



August 2025
THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF THE PENINSULA
MESSENGER

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Putting who we are into one statement

By Maura Whitmore

Sixteen of us met in the Dining Room all day Saturday, July 26, to talk about the CCP mission statement.

Rev. Terri Echelbarger led us in a workshop to discern what we want to say about what we want to do and be as a church community. Would it be different from our existing 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.” (as amended Jan. 28, 2024)

We started out in small groups, writing a (new) mission statement. We were guided by a list of what we see as our core values.



Henry and Steve wordsmithing.

There were four statements at the end. A group of members from each small group then captured the key words and phrases that seemed to resonate and repeat in each statement.

We then parsed out the language, intent and phrasing. It was very difficult to agree on who we are, and what we want to say to the world as to how we want to present ourselves. We finally agreed and voted on this statement:

“CCP's Mission is to build loving communities of acceptance and mutual support, grounded in our values, including spiritual growth, inclusiveness and social action.”

Then it became clear that this statement was adequate, but not poetic, and was miss-

See **MISSION STATEMENT**, Page 3

Homemade pizzas at CCP game night



Chef Greg Thornhill created a scrumptious spread of personal pizzas and toppings galore for CCP Game Night on July 19. With Greg looking on, Meggie Hoffman and Justin Porto went to work on pizzas before sitting down for board games in the Dining Room.



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

From Pastor Jim

Summer renewal refreshes Pastor Jim

By Rev. Jim Mitulski

Dear friends,

I just recently came back from some travels to other states. I took classes in contemporary trends in church music at the Hymn Society conference, spent time with my family in Michigan, went to the Metropolitan Community Church conference in Arizona, and I preached at a former church in San Francisco.

I got to explore medical options regarding a recent cancer diagnosis and am quite confident about the future. I read and spent time with my new kittens, Oscar and Wilde.

In short, I look forward to the fall and all that we will be doing together as a community, and I am coming to it refreshed and renewed.

I hope your summer provides opportunities for you to re-create in ways that are meaningful to you. It's not over yet!

We continue to have excellent worship, with music that consistently inspires and consoles. Our guest preachers have brought messages that combine comfort and challenge, which speaks to different sensibilities present at CCP.

When I was at the Hymn Society, we learned this new hymn by UCC author Rev. Hannah C. Brown that reminded me of the pivot point where we find ourselves. You can see it on the right and listen to a version [here](#).

We're engaged in conversations right now about our mission, and we're preparing to celebrate the centennial of our church building.

Our attendance even in summer has been growing steadily toward the goal we adopted earlier this year of a consistent 40 congregants at our 10:30 a.m. service.

Our finances are stable, and our assets are significant. Our generosity in sharing our resources continues to be one of our distinctive characteristics.

Join the momentum, and pray for the church daily for growth and renewal. I hope I'll see you this summer, and that you'll put Homecoming Sunday on your calendar for Sept. 14 as we all re-gather from the places where summer has taken us.

With love, Pastor Jim

P.S. I was recently interviewed about my

If a Church is Not a Building

By Rev. Hannah C. Brown

If a church is not a building, a familiar space and pew,
If a church is not its numbers or agreeing points of view,
If a church is not a history that we long to replicate,
What will draw us all together? What new church could we create?

If a church was freed from habit, setting precedent aside,
If a church was freed from striving, choosing calling over pride,
If a church was freed from trusting what is safe instead of true,
Would we welcome transformation? What fresh paths might we pursue?

May our church be blessed with courage, facing hurdles steep and strange.
May our church seek innovation, Spirit-led t'wards daring change.
May our church be love in action, through each people, in each place,
as a movement for this moment formed by God's amazing grace.



Kittens Oscar and Wilde at work!

reactions to the IRS change in policy regarding churches and pastors endorsing political candidates. My remarks are included [here](#):

Upcoming worship themes and sermons

August — Praying for Peace

Aug. 3, Rev. Jim Mitulski — Holy Communion, Peace Service with Commemoration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, picnic in Huddart Park with local UCCs anytime after noon.

Aug. 10, Rev. Jim Mitulski,

Aug. 17, Garrett House

Aug. 24, Rev. Rhina Ramos, Associate Conference Minister for Golden Gate Association of the NCNC UCC. Pastor Jim will lead an Emmett Till Commemoration. Stay after for a conversation with Rev. Rhina about the UCC.

Aug. 31, Rev. Thomas Crosby

September — Homecoming

Sept. 7, Building Centennial Celebration, Rev. Jim Mitulski

Sept. 14, Homecoming Sunday, Rev. Sheryl Johnson

Sept. 21, The Days of Awe, Rev. Jim Mitulski

Sept. 28, Rev. Warren Dale

Mission Statement

Continued from Page One

ing some key points.

Some folks suggested that we “look at the four remaining small-group statements, and vote for the one we all like the best.”

This is the one that garnered the most votes, but was also acknowledged to be imperfect:

“With faith as our guide, we create a community of acceptance and mutual support that shares our resources through acts of service, advocacy, education and music.”

We also voted on what our core values are: Love, community, service, social justice/action, solace, inclusivity and spiritual growth.

Unfortunately, we ran out of time and energy for further wordsmithing or reflection.

Our plan now is to have a one-hour forum after church on Sept. 14, that invites more folks to learn and think about what we want to say in our Mission statement that we will vote on at our Annual Meeting at the start of 2026.

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

Warren's Wonderings

Noting the special scenes around us

By Rev. Warren Dale

I have been noticing some wonderful scenes at our church lately.

Truth be told, I notice wonderful things happening all the time. Well, these wonderful things activate my excitement. The first events that I want to highlight is the reception of new confirmands. Now, we all know how special that is. It is always a moving moment when someone says, "I want to be an official part of this faith community. I want to be engaged; I want to influence it; I want to be inspired by this community."

What makes this so special is the added work in preparing those young people for membership, work enhanced by Rev. Sheryl... Rev. Jim, and their parents and friends. Wahooooo!

However, within that special moment came another truly lovely one. The youth said how special it was to be a part of a family with our Bob Donovan. I think of all the years that we have been a part of our youth growing, sharing and serving. And for them to acknowledge how special our relationship has been, was truly wonderful.

And it didn't stop there. While we were celebrating Bob's 104-year birthday at our moderator's house, Bob and a youth were



Pastor Warren presents hand carved statue of a working mother, a gift he received from the people of Angola for his trauma recovery work there, to the Domini Hoskins Black History Museum in Redwood City.

engaged in meaningful conversation.... Again, to me this was so special.

Well, friends the gifts keep on giving. What an inspirational time it was to hear Andrew sing, "I'm on My Way." Whew... and indeed off to Europe he went carrying his voice, our prayers, and our partnership in music. Thank you, Elizabeth Mye, parents and our choir who helped nurture him along the way.

And then there was another special moment. Our covenant minister, the Rev. Dr. Thomas Crosby, shared his work with us regarding the Veterans Administration Hospital in Menlo Park. We are again blessed by being a partner in ministry that touches lives in such difficult circumstances.

Well, I am not going to stop there. There is, of course, our leader, The Rev. Jim Mitulski who connects with people from all over this land. He still brings us hope in relationships with each other, the marginalized and in our faith journeys.

So, I leave this tome with the words from 1 Thessalonians 5:11 which states, "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

Blessings, The Rev... Warren



Donna Daulton, who recently moved to the Hallmark neighborhood of Belmont was received as a new member on July 20. Henry Altorfer, represented the Board of Deacons in reading the new member litany with Pastor Jim.

**Good Hope Lunch
will be at noon
Tuesday, Aug.
5, in the CCP
Dining Room.
All are invited,
but please RSVP
to the Office@
CCPeninsula.
org. Lunch is free,
but donations are
welcome.**

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



The gorgeous set of handbells donated to CCP by the Antioch Congregational Church were featured July 20 when CCP's Handbell Choir played. Donning white gloves for the morning were (from left) Audrey Boyd, Joe King, Linda Howard, Donna Daulton, Maura Whitmore, Carol Chivers, Justin Porto and Meggie Hoffman.

Moderator's Report

Doing the summer work of the church

By Maura Whitmore

Happy summer to all!

I am very excited to be helping to organize our Five-Church Picnic with College Heights, CCSM, San Carlos and Island United) on Sunday, Aug. 3.

It will be held at Huddart Park, in Woodside, from 1-5 p.m. My very helpful liaison from CCSM, Sandy McNabb, and I recently took a field trip to our picnic site, the Werder Shelter, and discussed food and

games options.

We decided that for this year, a potluck would be a bridge too far. So our churches will provide veggie and meat burgers, veggie and meat hot dogs, baked beans, chips and dips, carrots for dipping, and watermelon.

There will be games! Three-legged races, cornhole, giant Jenga, juggling, badminton, water balloon toss, hula hoops... and maybe more.

We look forward to enthusiastic at-

tendance.

I am also on The Walk committee, with Greg Thornhill as our chair. We hold regular meetings at the Back 40 and discuss slope, grades, trees, stairs, Scout help, deer, dirt and plans.

By the time you read this, we will have had our Mission Meeting and hopefully have crafted a Mission Statement.

God be with us as we do the work of the church!



The choir that Calyx Liu sang with at Stanford University, Testimony a Cappella, opened the summer music season by providing the sacred music for the June 1 service. Calyx jumped right back in to lend her voice as well.

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

Circle of Hope: We're Ready to Help

By Jill Visor

We're excited to share that the Circle of Hope fund — an initiative from the Congregational Church of the Peninsula — is officially up and running!

This fund is here to support immigrant families in our UCC community who are facing deportation-related challenges. That includes folks connected to CCP, CCSM, Island United, San Carlos, and College Heights churches.

After months of planning, all the pieces are now in place. We've finalized everything — from request forms to outreach materials — and the fund is ready to provide help with legal needs, housing, medical care and childcare.

Here's what's available now:

A dedicated webpage with:

- Forms to request assistance
- A way to donate
- FAQs to answer common questions
- A privacy explainer: "Why is the Circle of Care asking for my personal information?"
- Posters and flyers to help spread the word

This launch comes at a critical time. With the recent passage of the federal "Big Beautiful Bill," ICE has received a major budget boost. While we haven't seen increased activity in San Mateo County yet, we know how quickly things can change — and we want to be ready.

Our committee (Steve Chamberlin, Micki Carter, Jane Fernald and I) already started connecting with the community. The Circle of Hope program was recently introduced to the Latino faith group at CCSM, and posters are now up in the church. The response has been positive, with strong support from both faith leaders and members.

At its heart, Circle of Hope is about community. It's about showing up for one another when it matters most.

"This is about neighbors helping neighbors," Micki said. "We want people to know they're not alone."

Circle of Care/El Círculo de Atención Offering a hand to immigrant families...

If you have been troubled by the mass deportations that are tearing families apart and terrorizing communities, join us in offering a helping hand! The UCC Circle of Care for Immigrant Families has been created by local UCC churches to assist the victims of these anti-immigrant actions with money for:

Legal fees • Rent • Utilities • Medical bills • Child care

Members of these five UCC churches (Congregational Church of the Peninsula, Congregational Church of San Mateo, Island United Church, San Carlos Community Church and College Heights) are invited to nominate someone who is in need of monetary assistance because of their immigration status, deportation actions, or deportation of a family member.



Ofreciendo una mano a las familias inmigrantes...

Si le preocupan las deportaciones masivas que están aterrizando a la comunidad y destrozando familias únase a nosotros para ofrecer una mano solidaria! El Círculo de Atención para Familias Inmigrantes de las iglesias locales de la UCC se ha creado para ayudar a las víctimas de estas acciones antiinmigrantes con fondos para:

Honorarios legales • Alquiler • Servicios públicos • Facturas médicas • Cuidado infantil

Se le invita a los miembros de estas cinco iglesias de la UCC (Congregational Church of the Peninsula, Congregational Church of San Mateo, Island United Church, San Carlos Community Church and College Heights) a nominar a alguien que necesite asistencia monetaria debido a su estatus migratorio, acciones de deportación o deportación de un miembro de la familia.

To nominate someone for a Circle of Care grant or to donate to the fund, use this QR code, visit CCPeninsula.org/immigrant-support/ or call 650-593-4547.



Para nominar a alguien para una subvención de apoyo del Círculo de Atención o para realizar donaciones al fondo de inmigración, use este código QR, visite CCPeninsula.org/immigrant-support/ o llame al 650-593-4547.

For more information, please visit our [webpage](#):

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

Helping immigrants navigate ICE chaos

By Steve Chamberlin

What's it like to be an immigrant appearing in court to pursue an asylum application? Earlier this month I had an opportunity to find out, volunteering with Faith in Action Bay Area's accompaniment program.

I spent a day in U.S. Immigration Court in San Francisco providing informal help to people appearing before the court. You can imagine how scared these immigrants must be in order to call a phone number and ask a complete stranger to go with them.

The volunteers are not there to provide legal advice, or to act as translators, or in any official role — only to give people moral support during one of the most frightening and confusing experiences of their life, and help answer basic questions about what's going on.

And if the worst happens and someone is detained and arrested, volunteers are there to collect their personal info and call their emergency contact and legal assistance, so that nobody disappears without their family knowing and without a chance for due process.

The majority of people appearing in San Francisco's immigration court are Spanish speakers, and FIABA seeks bilingual volunteers. While I'm not exactly fluent in Spanish, I can get by.

I was joined by two other volunteers to accompany a woman from Colombia to her second hearing about her application for asylum.

Upon entering, about 20 people sat quietly on the benches in the courtroom, waiting for the judge to arrive. Many people were there with children or other family members. While we waited, we had whispered conversations in the benches, tense and nervous. Everyone knew that the decisions made in the next few hours would have huge implications for the directions their lives would take.

Finally the judge arrived, and people were called to the front of the courtroom, one at a time, for their hearings. A few people had lawyers with them, but most were alone, clearly confused and uncertain about what to expect.

I'd been told that days in Immigration Court were typically pretty boring, with each person's hearing usually lasting about five minutes and ending with them being as-

signed a new date in 2027 or 2028 for their next follow-up appearance. The first couple of hearings seemed to follow this pattern.

However, before long we discovered that this was an unusual day. After court began, ICE agents stationed themselves directly outside the courtroom door, the only exit from the room. They were detaining and arresting some immigrants as soon as their hearings were over.

We saw several hearings where the prosecutor made a motion for dismissal of the asylum application, without explanation. In those cases, the judge explained to the immigrant that they had seven days to contest the motion and could request additional time, if needed, in order to find a lawyer to assist them. But this was basically a lie.

The instant that those people walked out the courtroom doors, they were arrested and taken away to a detention center, likely to be deported within a few days. It seemed clear to me that ICE already had a premade list of people to arrest, and whatever might happen inside the courtroom was irrelevant.

As soon as the immigrants who were still waiting realized what was happening, the tension level in the courtroom went way up. Several people began to cry.

Mercifully, our new Colombian friend's hearing was postponed to a future date, and she was allowed to leave and was not detained. But seeing what was happening, the volunteers decided to stay.

We began physically escorting each person out of the courtroom after their hearing, even if we didn't know them, just to make sure they made it safely through the ICE squad and down the elevators.

If they were detained, our mission was explicitly not to interfere, but to inform their emergency contact and activate FIABA legal assistance.

For the hearings where the prosecutor made a motion to dismiss, we did everything we could to stop the immigrant from leaving the courtroom before speaking with us.

We had to be both discreet and urgent, whispering in their ear that ICE was outside and they were likely to be arrested as soon as they stepped through the door. In hurried whispers on the back bench, we did our best to collect their emergency contact info and discuss possible strategies and next steps

before they went outside to meet their fate.

Understandably, they were all extremely distraught, but I think it helped to have some people who were on their side and doing what they could to aid them.

As the day went on, the volunteers moved around the courtroom to connect with the other people who were waiting. I met a woman from Venezuela who was there with her young son, maybe 4-years-old. One of the other volunteers with better Spanish whispered to her to explain what was going on outside.

I spent a long while playing with the boy so that his mother and the other volunteers could talk about her situation.

Later we learned more about the story of these two. Due to the terrible economic conditions in Venezuela, the family moved to Peru in 2019. Then about a year ago, they walked 5,000 miles to the U.S from Peru. On the way, the woman was offered up to \$4,000 to sell her son!

Finally it was the Venezuelan woman's turn to appear before the court. I realized how confusing this whole process must be for the people going through it. From the kinds of questions they asked the judge, it was painfully obvious that most of them were totally lost and looking for somebody, anybody, to tell them what to do next.

The story ended on a happy note, as our new friend was granted more time for her asylum application, and we were all able to leave the court and walk through the crowd of ICE agents unmolested.

For me it was an emotionally difficult day, and I was still trembling hours later. But I was also moved to see all the people in the court working behind the scenes to ensure every person is treated with kindness and respect and has access to all the legal due process to which they're entitled.

It wasn't only our group of volunteers there at the courthouse that day. There were others working on similar issues from other angles: legal help, non-profit representatives, investigative reporters. With the passing of hours, we recognized each other, saw what was going on, exchanged nods.

Everyone kept a low profile, but you should know that compassionate people are out there quietly working for justice and human dignity.

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Revisiting a blessing for communion

By Rev. Dr. Thomas Crosby

The last time I visited CCP, I was truly amazed — we sang during communion! I must admit, I loved it. Many churches I've called home also included singing during communion. The music that Sunday moved me profoundly, and I nearly forgot myself as I started walking down the aisle with the bread. Communion always has that effect on me.

In the early 1980s, I faced difficulties after moving to Dallas right after college. I was exploring my identity but felt like I didn't have a community. One Sunday night, I chose to visit the Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas (MCC), known as "the gay church." I was unsure about what to expect, especially when they started communion. As I moved to the front, I was puzzled because the servers addressed each person individually, which was different from the Southern Baptist church where I was raised.

When my turn came, I stepped forward, received the elements, and began my longstanding belief about communion. The person looked at me and said, "Take this, knowing you are a part of God's family."

Sitting in the pew afterward, I felt numb. What did she just say to me? Even years later, I still remember that moment and draw strength from it today.

When I started leading the Sunday service at the V.A., the previous minister mentioned he served communion every week. I had no problem with that until I served my first veteran. Hmm, what should I say? Since I had served communion for years at the Cathedral of Hope UCC, I had plenty of blessings to share. I looked at the veteran and said, "Take this gift knowing God loves you," which was a blessing I had never used before. Based on positive feedback, I decided to continue using that blessing.

After a couple of years, saying the same words every Sunday, I wanted to try something different. I experimented with new communion blessings for a few Sundays. One day, after a service, I heard, "Chaplain!" When I turned, three veterans were behind me, wanting to talk "about something." As the conversation progressed, one asked, "So, when are you going to tell me that God loves me again?" Confused, I explained that I share that message weekly. Another veteran

said, "You haven't lately."

The next day, still puzzled, I went to visit one of the veterans and found all three in the courtyard. We started a meaningful conversation about their concerns. They told me they missed the communion blessing, which reassured them and gave them a sense of belonging. "Take this gift knowing God loves you."

They shared guilt and shame over past events. Having their pastor look them in the eyes and hear weekly that God loves them was significant. They felt rejected by family and friends because of their actions, which still caused them pain. But on Sunday mornings, they felt connected to others and a sense of community because of the words, "Take this gift knowing God loves you." This experience, which occurred over 10 years ago, still has a lasting impact on me today.

Even if I find the blessing becoming routine over time, those I serve still find it meaningful. Reflecting on my first communion blessing, I still find it fresh and comforting. The message of belonging remains clear. That's why I love communion.



Three CCP teens were welcomed as new members of the church June 22 after taking confirmation classes. The confirmands included Christopher and Cassie Gray-Spight and Stella Saucedo. They posed with Rev. Sheryl and Pastor Jim before they cut the cake celebrating their new status.

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



CCP Choir caps the year with a party!



Maura Whitmore and Audrey Boyd peek out between the tomato plants in front and roses, roses, roses behind in the Carter/Venturino garden.

Gray skies parted to offer sunshine and bright spirits for the annual summer Choir Party at the Belmont home of Micki Carter and Mike Venturino. Although both Elizabeth Mye and Pastor Jim were missing due to two different falls, the group included Mary Beth and Sarah Gray, Linda and Keith Howard, Steve, Danielle and Rory Chamberlin, Garrett House, Meggie Hoffman, Carol Chivers, Audrey Boyd, Justin Porto, Sarah, Tracey and Doris Brown, Calyx Liu, Maura Whitmore, Ken Koval, and Micki and Mike. The choir is taking the summer months off but plan to be back singing again at the Sept. 7 Centennial Service. First choir practice of the 2025-2026 season will be Thursday, Sept. 4, at 7:30 p.m. in the Dining Room. All singers are welcome, and no audition is required.

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



Join us Sept. 7 to celebrate 100 years!

By Micki Carter

The building that houses the Congregational Church of the Peninsula in Belmont, the former Belle Monti Country Club, is 100 years old this year — a year older than the city of Belmont itself.

The church will celebrate the building's centennial with a special service at 10:30 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 7, and a luncheon to follow. We are especially hoping that longtime members and friends will join us for both. Please RSVP to Office@CCPeninsula.org.

The history of the building — a true swords-to-plowshares saga — and its role in the development of Belmont from the Mezes Rancho into an incorporated Peninsula city is well-told in Ria Elena Dewing's book, *Heritage of the Wooded Hills*.

As with many such stories, it began with a gleam in a developer's eye — or in this case, the eyes of three (actually four) developers who, in 1924, saw the makings of a "little Hillsborough" at the top of rolling hills just south of San Mateo.

San Francisco businessmen Lee Monroe, Arthur Lyon and Lawrence Miller (locals will recognize the street names!) as well as a silent partner, Joseph Greenberg, set up the Belmont Country Club Properties on the 1,000 acres north of Ralston Avenue and east of Alameda de las Pulgas they had been able to purchase.

Those who live near the church today will recognize that their deeds and property tax bills note that their property originated as part of the Belmont Country Club Estates.

The entrepreneurs planned a subdivision of upper-middle-class homes, which would be anchored by two golf courses

and a country club with stunning views, a "swimming tank," a wading pool and tennis courts. The Belle Monti Country Club went up first, completed by the end of 1925 at a cost of \$65,000.

The first allotment of homesites sold well with Monroe, Lyon and Miller using modern marketing techniques (free beer, hot dogs and a country club membership for every buyer) that had worked in Los Angeles.

However, as Dewing notes, "The three entrepreneurs would have been better advised to have invested less in the glimmers of promotion and more in the necessities of paving and utilities for their new customers."

The corporation foundered under the weight of lawsuits and liens from utility providers and unhappy customers. They tried to use the country club as leverage by opening it to well-heeled locals, but the next group of properties was never brought to market.

Then along came the stock market crash of 1929.

The mortgage was foreclosed on the clubhouse which stood empty and in disrepair through most of the 1930s, and, word has it, may have served as a house of ill-repute!

For a brief moment in 1937, the city of Belmont negotiated to buy the property but dropped out when the private owner demanded too much money.

During World War II, the Army used the building to house the children of military parents deployed overseas, an officers' club and a school for illiterate recruits.

Newspaper reports tell us that in 1948 the American Institute of Radiation (which reportedly filled the pool with fish) bought

the building. Then the Kaiser Foundation purchased the clubhouse (and the fish!) to do cancer research. They drained the pool and filled it in for a parking lot (as it remains today).

Kaiser sold the property — the building essentially as it is to this day and more than four acres of land — to the Northern California Conference of the United Church of Christ in 1953 for \$45,000. It became the Congregational Church of Belmont, fostered by the Congregational Church of San Mateo.

With modest alterations to the original Belle Monti Country Club design, the ballroom became the Sanctuary — which still sports wall sconces with crossed golf clubs! — and the Dining Room the social hall. Downstairs the showers and dressing rooms were converted into a nursery and Sunday School rooms as well as the home for Carlmont Parents Nursery School in the 1960s.

And in July 2023, the Congregational Church of Belmont merged with First Congregational Church of Redwood City to become the Congregational Church of the Peninsula.

Bob Donovan recalls that the church sold off several lots below the Back 40 on Academy Street in the mid-'60s to pay off the mortgage that (we assume) was taken out to pay back the Conference.

Our building has been a country club intended to entertain the wealthy that housed the children of servicemen and women as well weapons research only to become, for the last 70 years, a church dedicated to comforting the afflicted.

Not a bad 100 years!

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



Calling from camp at Loon Lake

By Elizabeth Nordt

Troop 27 is enjoying their last full day of summer camp as I write this. Our Troop prides itself on its DIY camp tradition using public land in the Sierras to learn Scout skills, earn merit badges and have fun. Camp ends following the “Leave No Trace” principle for the land, but with lifelong lessons and great memories for participants.

Advanced camp, including a group of older Scouts and adults, left July 16 to build a camp on Loon Lake in Eldorado National Forest, west of Lake Tahoe.

They lashed together a kitchen and latrines, defined a waterfront for swimming and boating, and designated separate camping spots for girls, boys, Instructor Corps (older Scouts), Rovers (college-age alums), and Fossils (adult leaders).

Camp ran July 19-26 for 45 youth and

almost as many adults.

Although Loon Lake is totally off grid, technology keeps it comfortable. An extensive water filtration system allows for hydration and gourmet food preparations. Solar charged batteries help adults recharge flashlights and equipment.

Shortwave Radios keep the Troop in touch. Each night at 9 a radio call comes in via a repeater out of Sacramento to a former Scout family with a large antenna in San Mateo.

Families without HAM experience — and the general public — can listen in to the report of weather, activities, menus and any needed logistics via a web-based streaming service of the radio frequency.

Maybe someday we can get an antenna at church which could be a community resource in emergencies! What do you think?



Scouts might be involved in The CCP Walk

By Greg Thornhill

After a hiatus, The Walk Committee has officially regrouped and is actively pursuing options to enhance our Back 40 space. We’re pleased to share our initial progress and the exciting, albeit challenging, path ahead.

Our first step involved reaching out to a professional landscaping company to explore a full outsource solution for the extensive work needed. While we don’t have estimates yet, it’s clear that this path would involve fairly extensive work, including necessary surveys and several other prerequisites before we could even begin.

At this stage, we view full outsourcing as our least desired path due to the anticipated complexity and cost. However, it was crucial to understand all potential avenues as we plan for the future of our grounds.

A second, potentially much more appealing path we’re exploring involves re-engaging with Scout Troop 27. In the past, we’ve considered individual Eagle Scout projects, but we’re now looking at a potentially more impactful approach. We’re going to explore whether the troop as a whole could take on a larger project.

With so many dedicated youth and adult volunteers in the troop, it’s conceivable that we could get most, if not all, of the labor done by the Scouts themselves. This would be a fantastic opportunity for them to contribute to our community in a significant way, and it could be a very cost-effective solution for us. We’ll be discussing this alternative approach with them in the coming weeks.

Once we’ve assessed the viable paths and associated costs, we’ll be in a much better position to determine the scope of the project. This will involve a combination of private donations and perhaps some possible church expense approval. We don’t have a definitive timeline on this yet, but we hope to identify the most viable approach in the next month.

We’ll be sharing more updates as we continue to define alternative, more feasible action steps. Thank you for your continued support and interest in The Walk!

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

Bylaws vote expected in September

By Greg Thornhill

The Bylaws Committee is diligently working to finalize our proposed updates, and while we've experienced some delays from our initial timeline, we're making significant progress. We appreciate your patience as we work to ensure these foundational documents are robust and serve the longterm health of our church.

In addition to updating our bylaws, we're also creating new, restated Articles of Incorporation. This is a crucial step that allows us to integrate important legal and structural changes.

We're pleased to report that the organizational structure, as proposed at Annual Meeting, remains relatively untouched. We've made very minor changes including reverting back to Board of Directors vs. Governing Board based on legal feedback.

We're also proposing that the senior pastor be a voting, ex-officio member of boards rather than a non-voting ex-officio member as is the case today.

Our focus has been on clarifying and strengthening the underlying rules that govern this structure, rather than significant alterations to the structure itself.

We have an adjusted timeline to share with you:

- August: Initial approval from the Council.
- Late August/early September: Informational meetings with the congregation.
- September: Congregational approval.
- October through December: preparation for implementation
- January: Implementation

Through this process, we've gained valuable insights, and these learnings are being implemented in both the Bylaws and the Articles of Incorporation.

We are writing the bylaws to allow the Board to make changes to the bylaws, except for areas that require a church membership vote. This approach provides greater flexibility for operational decisions while ensuring critical elements are protected.

For example, the Board will be able to adjust many administrative procedures, but fundamental aspects like our mission statement, governance structure, and membership requirements (as examples) will remain subject to a congregational vote.

This approach stems from recent legal feedback. We learned that, technically, even if bylaws state the Board cannot do something, the Board could, in theory, change those rules.

To provide stronger protection for core church principles, we are moving these crucial topics into the Articles of Incorporation which can only be changed with a congregational vote.

Based on legal guidance, the Articles of Incorporation are being drafted as a complete restatement, rather than simply an amendment. This provides a comprehensive opportunity to incorporate the above-mentioned changes regarding protected areas that require a church membership vote and update the articles

CCP grant aids Texas flood victims Second donations are made to Puente and Hillsdale's ETA

By Linda Howard

The Social Action Board (SAB) recently met to discuss several local organizations that meet the criteria for making an impact for the good in the area of social justice. We have supported three of these organizations in the past, but as is so often the case, the unexpected disaster can happen anytime and in any place. The flood in Texas is an example of the unexpected.

When the floods swept through Camp Mystic near Kerrville, Texas, on July 4, we were united in our desire to help this community. Families were displaced and homes destroyed, but the magnitude of the loss of life surpassed the physical devastation. Within one week, donations from CCP and the congregation were sent to the Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country – Kerr County Flood Relief Fund which will directly benefit the flood victims

Puente de la Costa Sur is a community resource center that serves the San Mateo south coast communities of Pescadero,

La Honda, Loma Mar and San Gregorio. Puente is gearing up to defray school expenses to more than 150 students in the La Honda-Pescadero Unified School District. The program is available for families with the most need. The goal is to give a \$100 gift card for every school-aged child in the family. The Puente staff has determined that giving the parents a gift card allows them to purchase the items the child needs the most such as a backpack or shoes. SAB designated a \$2,500 contribution. If you wish to donate, click on this [link](#).

Empowerment Through Action (ETA) is a non-profit organization on the property of Hillsdale High School. The ETA program supports 200 of Hillsdale's historically underserved students and their families. The program consists of three main components: the Peace Pantry, the Community Garden and the Community Closet.

Every Friday the Peace Pantry sees dozens of people from the community file through, loading up bags of wholesome

food. Some food is donated, and some must be purchased. During the growing season, vegetables harvested from the Community Garden appear. Last year, 2,400 pounds of food was harvested.

The Community Closet, housed in a tastefully decorated boutique-like Tuff Shed, provides new and gently worn clothing. Prom suits/dresses, interview clothes and a variety of seasonal clothing are offered for the students to choose from.

ETA also established an Emergency Relief Fund to support families faced with financial hardship requiring temporary support.

The Social Action Board donated \$2,500 to ETA. If you would like to donate to ETA, please click on this [link](#).

The Social Action Board considers all recommendations for organizations that are dedicated to social justice. If you would like to suggest an organization to support, please click on this [link](#) and fill out the required information.

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

CCP's August Calendar

3 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Sunday worship
	11:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Coffee Hour
	1PM - 5PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Church Picnic at Huddart Park
	5PM - 6PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Zoom worship with Pastor Warren
5 Tue	12:00PM - 2:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Good Hope Luncheon
	1:30PM - 2:30PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Book Group
6 Wed	11:00AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Prayer Time with Pastor Jim and Pastor Warren
7 Thu	6PM - 7PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Thursday Night Prayer & Check-in
10 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Sunday worship
	11:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Coffee Hour
	5PM - 6PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Zoom worship with Pastor Warren
12 Tue	1:30PM - 2:30PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Book Group
13 Wed	11:00AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Prayer Time with Pastor Jim and Pastor Warren
14 Thu	6PM - 7PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Thursday Night Prayer & Check-in
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	11:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Coffee Hour
	5PM - 6PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Zoom worship with Pastor Warren

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



Proclaiming our Pride

CCP had a booth at the San Mateo Pride Event, marched in the Pride Parade with a CCP sign and shared a cake, provided by Lynne Benson-Colbert, during Coffee Hour one Sunday during June, Pride Month. Posing during the march are Maura Whitmore, Lynne, Jane Fernald, Calyx Liu and Danielle, Alice and Steve Chamberlin. Back at the booth were Garrett House, Rev. Sheryl and baby Andie and Pastor Jim.

September Messenger deadline will be Aug. 25.



United Church of Christ

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New church software will be installed soon

By Elizabeth Nordt

After thorough research and some experimentation by our admin Rebecca, Trustees approved a new church software package, called Planning Center, to streamline many of our administrative tasks and keep us all connected. There's an app for that!

Stream the service from the app, fulfill your pledge or donate to a special offering. The software's privacy and security protocols are top-notch.

Never fear, we love those who don't like apps, too. You can always call the office, phone a friend or ask for paper.

Buildings and Grounds is gearing up for some big projects. They met to evaluate how to tackle some serious repair/maintenance needs and prioritize how they will spend their budget.

The Fireplace Room is getting some love to make it nicer for tenants and single-use renters. We are seeing an uptick in kids party rentals!

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