



February 2023

THE MESSENGER

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BELMONT

751 Alameda de las Pulgas, Belmont CA 94002 • 650-593-4547 • CCB@ccbelsmont.org • www.CCBelmont.org



A delegation from CCB joined hundreds of other volunteers from houses of worship throughout San Mateo County at Peninsula Multifaith Coalition's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. Above is one of the many projects that they worked on. More photos appear on Page 7.

A note from Pastor Jim as he begins his first month at CCB

By Rev. Jim Mitulski

I'm writing this on the day before I begin formally as your new pastor.

Our relationship actually began several months ago, and in November we agreed to work together. Over the past three months I know you have continued to do remarkable things in ministry.

I went back to Duluth, Minn., to finish my work at Peace Church UCC. During the bitter cold and snow-filled intervening time, I admit I thought longingly of this day —

but not just because I was tired of winter. I enjoyed my work there, and the church was a remarkable community. I prayed for you daily and, when I left Peace Church two weeks ago, the congregation prayed for all of you and our upcoming work together.

My cat Keats and I moved back to our home in Oakland (this time for good, according to Keats!), and I've spent the last few weeks getting re-settled. My books and clothes are still en route due to a snafu with the moving company but even that hasn't

dampened my enthusiasm. Though I'm nervous in the ways we all might be starting a new job, I am also confident that God brought us together at this time for a reason.

February has some important observances for us to engage in. It's Black History Month, and we will take time to celebrate African American History as part of our spiritual lives. It is also a time in the wake of the death of Tyre Nichols to express our solidarity for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, **See Pastor Jim, Page 3**

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

Moderator's Report

CCB contemplates merger with First Church of Redwood City

By Danielle Chamberlin

Just as we have been doing, our friends at First Church of Redwood City UCC have also been contemplating their future direction over the last few years.

FCRC shares the same mission and values as we do and has been serving a small online congregation mostly based in Redwood City. Both churches also face many of the same challenges as a Progressive Christian church in our largely secular communities on the mid-Peninsula.

While FCRC has healthy financial resources (as a result of the sale of their church building), the size and age of their congregation does not lend itself well to church administration. Since our joint services over the summer in July and August, we have been brainstorming ways we could help each other thrive.

We decided last fall to partner with FCRC to bring Office Administrator Lea Mavroudis to full-time employment to serve both churches. Lea is an experienced church administrator and is happy to help First Church lighten their administrative load, and this shared position allows us offer Lea health benefits. We worked out a shared services agreement, and Lea moved to full-

time employment as of Jan. 1.

At the end of this process, FCRC's leadership team of Gabriela Simon and Paul Michel said their church has concluded its visioning process and has decided that it would like to fully merge with CCB!

Looking forward, the Church Council intends to combine both our financial resources and staff, and the Rev. Warren Dale and the Rev. Jim Mitulski both would continue to provide the same worship services we love, both in-person in Belmont and online.

First Church does not have a building, having sold it many years ago, but is in good financial health and would bring significant assets to CCB. We are also financially healthy, but we also bring a great deal of human assets and energy to the partnership.

Together, we will be able to extend our mission of Progressive Christianity to Belmont, Redwood City, and the world via our online presence! At this year's Annual Meeting on Feb. 12, we will bring a Memorandum of Understanding for our congregation to approve as we work towards a formal merger with First Church of Redwood City over the course of this year.

Memorial for Half Moon Bay shooting victims to take place on Jan. 31

Our Lady of the Pillar Church and the Coastside Interfaith Community will host a memorial service on Tuesday, Jan. 31, at 4 p.m., at the Boys & Girls Club Event Center, 530 Kelly Avenue. This service will include prayers and healing words from the interfaith leaders in remembrance of the victims and hope for the future. Spanish, Mandarin, and ASL interpretation will be provided.

Immediately after the memorial service, a candlelight processional walk will occur down Kelly Avenue, past the Mac Dutra Plaza memorial, and down Main Street to the I.D.E.S. Hall. At 6 p.m., at the I.D.E.S. Hall, 735 Main St., the City, County, and Chamber of Commerce would like to invite you to a Community Gathering for dinner and fellowship as we begin to move forward as a community. If you'd like to join us for the gathering, please register [here](#) so we can ensure we are able to host everyone appropriately.

We are heartbroken at the violence that occurred in Half Moon Bay this week. Leaders and Clergy of Faith in Action Bay Area in Half Moon Bay and the greater Coastside invite you to the following events to collectively process and mourn the victims of this week's shooting.

Pastor Jim

Continued from Page One

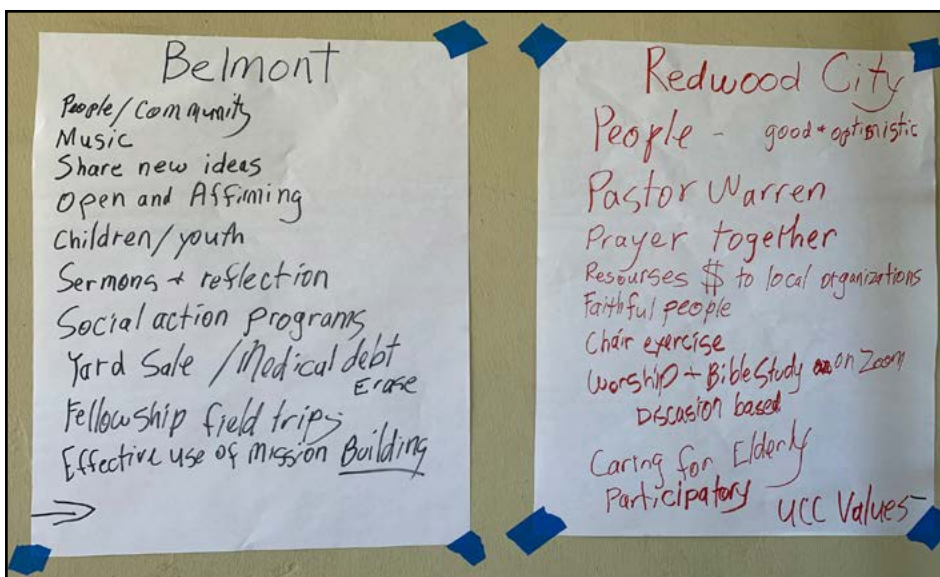
People of Color) communities and to renew our commitment to challenge racism wherever it is found.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22, and this year we will join at 7 p.m. with the congregation at Island United Church in Foster City for a joint service. Our Lenten theme is "Seeking: Honest Questions for Deeper Faith."

Please join us as we embark on this new journey together.

With love and faith, Pastor Jim

P.S. Help me out! Wear a name tag so I can learn your name because I really want to learn your name and your story!



Some of the brainstorming notes from the meeting between CCB and First Church of Redwood City.

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

Nothing ordinary about Doris Brown's early childhood, growing up in China

By Linda Howard

Imagine a childhood where one could see strings of Bactrian camels walking down the street, rickshaws instead of cars, and exotic locales advertising marble boats. At the same time the child observed abject poverty and mothers struggling to feed their children. These were some of the childhood memories of Doris Brown, who has been a member of Congregational Church of Belmont for more than 50 years.

Doris was born in China, where her parents met in the 1920s. Her father worked as a civil engineer in water management, advising the government on flood control to prevent further famine. Her mother was a medical doctor and missionary. While her father traveled a great deal, consulting on water projects on the Yellow River, Doris stayed home with her mother as she practiced medicine. When her father returned home, the family enjoyed hiking and visiting exotic sites in the Far East.

In her early years, Doris attended Peiking American School. She became fluent in Mandarin and moved easily between English and Mandarin. But the world was changing in 1938, and the family knew it was time to leave China for their safety. Doris's parents relocated to Palo Alto where she graduated from Palo Alto High School.

The importance of education was in Doris's family DNA. Her mother, a medical doctor, directed Women's Health Services at Stanford University. Like her mother, aunt and sister, Doris studied medicine. She earned her undergraduate degree from Smith College and returned to California to apply to medical school, but she soon learned that women seeking a medical degree in the 1950's met with challenges and discrimination. In her first interview, she was asked how she could possibly go into the profession of medicine AND have children.

Needless to say, that school didn't work out. She applied to Stanford and was accepted. She earned her medical degree, married AND raised six children! When there are children, grandchildren are sure to follow.

Doris has 10 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

After medical school, Doris and her family moved to Salinas where her husband served his residency. Doris was raising three children by then. Eventually, the family moved back to Bay Area settling first in San Bruno and then Belmont in 1966. She worked part time, and one of her jobs was performing routine physicals at San Mateo County Hospital formerly known as Chope Hospital. Eventually, she became a full-time physician at Kaiser Medical Center in Santa Clara where she worked for 20 years, mostly in the ambulatory section of the emergency room.

Doris's affiliation with CCB has historical roots stretching back to her mother, who was a Congregational Church missionary in China. She continues to be an active participant. On most Sundays for the past 20 years or so, you will see Doris singing in the alto section of the choir. For many years she faithfully tidied up the kitchen each Sunday after Coffee Hour.

When asked what changes she has seen since first coming to CCB, she mentioned one woman who thought God should look like a patriarch with a long, white beard. She recalls the process of becoming an Open & Affirming, a concept that did not sit well with some members who left the church.

What keeps her coming back to CCB? Doris describes the church as open and warm. She finds the friendship and support she has received over the years to be invaluable. In fact, Doris has chosen CCB to celebrate her 95th and her brother's 90th birthdays next March!

In retirement, Doris continued to serve by volunteering in National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI). She also served on



the San Mateo County Mental Health Board and committees advocating for older adults. Doris continues her 60+ year membership in the American Association of University Women.

These days Doris turns her energies toward gardening. Before Covid she volunteered at the San Mateo Garden Center. Anyone who visits her house will be amazed at the variety of succulents. She happily shares starter sprouts and advice on how to care for the plants.

When concluding an interview with a person who has a lot of life experience, the final question is usually along the line of, "What is your advice on how to live a productive, happy life?" In Doris's case the answer is obvious — be curious, care about others, acquire an education, set a good example and keep singing.

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

Help erase the medical debt of our neighbors in San Mateo County

By Micki Carter

Last Fall, CCB had something of a mini-triumph when our relatively small donation of \$6,500 to RIP Medical Debt was transformed to eradicate \$2.6 million in medical debt across the country.

At the time, we had asked RIP if our donation could go specifically to relieve medical debt in San Mateo County, but they weren't able to identify people with medical debt locally. But this January, our representative at RIP emailed me that they had located \$62,000 in medical debt here in San Mateo County, and we could alleviate that if we acted quickly.

We have less than \$1,000 in CCB's Medical Debt Relief Fund right now, but it's likely we could alleviate every dime of that San Mateo County debt (and more!) if we could raise \$5,000 in the next few weeks. I've already received a pledge of \$2,000 and another pledge to match whatever we raise by March 1. If you'd like to be part of this effort to eradicate the medical debt of our neighbors, put a check in the collection plate with "MDR" in the memo line or make a donation via our online site (marked "MDR") or talk to me.

In case you need a refresher on how this works, remember that RIP Medical Debt is a debt consolidator, RIP Medical Debt, which buys up medical debt from debt collecting agencies that, in turn, buy the uncollected medical debt of hospitals and other medical institutions. And once the debt is abolished, RIP helps the former debtor to re-establish their credit scores. The United Church of Christ, our denomination, has been working with RIP for years.

On average, each dollar raised eliminates about \$100 in debt, but in the case of CCB last fall, each dollar was able to erase more than \$400 of debt.

In each case, the buys met specific criteria: qualifying debtors were those earning less than two times the federal poverty level; in financial hardship, with out-of-pocket expenses that are 5 percent or more of their annual income; or facing insolvency, with debts greater than assets.

But this time, each debtor whose debt is erased is our neighbor right here on the Peninsula.



CCB supports HMB farmworkers after gun tragedy

By Micki Carter

CCB sent off a check on Sunday for \$945 to support the farmworkers in Half Moon Bay who were affected by the unspeakable violence last week.

The Board of Social Action approved a donation of \$500 from the Social Action Fund to ALAS (Ayudando Latinos a Sonar) is an organization committed to working with the farmworkers, their families and the Coastside community in general. They have switched from their normal, everyday support services into high gear to meet the needs of the families torn apart by the senseless violence. Many of the workers and their families are being housed in local hotels and cannot return to work or their usual onsite housing.

Cash donations are the best way to support the community, and \$445 was donated by the congregation on Jan. 29. If you would like to show your care for the Half Moon Bay farmworkers, use this link and indicate that the donation is for HMB.

You can also make donations directly to ALAS at 650-560-8947 or 636 Purissima St., Half Moon Bay, CA 94019, or online [here](#).

Altar Guild asks for help with flowers once a month

By Micki Carter

Four dedicated members of the congregation — Maura Whitmore, Doris Brown, Micki Carter and Carol Patterson — have provided the altar flowers every Sunday on a rotating basis for years, and they have committed to doing so again for 2023.

However, we need some help in the coming year. We have the usual four Sundays covered every month, but we need to find someone who would provide flowers for the occasional fifth Sunday. In 2023, the months with fifth Sundays are January, April, July, October and December. December's not a problem since the Christmas poinsettias will decorate the Sanctuary, and January's already been covered. You could commit to providing for the four months remaining or for just a single month, perhaps one that has special meaning for you.

The flowers or plant can be purchased (and Altar Guild will reimburse you) or you can bring cut flowers from your garden (or someone else's garden). The Altar Guild team is available to arrange flowers or help in any way. If you have questions or would be willing, please email me at mickicarter@gmail.com or catch me at church.

Also, please remember that you can dedicate altar flowers for a birthday, anniversary, memorial or any other occasion. Sign-up in the looseleaf binder in the Narthex. Your dedication will appear in the bulletin, and you can suggest the flowers you would like. The cost is \$15 — and you get to take the flowers home with you after church!

**Annual Meeting
12pm Sunday, Feb. 12
CCB Dining Room**

**Please mark your
calendars!**

**CCB needs to hear your
voice and record your vote
as we do the work of the
church!**

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

CCB youth to partner with the Sierra Service Project to aid members of Navajo Nation

By Micki Carter

Three years ago, 12 CCB youth were raising money to fund a mission trip with the Sierra Service Project, planning to work with other young people rebuilding homes in disadvantaged communities along the Mexican border in San Diego.

Enthusiasm was building, and kids were making and selling jam and baking pies! And then — bam! — the pandemic hit! Along with everything else we counted on, the mission trip was cancelled.

This year we're trying again with nine teens and three adult chaperones who will travel to the Navajo Nation near Flagstaff, Ariz., for five nights in mid-June to repair homes of Navajo elders and learn about the largest indigenous population in the country, the Diné (pronounced di-NEH) People. The trip, including car travel from CCB and back, is expected to cover June 17-25.

SSP intends, according to its website, "to build strong connections and resilience among communities, by equipping volunteers in home repair skills and community-based projects. Making necessary home repairs accessible to historically underserved residents allows communities to thrive and individuals to safely age in place."

The youth volunteers may also help with repairs at Diné College (the local college which supports the Diné community) in



Tsaile, Ariz., and learn about the history and traditions of the Navajo Nation.

CCB expects to pay the cost of participation and travel to Arizona (with possible stops at Grand Canyon and Zion National Park). We have applied for scholarships from SSP. (We were awarded some in 2020 but never got to use them!) And we plan to dedicate the funds raised by the sale of pies on Pi(e) Day in March to the trip. Other fundraisers may be planned as needed.

At the moment, the group has room for two additional participants so if you know of a young person (incoming sixth grade through age 23) who might be interested in such a unique adventure, contact Danielle Chamberlin or me as soon as possible.

Further information is available [here](#).



Rev. Thomas Crosby shares memories of his grandmother and her influence on his ministry work

By Rev. Thomas Crosby

For a long time, friends told me that my house smelled like Mop & Glo and Pine Sol at certain times of the year. I had no idea what they could be talking about. Sure enough, from February until April, I use Mop & Glo and Pine Sol to clean my house. My grandmother cleaned her house with Mop & Glo and Pine Sol.

She was born in the month of February and passed away in April. My ritual is to remember her — I had no idea I was doing it.

My soul still warms when I think about her impact on my life. I am where I am and stay here with her influence. From an early age, she would say, "Don't forget where you come from."

Today, I know she was talking about the family values she taught me. Values such as integrity, responsibility, and kindness, were meant to be lived through action. It defines the work that I do as a VA Chaplain.

When I accepted the call into ministry, if she had been alive, I could have seen her saying, "You should do it. We taught you well."

That my family did. For years I saw their integrity even during difficult times. Responsibility, I still think, is our family motto. My grandmother taught us never to take any commitment lightly.

Sometimes I wanted to walk away from seminary, but I did not because I was taught differently. The same could be said when I was doing clinical work at the VA.

My grandmother saw something in an awkward, creative, hyperactive and misunderstood chaplain that few others did. She helped nurture it and saw things that I would have never seen. One of those is being a minister who showed kindness to those in need, just as it was shown to him.

So for the next few months, my house will smell like Mop & Glo and Pine Sol. I will enjoy the memories of a loving woman who taught me what it means to be me.

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



CCB and PMC work together on community projects for MLK Day 2023

CCB'ers participated in a variety of activities in service of the community during Peninsula Multifaith Coalition's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service on Jan. 16.



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



SAN MATEO BRANCH #1068 ♦ CELEBRATING 97 YEARS OF SERVICE

Cordially invites you to the

Herby Dawkins Freedom Fund Gala

"Using Our Power to Define, Demand, and Defend Equality"



1221 Chess Drive
Foster City, CA 94404

Sunday, March 12, 2023 ♦ Program at 4:00 PM

Cost: \$100 per person / \$50 children under 13 years

PURCHASED MEALS ARE NONREFUNDABLE • COMPLIMENTARY PARKING

RSVP by Friday, March 6, 2023



MASTER OF CEREMONIES
The Honorable Maurice Goodman
Vice Mayor
Millbrae City Council



COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

Associate Justice Charles E. Wilson
Ellis Schoichet
Kathryn Haysbert
Sergeant Michael Haobsh
Island United Church
Rev. Dr. Penny Nixon
Unitarian Universalists of San Mateo

THE LEONARD HOUSTON CARTER AWARD

William "Bill" Stewart



KEYNOTE SPEAKER
The Honorable Charles E. Wilson II
Associate Justice
Sixth District Court of Appeal

Rev. Lorrie Carter Owens, President ♦ Hope Whipple, Event Chair
NAACP San Mateo Branch #1068 • 1670 S. Amphlett Blvd., Suite 214-35 • San Mateo, CA 94402

<https://www.facebook.com/NAACPSanMateo>



<https://twitter.com/@NaacpSan>

For More Information, contact Hope Whipple at events@naacpsanmateo.org

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

Pastor Jim will be playing a supporting role in the Black History Month play below in Palo Alto on Feb. 11. You're invited to come!

written & directed by
Dr. Cindy Acker, ED.D

hosted by Unity Palo Alto
3391 Middlefield Rd

Words That Made the Difference:
Brown vs the Board of Education

Saturday, February 11, 2023
Free admission, donations welcome

STATE THE OPERA JOURNAL News Editor
SCHOOL SEGREGATION BANNED

6:15-6:45 PM - Q&A with the playwright
7:00-9:00 PM - Performance (no intermission)
9:00-9:30 PM - Q&A with the cast

Register on Eventbrite at:
[tinyurl.com/UnityBvB](https://www.eventbrite.com/UnityBvB)

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

CCB Calendar for February 2023

2 Thu	7:30PM - 9:00PM	Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
5 Sun	9AM - 10:30AM	Church Events	Worship Preparation
	10:30AM - 12:00PM	Worship	Sunday worship with Rev. Jim Mitulski
	11:30AM - 1:00PM	Church Events	Coffee Hour
9 Thu	7:30PM - 9:00PM	Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
12 Sun	9AM - 10:30AM	Church Events	Worship Preparation
	10:30AM - 12:00PM	Worship	Sunday worship with Rev. Jim Mitulski
	12:00PM - 2:00PM ✉	Church Events	Annual Meeting
16 Thu	7:30PM - 9:00PM	Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
19 Sun	9AM - 10:30AM	Church Events	Worship Preparation
	10:30AM - 12:00PM	Worship	Sunday worship with Rev. Jim Mitulski
	11:30AM - 1:00PM	Church Events	Coffee Hour
22 Wed		Worship	Ash Wednesday
23 Thu	7:30PM - 9:00PM	Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
26 Sun	9AM - 10:30AM	Church Events	Worship Preparation
	10:30AM - 12:00PM	Worship	Sunday worship with Rev. Jim Mitulski
	11:30AM - 1:00PM	Church Events	Coffee Hour

March Messenger deadline will be Feb. 24



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