



The Pine Tree

The Congregational Church of San Mateo
United Church of Christ

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Congregational Meeting

By Linda Skromme

We will hold our **Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 30** following worship in the sanctuary. We will be voting on our 2011 proposed budget. In addition to the budget, we will have a status update on our goals and accomplishments as a congregation. I hope you will be able to attend. Children's activities will be provided.

Sunday Worship

Epiphany: Extraordinary Relationships

Jan. 16: Martin Luther King Jr.
Sermon: "I pledge allegiance to..."
Scripture: Romans 13:1-7; 8-10
Preacher: Rev. Nixon

Jan. 23: Special Preacher,
Rev. Cynthia Riggan
Sermon: *Thank You,
You're Welcome.*
Scripture:
1 Thessalonians 5:12-21



Jan. 30: Congregational Meeting
Sermon: *A Different Kind Of Social Networking,*
Scripture: Romans 12:1-13
Preacher: Rev. Nixon

Feb. 6: Rev. Janice Steele and Patrishia Gill return to CCSM for Gospel Sunday
Sermon: *To Give is To Live,*
Scripture: Acts 4:32-35.
Preacher: Bonnie Rambob



Feb. 13: Valentine's Day
Sermon: *Staying Power,*
Scripture: Hebrews 6:13-15
Preacher: Rev. Jerri Handy

CCSM's 2011 Priority: Social Justice

By Rev. Penny Nixon and Anne Fuller

One of the main reasons I felt the call to come and serve CCSM was because the church had such a clear direction that was in alignment with my passions. That direction was articulated in the three priorities that center on progressive Christianity, beloved community and social justice. We have made great progress in the first two priorities, and this year it is time to focus on our third priority: increasing CCSM's emphasis on *social justice*.

I believe we are beginning to make this priority more of a reality and am confident that 2011 is going to be a banner year in terms of social justice. Part of my increasing commitment is to try and communicate to the congregation what really happens here at CCSM. So hopefully, this article will help us understand why we give what we give, what we are actually doing, and how we can quantify and communicate it better in order to increase our emphasis on and commitment to social justice.

MSJ stands for **Mission, Service and Justice**. Our MSJ giving is aligned with our three priorities. When it comes to Mission we are in alignment with our first priority, becoming a voice for progressive Christianity. When it comes to service, i.e., how we serve one another, we can think of this in terms of our second priority, deepening our beloved community and extending the beloved community into our neighborhood. When it comes to justice, we can think of the ways we are advancing equality in the world through advocacy and giving in order to meet our third priority by increasing our social justice emphasis.

So here are just some of the organizations we share our resources with:

Our MISSION partners

- The United Church of Christ: The UCC is the most progressive mainline denomination
- Pacific School of Religion: PSR develops progressive Christian leaders
- Ellipsis: A new progressive Christian worship we are initiating outside the walls of church

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Youth & Family News

Mid-High

January 15-17: We will NOT be going to Mid-Winter Camp.

January 23: Make Sandwiches for SF Night Ministry, 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., CCSM Kitchen

January 30: Mi-Hi 60 Minutes: 6th-8th Grade 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Discussion on topics picked out by mid highs about what's relevant in their lives to enjoy with donuts.

Senior High

January 23, 2011

60 Minutes: 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Discussion on topics picked out by senior highs about what's relevant in their lives to enjoy with donuts.

Sell Superbowl Pizzas After Church. 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
(need at least a couple students volunteers for this)

Sunday, January 30

Sell Superbowl Pizzas After Church 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
(need at least a couple students volunteers for this)

Sr Hi: Dinner & Gathering in Oasis Youth Rm., 6:00-8:00 p.m.
Oasis Youth Room. Dinner promptly served from 6-6:30 p.m., SH Meeting 6:30-8 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 5

Make Super Bowl Pizzas, 9:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Sunday, Feb. 6th: Hand out pizzas after church! 11:30-12:30 p.m.

Progressive Christianity Curricula

This year, our Church School children will be embarking on a new spiritual journey, with two new curricula. The younger children's curriculum is called *The Joyful Path* written by the Center for Progressive Christianity. Its focus is on developing the spiritual life of children using scriptures and other resources. Each Sunday there are affirmations and a special story for the children. The 3rd through 8th grade youth will be using *Faith Practices*. Developed by our national UCC, this innovative resource guides youth and other church groups in ways to practice their faith. These first few months, they will be studying Giving and Receiving Hospitality. This is a perfect time to join our teaching community. Please talk to Betsy or Bonnie if you are interested.

Families' January Jamboree: Saturday, Jan. 22: 4-6 p.m. in Kloss Hall

It's late January and time for a fun afternoon at church! We will play *Hullabaloo*, *Twister*, *Trouble and Life*. There will be an art table and *Lego* area plus a movie and popcorn in the Youth Room! It's a family affair. Look for your *Evite* from Renato Floresca. Bring your favorite game and healthy finger foods to share. Please RSVP to RenatoFloresca@gmail.com.

Screening Of *Race To Nowhere:* Changing Lives One Film At A Time

Thursday, February 10, 7:00 p.m., at CCSM Sanctuary: A concerned mother turned filmmaker aims her camera at the high-stakes, high-pressure culture that has invaded our schools. *Race To Nowhere* is a close-up look at the pressures on today's students. The film is recommended for families, high school youth, youth leaders, educators and policy makers who are concerned about our children's schools. Tickets will be available online and at the door. More information to follow: please save the date.

An Opportunity to Explore Membership at CCSM

Interested in exploring what membership means at CCSM? Come and join our staff on **Saturday, January 22 from 9 to 11a.m.** We'll hear about each other's spiritual journeys and talk about what it means to take the next step in your spiritual journey by becoming part of a spiritual community. Whether you are new to the church, or have been attending for a while and have not taken the next step, this exploration is for you. This is an opportunity for you to meet some people who care deeply about welcoming others into their spiritual community. Childcare provided—with activities.

Members joining on January 30 during worship when CCSM will welcome our new members to the congregation. Come be a part of this group and experience warm hospitality.

Save These Dates

Saturday, Feb. 26: Train Day 4-6 p.m.

Sun., Feb. 27 Christian Education Open House, Coffee Hour in CE Building

Sat., March 19, Spring Fling Progressive Dinner

Sat., March 19, Men's Ministry, Golf Day



CCSM Caring Kids Corner

Month of January: Bring small toiletries for creating Valentine's Day toiletry bags for Shelter Network.

Sun., Feb 6: Bring your favorite canned foods or cereal to church to assist our neighbors in need.

Reminder: **Winter Taizé at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesdays**

It is a special time to connect with God's spirit in the mystery of shared contemplation like singing, prayer, and reflection.

The prayer is flexible and has no real beginning or end. Songs are repeated over and over again to help us enter into the contemplation of the presence of God. The simple phrases are easily memorized so that books are not necessary. Taizé will be held on:

January 19, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

February 2, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

February 16, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

March 2, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Ash Wednesday: March 9, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Global Ministries Highlight— January 2011

By Jerri Handy

Global Ministry is near and dear to my heart. I am deeply connected to Haiti. However, our connections to the world reach from Mother of Peace in Zimbabwe, to Orphanages in Nepal, Libraries in Botswana, Habitat for Humanity and Peace Corps in Mozambique, Tuition for the Lost Boys in Sudan, and beyond. It is important to keep an eye on what is happening here in our local ministry and in the broader church; we want to keep you informed.

In each Sunday bulletin, you will find on the back page a *Global Mission Moment* box giving you a country, mission project, and mission personnel. I ask that you remember them in prayer.

In each *Pine Tree* there will be a Global Missions Highlight offering a deeper look into a mission project. From time to time there will also be information on how to take an active part in reaching out to our mission partners around the world. This month we highlight East Timor.

Can you imagine a worship service in your home, tailored to your specific needs? Well our mission partner churches in East Timor do this. During the year every family in Immanuel Church receives their own family service. In this way, lay leaders in the congregation learn more about prayer, preaching, leading worship, and pastoral care.

Visit the website and see more of what is happening with Tom and Monica Liddle who serve with the Protestant Church of East Timor. <http://globalministries.org/bulletin/en/january-2011.html>.

Join Poverty Awareness and Action

CCSM is proud to host this program that Home & Hope has embarked on, Interfaith Poverty Awareness and Action. Participants will learn more about one another as individuals, as members of various faith traditions, and about issues of poverty faced by many residents in San Mateo County.

The five participating congregations are: Congregation Beth Jacob, Congregational Church Belmont, Congregational Church San Mateo, St. Paul's Episcopal Burlingame, and Yaseen Foundation.

Meetings will be hosted at CCSM. Meeting times are 6:30-8:30 p.m. on the following Tuesdays: February 22, March 1, March 8, March 15, March 22, March 29.

Each session will include discussion time around a poverty related topic where group members will offer insight from his/her religious tradition.

Each participating congregation will contribute six members. If you would like to be one of the six people who represent CCSM in this important program, contact Penny at pnixon@ccsm-ucc.org.

First Sunday Food Collection on February 6

As on the first Sunday of every month, please bring your donations of non-perishable food to church Sunday, February 6, and place them in the marked container in the narthex. Any non-perishable foods are welcome, but if you are looking for ideas, items in particular demand include: canned fruits and vegetables, peanut butter, and macaroni and cheese.

Thank you for your continuing generous support as we work together to alleviate hunger.

Wise and Wonderful Seniors

Wednesday, January 12: 10:30-11:30 a.m. Seniors Gathering:

Retirement Passions: Carolyn Shaw, Priscilla Storms, Marie Shepard and Jean Chamberlain will share paintings: Marge Marchant will bring a few quilts, and Anne Andersen and George Parker will share some of their writing. All are welcome!

Tuesday, February 1: 10:30-11:30 a.m., Valentine Creating.

Seniors are invited to an old-fashioned make-your-own-valentine party. We will have heart rubber stamps, doilies, valentine paper, markers, fun scissors and more. They can be for your family, friends or church members on our pastoral care team. Please call Betsy if you wish to bring your stamps or supplies.

Wednesday February Feb 9, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Seniors Gathering:

Healthy Foods And Exercise For Older Adults: Kristi Skjerdal, a CCSM member and San Mateo County public health educator, will be our presenter. Come with your questions. Only healthy foods will be served

Brown Bag Bible Study with our Ministers!

2nd and 4th Wednesday, 12:00 noon-1:00 p.m., Fireplace Room.

Bring your lunch and your Bible and join us for a discussion on the coming week's scripture lesson. Your thoughts and ideas are welcome.

Wednesday, January 12; with Betsy Woodward

Wednesday, January 24: with Steve Naylor

Wednesday, February 9: with Jerri Handy

ellipsis



Ellipsis: CCSM's Outreach

By Penny Nixon

On the day of Pentecost, the “church” was born. It was a day filled with chaos, new beginnings and actually looked nothing like “church” as we know it today. The church has had many different expressions in each age. In our present day, we find ourselves with people being increasingly “spiritual” but not so religious. We believe that an area of real growth potential at CCSM is to reach out to the “spiritual but not religious crowd.” Many evangelical churches are starting services and churches to reach this group of people, but very few progressive churches have attempted to do so. Well, CCSM is on the frontline once again. We believe we have a message to offer that extends beyond the four walls of our beautiful church.

At the annual meeting last June, we discussed creating an outreach ministry that would provide a new avenue for growth, as well as help us realize another CCSM vision—to add “alternative worship services.” Greg, Steve and I have been working for the last six months on this outreach ministry. We presented our vision to the Board of Ministries on November 21st and received an enthusiastic, unanimous endorsement of this new ministry. This outreach ministry is part of a great experiment in American religion, as we try to address the changing religious and spiritual landscape and meet the needs of a new world. In order to best communicate

the vision, the work and how you can participate, we are providing the new information in this article, and you can also visit our brand new website at www.3dotsundays.com.

Here are some answers to some basic questions about this new outreach ministry:

What is the new ministry called?

ELLIPSIS...(you know, the three dots...)

What is the external mission statement of Ellipsis?

Ellipsis...experience beyond words. Pausing 53 minutes on a Sunday to envision a new world.

What is the mission of Ellipsis?

...to reconnect with the Divine in each of us, rediscovering our passions, our worth and our power to become the change we seek.

We envision a spiritual community...a gathering that emerges from our shared spiritual experience. Every Sunday afternoon, we transform a nightclub venue into a sanctuary for the soul where every life matters and everybody belongs. We celebrate this connection through modern and ancient forms of embodied living. Our intent is to build a physical and online space that invites people who are spiritual but not religious, who “don’t do church” to connect with the Divine within and around them. Together, we can rediscover our passions, our worth, our power and effect positive change in our lives and the world around us.

Why was “Ellipsis” created?

We recognize that our message is bigger than our worship style. We recognize that DIVERSITY strengthens and informs our community, and we seek to remain true to our values as a church as we continue to evolve. Ellipsis...is a gift that we can give our church and our community, while at the same time holding true to the guiding principles of Congregational Church of San Mateo. We are convinced that there are many people who would benefit from a spiritual community with a truly alternative message. Ellipsis...is an outreach to those people who have given up on church as we know it, but are open to new journeys to the sacred. We hope to take our extravagant welcome two blocks south.

Who is Ellipsis for?

...for people who wish to have some experience of spirit, reflection, community, social justice...

...for people with something compelling in

common: a desire to think about things bigger than everyday life

...for people who want to contemplate and worship the divine as they understand it...

...for people tired of what Christianity has come to mean and wary of organized religion, but open to (and hungry for) the radical ideas that can be found in the teachings of Jesus

...for people who want meaningful spiritual community but haven’t found it in the traditional ways

...for people who want more in their life—more love, more joy, more openness, more connection

...for people who are not ready to give up on “God” but want an out-of-box spirituality that makes sense in their experience

As a CCSM member, how can I be involved?

...participate in a focus group

...be enthusiastic about this new ministry

...tell your friends about it who normally wouldn’t come to church with you

...donate to help cover the costs of the outreach ministry

...express interest to Steve, Greg or Penny

...look for more communication and ways to be involved

...ask questions

...“like” us on facebook

...visit our website

www.3dotSundays.com and give us feedback

Where will Ellipsis be held?

Ellipsis...will have its first gathering on February 13, at THE LEVEL 236, in downtown, 236 South B Street, San Mateo, from 12:30 to 1:23 p.m.

**Ellipsis...more from the
God is Still Speaking church**

Joys & Concerns

Join an Affinity Group

The Music And Art Circle invites everyone to start 2011 with the joy of song! On **Friday, Jan. 21 at 1:00 p.m.** in Kloss Hall, **The Golden Tones**, a group of 25 singers, a pianist and banjo player will entertain us with show tunes, old favorites and a sing-a-long. Come shed your stress, and leave smiling and humming. Please call Zelta Adams at 341-1644 to reserve. Music and Art members will meet at noon. Bring a sandwich; beverages and dessert will be served.

Band of Brothers (BoB): "We are a fun-loving inter-generational band of brothers on a spiritual adventure, inspiring mutual nurture, accountability and trust."

January 22nd, 2011, 7:30 a.m.-9:00 a.m.: Breakfast and small group discussions in Kloss Hall. *Challenges of the Modern Man:* How do we face the challenges of manhood in the 21st century? Is life meaningful and exciting? We have a chance to go deeper and grapple with issues that challenge the Progressive Christian Man. Discussion led by Peter Held. *Spiritual Journey*, where are you? Come explore your spiritual path, past, present and future with fellow church men. We will share our experiences, struggles and triumphs, and have a chance to grow and learn as we travel the road together. Discussion led by Mike Mullery and Mark Meyers.

January 29th: 7:30 a.m. Bike Ride, meeting at Edgewood and Cañada Road in Redwood City.

Monday Night Book Group: Join us on **Monday, January 24**, from **7:30 to 9:00 p.m.** in the Fireplace Room to discuss *Thirteen Moons* by Charles Frazier. This is the second book by Frazier, a bountiful literary panorama, set primarily in North Carolina's Great Smoky Mountains and telling the Cherokee nation story. Please read the book and come share your perspective. Susan Stoehr is the group's contact person. s_stoehr@hotmail.com.

Kaleidoscope Women's Group: We have invited **Abeer Elafifi**, Director of the Muslim Garden School to be our guest speaker in **Monday, February 7, 7:00-9:30 p.m.** in the Buckham Room. She will share her personal history and the history of the school. The school has 24 preschool children attendees and is housed in our Christian Education Building. They have transformed the preschool rooms into beautiful learning spaces. Please bring any interested friends and of course your potluck dish and join us for this evening.

Sue Miller (long, long time member who now lives in Oregon) celebrates her 95th birthday on January 26, 2010.

June Schutte celebrated her 90th birthday on January 6 with friends and members. Congratulations June!

George Vail who is now back in church after his knee replacement surgery.

Prayers of Comfort

On December 28, 2010, **Doris Godninez-Phillips** passed away peacefully surrounded by her family. A celebration of Doris' life will be held in the sanctuary on Friday, January 14, 2011 at 2 p.m.

Carol Boes brother-in-law, **John Miner**, passed away unexpectedly on December 7, 2010.

Michelle Fontanosa-Yee's brother-in-law, **Don Johnson**, died November 30, 2010.

Nancy Feldstein's husband, **Ken Feldstein**, passed away unexpectedly on September 21, 2010.

Tucson, Arizona Prayers for **all the families** affected directly by the shooting, killing six and wounding a dozen others. Prayers also for the state and country as we continue to strive for a more just and peaceful world for everyone.

Prayers of Healing and Support

Elae Bilsey is at Kaiser Hospital this week. Prayers for her recovery.

Bob Jarmuz is home from the hospital. Pray for his continued recovery.

Lynette Kady took a bad fall last week, but has been very brave and is healing well from the abrasions.

Diane Griffith is out of the hospital healing from a serious infection. Prayers for a complete recovery.

Mark Henry, brother-in-law of **Betsy Woodward**, who had a stroke this week. He is making good progress. Pray for recovery and peaceful hearts for his extended family.

Joyce Everson, mother of **Kristi**, is having knee surgery on Wednesday. Pray for a speedy recovery.

Ruth Sandberg e-mails that husband, **Dave** (former interim minister at CCSM) is back in chemotherapy, after over a year of being off. Get well cards may be sent to 620 Waterview Isle, Alameda, CA 94501.

Prayers for **Margi Stone**, **Zee and Cliff Larrew**, and **Phil Lind's brother, Geoff**, as they travel their different journeys with cancer.



Wise & Wonderful Seniors
a Half Moon Bay lunch

CCSM's Priority: Social Justice

Continued from page 1

Our SERVICE partners

- Home and Hope, and Shelter Network: Sheltering those in our neighborhood without homes and helping them get back on their feet.
- Habitat for Humanity: Helping to build low-income housing
- Homework Central: Tutoring neighborhood children to help level the educational playing field
- Peace Village: A new children's program coming in 2011, helping children learn about peace and interfaith relationships

Our JUSTICE partners

- Outreach trips: These include both the Senior High outreach trips to Pine Ridge or Mexico or New Orleans, as well as adult trips, raising our awareness of the issues of inequality, poverty and injustice in the world.
- PIA: Our local organizing committee works on special projects such as housing, immigration etc.

Our international Partners:

- In 2010 we gave significant gifts to The Mother of Peace Community in Zimbabwe, to relief work in Haiti (through our global mission partners and Jerri), to Nepal (through a project with Melodie Lew), and to helping with the education of David and Jacob from Sudan.

In 2010 we gave \$53,107 to our partners through the MSJ budget. That is 11% of our pledging base. However, we also give far more than is reflected in the budget. For instance, we have a Charitable Assistance (the former Deacons Fund) line item and this past year we helped several local people (some from our congregation) pay their rent in order not to lose their house. We are able to help people in emergency situations with food, transportation and accommodations costs. In 2010 we gave \$1,505 for emergencies.

In fact, we have begun to try and document all that we did last year in terms of Mission, Service and Justice volunteer hours as well as quantify monetarily what we gave that is not reflected in the budget. The most important thing we give is our time, energy and love. That kind of volunteering is priceless and cannot be measured. It is what we do out of our faith values and out of the goodness of our heart and our connection with all of humanity.

Yet, if we were to track our volunteer hours, can you imagine what that might add up to? The IRS values volunteer hours at \$10 per hour, but our time is worth far more than that! Even so, a cursory accounting of MSJ volunteer hours adds up to over 3,000 volunteer hours. That is a staggering additional \$30,000. Now add in the actual money spent on additional MSJ projects-over 40 Adopt-A-Box at Easter @ \$45 per box; 25 Thanksgiving baskets at \$50 per box; Just those two projects add up to \$2,800.

At the Christmas party, our silent auction, all of which items were donated by CCSM members, raised \$3,400 which was donated to Homework Central and the Mother of Peace Orphanage. Our Adopt-A-Family program brought in 90 gifts. The suggested price of each gift was \$30 that would be a total of \$2,700. It was actually much higher than that, but it would be hard to estimate. Another item that could be added is the lunches we pack for the Night Ministry. This involves 4-5 volunteers one Sunday per month. It takes about

1.5 hours to complete packing the lunches. Cost of the lunches comes out of the MSJ budget and is about \$90 per month.

And we haven't even looked at staff time yet. For instance, this fall, I spent a day a week at PSR teaching students how to preach the gospel of progressive Christianity. This should be quantified as part of what we give. Each staff member spends a percentage of their time on mission, service, and justice. The monetary equivalent of that time is significant but doesn't compare to all the good work that transpires in the life of our church each week and that is immeasurable.

In 2011, we are proposing to designate our plate offering (plate offering is the money that is put in the plate that is not pledge) each week to a different MSJ project or organization. Not only will this raise awareness about MSJ but it will also increase our ability to give. This could encourage visitors to give and also give all of us more opportunities to support organizations and causes about which we are passionate.

And, as many of you know, as a legacy to former MSJ chair Doris, the **Doris Godinez-Phillips Social Justice Fund** has been created. This is a reserve fund that means that it can be added to on an ongoing basis, and both the principal and interest can be used to enhance our MSJ projects as well as to launch a new MSJ project in 2011. We are so grateful for the legacy of Doris.

In the days and weeks ahead in 2011, we will be inviting the congregation to be more involved in specific ways as acting as God's hands, feet and face in the world becomes more and more our identity at CCSM.



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A newsletter for the families & friends of the
Congregational Church Of San Mateo, U.C.C.

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