

Everything Under the Sun....



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I hope this note finds you well and in good spirits. At the 7:00 o'clock service on Christmas Eve, worship took an unexpected turn when the children discovered that the Advent candles were missing and had to follow a series of clues to find them hidden around the sanctuary.

I had tried to protect the candles by encasing them in cardboard wrapping paper tubes and then decorating them with red paper like fire-crackers. I thought myself quite clever.



When the first one was discovered, one of the children began to unwrap it in front of the congregation. I tried to build the excitement by asking, "What's in there?!"

What do you see?! What could it be?" The eager little tyke tore off the paper and with a gasp of amazement and wonder shouted, "It's a toilet paper roll!"

While I struggled to reassure everyone that it was not, the congregation laughed itself silly.

Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3) Indeed on Christmas Eve a child revealed the truth: despite all the build-up, what was revealed was in fact quite ordinary. And yet the child was still delighted. There was still laughter for everyone. The ordinary became memorable because it was unexpected.

As we approach Epiphany, I invite you to remember the kings. With all of their expectations of pomp and circumstance, they came to find something unexpectedly ordinary: a tired mother and father, a stable full of animals, and a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes laying in a feeding trough. This is the antithesis of an extravagant spectacle. And yet because they had come with a child-like spirit, the unexpected filled them with awe.

Blessings,

Pastor Tracy



ANNUAL MEETING SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8

Come celebrate the accomplishments of 2014 and launch us into the new year at our annual congregation meeting and pot luck, immediately after church on February 8, 2015.

We have much to celebrate! Consider the range of what we have done just this past year—welcomed a new minister, held a Lenten study group, provided homeless dinners, many mission projects, EDFK support, Fall retreat, unique Christmas pageant, and consistently high quality worship, fellowship, service, and supportive ministry by so many.

At the annual meeting we will review the annual report and the proposed budget, and elect officers for 2015. We will also eat some great pot luck food and share a few laughs along the way.

Please save the date and plan to attend.

REPORTS NEEDED

Church Officers and Board/Committee Chairs need to get their reports for our Annual Report in to Eric by January 15.



PRAYER PARTNERS

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



December 28 - January 3
Caryl Hodges, Sean and Allison Kaufman

January 4 - 10
Annette English

January 18 - 24
Lorene Jackson, Aaron, Alex, and Jeffrey Russell

January 25-31
David Knopf and Cathi Fuller, Rachael and Rebecca

JANUARY 24 - TWELFTH NIGHT POTLUCK AND CRAZY GIFT-GIVING EXTRAVAGANZA



The month of January offers one of our whackiest traditions--combining a super potluck with funny gift giving. Mary and Oak Dowling will host this occasion in their home in San Rafael at 6 pm on Saturday night, January 24th . Meat and vegetarian main dishes will be provided; sign up in the Community Room for a side dish, appetizer, or dessert, and BYOB of your favorite drink.

The highlight of the evening will be our white elephant gift surprise -- your chance to exchange a WRAPPED gift (consider it a re-gifting or recycling opportunity). Bring a gift if you want to participate. We'll feast and laugh the night away.

See Mary or Oak Dowling for directions, a ride, and/or other questions. Please sign up for this event in the community room.

Don't stay home because you'd rather not drive—just let Oak or Mary know, and a ride will be provided for you.

The Dowling's home is at 273 Mt. View Ave., San Rafael.

News About Kids



CHURCH SCHOOL AND CHILD CARE DURING WORSHIP EVERY WEEK!

Just a reminder that we provide both child care throughout the Sunday worship service and Church School beginning about 10:20 after the children's story in worship. On any given Sunday you will find kids in our church school making crafts, playing games, learning about God and HAVING FUN.



BOARD OF MISSION MISSION MATTERS



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SAN RAFAEL RECOGNIZED FOR WATER CONSERVATION PILOT PROGRAM

Our Board of Mission sponsored an opportunity for members of our congregation to participate in the Marin Municipal Water Board's pilot program to help county residents reduce their water consumption. Here is part of an article that was posted on the MMWB's blog:

San Rafael church-goers have gotten into the spirit of conservation. More than 35 households representing five congregations participated in a pilot Water Conservation Challenge coordinated by the City of San Rafael. Participants took specific actions to reduce their water use at home, including fixing leaks, adjusting water pressure and irrigation scheduling, and installing high-efficiency fixtures. MMWD pitched in by providing high-efficiency showerheads, faucet aerators, and technical know-how.

Participating congregations included Trinity Community Church, Bay Marin Community Church, Lincoln Hill Community Church, First Congregational Church of San Rafael, and First Presbyterian Church of San Rafael. One participant from Trinity Community Church achieved a 50-gallon-per-day reduction! In addition to making changes in their own homes, several participants stepped up as ambassadors to help their fellow congregants save water, too. All the participating churches were recognized for their great work at the San Rafael City Council meeting on December 1, 2014.

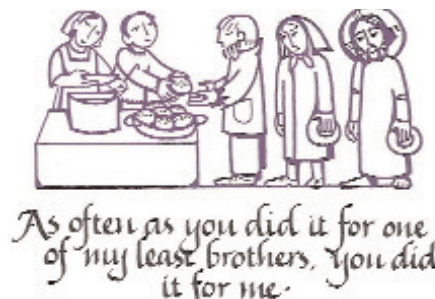


You can read the whole story using this link:
<http://www.marinwater.org/Blog.aspx?IID=27#item>

Bd. of Mission Chair Sue
Spofford and Rev. Tracy Barnowe
at City Council Meeting

R.E.S.T. DINNERS CONTINUE — JANUARY 26

The Mission Board will once again offering you an opportunity to provide meals for homeless women in Marin County at the Women's Winter Shelter Program in San Rafael. Officially called Marin REST, which stands for Rotating Emergency Shelter Team, this is a program of the St. Vincent dePaul Society,



Our congregation has been a faithful and important participant in this program for five or six winters. We have agreed again this year to provide the evening meal for a group of about 20 homeless women who are sheltered at the Wellness Center in San Rafael for one Monday night each month during the winter season. Our next dinner will be January 26. Contact Sher Ripley or Sue Spofford to participate.

PILGRIM PARK NEWS

PILGRIM PARK AND BOARD OF MISSION COLLABORATE ON CHRISTMAS SHOPPING PARTY

Imagine 28 eager, happy children shopping for gifts for their parents, paying for them, wrapping them, making necklaces or bracelets and then celebrating with hot chocolate and treats, all surrounded by Christmas decorations and music.

This was the busy, serious and happy scene in the afternoon of December 22 in the De Haan Community Center as the Board of Mission sponsored Children's Christmas Shopping Party again took place. (An earlier date in December had been rained out.)

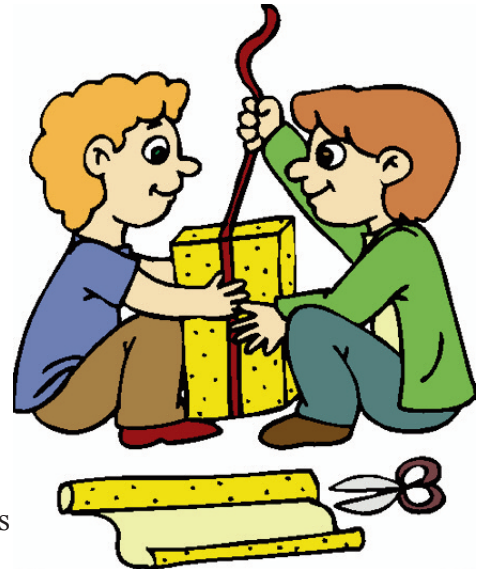
Colleen Trudeau from our church and her daughter, Laurie, led a group of volunteers, including Milagro Ramirez, Gurpreet Bassi, Luisa Trujillo Vasquez, Margie Rollman and Nancy Smith. Several parents also helped.

The children were given two quarters each to "purchase" donated gifts to take home for their holiday celebrations. After their choices have been made, the adult volunteers wrapped and tagged the purchased items. All together, 55 gifts were selected and wrapped!

What happy children there were as they scampered home with a bag of gifts for their parents and a bag of Christmas treats.

Thanks to all for continuing this magical and important Christmas tradition.

Bob De Haan



BOARD OF MINISTRY MEETING

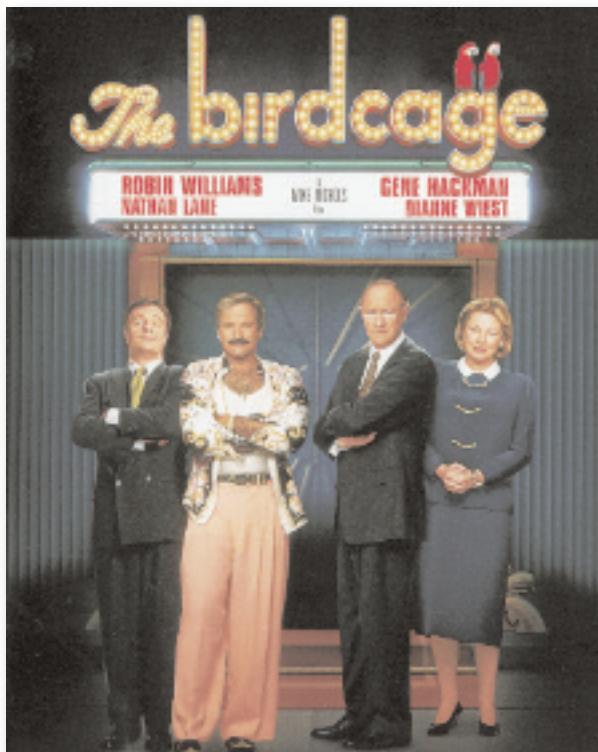
The next meeting of the Board of Ministry will be held on Sunday, January 18, 2015 at 11:30 AM in the Plum Room.

MOVIE NIGHT JANUARY 23 - *THE BIRDCAGE*

Mike Nichols died November 19, 2014, after a 50-year directing career in stage, film and TV that was virtually all highlights. Robin Williams tragically passed away just three months earlier. Both men had their roots in comedy, and that sensibility colored even their most serious work with warmth and humanity.

Our January movie, *The Birdcage*, is a comedy with just such a heart, and is the only film Mike Nichols and Robin Williams ever made together. Additionally, this re-make of the 1970s French classic *La Cage aux Folles*, features a screenplay by Nichols' old stand-up partner Elaine May.

It's set in Miami's South Beach, where Armand (Williams) is the owner of a popular drag club and his long-time partner Albert (Nathan Lane) is the high-strung star of its nightly stage show. All is well until Armand's college-age son announces that he has met the girl he wants to marry and asks them to host a dinner that will help win the approval her very proper, very conservative parents. The rest is side-splitting farce, but with an underlying reality that makes us care.



7 PM Friday January 23 in the De Haan Center at Pilgrim Park

The Birdcage might seem an odd occasion to find Mr. Williams playing things straight, but this is one of his most cohesive and least antic performances. It's also a mischievously funny one: he does a fine job of integrating gag lines with semi-serious acting, all the while modeling a delirious, silky wardrobe with the emphasis on nightmare prints. Mr. Lane, in the campier role, gives a solid but broad performance without the coy gentility that made Michel Serrault funnier in French. But he has nice legs and looks good in pearls.

Janet Maslin, *New York Times*



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

1 — Chris Siroky
6 — Oak Dowling
10 — Lisa Roberts-Raade
20 — James True
30 — Jeffrey Russell

GOLDEN GALS — January 13

The Golden Gals will meet on Tuesday, January 13, at 10 AM, at the home of Jean Nadell. Bring a bag lunch.



MEN'S GROUP — January 17



Join us for an hour or so of fellowship and wide-ranging conversation. Our next meeting will be **8:30 AM on Saturday January 17**, in the De Haan Community Center in Pilgrim Park. Please bring a breakfast pastry for yourself and one other person. We'll take care of the coffee.

TIE DEADLINE for the February Issue - Mon., JAN. 26

The deadline for articles and news for the February 2015 issue of The TIE is Monday, January 26. Please have all articles for the September issue at the church office by Sunday, January 25th. 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

revtracybarnow@gmail.com
















Eric Rowe – *Office Manager*

Tuesday 12:00 – 4:00 PM

Friday 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Office Phone: 415-479-2747

FCC Calendar January 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 11:30 am Pilgrim Park De Hoon Center Coffee Hour	29	30	31	January 1 New Year's Day	2	3
4  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care	5	6	7	8 7:30 pm  Choir Rehearsal	9	10
11  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care	12	13 10 am  'Golden Gals' monthly meeting	14	15 7:30 pm  Choir Rehearsal	16	17 8:30 am  Men's Group
18  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 11:30 am Board of Ministry Meeting	19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	20	21	22 7:30 pm  Choir Rehearsal	23 7 pm  Movie Night 'The Bridgeage'	24 8 am  12th Night Party at the Dowling's
25  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care	26 5 pm  TLE Deadline for February Issue 6 pm  Women's Stellar Dinner	27	28	29 7:30 pm  Choir Rehearsal	30	31

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.