



November 2023 THE MESSENGER

751 Alameda de las Pulgas, Belmont CA 94002 • 650-593-4547 • office@ccpeninsula.org • www.ccpeninsula.org



Chocolate Fest returns with a bang!

By Micki Carter

Wow!

Chocolate Fest bounced back from three years of pandemic-induced silence to an enthusiastic rebirth for its 40th anniversary Oct. 20 and 21. Thank you, Jill Visor, for refusing to let Chocolate Fest disappear!

So many chocolate lovers showed up that we actually had to hold people outside Saturday afternoon until others left. More than 200 came to each of the evening sessions, and we sold ticket No. 300 Saturday afternoon!

Over and over, we heard guests say, "We're so glad you're back!" And "I'll be back next year!"

This was also the most profitable Chocolate Fest ever. Larry Keiffer, our bookkeeper, tells us that we netted more than \$20,000 with most expenses tallied. The Silent Auction alone brought in more than \$4,700.

Steve Chamberlin managed a crew of about 50 volunteers, which was bolstered by a great bunch of Scouts from Troop 27 and their parents who slid seamlessly into their Chocolate Fest roles.

The 20 vendors, who sold their product from the tasting room floor, were equally pleased. Catherine Delfino of 1.2.3 Chocolat sent this note to Jill:

"I wanted to thank you personally very much for allowing me to be part of this wonderful event that you and your team have put together! It was really nice to be part of it and I really enjoyed it. Meeting other fellow chocolatiers (and caramel makers!) was very informative, and I did make some new friends/connections!"

"Your audience was perfect for my product, very local, and lots of women so it definitely helped me!"

"Your team of volunteers was wonderful, very gracious and helpful. The event was super well run, and you did an amazing job! I know how much work is required prior to the show to make it seem so professional



and smooth on D-Day!"

Of course, it was Jill who challenged us to bring Chocolate Fest back after the pandemic, and she had a veteran leadership team that included Danielle Chamberlin and Greg Thornhill. Maura Whitmore handled

See CHOCOLATE FEST, Page 8.

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

A Thanksgiving note from Pastor Jim

Almighty and gracious Mother and Father, we give you thanks for the fruits of the earth in their season and for the labors of those who harvest them. Make us, we pray, faithful stewards of your great bounty, for the provision of our necessities and the relief of all who are in need, to the glory of your Names, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

By Pastor Jim Mitulski

Dear friends: Our theme for November is Thanksgiving, and I hope you will make plans to join us throughout the month as we explore this topic.

Thanksgiving is more than a national observance marked by family gatherings. It's a lifestyle of giving back to God and to the community in gratitude for all the blessings we enjoy. "In everything, give God thanks," (1 Thessalonians 5:18) encourages us to be conscious and intentional in our awareness of who and what we're grateful for.

This month is also our Stewardship Month, and we are asked to express our gratitude for this vibrant faith community which we have renamed the Congregational



Rev. Jim Mitulski

Church of the Peninsula, an acknowledgment that we are growing and changing and expanding our outreach.

I want to invite you to participate weekly in worship this month and to show up in person as often as you can. Invite your friends and family to join us as we gather to sing and pray and learn together. Our services will include;

Nov. 5, All Saints and All Souls — Bring pictures and remembrances of people you wish to remember and also those who have been personal saints, our sources of inspiration. We will light candles in their memory or in their honor.

Nov. 12, Veteran's Day — In addition to diversifying our styles of music this day by welcoming our new Worship Band, we'll hear from both VA Chaplain Rev. Thomas Crosby and from CCP leader Bob Donovan, a World War II veteran. We'll also gather after worship for our Stewardship Brunch of blinis, prepared by the CCP Trustees, in the Dining Room.

Nov. 19, Come, ye thankful people, come! — Join us in worship to sing traditional harvest hymns in a Thanksgiving Day

themed service.

Nov. 26, Feast of Christ the Sovereign, and Pledge Sunday — This is the Last Sunday of the Church Year, a spiritual kind of New Year's Eve.

You are also invited to these community celebrations which we support:

Monday, Nov. 20, Transgender Day of Remembrance — 5 p.m. at the San Mateo Public Library, 55 W. Third Ave.

Thursday, Nov. 23, Thanksgiving Day — 10 a.m. at St. James AME Zion Church, 825 Monte Diablo Ave, San Mateo, an ecumenical service with St. James, Trinity Baptist, Island United Church, CCP and some other local churches.

And though it isn't worship, it is a Thanksgiving Meal. We will gather for **Harvest Dinner** at 6 p.m. Friday, Nov. 17, in the CCP Dining Room with our friends from the local UCCs. It is an intentional family opportunity to celebrate with new and old friends.

The Congregational Church of the Peninsula has much for which to be thankful, most especially the gift of each other. Hope to see you as we inaugurate the holiday season together.

In gratitude for YOU! Pastor Jim

Trustees to offer a special treat on Nov. 12

Another longtime favorite of CCP is making a comeback!

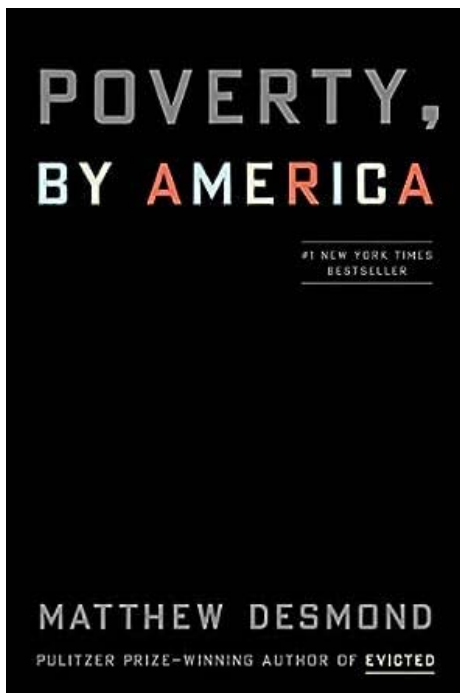
Greg Thornhill and his Trustees kitchen crew will prepare a Stewardship Brunch of blintzes, sausages and fruit after worship on Sunday, Nov. 12.

The Trustees will explain the value of pledging and give a brief overview of our financial situation as we munch.

After an auspicious Veterans Day service with the Rev. Thomas Crosby preaching and the new CCP Worship Band making its debut, you won't want to miss this brunch. It always is one magnificent meal!



To go to the Congregational Church of the Peninsula website, click [here](#).



Online Book Study: *Poverty, By America*

Revs. Penny Nixon and Jim Mitulski are hosting an in-depth study of Matthew Desmond's groundbreaking book, *Poverty, By America*. Held via Zoom, the first session will be on Nov. 14 at 7 p.m. and the second session will be on Nov. 21 at the same time.

Each session will include an introductory teaching outlining the key themes of the chapters being addressed, followed by a facilitated conversation. RSVP to receive link to revgpn@gmail.com.

"Poverty isn't a line. It's a tight knot of social maladies. It is connected to every social problem we care about — crime, health, education, housing — and its persistence in American life means that millions of families are denied safety and security and dignity in one of the richest nations in the history of the world."

Pastor Warren's Wonderings

By Rev. Warren Dale

Today is a different kind of wondering. Instead of my regular article, I want to respond to some other wonderings. Some folks were asking why I support the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center (PCRC), and why I annually ask for a matching grant from our Johnson/Lyman Gift Account. Well, here it is.

For several years, a program was prospering in Redwood City called Neighborhood Boards, a neighbor-to-neighbor dispute resolution program. The county had a mediation program focused on landlord/tenant problems.

In 1986, I was asked to chair a startup committee made up of community activists to plan the implementation of similar programs in San Mateo. When we activated services, it was as a newly expanded program titled to join all: The Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center.

Soon, we were asked to facilitate community problems. I helped mediate challenges between the students of Serra High School and surrounding neighbors, downtown tax assessment business relationships, and of course, neighbor-to-neighbor disputes that included boundary issues, barking dogs, and tree droppings.

Three times I was elected to the Board of Directors and have since been honored as board member emeritus. A few years ago, they established an annual award called the Warren Dale Building Empathy and Respect Award.

Well, now to mention some of our work. In the last four years, I have helped facilitate nine community discussions on "Homes for



Rev. Warren Dale

All" convened by the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors. We held gatherings in Redwood City, Portola Valley, Half Moon Bay, Pacifica, and Brisbane.

I have helped facilitate gatherings on Police Community relations, out of which several ideas were enacted by the cities in ways that helped collaborate rather than "conflictuate." I have

also facilitated meetings with county service teams, team building with local nonprofits. And I helped facilitate discussions on the inclusions of the Diversity Mural on the Redwood City Jefferson Street underpass.

Our program also sponsors the annual Pacific Islander Community Leadership program and has helped neighbors develop connections. Last month, we at PCRC facilitated a meeting in Half Moon Bay on the proposed development of low-cost housing for farm workers and service providers, all in response to the recent loss of life due to an act of violence.

PCRC's stated mission is: "PCRC partners with community to reduce violence, increase civic engagement, and strengthen community resilience through collaborative and innovative processes."

We take our skills and adjust them to the challenges presented. We utilize staff members and more than 100 trained community volunteers who help make a difference. The most common statement made after a community meeting that I have heard is, "Why don't we do this kind of process for more of our challenges?"

For more information, please visit our website [here](http://www.pcrc.org).

Blessings,
The Rev. Warren

LifeMoves/First Step for Families need our help

LifeMoves/First Step for Families provides interim shelter and services for homeless families serving up to 117 individuals per night with 39 family units. This is the successor organization to Home & Hope, which we served for years.

Donations to LifeMoves go directly to homeless families and individuals to help

them on their path to stable housing and self-sufficiency.

They desperately need the following goods: Baby wipes, Pull-Ups sizes 3T-4T and 4T-5T, diapers size 7. If ordering online, donations may be sent to Anamile Santiago or Tyla Lorenzo, 325 Villa Terrace, San Mateo CA 94401.

Island United Church is a donation center for LifeMoves. We can deliver to IUC or to LifeMoves at 325 Villa Terrace in San Mateo.

Members of IUC will be attending Harvest Dinner at CCP on Nov. 17 and could pick up our donations then.

To go to the Congregational Church of the Peninsula website, click [here](http://www.ccp.org).

Remembering what we're grateful for

By Rev. Thomas Crosby

It's the day after Chocolate Fest. I must admit it was a little struggle for me this year. Though I prepared myself as I walked through the door, I looked to the left, and Ella Mae Donovan was not there.

Walking through the parlor, I shed a tear, wishing she was. However, I could feel her spirit. For many years, we had a system. She would come to the kitchen to get my attention and point to the parlor. That was my signal that she would be there waiting for me. She would tell "Ella Mae stories." My favorites were her "War Stories" and being a part of the church's move to the UCC.

Through my grief, I have found some gratitude for her and other CCP saints who have supported me. November is Gratitude Month—a time to be grateful for our gifts and blessings.

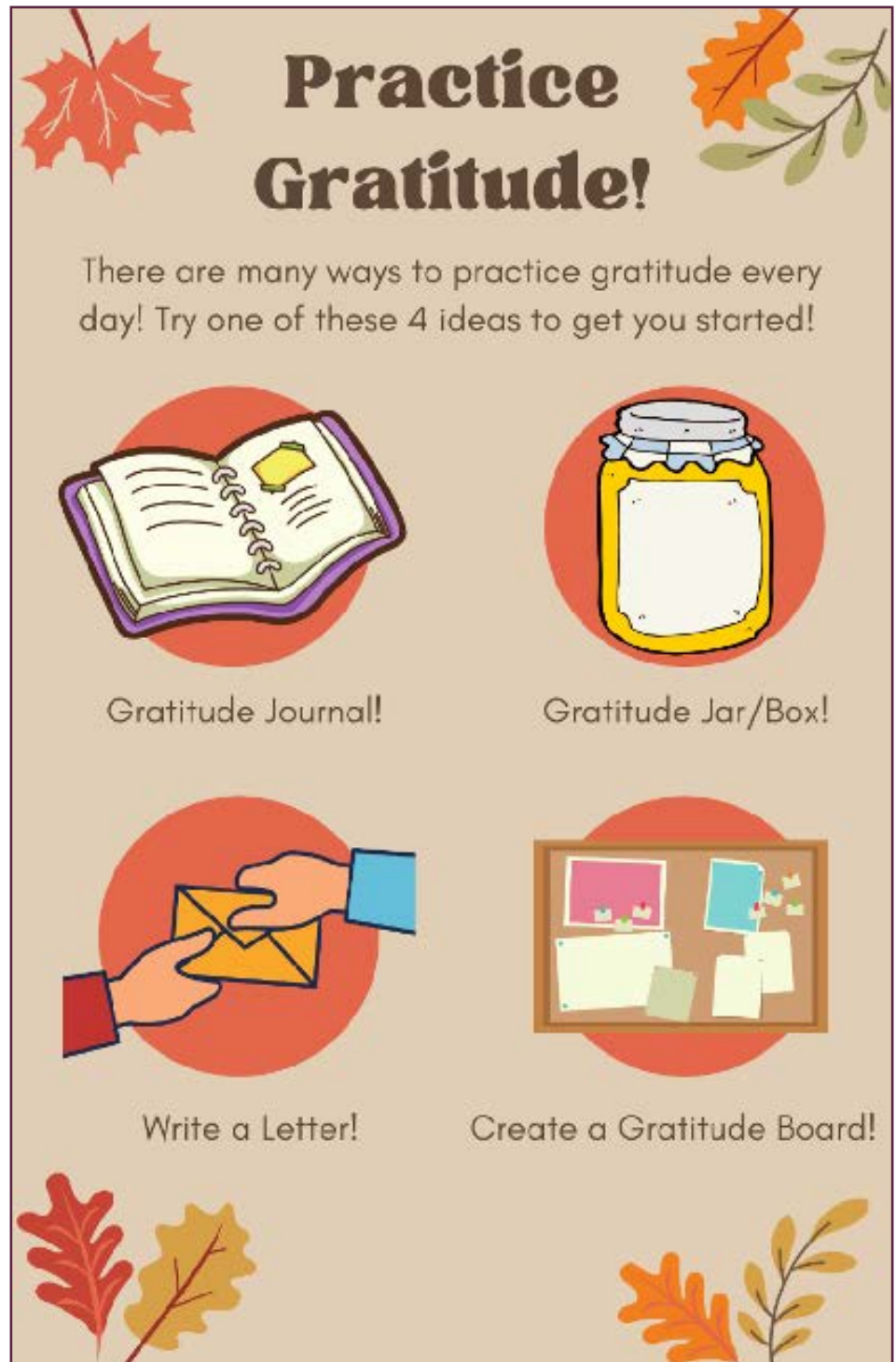
I lead two spirituality groups at our trauma recovery centers and a mediation meeting, which ends with every Veteran expressing gratitude for something in their life. Most are grateful for VA programs and their families.

I asked for individual gratitude for a reason. Qualities such as gratitude—an appreciation for life, expectation of favorable outcomes, and a profound love for others—may give individuals a deeper sense of meaning in life and a source of direction and comfort in difficult times.

Many studies show how spirituality may provide higher levels of gratitude. I like to remind our Veterans that their spirituality will help them as they go through difficult trauma treatment. Many say they are grateful for the VA despite their challenging treatment.

As for myself, I am grateful for the VA, too. My dream job gives me a sense of purpose and meaning. I have often been told that my ministry has made a difference in others' lives. Being a chaplain means that every day is a new challenge, providing a learning opportunity. Some situations require lots of patience and humility. Learning how to live life offers gratefulness to me.

As you go through Gratitude Month, I encourage you to start a gratitude journal listing three gratitude daily without repeating one. Studies show that your outlook



could change if you accomplish 21 days of this spiritual practice. Give it a try and see what happens.

Oh yeah, Chocolate Fest reminded me of another gratitude. It reminded me how

grateful I am for the support I find at CCP. Through good days and bad ones, I am often reminded your support of my ministry is a constant. Thank you!

To go to the Congregational Church of the Peninsula website, click [here](#).



Chair Exercise group meets every Monday at 11:00-11:30 a.m. Come and join this cheerful group. All are welcome. Please contact Lea at office@ccpeninsula.org if you are interested.



On October 14, the Congregational Church of the Peninsula was filled with over 100 vintage computer collectors from all over California for Steve Chamberlin's Mactoberfest Meetup event. Attendees demoed their classic Macintosh and Apple II computer systems, helped one another repair broken machines, and engaged in a busy swap meet.

Good Hope Luncheon takes place on Nov. 7

Please join us at the Good Hope Luncheon at 12:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month.

On Nov. 7, the group will gather at Yat Sing Restaurant at Woodside Plaza, 38 Woodside Road, Redwood City.

There is nothing on the agenda except socializing and catching up. Everyone pays for his or her own meal and joins a table of CCP friends.

RSVP to Gabriela Simon at gsbaja@yahoo.com.

Online Book Group with Island United Church

The group meets via Zoom on Tuesdays from 1:30-2:30 p.m. Here is the [link](#). The selection for November is *From Under the Russian Snow* by our very own Micki Carter, who will join us to talk about the book on Nov. 14. We have a few autographed copies in the back of the Sanctuary for those who would like them. They are also available at the library, book stores and as an ebook online.

Upcoming Events at Congregational Church of the Peninsula

Worship Band Debut — 10:30 a.m.

Sunday, Nov. 12

Harvest Dinner, the original Friendsgiving potluck! — 6 p.m. Friday, Nov. 17

Holiday Madrigals Concert — 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 3

Pick-up Christmas Pageant — 10:30 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 24

Christmas Eve Service with candlelight, chorale and carols — 9 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 24

Caroling, for shut-ins and the veterans at the VA Hospital, Menlo Park — TBA

To go to the Congregational Church of the Peninsula website, click [here](#).

Please join us for
HARVEST DINNER!



We'll gather in the Dining Room
at the
Congregational Church of the Peninsula
751 Alameda de las Pulgas, Belmont
at 6 p.m. Friday, Nov. 17,
for good food, fellowship and fun!

We'll provide the turkey!
You help us provide the fixings, sides, salads and desserts —
No need to tell us what you're bringing.
Just come and enjoy being with friends and family.

To go to the Congregational Church of the Peninsula website, click [here](#).

Chocolate Fest

Continued from Page One

decorations with the help of a horde of Scouts on the Tuesday evening of Chocolate Fest week.

Micki Carter's publicity work met a major snag two weeks before Chocolate Fest when she learned that the Ralston Avenue banner wasn't going to go up because the City of Belmont's boom truck had broken down. Thanks to Julie Freitas in Public Works, a lot of pestering by Micki, and the city facilities team, the city was finally able to borrow a boom truck from San Mateo and put up our banner a week before Chocolate Fest!

Gwen Jeong stepped up to make calls to potential prize donors, which resulted in some fantastic donations by local restaurants like Vivace, Divino, La Lanterna, Village Host, Applebee's and Hobee's. Silent Auction donors like Barbara White, Pastor Warren Dale, Peggy Smullin, Dusty Cox, Scout leader Brett Robinson, Jill and Micki pushed us way over the top.

Mike Venturino and Larry coordinated the finances, and Garrett and Kendall House managed childcare. Marcia Hilo was back to run the kitchen, and Lynne Benson-Colbert was spotted washing the Dining Room windows. Henry Altorfer oversaw much of the Scouts' work, including raising the lighted CHOCOLATE sign (made by Bob Donovan so many years ago) onto the church roof.

And, of course, CCP Admin Lea Mavroudis provided steady assistance all the way through.

"Wow! I'm blown away," Jill said. "What an amazing team!"



To go to the Congregational Church of the Peninsula website, click [here](#).

*Peninsula Area of
Narcotics
Anonymous®*

Contact Mario C. 650-287-5287

www.peninsulana.org



NARATHONS

*Location: Congregational Church of the
Peninsula, 751 Alameda de las Pulgas,
Belmont, CA 94002*

2023

*Need food, and cash donations along
with volunteers! POT LUCK!!*

24 HOUR
MEETINGS

Thanksgiving Narathon –
Nov. 22nd (4pm) through
Nov. 24th (last meeting at 11:00am)

Holiday Narathon –
Dec. 24th (4pm) through
Dec. 26th (last meeting at 11:00am)

New Year's Narathon –
Dec. 31st (4pm) through
Jan 1st (last meeting at 11:00am)

24 HOUR
MEETINGS

**NEW YEAR'S EVE DANCE,
DEC. 31ST AT 9PM**

To go to the Congregational Church of the Peninsula website, click [here](#).

Calendar for November 2023

1 Wed	11AM - 12PM	Off-site events	Bible Study (Zoom)
2 Thu	7:30PM - 9:00PM ✉	Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
5 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	Worship	Sunday worship with Rev. Jim Mitulski
	11:30AM - 1:00PM	Church Events	Coffee Hour
	5:00PM - 6:00PM	Off-site events	Zoom Evening Worship
7 Tue	12:30PM - 2:00PM	Off-site events	Good Hope Luncheon
	1:30PM - 2:30PM	Off-site events	Online Book Group
8 Wed	11AM - 12PM	Off-site events	Bible Study (Zoom)
9 Thu	7:30PM - 9:00PM ✉	Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
12 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	Worship	Sunday worship with Rev. Jim Mitulski
	12:00PM - 1:30PM	Church Events	Stewardship Brunch
	5:00PM - 6:00PM	Off-site events	Zoom Evening Worship
14 Tue	1:30PM - 2:30PM	Off-site events	Online Book Group
15 Wed	11AM - 12PM	Off-site events	Bible Study (Zoom)
16 Thu	7:30PM - 9:00PM ✉	Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
17 Fri	6PM - 9PM	Church Events	Harvest Dinner
19 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	Worship	Sunday worship with Rev. Jim Mitulski
	11:30AM - 1:00PM	Church Events	Coffee Hour
	12PM - 1PM ✉	Church Events	Social Action board meeting
	5:00PM - 6:00PM	Off-site events	Zoom Evening Worship
21 Tue	1:30PM - 2:30PM	Off-site events	Online Book Group
22 Wed	11AM - 12PM	Off-site events	Bible Study (Zoom)
	6:00PM - 7:00PM ✉	Off-site events	Deacons' meeting
	7:00PM - 9:00PM ✉	Off-site events	CCB Council Meeting
23 Thu	7:30PM - 9:00PM ✉	Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
26 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	Worship	Sunday worship with Rev. Jim Mitulski
	11:30AM - 1:00PM	Church Events	Coffee Hour
	5:00PM - 6:00PM	Off-site events	Zoom Evening Worship
28 Tue	1:30PM - 2:30PM	Off-site events	Online Book Group
29 Wed	11AM - 12PM	Off-site events	Bible Study (Zoom)
30 Thu	7:30PM - 9:00PM ✉	Church Events	Choir Rehearsal

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The teens sent out word that they wanted everyone to wear costumes on Halloween Sunday, Nov. 29. Several members of the congregation showed up in full Halloween regalia. For those who didn't, rummaging in the Christian Ed closet produced some last-minute fill-ins!

December Messenger deadline will be Nov. 24.



To go to the Congregational Church of the Peninsula website, click [here](#).