



April 2026

THE MESSENGER

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



Palms and passion for Jesus



Palm Sunday opened Holy Week with palms and the passion story as the choir led the congregation into the Sanctuary with loud and enthusiastic hosannas! Micki Carter passed out palm crosses she had folded, and hard-boiled eggs took on Easter colors as they were dyed for the great Easter Egg Hunt at noon on Easter Sunday with Mary Beth Gray lending a hand to daughter Sarah and Pastor Sheryl's daughter Andie.

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

From Pastor Jim

Resurrection's grief waxes and wanes

By Rev. Jim Mitulski

Dear friends: Easter isn't just one Sunday. It extends for almost two months. The 50 days of Easter are meant to put the 40 days of Lent into perspective

We reflect, we listen, we contemplate. Then, for an even more extended period, we celebrate new life.

This April we'll consider four aspects of Resurrection: Rising, Rest, Re-Creation and Renewal. I invite you to bring your whole self into this season.

Resurrection isn't always linear. The process of grief can wax and wane — something I've experienced intimately this past month as I learn to live a life without my sister Megan in it.

I know this journey is a universal one. I've found comfort in Gerard Manley Hopkins' poem "Spring and Fall."

Margaret, are you grieving
Over Goldengrove unleaving?
Leaves like the things of man, you
With your fresh thoughts care for, can
you?
Ah! as the heart grows older
It will come to such sights colder.
By and by, nor spare a sigh
Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal
lie;
And yet you will weep and know why.
Now no matter, child, the name:
Sorrow's springs are the same.
Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed
What heart heard of, ghost guessed:
It is the blight man was born for,
It is Margaret you mourn for.

Many of us have grief — some particular to a personal loss, some to how the world is unfolding at present. Bring all of this to church this Easter and be open to the promise of Easter that Love is Stronger than Death.

These are the Bible verses I whispered to my sister in her final days, and I believe they brought both of us comfort and assurance: "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (John 11:25), and this: "I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed,



Tell Me Something Good! Join us for Holy Week and Easter

Palm Sunday — March 29 at 10:30 a.m. here
Outdoor processional and reading of the Passion

Maundy Thursday — April 2 at 7 p.m. here
Combined Choirs, Worship Band and Holy Communion

Good Friday — April 3 at 7 p.m.
The Seven Last Words of Non-Violent Jesus
At Congregational Church of San Mateo

Great Vigil of Easter — April 4 at 7 p.m.
At College Heights UCC in San Mateo

Easter Sunday — April 5 at 10:30 a.m. here
Giant Easter Egg hunt here at noon after worship!

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yet, in my flesh, I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eye — I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" (Job 19:25-27)

I hope you will join us this Easter so that together we can share in the power of resurrection.

Faithfully, Pastor Jim

Upcoming Worship Themes and Preachers

April -- Resurrection: Rising, Rest, Re-Creation and Renewal

April 2 – Maundy Thursday, Lord's Supper Commemoration, joint service with local UCCs held at CCPeninsula

April 3 – Good Friday, Seven Last Words of the Non-Violent Jesus, joint service with local UCCs at Congregational Church of San Mateo

April 4 – Holy Saturday, the Great Vigil of Easter, joint service with local UCCs at College Heights UCC in San Mateo

April 5 – Easter Sunday (both services at Belmont campus this year)

Sunrise service at 6:30 a.m., Rev. Warren Dale

Flowering of the Cross, Festival Ser-

vice of Holy Communion at 10:30 a.m., Rev. Jim Mitulski

No 5 p.m. online service

April 12 – Second Sunday of Easter, "Rest," Rev. Jim Mitulski, Death Cafe at 12:30 p.m.

April 18, Saturday – Celebration of the Life of Ellen Sweetin with Rev. Wendy Taylor at 2 p.m.

April 19 – Third Sunday of Easter, "Re-Creation." Earth Day. Rev. Jim Mitulski. Stay for the Earth Day Film Festival during Coffee Hour.

April 26 – Fourth Sunday of Easter, "Renewal," Rev. Jim Mitulski

May

May 3 – Fifth Sunday of Easter, Holy Communion

May 10 – Sixth Sunday of Easter, Mother's Day, Rev. Dr. Sheryl Johnson. Invite your mother(s) and/or bring pictures

May 17 – Ascension Day observed, Rev. Jim Mitulski

May 24 – Pentecost Sunday, Holy Communion. Graduation at Pacific School of Religion at 4 p.m. Come celebrate Garrett House and the other graduates.

May 31 – Trinity Sunday.

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

Warren's Wonderings

So why lilies on Easter and not tulips?

By Rev. Warren Dale

Today, on my bike ride with the Senior Spokes Cycling Group, we passed a full block of trees in pink blossoms.

I thought of the Japanese cherry blossoms and the Washington, D.C., cherry blossoms.

Not only do we have the blossoms, we also have the moderate weather. What a blessing.

Well, friends, my wonderings did not stop there.

On this last Sunday, the list for sponsoring Easter lilies was circulating, and immediately your pastoral staff engaged in a theological discussion of the history of Easter lilies.

None of us were certain. So, here I am researching through my trusted assistant, Ms. A.I., to get the skinny on the significance of Easter lilies.

While Easter lilies were brought to America in the 1800s, they are mentioned in the Old and New Testament:

“I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like a lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon he will send down his roots” (Hosea 14:5).

“Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these” (Luke 12:27).

And one source even talks of the ancient mythology describing the beauty of the lily:

“Long ago, pagans connected the plant with motherhood and fertility — that’s why they are often given as a gift to the new mothers.”

Some of today’s thoughts state that the lilies sprouted from the ground where Christ’s blood and tears fell during the crucifixion, as well as in the Garden of Gethsemane after his betrayal.

So, whatever meaning you place on them, more often they symbolize the joy of spring, new life and, of course, the resurrection of Jesus.

Easter blessings to all!

The Rev... Warren



Last year, Pastor Warren led the Easter Sunrise service in Redwood City, but this year it will move to the Belmont campus on the veranda next to the Dining Room at 6:30 a.m. He promises that almost everything else will be the same.

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

Psst! We're having an Easter Egg hunt!

We're going to hide Easter Eggs on our lawn at noon Easter Sunday, April 5.



Then join us in the church Dining Room for lunch and Easter crafts!

Come fill your Easter baskets!

From Pastor Sheryl

Help pack care packs for college kids

By Rev. Sheryl Johnson

March has been a meaningful month for our Children, Youth and Family ministries. A highlight was our lunch and skating youth outing on Sunday, March 8. We had six youth participate in a burger lunch to fuel up before skating in Foster City.

It was a funny experience to go from the warmth of the California sun to the chill of the skating rink. The youth were brave to try an activity that was relatively new to many of them, especially as very young child speed skaters and figure skaters zoomed past.

It was certainly a community-building experience to support one another and try to make it around the rink!

Another highlight was the first Faithful Parenting book club event on Zoom. We are reading Molly Baskette and Ellen O'Donnell's *Bless this Mess: A Modern Guide to Faith and Parenting in a Chaotic World*.

Our first gathering involved a lot of community building, exploring questions like the values and faith experiences we received as children as well as our hopes for our kids and for all kids in this next generation.

We had seven participants, and we look

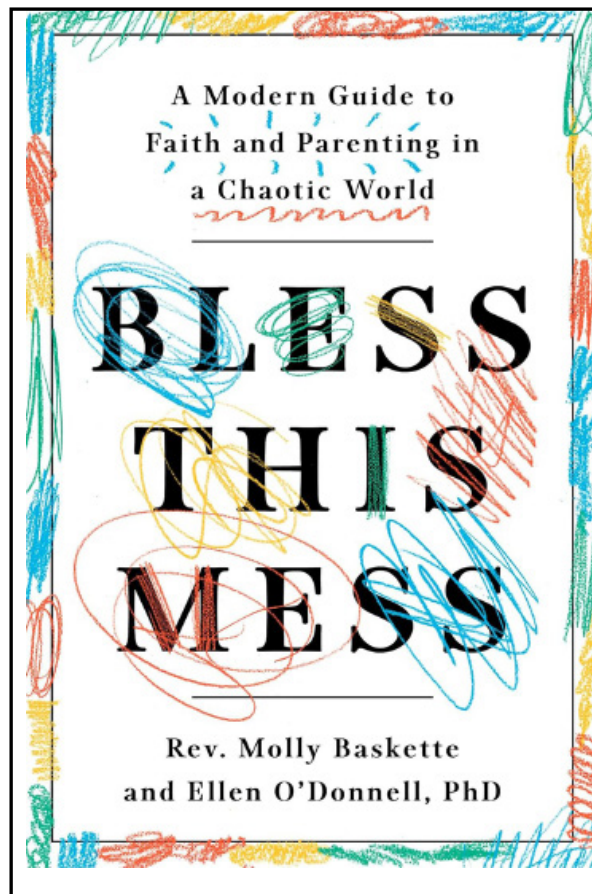
forward to actually diving into the book in April.

Other events in March have included preparations for Easter and both filling plastic eggs as well as dyeing hardboiled eggs. We are also working to promote our Easter Egg hunt out in the neighborhood as well as with our CPNS preschool neighbors.

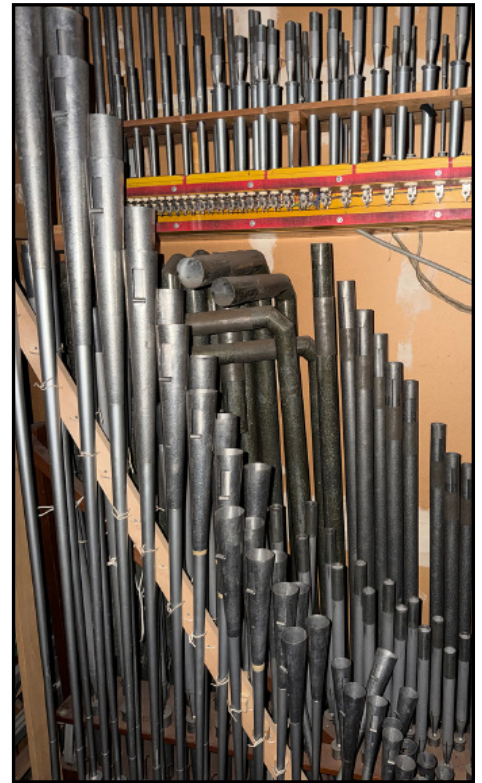
Please help to spread the word as you are able. We have door hangers and flyers available.

We also look forward to sending care packages to young adults and/or college students associated with our church in April. These were well-received last year and are a great way to let young adults know we care about them during a stressful time (especially for those studying for upcoming exams).

Thank you all for your support and for being a church committed to the inclusion of all ages!



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



Organ pipes in the 'annex' to have new home!

By Mike Venturino

The organ pipes have found a home!

After posting an ad for our organ pipes on Facebook Marketplace, Micki got a number of responses. One of the people responding was a technician who worked for a pipe organ company in San Francisco called Swain and Kates.

The late Gary Brandenburg had worked with them when he needed help with the organ, and the owner knew the instrument. When Gary was no longer able to maintain it, they were not interested in taking over that task. They gave us a proposal for replacement which was not realistic.

At the time, they did not express any interest in simply taking the pipes. Apparently they have now decided that they can use the pipes in building other organs, and they are even willing to dismantle them.

After Easter, they will be working with Philip Broadus to coordinate the work.

Praise God!



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

Film event to focus on Climate Future

CREDIT: Jilli Rose



CLIMATE FUTURE

FILM FESTIVAL

HONORARY JUDGE:
BILL McKIBBEN
FOUNDER OF THIRD ACT

DRAMA - DOCUMENTARY - DARK COMEDY - ANIMATION

The Congregational Church of the Peninsula will observe Earth Sunday with a mini film festival of as many as 10 short films to be shown in the Dining Room during Coffee Hour on Sunday, April 19. The films will explore the emotional responses to climate change --- visceral, personal and artistic. Four-time Academy Award Nominee and climate voice Edward Norton will join influential author and climate leader Bill McKibben to present drama, documentary, animation and humor to bring solace, inspiration and a call for community action. You can preview the films on this [trailer](#). We will have a soup and salad lunch while we watch as many of the 10 films as we can during our after-church time. If you can bring a pot of soup or a salad to share, please let Micki Carter know at mickicartr@gmail.com. Also contact her if you are willing to assist with the technical aspects of downloading and showing these films.

**Sunday,
April 19, at
Coffee Hour**

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

Board sets up Google site for all things for CCPeninsula

By Danielle Chamberlin

Do you have a question about how to reach someone in the church?

CCPeninsula now has an internal website to help you find what you need. It is located [here](#).

It is viewable by all members, staff and everyone on any church team or committee distribution list since we want to make it accessible to everyone involved with the church, whether or now they have joined as members.

Since it is a Google site, you will need to log in to a Google account linked to the email address we have on file for you to view it.

On the site we have email addresses for all staff, officers and team distribution lists. We also have links to the church's Bylaws and the approved meeting minutes of the board, as well as the church's financial spending rules and the reimbursement request form.

Approved minutes of board and congregational meetings are also linked on this Google site.

Hard copies of both Bylaws and approved meeting minutes will also be kept in a folder in the office.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF THE PENINSULA

DEATH CAFE

FREE DROP-IN

CAKE!

COFFEE & TEA

TALK ABOUT DEATH AND END-OF-LIFE ISSUES AMONG FRIENDS. IT'S NOT AS DARK AS IT SOUNDS - SOMETIMES WE LAUGH!

JAN. 11, FEB. 8, MAR. 8, APR. 12, MAY 10

SECOND SUNDAYS 12:30 - 2 PM

751 ALAMEDA DE LAS PULGAS, BELMONT, CA

DEATHCAFE.COM CCPENINSULA.ORG

Preserve the Todd-Gotthold Fund for members who need help

The Annual Pi(e) Day pie sale on March 15 featured the culinary skills of the bakers of the Congregational Church of the Peninsula — and it also raised \$450 for the Todd-Gotthold Fund of the church.

The Todd-Gotthold Fund was created in the mid-60s when a member of the Congregational Church of Belmont, Ray Gotthold, got seriously ill and was unable to continue as a teacher at Carlmont High School.

As Ella Mae Donovan told us, CCB took up two collections for many months — one for the church and one for the Gotthold family. When Ray recovered, he started repaying the church and the Gotthold Fund

was established to serve church members in need.

Then, when longtime member Barbara Todd died, she left a sizable amount to CCB, and it was decided to bolster the fund for members in need. So it became the Todd-Gotthold Fund.

It is supported entirely by member donations since the board feels that the church might violate its IRS non-profit status if it put money into the fund.

But by the end of 2025, the Todd-Gotthold Fund was nearly depleted with no source of income other than member donations.

So we are asking you to use the blue envelopes in the pews for adding to the Todd-Gotthold Fund or you can use the QR code below to make electronic donations.



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

Social Action

Two new groups approved for gifts

By Lisa Lucett

The Social Action Committee (SAC) continues its work to support a variety of social justice causes for the 2026 year.

SAC has reviewed donations for 2025 and are working to prioritize which of those donations might be appropriate to support again in 2026 so that we can plan for what resources will be available for new organizations.

It is our goal to maintain support for a wide range of social justice causes.

Speaking of new organizations, the committee approved donations for two organizations that we have not previously donated to: The Trevor Project has long supported a mission to end suicide among the LGBTQ+ young people.

They work toward this goal by providing 24/7 crisis intervention and suicide prevention services in addition to offering safe and affirming spaces for LGBTQ+ youth to find community.

If you are interested in supporting this organization too, use this [link](#).

Additionally, we were introduced to another impressive organization called Upward Scholars. This organization provides adult immigrants the boost they need to successfully navigate through education and career development.

Clients are often identified through adult education programs or English as a Second Language courses at the community colleges. The organization connects adults with tutoring and English conversation opportunities as well as financial support for education and certification costs which are often barriers to reaching their educational



Upward Scholars

BAY AREA



goals.

You can learn more about this organization and how you can support them [here](#).

If you have an organization that you

would like us to consider a donation from the Congregational Church of the Peninsula, please submit your request via this Google Form [link](#).

**Celebrate the conclusion of Holy Week
at the Good Hope Luncheon Tuesday, April 7,
at The Breakers Cafe in Woodside Plaza,
270 Woodside Road, Redwood City.
Everyone is welcome!**

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



No Kings protests Saturday, March 28, drew CCPeninsula members, friends into nearby streets to express their feelings about the political situation.

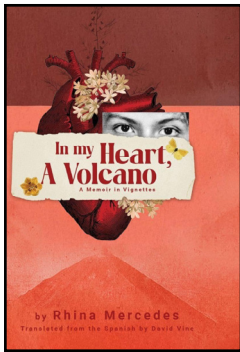


To go to the Congregational Church of Peninsula website, click on [CCPen](#).

Book group to read book by Rhina Ramos

The Online Book Group meets via Zoom on Tuesdays from 1:30-2:30 p.m. It's always okay to come if you aren't caught up with the reading, and newcomers are always welcome.

Many non-church goers also participate, and people come from all around the country.



Our April book will be *In My Heart, A Volcano* by Rhina Mercedes (Rhina Ramos). The reading schedule will be March 31, pps 1-36; April 7, pps 38-86; April 14, pps 88-103; April 21, pps 104-end.

The author will join our discussion.

Upcoming books will be *The True Story of Raja the Gullible (and His Mother)* by Rabih Alamedinne (May), which is the 2025 National Book Award Winner for fiction; *Enormous Wings* by Laurie Frankel (June); *The Human Scale* by Lawrence Wright (July); *I See You've Called in Dead* by John Kenney (August).

This schedule is subject to revision. Books are generally available at the rear of the Sanctuary, supplied by our partners at Reach and Teach Bookstore in San Carlos.

The books are free, but you are welcome to make a donation to cover the cost for yourself or others. Just give a check or an envelope marked Book Group.



Chocolate Fest set for Oct. 17

The week of Oct. 17, 2026, has been blocked out on the church calendar for Chocolate Fest. However, last year's chair, Jill Visor, needs to evaluate the commitment of the CCPeninsula leadership and members to see if we have the manpower and the will to tackle the 43rd edition of the longtime fundraiser. Jill and other members of Chocolate Fest leadership and the Board of Directors will be talking about the future of Chocolate Fest in the next few weeks. If you would like to be heard in such a discussion, contact Jill at jillvisor@gmail.com.

**Are you willing to serve as a liturgist or usher?
Could you help prepare communion or bring
Coffee Hour treats? Worship helpers are
needed so please sign up for the Sundays
you can serve [here](#).**

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

CCP's April Calendar

1 Wed	11:00AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Prayer Time with Pastor Jim and Pastor Warren
2 Thu	6PM - 7PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Prayer Time with Rev. Jim Minksi and Rev. Michael Cronin
	7:00PM - 9:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
4 Sat	9AM - 5PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Ironworks- Veranda Railing Project
5 Sun	9:30AM - 10:15AM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Preschool Playgroup with Rev. Sheryl
	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Easter 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
7 Tue	12:00PM - 1:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Good Hope Lunches
	1:00PM - 2:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Book Group
8 Wed	11:00AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Prayer Time with Pastor Jim and Pastor Warren
9 Thu	6PM - 7PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Prayer Time with Rev. Jim Minksi and Rev. Michael Cronin
	7:00PM - 9:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
12 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Sunday worship
	11:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Coffee Hour
	12:30PM - 2PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Death Cafe
	5PM - 6PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Zoom worship with Pastor Warren
14 Tue	1:30PM - 2:30PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Book Group
15 Wed	11:00AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Prayer Time with Pastor Jim and Pastor Warren
16 Thu	6PM - 7PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Prayer Time with Rev. Jim Minksi and Rev. Michael Cronin
	7:00PM - 9:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
18 Sat	2:00PM - 5:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Memorial for Ellen Sweeth
19 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Sunday worship
	11:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Coffee Hour
	12PM - 1PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Climate Future Film Festival
	5PM - 6PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Zoom worship with Pastor Warren
21 Tue	1:30PM - 2:30PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Book Group
22 Wed	11:00AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Prayer Time with Pastor Jim and Pastor Warren
	7:00AM - 9:00AM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Church Board Meeting
23 Thu	6PM - 7PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Prayer Time with Rev. Jim Minksi and Rev. Michael Cronin
	7:00PM - 9:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
26 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Sunday worship
	11:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Coffee Hour
	12PM - 1:30PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Youth Group
	12PM - 1PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Social Action Meeting
28 Tue	1:30PM - 2:30PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Book Group
29 Wed	11:00AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Prayer Time with Pastor Jim and Pastor Warren
30 Thu	6PM - 7PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Online Prayer Time with Rev. Jim Minksi and Rev. Michael Cronin
	7:00PM - 9:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir Rehearsal

You can access the entire CCPen April calendar [here](#).

The replacement of the wrought-iron railings that the congregation approved some months ago is under way. A construction crew worked all day Saturday, March 28, to install the first portion along the veranda by the Sanctuary. The old railings, which were rusted through in places, date from 1925 when they were installed at the Belle Monti Country Club!



May Messenger deadline will be April 24.



United Church of Christ

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