



It's been an amazing year! Let's have a party!

By Pastor Elizabeth Clement

Happy Anniversary, CCB! On March 9, you will have put up with me, I mean, we will have been together for one full year. And what a year it has been!



Pastor Liz Clement

When the 18-wheel moving truck pulled into the driveway and branches of the trees had to be sawed off; when that wonderful basket of goodies, flowers and homemade ice cream awaited me in my lovely new attic home; when we came together for that

first worship service the following Sunday — who knew it would be our last in this beautiful sanctuary for a very long time. What a year, indeed.

Well, it's been a journey of discovery, among many other things. What other things? The list is long but allow me to start with this thought: we have discovered what it takes to live together in a period of extraordinary change, disruption, anxiety and turmoil, leaning on the everlasting arms of a God who made us for good.

Time is filled with swift transitions,

(we had no idea how swift!)

Naught of earth unmoved can stand

(as Californians well know.)

Build your hopes on things eternal

(everlasting and steadfast.)

Hold to God's unchanging hand.

(Hold on, and don't let go God's hand.)

That's a hymn we used to sing in church way back in the day, one of those songs that come into my heart when things



Last spring our youth made kites and then made videos of them flying them — in the street, on bicycles, in fields — just to feel the power of the breeze and to push back the pandemic. Pastor Liz had her kite too and she flew it on the front lawn of the church.

are especially difficult and I must remember that “there is a God who reigns above, with hand of power and heart of love” (another old hymn) no matter what may be happening right now. (If you care to, have a [listen](#).)

This is the biblical counternarrative that has kept me thankful, hopeful and helpful (I trust) in this past year here at CCB. I believe it sustained our enslaved ancestors in times past, providing the life-giving nourishment that made them able to endure and live beyond their miserable, life-draining reality.

In the past year, we have been living beyond the reality of the Covid-19 pan-

demic, racial and political dis-ease, loss and disruption that seems hard to imagine, even now. Living beyond the reality of our current circumstances with the goodness God intends pulling us forward, together and into a future with hope.

Also, you haven't thrown me back yet. We really must celebrate.

So, let the festivities begin! We are still here. We are still visioning, looking over into the next stage of this journey with intention and possibility. I will get the cake, lemonade and balloons, and meet you on the veranda on Tuesday, March 9. How about 4 p.m.?

We are an Open and Affirming Congregation valuing everyone's race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, class, physical and mental abilities.



Christopher after a taste or two!



Cassie with a peach pie right out of the oven!

It's Pi(e) Day! Please place your orders now!

By Micki Carter

It's Pi(e) Day (or week or month) at CCB, and we usually celebrate with a pie auction (including the ever-popular Pie Futures) in the Dining Room after church on the Sunday closest to March 14.

But, as with everything else in this pandemic-altered universe, it's going to be different this year. With the help of Admin Lea, we've set up an ordering site on Square that will allow you to order your favorite pies to be delivered on whatever day you'd like to whomever you'd like to receive it (as long

as it's within 10 miles of Belmont).

The pie choices have expanded. This year we're offering St. Paddy's Pistachio, Razzleberry, Key Lime, Meyer Lemon, Cherry, Peach (see the photo above), Pecan, Pumpkin, Apple, Pear Custard and New York-style Cheesecake (or Cheese-pie, if you like). Or if you have a favorite pie not listed, request it in the Comments.

The CCB Youth have decided to donate the funds they raise to local Covid-19 Relief, and you can donate to the cause — even if you don't like pie!

The pies cost \$25 each, and you can order [here](#). The site is not well-adapted to selling pies, so you should know that you have to use the pull-down menu and select each pie that you want separately. Multiple pies mean multiple trips to the shopping cart — but just one purchase.

Despite what the order form tells you, we will check with you to confirm your pie choice, delivery time and delivery location. You can always pick it up at church if you prefer.

So let's eat PI(E)!

To go to the Congregational Church of Belmont website, click on [CCB](#).

Barbara Todd left a sizable bequest to CCB

By Mike Venturino

Long-time member Barbara Todd lost her battle with pancreatic cancer a year ago on March 30.

Barbara was CCB's webmaster, sang in the choir and was an award-winning artist. You can find her vibrant floral watercolors displayed throughout the church.

After her death, Barbara's family chose to donate 40 of her paintings and prints to the church, and we

invited members to purchase them for a donation to a special fund that we intended to use on something close to Barbara's heart.



Barbara Todd

That fund now has about \$1,100, and the Church Council would love to hear your ideas

for spending it as Barbara would have liked. She was a rose enthusiast so perhaps a rose garden on the grounds of CCB is a good fit.

Her family also told us that Barbara wanted the church family to have "first dibs" on anything left in her Redwood City home after the family had removed what they wanted. As a result, her beautiful oak office furniture found a new home in the redecorated office of CCB. Several area rugs now are covering the hardwood floors of the apartment of Pastor Liz and Mr. Clement.

We also planned a memorial for Barbara as soon as the pandemic would allow. The Sanctuary Choir gathered on Barbara's front lawn to "sing her away" the week before she died, but we had no idea that the Covid-19 lockdown would drag on for more than a year after her death. We haven't given up on the memorial; perhaps this summer.

Much to our surprise, the church was also named in Barbara's trust. We were left a bequest of \$100,000. Barbara's attorneys recently settled her estate and the money was deposited in CCB's account last Monday.

Barbara asked that half of the money be used in the spirit of the Ray Gotthold Fund; the rest was to be used at the church's discretion. Perhaps the church should consider



Barbara Todd did this sketch of the front of the church, and she was well-known on the Peninsula for her floral watercolors like the one below.



changing the name of the Ray Gotthold Fund to the Gotthold-Todd Fund.

The Trustees and the Church Council will consider a number of possibilities to spread Barbara's gift even further.

Many of the visions of the church's future look for ways to leverage our financial resources.

Thanks to Barbara, we now have even more at our disposal.

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Youth focus on Black History and Valentine's Day

By Linda Howard and Danielle Chamberlin

February is packed with special days starting with Punxsutawney Phil emerging from his hole and casting a shadow or not, (Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day, Presidents' Day and Black History Month). On Feb. 7, several youth met on Zoom to create valentines.

Valentine "kits" were delivered to the valentine makers before the event. Creating hand-made valentines for our church members and others is a time-honored tradition that continued even during times of Covid. Like everything else, the important traditions of our church have had to adapt to the present situation.

Before Covid, the children met during Sunday School and made valentines in one hour. In the year 2021, the tradition continued at a slower pace over Zoom. Children from ages 6-18 and several adults snipped, colored and glued brightly colored paper creating more than 100 valentines. Each participant dropped his or her valentines in a drop box by the front door of the church. Lea, the administrative assistant, put them in envelopes, stamped and placed mailing labels on each one. The valentines spread messages of joy and love to members of the church, past members who no longer live nearby and finally to veterans at a local Veterans Hospital.

As the group designed their valentines, they learned about the history and different ways Valentine's Day is celebrated in other cultures. Here's some valentine trivia:

The oldest valentine still in existence is a poem of love written by Charles Duke of Orleans around 1415. He penned this poem to his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London. The valentine is kept in the British Library in London. Valentine's Day is celebrated on July 6 in the Eastern Orthodox Church. In South Korea, Valentine's Day is observed on the 14th of EVERY month!

Love of all types is the message of Valentine's Day. Children taking time out of

MULTICULTURAL PASSOVER FREEDOM SEDER

Tuesday March 16 | 6-7:30 p.m.
Virtual Seder by Zoom. [Register!](#)

The Jewish Community Relations Council of the Peninsula has invited CCB to take part in its Multicultural Passover Freedom Seder from 6-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 16, via Zoom.

According to the JCRC, "the seder will celebrate our community as a bastion of freedom. Be part of this participatory, cross-cultural, interfaith exchange, and honor one of the most important Jewish holidays of the year!"

"This is a critical moment to come together:

"We are living through a time of racism and xenophobia, and this event will inspire us to action in the year ahead.

"Now more than ever, the story of Passover is resonant with the systemic injustices and inequities of our era.

"This year we will hear the important civic and elected voices who are in solidarity with our community at a time of rising anti-semitism."

their busy lives to make valentines for others captures the essence of Valentine's Day. ("A friend loveth at all times." — Proverbs 17:17)

On Feb. 20, Pastor Liz met with the youth to discuss Black History Month – whether we need it, what it teaches, and what it should teach.

We had a lively discussion, especially around the kids' own experiences with what has been taught about Black History in their schools and the current situation with racial divides within the communities of Ralston Middle School and Carlmont High School.

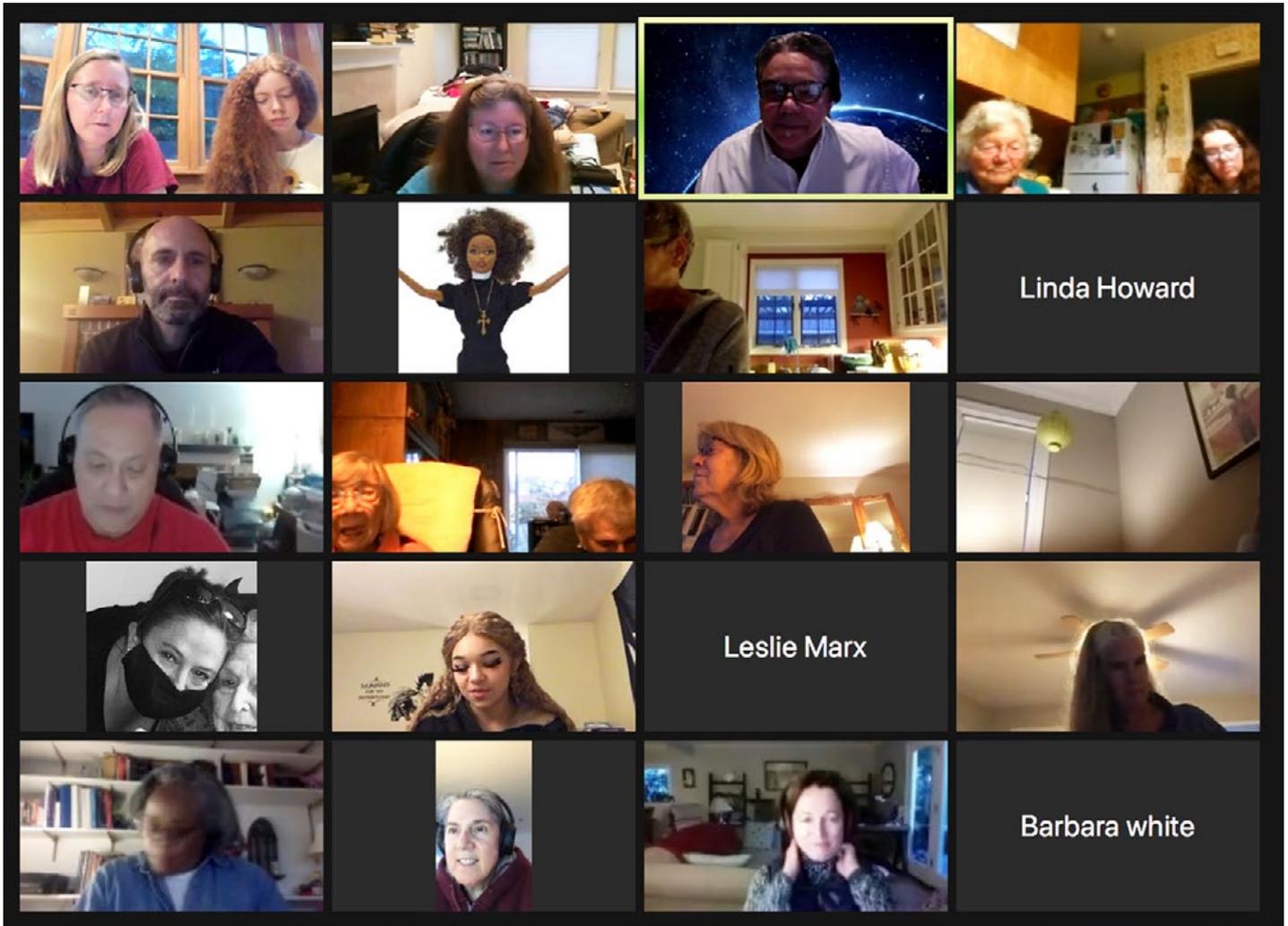
We reflected on whether the focus should be on studying past history that has been forgotten or on learning about and embrac-

ing Black culture. Pastor Liz shared that her cousin went to Carlmont in the '80s and did not find it a very enjoyable experience. We discussed whether things have changed since then and decided that much more progress needs to be made.

In March, kids should be looking for their Pizza Garden kits so they can start planting on March 6. If you would like your child or youth to receive a tomato planting kit so he or she is ready to participate in the Zoom youth meeting at 3:30 p.m., send a note to the church office (office@ccbelmont.org) letting us know.

Micki Carter will demonstrate how to start tomato seeds so that seedlings can be planted at the church in about six weeks.

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It didn't look or feel like any of our previous 65 Annual Meetings, but the one on Feb. 6 did the work of the church in fine fashion. We had nearly twice as many members attend as we have of late, and we adopted a balanced budget after applauding a fiscal surplus at the end of 2020. And we figured out how to vote effectively (if not efficiently) via Zoom. Next year, though, let's gather in the Dining Room once again!

Habitat for Humanity looking for volunteers

Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco has invited CCB to participate on Saturday, May 15, in its All Faiths Build 2021.

All Faiths Build 2021 is a special all-day event that will welcome volunteers of all faiths to help Habitat build six new, affordable homes at 3001 Geneva Ave. in Daly City.

Habitat hopes to highlight its special relationship with the faith communities that make the Bay Area so diverse and share its belief that everyone deserves a decent place to live.

"With a mission to build homes and sustain affordable homeownership opportunities

for families in Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties, Habitat Greater San Francisco has built 248 homes and has, at least, 100 additional homes in the planning stages.

"These homes are a team effort, built by staff, volunteers and homeowner families. Volunteers, many of whom have learned about our work through faith-based groups, provide much of the labor on our new home construction, saving more than \$30 million in construction costs and helping to keep our homes affordable.

"Please bless our work with your faith community's service and presence. Join our

work with hard-working Bay Area families who aspire to own their own home through a hand up, not a hand-out."

Donating to Texas storm relief

The CCB Social Action Committee recently donated \$150 to the UCC Emergency Fund. The funds support the ministries of UCC. Specifically the donation will go to relieve the plight of people in Texas. Social Action continues to support local areas of need, but supports ministries of the United Church of Christ.

If you would like to donate to this cause, you may do so through this [website](#).

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Ash Wednesday giving fights housing insecurity

CCB recently received this note from LifeMoves: “Thank you for your gifts on Feb. 17 in support of the Ecumenical Ash Wednesday Service for LifeMoves.

“We appreciate your commitment to help solve local homelessness in the midst of this unprecedented health and economic emergency. We are always stronger together, but especially during times like these!

“Thanks to your financial contribution, 86% of the families in our shelters and 67% of all those who engage in our program rapidly return to stable housing and achieve long-term self-sufficiency.

“Together, we will continue to provide safe living spaces, nutritious food, counseling and mental health services, educational support for children attending school re-

motely, and assistance finding employment and housing to more than 1,200 people every day.

“Your confidence in our highly effective programs means everything to our team, and your ongoing partnership is critical in our fight to end homelessness. Your gift helps hundreds of local families overcome homelessness.”

April Messenger deadline will be Monday, March 29



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