

Everything Under the Sun....



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This past month has felt like a whirlwind as we finished the 12 days of Christmas, rang in the New Year, celebrated Epiphany, hosted several youth events and guest speakers, and then plowed head-first into budget preparation, Annual Reports, nominations, and the Annual Congregational Meeting. Ash Wednesday is February 10 this year, and I am looking forward to the slow, deliberate and reflective season of Lent.

Lent is a time of prioritizing: What brings us closer to God? What pulls us away from God? What can I let go of? What do I need to focus on more?



As we spend forty days and forty nights moving through Lent, we remember Jesus' time in the desert, being tempted. He is tempted by immense power. He is tempted by fame and glory. He is

tempted to rely on himself and material things instead of God. The forty days is also reminiscent of the forty years that the Israelites spent in the desert after fleeing Egypt. They were also tempted again and again and it took them four decades to let go of their old ways, their old prejudices, their old grudges, and to learn to rely on God and trust God in all things.

As we approached the Annual Congregational Meeting at the end of January, I found myself reflecting on all that has occurred in the past year, and how many times I have encouraged prayer for turning the congregation, the problem, the issue, the burden, everything, over to God's capable hands, and relying solely on God to make it work. I have been amazed at how much has been accomplished, how many blessings have occurred in new people, new ministries, new hope, new love, new compassion, and new service.



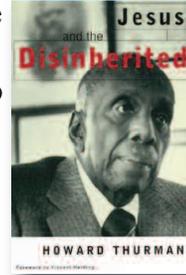
As we enter this season of Lent, I urge you to continue in your prayer. I urge you to continue reflecting on what brings you closer to God and what might be released. Traditionally people will give up something tangible like chocolate for Lent, but really we want to consider other burdens in our lives that have a greater impact. Like fear, disillusionment, resentment, pride, or anger. I encourage you to pray to release whatever it may be that is keeping you from truly reflecting God's love and light. Allow this season of Lent to open you up to new hope, new love, and new beginnings.

Blessings, *Pastor Tracy*



LENTEN STUDY SERIES WEDNESDAYS, FEB. 10-MARCH 16 6:00 - 7:30 PM IN THE COMMUNITY ROOM

Please join us for a special six-part series during Lent in which we will read and reflect on Howard Thurman's seminal work *Jesus and the Disinherited*. Each week we will reflect on a different chapter of Thurman's work. We will discuss the different theological understandings of God that are present and that continue in today's society. We will end each session with a guided meditation and journaling. If you would like to participate, please let Pastor Tracy know by February 7, so that she can order enough books for everyone. A \$15 donation per book is requested. No one will be turned away due to lack of funds.



For more information, please contact Pastor Tracy at revtracybarnowe@gmail.com
We will look forward to seeing you there!

- Feb 10: Foreword and Preface (This session will follow the Ash Wed. service)
- February 17: Chapter 1: Jesus - an Interpretation
- February 24: Chapter 2: Fear
- March 2: Chapter 3: Deception
- March 9: Chapter 4: Hate
- March 16: Chapter 5: Love and Epilogue

CROP WALK MEETING FEB. 7 — 2 PM

Save the date! This year's Crop Walk will be Sunday, June 12! This year we are having a Treasure Hunt theme where teams of participants will solve clues and crack codes to walk their three miles.

On February 7, 2016 at 2:00 PM the Planning Team will meet at First Presbyterian Church of San Rafael, 1510 5th Avenue in San Rafael. We will explore the entire downtown area to determine hiding places for the clues, basic route layout, and local businesses who might want to participate on that day. All are welcome to come - especially youth! For more information, please contact revtracybarnowe@gmail.com

PRAYER PARTNERS

Please remember the following members of our church family in prayer. Pray for their welfare and growth in faith and discipleship.



January 31 - February 6
Elizabeth Ganz

February 7 - 13
Jim and Judy Girard

February 14 - 20
Jon and Martha Girard, Inham
and Gaia

February 21 - 27
Lynn Grant

February 28 - March 5
Caryl Hodges, Sean and
Allison Kaufman



Come and
Worship
with us!

February 7 Luke 4:1-13 - Beginning of Lent

This text of Jesus' time in the desert being tempted by the devil is a familiar one. What many people do not realize is that forty days of fasting and being sustained by God happens many times in the Old Testament. When we read this story with eyes toward its ancestry, it reveals not a message of suffering and sorrow, but one of God's revelation through help in difficult times, and hope for the present and future.

February 14 Song of Solomon 1:1-17 - Valentine's Day

Please join us as we celebrate Valentine's Day! In American culture we celebrate a day of love with hearts and flowers, but few people know the real story of St. Valentine. Come join us as we explore this fascinating and *gasp* lawbreaking historical figure in light of one of the greatest love stories in the Bible.

February 21 Luke 9: 28-43a - Transfiguration Sunday

Jesus' transformation and subsequent healing of the child has fascinated scholars for years. When we look at the intense transformative experience of Jesus and the disciples who witnessed it, it informs our own understanding of how God calls us, transforms us, and uses us.

February 28 Luke 2:15-24 - in Honor of Black History Month

During the Lenten Season we are studying the book *Jesus and the Disinherited*, by Howard Thurman. In his book, he references this passage as critical to understanding Jesus' role and meaning for the Disinherited everywhere. Please join us as we explore the socio-historical context of this passage and the hope it has for our current time and context as American society wrestles with its continuing history of racial inequality.

Ash Wednesday Service
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 6 PM

The service will be held in the Sanctuary, followed immediately by Soup Supper and Study in the Community Room. Please join us for a reflective Ash Wednesday service with imposition of ashes on Wednesday, February 10. After the worship service, we will gather in the Community Room for a soup supper. **The first session of the study series will follow.**

NEWS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of San Rafael was held on Sunday, January 31, right after worship. We heard reports from the various Boards and Committees, discussed the budget that had been presented initially on January 24, and then voted on the budget presented at the January 31 meeting.

The congregation voted to adopt an ambitious budget for this year. The most significant change from last year is the decision to raise Pastor Tracy's position from ¾ time to 90% time, with the avowed intention of increasing this to full time as soon as it's clear we can afford it, possibly before the end of this year.

The other major change in the budget is to replace some of our budgeted benevolence payments with targeted, off-budget fund raising drives for specific causes. The goal is to increase our church's overall benevolence giving through more intentional giving by the congregation. This is understood to be an experiment, and it will be re-visited during the year if it appears to be falling short.

This aggressive budget was made possible by a surge in congregational giving in the last month or so of 2015, which appears to be continuing into 2016. Based on the strong results of our pledge campaign, we forecast that we will need only \$4,000, in additional pledge and offering contributions beyond what we have already on record.



Headlines

1. We finished better than expected.
2. Increase pastor's time from 75% to 90%.
3. A new approach to benevolence.
4. Small economies everywhere.
5. Income trend is strong
 - A new 12-step renter
 - Continued upturn in pledging

The Bottom Line			
Spending	2015 actual	2016 Budget	Change
Total Expenditure	187,419	192,828	+5,410
Income			
Rentals	64,025	69,100	+5,075
Courtyard Fund	15,565	15,599	+34
Interest & Misc.	1,429	2,200	+771
Pledges & Offerings	93,843	95,650	+1,807
Surplus from 2013/14	5,700	5,850	+150
Total Assured Income	180,562	188,799	+8,237
Surplus/(Shortfall)	(6,855)	(4,029)	
Expected Income from growth	n.a.	4,000	
Expected Surplus/(Shortfall)	(6,855)	(29)	

CONGREGATION ELECTS OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS AT ANNUAL MEETING

These are the officers and board members elected at the Annual Meeting January 31.

Church Council Officers

Moderator—Caryl Hodges

Vice Moderator—Lynn Grant

Clerk—Catherine Hills

Treasurer—Bob Spofford

Other Council members

Finance Secretary—Jim Girard

Pledge Secretary—Val Sherer

Council-at-large--Louis Frost

Board of Trustees chair—David Knopf

Board of Ministry chair—Jamie Cline

Board of Mission chair—Lucinda Ray

Board and Committee members

Board of Trustees

David Knopf (chair), Louis Frost, Jim Girard, Nancy Mahl, Michael Meehan, Bob Spofford, Val Sherer

Landscape: Lynn Grant, David Knopf, Greg Ripley, Sue Spofford,
The Cline-Meehans

Building and Facilities: David Knopf, Louis Frost

Board of Ministry

Jamie Cline (chair), Colleen Beery, Mary Dowling, Cathi Fuller, Tristan Cline-Meehan, Hilary Spaulding, Cindy Siroky, Jeff Paul;

Christian Education: Caryl Hodges, Cathi Fuller, David Knopf

Board of Mission

Lucinda Ray (chair), Jacob Cline-Meehan, Taylor Cline-Meehan, Megan Fuller, Judy Girard, Lynn Grant, Sher Ripley (REST only), Sue Spofford;

Pastor Parish Relations Committee

Jackie Dema, Oak Dowling, Jim Girard, Lynn Grant, Charles Little, Lucinda Ray

Nominating Committee

Caryl Hodges (chair), Lynn Grant, Nancy Mahl, Pastor Tracy Barnowe

Special Jobs

Golden Gate Association Representative—Lynn Grant

Tie Editor-in Chief—Lucinda Ray

Events Coordinator—Mary Dowling

Heavenly Hosts—The entire congregation!

FCCSR YOUTH PARTNER WITH ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING



Back in October, the youth led Children's Sabbath and expressed their concern about the plight of refugees. Later that month they wrote to Rev. Phyllis Richards, who directs the One Great Hour of Sharing program at the UCC National Offices in Cleveland, Ohio. They invited her to come and talk with them about what the program does to help refugees and how they might help.

She responded and came to serve as our guest preacher and meet with the youth on January 17, 2016. That afternoon, Rev. Richards and the youth had a fruitful discussion about refugees, One Great Hour of Sharing, and how stories from the Bible inform our response to this global crisis.

The youth shared their ongoing concerns about the refugee crisis in Syria and other parts of the world, and their own personal experiences with welcoming refugees in their schools. Rev. Richards talked about the work that One Great Hour of Sharing does and where our contributions go. (See **page 8 for more about One Great Hour of Sharing.**)



After much discussion, the kids decided to work throughout Lent to send Hygiene Kits to refugees as their participation in One Great Hour of Sharing. A Hygiene Kit is a small collection of basic toiletries that are sent to displaced peoples around the world. These kits include seven basic items in a Ziploc bag. The youth came up with a goal of 250 Hygiene Kits, and they will be working with other youth in the neighborhood to meet this goal. The youth will be asking their friends, classmates, teachers, and acquaintances for supplies to fill the kits.

Rev. Richards promised a \$250 matching grant for the first \$250 in cash or supplies that they collect. Each kit contains:

- One hand towel measuring approximately 16" x 28" (no fingertip or bath towels)
- One washcloth
- One wide-tooth comb
- One nail clipper
- One bar of soap (bath size in wrapper)
- One toothbrush (in original packaging)
- Six standard size Band-Aids®
- One-gallon plastic bag with zipper closure
- \$2 for shipping to get the kit to its destination

If you would like to help the youth reach their goal, please bring items to the church during February and March. For more information, please ask David Knopf at knopf.david@gmail.com or Pastor Tracy at revtracybarnowe@gmail.com or any of the youth!

Successful YOUTH Event

Sunday, January 24, seven youth helped prepare a delicious meal for the ladies at the REST Shelter. Special guest Sher Ripley, coordinator of the REST Shelter Dinner program, talked to the kids about the program and the passage that inspires her in her work: The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. Jesus says, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:31-46).



They jumped into the project eager to help and excited to look for the holy in the new people they would break bread with the following evening. They worked together under the direction of Marion Long, David Knopf and Pastor Tracy. The kids chopped garlic, fried meat, melted butter, whipped batter, sliced bread, and together assembled three beefy lasagnas, two large green salads, two loaves of garlic bread, a yellow cake with chocolate frosting, and a pan of brownies.

Monday, January 25, another group of seven kids met at Marin Health and Wellness Center to serve the meal. They set and decorated the tables, laid out the buffet, served fifteen ladies dinner and dessert, and helped to clean up. They worked hard and were polite; many of the guests commented on how pleasant and well-behaved and friendly they were. You may notice some new faces in the photos! On both evenings, as the kids began preparing the meal, Rosemary and Faye told a few of their friends who live in the neighborhood about the project, and they were eager to join in. In the end, we had more kids than we could accommodate who wanted to come and help serve! Pastor Tracy had to promise them that we would do it again soon so that everyone would have a chance to participate.



The evening was a transformative experience for all. At the beginning of the evening, the kids were cautioned not to get rowdy or play, as they might distress the ladies. By the end of the evening, the ladies were teaching the kids the Macarena, and the kids were demonstrating dance moves to the tune Rockin' Robin. Everyone was singing together with much joy and laughter. There were lots of hugs, mutual requests for prayer, and great fellowship. The kids were asked to reflect on what they learned, what surprised them, and where they saw God. Their responses were thoughtful and showed great love and capacity for discernment. Want to know more? Ask them the next time you see them ☺

Special thanks to David Knopf, Marion Long, Sher Ripley, Pastor Tracy, the ladies of the REST Shelter Dinner Program, and Jackie Dema who watched one sick child so her mother and big sister could participate.



BOARD OF MISSION MISSION MATTERS



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING OFFERING — MARCH 6



One Great Hour of Sharing is the Lenten Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports disaster, refugee, and development actions. Today, our world is facing a refugee crisis beyond anything we have seen in recent generation. At this moment, there are more refugees in the world than at any time since World War II. The One Great Hour of Sharing offering is rooted in responding to Christ's call to welcome the stranger. Please give generously on March 6, when we will collect this important offering. **See page 6 to learn how our youth will be participating in this offering.**

R.E.S.T. DINNERS CONTINUE

The First Congregational Church of San Rafael - Mission Board is happy to provide dinners for homeless women during 2015-16 Winter REST Program. We are feeding 15-20 homeless women, at the Wellness Center in San Rafael. The Mission Board Team prepares and brings everything needed for a hot, nutritional and tasty meal for these women. We also eat and chat together with our guests before we clean up. It all begins at 5:45 PM to set up tables, chairs, and place settings. The guests arrive at the center and are ready to be served by 6:00 PM. We eat with them, and then we clean up the dishes and are usually done by 7:30 PM.

Our REST Dinner dates - All on Monday nights

Feb 22 - Mar 28 - April 25

We need your help with table set up, food preparation (we can also pick up any dish/item you make/donate prior to 5:30, if needed), food serving, and clean up. Whatever the donation, help or time you can offer is appreciated. See the various sign up opportunities on line at Sign-up Genius: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/805044bada829a20-rest> If you have any questions, ideas to help, suggestions for dinner themes, please call Sher Ripley on her cell at 415-577-6104 or email sher_ripley@comcast.net



As often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me.



HOMESCHOOL CLUB MEETS on WEDNESDAYS AND THURSDAYS

Sponsored by the Board of Mission, the Homework Club serves children from Pilgrim Park and provides support and tutoring as they complete their school homework assignments.

About 10-12 children attend each Wednesday and

Thursday from 4-5 PM in the Oak Room. We are definitely **in need of more tutors** to help staff this vital program. If you are able to volunteer as a homework helper, please contact Pastor Tracy.

Spring

SPRING PROJECTS AT PILGRIM PARK

Normally I visit Pilgrim Park every Tuesday morning, chat with the Tuesday morning ladies coffee/conversation club, grab a cup of coffee and go into Nancy's office to see what's new. There's always something going on that we can discuss. However, lately I find myself spending time on the phone, on the Internet, in extra meetings, etc., to prepare for and help manage several projects coming up this spring:

- **Solar electric generation** – We've signed a contract for a system that will reduce about 80% of the electricity cost that Pilgrim Park pays. Residents pay their own costs; some of which are subsidized. Part of this project is to reroof the three buildings on which the panels will be installed. When the project is complete and running satisfactorily, we'll hold an open house so interested church members can learn more about solar generation.
- **Installation of LED lights** – After trying out various alternatives, we've selected several fixtures. Francisco, who manages maintenance, will install the lights. We plan to replace about 110 aging fluorescent fixtures.
- **Conversion of apartment to comply with ADA requirements** – We had previously installed a ramp to this apartment. Now, we'll make the bathroom and kitchen fully ADA compliant. While we're doing such major work, we'll refurbish the rest of the apartment and redo the under slab sewer lines.

Bob De Haan

OWL PROGRAM OVERNIGHT NEEDS YOUR HELP MARCH 4-5

The Our Whole Lives program is having an overnight at FCC San Rafael on Friday, March 4 overnight until the morning of March 5, 2016. The youth will be sleeping in the Oak Room and the Plum Room and we need your help. Do you have an air mattress, sleeping mat, or cot you can spare for the evening? We have 12 kids and need something for all of them to sleep on. If you have a mat you can spare, please contact revtracybarnowe@gmail.com



We are also looking for people to help serve dinner and breakfast. We need people to bring breakfast items and also help prepare and serve the meals. If you are interested in helping or contributing, please contact revtracybarnowe@gmail.com

BOARD OF MINISTRY MEETING



Sunday, February 7, immediately after worship, in the Plum Room, We will welcome our new Chair, Jamie Cline. At this meeting we will make plans for Ash Wednesday, Lent, Easter, and lay out the basic calendar for the year. We will also be discussing exciting new programs around Aging and Mental Health issues as we care for the elderly in our congregation.

MOVIE NIGHT FEBRUARY 26 - NEBRASKA

Director Alexander Payne specializes in quiet dramas that dig beneath the surface of family relationships. (We saw his 2011 feature *The Descendants* last April.)

Nebraska takes a probing, often funny look at how we grow old and how our relationships change in the process. On the surface, it's a road movie: 80-something Woody Grant and his son drive across Nebraska in search of a prize he believes he's won. But the real journey is the slow unveiling of what drives Woody beneath his taciturn surface, and his son's coming to connect with his father as a fellow human for the first time.

Nebraska was nominated for six Oscars in 2014, including Best Picture, Best Screenplay and Best Actor for Bruce Dern's breakout performance as Woody.

FROM ALEXANDER PAYNE DIRECTOR OF "THE DESCENDANTS" AND "SIDEWAYS"
NEBRASKA



"ONE OF THOSE MOVIES I'LL WATCH FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE"
— Los Angeles Times

7 PM Friday February 26 in the De Haan Center at Pilgrim Park

Nebraska takes a dark view of old age, but at least offers the possibility that resiliency and self-delusion can make the last years tolerable. What is it that Woody wants with a million dollars? What is it in this wreck of a man that makes him want to believe that he's hit a jackpot? It's not about money or the things money can buy. It's about wanting to be envied, to be admired and looked at and regarded as someone special. That desire, which Dern conveys with beautiful subtlety, never goes away until they nail down the coffin lid."

Mick LaSalle, *San Francisco Chronicle*

You can view the trailer for *Nebraska* on the FCCSR Website



REV. DIANE WEIBLE INSTALLATION SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20 — 4 PM

Rev. Diane Weible, our new Conference Minister of the Northern California Nevada Conference, will be installed on February 20 at 4:00 PM in Berkeley. Pastor Tracy will be attending and all are welcome.

If you would like to attend or would like to carpool, please contact revtracybarnowe@gmail.com First Congregational Church of Berkeley is at 2345 Channing way in Berkeley.



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 6 — Ralph Sherer
- 11 — Samuel Dempsey
- 15 — Richard Walker
- 18 — Jasmin Morales
- 25 — Rachel Knopf

GOLDEN GALS — February 9

The Golden Gals will meet on Tuesday, January 12, at 10 AM, at the home of Jean Nadell. Bring a bag lunch.



MEN'S GROUP — February 27

Do you want to discuss a wide range of important topics, including current events? Plan to attend the next men's group meeting on Saturday, February 27. We will meet at 8:30 a.m. in the community room at Pilgrim Park. Bring your favorite sweet roll. Coffee is provided. We normally meet for about two hours.

TIE DEADLINE for the March Issue - Mon., FEB. 22

The deadline for articles and news for the March 2016 issue of The TIE is Monday, February 22. (This includes Easter information!) Please have all articles for the March issue at the church office by Sunday, February 21st. Or, email your articles to lucindaray@aol.com.



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Rev. Tracy Barnowe – *Pastor*

Monday 9 AM - 1 PM

Wednesday 9 AM - 1 PM

Cell Phone (510) 703-0108

revtracybarnowe@gmail.com

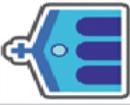
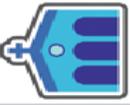
Office Manager

Tuesday 12:00 – 4:00 PM

Friday 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Office Phone: 415-479-2747

FCC Calendar February 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>7 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care</p> <p>11:30 am Board of Ministry Meeting</p> <p>2 pm Crop Walk Meeting</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9 10 am  'Golden Gals' monthly meeting</p>	<p>10 4 pm - 5 pm Homework Club - Oak Room</p> <p>6 pm Ash Wednesday Service</p> <p>7 pm - 8 pm Lenten Study Group</p>	<p>11 4 pm - 5 pm Homework Club - Oak Room</p> <p>7:40 pm  Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>12  Lincoln's Birthday</p>	<p>13</p>
<p>14 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care</p>	<p>15  President's Day</p> <p> Washington's Birthday</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 4 pm - 5 pm Homework Club - Oak Room</p> <p>6 pm - 7:30 pm Lenten Study Group</p>	<p>18 4 pm - 5 pm Homework Club - Oak Room</p> <p>7:40 pm  Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 4 pm  Rev. Diane Weible Installation - FCC Berkeley</p>
<p>21 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care</p>	<p>22 5 pm TIE Deadline for March issue</p> <p>5:30 pm - 6:30 pm  REST dinner for Homeless Shelter</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 4 pm - 5 pm Homework Club - Oak Room</p> <p>6 pm - 7:30 pm Lenten Study Group</p>	<p>25 4 pm - 5 pm Homework Club - Oak Room</p> <p>7:40 pm  Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>26 7 pm  Movie Night 'Nebraska' Dellaan Center Pilgrim Park</p>	<p>27 8:30 am  Men's Group</p>
<p>28 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2 4 pm - 5 pm Homework Club - Oak Room</p> <p>6 pm - 7:30 pm Lenten Study Group</p>	<p>3 4 pm - 5 pm Homework Club - Oak Room</p> <p>7:40 pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>4 OWL Overnight at church</p>	<p>5</p>

This calendar is also available on the church's website in interactive form. There you can click on any event to see more details. Check it out at www.FccSanRafael.org.