



The Bridge

February 2012 | Community Congregational Church UCC

Church Office Hours Tue—Wed 10:00am to 2:00pm

Rev. Renie's Office Hours Tue—Thu 6:30pm to 8:30pm
Saturday 10:00am to 5:00pm and by appointment

Happenings

THU, FEB 2

- Holiday House 10:00am

THU, FEB 2

- Choir rehearsal 7:00pm

SUN, FEB 5

- Worship Service 10:00am
Communion, Intergenerational Service
- Youth Group 6:00pm

TUE, FEB 7

- Women's Coffee 10:00am
- Rolling Tones Rehearsal 7:00pm

THU, FEB 9

- Choir rehearsal 7:00pm

SUN, FEB 12

- Worship Service 10:00am
- Youth Group 6:00pm

TUE, FEB 14

- Women's Coffee 10:00am
- Stewardship Meeting 5:30pm
- Rolling Tones Rehearsal 7:00pm

THU, FEB 16

- Holiday House 10:00am
- Choir rehearsal 7:00pm

SUN, FEB 19

- Worship Service 10:00am
- Youth Group 6:00pm

MON, FEB 20

- Rolling Tones Rehearsal 7:00pm

TUE, FEB 21

- Women's Coffee 10:00am
- Church Council Meeting 6:45pm

WED, FEB 22

- Ash Wednesday Service 7:00pm

THU, FEB 23

- Choir rehearsal 7:00pm

SAT, FEB 25

- Building & Grounds Fellowship Day 9:00am

SUN, FEB 26

- Worship Service 10:00am
- Youth Group 6:00pm

TUE, FEB 28

- Women's Coffee 10:00am
- Stewardship Meeting 5:30pm
- Rolling Tones Rehearsal 7:00pm

WED, FEB 29

- Faith Study - Naked Spirituality 7:00pm

SAVE THE DATE!

SAT, MAR 10

- Crab Feed & Auction

SAT, MAR 24

- Building & Grounds Work Day 6:00pm

SUN, APRIL 8

- EASTER SUNDAY

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Emma & Amaya and their moms!

Join Us

We believe that no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

God Is Still Speaking... and We're Listening

Mission Focus

Nora Gauger

SOLANO COUNTY FOOD BANK



For the past two years, CCC has chosen the Solano County Food Bank as our Mission giving focus for the month of February. Did you know that it is the Solano County Food Bank who supplies the food for many of the local programs we all support? *Meals on Wheels*, the Episcopal church's Community Dinner, the Farm 2 Kids program, which gets low-income school children a 3.5 pound bag of fresh produce, are just a few of the programs that get their food from the Food Bank. In fact, our Food Bank serves 84 Food pantries in the two counties and 7 Soup Kitchens.

Keep an eye out for the special Food Bank bins that will be in the Fellowship Hall all during February. Here at CCC, we don't just support the Food Bank though our financial donations, we can also bring needed food items and place them in those special bins. Any canned goods, rice, pasta, iron rich cereal and peanut butter would be great. And we don't have to worry that we will give too much. The Food Bank will come by and pick up our load as soon as the barrel is full, so we can fill up another!

You can use either the Change for Change jar or the special "Food Bank" envelopes in the pews to donate. And don't forget to bring your extra dry goods to help fill up those bins. Jesus encourages us to feed "the least of these." The Solano County Food Bank is an opportunity for us to do just that.

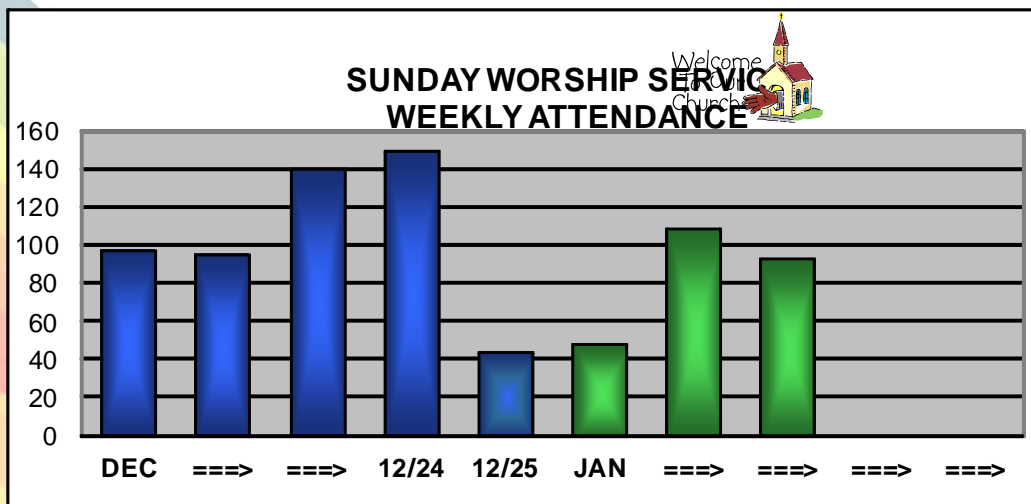
SOCIAL ACTION—GETTING THE SAFE INITIATIVE (THE REPEAL OF THE CALIFORNIA DEATH PENALTY) ON THE NOVEMBER BALLOT

When death row inmate Michael Ross was about to be executed in Connecticut in 2005, the legal arm of the Connecticut UCC (the Missionary Society of Connecticut) filed a suit to stay the execution. As part of that suit, the Rev. Davida Crabtree wrote: "... *Our conclusion is that the death penalty only perpetuates violence and killing as acceptable solutions in our society. We cannot be passive when there is action that can be taken. Therefore we have chosen to act.*"

Right now in California, we have an opportunity to examine our own position on the California death penalty and also to act. The SAFE initiative repeals the death penalty in California, replacing it with life imprisonment without possibility of parole. If the sponsors (taxpayersforjustice.org, including over 100 law enforcement leaders, ministers like Rev. Bob Matthews of the UCC, community leaders, the Catholic Bishops of CA, etc.) can get the required number of signatures by the deadline of Feb. 24th, the SAFE initiative will be placed on the November, 2012, California ballot for the voters' decision.



On February 19th, the Mission and Outreach committee will be staffing a Social Justice table during Fellowship. We will have the text of the Initiative, facts about the costs and effectiveness of our current death penalty, and petitions for those who want to sign. Our intent is to bring you information on Social Justice issues confronting us today and present opportunities for action. For more information on the initiative, go to www.safe.org or "SAFE California" on Facebook.



Building & Grounds

Greg Cox & Jim Lessenger

One Saturday each month, except in November and December, volunteers gather at the Church, donating their time and talents to maintaining our building and grounds. This is one of the ways that we keep our operating costs down—allowing more of our giving to go to the ministries of the church. In addition to the volunteers, we hire additional help from Genesis House. The tasks vary from month to month and we always need help. We do a lot of weeding, but it's not the only job available, and the scheduled work days are not the only days that things get done! If you're wondering what's on the task list or have a particular talent, skill or equipment that you think might be helpful, please contact myself or Jim Lessenger.

January Accomplishments

- Hired Wallace Trees service to prune trees in CE play area and driveways.
- Set schedule for 2012 work days. Scheduled Genesis house to assist.
- Assisted Mike Hill with installing the new TV screen in the Sanctuary.
- Met with Delta Landscaping to arrange to have grounds and parking area sprayed with Round Up. Agreed on a price of \$200.00. Once rains start will apply pre-emergent price TBD.
- Repaired a broken Gate in CE play area.

Building & Grounds Work Days

 Feb 25th, Mar 24th,
Apr 28th, May 26th,
Jun 23th, Jul 21st,
Aug 25th, Sep 22rd,
Oct 27th

Community Congregational Church - UCC

PRESENTS ITS 3RD ANNUAL



Saturday, March 10
at Vallejo Veterans Memorial

420 Admiral Callaghan Lane in Vallejo

Benefiting Church Youth Summer Camp Scholarships

No Host
Cocktails
6:00 pm

50/50
Raffle

Dinner
7:00 pm

Dessert
Raffle

\$ 40 per person

Table of 8 - \$295

Tickets: Phone 707-745-0674 (www.cccucc.org)

No Tickets at the Door

Council Actions

Carolyn Osada

*Following is a summary of decisions made at the December meeting of the Church Council.
Church Council meetings take place on the third Tuesday of each month and are open to all members.*

Next Council Meeting: February 21st at 6:30pm.

- Approval and support for a social justice letter-writing table on the third Sunday each month.
- Approval to move funds from Vanguard Money Market Account to Cornerstone Fund Flexible Demand account.
- Granted permission to loan non-fragile materials to Benicia Historical Museum for 6-week display.

Youth Group

Howard Gill



During the month of January, the youth department launched their mission, "The Heifer Project." We can all applaud our youth for an outstanding presentation.

I would also like to personally thank each of you for your generous donations thus far, for filling your "Ark" banks and your many purchases during the Heifer bake sale!

Speaking of bake sale! The youth had a fabulous time decorating the many cupcakes – ducks, llamas, alpacas, sheep, bees, pigs, and many more. We would like to give a BIG shout out to the adult volunteers – Janet Murrell, Donna Hill Hope Wingert, Debra Thomas and Penny Taylor for all of your support.

Stay tuned as the youth presents their final donation count and animal choices.

Middle & High School Youth Group!

Youth group is open to ALL high school and middle school youth

and will continue to meet each Sunday evening from 6pm-7:30pm. This month there were 15 youth in attendance an average of 8 per session. Remember to invite a friend to join in of the fun. Stay tuned for fun up-coming project and activities!



Join us at Sunday School!

As our Sunday school program continues to grow, I am blessed how each youth is eager to engage in conversation concerning each lesson presented. We will continue planning for the upcoming session, while presenting effective methods to explore God's love through each Bible story, reflection activities, and prayer.

This month our student attendance was 55, an average of 18.3 per session.



Up-Coming Projects & Activities!

Valentine's Day at Merrill Gardens: Spending time with the residence at Merrill Gardens has been a great experience for our youth so we're doing it again this year. The entire youth department

and church family is invited to join us Sunday, February 12, 2012, from 1pm to 2pm as we distribute Valentine's Day cards. We will also have fun playing balloon volleyball. Stay tuned for email updates for this event.

Youth Ministries Dates to Remember!

FEBRUARY 5TH

- Communion Sunday, Intergenerational Service (No Sunday School)
- Middle/High School youth group: 6-8pm

FEBRUARY 12TH

- Sunday school in session
- Valentine's Day at Merrill Gardens 1pm-2pm
- Middle/High School youth group: 2:30-5pm modified youth group – IAF Claiming our common ground

FEBRUARY 19TH

- Sunday school in session
- Middle/High School youth group: 6-8pm modified youth group – Movie Night

FEBRUARY 26TH

- Sunday school in session
- Middle/High School youth group: 6-7:30pm



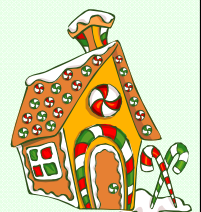
Cupcakes from the Youth bake sale for Heifer

Holiday House

Thanks to your generous support of the efforts of the Holiday House crafters, the 2011 Holiday Bazaar was a huge success. Just over \$3,700 is available for building/grounds and program projects. Stay tuned for reports of how these funds are used in 2012.



We're not just about Christmas anymore! Plan now to attend the Holiday House Spring Tea and Bazaar. Sale items will include gift ideas for Mother's Day. Stay tuned for more details.



Group meetings will begin again on Thursday, February 2, 2012, 10:00am – 12:00noon. Please join us – anyone who enjoys doing a craft, and who would like to donate items for the bazaars.

See you then!

Music Matters

Barbara Hamm

Making the Music Happen!

A wonderful thing happened during the January 22 worship service. The choir was singing its music ministry piece, with the congregation joining on the chorus. I was so wishing I had invited Shelby to play clarinet on the chorus to help facilitate the singing of the congregation. The next thing I knew, I heard the clarinet playing that melody! How did Shelby know to do that? Were my brain waves channeling to her? She said she just listened and decided that her clarinet would be helpful in anchoring the melody. It's what was needed at the moment to help make the music happen. We plan and prepare and work on details ahead of time, at the same time being aware that in the actual moment of the music making, something else may suggest itself as being more helpful or appropriate.

At various workshops I've gone to over the years, clinicians have given numerous tips for ways to adapt a given musical score for use in a given congregation or set of circumstances. That means exploring the possibilities inherent within the music itself—listening imaginatively for what might be produced. Sometimes the possibilities are limited only by our imaginations, or our vocal and harmonic training. The latter can always be improved, and we work on that in choir rehearsals. But one can't always anticipate every detail of what will happen in the actual moment. One listens for the possibilities and steps out in faith to add one's own voice to the song—which is what our sopranos sometimes do in improvising a descant on the spot, or, in Shelby's case, stepping up and playing.

If you feel that you are perhaps being called to add your voice to the Sanctuary Choir, we welcome you to attend a choir rehearsal or two. We rehearse Thursday evenings 7-8:15 pm. If you're not sure what your voice part would be, just come on in. We can figure that out.

The Girls' Choir rehearses on an average of about once a month after the fellowship hour to sing for Sunday worship and for special occasions such as the Christmas concert. All elementary and middle school girls are invited to sing.

If you play an instrument, you are invited to play the gathering music on the first Sunday of each month. You should plan to attend the Friday evening 6:15 rehearsal preceding that Sunday (or arrange a time with Barbara to go over the music). You might also offer to play in the offertory space.

There is always somewhere we can use your voice—or that of your instrument.

Deborah Shanks will be accompanying the January 29 worship service while Minister of Music Barbara Hamm is away on a required work assignment. Thank you, Deborah, for your very capable musical leadership!

Upcoming Girls' Choir Rehearsal: Feb. 5 after fellowship hour—to sing in worship Feb. 19.



Our kids in worship

Have your valentine delivered by

The Rolling Tones



Details to be determined with the purchaser.

Contact: Leslie Lessenger, 707-751-0289,
lhl@lessenger.net

A musical valentine will be presented with
your card/gift between 7pm and 9pm
on February 14, 2012
(Benicia/Vallejo only)

Make this Valentine's Day special!
Free-will donation to the CCC Music Fund

Minister in Training

Candace Frawley



As we continue to reflect on listening to God's call in our lives, I am reminded of one of my favorite quotes from theologian Frederick Buechner. He once said, that "vocation is where our greatest passion meets the world's greatest need." This has been an important guidepost for me as I have discerned God's call in my life, especially over the past few years.

It is important to note that when he speaks here of vocation; it doesn't necessarily have to mean that thing you do to earn an income. While that can be a really nice ideal, it may not always be possible. Especially with today's economy and job market, we can consider ourselves fortunate just to have a job. Any job.

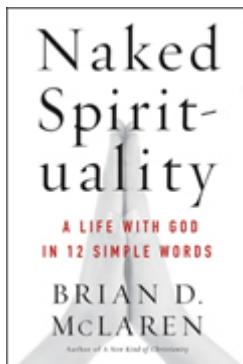
This doesn't have to exclude, however, finding those things to do in the world that connect our passion with the world's greatest need. Perhaps you like to cook or work with food. Maybe you enjoy sewing or maybe

you are one of those unique individuals who like to work with numbers. Any of these passions can be used in service of others. Whether it is working in a food line, making scarfs or socks for those who endure the cold outdoors, or volunteering your time to help a senior citizen do their taxes, it is possible to use your gifts, your passion, to meet needs in the world.

I encourage you, especially during this time of reflecting on God's call in your lives to take some time to consider what makes you happy, what feeds your soul or as we heard recently from Pastor Renie, in the words of Howard Thurman, "...what makes you come alive." Do this and then see how you make a difference in the world. And if you are looking for help on how to make that connection, please feel free to speak to me about it anytime and together I know we can find that connection.

May you feel the love of God surround you and in this presence be able to discern your own call as a disciple of Christ.

Blessings to each of you.



Wednesdays at 7:00pm

February 29 — March 28th

Join Us for a Lent Faith Study using the book *Naked Spirituality*, by Brian McLaren. This study presents McLaren's four-stage framework for understanding the spiritual life, and unfolds spiritual practices appropriate to each stage. Each practice is rooted in a simple word: here, thanks, O, sorry, help, please, when, no, why, behold, yes, and silence.

Naked Spirituality offers accessible, practical wisdom for living a truly spiritual life. Staying true to Jesus' core message while engaging faithfully with our postmodern world, the course presents a proven spiritual program for engaging in and sustaining a meaningful relationship with God. Facilitated by Pastor Renie and Candace Frawley.

Childcare may be provided. Please make sure you let us know your childcare needs when you sign up for the study.

Electronic Giving

Dale Olm

A simple and convenient way to give

This Spring, consider signing up for electronic giving. Community Congregational Church UCC relies on the financial support of the congregation and electronic giving offers an easy way to give on a one-time or recurring basis.

To give electronically, visit www.ccucc.org and locate the donation tab which will link you to our electronic giving page.

Mobile Giving

Community Congregational Church, UCC of Benicia now  also offers a mobile version of our online giving page to make it easy for you to give anytime from your smart phone or camera equipped tablet. Simply scan the image you see here using your phone's Quick Response (QR) code reader app. Ask for a demo!

Thank you!



Pastor's Ponderings

Rev. Renie Stamm-Kirk

Each Sunday through January and into February, We've have had the theme in worship "Can you hear me now?" I've been challenging the congregation to look at what their "calling" is. We've reflected on the words of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, we listen to the words of Howard Thurman. We've sang songs about calling, many of us wrote our sense of call on phone handsets. We've laughed, we've prayed and we've struggled with what it means to be called. Each of us is a beloved child of God and thereby each of us is called to live to our fullest potential and to serve others. Using the gifts that God has given us along with the skills we've acquired to serve the local church body and its ministries, to serve God in the world and to share the good news. Simply put one could say it's "SHOW UP" (be there), "PUT UP" (give generously from your

FIRST fruits) & "ACT UP" (being a Christian in word and deed). On paper it sounds easy, but in life so many things get in our way. Some of those things are our fears, thinking we're not enough, thinking folks won't like us, thinking we will be left out, fear is a powerful energy that can halt us in our tracks. Another obstacle to answering our calling is "worldly distraction", we frequently are distracted by stuff, events and greed when it comes to giving our time, talent & treasures in the service of God. "Pastor there's football and I really need this new X" I hear this and trust me I know it in my own life. But stepping out in faith and answering the call that God has put before us is critical to the world's well being. If everyday everyone just focused on themselves and no one else, there would be no sense of community, there would be such a loneliness. Answering our call to serve changes everything. Maybe

your calling is to feed the hungry, or teach Sunday School, or pray with others, or help keep the church in shape. There are a million possibilities. Serving God is not easy but it is very rewarding and it can make you come alive! Serving God does not mean fitting God into your schedule. And it does not mean doing what you want and just adding God's name to it.

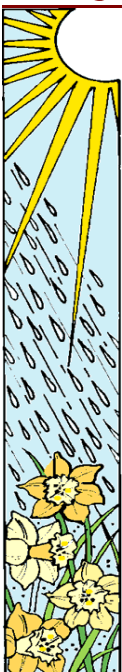
So I invite you to continue to discern God's call for you, and if you are having trouble figuring it out let's discuss it together.

"Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive." - Howard Thurman
With Many Blessings and much Gratitude!



Pastor Renie

Prayer Requests



Peg Stone
Chuck Hull
Helen Nelson
Pat Hunt (Eileen Ruel's mom)
Karen Baldwin (Norma's daughter)
Mary Jane Krug (Debi Stanley's sister in law)
The family of Randi Stauffer (Natalie Kidder's father)
Alonna Cox (Betty's granddaughter)
Ruth Crocker (Nancy Gilman's stepmom)
Lois Cook (Annette's mother)
Edward Olm (Dale's father)

Prayers for all families struggling with pain and separation

Prayers for all our military personnel

Prayers for our planet

We pray for all those affected by war, and we pray for peace

Prayers for Community Congregational and all the future holds for them.

Prayers for our leaders - may they be mindful of God's message of love

Jesus did not come to explain away suffering or remove it. He came to fill it with his presence.



Prayer Requests

**Community Congregational
Church**

United Church of Christ

PO Box 187
1305 West 2nd Street
Benicia, CA 94510

Phone: 707-745-0674
Fax: 707-745-0674
www.cccucc.org

Phones with Caller ID blocking -
Please dial * 8 2 ENTER before dialing.



**Remember
Our Homebound Members**

If you know of someone in our church family who needs a visit, please let Pastor Renie or the Pastoral Care Team (Penny Taylor or Jackie Lawrence) know. We don't always hear about a need right away. Thanks!"

Birthdays

Jan 30	Peg Stone
Feb 2	Valerie Hartzell
Feb 5	Dale Olm
Feb 7	Kathleen Kravets
Feb 14	Carl Mason
Feb 15	Kevin Stanley
Feb 19	Carolyn Osada
Feb 19	Nancy Schaffer
Feb 22	Carla Goad
Feb 23	Larry Oraboni
Feb 23	Mike Patterson
Feb 24	Carol Stephens



Emma & Amaya

ENJOY THE BRIDGE *ONLINE!* SEE THE BRIDGE IN COLOR

We hope you enjoy the Bridge Newsletter! Would you like to read the newsletter by e-mail? If so, send your e-mail address to us at bridge@cccucc.org and save a tree!

Lost a past issue? Look it up on the web at www.cccucc.org.

Written contributions for future editions can be sent to revrenie@cccucc.org (deadline is the 20th of each month) or placed in the church secretary's in-box and marked "Bridge". All material submitted is subject to editing for space and content.



2012

