



The Chocolate Fest Pop-up Chocolate Shop Oct. 9 featured the offerings of nine local chocolatiers and kicked off the Chocolate Fest online store. For more details, see Page 4.



Trains of Thought

Finding the sublime in a season of gratitude

By Pastor Sally Train

Love and Gratitude are the two attributes that form the foundation for a spiritual life. I recently read that of the two, Gratitude is the most sublime. I was surprised to read that. It got me thinking and I realized there is some truth in that statement.

Love can be confusing and difficult. It is often accompanied with desire or need. We tend to want to possess or control that which we love.

Finding the balance between self-love and love of the other can be tricky. Love tends to be active. We want to give to the

other. But when are we giving too much for our own good? When are our “gifts” actually crippling the other — preventing them from growing into their best self?



Rev. Sally Train

Most of us spend our entire lives trying to negotiate the pathways of love. Finding the balance between closeness and distance, between helping and challenging, between giving and receiving.

Gratitude, on the other hand, is simple. We are simply grateful for what we have received and say, “thank you.” We do not ask for more. We do not yearn for more.

Thus, the attribute of gratitude fosters contentment and inner peace. A life of gratitude centers on noticing all the blessings we have received, all the gifts that surround us. A life of gratitude does not wait until we have acquired our dreams in order to be happy. It does not require everything to be perfect before we can feel contentment.

A life of gratitude is a life lived with a **See GRATITUDE, Page 7**

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

Jazz & Justice clicks for growth of a church

By Steve Chamberlin

How can a small church grow and thrive?

To help answer this question, CCB's Church Council and the Pastoral Search Committee recently met with Pastor Emeritus Lois Mueller of Oakland's Plymouth Jazz & Justice Church, UCC.

Pastor Lois shared the story of how Plymouth church underwent a revitalization and new period of growth during the years of her leadership.

Mueller initially joined Plymouth Church on a temporary basis as an interim pastor in the early 2000s. The church membership had been declining for years, and at that time only a few dozen members remained, with typical Sunday attendance of about 10 people. The congregation was primarily older people, with very few new members joining. She described a feeling of failure in the air.

Over the next few years the church explored its strengths, and Rev. Lois transitioned to a permanent role.

Several of the members were heavily invested in music, and the church's music director was also a talented jazz performer. Plymouth decided to lean in to this strength, and re-imagine itself as the "Jazz & Justice" church.

They hired additional musicians for the church staff, including a paid vocalist, and made each Sunday into a well-polished jazz-infused celebration of God. The additional hires weren't easy to afford, but the church decided they'd prefer to go all-in with their vision rather than to guard their pennies while the church withered away.

She said the initial reaction to this new direction was very positive.

At the same time, the church organized a series of member dinners where small numbers of people would meet together for a meal. This helped forge stronger connections between some of the longtime members and the newer people who were beginning to respond to the Jazz & Justice direction.

The demographics began to change, as more diverse and younger people joined the original members. The dinners were very successful in creating stronger ties among



Jazz performers at Plymouth Jazz & Justice UCC in Oakland.

members who hadn't known each other well before, and fostered a willingness to try more new things.

Plymouth also worked to consciously raise its profile in the local community. Even if it didn't directly lead to membership growth, the church wanted their neighbors to know who they were and what they were about.

They printed up banners, attended local events, and marched in parades. They made themselves into visible members of the community. Word spread that they were

on to something good.

Throughout this time, Rev. Lois kept the core content of Sunday services largely unchanged. Her weekly meditations still focused on the lessons of Jesus, spiritual understanding, justice, and its application to today's world. The message hadn't changed, but now they were doing a better job of getting the message out.

As of today, Plymouth's membership has grown to about 150 people, with a thriving, diverse and inclusive membership that's still centered on Jazz & Justice.

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

Chocolate Fest Online Store



Now through Nov. 28

Order by Sunday midnight; pick up at the Congregational Church of Belmont, 751 Alameda de las Pulgas, Belmont, the following Friday afternoon. No additional charges.

shop.chocolatefestofbelmont.org

Chocolate Fest online store open for business

By Micki Carter

With the highly successful Pop-up Chocolate Shop over, Chocolate Fest 2021 is in the thick of the Online Chocolate Store which will run through Nov. 28.

On Oct. 9 at the Pop-up Shop, more than \$5,000 in artisan chocolate products was sold. Masked, vaccinated and socially distanced chocolate lovers made their choices from the unique offerings of nine of the Bay Area's best chocolatiers.

They also bid on holiday cabins and flight-seeing tours, 10-lb. Guittard blocks of chocolate, Barbara Todd paintings, coffee and gift certificates from Cafe Society in Half Moon Bay and more in the Chocolate Fest Silent Auction. This year the auction was hosted online and shoppers were aim-

ing the cameras on their smart phones at the QR codes of the items they wanted to bid on. More than \$1,800 was raised this way.

After the Pop-up Sale the chocolate wares were carefully boxed and moved downstairs to the Sunday School room, which has been converted to a chocolate shop for the online portion of the sale.

We will fill online orders for the same quality chocolates offered at the Pop-up Shop, placed through the Shopify website, each week. Shoppers will pick up their orders each Friday at the church.

If you'd like to browse the store in the Sunday School room and make credit card purchases, ask Danielle Chamberlin or me to open the store after church.

To make this version of Chocolate Fest

a success, it's critically important that you all enlist friends and co-workers to choose their holiday chocolate gifts at shop.chocolatefestofbelmont.org. Offer to pick up their orders for them and bring them to work or to their homes.

In addition, consider buying one of the unique chocolate cakes of Ladle & Leaf in the freezer downstairs. Need a dessert for a holiday party? How about a flourless cake (5-inch or 9-inch) or a chocolate bundt?

The Pop-up Shop and the Online Chocolate Store as well as the auction all benefit our community partners like Samaritan House and Second Harvest as well as programs within the church.

It only works if we all lend a hand.

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



THANKSGIVING INTERFAITH PICNIC



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14 • 1:30-3:30 PM

Central Park (Picnic Area 1), San Mateo

Let's get reacquainted! Please join us as we gather as a community of various faith traditions to share thoughts and prayers of gratitude and thanksgiving. A boxed Mediterranean meal will be provided.

Covid-19: Adults only, must be fully vaccinated. Attendees will be asked to wear a face mask at all times, except when eating.

Food Drive: We will be having a food drive at this event. Please consider bringing canned food to donate to a local Food Bank.



A L L A R E W E L C O M E !

This event is free, but advance registration is required:

<https://pmc-thanksgiving-picnic.eventbrite.com>



The Blessing of the Animals on Oct. 10 brought the Thornhills' Bento, the Howards' Blue and the Chamberlins' Bob the cat for a hands-on blessing (as well as a treat) from Pastor Sally. Many others brought photos of their current pets or ones that have been part of their families over the years.

Busy youth consider summer service project

By Danielle Chamberlin

The CCB youth have been busy through October! We had a fun game night on Oct 2 with nine youth and parents attending.

Thank you to Elizabeth Nordt and Elizabeth Mye for a great job pulling together a Children's Sabbath service for Oct 17 which, unfortunately, had to be postponed. We're rescheduling it for Stewardship Sunday, Nov 14, and Elizabeth Nordt has agreed to rally the kids again.

Lea has taken on organizing events for our youth and is trying to schedule a visit to the Monterey Bay Aquarium some time in November/December.

Between this, Children's Sabbath and Christmas Pageant, our youth will have lots to do for the next few months. The Youth Choir will be rehearsing for 30 minutes after

service now through Christmas.

Pretty soon, the advent season will be upon us. We are planning a filmed pageant this year, but with in-person filming instead of over Zoom. Please let me know if you or your child would like to participate.

Our youth were very excited for a service project to San Diego in 2020 which was cancelled because of the pandemic. We now have the opportunity to do this again!

Sierra Service Project is organizing in-person service trip in summer 2022 in Smith River, Calif., San Diego or Tsailie, Ariz. Priority registration to get our preference of dates was due to Sierra Service Project by Oct. 31.

So far we have not received a lot of feedback for interest in attending a 2022 service trip. It will take quite a bit of work

to organize a trip like this so if you think this is something you would like to attend, please let us know ASAP.

Finally, CCB could use some more help on Sunday mornings! Kendall House and Emma Naomi Mye are doing a fantastic job keeping the church operating by setting up and cleaning up the coffee hour, managing the sound system, and streaming our worship services.

However, occasionally they have a conflict, and we could use some more people to be available to help out as backups.

If you are 15 or older and would like to apply to make our Sunday morning service go smoothly and help with child care once our children's program ramps back up, please contact me for an interview.

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CCB Calendar for November 2021

4 Thu	7:30PM - 9PM ✉	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir practice
7 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Communion worship with Pastor Sally Train: A Whole New World
	11:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Coffee Hour
11 Thu	7:30PM - 9PM ✉	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir practice
13 Sat	3:30PM - 5:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	CCB Youth Group on the Veranda
14 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Stewardship Sunday/Children's Sabbath Redux
	11:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Coffee Hour
18 Thu	7:30PM - 9PM ✉	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Choir practice
20 Sat	7:00PM - 9:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Harvest Dinner
21 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Thanksgiving Sunday worship with Pastor Sally Train: A Thankful Heart
	11:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Coffee Hour
22 Mon	7PM - 9PM ✉	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Council Meeting
27 Sat	3:30PM - 5:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	CCB Youth Group on the Veranda
28 Sun	10:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	First Sunday of Advent with Pastor Sally Train: Introduction to Luke
	11:30AM - 12:00PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Coffee Hour

Gratitude

Continued from Page One

sense of appreciation and wonder.

Gratitude is essentially receptive, not active. We simply receive the other with appreciation and do not try to change anything. In that way, we honor the other.

Gratitude is sublime. In this season of gratitude, I invite you to focus on the gifts you have received, the beauty that surrounds you, the good that fills your world.

I invite you to express words of gratitude to the people in your lives and prayers of gratitude to the God of your understanding.

I invite you to notice what happens in your heart and soul as you carry out these simple acts.

I suspect that the more we focus on gratitude, the easier it will be to express love appropriately.

Prepare your Harvest Dinner and then gather around the Zoom table at 7 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 20, to share the meal with your CCB family and friends. Here's the [Zoom link](#).

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

Family-to-Family to gather jackets, gift cards

By Linda Howard

For many years the Little Church on Top of the Hill has been a supporter of the programs of Samaritan House of San Mateo County.

Family-to-Family is the annual drive to help more than 230 families and seniors in our community, starting in November. The goal is to make the Winter Holidays joyful, and to provide needed items through gift cards, coats, food and cash.

Two thousand Target gift cards is the goal to ensure that every client family receives on \$25 gift card for each child in their family. Target gift cards can be purchased and brought to the church by Nov. 21.

If you wish to purchase gift cards online, this [link](#), through the Roonga website, can be used.

There are three other ways to donate to Family-to-Family. In addition to Target cards, there is a great need for new jackets and coats for children and adults. Just as we did last year, CCB will be collecting new



Last year, Irene Hall packed up new jackets.

jackets and coats that will be delivered to Samaritan House.

You can also bring canned food. There will be a container in the Narthex to collect cans of food in the coming weeks.

Finally, monetary donations are always welcome. Cash allows for flexibility to support the Holiday Program in a variety of ways. You may mail a check to the church with Family-to-Family in the memo line or use CCB's online [giving site](#). Be sure to put Family-to-Family in the Comments box.

More information on the how and when of Family-to-Family donations will come later.

Let's get together and talk about being joyful

Please join us at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 1, in person (masked and vaxxed, of course) in the Sanctuary to watch an amazing film *Mission: JOY*, based on a terrific book,

Deeply moving and laugh-out-loud funny, *Mission: JOY* is a documentary with unprecedented access to the unlikely friendship of two international icons who transcend religion: His Holiness the Dalai

Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa.

In their final joint mission, these self-described mischievous brothers give a master class in how to create joy in a world that was never easy for them. They offer neuroscience-backed wisdom to help each of us live with more joy, despite circumstances.

Inspired by New York Times bestseller

The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World, the film showcases the exchange between these two Nobel Peace Prize winners that led to that book.

You can watch a trailer of the movie [here](#).

We will discuss the film after so plan to stay and talk.

Popcorn is optional.



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Winter Gift Card Drive 2021

Every day, Puente works side by side with community members to build and increase equity for all who call this place home.

With your support, 220 families and individuals will shop for groceries and gifts this winter season. Make a contribution and be the bridge to independence for farmworkers, seniors and low-income families and individuals in Pescadero, La Honda, Loma Mar and San Gregorio.

You can provide gift cards in amounts of \$50 or \$100 or cash/check to purchase them by our deadline of **December 1, 2021**.

TO GIVE

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/n4we5rur>

or mail check to

PO BOX 554, Pescadero, CA 94060



Together let's support 220 of our neighbors!

For more information, please contact
Alejandra Ortega, Development Director,
at aortega@mypuente.org or 650.262.4100

PUENTE Pescadero Office 620 North Street Pescadero, CA 94060 La Honda Office 8865 La Honda Road La Honda, CA 94020
outreach@mypuente.org • 650.879.1691 • www.mypuente.org    

December Messenger deadline will be Monday, Nov. 22



To go to the Congregational Church of Belmont website, click on CCB.