

Everything Under the Sun....



Dear Friends,

In the early days of the Christian church, the period of Lent was observed by disciples awaiting their baptism and reception into the church on Easter. They used the forty days before Easter for deep reflection and study, fasting and prayer, in preparation. In the United States we have altered this tradition to “giving up” something to mimic what Jesus experienced in his 40 days of temptation in the desert. Of course, it is impossible to know what it may have been like to survive 40 days alone with no food, and a manipulative individual tempting us to give in to the worst vices—showmanship, seeking power, and simply not trusting God in our moment of need.

This past Sunday I was surprised when one of the youth asked me what I was giving up during Lent this year. I hadn’t decided, and often I don’t share it because I don’t want to find myself complaining about whatever I’m missing—or worse, have people give me sympathy. More importantly, it is often deeply personal, something that truly feels like a pull away from God—a false idol—and when I

identify something like that, it is often not something I am proud of. Over the years I have altered my Lenten practice to include replacing whatever I am giving up with something that is spiritually sustaining—prayer, meditation, doing a good turn, reaching out to nurture loving relationships that may have fallen to the wayside.

The youth’s question reminded me of a Lent my first year in college, when I gave up coffee, chocolate, and tea simultaneously. Easter morning I had an extra strong double cuppa and the caffeine rush left me green and twitching for several hours. I have never been able to handle caffeine since.

While it may seem like a token exercise to give up something during Lent, it is in fasting that we straighten out our priorities. We may find that something was so toxic we didn’t even realize how ill it was making us. We may find how important something is to us. We may discover how much of a distraction something is to our time, talent and treasure. We may realize how little we allow ourselves to rely on God.

As we enter this Lenten season, I invite you to pray with me that we use this time well in preparation, prayer, meditation, reflection and study. Lent is a time to go deep with God, eliminating those things in our lives that are drawing us away, and in the process drawing closer.

As we await the celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ, let us remember and join with those earliest disciples who were also preparing for their death and rebirth through baptism. Loving God, help us to look deep and with fierce honesty at things that are drawing us from you. Help us to use this time to reconnect and prepare for the Easter miracle that sustains us all. Amen.

Blessings, *Pastor Tracy*





SPIFF UP THE CHURCH DAY SATURDAY, APRIL 1 10 AM - 1 PM

Spiff-Up-the-Church Day on April First, No Foolin'!

We gather on the first Saturday in April to make the church to sparkle for Easter. This will be a time to clean, polish, organize, plant, weed, pick-up, laugh, and munch. There will be big and small jobs

NEW RENTERS

The Threshold Choir now rehearses the first and third Tuesday evenings of each month in the Community Room. This group sings at the bedside of people in hospice and related situations. They create an inspired and beautiful sound.



PRAYER PARTNERS

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



March 5 - 11
Elizabeth Ganz

March 12 - 18
Jim and Judy Girard

March 19 - 25
Lynn Grant

March 26 - April 2
Catherine Hills, Audrey, Josie

Come and Worship with us!



March 5 Matthew 4:1-11 First Sunday of Lent

Jesus is tempted by the Devil

March 12 Romans 4:1-5, 13-7

Faith versus Works

March 19 John 9:1-41 Healing Service

Jesus heals the blind man

March 26 John 4:5-42

The Samaritan woman at the well

April 2 Ezekiel 37:1-14

The Valley of the Dry Bones

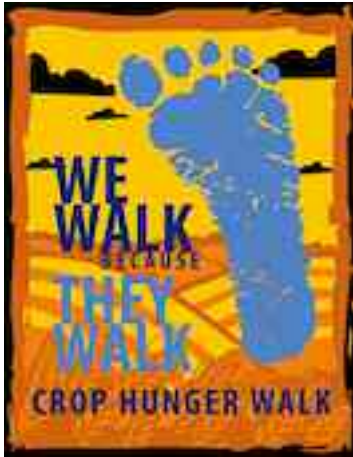
MEET OUR NEWEST MEMBERS MICHAEL CHAN BARBARA ALEXANDER

Michael has recently returned to his home in the States after living and working for many years in Japan. He is currently looking for work in the tech industry, kicking butt in local tennis tournaments, tutoring at our TRACKS Homework Club, and serving as our new Finance and Pledge Secretary. He brings to us a wealth of experience in teaching Bible Study, Outreach, and A/V equipment.



A long-time church-goer, Barbara has been active for the past many years advocating for people suffering from mental illness. She is currently working hard to get Laura's Law (assisted outpatient treatment) implemented in Marin County. She is also working to take ten actions in one hundred days with our group following up on the Women's March. A mover and a shaker, Barbara brings us a passion for faith in action.

MARIN CROP HUNGER WALK - MARCH 12 - 1:30 PM



CROP Hunger Walks are community-wide events where folks from different faiths, cultures, and school groups work together to help address the horrors of hunger in our world – even for those battling hunger in our own city of San Rafael.

Everyone who wants to participate is asked to seek donations from neighbors, family, and friends. Then on the afternoon of Sunday, March 12, all who sign up to walk the 3K route in downtown San Rafael will be carrying banners and hoping to gather additional support from merchants along the way. The steps we take, and the funds we raise, will make a real difference!

We should now all be gathering DONATIONS for the MARIN CROP HUNGER WALK.

Please ASK FOR DONATIONS of any size from as many friends and neighbors and relatives as you can. Donations of cash or check should go directly into an envelope to be delivered to your FCC CROP Recruiter (Sue Spofford) on or before March 12, 2017, the day of the Hunger Walk. (Checks need to be made out to "CWS/CROP")

OR you can contact your donors from your own online fundraising page on the CROP WALK Web Site, asking them to reply with a donation by credit card. This is how to set that up:

1. Sign up and Register on the CROP WALK Web site: <https://www.crophunger-walk.org/sanrafael>
2. Register with your name, email address, and password and don't forget to sign up for our TEAM: 1st Congregational Church of San Rafael.
3. This creates your own “account” which is your own online fundraising page on this website, where you will be able to direct your donors to go in order to support you with a credit card donation.

The Hunger Walk is to be on Sunday, March 12, starting at 1:30 PM

Thank you! You are helping to end hunger one step at a time—in your community and around the world.

News For and About Kids



VALENTINE MAKING A SUCCESS

Thanks to all who donated valentine supplies and decorations. The valentine-making party on February 13 was a big success!

HOMEWORK CLUB 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 Mission Board chair Lucinda Ray or Pastor Tracy.



BOOK DISCUSSIONS WEDNESDAYS IN MARCH 8

Wednesdays from 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Please join us for A BOWL OF SOUP a book study of the book *Holy Conversations* by Richard Peace.

We will cover one chapter each week. Chapter 4 will be discussed on March 8. Meet at the home of Hilary Spaulding and Bruce Weir, 168 Esmeyer Drive in San Rafael.



BOARD OF MISSION MISSION MATTERS



MARCH 6 AND APRIL 3 DINNERS FOR HOMELESS WOMEN (THE R.E.S.T. PROGRAM)

The First Congregational Church of San Rafael - Mission Board is happy to provide dinners for homeless women during 2016-17 Winter REST Program. We feed 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 5:30 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 - BOTH on Monday nights March 6 - April 3

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. **Please call Sher Ripley (415) 577-6104** or sign up at:

Sign-up Genius... <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/805044bada829a20-rest>



SUNDAY, MARCH 26

WHAT IS ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING AND WHY SHOULD I CARE?

One Great Hour of Sharing is the Lenten Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports disaster, refugee, and development actions. **The offering this year will be on Sunday, March 26.**

We live in the midst of the largest refugee crisis since World War II. One in every 122 people in the world today is forcibly displaced from their home, seeking refuge either within their national borders or beyond (according to the UNHCR).

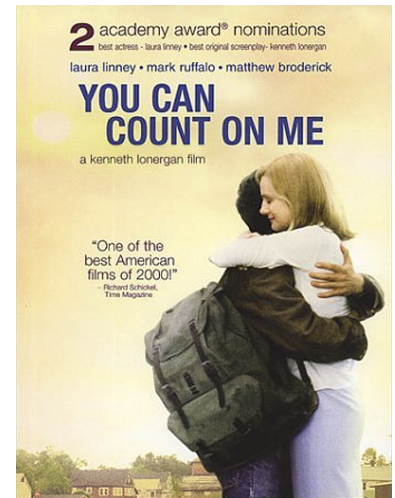
Violent political actions all over the world—Syria, Iraq, Burundi, and Guatemala—have created waves of refugees and displaced people, unable to return home, fearing for their lives. Natural disasters, like Typhoon Haiyan, have also disrupted communities, displacing people from their homes and livelihoods. In addition, chronic hunger, exaggerated by climate change, forces the migration of families for the sake of survival. Life in a refugee camp, without access to health care, defies the wholeness of individuals and communities. These realities may lie beyond our comprehension, but the people who live them are not beyond our collective hearts. Without OGHS donations this work would be impossible.

Yes, you can help! It all starts with your decision to give. Our One Great Hour of Sharing Offering (OGHS) will be on March 26. Thank you for your support.

MOVIE NIGHT - MARCH 24 - YOU CAN COUNT ON ME

At last month's Academy Awards, writer-Director Kenneth Lonergan had two Oscar nominations (Best Director & Best Original Screenplay) for *Manchester by the Sea*. For this month's Movie Night, we'll journey back 17 years to his first Oscar-nominated script. This was also the film that earned Laura Linney the first of her three Best Actress nominations.

You Can Count on Me is the pitch-perfect story of how real people cope, survive and love each other despite their faults. Sammy (Laura Linney) and her younger brother, Terry (Mark Ruffalo) brought each other up after their parents were killed in an accident.



After some tough years, Sammy has achieved a measure of stability as the divorced mother of an 8-year-old-son, working for a small bank in upstate New York. Terry is still a lost soul, out of touch for long periods as he wanders from one unsuccessful adventure to another. As the movie opens, he has appeared on his sister's doorstep after breaking up with his latest girlfriend. Is he there because he's finally looking to change his life or just because he needs to borrow money?

Providing a simple answer is not what the movie is about. Rather, by following these two through the ups and downs of a few days together (some of them very funny) it illuminates the nature of their love and the meaning of "family." Join us.

Friday March 24 in the De Haan Center in Pilgrim Park

The characters in You Can Count on Me have been freed from the formulas of fiction and set loose to live lives where they screw up, learn from their mistakes and bumble hopefully into the future. It's rare to get a good movie about the touchy adult relationship of a sister and brother. Rarer still for the director to be more fascinated by the process than the outcome. This is one of the best movies of the year.

Roger Ebert

You can view the trailer for *You Can Count on Me* on the FCCSR website

A STORY FROM PILGRIM PARK

A CHRISTMAS MIRACLE continued

What is the connection between one of Pilgrim Park's residents and the Meredith Victory that saved 14,005 North Koreans at Christmas time in 1950? This miracle type rescue remains very important to the residents of Geo Je island in South Korea where many of the survivors, particularly the young ones, still reside. There is at least one monument on the island commemorating the story.

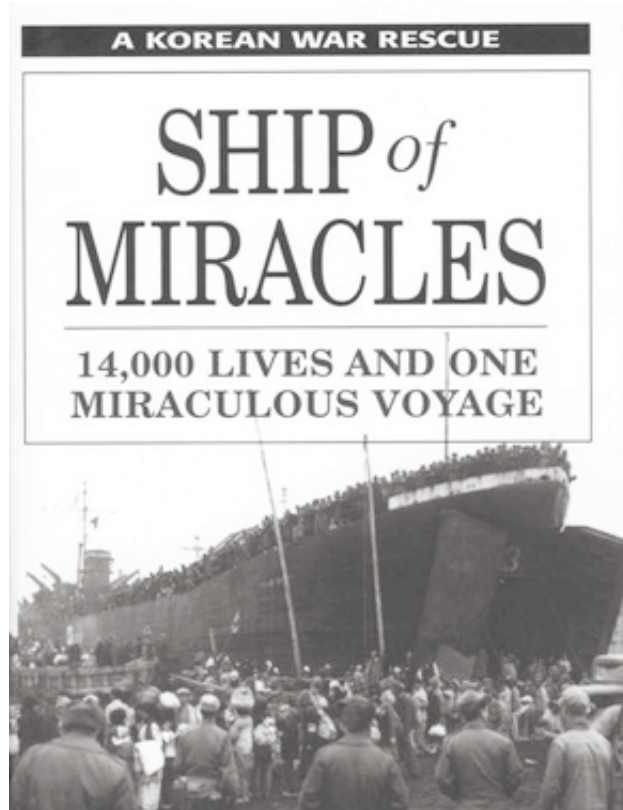
Today, the farming and fishing orientation of the island has been transformed to one of the world's major large shipbuilding centers. Over a year ago, the mayor of Geo Je city and a delegation from the island, including Dr. Song Park from Pilgrim Park, visited Richmond, California, to offer to buy one of the three remaining Victory ships and tow it to Geo Je island as a more fitting monument.

As the ship was given to Richmond as a museum, it was not for sale. Now, the mayor wants to build a replica. He has asked Song to obtain the plans. Song and I visited the Red Oak Victory to investigate how best to do this. Yes, the Red Oak Victory has complete plans. They are voluminous. At Song's request, the Maritime Administration in Washington has sent him four CD's which, we believe, contain the complete plans.

Song will take the CD's to the mayor in March. Song believes the mayor will then enlist the help of the huge shipbuilding talent on the island to begin to raise building funds from the Korean government and others.

That's the end of this wonderful story so far. I'll report from time to time as the future story unfolds.

Bob De Haan



MEETINGS, MEETINGS, MEETINGS



MARCH 15: The Church Council meeting will at 7 PM in the Plum Room

MARCH 19: The Board of Mission meeting will be at 11:30 AM, Oak Room.

MARCH 28: The Board of Trustees meeting will be at 7 PM, Plum Room

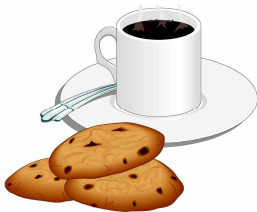
MARCH BIRTHDAYS



8 — Sue Spofford
10 — Colleen Trudeau
11 — Jackie Dema
19 — Jim Girard
19 — Charles Little
24 — Blair Ripley
25 — Milagro Ramirez
26 — Sue MacKenzie

GOLDEN GALS — MARCH 14

The Golden Gals will meet on Tuesday, March 14, at 10 AM, at the home of Jean Nadell. Bring a bag lunch.

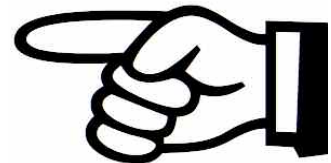


MEN'S GROUP — Saturday, March 25

Join us for an hour or so of fellowship and wide-ranging conversation. Our next meeting will be **8:30 AM on Saturday, Mar. 25**, 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 APRIL Issue - Mon., March 27

The deadline for articles and news for the April 2017 issue of The TIE is Monday, March 27. Please have all articles for the February issue at the church office by Sunday, March 26th. Or, email your articles to lucindaray@aol.com by Monday, the 27th.



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Rev. Tracy Barnowe – *Pastor*

Tuesday 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Available by appointment on other days

Cell Phone (510) 703-0108

revtracybarnowe@gmail.com

Gwendolyn Morgan – *Office Manager*

Tuesday 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM











Wednesday 9:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Thursday 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Office Phone: 415-479-2747

office@fccsanrafael.org

FCC Calendar MARCH 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care	27  5 am TLE Deadline for MARCH issue	28	March 1 4 pm - 5 pm Homework Club 6 pm - 8 pm Ash Wednesday Service	2 4 pm - 5 pm Homework Club 7:40 pm  Choir Rehearsal	3	4
5  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care	6  5:30 pm REST Dinner	7	8 4 pm - 5 pm Homework Club 6 pm - 7:30 pm Book Discussion with Hilary Spaulding	9 4 pm - 5 pm Homework Club 7:40 pm  Choir Rehearsal	10	11
12 Daylight Saving (Start)  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 1:30 pm CROW Walk	13	14 10 am  Golden Calf monthly meeting	15 4 pm - 5 pm Homework Club 6 pm - 7:30 pm Book Discussion with Hilary Spaulding 7 pm Church Council Meeting	16 4 pm - 5 pm Homework Club 7:40 pm  Choir Rehearsal	17  St. Patrick's Day	18
19  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 11:30 am - 12:30 pm Board of Mission Meeting	20	21	22 4 pm - 5 pm Homework Club 6 pm - 7:30 pm Book Discussion with Hilary Spaulding	23 4 pm - 5 pm Homework Club 7:40 pm  Choir Rehearsal	24 7 pm  Movie Night: YOU CAN COUNT ON ME De Ham Center Pilgrim Park	25 8:30 am  Men's Group
26  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am One Great Hour of Sharing Offering	27  5 am TLE Deadline for APRIL issue	28 7 am  Board of Trustees Meeting	29 4 pm - 5 pm Homework Club 6 pm - 7:30 pm Book Discussion with Hilary Spaulding	30 4 pm - 5 pm Homework Club 7:40 pm  Choir Rehearsal	31	1 April Fool's Day 10 am - 1 pm  Spill Up the Church Day

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.