



Time to turn this congregation into a garden

By Rev. Elizabeth Mitchell Clement
Interim Pastor

"Congregations are to the future disciples what gardens are to tulips — living systems in which cultivation in one season brings new life in another."

This is one of those odd comparisons that you can count on me to make from time

to time. It's just that, while it doesn't capture the whole truth, it tends to get us reflecting critically. Good similes help us get a better, fuller picture in our heads.



Pastor Liz Clement

For the most part, I think in pictures. So, it's no surprise then

that, as the outside world around us breaks without hesitation or apology into unspeakably glorious, spring bloom — without concern that we have withdrawn to our shelters in place — my congregations-to-tulips metaphor comes to mind. (Surely, you know by now how I feel about growing things.)

When this picture first came to me, we were trying to discover the role congregations play in God's call to pastoral ministry. The answer was "a living system of relationships, over time, in which we all are called and have a part to play."

This figure summed up that exploration in a way that I could see and use. It became the seed bed (!) of my approach to ministry in congregations and helped me see the possibilities that interim ministry offers.

Ruminating on this idea of tulips, I went in search of information about growing



Easter at CCB in the time of coronavirus DID have an Easter egg hunt (albeit a virtual one), jubilant shouts of "He is risen!", a moving Easter message and our traditional flower-bedecked cross which was carried to the altar by a masked and gloved bearer. After our live-streamed worship, Pastor Liz installed it on the front porch to remind the walkers who circle the church all day that this is a church — and this IS Easter!

tulips in the Bay Area. In an article from SFGate.com, Roberta Floden writes this in "Tulips in Bay Area Just Need to Chill Out," May 11, 2005:

"In November or December, in an area that gets full, rich sun in the spring, plant the bulbs with their noses up in rich, sandy soil...plant them deep....Deep planting ensures that the bulbs will be surrounded by the cool soil they require to put out good roots. It also aids the production of large blooms in spring."

The italics, of course, are mine. And they are there to emphasize these four things

related to our work together over the next months in this interim:

1. Only that which is planted with care in season will grow.
2. Do your best to see where the sun will be in the future, at harvest time.
3. Give good attention to the quality of the soil, its organic elements and micro-climates.
4. Go deep. Timely digging makes healthy, sustainable roots and large blooms

The thing about gardens and tulips is you cannot make them happen. As Otto

See TULIPS, Page 8

Check out CCB's new [website](#) and tell us what you think!

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

Visioning 2020: If we build it, they will come

**By Garrett House
Moderator**

The year 20/20 is the year of vision, but it must also be the year of balance. As we continue to balance our safety with our everyday needs, I hope everyone is safe and healthy. Be patient. We are learning to experience life in a way that is quite unfamiliar to most of us, and sometimes, kind of scary.

Despite the recent limitations, I still see so many people finding ways to communicate and stay connected. People are finding new ways to serve, as well as new ways to be loving and helpful. The human spirit never ceases to amaze me.

Recently, Greg Thornhill put out a request for volunteers to stay connected to the church by joining the new visioning team. This visioning team will work with Pastor Elizabeth developing our collective vision. This new team will tackle many of the most important questions.

Why are we here? What is our mission? What are we doing about it? Who are we serving? Who aren't we serving?

As we begin this visioning process, I invite everyone to be involved. It would be wonderful if you would like to be part of that conversation. Your opinion matters, and you are not required to join the "official" visioning team. Although, I do think it would be

really great to see some new people get involved, and even take a leadership role if they are moved to do so.

Our dear friend, and church elder, Paul Anderson would often say, "What if we were starting a church from scratch today? What would our church look like, and what would we want it to be?"

So, what does it take to build a church in these times, and in this day and age? What does it take to survive? If you were starting a church today, what would you want it to look like?

This visioning process will provide an excellent opportunity for us to balance our opinion with our ability to listen and be open-minded, regardless of what we have done before. This is the year of balance, so

let's get everyone to weigh in. If we build it, they will come.

But wait...

What if we were not starting from scratch? What if we had an expansive beautiful building in an amazing location? What if we had an exceptionally strong core of people willing to do the work? What if we could get an interim pastor who is truly called to this type of ministry to help us in this time? What if we were blessed enough to get this pastor to travel across the country, relocate and dedicate herself to our visioning process?

What if we were also blessed with a wonderful new Christian Ed Coordinator and an amazing new office administrator?

Could we make that work?

So how do you pass the time these days?

How are you keeping busy while sheltering in place?

This past Sunday, new CCB office administrator Lea Mavroudis made an announcement asking our community to help us stay connected by sharing photos and videos. CCB members have already begun submitting their music, art, food creations and more.

Check out our [Facebook](#) page in the

coming days to see what your fellow community members have been up to. And if you have anything to share, please send it in! We are always happy to see the things that bring you joy.

CCB sends our sincere thanks to all those who have already shared their experiences with us. Further submissions can be sent to office@ccbmont.org or in a DM on Facebook.

CCB votes to apply for CARES Act stimulus

**By Mike Venturino
CCB Treasurer**

On April 3, Congress passed the CARES act. Who would have thought that this huge piece of legislation might actually apply to CCB. One of the programs under the act is called the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). It offers forgivable loans to cover payroll and parts of utility, rent and/or mortgage expenses for two months. More on the forgivable aspect later.

Right after the passage, while I was recovering from my carotid surgery, my inbox was lighting up with emails from CCB's insurance agent, and numerous other organizations saying: "Churches can apply. Churches can apply!"

After attending a couple of webinars sponsored by our insurance agent, I recom-

mended to Trustees that we apply for the loan. Since the bylaws required congregational approval and we had to act fast, the amazing virtual congregational meeting was called.

Once the congregation approved, the application was submitted. Since CCB is a long-time customer of Bank of America, the process was very quick. The amount that could be applied for was based on last year's average monthly payroll. After doing the math, we applied for \$20,477.50. At this point, the application is complete, and we are waiting for a decision. Hopefully with the recent passage of the second round of funding, we will hear soon if our loan is approved.

Why did we feel we needed to do this? A peek at our financial statements shows that

CCB has remarkable cash reserves. So why not just use our savings to cover costs until things become more "normal?"

First of all, the loan terms were very generous:

- Two-year term at 1 percent: The average return on our Cornerstone Fund investments is about 1.75 percent; therefore it's cheaper to use this money than our savings.
- First payment due in six months.

Second, the loan is fully forgivable if the proceeds are used to pay the costs stipulated in the program and we maintain our employee headcount and wages during the two months following the receipt of the loan.

This will enable us to at least pay our employees and cover some of our utility costs without dipping into our savings.

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

Live-streaming! How Danielle pulls it off...

By Danielle Chamberlin

CCB tried live-streaming our services for the first time March 15 to reach those who would like to attend from home. After our shelter-in-place order on March 16, it became a necessity, and on March 22 we had our first 100-percent live-streamed service. We give many thanks to Pastor Darley from Catedral da Familia for training us that first week! But we had to climb up the learning curve quite fast to change the format of our weekly services from live to “Facebook live.”

Each week’s service comes together as a combination of music, pre-recorded readings and live-streaming.

For the music: First, the music is selected by Music Director Elizabeth Mye. Over the past month, we have combed the recordings made by Gary Brandenburg and others from the past 15+ years of CCB music. Elizabeth and others have now created an archive of more than 250 of our own recordings from which we can draw each Sunday’s music. For most of these recordings we have only audio and not video, so in those cases either CCB Admin Lea Mavroudis or I will take an audio recording, pair it with a visual image, and create a video to display using iMovie or other similar software.

We are also creating an archive of visual images to use for this purpose and, if you’d like to contribute, we’d love to have your artwork! Please send your photos or photographs of your art to Lea at office@ccbmont.org to add to the image archive. We’ll be sure to acknowledge you during service unless you tell us you wish to remain anonymous. It’s wonderful to be able to have our congregation contribute in this way because it strengthens our sense of community during this time.

We are still working on including some recent piano recordings that CCB Musician Jeffrey Jones has made for us and hope to have more of his talent showcased in our service soon.

For the readings, early each week Pastor Liz sends them to the liturgist. The liturgist will send their home recordings to Lea by Thursday afternoon, and she edits them to cut out any pauses at the beginning or end if needed.

Anyone who would like to make an an-



nouncement, light candles or lead Time with Children is encouraged to send videos to Lea for a bit of “spit and polish” by Thursday when possible. Lea does a wonderful job of cleaning up the files, compressing them to a smaller size for streaming, and archiving them on our Google Suite drive for easy import into our streaming software.

On Saturday, I load each of the pre-recorded videos of music and readings into our streaming software, put them in order, and add titles for each of the sections as needed and text for readings and responses. Where possible, I try to adjust the audio levels to keep the volume somewhat consistent because we’ve found different people’s recordings tend to all be at different volume levels, which can mean at home you have to turn your audio up and down during service.

It’s also been fun to use the “picture in picture” functionality to have the acolyte light and extinguish candles during the prelude and postlude music videos.

Then on Sunday, I set up the live-stream. We first do a “private test stream” for an audio check and, when the microphones seem as good as we can make them, we set the streaming software to send our video to

Facebook Live. Streaming involves pressing a button for each new video segment when the last one finishes. When it’s Pastor Liz’s time to talk, I push the button that has the live video of her, signal her to speak, and (hopefully) unmute the microphone.

To be honest, Pastor Liz and I are still improving on our system for the signals for her to start talking when the camera is live and for me to know when to cut her off, switch to pre-recorded video, and press the mute on her mic. I wish I had one of those big “LIVE” lightbulbs on my camera that would light up like you see in the movies!

One secret I’ll let you in on is that I have learned to display a still image at the end of pre-recorded sections and before we start a live section so we have time to signal

to each other before I start the live video. Again here, we love to feature photos and art contributed by the congregation to increase our sense of community in service – please send us your images!

Pushing the buttons to play the different video segments during service actually feels a little bit like playing a video game on my phone — but live-streamed to all the people who are watching. My family will tell you I have horrible hand-eye coordination and am terrible at video games, but I am learning to press the right button at the right time to make service seamless. Being a professional online gamer was never a career aspiration!

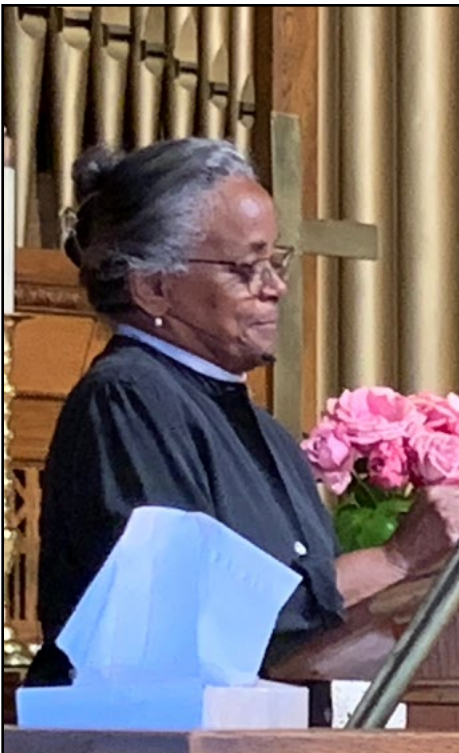
We’ve loved having so many friends from the local area as well as afar joining us each Sunday. We do plan to keep streaming once the shelter-in-place order is lifted, but we will have to come up the learning curve again to make both the live and live-streamed experiences wonderful.

I am very much hoping that one of our very gifted teens will take over on the camera once we are back together in the Sanctuary, not the least because of their superior hand-eye coordination!

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



...on Sunday mornings while we stay home



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



Easter had no lilies this year as we sheltered-in-place but it did have CCB's traditional flower cross. Members brought flowers in jars of water on Saturday. (Blue came along with Keith and Linda Howard to make their delivery.) Then Micki Carter and Susan Linares (in separate socially distanced shifts) attached the flowers, which came from the gardens of Doris Brown, Lynne Benson-Colbert, Jane Fernald and Danielle Chamberlin as well as Susan and Micki.

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

Zoomers to Boomers

Free, fast, and sanitary grocery delivery for elders at risk!

We have handled 2,000+ free grocery deliveries nationwide to those at risk and are now able to deliver groceries to your doorstep!

Contact us or refer a friend

www.zoomerstoboomers.com


(650) 533-0476



Most of the volunteers in Belmont
are Carlmont High School students.

Liturgy for Eastertide through Pentecost

Easter

 lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/lections.php

Easter Year A	First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
Fourth Sunday of Easter May 3, 2020 <i>ART -- PRAYER</i>	*Acts 2:42-47	Psalm 23	1 Peter 2:19-25	John 10:1-10
Fifth Sunday of Easter May 10, 2020 <i>ART -- PRAYER</i>	*Acts 7:55-60	Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16	1 Peter 2:2-10	John 14:1-14
Sixth Sunday of Easter May 17, 2020 <i>ART -- PRAYER</i>	*Acts 17:22-31	Psalm 66:8-20	1 Peter 3:13-22	John 14:15-21
Ascension of the Lord May 21, 2020 <i>ART -- PRAYER</i>	*Acts 1:1-11	Psalm 47 or <i>Psalm 93</i>	Ephesians 1:15-23	Luke 24:44-53
Seventh Sunday of Easter May 24, 2020 (If Ascension not observed here) <i>ART -- PRAYER</i>	*Acts 1:6-14	Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35	1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11	John 17:1-11
Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth May 31, 2020 <i>ART -- PRAYER</i>	*1 Samuel 2:1-10	Psalm 113	Romans 12:9-16b	Luke 1:39-57
Day of Pentecost May 31, 2020 <i>ART -- PRAYER</i>	*Acts 2:1-21 or <i>Numbers 11:24-30</i>	Psalm 104:24-34, 35b	1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 or <i>Acts 2:1-21</i>	John 20:19-23 or <i>John 7:37-39</i>

* During Eastertide a reading from Acts is often substituted for the lesson from the Hebrew Bible. On the Day of Pentecost, if the Old Testament passage from Numbers is chosen for the first reading, the passage from Acts is used as the second reading.

Tulips

Continued from Page One

Scharmer, one of my favorite thinkers on large scale change process, says: “What happens at the beginning of any creative process? Nothing! Creativity requires that we create space and wait for something to emerge.”

Scharmer and his colleagues have developed methods and practices to capture and harvest the emergence in that creative process, and they will inform the work we do together over the next months. The first step will be to create space for the work. And, as soon as we get life in quarantine sorted, we will begin in earnest.

Perhaps we can think of May 2020 as a “virtual November or December” and see ourselves as looking at where we want to see tulips and where there will be sun when spring comes. We are planning, sniffing the dirt and the air, noticing the sun and water, lining up bulbs to be stored in a dark place.

If it doesn’t look like a lot is happening in our future-ing work, well, if this church is anything like a garden, look again.

One Great Hour of Sharing, which supports the UCC’s Disaster, Refugee and Sustainable Development Ministries, will be our special offering for May. Here’s the [link where you can donate or you can mail a check to CCB marked OGHS.](#)

Barbara Todd's art available for a donation



Renowned watercolor artist Barbara Todd, a longtime member of CCB and the Sanctuary Choir, died March 30. Her family wrote to say, "Barbara was very passionate about her roses, her kitties, gardening, traveling and painting, and she loved her church and the choir. She will be missed by all those who loved her." Her family also gave CCB more than 40 of her paintings and prints. So, we have decided to allow those of us at the church who loved Barbara to choose a painting or print and make a donation in Barbara's name to a project or service at CCB that she would have supported. Her artwork is now displayed in the Sanctuary of the church. If you would like to make a selection, email CCB@ccbmont.org and we'll arrange it. CCB is planning a memorial for Barbara in the late summer or early fall when we can gather together once again.

June Messenger deadline will be Monday, May 25



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

Wondering how to get your pledges and donations in to the church now that we aren't able to pass the collection plate but still really need your support?

Two ways: Click [here](#) to use your credit card to make your tax-deductible donation or — tada! — just mail us a check!

Either way, the only person who will handle your transaction is the Financial Secretary, Mike Venturino.