



The Thornhill Family helped create a brick walkway to the stadium at Hillsdale High School as part of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, on MLK Day. The day was organized by the Peninsula Multi-Faith Coalition, and a large group of CCB members took part in the many projects. Story and photos on Pages 4 and 5.

## Trains of Thought: Spring's on the way, bringing change

By Pastor Sally

*"In the cold and snow of winter, there's a spring that waits to be,*

*Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see."* — Natalie Sleeth

Spring is coming and with it will come warm weather, baby ducks and wildflowers. Spring is a time of change and new growth.

The church is also looking forward to change and new growth. On March 9, Rev. Elizabeth Clement will begin her work here as your full-time Interim Minister. She



Rev. Sally Train

will come with her own ideas, perspective, practices, talents and understanding of God's call. With her will come change and hopefully new growth in many areas. Her primary work will be to help you define who you are as a congregation and envision what God is calling you to do and be in the future. It is my hope that you will embrace her and the change she brings, thus opening yourselves to learning and new growth.

I want to remind you that in today's world, churches are called to trans-  
**See TRAINS OF THOUGHT, Page 3**

## Liturgy and sermon themes for February

**Feb. 2 Communion Sunday — Prayer of Petition** – Praying for ourselves and asking God for what we need; Romans 8: 26-28 and Matthew 7: 7-11. **Special treat:** I will tell the story of how I met my husband who was/is indeed an answer to my prayer.

**Feb. 9 Prayer of Intercession** – Praying for others; Mark 9: 14-29 and Romans 8: 26-27

**Feb. 16 Prayer of Surrender** – Surrendering to God's will; Luke 1: 26-38

**Feb. 23 Meditation** – Listening to God; Psalm 1: 1-6

**We are an Open and Affirming Congregation valuing everyone's race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, class, physical and mental abilities.**

# New opportunities to have your voice heard

By Micki Carter

It's January, the beginning of CCB's year of discovery and renewal, and I want to talk about the unique chance each of you have to affect the direction this church will take in the coming months.

Rev. Elizabeth Clement will arrive March 9 to lead us through a time of reflection to determine who we are as the body of Christ here at CCB and who we want to be. We all have our own thoughts about what this church does right and what things we'd like to see changed. Now is the moment — the moment to think, to speak up and to act.

We need to hear the voices of each one of us, from the oldest to the youngest, and we want to invite you to take a leadership role in this process of looking inward — and forward!

We need to hear from all of us who have found irreplaceable community here, but also from our unique group of young people who have grown up in this church and now have taken the step to become a member.

So how do we make our voices heard? We commit to being part of the process by joining the Pastoral Search Committee (which has four openings right now) or the new Visioning Committee which Pastor Elizabeth will form. Or...

- If you have ideas for ways for us to act for social justice,
- If you can lend a hand spreading the word via Instagram or Snapchat,
- If you can cook meals for those who need them,
- If you can pick up members who need a ride,

• If you have the expertise to stream our worship services,

• If you would like to decorate the altar one Sunday a month,

• If you have graphic design skills and are familiar with InDesign,

• If you'd like to bake communion bread first Sunday of the month,

• If you want to sing in the choir (even if you can't read music),

• If you don't like to go to meetings but would be comfortable with a recurring task you could do at home,

• If you'd like to design a project for Earth Day,

Then speak up — to Steve Chamberlin or Garrett House or Greg Thornhill or me — and we'll find a way for all of us to hear your voice.

## Trains of Thought

Continued from Page One

formation and growth in ways that move far beyond just welcoming a new minister. The Christian church in America is undergoing a profound transformation. Christendom is dead and, with it, the assumption that people will automatically join a church, bring their children to Sunday School, and contribute generously. Church attendance in America has been declining for decades.

At the same time, there is a deep spiritual hunger and growing interest in spirituality. Churches need to figure out how to respond to that hunger and provide spiritual nurture in ways that reach people's hearts and transform their lives. In order to fulfill that mission, they need to figure out how to keep their doors open and meet their financial obligations. Creative thinking and innovative approaches to both of those challenges are going to be key in the coming years. Change and new growth. Constantly assessing what the community needs and responding to those needs.

One of the religious organizations that has done this very well is the Sisters of Mercy in Burlingame. They were founded in 1854, five years after the Gold Rush. Their initial ministry was providing health care, something badly needed at the time. In the following years, they expanded their

ministries to include care for women and the elderly. Noticing a need for education, they began building and staffing schools in 1870 and still sponsor two highly respected high schools in the Bay Area. In 1924 they acquired the Kohl Mansion in Burlingame.

With the cultural revolution of the 1960s, they experienced a decline in young women joining the order. With 40 acres of land, a number of buildings to maintain, and an aging community of nuns, they pondered what to do next. They decided to specialize in contemplative spirituality. In 1981 they converted their novitiate building into Mercy Center and began offering retreats, lectures, classes, conferences, Taize worship and spiritual direction. They have a program in East West Meditation which explores the similarities between Buddhist meditation and Christian mysticism. They are a thriving center that serves people from all over the Bay Area who are of any faith — Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist, etc. — or no religious affiliation.

What impresses me is their ability to consistently respond to the changing culture and needs of the world around them while remaining true to their traditions and values. Viewed from the outside, they appear to change and grow with integrity. They stand as a good example for churches in transition.

When I think of the Congregational Church of Belmont, I see a church that is

ahead of the curve in many ways. You have a core of loyal members, experienced and committed lay leadership, a very strong musical ministry, a real dedication to children and youth, a fabulous group of teen-agers, and strong commitment to social justice. You care deeply about each other, and it shows in the way you take care of each other. Your Book Study offers an opportunity for ongoing adult education, small group community building, and an easy way for newcomers to make connections and friends. You have a lovely historical building which serves not only you, but the community as well.

Through the years you have evolved and changed, utilizing the following qualities:

- insightful assessment of the current culture
- identifying the needs of the world around you
- bold thinking
- innovative actions
- real commitment

In the coming years you are going to need to call on those same attributes to determine the best way to live into the future while staying true to your core values. The world keeps changing and so must the church. You have the skills. You have proved that. You now need to apply them to the current situation. I am going to enjoy watching you grow into your future.

To go to the Congregational Church of Belmont web site, click on [CCB](#).

# CCB turns out in force for MLK Service Day

By Greg Thornhill

CCB had an impressive 21 of our members and friends volunteer on this year's MLK day. That's almost 30 percent of our total membership! When I originally saw our statistics a week before the cutoff time to sign up for volunteering, I was questioning how passionately we really feel about this event. But then a week later I was wowed by the number of sign-ups. This is strong reassurance that we do still believe in the Peninsula Multi-Faith Coalition and the work that is done on MLK Day.

This year CCB had folks volunteering for a wide variety of events. Singing appears to be our most popular event, with a whopping 11 of our folks singing at San Carlos Elms and Carlmont Gardens with Elizabeth Mye taking the lead as the project captain. There were folks helping to restore Huddart Park's ecosystem and feeding those volunteers. There was also a volunteer at Roosevelt school in Redwood City working on a painting and number panel replacement project.

Finally, there were a few folks representing CCB at Hillsdale High School — greeting, signing in, and directing volunteers, in addition to a crew working on the beatification project of the walkway going into the stadium. For those that couldn't make it to one of the projects, some chose to donate goods to hygiene packs that were passed out to homeless utilizing the services of Dignity on Wheels — basics like toothbrushes, shampoo, deodorant, socks and more.

The MLK Day event was incredibly successful with approximately 500 volunteers across 25 locations. Each year, a wide variety of projects are offered in an attempt to find something for everyone. This year, in addition to singing and weeding, there were events to feed veterans and families in shelters, craft projects creating blankets and stuffed toys for children in hospitals or given by first responders to children, helping children read in shelters and so much more.

I don't know how long I've personally been involved with the annual MLK day, but it must be my sixth or seventh time. This was my second year as a project captain. It probably won't surprise many of you that I tend to gravitate toward the projects that involve building or painting or something along



those lines. While I sometimes wonder how this is helping those in need, I quickly remember what it is that makes these events so important. All the projects I've worked on so far have been at schools, and we send a very loud and clear message to the kids, to their families, to the teachers and administration, and even the local community. We say that we care about them, about their facility, about aspects of their education beyond academics. We "walk the talk" through our work and through our cohesiveness.

All these projects tend to have a very diverse group of volunteers, working side by side for a better world. We do good work, make a few new friends, and hopefully learn a bit more about other faiths and cultures while we're at it. The community sees representatives from many different faiths — a wide variety of Christian denominations, Jewish, Buddhist, Sikh, Hinduism, Bahai, and Islam, 26 different faith groups in all. I strongly believe that it's less important what specific project we're doing, but more how we're doing it — together, in community, in harmony.

We broadcast that we believe our faiths have more in common than we do differences, that we care about making our community a better place, helping those in need, and giving of our resources.

Personally, I'm also very rewarded by



doing this work with my kids. I drag them along each year, sometimes with some grumblings of how it's affecting their ability to sleep in or enjoy a three-day weekend. But for the most part, they get much of the same reward out of it as I do.

These moments as a parent are very important for me. I get to talk to them a bit about the project and its impact, echo why I think PMC is so important, and see them doing good things in the community.

As a parent, there are so many things that we can get wrong, I know this is one is right!

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# Steve got to see how the CCB ‘sauce’ is made

By Steve Chamberlin, Moderator

After two years, my term as church moderator ends this month. I want to thank the congregation for offering me this opportunity.

Yes, it’s been a lot of work, but the work has been important and rewarding. I feel like a diner at a fancy restaurant who’s been invited into the kitchen to consult with the chef and tinker with the recipes. It’s offered me a chance to see how the sauce gets made, and to gain better appreciation for everything that goes into it.

When I first joined CCB, I was unclear what the moderator’s job was. I assumed the pastor must be the senior member of the church’s leadership. But we are a Congregational Church, which means we’re a bottom-up organization. We’ve been blessed with some amazing pastors, but it’s the church’s members who ultimately provide the vision and the human power to keep it moving forward.

It’s natural to have mixed feelings about this. Sometimes we might wish somebody else could be in charge, so we could be

passive observers rather than active participants. Sometimes we might look at the various boards and committees as merely obligations to be met, instead of as opportunities to be seized and savored. But ask any member of the Church Council or choir or boards, and I bet they’ll tell you their involvement has added powerful new depth to their relationship with the church.

As I reflect on my time with the Church Council, I’m filled with a sense of community. Here’s a group of people from disparate backgrounds who’ve come together to help lead the church. We often disagree, and sometimes there’s too much drama, or people become impatient, or our conversations just go in circles. We discuss questions of vision and purpose that lack clear answers.

But we come together as a group, and we talk and listen to each other, and we just... figure it out. The results aren’t always perfect, but it’s like a family meeting where everyone is heard and understood.

In fact, the church really is like a family. We’re a small community of 77 members with a few added friends, and for many of us

the church feels like an extended family of special cousins with whom we can share our joys and burdens. We know that we’re not alone; that our church family is there for us and has our backs. These are special people.

The best way to develop and strengthen these church family relationships is to take a step beyond Sunday morning worship service and get involved in the wider life of the church. There’s no better way to genuinely get to know someone than to work with them side by side.

After stepping down from the Church Council, I plan to remain involved with the “business” side of the church through participation on the search committee and personnel committee.

The majority of my attention, however, will be intentionally shifted towards more traditionally churchy activities. I plan to join the Board of Deacons, continue visiting the boys at Hillcrest Juvenile Hall, singing in the choir, and leading the church’s walking group and book discussion group. These are the activities that bring me the most joy. I hope you will find yours.



Doris Brown’s granddaughter, Hope Littwin, an accomplished singer/songwriter with several albums to her credit, presented an intimate concert at CCB as part of her 2020 Winter Tour on Monday, Jan. 20. The Sunday before, she provided the special music, singing *Bridge Over Troubled Water* and *Deep River*, her own composition.

To go to the Congregational Church of Belmont web site, click on [CCB](#).

# February 2020

<b>2</b> Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Sunday worship
	1:30PM - 3PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Walking Group
<b>6</b> Thu	7:30PM - 9:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir rehearsal/Dining Room
<b>9</b> Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Sunday worship
	12:30PM - 4:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Annual Meeting/Dining Room
<b>13</b> Thu	7:30PM - 9:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir rehearsal/Dining Room
<b>16</b> Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Sunday worship
<b>17</b> Mon	7PM - 9PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Church Council
<b>20</b> Thu	7:30PM - 9:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir rehearsal/Dining Room
<b>23</b> Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Sunday worship
<b>27</b> Thu	7:30PM - 9:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir rehearsal/Dining Room

# March 2020

<b>1</b> Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Sunday worship
	1:30PM - 3PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Walking Group
	3PM - 5PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Peninsula Multifaith Song Fest
<b>2</b> Mon	7PM - 9PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Book Group
<b>5</b> Thu	7:30PM - 9:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir rehearsal/Dining Room
<b>8</b> Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Sunday worship
<b>12</b> Thu	7:30PM - 9:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir rehearsal/Dining Room
<b>15</b> Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Sunday worship with Rev. Elizabeth Clement
<b>16</b> Mon	7PM - 9PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Church Council
<b>19</b> Thu	7:30PM - 9:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir rehearsal/Dining Room
<b>22</b> Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Sunday worship
<b>26</b> Thu	7:30PM - 9:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir rehearsal/Dining Room
<b>29</b> Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Sunday worship

To go to the Congregational Church of Belmont web site, click on [CCB](#).



*The Joy of Music  
Unites Us!*

Peninsula Multifaith Coalition  
Presents our 7th Annual

## **Multifaith Song Fest**

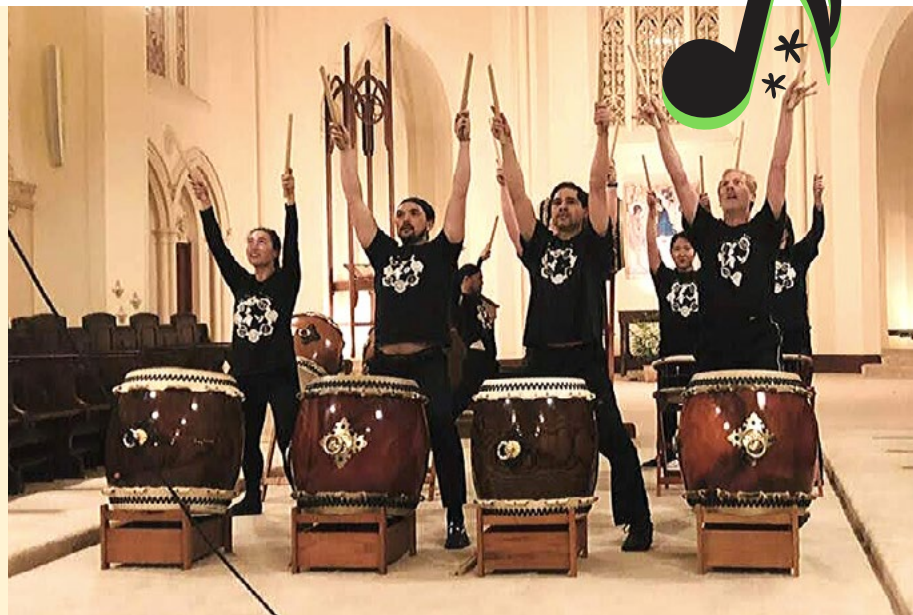
Sunday, March 1, 2020  
3-5 p.m.

Peninsula Temple Sholom  
1655 Sebastian Drive, Burlingame

**CCB's Sanctu-  
ary and Youth  
Choirs will per-  
form! Plan to  
come and cheer  
them on.**

We'll share our choirs, our cantors, our chants, our songs!

A dessert reception provided by the PMC Liaisons  
will follow the concert.



To go to the Congregational Church of Belmont web site, click on [CCB](#).

# Pi(e) Day to benefit CCB Youth Mission Trip

**By Micki Carter**

The Mission Trip for CCB youth to San Diego is starting to take shape.

We have six youth who have committed to the trip Aug. 2-8: Andrew Altorfer, Becky Chamberlin, Cassie and Carolina Gray, Robin Linares and Wesley Thornhill.

Greg Thornhill and Mary Beth Gray have signed on as chaperones and drivers. Danielle Chamberlin's parents have agreed to host the group overnight on the trip down and back.

Our youth are all planning to take advantage of the opportunity to spend one day in Tijuana to learn about the plight of migrant families who are living in camps near the border. A member of the El Faro Border Church of Tijuana, who serves that population, will be their guide.

The group will be tackling service projects in Imperial Beach in southern San

Diego County and will stay at the Boys and Girls Club of Imperial Beach with counselors from the Sierra Service Project. Last year the youth in the San Diego program helped rehabilitate homes of low-income families in the area and landscaped a public playground.

The Mission Trip planning committee is committed to raising the money to meet the budget of about \$5,000 for this effort. The Social Action board has set aside \$2,000 of their funds for the trip, and the Special Offering for February will be for the Mission Trip.

To raise the rest of the funds needed, the youth will be fundraising, and we'll start with Pi(e) Sunday, March 15. We'll be auctioning pies and other desserts after worship. We'll sell Pie Futures as well so we hope you all will be thinking ahead to special events when you will need the perfect dessert. Order it and we'll deliver!

You can even place your order ahead of

Pi(e) Day by emailing me at [mickicartr@gmail.com](mailto:mickicartr@gmail.com). Let us know what you want and what you'd like to donate for your pie.

Everything raised will go toward the youth trip.

Greg and Wesley are putting together another fundraising idea: Cross-shaped succulent planters. More to come on that project as we move toward Easter.

We're also thinking about a fundraising dinner, a bake and plant sale with the Bouncy House as an attraction and a "virtual" fundraiser. We'd love to hear your ideas.

We could accommodate at least two more young people and possibly even more. If you know of a middle-schooler or high school student who might be interested, let me know.

For more information about the trip and Sierra Service Project, click [here](#).

**March Messenger deadline will be Monday, Feb. 24**



**THE MESSENGER**  
 CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BELMONT  
 751 ALAMEDA DE LAS PULGAS  
 BELMONT CA 94002