



May 2025
THE

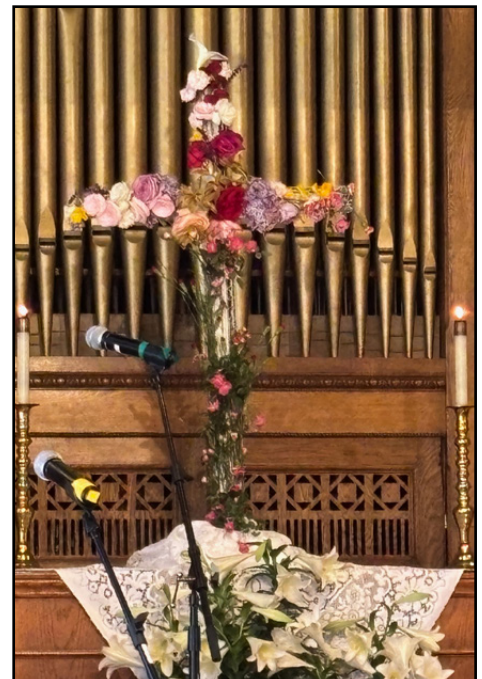
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF THE PENINSULA
MESSENGER

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



Christ is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

There was something special about receiving communion elements from a pastor holding a baby, especially our beautiful Andie in Pastor Sheryl's arms. But we had a trifecta of pastoral leadership on Easter Sunday this year with Pastor Jim and Pastor Warren!



Orchids, lilacs and roses went into the making of our Easter flower cross.

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

From Pastor Jim

Are you still beaming after Easter?

By Rev. Jim Mitulski

Dear friends, If you were able to join us for Holy Week and Easter, you were blessed by extraordinary music and worship offered by our cluster of San Mateo County Open and Affirming Congregations..

This is the fruit of what is possible when we see each other as collaborators and not as competitors. Each church took risks by being willing to let go of being individual hosts and to embrace coming together at different locations.

The result was a powerful sense of spiritual renewal, with significantly higher numbers at each service than we would have achieved alone. And we all had our largest turnouts in many years for our Easter Sunday services.

I want especially to appreciate Elizabeth Mye, who conducted our Mass Choir, our musicians Jeffrey Jones, Justin Porto, Michael Medwid, and our traveling soloists including Mike Venturino, Mary Beth Gray, Emma Naomi Mye and Audrey Boyd, and all the singers.

Thank you to Kris and Michael Stauffer for hosting the Easter sunrise service at their lovely home in Emerald Hills and to Rev. Warren for his continued vision and passion for community service and outreach.

If you were there on Easter, you witnessed the increasing number of children, families and young adults. Some even returned from college, and it wasn't part of their break.

The diligence and thoughtfulness of Rev. Sheryl Johnson is having a tangible effect.

A final word of gratitude to Rebecca Perry for keeping us organized and on-task.

Even with all the activity of last week we are of course continuing to celebrate Resurrection Power this upcoming Sunday, April 27.

I will be there of course, and we will receive the musical and worship gifts of United Methodist pastor and distinguished jazz musician [Rev. Dan Damon](#).

Dan is a graduate of Pacific School of Religion, and I have heard him play at a number of restaurants and venues. Bring your friends and family for this extraordinary experience. Easter isn't over!

We continue to explore the question of how we can be in closer relationship and cooperation with our closest sibling UCC church, San Carlos Community Church.

They came to worship with us in March, and we are going to worship with them on Sunday, May 25, at 10:30 a.m. I know it's unusual for us to move our Sunday morning worship service, though I'm hoping we can remain open to the unexpected blessings that will occur when we let go and take a risk. I hope we can have a big turnout that Sunday in San Carlos.

Join us as we continue to explore Easter together for the next 50 days.

With Easter love, Pastor Jim

May — Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month

May 4, Third Sunday of Easter, Holy Communion, Rev. Jim Mitulski;

Earth Day presentation by Keegan Pham

May 11, Fourth Sunday of Easter, Mother's Day; Rev. Sheryl Johnson

May 18, Fifth Sunday of Easter, Special Guest — former CCB pastor Rev. Wendy Taylor from Lacey, Wash., honoring her as Pastor Emerita

May 25, Sixth Sunday of Easter, Joint worship at San Carlos Community Church at 10:30 a.m.

June — LGBTQ Pride Month

June 1, Ascension Sunday and Holy Communion, Rev. Warren Dale

June 8, Pentecost Sunday and Holy Communion, Confirmation, Rev. Sheryl Johnson

June 15, Trinity Sunday and Solemn Commemorations/Father's Day, Rev. Jim Mitulski

June 15, Afternoon Rally at 3 p.m. in Redwood City for Rise Up San Mateo with a number of faith communities.

June 21, Pride service with local UCC churches here at CCP with [Rev. Brandon Robertson](#)

June 22, Juneteenth; Rev. Jim Mitulski
June 29, Stonewall Commemoration



LGBTQ Religious Archives Network presents a discussion of the new book

DISGRACED

How Sex Scandals Transformed American Protestantism



Suzanna Krivulskaya, Ph.D.

Author and associate professor, California State University San Marcos

in conversation with
Rev. Dr. Jim Mitulski
Pastor and LGBTQ-RAN board member



Thursday, May 22, 2025

8 p.m. Eastern • 7 p.m. Central • 6 p.m. Mountain • 5 p.m. Pacific

Register free at lgbtqreligiousarchives.org/disgraced



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



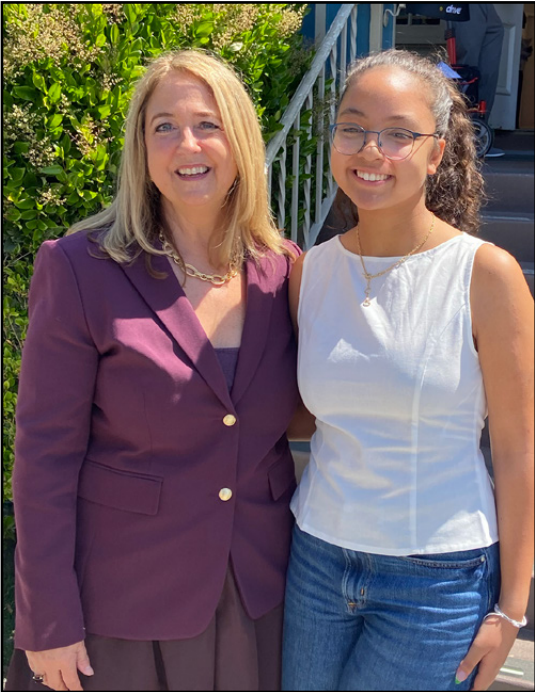
Sing Hosanna to our king!

Waving palm branches set the scene for the Palm Sunday processional.



The beautiful Holy Week banners, made by the women of the First Congregational Church of Redwood City and brought to us with the merger, were moved to the front of the church to frame the altar for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Easter. We just learned that the banners were designed by Garrett House's aunt Mary Wycoff. Among the stitchers was Annette Howitt, Carol Chivers' mom. The remaining banners hang on the east and west sides of the Sanctuary.

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Lots of smiling faces at Holy Week services. Above, Elizabeth and Emma Naomi and Carol Patterson and daughter Terri. At left, Maura Whitmore and son, daughter-in-law and granddaughters, At right, Mike Venturino singing *Were You There* on Good Friday, and the pastors of our sibling churches before the service at CCP on Maundy Thursday!



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Warren's Wonderings



Pastor Warren led the Easter Sunrise Service at the Stauffer home in Emerald Hills in Redwood City. It was the 31st year that Easter for us began on the hillside, but this was the first time we were serenaded by chickens!

Sending May flowers to so, so many!

By Rev. Warren Dale

Well, they say, "April Showers Bring May Flowers..." This being May, I am looking for the flowers.

On May 6, I will be on a biking and barge trip through the tulips of the Netherlands. I will start with a personal reading and tour of Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl*.

Years ago, the Palo Alto Library hosted the traveling Anne Frank Museum. Georgi and I attended. The museum had arranged for hosts to be there to tell their stories... stories of themselves or their family members having been hidden by good neighbors during the Nazi regime in Europe.

I was surprised to learn that one of my favorite people and her family had been hidden in the Netherlands. My heart sends out flowers to the unknown neighbor who saved a generation of God's people.

May 11, of course, is Mother's Day. I celebrate my mother for how she took care

of me during her "single parent days." She was always sharing with others how proud she was of me.

And she helped me learn how to cook. Since she was a poor cook (except for liver and onions; I love liver and onions!) I tried to learn from grandma. When we visited her, I would ask how to cook different dishes... And my mom gave me my first cookbook, *The Betty Furness Cookbook*. My heart sends out flowers to my mother.

On May 18, the famed Bay to Breakers Fun Race will take place. It started as a legitimate foot race in 1912, and it has evolved into what one writer called "The Mardi Gras in Shorts."

I ran in six of them. I will always remember one centipede entry (nine runners connected by a single theme and a lanyard). They were nine men dressed in the most bizarre Easter Hats; their centipede name, "Gays in the Millinery." My heart sends

flowers to the most creative people who both make me laugh while reminding me of important issues.

On May 25, we celebrate Memorial Day. While I wish there were no wars, I recognize that there have been moments when people have served with the mission of preserving freedom in this nation and the world. While my service days were in the Inactive U.S. Naval Reserve, I am glad that some of my closest friends have served in various branches. My Dad served in the Coast Guard. My uncle in the U.S. Navy. My brother served in U.S. Air Force.

I have good friends who served in the U.S. Army. And yes, I do know some who have served in the U.S. Marines. I know women who have served as well.

My heart sends flowers to those who have served. I hope no one will ever have to take another person's life again.

Flowers to you all... *The Rev... Warren*

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

What a month for CCP kids and youth!

By Rev. Sheryl Johnson

April has been a great month for children, youth and family activities at CCP!

On Sunday, March 30, we had a great group of five youth and young adults go for lunch at Hillsdale Mall and complete an escape room in record time!

Thank you so much to Mary Beth Gray, who attended as a volunteer. It was wonderful to get to know our youth better and see how well they support and collaborate with one another.

We had a great playdate before church on Sunday, April 6, and I was delighted that we had a lovely parent and child join Andie and me for a fun time on the playground in the sunshine!

We have been brainstorming new ways to get the word out, but it was great to have another family join us (who have been back to church several times now!).

On Sunday, April 13, there were lots of youth and young adults at church, which was perfect because we had two service projects ongoing that day.

After church, we stuffed care packages for our 18-25 year old young adults and college students, and we also filled more than 200 plastic eggs for our egg hunt on Easter! It was wonderful to connect with both regulars and new folks visiting. Thanks to everyone for their help!

I heard many positive reports from those who received the care packages — including the message that it was just the sweetest thing:

“Please thank everyone who contributed items, ... and the treats came at just the right time, the most stressful part of the school year.”

Thank you, everyone, for bringing items to show our young adults how much they are loved!

Finally, on Easter Sunday, we had a wonderful time welcoming new and old friends, including several families from CPNS.

We are grateful that they were willing to allow us to leave little egg invitations in the kids’ cubbies!

During the service, we did crafts and talked about the symbolism of Easter, connecting the story of Jesus to the surprising new life we see in eggs hatching baby animals, carrots growing underground,



High school and college youth enjoyed an escape room outing March 30, and then we all filled care packages for college students and young adults. We signed cards so we could tuck our love inside each box.



and flowers coming up from tiny seeds in the soil.

Several kids appreciated being able to go back and forth between the Dining Room and Sanctuary.

Thank you especially to Leslie Marx for setting up a wonderful “stained glass” craft with recycled materials (a great Easter message in that!) and to Sarah Thornhill for helping to lead the craft table. Mary Beth also helped out in a variety of ways! What a team!

During the service, kids also enjoyed our brand new “busy bags” which are small tote bags kids can use any week that are filled with Bible activity books, Play-

Doh, fidgets, finger meditation boards, pipe cleaners, mazes and more. Please feel free to hand these out to kids at any time if you are ushering!

After the Easter service, about 12 kids participated in a wonderful Easter Egg hunt, with eggs skillfully hidden by our youth (thank you!). Each kid took home about two dozen plastic eggs, filled with all kinds of treats.

Many families came inside to enjoy wonderful festive refreshments and make lots more crafts.

It was so wonderful to meet so many friends and have a chance to share about our programs and community at CCP!

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



The Rev. Wendy Taylor

Rev. Wendy Taylor to be named Pastor Emerita

By Micki Carter

The Rev. Wendy Taylor, who served as co-pastor and sole pastor of the Congregational Church of Belmont, from 1988 until 1997, will be honored as Pastor Emerita at a service at CCP on May 18.

Wendy now lives in Lacey, Wash., with her partner, Ellen Sweetin, in a memory care facility nearby. They have been together for nearly 42 years.

Wendy, a graduate of Whitworth College and Pacific School of Religion, had a counseling practice in the church building in 1988 when she was called to serve as pastor during the sabbatical of the Rev. John Brooke.

A few months after John returned, he announced that he was eager to work only half time, and he suggested that he and Wendy would share the pastorate as equals.

The church agreed, and Wendy received the call she needed to be ordained in the United Church of Christ. She was ordained at CCB on Aug. 28, 1988.

Wendy served as co-pastor until John retired and then as the sole pastor until she left CCB to found Puente de la Costa Sur in Pescadero in 1998. A Spanish-speaker, Wendy created the organization to serve the underserved Latino population of the Coastsides. She remained there until she retired, and she and Ellen moved to Washington State.

Wendy and the late Margaret Cross, another CCB member, collaborated on a book about Puente, *No Longer Strangers*, in 2011.

She will be recognized as Pastor Emerita on May 18 and will preach that Sunday as well.

Chocolate Fest 2025 is taking shape!

By Micki Carter

Chocolate Fest 2024 is off and running now that the date of Oct. 18 has been confirmed.

Chair Jill Visor spent the afternoon at the Chocolate Salon in San Francisco April 6 chatting up vendors to great success! She reports that she has commitments from eight vendors — Cocotutti, 123 Chocolates, Blue Canary, Kate's Single Batch Toffee, Coba, Neococoa, Brigadeiro Sprinkles and VB Fine Chocolates.

And it's only the beginning of May!

Chocolate Fest will be presented in two sessions on Saturday Oct. 18 — the first from 1-4 p.m. and the second from 5-8 p.m.

The partnership with San Mateo Health Foundation is already beginning to percolate with Dana Floro from the Foundation taking direction of the Silent Auction and lending a hand to the collection of door prizes and the recruiting of volunteers.

Jill will meet with her to walk her through our space and share bits of our 42-year tradition on May 14.

Dana has a background in event-planning so Jill hopes to pick her brain for Chocolate Fest.

The usual banner over Ralston Avenue in Belmont has been reserved for the two weeks before Chocolate Fest, and Calyx Liu has proved to be a whiz as Chocolate Fest webmaster. Her quick work on the website put it in order for vendors, intrigued by Jill's pitch at Chocolate Salon, to sign right up.

Plans are to have the Save the Date cards go out to past Chocolate Fest-goers on June 1 and for ticket sales to open on July 1.

Prices are expected to remain the same as last year.

In all this excitement, we have had to absorb one sad blow: Kathy's Kreative Kakes, which has been a Chocolate Fest constant at every one since 1983, has closed up shop. Kathy told Jill last year that she was retiring, and Greg Thornhill noted that the doors on B Street in San Mateo are closed.

Truly the end of an era for Chocolate Fest.

If you have a special role in Chocolate Fest that you want dibs on, let Jill know ASAP.

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

From your Moderator This Easter was filled with new expressions of hope



Pastor Sheryl with baby Andie

By Maura Whitmore

Happy Easter season to all!

We celebrated Holy Week and Easter Sunday with moving services, beautiful music and a glorious Egg Hunt on the front lawn. We had smiling faces, tasty treats, crafts for the kids, and, of course, bagels.

We enjoyed Sheryl's baby daughter Andie helping with communion. It was beautiful, and something to remember as we are SO VERY busy with all of our ambitious committees and boards meeting often to do the work of the church.

It is a good reminder for me to find joy in our church community, and our extended families. It was good to hear Pastor Jim remind us that we can change and resurrect to be our best and happiest selves.

I truly believe that this is Jesus' message for us.

Romans 15:13 tells us, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."

This Easter Season is giving me hope.



The music was exquisite during Holy Week and the soloists shined: Emma Naomi and Mary Beth (above) on Good Friday, and Audrey on Maundy Thursday.



**Good Hope
Luncheon will be
at Breakers Café,
270 Woodside
Road, Redwood
City, at noon
Tuesday, May 6.
Peggy Smullin will
be our host.
Please RSVP
to Office@
CCPeninsula.org.**

Pastor Jim at first session of Queer Faith: In Action

Pastor Jim will speak at the inaugural session of Queer Faith: In Action from 6-8 p.m. Sunday, May 4, at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Francisco, 1187 Franklin St., San Francisco.

He will be joined by the Rev. Donal Godfrey, an Irish Jesuit priest, chaplain at the University of San Francisco and the author of *Gays and Grays: The Story of the Inclusion of the Gay Community at Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Parish in San Francisco*.

The moderator will be Michael Pappas, executive director of the San Francisco Interfaith Council. Pappas had a 16-year ministry as an ordained priest of the Greek

Orthodox Church before transitioning from parish ministry to full-time ecumenical and interfaith work.

The conversation will explore the rich history of queer Christian activism in the Castro during the '80s and '90s through stories of the faith community's response to the HIV epidemic.

Queer Faith: In Action is a dinner/speaker series, presented in partnership with City Church San Francisco, to bring together intergenerational LGBTQIA+ folks and allies to explore the intersection of queerness, the practice of Christianity and social justice to empower faith-driven activism.

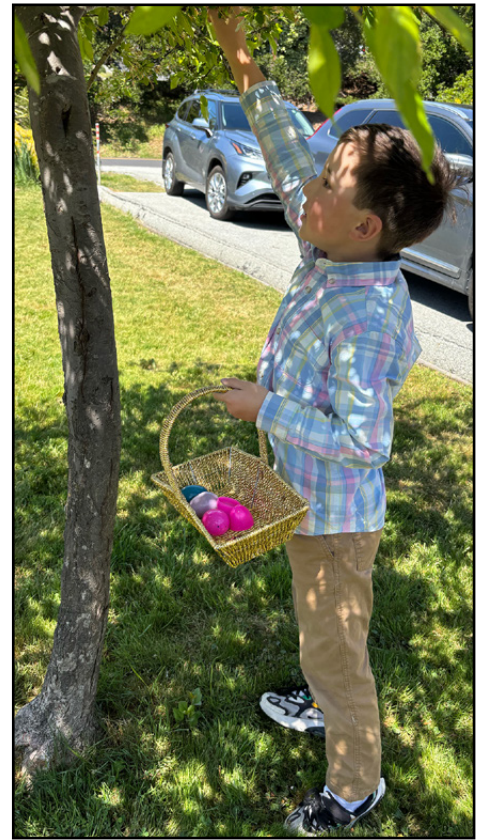
To register, click [here](#).

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

CCP's May Calendar

1 Thu	6PM - 7PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Thursday Night Prayer & Check-in
	7:30PM - 9PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
4 Sun	9:30AM - 10:15AM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Preschool Playgroup with Rev. Sheryl
	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Sunday worship
	11:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Coffee Hour
6 Tue	12:00PM - 1:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Good Hope Luncheon
	1:30PM - 2:30PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Book Group
7 Wed	11:00AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Prayer Time with Pastor Jim and Pastor Warren
8 Thu	6PM - 7PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Thursday Night Prayer & Check-in
	7:30PM - 9PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
11 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Mother's Day worship with Rev. Sheryl Johnson
	11:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Coffee Hour
13 Tue	1:30PM - 2:30PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Book Group
14 Wed	11:00AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Prayer Time with Pastor Jim and Pastor Warren
15 Thu	6PM - 7PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Thursday Night Prayer & Check-in
	7:30PM - 9PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
18 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Sunday worship with Rev. Wendy Taylor
	11:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Coffee Hour
20 Tue	1:30PM - 2:30PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Book Group
	6:00PM - 7:00PM ✉	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Deacons' meeting
21 Wed	11:00AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Prayer Time with Pastor Jim and Pastor Warren
	7:00PM - 8:00PM ✉	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Trustees Meeting
22 Thu	6PM - 7PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Thursday Night Prayer & Check-in
	7:30PM - 9PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
25 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Combined worship at San Carlos Community Church.
	12:30PM - 1:30PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Youth Confirmation Class
27 Tue	1:30PM - 2:30PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Book Group
28 Wed	11:00AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Prayer Time with Pastor Jim and Pastor Warren
	7:00PM - 9:00PM ✉	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	CCB Council Meeting
29	6PM - 7PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Thursday Night Prayer & Check-in

You can access the entire CCP May calendar [here](#).



CCP's great egg hunt!

At least a dozen kids scoured the front lawn for plastic Easter eggs filled with special Easter treats. No one seemed to care that they weren't real!

June Messenger deadline will be May 26.



United Church of Christ

Congregational Church of Belmont/First Congregational Church of Redwood City
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