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70<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting  
January 28, 2024

Danielle Chamberlin  
Moderator

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## 70<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Agenda

January 28, 2024

12:15 PM

Zoom and In-Person

### 12:30 PM - Call to Order

Quorum Check

Micki Carter,  
Parliamentarian

Opening Prayer

Rev. Jim Mitulski,  
Pastor

Explanation of voting via zoom and  
in-person

Danielle Chamberlin,  
Moderator

Agenda Review - additions, revisions,  
and approval

Danielle Chamberlin

### 12:45 PM Old Business

Approval of 2023 Annual Meeting  
Minutes

Danielle Chamberlin

2023 Treasurer's report

Mike Venturino,  
Treasurer

Acceptance of 2023 Annual Reports  
(excluding nominating and budget  
reports)

Danielle Chamberlin

### 1:00 New Business

Goals for 2024

Danielle Chamberlin

Proposed Constitutional  
Amendments

Micki Carter

Proposed Articles of Incorporation  
Amendment

Micki Carter

2024 Budget

Elizabeth Nordt, Chair  
Trustees

Nominating Report

Maura Whitmore,  
Vice-Moderator

Formation of 2025 Celebration  
Committee

Micki Carter

Renew Covenanted Minister's 4-way  
Covenant

Rev. Dr. Thomas  
Crosby

Closing Prayer

Rev. Warren Dale

## Minutes of the 69<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

### **69th Annual Meeting of the Congregational Church of Belmont Feb. 12, 2023 Minutes**

The meeting was called to order at 12:33 p.m. by Danielle Chamberlin, moderator. The meeting was both in-person, after lunch, in the Dining Room and on Zoom.

Pastor Jim Mitulski gathered the group in prayer to open the meeting, and Micki Carter, parliamentarian, declared a quorum was present.

The Annual Report is available [here](#).

Danielle explained the hybrid process of voting in person and via Zoom.

Danielle announced one change in the agenda printed in the Annual Reports. She asked consent of the group to move the Memorandum of Understanding ahead of the Development of Goals for 2023 in the agenda. The request was granted.

#### **Old Business Minutes**

The minutes of the 68th Annual Meeting were included in the Annual Report. It was moved to accept the minutes as presented in the Annual Report, seconded and passed.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

Mike Venturino, treasurer, reviewed his report and added one new segment, which didn't appear in the Annual Report. It covers the financials of the Medical Debt Relief Fund, which had been handled within the Social Action Fund and now will have its own category. The action of that fund appears here:

Register							02/12/23
Social Action Collections:Medical Debt Relief Register through 02/12/23:							
Date	No./Ref.	Name	Account	Memo	Amount	C	Balance
05/31/22			Social Action Don...		715.05		-715.05
07/31/22			Social Action Don...		-31.04		-684.01
08/31/22			Social Action Don...		3,090.21		-3,774.22
09/30/22			Social Action Don...		3,248.25		-7,022.47
10/07/22	EFT	Medical Debt...	Bank of America [...		-6,500.00		-522.47

It was moved to accept the Treasurer's Report (as amended), seconded and passed.

### Annual Report

The 2022 Annual Report (excluding the Nominating Report and the 2023 budget) was presented, and it was moved to accept, seconded and passed.

### New Business

#### Memorandum of Understanding

Danielle introduced the Memorandum of Understanding Between CCB and First Congregational Church of Redwood City:

This memorandum describes an agreement between the Congregational Church of Belmont (CCB) and First Congregational Church of Redwood City (FCCRC) to combine their churches. It's a broad outline describing the expectations of both churches, without attempting to specify every detail. The memorandum isn't a legally binding document, but it signals that both churches are prepared to work together in good faith to finalize the detailed terms of the agreement as soon as possible. It's expected that the membership of CCB and FCCRC will individually vote whether to approve this memorandum before more detailed discussions begin.

CCB and FCCRC share similar beliefs and missions, and face similar challenges. Located about five miles apart from each other on the San Francisco Peninsula, both are members of the United Church of Christ, Golden Gate Association of Northern California and Nevada. Both churches have a progressive and inclusive philosophy, and a focus on social activities, community outreach, and social justice reform. Persons of all ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and gender identities are welcomed to participate at all levels of church life and leadership.

In recent years, both churches have experienced declining membership numbers, aging membership, financial challenges, and a shortage of human power available to keep church services running. FCCRC is also currently without a physical meeting space, and has operated virtually while keeping its material effects in storage. Recognizing their closeness in both location and spirit, the two churches believe that combining together as one will enable them to better pursue their shared mission. Like a good marriage, each church will bring a unique history to the union, and the new whole will benefit.

The Congregational Church of Belmont and First Congregational Church of Redwood City agree:

- CCB and FCCRC intend to combine into a single legal entity — a new church.
- The new church will have a new business name, to be determined.
- The two churches intend to complete their official combination quickly, by mid-2023.

- The church leadership will exercise due diligence and seek professional advice for the best way to construct the combined legal entity, considering possible property tax implications and similar issues.
- All physical assets and financial assets and liabilities of the two churches will be combined as one.
- All current employees of CCB and FCCRC will continue as employees of the new church for the foreseeable future.
- The new church will serve the specific needs and interests of residents in Belmont, Redwood City, and surrounding areas.
- All existing internal programs, external commitments, and obligations of CCB and FCCRC will be maintained by the new church for the foreseeable future.
- The new church's leadership council, committees, and boards will be filled with members coming from both CCB and FCCRC.
- The address of the new church will be 751 Alameda de las Pulgas, Belmont.
- Warren Dale will continue to lead virtual Sunday afternoon church services and Wednesday Bible studies.
- Jim Mitulski will lead Sunday morning church services in person at 751 Alameda de las Pulgas.
- Other church activities may be led by Jim, Warren, or both.
- The new church will regularly use significant sentimental items from the collections of both CCB and FCCRC. These may include items like crosses, hymnals, Bibles, bells, candlesticks, collection plates, nativity scenes, baptismal fonts, or historic seasonal decorations.
- The format and style of new church services will reflect the traditions and practices of both CCB and FCCRC.
- The leadership of CCB and FCCRC both agree to provide all necessary legal and financial information, documentation, and document review in order to conclude the final agreement in a timely manner.

Danielle noted that this is NOT a legally binding merger document, only a commitment to merge. The Memorandum has been approved by the Councils of both churches and signed by the Moderators of both churches.

Elizabeth Mye moved the adoption of the Memorandum, and it was seconded. Discussion followed that covered the following issues:

- A brief history of the Redwood City church which was founded in 1862. It's the oldest Protestant church in San Mateo County.
- The employees of both churches, which will be covered by the Memorandum. CCB's employees include the Pastor, Music Director, Musician, Office Administrator, Building Assistant and Sunday Morning Worship Assistants. FCCRW has a part-time Pastor, Office Administrator (shared with CCB) and a Tech Assistant.
- The end result will be one church with members of both former churches serving in the leadership of the new church.
- The new church will have a new name although its legal corporation name may remain the Congregational Church of Belmont. The new name may be reflected in a DBA (Doing Business As) appellation.

- Legal counsel will be hired to oversee the merger, and the experiences of other UCC churches will be sought.
- The CCB building will not be sold, and FCCRW has no building, so property taxes shouldn't be affected in any way.
- It's hoped that this merger can be effected within six months.

The measure passed with 29 yes votes, 0 no votes and 1 abstention.

### **Nominating Report**

In the absence of a Vice Moderator, Micki Carter had accepted the responsibility of overseeing the development of the Nominating Report. She noted that the nominations to leadership positions include a number of people who haven't served before. She said she thought that indicated renewed interest in the vitality of CCB.

Acceptance of the report was moved and seconded. The following amendments were made:

- Thomas Crosby was moved from the Pastoral Relations Committee to the In-Discernment Committee.
- Elizabeth Nordt was added to the Pastoral Relations Committee.
- Mary Beth Gray and Penny Philips were added to the Prayer Chain.

### **Goals**

Danielle noted that the Council had not approved goals for 2023 so the Annual Meeting at large would set them. She added that the 2022 goals had been achieved. The following goals were proposed and approved by a unanimous vote of the meeting.

- Complete the merger with FCCRC
- Develop a formal liaison with Carlmont Parents Nursery School
- Increase the number of our shared activities with local churches like Island United in Foster City and College Heights UCC.
- Create a priority list for building maintenance and get started on the Sanctuary redesign.
- Build a relationship with Scout Troop 27.
- Find and execute three strategies to grow membership and attract youth (including shared youth activities).
- Be an active participant in local disaster recovery.
- Engage in Social Justice action beyond donating money.

### **Budget**

Trustee Greg Thornhill introduced the 2023 budget, which he noted "features a pretty good-sized deficit" of \$24,292! That was largely because we have had part-time pastors for the past few years and now will have a full-time pastor. He was also pleased to report that for the first time in several years, pledge income rose (from

\$59,095 last year to \$66,600 this year). He pointed out that cost-of-living wage increases were included for the Office Administrator and Musician.

After a brief discussion, the 2023 budget passed unanimously.

### **Four-way Covenant Report**

Thomas Crosby reported on his work at the VA and expressed the appreciation that the veterans feel about their connection with CCB. He also noted that he will receive his doctorate from Vanderbilt University this spring.

Pastor Jim offered a closing prayer.

The meeting was gaveled to a close at 2:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Micki Carter  
Parliamentarian

## **2024 Goals**

As a Micah 6:8 church, the Congregational Church of the Peninsula reaffirms its commitment to nurture spiritual growth and outlines these goals for 2024:

- To grow CCP membership by:
  - Rebooting our children's and youth program.
  - Investing in our music ministry and experimenting with new uses of music in worship.
  - Inviting wider community interest in CCP through outreach programs like the Good Hope Luncheon, book clubs and guest speakers.
- To develop a plan for distribution of Social Action funds (including those from the Johnson Lyman covenant) to community organizations aligned with CCP values and mission.
- To further define our social justice identity.
- To deepen CCP's cooperation and collaboration with other local UCC churches.
- To create a strategic investment policy for the church and introduce the practice of legacy giving.



## Pastor's Report

By Rev. Jim Mitulski

Dear CCP family,

A year ago at this time, I moved from the warm embrace of Peace United Church of Christ in cold and snowy Duluth, Minn. to the warm embrace of what was then the Congregational Church of Belmont, Calif., and to my home of many years in the Eastlake area of Oakland. From Lake Superior to Lake Merritt and the warmer shores of the San Francisco Bay was quite a distance geographically, culturally and even spiritually. I'm so glad I moved back to be your pastor at what has since been renamed the Congregational Church of the Peninsula.



*This is the cake my church in Duluth had for me on my last Sunday there in January 2023.*

This first year has been an adjustment, reacquainting myself with an area where I have lived and pastored churches in the past, and which still feel at times unfamiliar and new. I now feel I have memorized every inch of the 880 freeway and the San Mateo Bridge between my home and the church. I continue to be charmed by the little church on the hill that I see when I drive up Ralston, and turn on Alameda de las Pulgas and into our parking lot. More charming than the country club turned church are the wonderful people who make up this community of faith who have banded together to make meaning out of our lives as Christians in 2023.

I am grateful for my predecessors, both the interim (Sally Train and Liz Clement) and settled pastors (Kristi Denham, Wendy Taylor and John Brooke), who

collectively have worked for several generations alongside an extraordinary group of leaders to ensure a continuing Congregationalist presence here in Belmont for 70 years.

Dedicated, hard-working and generous are the words that characterize the people who have made this a special and progressive faith community. Both the Trustees and the Council Members, under the leadership of Elizabeth Nordt and Danielle Chamberlin, have ensured that CCP continues to function as a beacon of hope, even as we learn what it means to be Church in the wake of Covid.

The Deacons, led by Henry Altorfer, have provided a steady hand, and Micki Carter in particular has ensured that our connection to the past is preserved and that long cherished traditions are maintained and even improved upon.

The Council and Trustees are leading us through a paradigm shift of how church is financed in 2024, through the establishment and management of new revenue streams as a result of our extraordinary financial assets.

Early on in my tenure, I observed through the loss of long-cherished members and leaders like Ella Mae Donovan, Lois Shouse, and Gary Brandenburg that this is a congregation intimately acquainted with grief. I am grateful to Wendy Taylor, Kristi Denham and Micki Carter for assisting me as I learned how to accompany you on your grief journeys.

In between the time I interviewed for this job and when I arrived, your relationship with First Congregational Church of Redwood City had evolved to the point of a merger vote, which culminated in July with the forming of the Congregational Church of the Peninsula. One of the delights has been getting to know an additional group of people and perhaps the greatest treasure of all has been the opportunity to work with Rev. Warren Dale. We complement each other well, and I have learned a great deal from Warren about pastoring, the use of the internet to build community, and the importance of community ministry.

Warren's additional expertise in a ministry of reconciliation and trauma response — widely observed in the broader community — has been an asset for us. Warren is a gem of a pastor and I am grateful to call him colleague and friend. And Admin Lea Mavroudis has the skills, vision, patience and temperament we need right now as we simultaneously consolidate and expand.

I have worked to bring liturgy and preaching that is relevant, contemporary and consistent with our progressive values. I am grateful to the tech team, and to our two gifted musicians, Jeffrey Jones and Elizabeth Mye. We have a fantastic choir. And Elizabeth has demonstrated the breadth of her talent by innovating a new worship band and by her willingness to bring our music ministry into further collaborations with neighboring churches.

We had a wonderful ecumenical Holy Week series of services, which we're expanding up even further this upcoming year. My favorite performing group is the Senior Band, and I was glad to bring you special musical guests from around the country, including the Marin Unity Choir, Eric McEuen, Bobby Jo Valentine and Susan Larson Kidd.

I have worked especially to strengthen our collaborations with the other UCC churches in close proximity (San Carlos, Foster City, CCSM, and College Heights). Look for more shared ministry in the year to come among the churches of the San Mateo County UCC Cluster.

I have continued to represent us in a variety of community settings and relationships including the NAACP, the Peninsula Multifaith Coalition, and the Peninsula Solidarity Cohort. I went on a pilgrimage to Sacred Sites of the Civil Rights Movement in Alabama with the PSC. I co-wrote a grant with Diane Fahrner for the PMC from the Silicon Valley Foundation to cover the costs of the MLK Day of Service. And I have resumed writing for both the Bay Area Reporter and the San Mateo Daily Journal to expand our visibility.

For the time being I continue to serve on the Board of the LGBTQ Religious Archives Network and the Oakland Peace Center.

The experiments, collaborations, innovations and risks we take in 2024 will determine the fate of CCP in 2026, 2028, 2030 and beyond. Here's what I ask: be open to change, pray daily for the church, attend worship regularly and believe together in our very promising future.

## Associate Pastor's Report

By Rev. Warren Dale

As Associate Pastor, my main focus has been to provide pastoral care and services to the merging communities of the Congregational Church of Belmont and First Congregational Church of Redwood City, UCC, as we moved to form the Congregational Church of the Peninsula.

When I became Bridging Pastor of First Church, we were providing two worship services per month (second and fourth Sundays, 5 p.m.). With the pandemic, it was decided to increase our community connection by providing Zoom services each Sunday with full worship services on the second and fourth Sundays, and Bible Study on the remaining Sundays of each month. Zoom services allowed me to use more You Tube content augmented by more discussion. In addition, we were continuing our weekly prayer time at 11 a.m., Wednesday.

In the current merged church, I lead worship once a month and cover for illnesses or vacation time for the lead pastor. This is in addition to continuing to offer the above 5 p.m. services.

I also have conducted home and hospital visits.

During the year we offered special services. I led the Blessing of the Animals, the Easter Sunrise Service on the Hill, and co-hosted the Christmas Eve Services. During Advent, I also hosted and arranged for the Madrigal Singers Concert.

During the morning service, I often provide the prayers for the people.

Once a month, I attend and share prayers and invitations to church events during our Good Hope Luncheon. The Luncheon is attended by 10-15 people consisting of our church members, constituents, visitors, and members of other churches. It is a great source of community to which visitors are often invited by the regulars. Visitors have become regular attendees at our evening Zoom services, prayer time, and Good Hope Luncheons.

Once a month I write *Pastor Warren's Wonderings* for *The Messenger* and often contribute a church humor column.

In the community, I continue to be the Board Member Emeritus of the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center and have facilitated special meetings in San Mateo County on housing on church property, special housing for Half Moon Bay Agricultural Workers, Team Building of a northern city council, County Mental Health Team, and Pets In Need. I have personally delivered checks from the Johnson/Lyman Fund and connected with those, our giving partners. I attended the ribbon cutting and tour of the Navigation Center, Life Moves.

I also have maintained connection with Ad Hoc Senior Groups: Tuesday Night Dinner Group and the Senior Spokes (Cycling Group). I have volunteered, provided support, and helped the Domini Hoskins Black History Museum share its story and find a home.

In the last year, I have given out 30 of my manuals, *Facilitating Healing from Traumatic Stress*, and have conducted in-person discussions regarding use of the manual. In February, I attended and contributed to a Discussion Roundtable of Churches as Post Disaster Trauma Care Providers in Memphis. I also established a website: [www.disasterrecoveryguide.com](http://www.disasterrecoveryguide.com).

I am grateful to be a part of this still growing community of faith.

Celebrating God's Blessings,

The Rev. Warren Dale

## Moderator's Report

By Danielle Chamberlin

2023 was a transformational year, giving birth to the Congregational Church of the Peninsula. At the beginning of the year, the Congregational Church of Belmont was thrilled to learn that First Congregational Church of Redwood City was interested in a merger.

At last year's Annual Meeting of the Congregational Church of Belmont, we voted on a "Memorandum of Understanding" to merge before the end of June, per the wishes of FCCRC to close the merger prior to their fiscal year end. And we are now one new church, the Congregational Church of the Peninsula, with two pastors, Rev. Jim Mitulski (whom CCB hired in February 2023) and Rev. Warren Dale.

Our new church has accomplished a lot this year! Our Trustees and Communications boards have made significant efforts this year to bring the functions of the two churches together on top of their "day jobs" of running the organization.

Our wonderful Social Action team, headed by Linda Howard, led projects such as putting together care packages for the homeless and supporting families at the holidays through the Samaritan House Family Sharing program. They are excited to continue the tradition of strong financial giving that First Church brings to the Congregational Church of the Peninsula, giving away 1% of our invested capital each year into local charities.

Our Board of Christian Education, together with BSA Troop 27, put together a Family Fun Day carnival for the community in the spring and organized a service trip to the Navajo Nation in June.

Our Deacons kept our worship services engaging and our congregation cared for, including organizing a wonderful Harvest Dinner in November which, for a second year, included our friends from other local UCC churches.

Pastor Jim has helped us to engage more strongly with other local churches, including joint services on Maundy Thursday and Thanksgiving, a joint Family Camp weekend with College Heights in July, and a joint book group and two joint worship services with Island United. Jim has also experimented with and revitalized our Sunday morning worship services, resulting in an uptick in weekly attendance and more new visitors returning.

In addition to leading our Sunday evening online service and Wednesday prayer meetings, Pastor Warren has helped continue several First Church traditions which help build community, such as our Good Hope Luncheon and the December concert from the Mountain View High School Madrigals.

Elizabeth Mye, our Director of Music, has started a new initiative to have a worship band in our Sunday morning service once a month, in addition to continuing our tradition of excellent choral music.

As a new church with increased resources, both human and financial, we are now blessed with the ability to invest in new areas to revitalize and grow. In line with our mission to provide safe space for spiritual growth, we propose a partial subsidy for housing for our Seminarian through the completion of his studies at Pacific School of Religion.

In our proposed 2024 budget we would also like to invest further in several areas core to our mission, including our music and youth programs as well as a much-needed increase in building maintenance to support the community-centered organizations we house. These investments will help grow our church and transform our organization into a thriving 21st-Century church, providing safe space for spiritual growth to people from all walks of life.

## Clerk's Report

By Jill Visor

- Baptisms - 0
- Marriages - 0
- Renewal of Vows - 0
- Memorials - 3
- New Members - 4
- Inactive and Moved - 8
- Returning Members - 0
- CCP Congregational Membership at Year End - 83 (23 former FCCRC and 60 former CCB and new members)

## Chocolate Fest Report

By Micki Carter

Chocolate Fest bounced back from three years of pandemic-induced silence to an enthusiastic rebirth for its 40<sup>th</sup> 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. We sold a grand total of 730 tickets for the three sessions.

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 \$21,557. The Silent Auction alone brought in more than \$5,000.

The Chocolate Fest team and the Social Action Board are now deciding how \$10,800-plus will be distributed to local charities.

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.

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 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 which 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, the CCP Admin Lea Mavroudis had her fingers in everything all the way through.



## Board of Deacons Report

By Henry Altorfer

2023 was a special and a busy year for Deacons. We began the year preparing for Pastor Jim's arrival and ended the year with planning for his installation.

We also welcomed new members in our newly integrated church from the merger of the First Congregational Church of Redwood City and the Congregational Church of Belmont – resulting in CCP, and Warren becoming our Associate Pastor. The year had a number of good opportunities, such as the Harvest Dinner, to mix the groups and get to know each other better. We look forward to more such opportunities in 2024.

Unfortunately, in 2023, four longstanding members that were pillars of our church community passed away – Lois Shouse, Ella Mae Donovan, Gary Brandenburg, and Jerry Coleman (former member who moved to Sebastopol). The deacons helped plan the memorial services that were held at CCP for our three local members.

The Deacons train and schedule the liturgists, ushers and communion preparers and servers. We also ensure coffee hour and other Sunday morning gatherings go well. Arranging for the right seasonal banners, altar decorations, and Holy Week and Christmas decorations and activities are all part of ensuring our worship services are a nice experience.

Deacons also oversee the Ministries of Care, which serves to manage our attention to the needs of the congregation, especially those who are ailing inside or out, and reach out to them or visit if appropriate. We also try to help coordinate these efforts with the pastor to ensure our members are cared for spiritually. Ministries of Care also includes teams that write cards, coordinates food/meals for those temporarily hampered by injury or other reasons, and drive members to church or other events.

Lay members of the Board of Deacons for 2023 were Micki Carter, Mike Venturino, Jane Fernald, Garrett House, and Henry Altorfer. We met monthly and gave updates to the council.



## Altar Guild Report

By Micki Carter

The Altar Guild has continued providing and arranging flowers for the altar every Sunday (with thanks to Maura Whitmore, Doris Brown, Carol Patterson, Maureen Gallaty, Jane Fernald and me), in its familiar role at CCP.

We also ordered 16 Easter lilies and 21 Christmas poinsettias for seasonal displays, complete with dedications.

We changed the paraments on the altar, according to the church calendar, and decorated with appropriate banners for the season.

This year we had an added opportunity to serve. Maura, Mike and I went through the boxes marked "Kitchen" in the First Church Redwood City's storage unit and found a complete set of lovely china for the CCP kitchen, a set of matching silverware and lots of glassware. We hauled it back to the church, moved all the dishware from the upstairs kitchen to the downstairs kitchen, culled stuff that wasn't needed, and installed it all in the upstairs kitchen in time for Harvest Dinner!

The downstairs kitchen still needs to be organized, but we invite you into the upstairs kitchen to open cupboards and see what came to us with the merger! More boxes await! Let us know if you'd like to share in the discovery of new treasures.

As always, the Altar Guild would love to increase its numbers for providing altar flowers. Contact me if you would care to take a Sunday to provide the flowers, even if it's just one Sunday for the year!

## Music Ministry Report

By Elizabeth Mye

Music at CCP continues to serve as a foundation of the spiritual heartbeat of our church and faith community. We've broadened our music program with a new CCP Worship Band in late 2023. Our Sanctuary choir has expanded membership, and Pastor Jim has led in creating more collaboration with other church musicians within our service and in partnership with other churches.

### **SANCTUARY CHOIR:**

With the steadfast dedication of Jeffrey, our Sanctuary Choir members and new choir members (Pastor Jim, Calyx Liu, and Carol Chivers) our adult choir continues to thrive. Sunday music has evolved with more congregational singing and song leaders. We continue to incorporate an eclectic mix of choral, vocal solos and instrumental music.

**YOUTH MUSIC at CCP:**

CCP youth music is supported by Rory, Andrew, Sarah, Emma Naomi, and Kendall. Many of our teens have grown up and are at college. That said, our mighty, talented, and devoted youth continue to offer their voice and instrumental skills (Rory, flute, and Emma Naomi, cello) as schedules permit.

**NEW CCP WORSHIP BAND:**

Of particular note, we built our first CCP Worship Band that premiered Nov. 12. The effort to put the band together was great, however very satisfying. We have four CCP Worship Band members. Jeffrey Jones on keyboard, Michael Medwid on drums, Justin Porto on bass (referred by Lisa Lucett) and Alex Makeev (Carlmont High School senior) on guitar and jazz piano! Worship band music selection is a diverse mix of genres from modern Christian songs, musical theater, classic jazz, choral band combinations, hymns and more. Calyx Liu, one of our newer Sanctuary choir members, stepped up to sing with the band, and Steve Chamberlin, tenor in the Sanctuary Choir, will sing with the band this month on Jan. 21. We are anticipating another Carlmont High School singer will join the band in February. Currently, funding for the Worship Band allows for one rehearsal and one Sunday performance per month.

**COMMUNITY MUSIC:**

Mike Venturino and I will lead this year's Martin Luther King Day of service choir to sing at Bonnie Brae Terrace (formerly Lesley Gardens). We will also continue to partner with our broader church community in music events and concerts.

**SANCTUARY MUSIC SOUND TEAM:**

Mike Venturino and Danielle Chamberlin continue to lead our youth in managing Sunday worship sound and video streaming. We should consider additional sound support as we have expanded our music program with the CCP Worship Band. Currently Mike is managing sound for the CCP Worship Band practice and providing additional support during worship services.

**LOOKING FORWARD:**

Thank you to our dedicated choir, youth, and musicians and to Pastor Jim and the congregation for your support of CCP's music program. May God bless us in our efforts to create beautiful music that feeds our spiritual well-being.

With love of singing and many blessings,  
Elizabeth Mye

## Social Action Board Report

By Linda Howard

The Social Action Board as a part of the Congregational Church of the Peninsula is mindful that our mission is “to do justice in God’s world.” The actions undertaken by the Social Action Board attempt to direct activities and donations to reflect those simple yet powerful words.

The board currently meets once a month on the second Sunday after the church service.

In 2023, the Social Action Board added two new members, bringing our numbers up to seven.

Funding for the Social Action Board comes from the following sources: 50 percent of the Chocolate Fest proceeds, the Todd/Gotthold fund, and donations from antique sales. Throughout the year, appeals for Special Offerings augment the Social Action Fund.

In addition to the above sources of income, with the merger of the First Church of Redwood City, the Social Action Board receives funds from the Johnson/Lyman Covenant. This money will be held in the Social Action fund and disbursed throughout the year to fund charities consistent with the church’s mission.

The monies collected from Special Offerings go to specific causes. In addition to money donated by the congregation, the Social Action Board also contributes money to Special Offerings. Special Offerings from our church provide funding for the national ministries of the United Church of Christ and include Neighbors in Need, One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church and the Christmas Fund.

On the local level, Special Offerings have included the following:

- A.L.A.S. – (Ayudando Latinos a Sonar) an organization committed to working with farmworkers, their families and the Coastside community.
- Family Sharing – Our church annually participates with the Samaritan House to provide presents of clothing, toys and food gift cards to community members who need a little extra support at Christmas time.

### **DONATIONS**

The Social Action Board has contributed to the following organizations or causes:

- Puente de la Costa Sur
- Second Harvest
- Medical Debt Relief
- Maui Food Bank
- Blessings Box
- Support for three church members to attend an NAACP lunch
- Grab & Go Kits
- Hillsdale Peace Pantry (food distribution and garden)
- Garden supplies for Martin Luther King Day of Service

## **ACTIVITIES**

The Social Action Board organized the following activities in 2023:

- Grab & Go Kits – Donated money and assembled bags containing hygiene products, socks, and a McDonald’s gift card to hand out to people in need
- The Blessing Box – donated money and organized a food drive to replenish the Blessing Box
- The Navigation Center – visited this transitional housing site administered by LifeMoves.
- Attended the Faith Summit on Homeless
- Organized and managed the Family Share program in December

## **Personnel Committee Report**

By Danielle Chamberlin

The Personnel Committee is an ad hoc committee of the Church Council which handles the employment issues for the Council. The Council oversees all hiring decisions but the Personnel Committee handles the day-to-day tasks of onboarding and overseeing as well as the ongoing responsibilities of the ever-changing employment laws of the city, state and nation.

In 2023 our major efforts included onboarding Pastor Jim and onboarding the staff of FCCRC to the Congregational Church of the Peninsula.

## Office Administrator Report

By Lea Mavroudis

This March will mark four years of me working as the church office admin! Time certainly flies. As many of you may remember, my first day at CCB (as it was called at the time) coincided with the announcement of the Covid-19 lockdown in the Bay Area counties. We have certainly come a long way since then! Adapting during that time was challenging for everyone, but I have carried those lessons in adaptability and flexibility with me throughout the years at the church.

I still continue to wear many hats at CCP and seem to be adding more all the time. These duties include managing building rentals (detailed in my Building Use Report), prepping and printing the weekly bulletins, counting and recording incoming funds each week, completing payroll twice a month, and much more.

Last year, I took over the mantle of the Messenger from Micki and learned how to use InDesign under her instruction to put it together each month. Now, I'm able to effectively use the tool to create the layouts and publish the Messenger. Micki still helps out with her sharp editing skills and publishing wisdom, but I'm happy to take the lead on bringing monthly news to the congregation.

A large part of the year was spent helping to facilitate the merger between Congregational Church of Belmont and First Congregational Church of Redwood City. I had the advantage of perspective from both churches as I had already been helping FCRWC out with admin support under agreement with CCB. There were many steps to completing the merger and I lent a hand where needed.

Another highlight of 2023 was the return of Chocolate Fest! This was my first time experiencing Chocolate Fest in its full glory, though I had helped out with the online iterations during Covid. After last year's decision to discontinue the tradition, I hadn't thought that I would ever get to see it, but Jill's determination and the whole CCP team's efforts made it into a great success. I provided assistance throughout the whole process leading up to the event, from website updates to ticket sales and more. Being part of the Chocolate Fest team was great and I hope we can do it again in 2024!

I also attended ChurchWest's "HR Bootcamp" seminar in January 2023, for the second year in a row. The things I learned there were invaluable in helping make sure CCP is in compliance with state and federal HR and employment laws. I am planning to attend again in January 2024 to learn even more and make sure we stay up to date.

In late 2023, the Communications team made the decision to move CCP email campaigns to Constant Contact. I spearheaded the process and oversaw the transition. We're still working a few small issues out, but this has allowed us to do a

lot more with styling and formatting as well as the ability to schedule emails ahead of time. We are also able to manage much of our social media posts through Constant Contact, and I think it will be a valuable tool for CCP in 2024.

I'm looking forward to seeing what the new year will bring for the church!

## Board of Christian Education Report

By Danielle Chamberlin

In 2023 the Board of Christian Education focused on a few big events. In the spring, we partnered with Troop 27 to bring back our Family Fun Day carnival. It was a great success, bringing joy to many families in our community through carnival games, popcorn, cotton candy, a petting zoo...and last but not least, our bounce house. One little girl I spoke with, about five years old, said she had never been in a bounce house before. Her mom corrected her, but the little girl pointed out that because of Covid she could not remember the last time she had been in a bounce house.

Maura did a great job hosting the penny toss and helping children to win a vase to "give to their mothers for Mother's Day." Another child I spoke with insisted I help her to find a bag to allow her to "hide" the present so it could be a surprise for mom. It was a delight to bring so much real, in-person joy to children in our community – and we couldn't have done it without the support of our new friends from BSA troop 27, who also had a lot of fun hosting the event (especially with operating the cotton candy machine).

In June, 10 of us traveled to Tsaile, Ariz. for a week volunteering with Sierra Service Project in the Navajo Nation. We spent five days rebuilding a handicapped ramp and stairs for an elderly Diné matriarch, Mary Rose. We also re-roofed her wood shed, a vital source of heat for the long, snowy winters. Both Mary Rose and her husband Joe spoke little English and spoke mostly Navajo, but we enjoyed working with them despite the language barrier and got to know some of children and grandchildren as well.

We were shocked to learn firsthand about the injustices still faced by Indigenous Americans and the difficulties faced by people trying to live on the reservations and preserve their culture and traditional ways. While we learned a ton of new construction skills, even doing things we didn't think were possible, many of the lasting lessons came from our cultural exchange with Mary Rose's family.

We finished off the season with the annual tradition of our Christmas pageant on Dec. 24 – this year with a Taylor Swift theme. It was great fun to pull the whole

congregation into our pickup pageant, and we hope we can do the same thing again next year.

While we have been able to focus on a few big projects in 2023, we have not had the resources to rebuild our children's program into a regular occurrence, bringing more families into our community. We would like this to be a priority for the church in 2024.

## Communications Board Report

By Micki Carter

The merger of the Congregational Church of Belmont and the First Congregational Church of Redwood City on June 30 created a new church, the Congregational Church of the Peninsula — and all the attendant changes that a new name entails. The Communication Board was at the center of most of those changes.



In a few short weeks, the board:

- Oversaw the voting that chose the new name.
- Offered Church Council four choices for a new logo, one of which was a redesign of the CCB rainbow tree logo. The CCP rainbow tree logo was Council's choice.
- Created a new sign for the front of the church using the new name and logo.
- Redesigned church letterheads and stationery with the new name and logo.
- Redesigned the side banners by the north and south driveways of the church.

Improvement of the lighting and sound in the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings and the Zoom broadcast of the morning worship continues to be a priority along with the training of the youth who manage the sound and iPad recording. We considered adopting Switcher Studio for the online broadcast, but some subtle changes in the use of the iPad for recording made using Zoom more practical.

We have transitioned the Friday missive (with information about the following Sunday's services) from email to a Constant Contact newsletter format which Lea handles. So far, we haven't heard of any issues with the switchover. If you are not receiving it on Fridays, check in with Lea for help. We are eager to add information about Pastor Warren's Sunday evening service to it so he doesn't need to send out a separate communication.

The board considered sharing a page of Christmas advertising in the San Mateo Daily Journal with three other UCC churches, at Pastor Jim's suggestion, but we found the cost to be prohibitive. We will revisit the idea for Easter.

The Communications Board consists of Danielle Chamberlin and me. We would love to add some new members. If print or online communications, social media or Adobe Creative Suite are in your skill set, we would welcome you with open arms — and great thanks.

## Trustees Report

By Elizabeth Nordt

### **Taking Care of Our Building and Grounds**

2023 brought changes to our building and grounds, in addition to our organization. Thank you to the Buildings and Grounds team and all who helped us!

We started the year with major rainstorms that brought the water into the fireplace room and other places downstairs. We bailed out, replaced some ceiling tiles for OT4Kids, placed sandbags in key locations, made sure gutters were clean and functioning before the next storm. The patio/deck off of the Sanctuary has leaks. Although many areas were treated with sealant this fall, the current rainy season is proving it may not be enough. As leaks here cause a significant problem for our leaseholders, they are high on the list of needed repairs for 2024!

Our new relationship with the BSA 27 family of units (Pack, Troops, and Venture Crew) brought attention to the issue of storage. The Troop proposed several options and worked with us to find solutions. They bought and installed a small shed for our stuff on the south end of the rear parking area and took over the space on the north side of the property for their storage.



CPNS installed artificial turf on the patch of yard adjacent to the center path from the parking lot to the door of the fireplace room.

With the merger came two storage units rented in Redwood City full of items from FCRWC. We have begun to sort through it, and will continue in the coming months. So far, a complete set of dishes and some kitchenware have been put into use and several chairs are in a row where the pews were removed to accommodate those with wheelchairs or other needs in the Sanctuary. Deacons are integrating liturgical items, including a communion set and banners, into our supplies.

Unfortunately, our front porch banners were vandalized in July. They were replaced as soon as possible.

The Scouts had a Work Day on Sept. 23 where they removed the platform from choir loft, deep cleaned most of the building, painted the bathroom cabinets, padded the table racks, cleared the Back 40 of debris/fire hazards, removed a dead tree from the CPNS yard, trimmed branches to clear parking spaces, and realigned the Blessing Box door. Several full pick-up trucks went to the dump. Recology made an extra pickup.

A major section of dry rot was replaced from the front ramp. Other safety and accessibility items were addressed.

The downstairs kitchen got a new-to-us refrigerator, and a dishwasher awaits installation. The downstairs toilets got new flush valves but will most likely need to be replaced.

Our elevator phone was upgraded to a dedicated cellular device called Ooma Airdial.

#### **Leases:**

- **Apartment:** Working under Council's guidance to support the tenant as our seminarian until graduation or June 2025, whichever comes first.
- **Bay Area Art Therapy:** Continues to sublet teen room in addition to their exclusive office. We look to update lease.
- **Big Mess o Wires:** Signed a new lease for the small upstairs office.
- **CPNS:** On budget. We will increase rent by CPI as indicated in their lease.
- **OT4Kids:** On budget. A new five-year lease was signed, with annual CPI adjustments.

#### **Other arrangements:**

- **Narcotics Anonymous:** Both a men's group and a women's group meet weekly

- **Alcoholics Anonymous** meets weekly
- **Scout Troop** meets weekly
- **Cub Pack** meets monthly
- **Venture Crew** meets off-site
- **Beekeepers:** have returned to meeting monthly after many years meeting elsewhere
- **Senior Band:** Rehearses weekly

## Rentals

Music recitals, parties and community events provided a steady stream of rentals. **Destination Science** did not return which definitely hurt our income! In recent conversations, we're told they plan to come back for four weeks this summer (2024) which is welcome news!

## Finances

The merger brought major changes to our financial accounts. Trustees and Treasurer have worked closely with leadership from FCCRC to transition accounts to our new church. We are blessed with significant resources to support the work of the church, but continue to need pledges to support our mission!

## Building Use Report

By Lea Mavroudis

Building rentals continued to be a significant source of income for CCP in 2023. While the post-Covid rush seemed to die down a bit, we still had a steady number of short-term rentals. From birthday parties to bridal showers, memorials to music recitals, our variety of rentals continues to show the versatility of our building.

Scouts has joined us in a symbiotic relationship and holds their regular meetings on Tuesdays, but they have also hosted several special events here in 2023.

A former CPNS parent who hosts a monthly board game party with friends was happy to secure all-day use of the Fireplace Room for one Saturday a month. While we were hoping to provide him a longer-term agreement in 2024, he has unfortunately had to stop the gathering for the time being due to family commitments. We hope to have him back in the future.

A day camp that provides childcare for kids on school holidays has rented from us on several occasions in 2023. We hope to solidify this relationship and perhaps offer them a longer-term agreement as well.

CCP member Steve Chamberlin hosted “Mactoberfest” at the church in October for the first time. This meetup event allowed vintage Apple computer enthusiasts to come together for demos, collaboration, and trade. Steve hoped to repeat the event in 2024.

The total income from short-term rentals in 2023 was \$22,923.

In 2023, we also maintained or—in some cases—expanded our relationships with most of our long-term tenants. CPNS and OT4Kids have continued their operations as normal. Bay Area Art Therapy maintains its additional rental of the Sunday school room, which allowed them to bring on more employees last year.

Narcotics Anonymous has continued to rent spaces for their weekly meetings upstairs and downstairs on Wednesdays. They were also able to hold their holiday Narathon events again this year, in which they provide a safe space for people who need extra support, a warm meal, or just some company during the holidays. I received many messages of gratitude from their leadership for the church providing space for this important work.

The tenant of the small upstairs office moved to the room in the warrens vacated by Catedral da Família. This allowed Big Mess o’ Wires to take over the small office, updating their lease and moving their items out of the main church office.

We also began providing a meeting space for an Alcoholics Anonymous on Sunday evenings. We’re happy to continue supporting those who struggle with addiction in whatever way we can.

Sadly, Destination Science did not return in summer 2023. They reported that they were cutting back their locations due to staffing issues. However, after reaching out to them a few weeks ago, it looks like they are open to coming back for summer 2024. Stay tuned!

We have one more long-term rental starting in January 2024. The San Mateo Beekeepers Guild will be returning for their monthly meetings in the Fireplace Room.

The total income for long-term rentals in 2023 was \$102,102.

Looking forward to seeing what this year brings for building rentals. We already have quite a few bookings, even as far out as December 2024!

## Financial Secretary's Report

By Keith Howard

The generosity of the church community to support the mission of the Congregational Church of the Peninsula is inspiring and humbling. Twenty families pledged \$67,800 to the Congregational Church of Belmont for 2023, and together donated a total of \$2,235 more than that, in addition to designated special offerings. Unpledged giving to the merged church totaled another \$10,479.

At the time of this report, 20 families have pledged \$57,620 to the Congregational Church of the Peninsula for the year 2024. The median annual pledge is \$2,400.

## Auditor's Report

By Steve Chamberlin

The 2023 financial records of the Congregational Church of the Peninsula have been reviewed, and no irregularities were found.

The essence of the auditor's role is to provide an extra pair of eyes on financial matters, independent of the treasurer and Trustees, to shine a light on possible trouble spots on behalf of the congregation.

As you will see in the year-end financial report, the apartment tenant was roughly \$10,000 behind on their rent as of year's end. While they continue to live in the apartment, if this amount isn't repaid, the forgone rent would represent a sizable debt forgiveness or gift to the tenant.

The merger understandably threw off the 2023 budget by creating several major new areas of expenses that hadn't been anticipated. This resulted in significant overspending in several budget categories, and spending on some categories that had no budget at all. In my opinion this isn't a cause for concern, since most of these were one-time expenses and the rest will be folded into updated budgets for 2024.

I prefer to use the term "financial review" instead of "audit," because I've learned that audit has a very specific legal meaning to many people. The financial review does:

- Confirm that all disbursements were documented with a bill or statement that gives the purpose, payee, and budget category.
- Check that the spending was correctly categorized, for an authorized purpose and by an authorized person.
- Verify that recurring monthly rents from all tenants were paid.

- Check that donation and income records are consistent with bank deposit amounts.
- Perform sanity checks for possible double-billing, spending far over budget, budgets allocated but not used, money spent on services the church may no longer need, transfers or disbursements from funds that may be inconsistent with the purpose of the fund, and so forth.

I'd like to thank the church trustees, our bookkeeper Larry Keiffer, and our treasurer Mike Venturino for their careful and dedicated work as stewards of the church's funds.

## Covenanted Minister's Report

By Rev. Dr. Thomas Crosby

Looking back at this year, I could never imagine how much my ministry has changed. In my 14 years of ministry, this has been the most exciting year so far. Right now, I feel like a kid in a candy store. There are so many choices in front of me.

My ministry still focuses on our Men's and Women's Trauma Recovery programs and respite unit in Menlo Park. The men and women in our trauma recovery program have experienced complex trauma in their military service. They are generally in their 30s and 40s.

Veterans in our respite unit are usually older people who need daily assistance. They typically have "the good ol' days" stories and have developed a sense of community in this 20-bed unit. Unfortunately, I have presided over a few memorial services this last year. My father used to tell me, "Loving them is the easy part; losing them is difficult." Since the COVID pandemic, 10 Veterans from our Sunday VA congregation have passed away. That is almost half of our congregation.

Speaking of congregations, starting last January, we started our Sunday worship services at the Menlo Park VA. For the first time in four years, I was about to preach during Black History Month, Easter, and Advent—my favorite services. A Veteran kept asking me when I would preach on the Charlie Brown Christmas, Silent Night, and Christmas Carol. These are my (and his) favorite sermons I preach during Advent. On the first Sunday of Advent, I felt like I had come home again.

I learned about acceptance when we started the service. Instead of one service, I do three on Sunday. Two services are held in our Community Living Centers in the morning, while the third is held in the chapel in the afternoon. I started something new in our last service due to the Veterans who attend. They tend to be in their 30s and 40s and do not know many of the hymns I have used for years. I have had to

research and experiment, and experiment, and experiment, and experiment to find contemporary music for this service—a labor of love for the Veterans who attend. I pray that one day, all Veterans at the Menlo Park VA can attend one service in the chapel.

Another joy this year was the return of the Christmas Carol Sing-A-Long hosted by our church and the VA's Chaplain Service. This was the first time this event had been held in four years. As with other things, it was different this year. We held it on a Friday night in the Community Living Center Dining Room. This was the largest group of Veterans and church members to attend. We had Veterans from all VA programs attend, which was the first time since COVID in Menlo Park that such an event was held indoors. All the reviews were great! The staff who participated in the event seemed to enjoy the time off to sing with us. They have already made suggestions for next year's event.

The most significant event for me this year was receiving my Doctor of Ministry degree from Vanderbilt Divinity School. I do not know how to explain the joy I experienced throughout the whole process. Weekly meetings, required papers, and hours of research felt more manageable than I thought it would. On the big day, I was thrilled to receive my diploma with my "spiritual" daughter, her husband, and my two grandkids in the audience. We had fried chicken at Hattie B's afterward. The day was heaven.

Personally, some things have changed. For me, 12-step meetings attended through Zoom are not the norm, and I have had to adjust to attending "in-person meetings" again. I have attended new meetings and met new people. However, I still have the dear friends I have known for years who have been with me.

I continue to hike regularly with my hiking group and on my own. Hiking around Lake Chabot is still my favorite, even though it is nine miles long. This year, I started looking for hiking trails when I went on vacation; that was a first. My hope for this year is to go to London to meet the new friends I made on Zoom. They have already picked some trails for me to try.

As I reflect on the last year in ministry, gratitude comes to mind. There were many lessons to learn. Changes encouraged growth. Patience produced results. And your love and support, the Congregational Church of Peninsula, my home church, keep me going.

## Seminarian Report

By Garrett House

I have attended the Congregational Church of the Peninsula (formerly The Congregational Church of Belmont) for about 15 years. During that time, I have served as moderator, deacon, Board of Education, Pastoral Search Committee Chair, Buildings and Grounds, and Trustees. Presently, I am our resident seminarian in graduate school at The Pacific School of Religion. I am entering my third year, as I work on my Master of Divinity degree with a trajectory of ordination in The United Church of Christ in the 2-3 semesters.

In the past two years, I have taken classes such as, Theological Thinking, Contextual Thinking, Spiritual Formation, Rhetorical Use of Texts, Ethics, Design Thinking for Social Change, and many others. My favorite class has been Visions of Tomorrow with Dr. Dorsey Blake who is the protégé of Howard Thurman.

This semester I am enrolled in The History, Theology & Polity of The United Church of Christ, Field Study (intern pastor), MDIV Spiritual Formation, and MDiv Vocational Academic Plan.

As I finish the Field Study course, I will unfortunately be away from CCP on most Sundays. In 2024 however, I will continue to serve on the Board of Christian Education, Pastoral Relations, Buildings and Grounds, Pastoral Care, and Four Way Support for our minister in covenant, Dr. Thomas Crosby.

I am presently serving my internship at The Unitarian Universalists of San Mateo, where I am running the children's ed program. As the Director of Religious Exploration, I teach Sunday School while learning about safety, national and state compliance laws and how to build a program and curriculum for all ages. The foci for my concurrent field education are Public Theology, Leadership, Decolonization of church, prayer, and systems of authority.

When I graduate from Seminary, I am looking forward to a position of service as a UCC Pastor, or a job in Christian education, depending on where I am called, and where I am needed. I humbly and gratefully thank The Congregational Church of The Peninsula for all that I have learned, and the amazing love and support which I have received.

Yours truly,  
Garrett House  
CCP Seminarian

## Nominating Committee's Proposed Slate for 2023

### **Moderator**

Maura Whitmore

### **Vice moderator**

### **Clerk**

Jill Visor

### **Treasurer**

### **Council Members-at-large**

Paul Michel

Gwen Jeong

Inkang Kim

### **Financial Secretary**

Keith Howard

### **Auditor**

Steve Chamberlin

### **Parliamentarian**

Micki Carter

### **Boards of the church**

#### **Trustees**

Danielle Chamberlin

Elizabeth Nordt

Maura Whitmore

Greg Thornhill

#### **Deacons**

Henry Altorfer

Jane Fernald

Mike Venturino

Garrett House

#### **Christian Education**

Danielle Chamberlin



Garrett House

### **Communications**

Micki Carter

Danielle Chamberlin

### **Social Action**

Linda Howard

Jane Fernald

Andrew Altorfer

Lisa Lucett

Barbara White

Rev. Warren Dale

### **Committees of the Church**

#### **Personnel**

Mike Venturino

Danielle Chamberlin

#### **In-Discernment Support (for seminarian Garrett House)**

Steve Chamberlin

Rev. Warren Dale

#### **Buildings and Grounds Committee of the Trustees**

Jill Visor

Henry Altorfer

Garrett House

Greg Thornhill

Marcia Rapozo Hilo

#### **Charter Organization Representative to BSA**

Elizabeth Nordt

#### **Pastoral Relations (for Rev. Jim Mitulski)**

Danielle Chamberlin

Garrett House

Rev. Jim Mitulski

Maura Whitmore

**Four-Way Covenant Support  
(for Rev. Thomas Crosby)**

Garrett House

**Ministries of Care**

**Writing Team**

Steve Chamberlin

Carol Patterson

**Transportation Team**

Mike Venturino

Jane Fernald

Jill Visor

Linda Howard

**Food Team**

Danielle Chamberlin

Micki Carter

**Home/Hospital Visitor Team**

**Altar Guild**

Micki Carter

Maura Whitmore

Doris Brown

Carol Patterson

Maureen Gallaty

**Prayer Chain**

Carol Patterson

Jane Fernald

Sarah Fernald

Jan Heise

Leslie Marx

Elizabeth Nordt

Rev. Kristi Denham

Rev. Jim Mitulski

Henry Altorfer

Gwen Jeong

Micki Carter

## Parliamentarian's Report

By Micki Carter

This past year was event-filled for most of the church leadership, and the role of the parliamentarian was mostly filled by keeping an eye on the bylaws while we made the significant changes that the merger entailed. Throughout the process, we erred broadly on the side of full disclosure and inclusion and, so far, that has served us well.

At the Annual Meeting, members will be invited to amend the CCP constitution which is basically a preamble to the bylaws. It sets out the principles of the church (which is a legal corporation recognized by the State of California). This will include a new mission statement and a fix that needs to bring the Constitution into alignment with the Bylaws.

The parliamentarian is going to be incredibly busy next year as we rewrite the bylaws to reflect what we want to do and to be as a merged congregation with limited human resources. This requires the participation of interested people, under the direction of the parliamentarian, and we are eager to hear if you would like to help. This requires people willing to think outside what we do (or don't do) now and conceptualize the shape and needs of CCP into the future. It'll be fun, I promise!

## Amendments to the Constitution

### First Proposed Amendment to the Constitution

Two-thirds of the voting members are required to pass this amendment.

**Intent:** To correct the Constitution to conform with current practice.

### Article XIII — Section 6. Voting

Voting at all meetings of the church ~~(except the Annual Meeting)~~ may be conducted in person or by email, video conferencing or any other accepted electronic method.

A YES vote is to delete the bold-faced phrase. A NO vote is to keep the phrase.

## **Second Proposed Amendment to the Constitution**

Two-thirds of the voting members are required to pass this amendment.

**Intent:** To delete **Article IV — Faith** in the Constitution. This article no longer represents the current UCC Statement of Faith, and our Covenant in Article 5 describes our beliefs more accurately.

### **ARTICLE IV - Faith**

This church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its head and finds in the Holy Scriptures, interpreted by the Divine Spirit through reason, faith, and conscience, its guidance in matters of faith and discipline. We believe in the freedom and responsibility of the individual soul and the right of private judgment. We join with the Fellowship of the United Church of Christ in the Statement of Faith adopted by the General Synod of the United Church of Christ, not as a test, but as an expression of the spirit in which the church interprets the Word of God.

#### **STATEMENT OF FAITH**

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, who is made known to us in Jesus, our brother, and to whose deeds we testify: God calls the worlds into being, creates humankind in the Divine image and sets before us the ways of life and death. God seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin. God judges all nations and all humanity by that will of righteousness declared through prophets and apostles. In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, God has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the whole creation to its creator. God bestows upon us the Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the Church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races. God calls us into the Church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be servants in the service of the whole human family, to proclaim the Gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory. God promises to all who trust in the Gospel forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, presence of the Holy Spirit in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in that kingdom which has no end. Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God. Amen

A YES vote is to delete Article IV of the Constitution. A NO vote is to keep Article IV.

### Third Proposed Amendment to the Constitution

Two-thirds of the voting members are required to pass this amendment.

**Intent:** Change the Mission Statement to a new, more succinct version incorporating the missions of the two churches, and ensuring it reflects the work that we are actually doing as a nonprofit in our major programs (worship, social action, music, youth, building use). This is important to maintain nonprofit status.

Here is the current Mission Statement:

#### ARTICLE VI - Mission Statement

As members of the Congregational Church of Belmont, United Church of Christ,

we accept each other's diversity and remain open to one another's spiritual interpretations as we strive to:

- Worship together seeking spiritual growth, inspiration and inner peace;
- Develop a close relationship with God;
- Experience the joys and risks of allowing God to work within each of us;
- Be aware, with humility and love, of the individual struggles and joys within our collective lives;
- Minister faithfully and effectively to one another as an extended family within the local community;
- Do justice in the world God loves;
- Practice inclusiveness and openness to provide a sense of worthiness and acceptance of all people;
- Enable each of us to live a meaningful life.

We undertake this mission with the help of Jesus Christ.

Here is the proposed new Mission Statement:

#### ARTICLE VI - Mission Statement

**As members of the Congregational Church of the Peninsula, United Church of Christ, we value each other's diversity and remain open to one another's spiritual interpretations as we strive to create safe spaces for spiritual growth and to do justice in God's world.**

A YES vote is to adopt the proposed new Mission Statement (in bold) as Article VI of the Constitution. A NO vote is to keep the original Mission Statement.

## **Proposed Amendment to Article VII of the Articles of Incorporation of the Congregational Church of Belmont**

Two-thirds of the voting members are required to pass this amendment.

**Intent:** The amendment would allow the Congregational Church of the Peninsula (DBA Congregational Church of Belmont) the greatest freedom in choosing to whom to distribute assets at the time of a possible dissolution. If we chose to do so, it would give us the option to merge with another church just as the First Congregational Church of Redwood City chose to merge with us. It would not preclude us from giving our assets to the Northern California Nevada Conference, but it would not require it.

The amendment would delete the words that are struck-through and bold-faced.

### **The Articles of Incorporation of the Congregational Church of Belmont, Nov. 27, 1954 — Article VII**

This is a corporation which does not contemplate pecuniary gain or profit to the members or officers thereof. In the event of the dissolution of the corporation, the property of this corporation shall not in any respect or amount whatever be divided or distributed among the officers or members thereof, but after all debts and obligations are paid or provided for, shall be conveyed, assigned, distributed, paid or otherwise transferred to ~~(1) NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CONGREGATIONAL CONFERENCE, a nonprofit corporation organized for religious and charitable purposes, or (2) in the event of the prior dissolution of NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CONGREGATIONAL CONFERENCE, to~~ such other nonprofit corporation that shall be most likely to carry out the purposes for which this corporation is organized, such determination to be made by the Executive Council of this corporation.

A YES vote is to delete the struck-through and bold-faced words of Article VII of the Articles of Incorporation. A NO vote is to keep the original wording.

## Treasurer's Report

By Mike Venturino

Per tradition, the following financial reports represent the Treasurer's Annual Report.

I'll make a few comments but let the Trustees remark on individual line items.

1. A quick look at the financial statements revealed a pleasant surprise. The operating income and expenses showed a significant loss indicating that we did use our savings and fund reserves to offset revenue loss and extra program and operating costs. But a look "below the line" where we book investment portfolio (Schwab) income and dividends revealed that, from a total cash standpoint, we made were able to make up for the use of these reserves and pretty much broke even. We were beneficiaries of sound fiscal management of the portfolio and, of course, excellent financial market performance in 2023.
2. Thanks to the resources that were on hand, the church was able to fund extraordinary events: new pastors, a merger, acquired staff and related obligations, new sound equipment, and a band to name a few.
3. As the Balance Sheet shows, we ended up the year with almost \$263,000 in cash. Going into 2024, I'm sure that the Trustees will not leave that much sitting in a low or non-interest bearing accounts but will leave enough available for short term needs.
4. Future market performance may not provide the kind of income bump that we got at the end of 2023. The Trustees have an excellent understanding of the tradeoffs involved in drawing income from our portfolio of investments in such a way as to maintain its value while providing for operating needs.
5. We enter 2024 in a very strong fiscal position. I have faith that the church will rise to create a ministry as strong as our finances.