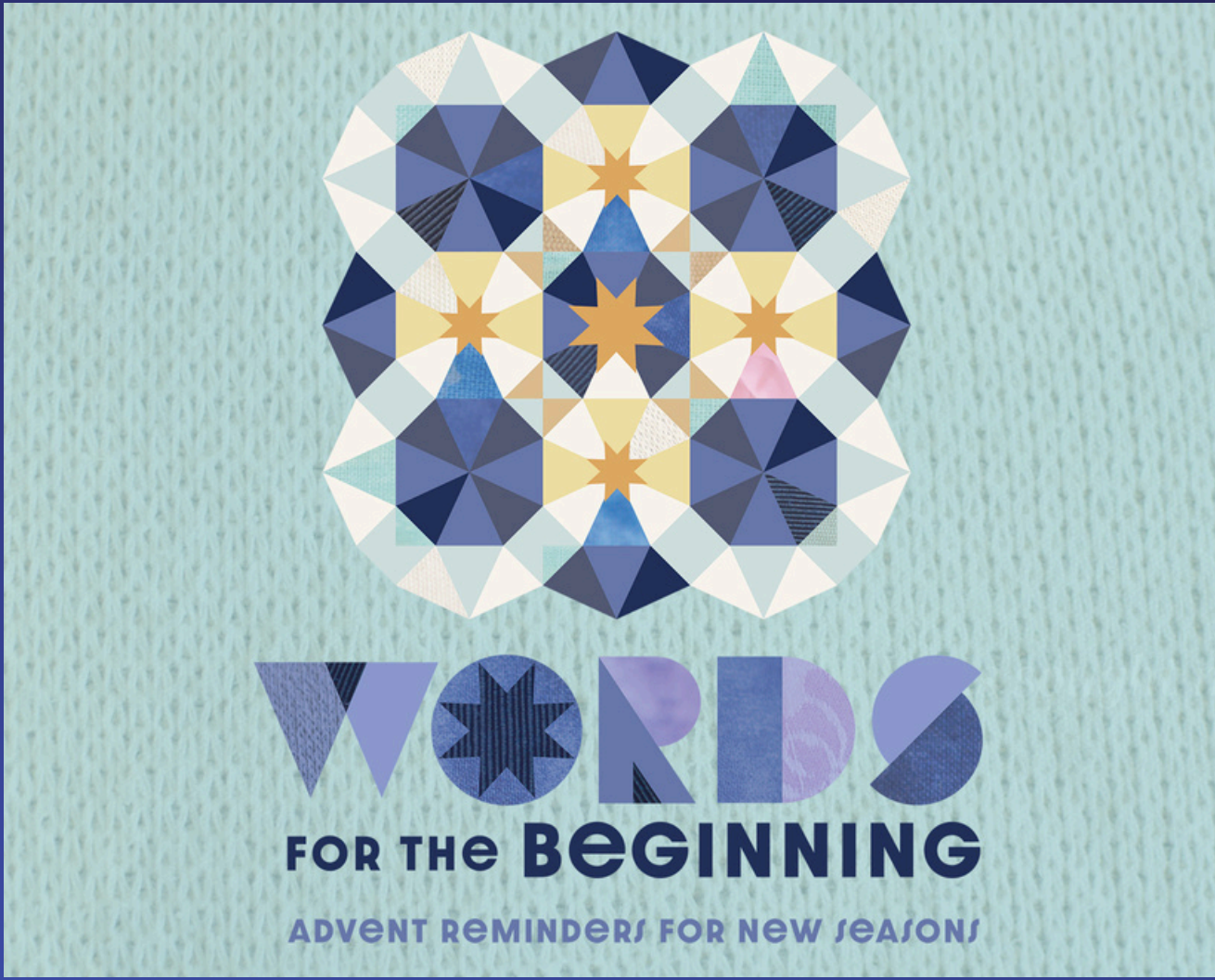




CCSM PINE TREE



Advent Edition

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Words for the Beginning

by Rev. Jessica Vacketta



Advent, a season of endings and beginnings, is just around the corner. As the calendar year comes to a close, a new church year rushes in. Did you know Advent is the start of the church year? Christ's birth ushers us into new ways of living and loving — and yet, we feel the weight of many things coming to an end.

This December, we'll join churches across the country in revisiting the words of ancient scripture, words we need to hear again and again as we begin a new season. What will the Spirit say to us this season? How is God still speaking? While our weekly worship themes may feel like the lessons we teach children, in reality, these are lessons we continue to learn and relearn as adults. The stories we'll revisit are frequently used in weddings, ordination services, and baptisms, sacred messages we impart on loved ones during special ceremonies and sacred rituals:

- Dec. 1 – You Are a Blessing***
- Dec. 8 – We Can't Go Alone***
- Dec. 15 – Do the Good That Is Yours to Do***
- Dec. 22 – Hope Is Worth the Risk***
- Dec. 24 – Love Knows Your Name***
- Dec. 29 – Don't Forget to Laugh***
- Jan. 5 – The Road Isn't Straight***

As we enter this sacred season, let's hold fast to the reminders that will bolster us for the journey ahead. Now, more than ever, it's important that we lean into community and ground ourselves in God's love.

Throughout this edition of the Pine Tree you will find opportunities to connect, grow, and serve throughout the season, including a new worship opportunity on Sunday nights and beloved traditions like Las Posadas, Poinsettia deliveries, and our annual Cookie Exchange.

As I look toward Christmas, I think of Mary, who in many ways was surrounded by endings, beginnings, and the unknown — large and small, personal and political. And yet, Mary proclaimed hope in a God who was and is making all things new. As we also move through new personal and political and congregational chapters, may these words for the beginning renew us and remind us of the ways we are called to live out our faith.

No matter what we are facing, no matter what this new day brings, let love be our guide.

With hope,
Jessica

A New Advent Experience

Gather 'Round the Table

by Rev. Jessica Vacketta



This Advent season, we invite you to experience the ancient stories of our faith in a fresh, intimate way. Beginning December 1st at 5 pm, join us in Kloss Hall for a unique bilingual worship service that brings together all generations around shared tables – just as families have gathered to share stories for countless generations.

In this relaxed, interactive setting, we'll explore the treasured narratives of Advent through conversation, prayer, and song. Rather than a traditional sermon, each week features a brief message followed by guided table discussions that allow everyone – from our youngest to our wisest – to share in the wonder of the season.

Together, we'll:

- Experience the stories of the season in both English and Spanish
- Participate in inclusive, hands-on activities
- Celebrate communion as one community
- Build connections with our church family

Whether you come with your blood family, chosen family, or seeking to connect with your spiritual family, there's a place for you at our table. Join us as we journey through Advent together, creating new traditions while honoring the timeless practice of gathering to share our stories of faith.

Every Sunday at 5 pm in Kloss Hall, beginning December 1st.



Christmas Eve @CCSM

Tuesday, December 24:

11 am Join us for a festive morning worship in our familiar Sunday style, complete with cherished carols and Holy Communion. We'll explore Luke's timeless account of Christ's birth together, celebrating the wonder of the Incarnation in community.

5 pm Come be part of the Christmas story! This joyful, bilingual, interactive service features familiar carols in both English and Spanish and a pop-up pageant where everyone is welcome to participate. All ages are invited to help bring the nativity story to life. Bring your friends and neighbors to this welcoming celebration of Jesus' birth!

11 pm Begin your Christmas celebration with our treasured late-night service. Arrive early to experience our special "Christmas Garland" of music, beginning at 10:35 pm. This contemplative service offers a peaceful pause amid the season's bustle — a sacred time to welcome the Christ child through scripture, song, and prayer. After a brief Christmas message, we'll share the light of Christ, concluding with our traditional candlelit singing of Silent Night.

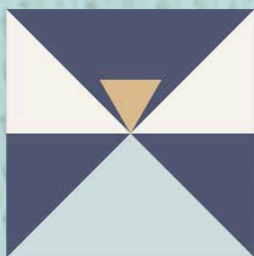


CCSM Blessing Tree

Stay Warm, Share Warmth: Our Blessing Tree

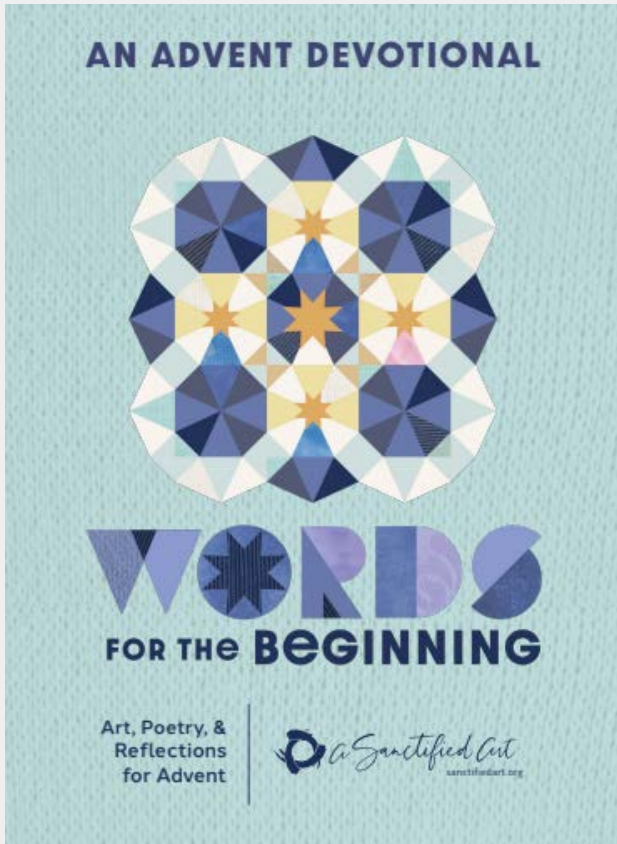
This Advent season, a special tree will go up in Kloss Hall – instead of ornaments, it will be trimmed with warmth and care for our neighbors. Our new "Blessing Tree" extends the spirit of our beloved Blessing Box into the cold and rainy winter months. You're invited to hang new or gently used hats, scarves, gloves, and umbrellas on its branches. Just like our Blessing Box, the principle is simple: leave what you can, take what you need.

As winter rains arrive in San Mateo, let's ensure everyone in our community has what they need to stay warm and dry. Together, we can make this season a little more comfortable for all.



YOU ARE A BLESSING

ADVENT RESOURCES



This devotional from Sanctified Art is shaped around several reminders we all need from time to time: you are a blessing; we can't go alone; do the good that is yours to do; hope is worth the risk; love knows your name; don't forget to laugh; the road isn't straight. These reminders root us in the fundamental truths of our faith. Many of them are life lessons we teach to children — lessons that adults continue to learn and relearn.

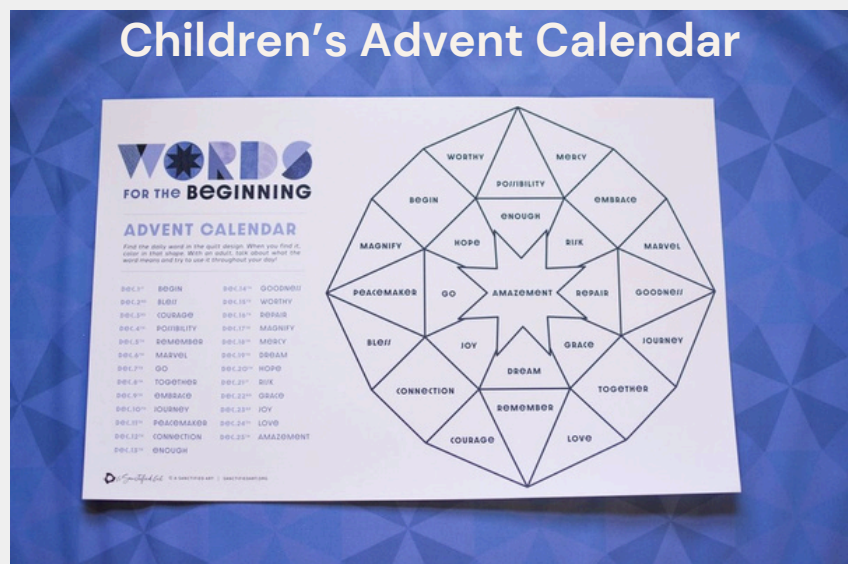
Devotionals are located in the Narthex on the Welcome Table, and a digital version can be found here:

online.flippingbook.com/view/811735764/

Per our purchase agreement, please refrain from posting this link on social media.

Each day in December, children can color in a new shape on the calendar containing a daily word to learn and use.

Be sure to pick up a copy in the Narthex or Kloss Hall. Calendars are available in English and Spanish!



Advent Resources

Our adult (and youth-friendly) calendar is a photo-a-day challenge to share on social media. The daily words are the same for both calendars so all ages can engage in this daily practice. Be sure to tag us in your posts!



ADVENT PHOTO-A-DAY CHALLENGE @sanctifiedart

For each day of Advent, we invite you to take a photo inspired by the word of the day. Share your daily photos on social media along with the words that inspired them.

Dec.1 BEGIN	Dec.2 BLESS	Dec.3 COURAGE	Dec.4 POSSIBILITY	Dec.5 REMEMBER
Dec.6 MARVEL	Dec.7 GO	Dec.8 TOGETHER	Dec.9 EMBRACE	Dec.10 JOURNEY
Dec.11 PEACEMAKER	Dec.12 CONNECTION	Dec.13 ENOUGH	Dec.14 GOODNESS	Dec.15 WORTHY
Dec.16 REPAIR	Dec.17 MAGNIFY	Dec.18 MERCY	Dec.19 DREAM	Dec.20 HOPE
Dec.21 RISK	Dec.22 GRACE	Dec.23 JOY	Dec.24 LOVE	Dec.25 AMAZEMENT

Samaritan House

by Jim Granucci

Years ago, when the Samaritan House Dining Room lost its lease, CCSM hosted the dinners for a few months until the Dining Room could move to the Masonic Temple across the street. But now the Masonic Temple is up for sale, so CCSM stepped in this August to become the official new host site for Samaritan House dinners, cooking and serving dinners every weeknight from 4-6 pm.

Our hospitality has been a success. We started serving less than 100 people with very few of them staying in Kloss Hall to enjoy their dinners. Now we are serving about 300 meals with about 60 sitting at our round tables for conversation each evening. New friendships have developed; a number of our guests will sit for an hour talking to one another. Some of our dinner guests have even joined us for Sunday worship.

The response from our church members has been outstanding. Over 30 CCSM volunteers have become welcoming faces night after night, along with Samaritan House staff. Our members help to set up the Dining Room each evening, serve the meals, talk to our guests, and clean up afterwards. Other volunteers from the community assist and often ask about CCSM.

I can't be any prouder of the decision our church made to invite Samaritan House back into our church. If you want to feel the spirit of God working in our community, come by one afternoon and see for yourself. **If you are interested in becoming part of this ministry**, please give me a call at (650) 302-9911 or speak with one of our volunteers.

Jim Granucci, CCSM's Dining Room Coordinator



DO THE GOOD THAT IS YOURS TO DO

Music Notes

by Lynnelle Bilsey

This Holiday season bells will be ringing, people will be singing, and joyful hearts will be making music at CCSM. All members, friends, and families are invited to join in making 'all things bright' as we celebrate the sounds of the season together.



Joyful Noise

is an intergenerational choir led by Julie Berk. The choir engages children of all ages and their family members, providing a great opportunity to make music together. Julie works to create an engaging and welcoming environment for early music exploration with children and youth at CCSM.

Joyful Noise is currently working toward the next church service performance date, which will be Sunday, November 24. Joyful Noise ensemble will be singing and playing percussion instruments in a lovely fall anthem, "Father is the Sun, Mother is the Rain", composed by a former CCSM member, Betsy Del Fierro.

During the Advent candle lighting and at the family Christmas Eve service, they will share a beautiful favorite, "Light a Candle for Peace."

Joyful Noise meets on Sunday mornings at 9:45 am in the CE Building. Children of all ages are welcome! Please come and join us over the holidays!! If you have any questions, please reach out to Julie at teacherjulie7@gmail.com.

Music Notes

Advent Singing at CCSM

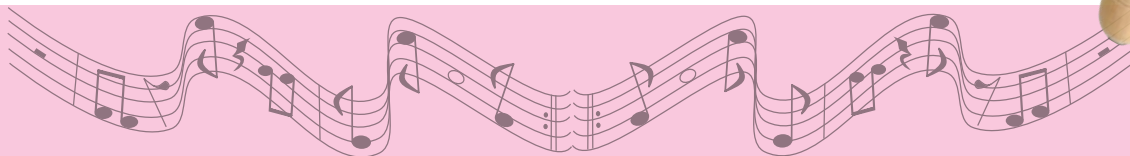
I find one of my great joys each year is the singing that takes place during the holiday season, and I know many at CCSM feel the same way. The Chancel Choir is preparing for a festive month of singing this December, both for the Sunday morning services and for the Candlelight Christmas Eve Service. All singers are welcome to join us for Sunday mornings and/or the Candlelight Christmas Eve Service. Rehearsals are Wednesday nights at 7 pm in the Sanctuary.

Rehearsals for the Christmas Eve music will be during the Wednesday evening sessions but toward the latter half of the rehearsal. You are welcome to come at 7 pm for the full rehearsal or at 7:45 pm for the Christmas Eve rehearsal portion. If you have any questions, or would like to be added to the choir update email I send weekly, please contact me (Lynnelle Bilsey) at ltbmusings@gmail.com.

Ring in the Holidays with the Carillon Ringers at CCSM

Another wonderful holiday tradition at CCSM is the bell choir ringing in the holiday season both at a Sunday service and on Christmas Eve — this year we will be ringing at the Christmas morning service. If you have some ringing experience and/or are able to read music and would like to try ringing bells, we would love for you to join us. Rehearsals are on Thursday evenings from 7–8:30 pm in the Sanctuary.

If you are interested, or have any questions, please email Lynnelle Bilsey, Director of Music at CCSM at ltbmusings@gmail.com.



Congregational Care Ministry

Happy Coffee Hour

by Melodie Lew

2024 is quickly coming to its wintry close and before the door shuts, I'd like to highlight the hosts who have provided weekly goodies for Happy Coffee Hour and helped to extend the communal aspect of our Sunday worship.

First and foremost is Lin Fenn who single-handedly resuscitated Coffee Hour after the Pandemic in late 2022 and continued to be its single hostess for all of 2023. She is still there in 2024 hiding behind the kitchen door or sitting quietly at a table waiting to lend a hand as needed.

There are stalwarts such as Donna Lindsay who has stepped forward for 11 first Sundays of the month this year to bring her goodies and eager smile to Kloss Hall. It was "only" 11 first Sundays in 2024 because she realized that she wanted to host the first Sunday of each month after the year had started!

Extra kudos to Sue Hill, Sharon Tobin, Kathy Gallo, Alison Schwandt, Valerie and Lana Leung, Robin Person, the Raikov family, and Carol Henton who have all said yes when not traveling and Happy Coffee Hour needed someone to host.

Linda Stoick stepped up and was "cheese lady" for many Sundays. Robert Leung has followed in his mom's footsteps and provides a warm word and quiet hello to everyone who comes into Kloss Hall. Thank you to all the CCSM ministries that have stepped forward to help host a Sunday.



It's been very supportive and if I may speak for the Happy Coffee Hour attendees, very much appreciated; thank you all, for a great 2024 Happy Coffee Hour! Please give a big thank you to any of the hosts you see during Happy Coffee Hour, or any time you see them. These folks will appreciate your smile.

In addition, Betty Till, Katie Bylander, Laura Pierce-McKenzie, Judi Powell, Chris Wuthmann and Alison Rock, Tina Schuckamp and JW Lowrie, Laura Peterhans, and Teresa Gabler have all helped host coffee hour. Thank you all!

The sign-up sheets will be coming out in December for 2025 Happy Coffee Hour hosts. We will let you know when and where the sign-up sheets will be. Please put your name down to host — we would like to have two families host each week to share the task. It really is a fun activity and quite enjoyable — even for introverts!

A small fund for Happy Coffee Hour is available to help cover the costs of food if you can host and would like to be reimbursed for your purchases. Just let me know and fill out a reimbursement form available from Chase or myself.

Again, thank you all for making Happy Coffee Hour work and being the hands, feet, and face of God.

Congregational Care Ministry

Upcoming Events

Leading up to Christmas, it will be a very busy time at CCSM! On **December 8 and 15** right after the Sunday service, we'll have the following opportunities on the Loggia:

2025 Happy Coffee Hour Sign-Ups

Please sign up to help host Happy Coffee Hour in 2025. You can sign up for more than one Sunday and space your volunteering over a few months.

Life Moves Family Wish List

CCSM will once again help Life Moves' First Step for Families provide gifts for families who may otherwise find little under their Christmas trees this year. First Step for Families provides interim shelter and services to 39 families experiencing homelessness in San Mateo. We will also provide gifts to residents of the Vendome Hotel.

Please look for the lighted Christmas tree with paper ornaments after the Sunday services. If you cannot attend the services in person and would like us to select an ornament for you, please let Melodie Lew know (boygie.m2000@yahoo.com) and we will get an ornament to you, so you can participate in bringing a bit of warmth and caring to another person.

Poinsettias

CCSM will need drivers and well-wishers to bring holiday cheer to church members during the Christmas season this December. On December 8 and 15, please look for the poinsettias and list of recipients on the Loggia. Take a name and poinsettia, and bring a warm Christmas greeting to someone!



WE CAN'T GO ALONE

Latino Ministry

Día de Muertos

by Álvaro Durán

On October 30, our Day of the Dead (Día de los Muertos) service created a heartfelt atmosphere of remembrance in which we reflected on the lives of our departed loved ones. The service and children's activities were attended by nearly 60 community members, along with 15 children.

Participants engaged in traditional altar-making, filling it with cempasúchil flowers, photos, mementos, and offerings honoring those who have passed. New families, drawn by social media outreach, benefitted from the enriching, colorful activities. Our community's warm hospitality fostered connections among attendees, contributing to a deeper understanding of this cherished Latin-American tradition. During our dinner in Kloss Hall, we shared special moments of joy, which became a binding communion experience.

The collective effort transformed the evening into a truly special celebration, rich in culture, connection, and remembrance.

Thanks to all who attended and worked to make this Día de los Muertos truly remarkable! Your participation and contributions made this event a success.



Día de los Muertos



Latino Ministry Events

Thanksgiving Potluck Service

We're excited to celebrate our special bilingual Thanksgiving Potluck Service on **Wednesday, November 27, at 7 pm.**

This will be a beautiful opportunity for our church family to come together and express gratitude for another year of blessings.

This intimate service will be led by Revs. Jessica and Álvaro and will take place around tables where we'll share bilingual prayers, break bread, and enjoy a festive dinner. The church will provide turkey, so **please consider bringing your favorite side dish or dessert to share**, or just bring yourself and your thankful heart!

To help us prepare enough turkey for everyone, please RSVP to Alicia Santamaria by texting (650) 868-4324 or emailing westcoastalicia@gmail.com.

Las Posadas

Las Posadas is a deeply rooted Latin-American religious tradition celebrated during Advent. It represents the journey of Mary and Joseph as they searched for shelter before the birth of Jesus, a journey that resonates with our own spiritual quests.

Organized by the Latino Ministry, Las Posadas, "**Making Room for Christ in Our Hearts,**" has become a joyous and fun-filled annual tradition at CCSM.

We invite you to join us on **Wednesday, December 18, at 7 pm** on the church lawn to participate in this special experience filled with music, community spirit, delicious food, piñatas, and much joy. This is a fantastic opportunity to invite friends of all ages and help them connect with the true essence of the season!

If you plan to attend, we kindly ask that you bring a side dish or dessert to share, making this gathering a truly communal celebration of our faith.



Latino Ministry

English Together

by Katherine Vega Stultz



The Latino Ministry launched **English Together** for our CCSM community this Fall. Over the past couple of months, English language learners were paired with Practice Partners to build their confidence and conversational English language skills. Our effort was supported by English Together, which is a non-profit organization building community through conversation throughout the county (<https://englishtogether.org/>). The experience has been enriching for our community and those involved on a week-to-week basis.

A few quotes from the English learners about their experience:

"I was happy to have someone to practice speaking English with me each week."

"It was the first time I have connected with someone who only speaks English."

A few additional quotes from the Practice Partners:

"Spending time together and learning about myself was a great experience."

"It was wonderful to get to know my Spanish speaking partner and learn about her life and family."



Over eight weeks, our pairings engaged in conversation, practiced skills, and broke down walls sometimes in place due to challenges in communication. We plan on continuing the program from January – March 2025. Training sessions for Practice Partners will be the week of January 13th. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Katherine at vegastultz@yahoo.com. As part of our learnings, we will create a hybrid option to allow some sessions to be held in person and some through Zoom. This will allow more flexibility over the eight weekly sessions. Thank you to all who participated and to those who extended themselves to support this effort.

Latino Ministry

Lay Leadership Transition

by Alicia Santamaria

In January, our dedicated and long-serving Ministry leader, Julien Phillips, will be passing on the mantle of lay leadership. As many of you know, this is an enormous job and Julien's shoes are not easy to fill. We are thrilled to announce a shared leadership team model with point people overseeing various key aspects of the ministries (what we call Equipos – teams in English) in collaboration with Rev. Álvaro and our Latino members.

As we continue to nurture and build the leadership capacity within our Wednesday group, the Latino Ministry lay leaders will be: Alicia Santamaria, Katherine Vega Stultz, Kerianne Steele, and Lauren Mathews. Alicia and Lauren will be the lead contacts for the Council of Ministries, while the four of us (and the Equipo we coordinate) hope to collaborate more closely with other corresponding ministries. We are truly becoming one congregation!

Please stay tuned for more details and feel free to ask any of us for more information! We continue to evolve and explore the best ways to support and sustain this robust ministry.



Building Updates

by Jim Schwandt & Chase Montara

A summary of completed 2024 maintenance and repair projects at CCSM:

We are so blessed that many of these completed projects were funded through the generosity of the Dana Scadden estate.

- Replaced storm drain system from the corner at the Sr. Pastor's office to Ellsworth Ave.
- Roof underlayment repaired and replaced between the CE Building and Kloss Hall
- Replaced the aging storm drain system that runs from the wheelchair ramp by the Main Office, turns the corner at Kloss Hall and now empties to Tilton Ave. bubbler system
- Painted the outside windows of the sanctuary, Tilton Ave. side and the Memorial Garden side
- Placed gutter shields in the gutters along the front and back of the church
- Treated the heritage live oak trees in the Memorial Garden for blight (***Thank you Nancy Steele for funding!***)
- Repaired and repainted two outside doors in the CE Building (Ellsworth Ave. side)
- Extensive campus-wide tree trimming and shaping**
- Replaced the motor to the kitchen hood blower system
- Pruned the live oak tree by Ellsworth Ave.
- Investigated structural integrity of posts and beams in sanctuary
- Attended to area where old PINE TREE was located and developed a beautification plan
- Repaired main sewer line leak and replaced section of pipe
- Repaired wall in Narthex after removal of display case
- Outside balcony doors removed, repaired, and repainted



Building 2024-25 & Beyond

A summary of future projects in the pipeline for end of 2024 – 2025:

- Replace underlayment of Kloss Hall roof
- Install bollards and/or renew the painted stripes in the parking lot to enhance accurate and safe parking
- Inspect and/or repair tiles on Tower roof
- Complete project to renew area where the old PINE TREE was located
- Remove two liquidambar trees in Little Wonders' playground (permit pending)
- Recoat Kloss Hall hardwood floor (Thank you Jim Granucci for funding)
- Remove carpet and strip hardwood floors in Senior Pastor's office
- Replace aging Back Flow apparatus/pipes outside Kloss Hall
- Install a two-way clean out to main sewer line to prepare for yearly maintenance
- Add flowering plants to the Memorial Garden for use by Liturgical Arts Ministry

Dream wish list for projects when funds are available (5-year plan):

- Paint the windows on the parking lot side of the church (office areas)
- Design and implement a plan for drought-tolerant landscape throughout the property (with EJ Ministry)
- Upgrade the CE building bathrooms
- Paint the outside of the entire church
- Upgrade the hearing-assist system in the Sanctuary
- Resurface and reseal the tiles on the Loggia
- Upgrade the sound system in Kloss Hall
- Reconfigure the Memorial Garden fountain so that it becomes a more usable feature
- Remove carpet and strip hardwood floors in the Main Office and Production Room
- Resurface the parking lot

**With the leadership and expert guidance of Charlie Drechsler, the Buildings and Grounds team, led by Jim Schwandt, spent hundreds of hours cleaning, trimming, and shaping the bushes and trees around the property. They filled two large dumpsters and hauled several more truckloads of debris to the dump. (Thanks to Oscar for the use of his truck!) There is a lot more to do on this project, but so far, we have done all the work with volunteer members. Join us!

Thank you to the Board of Directors for their wisdom in investing funds toward the preservation of our church's legacy.

Mary Ann Notz

by Genel Morgan

Music and Art is so saddened by the passing of our own Mary Ann Notz. As her name suggests, music was her life. She was a longtime member of Music and Art and shared her piano magic with us on many occasions. She creatively and tirelessly submitted publicity for Music and Art programs for many years.

Mary Ann shared her love of music in many ways. She worked with kids attending the Music School many years ago. She taught private piano lessons (as shown in the attached picture) to both adults and kids. Even after recent major health challenges, Mary Ann still attended musical events.

We love you Mary Ann and miss you.



Ministry of Service and Justice

by Genel Morgan

There are so many ways that CCSM can be the **hands, feet, and face** of God. Every day, we provide food for our food-insecure neighbors in our **Blessing Box** located in front of the church. We are blessed to receive food from Samaritan House, congregants, and neighbors filling the box too. Most weeks, we donate our Sunday plate offering to a different charity. Recipients have included World Central Kitchen during a disaster, Planned Parenthood during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Little Eagle during Native American Heritage Month, and Help a Mother Out (free diapers) on Mother's Day. We are not just supporting these organizations with our money but are also building relationships with the organizations and building awareness of their existence.



We have lost a couple of members over the last year, so our ministry has dwindled. We would love for you to join us in our mission. We would welcome volunteers who can fill the Blessing Box each week and also volunteers who can help put away the food we get from Samaritan House once a week. Many hands make work light.

Our meetings are the second Tuesday of the month via Zoom. If interested, please call Genel Morgan (650) 759-7318. MSJ is very proud of the work we have done and plan to do in the future.

Environmental Justice Ministry

by Gary White

Our Environmental Justice Ministry supported the leadership role of Susan Lake as it recently hosted a stimulating lunchtime workshop on home recycling entitled, Better at the Bin. Recology San Mateo County sent two of its young representatives to CCSM to teach attendees about its services and to clarify its policies on recycling, composting, and trash disposal. Attended by 22 attentive people, the workshop began with a hands-on challenge for the audience to try to determine what bin various household items should go in. Was it for the blue recycling bin, the green composting bin, or the black garbage bin? The Recology reps then gave a slide presentation on the recommended guidelines to follow to maximize one's disposal decisions. A key point in their talk showed the importance of scraping



off leftover food into the compost bin. When using paper plates, scrape and then toss them into the composting bin. Bear in mind that any paper products that include a plastic liner are garbage. Another point they stressed is the fact that simply because a plastic item has the chasing arrows sign on it does not mean it is necessarily recyclable. In fact most plastic is NOT recyclable. Only 9% of all plastic gets recycled – mostly #1 plastic. The rest is incinerated or placed in a landfill. This is where our affiliation with the Precious Plastics Program (P3) comes into play, as they collect #s 2, 4, and 5 plastic and turn it into new, usable products. After the workshop, feedback from various attendees indicated that the workshop was very informative and worth attending. So keep on recycling!



Sturge 100th Anniversary

by Phil Lind

On October 20, **Sturge Presbyterian Church celebrated its 100th Anniversary** as a Congregation. Out of gratitude, members of our church were invited to participate and several members attended the Service that Sunday. Kay Harris, representing the CCSM Board of Directors, presented a beautiful Orchid to Sturge Senior Minister, Drew Yamamoto. Rev. Álvaro also attended, along with Mike Harris, Betsy Woodward, and Phil Lind.

There has been a **100-year relationship between CCSM and Sturge Presbyterian Church**. In 1924, members of the Japanese community, many of them first-generation immigrants, wanted to start a church in San Mateo. The Congregational Church of San Mateo, under the leadership of Rev. Charles Kloss, agreed to provide space for them to worship. The new Congregation was called The Japanese Independent Union Church of San Mateo. They worshipped in our Sanctuary from 1924 until World War II. The Church held Japanese-language worship services twice a month and had a thriving Sunday School for the children. Members of the new church also attended worship with CCSM.

After the outbreak of World War II, racial tension flared up on the West Coast. In response, the Board of Trustees met on December 15, 1941 and issued a statement in support of the Japanese Union Church. Drafted by Rev. Sydney Buckham, the statement read: "As a token of our faith in your loyalty to our common Christian Principles, the Congregational Church of San Mateo, at this time, renews its welcome to the Japanese Union Church to continue to worship in our church. We pledge ourselves to keep unbroken the bond of Christian fellowship with your church as an essential expression of our belief in the Fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of all men."

A few months after the Declaration of War against Japan, Special Order 9066 was issued by President Franklin Roosevelt in response to the growing hysteria, fear, and hostility toward Japanese Americans living on the West Coast. The order put in motion the relocation and incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans. Just weeks after the order was issued, six Japanese members of the Japanese Union Church applied for membership at CCSM. At the March 27, 1942 meeting of the Trustees, the following is recorded in the minutes: "It was the unanimous opinion of those present that they should be accepted into membership and that the church committee would be ready to answer any criticism that might arise."

During the war, CCSM also cared for the personal property of the Japanese community in the attic space above Kloss Hall. There is a long supportive relationship between CCSM and Sturge Presbyterian Church. May it continue.



End of Life Doula

by Betty Till

On Sunday, November 17, we were joined by **End of Life Doula Rhyena Halpern** for a Second Hour discussion on death and dying. **Her talk was captured on video and is available to view until December 9th.**

What if we thought about “end of life” as not only a medical event, but more importantly a social and deeply spiritual event? Death is not only about taking care of a loved one, it’s about taking care of each other. Talking about death can bring us closer to the people we love, help to reduce family conflict, and aid in decision making both financially and spiritually. Ultimately, talking about end-of-life wishes is an act of love. It’s a way to gain clarity and peace of mind while fostering community building, support, and understanding.

There are many aspects to end of life including the pragmatic as well as the spiritual and soulful aspects. We may or may not have completed advanced directives, completed a trust and/or will, created a password safe for all our online passwords, etc. What’s important to us as we approach the end of life? Have we made our wishes known? Is there unfinished business that needs to be addressed? Learn more to find out how to make it easier to manage with support.



WATCH NOW

click here

Children Youth and Families

by Rev. Sheryl Johnson

These past months have been busy for our Children, Youth and Family Ministry at CCSM. Some highlights included:

- Our annual Homecoming Celebration on Sunday, September 8th featuring a balloon artist, face painting, learning about spiritual community, and decorating rocks to bring home and to leave at church as a sign of our connection to faith at home and that we bring our whole selves to church.
- A wonderful Parents' Night Out hosted by Kim and Javi Rey with over 25 adults and 7 kids in attendance, including attendees of both our Wednesday and Sunday services. It was a fabulous time of connection, fellowship, and food!
- An impactful series for both Wednesday and Sunday programs featuring an in-depth exploration of CCSM's Guiding Principles. Each week we explored one of the Guiding Principles and a related scripture passage, had a time of prayer, and responded with our own ideas through crafts, games, prayers, and community service projects.
- Día de los Muertos Celebrations on Wednesday, October 30 featuring learning from members of our community with Mexican heritage, creating an ofrenda (altar), five different crafts, and a discussion of death, dying, remembrance, and faith. We had over 25 kids and parents, including many first-time guests to CCSM, engage in our family activities.
- A Youth Day of Service in San Francisco with friends from Danville UCC. A highlight of the day was a dynamic worship service about social justice, personal healing and recovery, and ancient and modern prophets at Glide Memorial Church and their amazing praise band.
- Our middle school Gran'its and high school 60 Minutes gatherings, where we discussed current events, explored CCSM's Guiding Principles, had personal sharing, engaged in community support, and prayed!
- ...And much more!

Children Youth and Families



Advent Season Special Events

Sunday, November 24:

1:00 pm Advent Decorating!! All are welcome to hang the garland and paper chains, install and decorate the trees, and hang wreaths. The Liturgical Arts Ministry hopes you will join us! Call Pam Ridlehuber with any questions: (650) 579-7835

Sunday, December 1:

Families are invited to join us after church in the CCSM Community Room for pizza, craft making, and practicing carols for our caroling to seniors outing on Dec 8!

Sunday, December 8:

Join us in the community room for pizza and then we will split into groups to go caroling to CCSM members' homes. Please RSVP to Sheryl by Wednesday, December 4.

Sunday, December 15:

All are invited to join in the CCSM Cookie Exchange and kids especially are invited to participate in cookie decorating led by Nicole (thank you!).

Sunday, December 18:

Las Posadas! Please meet in the Buckham Room at 7 pm to choose a costume and do some crafts before participating in the procession around the church to remember Mary and Joseph looking for a room at the Inn. Stay afterward for a wonderful fiesta with food and activities for all ages.

Sunday, December 22:

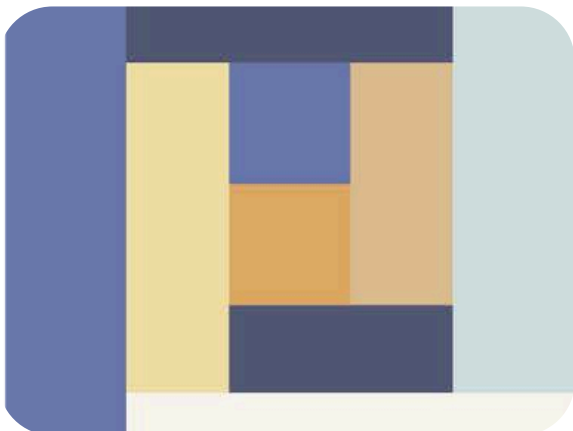
Youth are invited to come to the CCSM Community Room after church for pizza and to practice lines for the CCSM Christmas Eve Pageant. Youth are invited to stay afterward for skating and fun at San Mateo Central Park. Please let Sheryl know by Sunday, December 15 if you are available and would like to narrate (5th grade and up) during our pageant at 5 pm on Tuesday, December 24.

Note from Rev. Sheryl Johnson



I would like to express my sincere love and thanks to the CCSM community for 5 ½ wonderful years together. I am so blessed to have been welcomed into your lives and the amazing CCSM community during this time. I will treasure the memories forever and miss you all dearly. Thank you so much for all of the wonderful notes and words of encouragement and gratitude, I cannot tell you how much they have meant to me. You are all wonderful people and CCSM is a very special church.

I will be taking on new responsibilities at the seminary where I teach (Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary), including offering some new classes and coordinating a new Certificate in Racial Justice and Faith (let me know if you'd like to register!). I am also pursuing a broader ministry role with both youth and adults at another UCC congregation. You will be in my prayers forever.



Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Care Team

Please share your prayers with the pastoral care team, Rev. Jessica Vacketta, Rev. Álvaro Durán, Rev. Dr. Sheryl Johnson, 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 email. 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.

Prayers of Joy and Gratitude

Linda Skromme expresses prayers of gratitude for a new grandbaby girl, **Miley Ann Spicer**. Miley's parents are Erin (Skromme) and Adam Spicer. She was born November 5 and is healthy and growing.

We celebrate with **Suzanne Monte** who was baptized at CCSM on Sunday, October 13!

Prayers of Love and Strength

Prayers for **Betsy Woodward** and family, following the death of her nephew, **Kirk Meganheimer** on November 2.

Prayers for the family of **Betty Yeh**, who passed away on November 4. Our hearts are with **Chris, Jennifer, Katie, Madeline, and Caroline**, and the many more who loved dear Betty.

Prayers of Love and Strength

Prayers for the family and friends of our beloved **Mary Ann Notz**, who passed away at her home on October 18. We will always cherish our memories of Mary Ann's gifts and devotion to CCSM.

Prayers for **Laura Peterhans** on the event of her brother **Melville's** passing.

Prayers for **Susan Bell** who lost her brother, **Dave McQueen**, on October 28 after a lengthy illness.

We surround in prayer **Sue Bullis** and her dear friends of 40 years, **Colleen** and **Gary**, following Gary's passing this Fall.

We hold **Tracy Avelar** and family in prayer following the sudden and unexpected death of her father, **Bert Henderson**, on October 1, in Lakewood, Colorado.

Chona Tendero lost her niece, **Ellen**, on November 6 after a battle with colon cancer

Joys and Concerns

Prayers of Healing and Support

Tony Gallo asks for continued prayers for his brother, **Enzo**, whose treatment for colon cancer will include chemo.

Linda Stoick requests prayers for her sister **May Kay**, who fractured her femur.

Don Ruthroff and **Jonathan Kronn** request prayers for Jonathan's cousin, **Mark Shaper**, who is hospitalized with an undetermined brain injury.

Please keep **June Brown** in your prayers as she experienced a health event recently.

Pam McCarthy-Hudson asks that we please pray for the full recovery from surgery for her friend, **Lisa Caswell**.

Chona Tendero prays for her niece, **Abigail**, who will need laparoscopic ovarian surgery once she gives birth; and for her friend, **Feljohn Rancap**, battling with ALS.

Genel Morgan requests renewed prayers for her childhood friend, **Susan**, who is back in the hospital with kidney problems. Prayers for resolution of the issue so Susan can return home.

Robert and Johann Leung request prayers for their friend, **Aprille Espinueva's mom**, who has cancer that has spread.

Carol Goodrich and her husband, **Darby Reid**, request prayers for Darby's aunt, **Carolyn D.**, and for Carolyn's wife, **Carolyn H.**, who is undergoing treatment in Nebraska for an inoperable pancreatic tumor. **Carolyn D. and her wife, Carolyn H.**, were married at CCSM in 2014.



Joys and Concerns

Ongoing Prayers

Continuing prayers for our beloved siblings: **Lisa Caswell**, friend of **Pam McCarthy-Hudson**; **Melanie Dresbach's** brother, **Michael**; **Ana Villalta**, **Isabel Hernandez's** mother; **Oscar Acuna's** mother; **Judy and Peter**, friends of **Angela and Robert**; **Mary Ann Clifford**, **Dawn Graves's** stepmother; **Gaby Topete Eng Goon**; **Lani Leydig**; **Cheryl Granucci**; **Trini Romero**; **Genel Morgan's** family member, **Jason**; **Allison Rock** and **Chris Wuthmann's** friend, **Karen**; **Mel Thrash**; **Bev Knowlton**; **Lee White**, friend of **Michele Merfeld Hale**; **Cari Parker**; **Martha Clements**; **Bill Melis**; **Mike and Lee Mullery**; **George Vail**; **Martha Pierce**; **Ruth Black**; **Dorothy Gorman**; **Dottie Scott**; **Don and Jonathan's** brother, **Chuck Ruthroff**; **Caroline Reinke**.

Designed by
Chuck Rosenthal

Edited by
Jennifer Prince and Diane Kalliam

A bi-monthly newsletter for the families and friends of the Congregational Church of San Mateo, UCC
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