during the first 15 minutes of service.

This role involves:

- 1) **Greeting online viewers** as they enter.
- 2) **Gathering names of online attendees and texting them** to the pastor.
- 3) **Posting a link to the bulletin** during the first few minutes.
- 4) **Posting relevant links** during key moments in the service, such as the welcome and offering.

That's it! This is a great way to serve CCSM and to connect to our online community.

Please contact Chuck Rosenthal, our videographer, if interested or if you have questions.

chuck@ccsm-ucc.org



MINISTRY OF SERVICE AND JUSTICE (MSJ)

MSJ meets on Zoom the second Tuesday of the month at 7:15pm. Please join us anytime. Just let Genel Morgan or Sharon Tobin know so we can send you the link. We welcome new members to MSJ!

Please continue to bring nonperishable food items for the Blessing Box each Sunday. There is a blue receptacle in the Narthex. The need is so great that once we fill the box, it is empty within an hour. With help from Samaritan House and money from plate offerings we can continue to provide this important service to our neighbors who are food insecure.

Many thanks for your generosity each Sunday when we collect the plate offering for different charities and non profits. We are open to suggestions for any organization you may be interested in or involved with. We vet each organization in order to be good stewards of your donations.

CCSM is surely committed to be the hands, feet and face of God in many ways.



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

by Chase Montara



Oscar and I are grateful to Jim Schwandt, lead of the Buildings and Grounds Ministry, for helping us to address some maintenance and repair issues facing our beautiful, but aging, church. **At the top of the list is the elderly storm drain infrastructure.** As

you can imagine, our vast roof collects a lot of rain water! That rain water runs into downspouts and feeds into underground clay pipes, that are estimated to be at least 75 years old, which then carry the water for dispersal. A section of these pipes from the parking lot doorway near where Rev. Jessica parks her car to the Little Wonders playground has failed and needs to be replaced.

Jim, Oscar and I are in the process of securing multiple bids from five different plumbing companies, each with their own creative solutions for moving that water. We want to do the job right, in a manner that will last for another 75 years, but one that will also be the most cost effective. So, we have been “shopping around” in earnest! As part of the required investigative work to determine the extent of the failure, the delivery ramp had to be partially excavated and remains closed. (Just a note that this ramp is not an actual wheelchair (ADA) ramp. It is too short and steep to meet those requirements. It is actually a delivery ramp. The wheelchair accessibility into the church is not impacted by this project.) But nonetheless, we want to restore access as quickly as possible for convenience and keyless entry access. After the final bid is in, sometime during the week of February 5th, the Finance Committee will make their decision about which contractor to go with, a decision that Jim Granucci and I will help them to make. Once the work is scheduled, it should take about a week to complete, assuming good weather and all going to plan. Now that’s some faith! We empathize that a project of this scale poses an inconvenience, and we are working hard to complete this project as soon as possible.

Have you noticed the storage container that appeared on the east side of the parking lot? A furniture company called “Drop House” is renting space from us to place this container which will house furniture for customer pickup on Saturdays. We have contracted with them for a six-month trial period. Should we decide to extend for a year, this arrangement could yield \$7,200 for us each year. We are only losing one of our parking spaces and the Board felt the trade-off was worth the income. We

hope that, despite any inconvenience posed, you will applaud the creativity involved in finding new revenue for the church.

And speaking of finding revenue, **we are continuing to work with Peer Space**, an online rental platform similar to Airbnb. Sean Moran is generously helping me by responding to inquiries. Since December, we have had three bookings, which provided needed income. One of the additional benefits to outside rentals is that we have an opportunity to share CCSM and its mission with people who might not otherwise have heard of us. I am also in initial discussions with a provider of Art Camps for young children who is interested to rent the Community Room Monday through Friday, year-round. Making use of this space during the weekdays when it otherwise sits empty would not pose any inconvenience to our members and so, could be ideal as another revenue stream. Do you have any ideas you would like to share? I’m all ears!

John Neil has been successful in finding a **more updated and less expensive provider for our telephone needs at the church.** I was able to find a less expensive contract for a **new postal meter.** Cheryle Matteo and I met with a copier company who wants to work with us to **reduce our monthly printing costs.**

Please let me know if you have any questions about the above projects. Oscar, Zoe, Cheryle (the staff I supervise) and I are enjoying working with Rev. Jessica as she enters the New Year with new ideas and great energy. The church feels vibrant and energetic moving toward the beautiful and thoughtful season of Lent. May God bless us all in this new season of change, growth and renewal!



Joys and Concerns

CCSM Pastoral Care Team

Please share your prayers with the pastoral care team, **Rev. Jessica Vacketta, Rev. Dr. Sheryl Johnson, Rev. Álvaro Durán, and Chase Montara**. Share your prayers, your hopes, and your lives. You may connect in the following ways: by **filling out an [online prayer request](#)** or by **contacting us via staff emails** listed in your bulletin. 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 LOVE AND STRENGTH

Margot Struble, age 93, passed away on January 25 at home surrounded by her family. Margot was an active member of our CCSM community who loved to sing and travel and wanted everyone at CCSM to know how grateful she was for her church family. We hold her family and friends close in prayer in this season of remembrance and grief. There will be a Celebration of Life on **March 9** at Margot's home at 425 Ranelagh Rd, Hillsborough; more details to follow.

Barbara Reynolds Sky asks for prayers of peace and healing as her dear husband died unexpectedly on January 28.

Rebecca Ruedy-Whelan and family request prayers over the loss of her brother-in-law **Martin Giddy**, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on January 12 from prostate cancer. He was age 81 and was the beloved husband to her older sister **Susy Giddy** for almost 38 years. Rebecca also requests prayers for herself for on-going health problems since returning from a trip to Mexico in November. She is having a lot of testing and doctor visits at this time and hoping for some answers and a good outcome.

Ann Ritter, mom of **Rebecca Judd** (and grandmother to **Ellie and Tuesday**) passed away on December 13 after a year and a half on hospice. Please pray for the Judd family in this difficult time of loss.

Lorna Groundwater asks for prayers of comfort for her friend, Theresa, whose only son was killed in a car accident.

Prayers requested for **Genel Morgan's** cousin, **Gerda**, in Denmark, whose sister **Kirsten** passed suddenly on December 27, an especially hard time to lose a family member.

Pam McCarthy-Hudson requests prayers for her friend **Jeannette D's** family, as Jeannette passed away on December 11 from cancer. She will be dearly missed by Pam, as well as Jeannette's sisters, daughters and her extended family.

PRAYERS OF HEALING AND SUPPORT

Isabel Hernandez is asking for prayers and emotional support as she is co-responsible for the care of her mother, **Ana Villalta**, who is going through a difficult time due to her multiple physical

and emotional health conditions.

Linda Stoick requests prayers for her friend **Corinne**, who is undergoing cancer treatment.

Brian Torres' mother, Laurel Torres (a former member) has moved to Laurel Parc Senior Living Community, 15850 N.W. Central Drive, Apt 113, Portland, Oregon 97229. Brian says she would love a note about what her old friends are up to, and our prayers as well.

Andrew Lind and his wife **Margherita** and children **Livia** and **Filippo** have moved to Istanbul, where Andrew will be the Turkey Country Director in charge of Migration for IOM (International Organization for Migration). Andrew is **Betsy Woodward** and **Phil Lind's** son.

We pray for **Anne and Steve Galli** who are continuing to experience some health challenges. Our prayers and cards are greatly appreciated by them.

Genel Morgan asks for prayers for her cousin **Kay**, whose husband **Terry** has just been diagnosed with recurrent lung cancer.

Please pray for **Espie Abacan** and others who are on Espie's heart.

Please pray for **Oscar Acuña** and family, whose father died in El Salvador.

Michele Merfeld Hale requests prayers for the following loved ones: Friend **Lee White** is cancer free following treatment, but still has a troubling neurological condition. His wife **Marilyn** passed away on Nov. 4, which was a kind of blessing, but leaves her family grieving her loss. Also her friend **Camilla** is caring for her husband **Ron** who is dealing with health concerns. And her friend **Melissa** is dealing with the aftermath of divorce and its impact on her and her children.

Please continue to keep **Mel Thrash** in your prayers as he continues his struggle with recurrent cancer.

Prayers for the daughter of a friend of **Linda Stoick, Jennifer Garcia**, who suffered a stroke.

Please pray for **Lorna Groundwater's** dear friend, **Denise McKevitt Rasmussen**, who has Stage IV metastatic cancer now affecting her brain.

—cont. on next page—

Joys and Concerns... cont.

Please pray for **Cindy Shaughnessy's** brother **Jim**, who recently suffered a brain bleed.

Sarah Iya requests prayers for her mother, **Jane Don**, in England. She is undergoing her 4th round of chemo treatments for Stage 4 ovarian cancer. She is also recovering from surgery on a broken hip, caused by cancer in her bones, in October.

Deb Chang requests prayers for her friend **Theresa** who returned home after 3 months in and out of the hospital from fainting and seizures. Hopefully her condition can finally be diagnosed and treated so she can recover at home with her family.

May we who enjoy the privilege of peace not forget **our siblings in the Middle East** that are suffering daily: from the innocent civilians caught up in the middle of the war, to those who continue to be held hostage, and the far too many families who have lost loved ones.

Prayers requested for **Cheryle Matteo's** brother **Lou**, who had a cancer recurrence and is now home

following a stay at a skilled nursing facility.

CONTINUING PRAYERS

Continuing prayers of strength, encouragement, and healing for our beloved brothers and sisters:
Mel Thrash; Steve Galli; Lynnelle's friend Lisa Nelson, Judy and Minsook, friends of Angela and Robert; Bev Knowlton; Alice Morison's close friend, Cheryl R; Jason, friend of Genel Morgan; Ron and Camilla, and Lee and Marilyn White, friends of Michele Merfeld Hale; Cari Parker; Martha Clements; Bill Melis; Mike and Lee Mullery; George Vail; Martha Pierce; Mary Ann Notz; Jo Buckham; Ruth Black; Gene Chelberg and David Meissner; Dorothy Gorman; Dr. Jim Groundwater; Clare Naegle; Dottie Scott; Don and Jonathan's brother, Chuck Ruthroff; Kay and Mike Harris' friend, Mary-Helen McMahon; Caroline Reinke.



SAVE THE DATE!

We'll celebrate Lynnelle's 30th Anniversary on February 25!

Angela has written a special piece for choir and bells, and we'll have a celebration of Lynnelle's service at coffee hour.

We hope you can join us!

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Holy Week

WITH CCSM

Palm Sunday 	March 24	10:30AM CCSM SANCTUARY
Stations of Peter	March 24	5PM MEET IN KLOSS HALL
Servicio de Adoración bilingüe	March 27	7:15PM MEET IN KLOSS HALL
Maundy Thursday	March 28	7:15PM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF THE PENINSULA
Good Friday	March 29	7PM CCSM SANCTUARY
Easter Vigil	March 30	7PM COLLEGE HEIGHTS UCC

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HE IS RISEN

EASTER AT CCSM

SUNRISE
6:30AM
Memorial Garden

TRADITIONAL
10:30AM
Sanctuary

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