



Sanctuary decorated for Lent with handmade vintage banners from First Church storage

By Micki Carter

The beautiful hand-made banners that are decorating the Sanctuary for Lent were unearthed in the storage units containing items from the First Congregational Church of Redwood City.

Carol Chivers provided some background about the banners.

“There were two sets of banners, one for Advent/Christmas and one for Lent. The Advent/Christmas banners were created by the Fine Arts Board in the early 1970s. Many concerts, bake sales and Christmas Boutiques provided the funds to buy the materials needed. There were originally eight, then two more were added a few years later.

“The banners hung evenly along the sides of the sanctuary, five on each side. They were based on Bible Scriptures that told the Christmas story. The larger Gloria banner was made for the front of the sanctuary.

“The Church on the Rock looked so bare after the Advent/Christmas banners were taken down that the ministers asked the Fine Arts Board to design and create Lenten/Easter Banners. The same designers and seamstresses went to work creating the banners depicting Bible verses that tell the Easter story. These banners were started in the early 1980s after more fundraising to purchase materials. Because of the dedication of the same talented seamstresses, the banners were completed in less than a year!



“The banners were designed and sewn by members of the church. Hundreds of ‘lady hours’ (by about 25 dedicated seamstresses) completed the banners. They worked daily at homes and in the church basement.

“After the building on Euclid Avenue in Redwood City was sold in 2007, the Gloria banner usually graced the various spaces we used for worship, sometimes accompanied by a few of the other banners.”

The satin ropes that had been used to hang the banners had deteriorated in storage so Micki Carter and Mike Venturino created new rods and rope to hang them in the Belmont Sanctuary. Maura Whitmore and Ken Kovel hung them just before the first Sunday in Lent.

The Advent banners haven’t been located yet, but we hope to be able to display them next Christmas.

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

Praying for peace during the season of Lent

By Rev. Jim Mitulski

Dear friends,

As I write this, I am so aware of what is happening in Gaza/Palestine/Israel, and the ever-mounting death toll there. 70 percent of these deaths are women and children. For the past week or so, it really looked like there would be a ceasefire, but I just heard President Biden say that didn't appear to be a realistic explanation anytime soon.

I'm also gearing up for Holy Week, reading accounts from two thousand years ago of those places, and that period of time. We'll be focusing on what Christians have sometimes called the Holy Land over the next few weeks.

A few years ago, I wrote a piece that appeared in both the San Mateo Daily Journal and The Jewish News of Northern California, and has been picked up a number of places still. I am including the text of the article here:

"Two years ago this week, my book buddy Jim Van Buskirk and I were attending a lecture at the Jewish Community Center in San Francisco. We used to work together at the San Francisco Public Library producing book events, and we still enjoy going to almost any literary event together. He is Jewish, I am Christian, and we're both gay and love books.

"We were there to hear Deborah Lipstadt talk about her then new book, 'Antisemitism: Here and Now.' I was one of the few non-Jewish people in the audience. I appreciated the chance to hear perspectives I might not hear otherwise.

"From her work, Dr. Lipstadt read quotes like 'We recognize and abhor the extremists. There is no ambiguity about who they are and what they believe. Most people (with an emphasis on the word 'most') respond to them with visceral disgust. But our focus on them can sometimes distort the landscape because they're not the only ones poised to do harm. In the wake of the Holocaust, Adolf Hitler has become the template for the archetypal antisemite. When someone does not present as an out-and-out Nazi, observers often fail to recognize him or her as an antisemite. But to be an antisemite one need not



Rev. Jim Mitulski

be a Hitler or Nazi equivalent. You need not even be prone to violence. There are many antisemites who would never dream of even using offensive rhetoric.'

"And: 'When our children fear there is danger in openly identifying as a Jew, it is indeed something that should concern us all.'

"I felt uncomfortable as a Christian pastor.

"It was just a few months after the horrific shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, where 11 people were killed.

"As Dr. Lipstadt described her anxiety about the upcoming Easter holidays as a time of particular wariness for Jews, I thought about the language we comfortably use in our Holy Week services that routinely talk about 'the Jews' and the role they played in the first-century death of Jesus.

"I felt the palpable fear in the room.

"As the holiest days in the Christian calendar approached, people in my community were excited about Easter lilies and new clothes, but people with whom I was sitting had plans for beefed-up, armed security at their temples. Not two weeks after Easter that year, an armed gunman shouting antisemitic sentiments shot up the Chabad of Poway synagogue near San Diego, killing one woman and injuring others.

"I grew up in a church that prayed every Good Friday for the 'conversion of the Jews' with these words: 'Let us pray for the Jews that the Lord ... may take the veil from their hearts. ... You do not refuse your mercy even to the Jews; hear the prayers we offer for the blindness of that people ... that they may be delivered from their darkness.'

"Those prayers have been cleaned up in recent years, but the sentiment remains the same. In liberal Protestant churches, we mostly don't pray like that, but during Holy Week, we will all likely read the accounts of Jesus' death, replete with references to the Jews, and never distinguish between a first-century account and the present use of the term, and never acknowledge the Jewishness of Jesus.

"The stories of Jesus' death were internal to a community at the time but since then have been used by Catholics, Orthodox and

Protestants alike, from Augustine to Martin Luther, to justify antisemitism even to the present.

"We use prayers and hymns that have people saying 'Crucify!' but don't pause and say, 'That was particular to a time and place.'

"We need to say, every time we use it in public worship, that we disavow antisemitism in all its forms, or we are subconsciously participating in perpetuating Christian supremacy.

"Fellow Christians, we don't need to build up our faith at the expense of other people. We can tell an ancient story and give it context. We can talk about how the resurrection of Christ brings life and hope to us. And we can acknowledge the history and legacy of how that story has been used to oppress others (even unintentionally) and explicitly refuse to perpetuate it.

"Repentance for antisemitism in the past and in the present is what makes the events of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter truly holy. A world of religious harmony and an end to intolerance and violence caused by religion is what Resurrection looks like." (2021)

I stand by what I said a few years ago, and this year I urge us to be especially mindful of what is happening in Gaza/Palestine/Israel right now.

As a Christian, I'm aware of my own inadequate grasp of the complexities of both Islam and Judaism, and I resolve to learn more. As an American I am guilty of ignorance about the nuances of the current situation.

Join us for our field trip to Peninsula Temple Beth El in San Mateo, and we hope you'll be with us to hear the speaker from Palestine on March 17 at our church. I do believe it is a non-partisan and necessary position to pray for peace. No more deaths are necessary; we must find another way than violence.

I hope and pray that Easter this year brings peace and that resurrection means hope that it can be sustained permanently. I ask you to join me in praying for permanent ceasefire, for the safe return of the hostages and the release of political prisoners. May the miracle of new life extend to all.

Hope to see you on Easter especially—and before!

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

Moderator's column

Looking ahead to the future in 2024

By Maura Whitmore

It is with great joy that I write my first Moderator's Messenger article. I am so happy to serve you, and can guarantee my best efforts. I am very excited for our merger to settle in, and settle down, and for all of us to work together as I know we truly want to.

On our docket this year, in the near future, we will work on longstanding deferred maintenance issues on our church. We will look at new plumbing (toilets!) that are modern and flushable. We will look at bathroom redesigns. We will look at Sanctuary redesign, (painting, removing pews (?), removing the organ (?), replacing old rotten windows, getting new lighting, (chandeliers?) and new music systems.

We are investing in programs and in our building in an effort to grow and strengthen the church. We have a band that plays once a month during worship, and we are planning financially and practically to ramp up a children's program.

We will look at (per Bob Donovan's

request) constructing a Meditation Path with gazebos/benches/decking as the destination on our "back 40."

Those are some of our nuts and bolts concerns. A greater joy is to see our blended worship service(s) opening to new ideas, music, readings and participations. Change is in the air, and I am excited to see it. With our finances in order, we can try things that have only been dreams in the past. We will see what resonates with us long term, what is valuable.

We have 2024 goals that we set at our Annual Meeting:

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:

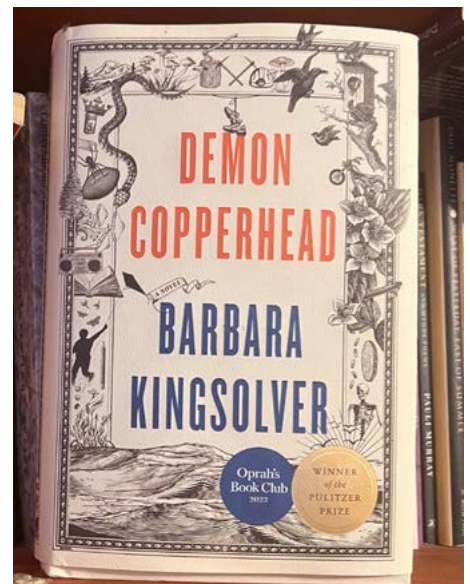
To grow CCP membership by:

- 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.
- Re-establish the sanctuary redesign committee
- To prayerfully consider the environment in the work we do as a church.
- 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.
- I look forward to humbly serving you all, to our greater good.



Pastor Jim poses with Rev. Polly Moore, Rev. Michael Cronin, and Rev. Jessica Vacketta after the joint Ash Wednesday service at CCSM on Feb. 14.



The Chat 'n Chew Book Group meets Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. on Zoom ([link](#)). The March selection will be *Demon Copperhead* by acclaimed writer Barbara Kingsolver. Join us!

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

Egg-dyeing and butterflies to return for Easter

By Danielle Chamberlin

We will continue many of our beloved Easter traditions for children this year – please bring your kids and grandchildren!

On March 24 (Palm Sunday) from noon to 1, we will dye dozens of hard-boiled eggs in the Dining Room at 751 Alameda de las Pulgas. This is always a ton of fun and open to all in the community, so please help us get the word out. Please share with your friends and family.

We have also ordered 250 door hangers to place around the neighborhood, so if you are willing to go for a walk around the Belmont neighborhood with some door hangers on the afternoon of March 17 to advertise this event, please let us know.

During church on Easter, our older youth will hide the hard-boiled eggs on our front lawn and we will have a giant Easter Egg hunt for children after church.

Another Easter tradition for our children

is to raise caterpillars into butterflies in order to visualize the rebirth of the Easter story. Once again, we will have caterpillars and butterfly habitats to bring home for children that visit the Belmont site on Easter Sunday.

Pastor Jim tells us that he's found in other churches that hard boiled eggs and live insects are not really what children and families love most about Easter. Rest assured, there will be some candy involved in the festivities as well.



Share Holy Week with us! See how a progressive church does Easter.

Palm Sunday — March 24 at 10:30 a.m. here

Egg-coloring party — March 24, 12-1 p.m. here

Maundy Thursday — March 28 at 7 p.m. here

Tenebrae chorale and Holy Communion

Good Friday — March 29 at 7 p.m.

At Congregational Church of San Mateo

Easter Eve — March 30 at 7 p.m.

At College Heights UCC in San Mateo

Easter Sunday — March 31 at 10:30 a.m. here

A giant Easter Egg Hunt for kids after worship!

Congregational Church of the Peninsula

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

Continued 2024 Annual Meeting concludes with budget okay

By Micki Carter

It took two congregational meetings and a Q&A forum to do it, but we have a budget and elected leadership for 2024.

After the Annual Meeting on Jan. 28 was continued after a snag on the budget, the Trustees organized an after-church discussion Feb. 11 to find a solution to the hold-up.

Once they found consensus on the issue, the continuation of the Annual Meeting took place in the Sanctuary after worship on Feb. 18. The 2024 budget was approved, and the following slate of officers was elected:

- Moderator — Maura Whitmore
- Clerk — Jill Visor
- Treasurer — Danielle Chamberlin
- Council Members-at-large — Paul Michel, Gwen Jeong and Inkang Kim

After the Boards of Trustees, Deacons, Social Action and Communication meet and elect a chair and/or a Council representative, the Council will be complete, except for one large unfilled slot — that of Vice Moderator. The Vice Moderator steps in when the Moderator is not present and handles recruiting for the next year's nominating slate. It's hoped that the Vice Moderator will step up to the Moderator's position in two years, but it is not required. If you are interested in being considered for that position, please let Maura Whitmore or any member of Council know.

Good Hope Luncheon is slated for March 5

This month, the Good Hope Luncheon will gather on March 5 at 12:30 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial Senior Center, 1455 Madison Ave., Redwood City.

This is a purely social event. Everyone pays for their own lunch, and there is no agenda other than being part of the community of the Congregational Church of the Peninsula.

Please RSVP to Gabriela Simon at gs-baja@yahoo.com.



Bob and son David scatter Ella Mae's ashes in the Back 40 last May.

Bob has a plan for a quiet place in the Back Forty

By Bob Donovan

For 60+ years I have passed by the Back 40 (the undeveloped area across the back parking lot) without paying much attention to it.

Ella Mae for many years was chair or a member of the Board of Trustees, who had responsibility for it. It must've been that involvement that prompted her to ask that her ashes be scattered there as she appreciated the natural beauty.

Since we scattered her ashes there on May 14, 2023, I have nearly every week stopped as I left Sunday's service and spent some time reflecting on many things and times.

I never felt comfortable venturing deep into the wooded glen to be in a quiet place such as Pastor Warren suggested we do as he led us in prayer one recent Sunday. The hill is too steep and the footing too insecure for many of us.

In that quiet space, I envision a path to a location somewhat centrally located with

a seating in a gazebo so that individuals, twosomes or larger groups could spend time reflecting, having private conversations, small ceremonies such as a Boy Scout badge presentation, an intimate wedding, a church Sunday school class, a nursery school class, but most of all a close-by quiet place for anyone to pray, to seek God's help in their life.

To create such a sanctuary, we are searching for assistance in designing the landscape so that the idea can be presented to the congregation for approval and funding arrangements for made. A donation has already been pledged. Anyone who wishes to remember someone with a pledge can give the information to Keith Howard, the financial secretary.

A method of noting donations in memory of loved ones will be developed with a plaque at an appropriate spot.

The Church Council has formed an ad hoc committee to draft a plan for the meditation space and bring it back to Council for approval.

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

CCP to confer Pastor Emerita title on Pastor Kristi

By Micki Carter

The Rev. Kristi Denham, who retired from the Congregational Church of Belmont in 2019, will be honored with the title Pastor Emerita during worship at CCP on March 10. A reception will follow.

Pastor Kristi was called to CCB in 1999 after the Rev. Wendy Taylor resigned to launch Puente de la Sur on the Coastsides. A graduate of the San Francisco Theological Seminary, she arrived from Atlanta, Ga., with her two young sons, Jesse and Gabe.

At CCB, she served as president of the Peninsula Multifaith Coalition in San Mateo County and as a chaplain for the Belmont Police Department and San Mateo County Juvenile Hall. She helped establish the Peninsula Clergy Network in 2001 and was a member of the Domestic Violence Awareness Committee of San Mateo County. She was especially known for her compassion as a pastor to her flock, as well as her wild red hair and her need to dance!

After retirement, Kristi sold her home in San Mateo and bought a condo in Novato near her son Jesse and his family where she lives with her two cats. A year ago she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and has undergone treatment throughout the intervening months.

We are spreading the word through the Northern California Nevada Conference and PMC in hopes that Kristi's wide community

of friends will want to share this opportunity to honor her. Son Jesse will bring her down for the service.

Please plan to bring cookies or brownies or lemon squares as dessert for the reception. And take the time to let us know that

you are coming by sending an RSVP to Office@CCPeninsula.org — even if you're a regular on Sunday morning. We want to have enough food for everyone.

We're honoring Pastor Kristi March 10! Please join us!



The Congregational Church of the Peninsula will confer the title of Pastor Emerita on Rev. Kristi Denham during worship at 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary at 751 Alameda de las Pulgas, Belmont, with a reception to follow. Pastor Kristi and her family will be with us that day, and we hope you will be too! Please RSVP to Office@CCPeninsula.org to say that you will be there to honor her 20 years of service to the church and the wider Peninsula community.

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

Palestinian speaker Adam Manasra to share perspective on Gaza at CCP on March 17

By Lea Mavroudis

We're excited to be hosting Adam Manasra at CCP on March 17 after worship. We will also welcome Rev. Deborah Lee of the [Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity](#) as our guest preacher that day.

A young engineer from Palestine, Adam originally traveled to the US in Aug. 2023 for a speaking tour organized by [Friends of Wadi Foquin](#) to raise money for a Guest House project in his home town.

Unfortunately, Adam is now unable to return home due to the current violence in Gaza. For now, he continues to traveling the country speaking about his experiences as a Palestinian under Israeli military occupation.

Adam was also recently featured on KQED's "Here and Now" radio show. You



Adam Manasra in his hometown of Wadi Foquin

can listen to him at this [link](#) on the Feb. 8 episode.

Adam's speaking event is part of a larger effort by CCP to join the hundreds of other houses of faith around the country that are joining the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity in a call for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza.

What do the events in Gaza require?

From *Upwellings*, the NCNC newsletter

Seek mercy, do justice, and understand root causes.

Join us at Plymouth Jazz and Justice Church, 424 Monte Vista Ave. Oakland, CA 94611

A Three-Part Series Led by Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb

- Tuesday, March 5 | 7 p.m.
- Sunday, March 17 | 11 a.m.

On Zoom, email revjean@plymouthoakland.org for link

Do you want to know more about the history and root causes of the conflict between Israel and Palestine? Please join us for this time of learning, prayer, ritual and reflection with Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb.

Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb, one of the first women to become a rabbi in Jewish history, is a pioneer Jewish feminist, human rights activist, writer, visual artist, ceremonialist, community educator and master storyteller. Lynn has been a congregational rabbi since the fall of 1973, and founded the Congregation Nahalat Shalom in Albuquerque, NM, in 1980.

Lynn engages in multifaith, intergenerational and multicultural organizing in solidarity with racial, indigenous, gender justice and Palestinian liberation struggles. Currently, Lynn sits on the Rabbinic Council of Jewish Voice for Peace and is board chair of Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity and is the author of several books.

Join the UCC in calling for an end to the violence in Israel and Gaza

From [ucc.org](#)

Join the United Church of Christ, and our ecumenical partners, in telling our elected leaders that we support calls for an immediate ceasefire, steps toward de-escalation, and respect for international law to prevent further civilian harm. Send an email to your officials with one click using [this form](#).

LOVE AND LIFE DEMAND



**PERMANENT
CEASEFIRE NOW**

After discussion among the congregation and Church Council, CCP has approved the hanging of a ceasefire banner in partnership with the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity, joining the many other houses of faith throughout the country that have hung their own banners. The Communications Board will decide where to hang the banner. Pastor Jim also has plans for a ceremony to bless the banner. Stay tuned for more details.

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

Some Mother's Day Magic would work wonders for the families who are housed by LifeMoves

By Micki Carter

Linda Howard, Maura Whitmore, Marcia Hilo and I packed up 18 boxes of dishware (each service for four) and delivered them to three different Life Moves shelters in San Mateo, Redwood City and Menlo Park.

Our old dinnerware (that was replaced by the beautiful china found in the FCCRC storage units) and a variety of other items got incredibly useful second lives with families who live at these remarkable shelters that look just like a cluster of garden apartments.

Evelyn Reyes, at the Haven in Menlo Park, noted that the dishes will be put to immediate use since families usually arrive with no kitchenware at all. "They need

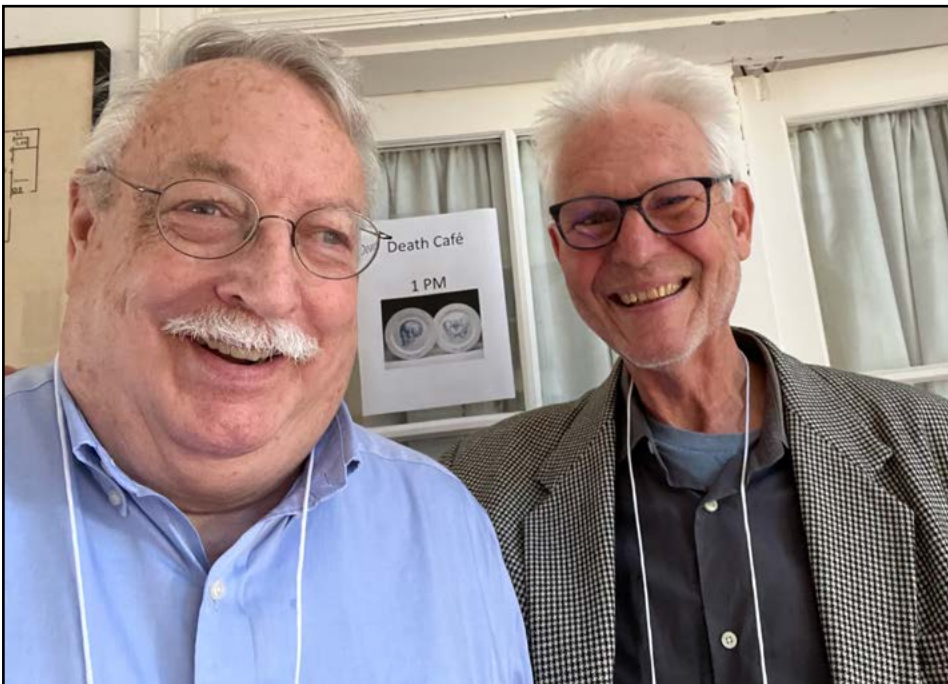
everything from toasters and coffee-makers to pots and pans. They want to set up housekeeping but they need everything."

That sparked a thought: Mother's Day is coming. Perhaps we could each bring a kitchen gift (new or gently used) for a Life Moves mother. And if you don't have anything from your kitchen to share, a trip to Goodwill or Savers in Redwood City would offer lots to choose from.



Would you join me in providing some Mother's Day Magic for the families at one of the five Life Moves shelters?

Contact me if you are interested in helping.



On Feb. 8, Pastor Jim organized CCP's first [Death Café](#) with his friend Jim Van Buskirk. This international program organizes events at which people gather to eat cake, drink tea, and discuss death. The objective is "to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives." Pastor Jim said: "This is a group-directed discussion of death with no agenda, objectives or themes, no program, products, or proselytizing, a discussion group rather than a grief support or counseling session. We have encountered lots of laughter as we share our beliefs, fears, and experiences with death and dying." Stay tuned for another date in April!



As we "mine" the FCCRC storage units, we've unwrapped a beautiful ebony Charles Stieff grand piano that measures 76 inches long and 60 inches across. This is a photo of a similar piano. The one in the storage unit is still wrapped in packing quilts with its legs and pedals removed. If you are interested in the piano, contact Elizabeth Nordt or Micki Carter. It will likely require a piano mover to get it out of the unit and set it up. And, no doubt, it will need to be tuned.

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

Committee starts work on writing new CCP bylaws

By Micki Carter

No one is much interested in the church bylaws until they run up against something in them that they don't like. Those particular items in the Bylaws get tweaked, usually at Annual Meeting, and they are promptly forgotten — until the next time. But this year, we have a chance to do the whole thing up right!

As part of the merger last June, we agreed to operate using the Bylaws of the Congregational Church of Belmont until we could draw up an entirely new set for the Congregational Church of the Peninsula. At Annual Meeting this year, we invited people to join the parliamentarian (me — who is charged with the general upkeep of the Bylaws) and create a committee to write new Bylaws for CCP. We now have a committee that includes Carol Chivers, Henry Altorfer, Greg Thornhill, Mary Beth Gray, Gwen Jeong and Calyx Liu, and we are about to get started. If the idea of writing new Bylaws from the get-go sounds exciting, let me know and we'll include you too.

Before we actually meet, I have distributed copies of the Constitution and Bylaws of CCB and the Bylaws of FCCRC to the committee and asked them to take a deep dive into them as a starting point. I also sent along the Bylaws of Island Church, Col-

lege Heights and CCSM for inspiration and comparison. Perhaps a quick read may start some ideas percolating. It's also interesting to see where there is widespread agreement among all these Bylaws on how to handle certain issues or topics. We may not have to invent the wheel!

We also realize that have a charge from the congregation that urges us to:

Simplify — with the understanding that we have fewer bodies to fill all the roles than we've had in the past.

Remember that our Bylaws are a legal document required since we are a religious corporation recognized by the State of California

Understand that most difficulties that churches encounter, related to their Bylaws, involve the handling of money so we want to be especially clear in these areas

The first thing I noticed in reviewing the other Bylaws was that the CCB Constitution and Bylaws are the only one of the five that has a Constitution. I'm going to seek some legal counsel to see if we actually need one. That will be one easy simplification if we can just do without one.

You will get your chance to weigh in when a congregational meeting will be required to adopt them by a two-thirds vote. Stay tuned!



When Josh responded to our ad that he wanted the Wurlitzer Electronic Organ which had been tucked away in the FCCRC storage unit for years, he was urged to bring a truck with a ramp and some help in the form of muscled labor. But when he showed up — alone — in a rusty old van, we were pretty sure this was going to be another failed attempt to get rid of the organ. But Josh said not to worry; he could do it alone. And, using stuff in the units for wedges and lifts as well as serious muscle power for more than an hour, he managed to get it in, along with the bench and foot pedal rack. The van was wheezing and no more than a foot off the roadway, but Josh was as good as his word. The organ, that had been plugging up the front of the eastside unit, was gone!

Will you bake or buy a pie on Pi(e) Sunday?

By Micki Carter

Official Pi(e) Day falls on March 14 (3.14...), but we will celebrate Pi(e) Sunday on March 17 at CCB.

However, that's a crowded day on the church calendar since we will have a guest speaker at 1 p.m. So we will be offering Pi(e) sales before AND after worship.

At 9:30 a.m. or during Coffee Hour in the Dining Room, you will have the chance to purchase a pie baked by CCP's master pie makers or schedule a pie future to be delivered at a later date.

And this year, we are taking orders from people who may not be able to be in church on Pi(e) Sunday. We will deliver (as long as

you're relatively close)!

To place an advance order, email Office@CCPeninsula.org and provide your name, address, preferred delivery date and choice of pie (cherry, apple, razzleberry, pecan, lemon meringue and key lime). If you have another favorite, tell us and we'll see what we can do.

We will charge \$25 per pie, and 100 percent of the proceeds will go to the CCP Medical Debt Relief Fund to erase the medical debt of San Mateo County residents. The pie makers donate the materials as well as their skills.



If you are willing to make a pie (or several pies) for Pi(e) Sunday, please let Micki Carter know ASAP.

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

Get ready for a centennial celebration for our building in 2025!

By Micki Carter

Our church building will be 100 years old in 2025, and we want to party!

We'd also like to do some research on the building and Belmont history around the original site.

The late John Brooke, Pastor Emeritus of the Congregational Church of Belmont, wrote in his history of the church: "The building which houses the church was built in 1925 as the Belle Monti Country Club, as a sales promotion for the Country Club Estates lots which were sold in the surrounding area. Complete with a nine-hole golf course and an Olympic-size pool (where the back parking lot now is), the ballroom included (and still does include) light fixtures which featured crossed golf clubs.

"In 1981 I had a baptism for a baby, whose grandfather stood up with the family for the Sacrament. After the service he told me that where he stood for his grandson's baptism was almost the same spot where he had played his trombone for a country club dance 50 years earlier!

"The country club went bankrupt during



The Belle Monti Country Club in 1925

the Depression. It stood vacant for some time, then successively was used as a military training facility during World War II, then a medical research facility by several groups, the last being the Kaiser Corporation. Mrs. Kaiser sold the property — the building essentially as it is to this day — and over four acres of land to the Northern California Conference of the United Church

of Christ in 1953 for \$45,000."

We would also like to plan a centennial bash sometime in 2025 and invite anyone with connections to the building to come.

So far, our committee includes Maura Whitmore, Carol Chivers, Calyx Liu, Leslie Marx and me. Email me if you'd like to join us.

Psst! Bring your kids!

**We're going to dye
oodles of Easter eggs
here from noon-1 pm.
on Sunday, March 24.**



**Then we'll
hide them on
the lawn for
a humongous
Easter egg
hunt at noon
on Easter,
March 31**

Join us for all the fun!

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

Sun Nien Fai Lok! Chinese New Year memories

By Gwen Jeong

Hello, I'm Gwen Jeong, an associate member of Congregational Church of the Peninsula. I came along with the First Church of Redwood City and Congregational Church of Belmont merger.

My family ties are entrenched in San Francisco where I grew up from the age of 8. I attended a Catholic Mission school where I learned about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Family, Joseph and Mary. At the Mission school's appointed time, I agreed to be baptized and confirmed as Catholic. Through those early experiences as a Catholic however, I was already feeling that God was inclusive and not exclusive. I did not agree with the negative remarks made about some classmates who were attending after-school programs at a Presbyterian Mission up the street.

I used to go to the public library often. Once I picked up a book titled *Keys to the Kingdom*, along with Hans Christian Andersen and Grimms Fairy Tales. I had no clue what that book was about except that the title sounded interesting. It turned out to be about a missionary who rode on a horse going from town to town talking about different beliefs. Over time, I found myself to be eclectic theologically.

My son also grew up in San Francisco and attended the programs at the Presbyterian Mission mentioned earlier. He was baptized at Presbyterian Church in Chinatown in San Francisco but is eclectic as well. "God is still speaking." Upon my early retirement from my first full-time job in the corporate world, I felt I would have some extra time and changed my denominational affiliation to Presbyterian Church in Chinatown in San Francisco, now my Home Church.

Saturday, Feb. 10, was the new Lunar Year, aka "Chinese New Year." In my youth, I lived with my paternal grandmother and so I think of her and the traditions that she followed.

One of her traditions is to have a bowl of oranges/tangerine or pomelo and a tangerine on top together with a red good luck envelope with a token amount of money (a crisp dollar bill) somewhere in the living/dining room. There must be family dinners with dishes that are not normally enjoyed the rest of the year because of the availability of the



The CCP altar was decorated for Chinese New Year with inspiration from Gwen's family traditions.

ingredients and work required to make them.

Grandma was a Buddhist, and for her it was an offering to her ancestors. But the displays of the citrus (or cherry blossom branches) and the culinary feasts were also symbols of Welcome, Hope, Blessings for a good health and prosperity. In contemporary times, store-bought fancy boxes of wrapped candies are also displayed in homes during the New Year month. Red, or spectrums of red, represent good fortune.

Significance of the money in the red envelope vary and can include;

- Clearing of any debts, whether or not there is any debt.

- Money given by married couples to unmarried relations/friends/kids. Parents usually give them to adult children whether married or not.

Kids look forward to seeing relatives because they are all supposed to have a red envelope for them, thus filling their piggy banks. Kids are usually told to save them

for their college or some other important purpose.

I started out just wanting to wish everyone at CCP a Happy New Year and not make a big deal of it. Having watched the service on MLK and Black Lives Matter and being reminded of the Peninsula Multifaith Coalition's Mission statement, I felt some narrative or explanation on my part would only be fair.

"The Peninsula Multifaith Coalition brings together our diverse faith communities to build bridges of understanding and respect. We stand together with humility to acknowledge our common values, learn from one another and serve our wider world."

"Sun Nien Fai Lok, Gung Hay Fat Choy." Happy New Year! May you have Prosperity!

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

UCC WESTERN REGIONAL YOUTH EVENT



Long Beach, California

Save the Date!

JUNE 23 - 27, 2024

Join hundreds of UCC Middle and High Schoolers from the 8 UCC Conferences of the western half of the United States. We're gathering at California State University - Long Beach for a few days of workshops, service projects, music, worship, an adventure day at Disney and more!

- Sunday - Arrive & Evening Worship
- Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday- 3 days of Workshops, Service Project and an adventure day at Disney.
- Thursday - Morning Worship & Depart

Registration costs are still being finalized (somewhere around \$600) and will include housing, meals, and admission for one day at Disneyland. More info coming soon.

QUESTIONS? WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

Rev. Wally Hoeger | whoeger@firstchurchlb.org

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

Calendar for March 2024

3 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	■ Worship	Lenten Sunday worship with Rev. Jim Mitulski
	11:30AM - 12:00PM	■ Church Events	Coffee Hour
5 Tue	12:30PM - 2PM	■ Off-site events	Good Hope Luncheon
	1:30PM - 2:30PM	■ Off-site events	Online Book Group
6 Wed	11AM - 12PM	■ Off-site events	Bible Study (Zoom)
7 Thu	6PM - 7PM	■ Off-site events	Thursday Night Prayer & Check-in
	7:30PM - 9:00PM ✉	■ Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
10 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	■ Worship	Lenten Sunday worship with Rev. Jim Mitulski
	11:30AM - 12:00PM	■ Church Events	Coffee Hour
	12:00PM - 2:00PM	■ Church Events	Reception for Pastor Kristi
13 Wed	11AM - 12PM	■ Off-site events	Bible Study (Zoom)
14 Thu	6PM - 7PM	■ Off-site events	Thursday Night Prayer & Check-in
	7:30PM - 9:00PM ✉	■ Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
17 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	■ Worship	Lenten Sunday worship with Rev. Jim Mitulski
	11:30AM - 12:00PM	■ Church Events	Pi(e) Sunday
	12:00PM - 1:00PM	■ Church Events	Adam Manasra, a guest speaker from Palestine
20 Wed	11AM - 12PM	■ Off-site events	Bible Study (Zoom)
	6:30PM - 8PM	■ Off-site events	Trustees Meeting (Zoom)
21 Thu	6PM - 7PM	■ Off-site events	Thursday Night Prayer & Check-in
	7:30PM - 9:00PM ✉	■ Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
24 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	■ Worship	Palm Sunday worship with Rev. Jim Mitulski
	11:30AM - 12:00PM	■ Church Events	Coffee Hour
	12:00PM - 1:00PM	■ Church Events	Egg-coloring on the veranda
27 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
28 Thu	6PM - 7PM	■ Off-site events	Thursday Night Prayer & Check-in
	7:30PM - 9:00PM ✉	■ Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
	7:30PM - 8:30PM	■ Worship	Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service
29 Fri	7:00PM - 8:00PM	■ Off-site events	Good Friday Worship Service
30 Sat	7:00PM - 8:00PM	■ Off-site events	Easter Eve Vigil
31 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	■ Worship	Easter Sunday worship with Rev. Jim Mitulski
	11:30AM - 12:00PM	■ Church Events	Coffee Hour
	12:00PM - 1:00PM	■ Church Events	Easter Egg Hunt

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

Freewill Offerings for The UCC ONA Coalition & AllianceQ will be taken all day!



A Hybrid Event at Parkway United Church of Christ

Gateway Open & Affirming Convocation

Saturday March 2, 2024 9am - 3pm

ONA: NOW. MORE THAN EVER

Please bring a canned food item for Doorways




Click [here](#) for more information and to register for the event.



TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2024 Trinity Garage Sale Donation List

Donations accepted Sunday, March 10 from 11am-3pm
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday March 11-13 from 9am-8pm

<p>Please Donate: All items should be clean, complete and in working condition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baby items Baskets/tins Books (Children's books only) Bookshelves Clothes Games and puzzles, if complete Computers (less than 2 years old) Craft Supplies DVDs/CDs/ records Electronics Frames/pictures Gardening supplies Hats/purses Holiday items House wares/dishes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jewelry Knick-knacks Lamps Linens/blankets Pet supplies Sewing Machines/supplies Shoes in very good condition Small appliances Sports/ recreation equip Tools Toys / stuffed animals Vacuum cleaners Vehicles (running, good condition) 	<p>Do Not Donate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Books (except children's books) Car Seats Chemicals Christmas trees Computer monitors Computer printers Computers or Laptops more than 2 years old Cordless telephones or answering machines File cabinets Furniture Large Appliances (without checking first) Mattresses or box springs Paint Straight skis TVs Underwear (used or new)
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GARAGE SALE



If you have specific questions about your items, contact Annette at TrinityGarageSale@gmail.com, 650-740-1265 or Alicia at choppie03@gmail.com.
More information and flier available on Trinity's website at www.trinity-pres.org
Garage Sale is March 16 & March 17

1106 Alameda De Las Pulgas
San Carlos, CA 94070
www.trinity-pres.org

Andrew Altorfer will be joining the youth at Trinity Presbyterian Church in San Carlos for their mission trip this summer. The Garage Sale mentioned in the flyer above will help fund that trip. Contact Andrew for more information.

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



SPRING '24 Webinars

7PM-8:30PM EACH NIGHT

- 2/27/24. ONA 101 — Starting the Open and Affirming Journey.
- 3/19/24. ONA 201- We're ONA, What's next?
- 4/23/24. ONA and the Bible.
- 5/28/24. Beyond The Binary Panel: The spectrum of gender-- Trans, Non-Binary, +
- 6/25/24. Using the Bible to Unpack Attraction: A Deep Dive into Bisexuality, Pansexuality, and Asexuality.
- 7/30/24. Navigating Ethical Non-Monogamy & the Bible: Open Relationships, Polyamory and More.

REGISTER NOW AT
OPENANDAFFIRMING.COM/EVENTS

April Messenger deadline will be March 27



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