



February 2021 THE MESSENGER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BELMONT

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The Chamberlin Family took part in Martin Luther King Day of Service this year by making cards for seniors in retirement homes. A resident of the San Carlos Elms holds one of the cards Becky made. More on Page 4.



We're moving through the seasons of change

By Pastor Elizabeth Clement

It's February already (already?) and at the end of this month we will celebrate my first anniversary as the interim pastor of CCB. Well, it will be a year and, celebration or no, what a time we have had! We knew we were in a season of change, but this?



Pastor Liz Clement

In this new month, the seasons of the calendar of the Christian year (see graphic) will also change this month.

The Christian Year



I write today to ask us all to spend time reflecting on what we are feeling and what we have experienced in this time. How are we seeing things differently? Where are the places God is leading us? We have a lot to learn about ourselves and about one another and I look forward to the day when we can find a way to share these stories, revelations and understandings that this time has invited us to discover.

We will move from Epiphany (Revelation) in Ordinary Time to Lent (Crucifixion) and the holiest season of our faith tradition. This year, the first day of Lent is Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17. (Yikes! Yes, already, and Easter Sunday is April 4.)

Through Epiphany, our Scripture read-

ings, our Time With Children and my sermons have focused on how God calls us to be helpers in "God work" — helpers to make our world more just, peaceful and life-sustaining, as we can. Another way to think of it is, how we (each of us and con- See SEASONS, Page 3

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

Annual Meeting is Saturday, Feb. 6, and you are needed!

By Micki Carter

After a year like no other in the life of the church, CCB ended with a surplus and will present a balanced budget for approval at the 67th Annual Meeting of the church.

This year, in keeping with the pandemic theme, we will meet by [Zoom](#) at 3:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 6. You can join us with audio and video or by phone with just audio.

Every voting member was emailed a PDF version of the Annual Reports. If you would like another sent, email Lea at Office@CCBelmont.org. A few hard copies are available in the Narthex of the church.

Danielle Chamberlin is working on a system that will allow us to vote with clarity, even if more than one voter is on the same Zoom call. Anyone who proposes an amendment or a motion will be required to type it into the Chat section so that Mary Beth Gray, our clerk, has the exact wording.

Most measures will pass with a simple majority, but three amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws will require a 2/3 majority to pass.

Samaritan House needs food service volunteers

CCB received this message from Samaritan House:

“During this time of great hardship in our community, we are in urgent need of volunteer help in Food Services.

“Samaritan House is an essential business and the safety of our volunteers, clients and staff is our highest priority. All volunteers are provided comprehensive details on our safety protocols which include social distancing and masks.

“Children ages 12 years and older may participate with a guardian volunteering alongside them. We ask that each volunteer self-assess their risk level and the risk level of those in their household.

“Volunteers may commit to a 9 a.m.-noon or 1-4 p.m. shift for an ongoing time of at least four weeks.”

To sign up or to ask questions, please email volunteering@samaritanhousesanmateo.org.

Besides the 2021 Budget and the Bylaws amendments, the Annual Meeting will also vote on the Nominating Report.

As always, the Annual Meeting also provides an opportunity for the membership to ask questions about the future of the church, especially now as CCB completes almost a full year in the interim process.

This year, 18 voting members, including our youth members, are needed for a quorum so please plan to be with us. If you have questions, email me at mickicarter@gmail.com.

Deacons launch new system of worship sign-ups

By Steve Chamberlin

The CCB Deacons have transitioned to a new method of scheduling weekly liturgist sign-ups, with a standing schedule of rotating liturgists rather than weekly ad-hoc sign-ups.

In recent months it's been difficult finding enough people to sign up as liturgists on Sundays, without the normal opportunity of signing-up people during Coffee Hour. Our hope is to eliminate some recurring scheduling stress.

The standing schedule currently has 12 names, with each person serving roughly four times per year.

Liturgists can participate in person (after in-person church resumes), by Zoom or by submitting a pre-recorded video.

If somebody can't do their regularly scheduled Sunday for any reason, they can trade their week with another person on the schedule. And if a new person wants to be liturgist, the schedule will be updated.

Please speak to the Deacons if you'd like to take a turn as liturgist any time.

Register [here](#) to be notified when you are eligible for the vaccine!

Seasons of change

Continued from Page one

gregations, too) can make God's love show up where we are. An incarnation, like Jesus.

How God continues to call us and how CCB will name and enact that in the future with new pastoral leadership is the question we have been exploring in this congregation's season of transition. Now, as the season changes, it's time to capture our discoveries and discern what we can for moving forward.

Lent has traditionally been a time for reflection and preparation for Christians before we celebrate Easter and the Resurrection. It is a time often marked by fasting from food and festivities, or by taking on a practice that deepens one's faith life. Do you have such a tradition?

In this article, I am proposing to the Council and the congregation that we — all of us together — make a commitment in the 40 days of Lent to 1) take on a common spiritual practice, and 2) commit to completing the UCC congregational profile and the first draft of a job description for pastoral leadership.

Yes, this is asking all of us to make a commitment to the future of this congregation in the six weeks of Lent, and to a willingness to be accountable to one another in these shared practices. It is time. (I know, it's a lot to ask, and I will be the first one to need support and prodding.)

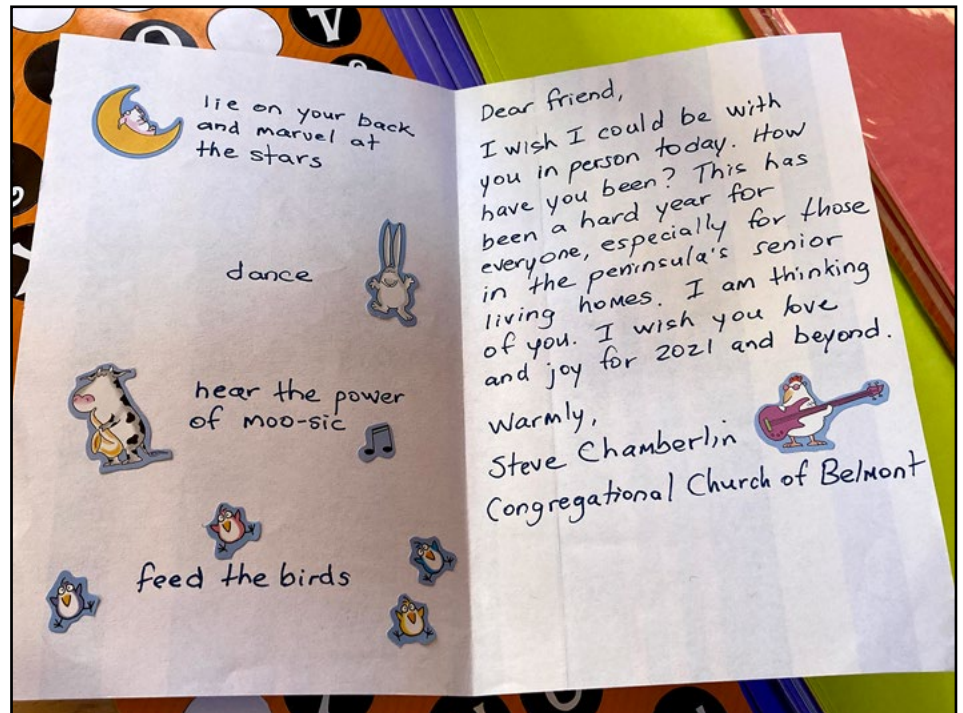
This is the proposal I will make formally to the Council in their meeting on Feb. 1. The work to complete the documents required to search for a pastor are the responsibility of committees that have been named and who know who they are.

As for the spiritual practice, I invite your input. There are many possibilities — an hour when we pray together, a devotional resource, chair yoga, plant a seed, what? Please share your thoughts with me and the worship committee. No later than Mardi Gras, we should be ready to announce what it is.

ATTENTION, CCB YOUTH: Weigh in here, please. What can we do together for six weeks that will grow our spirit and spiritual life?

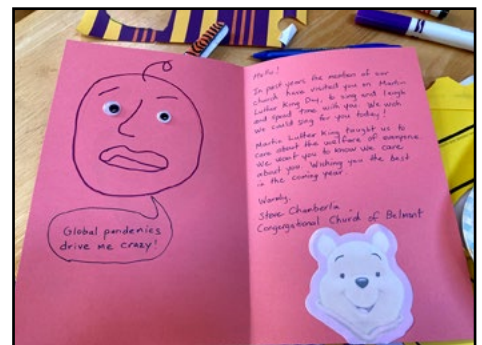
As we move through these seasons together, know that I thank God for all of you and for this church family, and I wish you grace upon grace.

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



Cards deliver MLK gift of love

CCB used to use our music to offer gifts to residents of retirement communities as part of Martin Luther King Day of Service, but that wasn't possible this year. So the Chamberlin family (including Becky) joined many others in creating greeting cards for those seniors. Residents of The Elms of San Carlos received many of those cards and sent their thanks to the Peninsula Multifath Coalition.



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CCB serves as a sorting station on MLK Day



CCB's Dining Room and front porch offered space for MLK volunteers to sort magazines that were donated and cards that were created to distribute to seniors throughout the Peninsula as part of the MLK Day of Service, sponsored by the Peninsula Multifaith Coalition.



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Andrew offers youth a lesson on tofu tacos

By Andrew Altorfer

I like cooking and baking and have done so a lot. One of my favorite things to bake is a delicious lemon layer cake with vanilla buttercream frosting and strawberries in the middle. Yum!

Around the start of the pandemic, I was bored and decided to cook something. I've always liked Mexican-style food, so I thought of street tacos. I remembered that we usually put carnitas in the tacos. Since I had recently become vegetarian, I thought, why not tofu!

Of course, I could have looked up a recipe for tofu tacos, but I decided to make my own. I have improved on it throughout the pandemic but never written it down before now.

The recipe is adjustable and you can make it with whatever you have in the fridge. For example, if you don't happen to have tomatoes, you can just put on extra salsa, or if you don't have some of the spices mentioned, you can use whatever you have. If you don't have salsa, you can add some extra spicy seasonings and more tomatoes.

One time, when I was making the tacos, we didn't have lettuce, spinach or any kind of leafy green, so I just used thinly sliced cucumber. Some of the ingredients you don't even need to begin with, like the radish.

Here are the ingredients I used dur-
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Tacos

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ing our youth group Zoom session: Black beans, corn tortillas, lemon, lettuce, Mexican blend cheese (shredded cheddar, Monterey jack, queso quesadilla and asadero), radish, salsa, sour cream, tofu, tomatoes and various spices.

Step 1: Wash your lettuce, tomatoes, radish and lemon. Then chop up the lettuce into small shreds. Chop your tomatoes into roughly half-inch chunks; your radishes into very thin circles, then roughly into smaller chunks, and your lemon into quarters.

Step 2: Mix up some seasonings! For this step, you can use whatever you have/want for seasonings. I use garlic powder, cumin, dill, Bragg's herb mix, dehydrated minced onion, a tiny bit of pepper, and Tajín (a brand of seasoning with chili peppers, salt, and dehydrated lime juice, that I find adds a vibrant, but mild kick to the tacos).

Step 3: Chop up the tofu into small chunks and stick it in a pan with a little bit of butter. (Sometimes I add in some tamari. Even though it contrasts a lot with the vibe of the tacos, I still find it to be quite delicious. Plus, it helps the tofu cook better.) Put it on medium to low heat and flip it around a bit. Then add a lot of your seasoning mix all over the tofu. Let it cook for a bit, then put it on extra-low while you prepare the rest of your taco.

Step 4: Get out another pan, put it on medium, stick some butter in it and plop on a corn tortilla. Then flip it. It shouldn't take that long to cook. Next, put it on a plate, and you're ready to assemble!

Step 5: Put a small line of sour cream down the middle of the tortilla, and do the same with the salsa but with a slightly bigger line. Then put on a good amount of tofu on top of that.

Next, open up your can of black beans and put some of those on. Then you put on a sprinkle of Mexican blend cheese. Next put on a medium amount of tomato chunks. Then sprinkle on some lettuce and a tiny bit of radish as a garnish on top.

Finally, sprinkle on some more of the seasoning mix and, to finish it off, put a big old squeeze of lemon.

Two tacos is a serving size
Enjoy!

Youth Saturday afternoons start new year with cooking

By Linda Howard

After the Pandemic Pageant in December, the youth of CCB launched the new year as they continued to meet on Saturday afternoon. Tofu tostadas were on the menu of activities for January along with participation in the Multifaith Day of Service in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Although there were limitations on how individuals could participate due to Covid, the youth contributed by donating books to the Children's Book Project and writing notes and cards to residents living in local senior centers.

One of our longtime members living at Carlmont Gardens will receive a note from our youth periodically throughout the year. "Children of the church" of any age are welcome to join in. Drawing a picture is considered a note if you would prefer.

The youth group will continue to meet every other Saturday from 3:30-5 p.m. Our next meeting date is to be determined.

The CCB Annual Meeting will be on Saturday, Feb. 6, and youth who are members of the church are encouraged to attend.

Keeping the spirit of what Dr. Martin Luther King stood for does not have to be limited to one day in January. Let's all try to keep the spirit of this great man in our hearts and minds all the year through.

If you would like to find out more about contributing to the note-writing campaign, you can contact me at roswell.linda20@gmail.com.

If you would like to donate gently used or new children's books for ages 1-18, you can contact the Children's Book Project [here](#).

Sierra Service Project outlines multifaith youth programming

By Danielle Chamberlin

The CCB Youth have been invited to join a fun multifaith (anyfaith) youth group that Sierra Service Project is running once per month.

This is very much like a one-hour version of the summer program that a few of our youth enjoyed so much last summer. SSP does a great job – and it's a lot of fun even if you don't know everybody on the Zoom call.

Kids looking for a spiritual break from school for an hour this afternoon can [register here](#). There is one ZYP each month, the last Thursday of the month every month at 3 p.m.

Also we have an update on SSP for the summer. Sadly, they will not be running overnight trips this summer. They will be offering a four-week online program June 28 – July 23 similar to last year's program, which Andrew, Becky and Sarah really enjoyed.

If you are interested in joining this pro-

gram, let us know! They haven't published this year's detailed schedule yet, but last year's format is described [here](#).

Another possibility for service is that they will start running day-long service projects in Sacramento once Sacramento County is down to moderate or minimal Covid spread (orange or yellow tiers).

So we can keep an eye on the opportunity to arrange a service day trip for our church once we get through the current Covid emergency if there's interest.

This should have all the fun of SSP, but you get to sleep in your own bed at night!



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CCB offering surplus office equipment for pick-up

The reconfiguration of the church office (thanks to the donation of Barbara Todd's office furniture) and the digitizing of the church's records concurrent with Lea's hiring have resulted in the church finding itself with surplus office furniture. Several file cabinets, a projection screen and some other items are awaiting discovery by a new owner on the Dining Room veranda. If you — or an organization that you know of — might be able to use them, contact Lea to coordinate pick-up.

March Messenger deadline will be Monday, Feb. 22.



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