

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS REV. JEFFREY COCHRAN-CARNEY



Do Not Skip Thanksgiving

“I’m just going to skip Thanksgiving this year!” I have heard many variations of that sentiment in the media over the last couple months. The context suggested that there was very little to be thankful for anyway. What about you? Will you be thankful this year, or will you skip Thanksgiving?

The holiday itself will be very different for most people. It will just be my wife and myself at our house. No family gathering this year. These are strange times in which we live. Shelter in place . . . wear a mask . . . wash your hands . . . keep your distance. You know the drill. Over 200,000 have died in our country alone, and millions have become ill around the world.

We are experiencing a covid recession. There is racial tension in our streets in most major cities.



Who could blame anyone if they opted to skip the holidays this year?

Except there is more to the story. For Christians, and for many spiritual people, there is still a glimmer of joy and light within that refuses to be extinguished. Could it be that it is not dependent upon outward circumstances or personal fortune? Are such people woefully out of touch, or could it be something more?

Like many of you, I am thankful for blessings large and small every day.

We live in a beautiful place where it is possible to be outside and take walks every day. My dog still wags her tail and makes me laugh throughout the day. There is nothing to prevent the enjoyment of a good book and a glass of wine at the end of the day. And it is always a delight to see your faces on Zoom, or hear your voice over the phone.

I also see evidence of hope in many people, regardless of what may be happening in their lives or around them. I suspect that gratitude and hope often travel together. Hope is not dependent on circumstances. Hope is not something we come to rationally. Hope is eternal. It was instilled when our Creator made us. I think of what the Apostle Peter writes in

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his epistle: "Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope." (1 Peter 3:15) What would your answer be?

Finally, as people of faith, we can be grateful because the divine essence of God dwells within us. That is something the pandemic can't take away. We don't have to leave the house to find it. A few quiet moments in prayer or remembering a favorite scripture can do the trick. Whenever I am able to clear my mind, there is God waiting to be found -- in quiet moments, or in the sunlight shimmering through colored leaves outside my window.

Yes, Thanksgiving will be different this year. No large gatherings with family and friends. Some people may skip it altogether. But let's not forget the intrinsic nature of gratitude. I suspect that's what the Apostle Paul had in mind when, in spite of many hardships, he was able to write to the Philippians, and declare, "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy." Philippians 1:3-4. May that kind of joy and hope be with you in this season.

*Blessings,
Pastor Jeffrey*

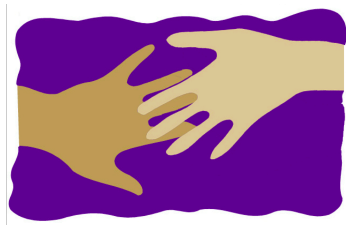
NOVEMBER AGAPE TEAM

Agape - Providing compassionate connection to our church community through words of encouragement, cards, calls, and visits. Our Agape leader for November is Cathi Fuller (415-246-6571) with the Agape team members Hilary Spaulding and Annie Song-Hill.



PRAYER PARTNERS

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



November 1 - 7
Ann Jolly

November 22 - 28
Jill Krippendorf

November 8 - 14
Amy Kaufman,
Sean and Allison

November 29 - December 5
Marion Long

November 15- 21
David and Cathi Knopf/Fuller,
Rachael and Rebecca

Come and Worship with us!



Pastor Jeffrey is providing a complete worship service via email every Sunday. It's a video including music, prayers, scripture and sermon. Check your email on Sunday morning.

Nov. 1 The Saint in You

Ephesians 1:1-6, 15-17

The first Sunday in November is traditionally recognized as All Saints Sunday.

What is a saint? What can we learn from them and what is their relevance for today? In the early church, a saint was not someone who was singled out, but rather the ordinary devoted followers of Christ. Perhaps today a saint is better thought of as an adjective rather than a noun, as in saintly. Today you are invited to reflect on the saintly virtues of others who have influenced your life, and how they have become a part of you.

Nov. 8 Where Your Heart Is Psalm 19:1-10; Matthew 6:19-21

What does the bible say about money? What is the significance of money in your life and in the life of the church? Jesus talked a lot about money. He reminded us that "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." During this season of stewardship and thanksgiving, you are encouraged to reflect on your attitudes about money, and how you might share your resources with the church in the year ahead.

Nov. 15 When Your Cup Runneth Over

Psalm 23; Matthew 17:14-20

Is your cup full and running over, or is it almost empty? Whatever the case may be, God has blessings to bestow upon each one of us, even during the midst of a pandemic. Today's parable of the mustard seed helps us understand how the smallest of seeds can yield many blessings, and how we might share those blessings with the church and others. Hear the true story of a little girl whose small gift was the seed money and inspiration for a large downtown church and a university medical center that is still thriving today.

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Come and Worship with us!



Nov. 22 Guest Preacher

Pastor Jeffrey will be on vacation. See page 7 for more details.

Nov. 29 Advent 1 Stay Awake Mark 13:24-37

This Sunday is the one year anniversary of when I came to be your pastor! It was the first Sunday of Advent, and today, we begin another Advent journey, even though it will look very different. Advent is characterized as a time of waiting and expectancy. We are waiting during these days for many things, such as a covid vaccine and more treatments. Many are waiting for the economy to improve or a time when things get back to normal. In the midst of it all, God encourages us to expect something more. During the darkness, and anxiety and the unknown, God has promised to come in ways we might not expect. Our stance is to be open and alert to the ways God is breaking into our midst as we journey towards Christmas.

All sermons are posted on the website in PDF format.

ZOOM MEETINGS LET US GATHER TOGETHER SAFELY on Sundays at 10 AM

We are holding weekly Zoom meetings on Sunday mornings, so members of the congregation can gather together for “Coffee Hour” via a video meeting tool called Zoom. We can see one another, talk to each other, and share our experiences of the past several weeks. It is like being in a room together, but safely. Most people find it easy to do. Give it a try! You can use either your computer, your cell phone, your tablet, or even just call in from your land line.

Link to join all church Zoom meetings:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/813993981>

Meeting ID: 813 993 981

Password: 594741

Call in number 1-669-900-6833



MEETINGS, MEETINGS, MEETINGS -- VIA ZOOM

(See the Zoom instructions above.)

NOVEMBER 17: The Board of Ministry meeting will be on Tuesday, November 27, at 11:00 AM.

NOVEMBER 17: The Board of Trustees meeting will be on Tuesday, November 17, at 7 PM.

NOVEMBER 25: The Church Council meeting will be on Wednesday, November 25, at 5 PM.



UPDATE FROM THE TRUSTEES

Every Member Counts in Helping Us Think Ahead

Trustee or Council members will call you soon to check with you about some ways to safely begin getting back together as a church.

In order to plan for next year, the church needs to consider ways our on-line events have worked and not worked for everybody. We would also like feedback on some intermediate steps toward returning to church life such as various small group gatherings, open sanctuary meditation/prayer times, Zoom, and other on-line activities.

We anticipate reopening slowly, and cautiously, with any in-person activity continuing our mask and distance practices and following public health department guidelines.

We hope this discussion will help us get ready to consider our pledging of time, talent, and resources later in the month.

David Knopf



PLEASE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF OUR CHURCH THROUGH YOUR PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS



Thanks to all our members and friends who have continued to keep up with their pledges. We especially want to thank the members who have sent their complete 2020 pledge. Our expenses do continue so this helps us keep on track.

You have 2 options:

Option 1

Use PayPal. Go to fccsanrafael.org. On the home page, you will see the words GIVING ONLINE. Click on this and you will end up on a screen with a PayPal logo. Click on it and you'll see a place to enter your pledge or offering amount. You can use a credit card or your PayPal account.



You have the option to do a monthly donation this way as well. For your first time donating this way, Val Sherer will be happy to email you confirmation that she received your donation.

Option 2

You can mail a check to the church. Deposits will be made less frequently until we resume Sunday services, so don't panic if your check is not cashed as quickly as usual.



Feel free to email Val with any questions.

Val Sherer, Financial Secretary valpub@yahoo.com



BOARD OF MISSION MISSION MATTERS



MISSION BOARD UPDATE

Support for Families in the Canal

Through the Marin Interfaith Council , Accompaniment Network, many boxes of diapers and gift cards are donated weekly. There are three drop-off points. One of the drop-off points is the home of Annie Song-Hill.

In addition to ongoing needs for diapers, particularly size 4 & 5, there is a continuing need for baby wipes, and now formula, as well as gift cards. One of the members of our congregation got a gift card for participating in a study. She said it was “found money” and generously sent it on to the Canal Alliance.

Gift cards may be mailed to:

Canal Alliance Attention: Sara Matson
91 Larkspur St
San Rafael, CA 94901

Visa cards are available on Amazon:

<https://www.amazon.com/Visa-Gift-Card-plus-Purchase/dp/B01MSBQB1P>

You can drop off diapers, baby wipes and baby formula at:

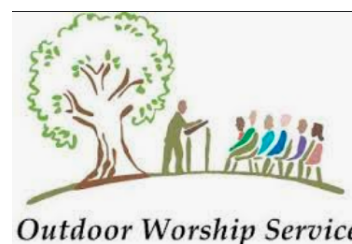
31 Elda Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

Supplies are delivered to Canal Alliance once a week, usually on Fridays. People are discouraged from just leaving supplies on their door step since staff is not always on site due to Covid.

Annie Song-Hill

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29 OUR NEXT “OPEN AIR” SERVICE

November 29th: Our next “Open Air” service is scheduled for November 29th on the patio (hopefully with some patio heaters). Plan on dressing warmly and wear your masks. If you have questions, suggestions, or ideas to share regarding this service, please contact Caryl Hodges or Annie Song-Hill.



BOARD OF MINISTRY NEWS

Worship:

October 11th : The “Open Air” service held on the patio celebrating The Blessing of the Animals received rave reviews by those who attended; expressing delight in seeing church family members in person (more on this from Annie Song-Hill on page 8).

November 29th: Our next “Open Air” service is scheduled for November 29th on the patio (hopefully with some patio heaters). Plan on dressing warmly and wear your masks. If you have questions, suggestions, or ideas to share regarding this service, please contact Caryl Hodges or Annie Song-Hill.



Our on-line services and ZOOM community hour will continue to be offered weekly including on Nov. 29th.

Guest Preachers:

October 18th: Appreciation for the service by Rev. Cynthia Cochran-Carney was expressed by many and which led to a good discussion on “seeds of hope” in the community time.

On November 22, we will be invited to join the Temple United Methodist Church ZOOM service led by Rev. Dr. Kelley O’Conner. Megan and Cathi’s sister, Mary and her family are members there. Watch your email or call Cathi if you have not received an invitation by Nov. 21st.

For more information about Temple UMC:

<https://www.templeunitedmethodist.org/>

Advent Study:

Wednesday’s in December: Pastor Jeffrey will lead an Advent study for 4 Wednesdays in the weeks leading to Christmas, using the book, by Richard Rohr, *Preparing for Christmas*.



Christmas Eve Service:

We have begun planning for Christmas Eve Service. We will be reaching out to involve more members through readings and music to tell the Christmas Story readings and music for our virtual service.



Next meeting and Invitation: November 17th, 2020 at 11am

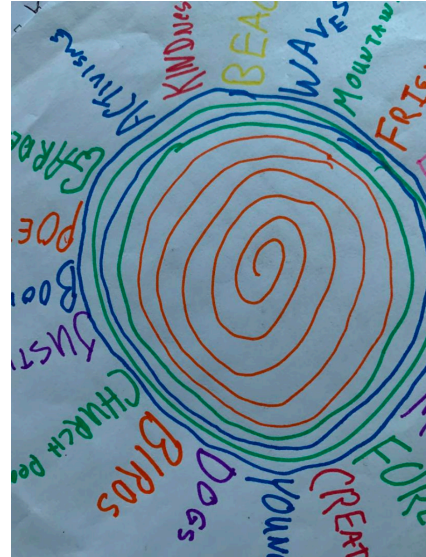
Please contact Cathi Fuller if you are able to join the Board of Ministry. We welcome attendance at any meeting and we know there are many gifts each member has to offer that bring a freshness and unique perspective to keep us growing. Special shout out “thanks!” to Louis for bringing some inspiration to our initial our Christmas Eve Service planning.

RESPONSES TO THE BOARD OF MINISTRY OCTOBER RETREAT

The Meditation Retreat led by Pastor Jeffrey, Cathi and Hilary on October 3rd brought some “Light in the Darkness” to the 16 participants who were able to join together on ZOOM. Folk engaged in reflective art, guided meditation, breathing and Qi Gong practices, as well as listening to inspiring music, poetry and thoughts on contemplative prayer.

Yippee Reviews:

- *“...It was heart-warming and soul-lifting! Such a gift to share the experience with so many of you, dear friends.”
- *“... I think that was one of the best prayer retreats. Wow! It’s almost as if Zoom wasn’t part of it. We were truly together as one. Absolutely magical! I would love to have more of these prayer retreats.”
- *“...The Retreat was so very uplifting and, is part of my inspiration and rays of hope...”
- *“...It was uplifting and so fulfilling for me...”



Coming in the New Year: Interest was expressed in having more retreats led by the Board of Ministry to begin planning for a retreat early in 2021. Stay tuned for updates.



ONE PERSON’S REFLECTIONS ON OUR IN-PERSON WORSHIP SERVICE, OCTOBER 11

On a beautiful mild Sunday October 11, 2020, about twelve of us gathered on the patio of First Congregational Church of San Rafael for an in-person service. This was the first time since March that we have had Sunday service at our church. It was for the Blessing of the Animals.

I was unprepared for how meaningful it was for me to see members of our church in-person. David Knopf thoughtfully set up the shade cloths. Caryl Hodges set up the chairs 6 ft apart. Our faithful IT person, Bob Spofford, set up the sound system outdoors so everyone could hear the music and sermon. There was hand sanitizer at the entrance. Evelyne wore masks and maintained the required minimum of 6 feet distance. It felt comfortable and safe.

Pastor Jeffrey gave a thoughtful and moving sermon on the blessing of pets in our lives and how we can learn the unconditional love from them. Jeffrey Paul played some beautiful piano music. There was no singing. Although the choir was certainly missed, Jeffrey’s music was uplifting and inspiring.

As I have admitted to some friends at church, I have felt disconnected from church during these long months of separation. I almost did not attend the in-person service. I am so glad I went. I felt uplifted for the remainder of the day. It is a reminder of how precious our corporal bodies are and as, Mary Oliver said in her poem Wild Geese, “You only have to allow the soft animal of your body to love what it loves.” I felt God’s presence through spending time, in person with members of our beloved community. Annie Song-Hill

PILGRIM PARK UPDATE

It has been a relatively quiet summer for Pilgrim Park. The staff continues to renovate apartments for the several vacancies that have occurred this summer. None are due to the tenant's inability to pay. I panicked a bit when Margie jokingly told me recently that they couldn't find the sewer that needs replacing under the concrete floor of one apartment. The problem was that it wasn't in the normal spot. It was found eventually. The plumbers used the new technique of breaking up the old cast iron pipe as they used great force to pull a new pipe through the old pipe. Thus they had to excavate much less. Ah, technology.



On the Board of Director's side, we recently held a quarterly meeting (via Zoom) to receive the annual audit, to approve adjustments to the rent schedule as of 1/1/21, and do other business. Pilgrim Park remains in strong financial condition.

Management has begun the interview process to find a site manager as Nancy Smith nears her end of year retirement target.

Bob De Haan



PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS: AN ADVENT ZOOM GROUP

Join us during December for devotions and reflection during Advent.

Pastor Jeffrey will lead us on four Wednesdays in the weeks before Christmas, using the book, by Richard Rohr, *Preparing for Christmas*.

More information will be available in November.



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

8 — Jessica MacKenzie
8 — Ian MacKenzie
16 — Eckhard Mahl

GOLDEN GALS — Meeting postponed

The Golden Gals will not be meeting this month due to the Shelter in Place order but hope to do so some time in the future.



TIE DEADLINE for DECEMBER 2020 Issue - Mon. NOV. 23

The deadline for articles and news for the December 2020 issue of The TIE is Monday, Nov. 23rd. Please email your articles to lucindaray@aol.com by Monday, the 23rd.



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Both Amy and Jeffrey are working from home.
You can contact them via email

NOTE: Pastor Jeffrey's new email: fccsrpastor@gmail.com

Rev. Jeffrey Cochran-Carney
Pastor

Mondays and Thursdays 8 AM - 4 PM

Please call first for an appointment

Phone (908) 487-8855

fccsrpastor@gmail.com

Amy Powers — *Office Manager*

Tuesday 11 AM- 2 PM

Wednesday 10 AM - 2 PM

Thursday 10 AM - 2 PM

Office Phone: 415-479-2747

office@fccsanrafael.org

FCC Calendar NOVEMBER 2020

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|-----------|--|---|-------------------------------|-----------|--|
| 1 Daylight Saving (End) 10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am ZOOM Meeting, Virtual coffee hour | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 7 pm Movie Night at home. See suggestions FROM PREVIOUS MONTHS |
| 8 10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am ZOOM Meeting, Virtual coffee hour | 9 | 10 | 11 Veterans' Day | 12 | 13 | 14 7 pm Movie Night at home. See suggestions FROM PREVIOUS MONTHS |
| 15 10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am ZOOM Meeting, Virtual coffee hour | 16 | 17 11 am Board of Ministry Meeting 11:00 AM via ZOOM 7 am - 8 am BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING via ZOOM | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 7 pm Movie Night at home. See suggestions FROM PREVIOUS MONTHS |
| 22 10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am ZOOM Meeting, Virtual coffee hour | 23 | 24 | 25 5 pm - 6 pm Church Council Meeting via ZOOM | 26 Thanksgiving | 27 | 28 7 pm Movie Night at home. See suggestions FROM PREVIOUS MONTHS |
| 29 10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am ZOOM Meeting, Virtual coffee hour 10 am - 11 am OUTDOOR WORSHIP 10 AM IN THE COURTYARD - WEAR A MASK, SOCIAL DISTANCING | 30 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 7 pm Movie Night at home. See suggestions FROM PREVIOUS MONTHS |

Stay Healthy

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.