

January 2022

First Congregational Church of  
San Rafael

# The TIE

## PASTORAL REFLECTIONS REV. JEFFREY COCHRAN-CARNEY



### The Season of Epiphany: Let God's Light Shine!

The season of Epiphany officially begins on Thursday, January 6, and lasts for six weeks, ending just in time for Ash Wednesday and Lent. Epiphany follows twelve days after Christmas, and celebrates the manifestation or appearing of God's light in Jesus. Remember the song, The Twelve Days of Christmas? It takes us right up to Epiphany! Historically, Epiphany calls to mind the journey of the Magi as they followed the star to pay homage to the Christ child (Matthew 2:1:12). Legend has it that the Magi travelled for twelve days to find the baby Jesus.

Epiphany comes at a time when we're ready for some light. We are emerging from a season of long nights and short days. We get up in the dark and come home in the dark. Much of what we do at this time of year is shrouded in dark-

ness. The ancients feared this time of year, believing that the sun may disappear and never return. It's easy to understand why. For some, that primordial fear remains and is internalized. The power of darkness can pervade our spiritual landscape as well. The great hymn, "O Little Town of Bethlehem" speaks to this condition when it proclaims,

"Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light,  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight."

How will the promise of light and new beginnings be manifested in your life in this New Year of our Lord? One way might be to look for new perspectives and different roads God might be leading you to travel. Matthew's gospel tells us that after following the star and bringing gifts to the Christ child, the wisemen were warned in a dream to return to their home country by another road.



Even Mary and Joseph did not have time to settle down, as they hastily took flight to Egypt for the safety of mother and child. What adventures and new discoveries await as you take "another road?" Where will the star lead? May this New Year find you ready to follow the star as you travel a different road, one that is filled with wisdom and light.

# ANNUAL MEETING



**SAVE THE DATE:  
FEBRUARY 6 AT 11 AM**

Our congregation's **annual meeting** will be the **FIRST** Sunday of February, the 6th. The meeting will be immediately after worship.

Don't miss this important meeting. It is the time when we briefly reflect on the past year, vote on the 2022 church budget, elect officers and members of boards and committees, and plan for the upcoming year.



## MODERATOR'S REPORT



Well, here we go into a New Year. What on earth will this one bring? Hopefully the end of this pandemic and some good forward direction, both for the world and for us here at First Congregational Church of San Rafael.

We will be holding our Annual Meeting on February 6th, right after worship service. It is my sincere hope that one of our members will feel moved to be the moderator, as I did two years ago. I thought I had signed on for one year, but not so. In any case it is now someone else's turn.

I guess this is my plea for one of you to find that you can help keep our church moving forward in this way. There are many angels in this congregation who consistently take on the necessary jobs of the church and without them we would not function. The moderator's job is amazingly aided by that fact.

Perhaps seeking guidance through prayer will help one of you to find that you might do this.

Prayerfully, Lynn Grant, Moderator

## PRAYER PARTNERS

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



**January 2 - 8**

Jill Krippendorf

**January 9 - 15**

Charles Little and Lucinda Ray

**January 16 - 22**

Helen MacLam

**January 23 - 29**

Ekhard Mahl

**January 30 - February 5**

Michael Meehan and Jamie Cline,  
Taylor, Jacob, Michael, and  
Tristan

# Come and Worship with us!



***We will be worshipping together on Zoom for at least January 2, 9, and 16. The Church Council will then make a decision about when it is safe to return to in-person worship. Check your email!***

## **Jan. 2    The Faith to Follow a Star    Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12**

This story in Matthew 2 is about the beckonings of God in our lives. By means of a new and strange star in the sky, wisemen were summoned by God to leave their established pattern and way of life and set out on a pilgrimage. Today, God calls us to follow the star, and to discover God's purpose for our lives. As we enter a New Year, let us learn from the journey of the Magi, and seek wisdom for our lives in the year ahead.

## **January 9    Sophia Jackson preaching**

## **January 16    Second Sunday after Epiphany**

### **A Resolution That Lasts**

Lamentations 3:21-26; Colossians 1:9-12; Philippians 1:3-6

*3 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Philippians 1:3-6.*

We are only two weeks into the New Year, and it's still not too late to make some New Year's resolutions. How about you? Did you make some resolutions this year? If you made them, are you still keeping them? Regardless of your goals, as people of faith, it may be better to focus on a resolution that lasts. Unlike happiness which can be fleeting, true joy is a gift from God, and will endure regardless of your outward circumstances. We will consider some examples that are sure to bring joy in the New Year.

## **January 23    Third Sunday after Epiphany**

### **Today Is the Day!    Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Luke 4:14-21**

Our Old Testament lesson from Nehemiah details the dramatic discovery of a Torah scroll found in the walls during the rebuilding of Jerusalem. It is a scroll that contained the words of Israel's law, and the people weep at the revelation. In Luke, Jesus returns home as he is about to begin his Galilean ministry. He is reading the scroll in the temple: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." What is the meaning of his words, and why is today the most important day to experience his presence?

# Come and Worship with us!



## January 30 Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

### Why Should You Weep?

Lamentations 1:1-4, 11-12; Luke 19:41-44

Frederick Buechner once said that it would help us all if we would keep track of the times and events in our lives that bring tears to our eyes. They may be joyful or sad moments. It may be at an unexpected time or place. Whenever you are stirred to such depths, these are special times that God is at work in your life. These occasions are like windows through which the light of God's love shines. Check the times and places where you weep, said Buechner, and you will see the places where God was closer than we might think.

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

We are holding weekly Zoom worship on Sunday mornings.. Jan. 2, 9, and 16, so members of the congregation can worship "together." 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**

**JANUARY 18:** The Board of Trustees meeting will be on Tuesday, January 18, at 7 PM.

**FEBRUARY 6:** The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of San Rafael will be Sunday, February 6, at 11 AM.

**FEBRUARY 8:** The Board of Ministry meeting will be on Tuesday, February 8, at 12 noon.





## BOARD OF MISSION MISSION MATTERS



### MISSION UPDATE

**Ritter Center Family to Family Christmas** Special thanks to Judy Girard for organizing the FCC's donations to two families identified by the Ritter Center team. Thanks to the generosity of our congregation, these two families enjoyed gifts that fulfilled their Christmas "wish list." As Judy said in thanks, "We may be a small congregation, but such a generous one."

**SERRV Sale** Thanks to those of you who purchased special holiday gifts from the artisans of SERRV. For 70 years, SERRV has made it a priority to ensure that artisans and farmers living in poverty are treated with respect and dignity and are paid fairly for their work. With your help, SERRV is connecting families and strengthening communities worldwide.

There is currently a 20% off holiday sale still going on through January 10th. Get a head start for holiday 2022 or visit soon for Easter and Spring offerings. Remember when you make a purchase, FCC of San Rafael also receive 20% of the proceeds. Just copy and paste this link to make sure your purchase is credited to our church fundraiser: **[serrv.org?a=FCCserrvsale](https://serrv.org?a=FCCserrvsale)**

Watch for the summary of FCC's benevolences presented soon in the upcoming Annual Report! Thank you for your continued generosity to our neighbors in need—locally, regionally and internationally.

### DON'T FORGET THE FOOD BANK



As soon as we return to in-person worship services, remember to bring food items with you and deposit them in our Food Bank barrel. In the meantime, please contribute instead here:

**<https://donate.sfmfoodbank.org/page/5009/donate/2>**

Or, send a check to:

SF-Marin Food Bank  
2550 Kerner Boulevard  
San Rafael, CA 94901





## UPDATE FROM THE TRUSTEES

### Improvements in Zooming

Due to an anonymous donor, FCC has been able to improve the quality of our live streaming through Zoom. With Covid concerns increasing, we hope better streaming will enable more people to stay safe but keep connected when we have live services.



Since we came back live last Easter, we had been showing the service live to a few members using just a cell phone on a tripod. We have been told the picture quality was OK, sermon sound was mostly audible, but the music sound was terrible.

Now we will be running the sound from the church's sound system through a Canon camcorder to a new laptop which streams via wi-fi to the internet and Zoom. We are told the picture and sound quality are vastly better.

We still need to improve the camera work to make closeups and wide shots more smooth. We also think we will be able to improve the music quality even more. We expect to be able to record services and post them on the church's website and YouTube.

We still need to add to the camera crew so we don't have to depend on one person. It is really not that hard to learn. You can do it! Contact David.

## IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO MAKE YOUR PLEDGE FOR OUR 2022 CHURCH BUDGET!



Still trying to decide about your New Year's resolutions for 2022? We need more pledges in order to meet our budget for the upcoming year. You can email Val Sherer to let her know the amount you want to pledge: [Valpub@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Valpub@sbcglobal.net)

## BOARD OF MINISTRY REPORT

### Highlights of Advent and Christmas

The Advent study group on Zoom on Mondays in December offered a chance to share thoughts and reflections on scriptures and meditations with one another that lifted our hearts.



In December, we enjoyed the beauty of the Sanctuary decorated with garlands, poinsettias and Communion Table themes echoing the sermon theme. We enjoyed scripture readings and lightings of the Advent Candles by varied members of the congregation. The choir and Gerry Grosz on the piano graced our services with familiar carols and some less familiar and exquisite pieces. Pastor Jeffrey's stories and sermons warmed and inspired us. We are grateful to Bob De Haan who provided the idea and the poinsettia flowers to grace our cross at Christmas many seasons ago and began our now annual tradition.

Thank you to David Knopf and Bob Spofford who make it possible for folk to join worship from home with their technical gifts as well as the trustees and donor involved in the purchase of equipment for improved clarity and sound for Zoom. Additional thanks to all those involved in decisions and actions that led to enhanced safety and warmth of our Sanctuary.

### Christmas Eve Services

Due to the rapid rise in Covid case numbers due to the Omicron variant, the in-person Christmas Eve Service was moved to Zoom only.

### Community

Joseph, Mary and donkey, Joshua traveled to a number of homes during the Advent season and you may notice that Joseph is sporting a head attire after losing his hat, thanks to Julie and Doug who research and created one that is styled to be historically appropriate.

### The Memorial Poinsettias

The Sanctuary was filled during Christmas week with brilliant poinsettia color that warmed us as we remembered loved ones.



In memory of The Reverend Kenneth Barnes and the Reverend Frances Geddes, Jean Nadell, Richard Walker, Chris Siroky and Mary Moore Hargreaves

From FCC Board of Ministry

In memory of Audrey Martin-Jones - Mom!

From Kristi Denham

In memory of Lucille and Charles Frost

From Louis Frost

In memory of Fuller, Lindgren, Lester and Knopf loved ones

From Megan Fuller, Cathi Fuller, David Knopf

(continued on the next page)

In memory of Jim Girard  
From Judy, James and Jonathan Girard

In memory of Gayle Kaufman, David Hodges, Edward and  
Miriam Hodges, Edward Hodges, Jr., L.J. and Suzanne Cox,  
Teresa Tompkins  
From the Hodges-Kaufman Family

In honor of Joseph and Janice Cuneo  
From Caran Cuneo

In honor of my family  
From Jackie Dema

In Memory of Henry Flesh III, Henry Flesh Jr., Alfred Flesh, Dana Flesh, Virginia  
Morehead, Alex Flesh and In honor of Gayle Roberts, Porter Gale, Rylee Blum and  
Barrett Flesh  
From Anice Flesh

In thanksgiving for my new hip!  
From Lise Adams



**Next Board of Ministry Meeting: Tuesday Noon February 8th, 2022**

## **EVERY DOLLAR FEEDS KIDS**

As in the past, the Christmas Eve cash collected was to go to EDFK, but the in-person service was cancelled, so we hope you will make your Christmas contribution by a check made out to EDFK.

Every Dollar Feeds Kids, a non-profit formed by members of FCC, has provided nutritious lunches for needy children who attend school projects organized by our partner, VAMOS! in Cuernavaca, Mexico, for over 20 years.



Due to the pandemic, the focus of VAMOS! changed in 2020. They now deliver boxes of groceries to VAMOS! centers every week. These boxes of groceries are designed to feed a small family for a week. Your donation of \$12.50 will provide a box of groceries.

The need continues. Please send contributions to EDFK, 8 N. San Pedro Road, San Rafael CA 94903. Or use Paypal: edfk1@yahoo.com.

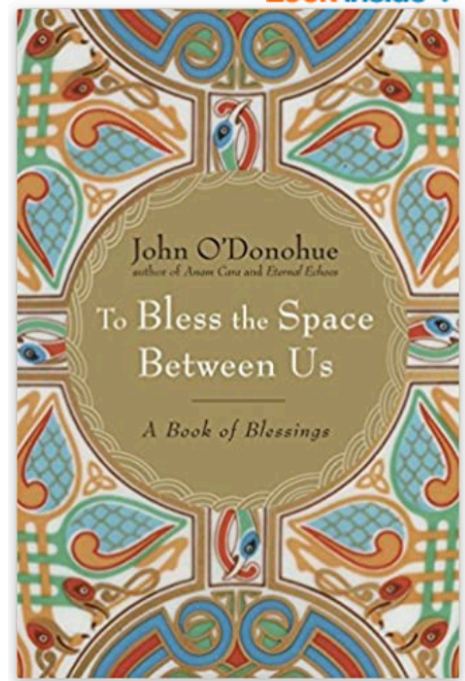


## Beannacht: A Blessing for the New Year

On the day when  
The weight deadens  
On your shoulders  
And you stumble,  
May the clay dance  
To balance you.  
And when your eyes  
Freeze behind  
The grey window  
And the ghost of loss  
Gets in to you,  
May a flock of colours,  
Indigo, red, green,  
And azure blue,  
Come to awaken in you  
A meadow of delight.  
When the canvas frays  
In the currach of thought  
And a stain of ocean  
Blackens beneath you,  
May there come across the waters  
A path of yellow moonlight  
To bring you safely home.  
May the nourishment of the earth be yours,  
May the clarity of light be yours,  
May the fluency of the ocean be yours,  
May the protection of the ancestors be yours.  
And so may a slow  
Wind work these words  
Of love around you,  
An invisible cloak  
To mind your life.

From John O'Donohue  
*To Bless the Space Between Us*

John O'Donohue is an Irish teacher and poet, has been widely praised for his gift of drawing on Celtic spiritual traditions to create words of inspiration and wisdom for today.



An update from one of our church family, Saba Dempsey.

**Oron Primary School**  
West Pokot Kenya



Dear First Congregational Church San Rafael Family,

I hope that this email finds you all safe and well. I cannot believe that we are already at the end of 2021. We want to thank you again on behalf of the children and staff at the Oron primary school for your generous donations last year that accomplished a lot at the school. Thankfully this year, the schools in West Pokot Kenya have remained open, and the children have not had disrupted learning due to Covid 19.

Your generous donation has not only gone towards the running of an educational facility, as so much more has been gained physically, emotionally and mentally. Going to the school guarantees the children three nutritious meals a day, readily available healthcare should they get sick, a change of clothes and comfortable beds to sleep in. These things in materially impoverished regions in Kenya are a luxury.

Amongst other things, your contribution last year was put towards the following:

- \* Covering full and partial costs of fees for the families who cannot afford them.
- \* We have dug a well in the school compound so the children have access to fresh clean water,
- \* We erected new fencing around the school grounds.
- \* We have built a dining area so the children can have their meals under shelter.
- \* We bought secondhand story books and brand new games for the library.
- We bought outdoor games equipment like soccer balls, badminton sets and skipping ropes.
- We are working on the school starting their own edible garden that the children can tend to.
- We recently bought ten milk goats to provide the school with milk.

We are aware that giving is a sacrifice during this Covid crisis and appreciate the assistance you have given us. If you would like to make contributions towards the community at the Oron Primary School, any amount that you can give would make a big difference. All contributions go to the school 100% without a processing fee. Again this year, Mtelo Ministries has agreed to process the donations and you send tax receipts. Mtelo Charity 501(3)c number is 20-36220639

Please make your donation through: <https://www.mteloministries.org/donate/>  
Please specify the country: Kenya. Under designated funds, please label: Oron Primary School.

If you prefer to send a check, please don't forget to specify that the donation is for the "Oron School" in the memo. Please send checks to:

Mtelo Ministries  
302 W 5th St suite 210  
San Pedro, CA 90731



## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

6 — Oak Dowling  
20 — Doug Shannon  
20 — James True

### **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 FEBRUARY 2022 Issue - Mon. JAN. 24**

The deadline for articles and news for the February 2022 issue of The TIE is Monday, Jan. 24th. Please email your articles to [lucindaray@aol.com](mailto:lucindaray@aol.com) by Monday, the 24th.



### **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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:office@fccsanrafael.org)

# FCC Calendar JANUARY 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>26</b>  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on Zoom at 10 AM	<b>27</b>  5 pm TIE Deadline for November 2021 Issue	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>January 1</b> New Year's Day
<b>2</b>  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on Zoom at 10 AM	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on Zoom at 10 AM	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b>  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on Zoom at 10 AM	<b>17</b> Martin Luther King Day	<b>18</b>  7 am - 8 am BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING via ZOOM	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b>  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on Zoom at 10 AM	<b>24</b>  5 pm TIE Deadline for February 2022 Issue	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b>  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on Zoom at 10 AM	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Groundhog Day	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

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](http://www.FccSanRafael.org).