



The Bridge

May 2014 | Community Congregational Church UCC

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

Rev. Renie's
Office Hours

Tues - Thurs. 10:00am to 2:00pm
and by appointment

Happenings

Thursday 1

7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal

Sunday 4

10:00 AM Communion Sunday
Worship

12:00 PM Middle and High
School Youth Group

Tuesday 6

10:00 AM Women's Coffee

7:00 PM Rolling Tones Rehearsal

Thursday 8

7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal

Saturday 10

8:30 AM Feeding Our Friends of
the Street

7:00 PM Screening of Miss
Representation



Sunday 11

10:00 AM Sunday Morning
Worship

12:00 PM Middle and High
School Youth Group

Tuesday 13

10:00 AM Women's Coffee

7:00 PM Rolling Tones Rehearsal

Thursday 15

7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal

Saturday 17

9:00am Building and Grounds
Fellowship

Sunday 18

10:00 AM Sunday Morning
Worship

12:00 PM Middle and High
School Youth Group

Tuesday 20

10:00 AM Women's Coffee

6:45 PM Church Council

7:00 PM Rolling Tones Rehearsal

Thursday 22

7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal

Sunday 25

10:00 AM Sunday Morning
Worship

12:00 PM Middle and High
School Youth Group

Tuesday 27

10:00 AM Women's Coffee

7:00 PM Rolling Tones Rehearsal

Thursday 29

7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal



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The Community Congregational United Church of Christ in Benicia presents a Mother's Day Celebration:

"Empowering Mothers, Empowering Daughters"

What: Come join us in the showing of Miss Representation – a documentary on the state of women and girls' political power in the United States. Followed by discussions led by educational professionals for 5th-6th graders, 7th-8th graders, 9th-12th graders, and adults

Where: The viewing will be held at 1305 West Second Street in Benicia (The Community Congregational Church)

When: **May 10, 7:00-9:00, Come at 6:30 for seating.**

Any questions?

Please contact: Sarah Thompson
707 342 7825

For more information about

Miss Representation:

<http://film.missrepresentation.org/>

Campus Enhancement

Jim Lessenger

The Campus Enhancement Committee is working through four tasks: 1. The loan, 2. The engineering drawings, 3. The landscaping designs, and 4. The solar project.



We have put a lot of work into collecting the documents necessary to obtain a \$350,000 loan from the Cornerstone Fund. This included retaining an attorney to certify the correctness of the documents, recording the re-conveyance documents from the last loan, obtaining earthquake insurance as was required by the lender, providing proof of property insurance to the lender, and other documents. This is all done and we are expecting a closing date of about May 6, 2014. The committee selected attorney Scott Reep to provide the "Letter of Counsel" and do the closing documentation. Mr. Reep gave the Church a special non-profit rate.

The engineering documents are in progress. These will include a complete rebuild of the sewer system which has disintegrated and "stubbing in" of utility lines to the second pad where eventually we hope to build a recreation hall someday.

The draft landscaping designs were approved by the committee. They feature drought resistant plants and low maintenance.

The solar project was found to be unfeasible. The cost of installing steel solar structures in the parking lot is prohibitive. The companies that we contacted were interested in lease agreements because the church cannot benefit from tax credits. Such an agreement to put solar panels on the roofs of our two buildings was deemed to be outside the construction parameters approved by the Congregation. It would require another action of a Church Council and possibly the Congregation. While it may be feasible in the future, the committee thought that it had too much on going on to be able to take on the project at this time.

We have good news. The city review will only take a month cost about \$1,200. This is because we made a concerted effort from the first day that the taskforce met two years ago to meet all of the design and construction codes. This saves us four months and about \$5000 in fees to go before the planning commission.

The Committee meets every other Sunday at 11:30 in the CE room.

Loan signing and thumb prints! Moving forward on parking lot.



Music Matters

Barbara Hamm

What a glorious Easter Sunday—with handbells, piano, organ, trumpet, flute, violin, bass, guitar, and mandolin, plus the Sanctuary Choir, and YOU, the congregation lifting your voices in “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today!” All of this serves to highlight the importance of this day to the Christian story, emphasizing the fact that the power of God’s love is stronger than anything else on earth, including death. Huge thank-you’s go to all the musicians who gave freely of their talents to enhance the beauty of our services not only on Easter but all the way through Lent. I am blessed to work with so many talented people!



Deborah Shanks will accompany the May 4 worship service and the Sanctuary Choir’s singing of “Christ Is Alive,” with Shelby Riddle on clarinet and Leslie Lessenger on flute. Barbara Hamm will be away helping with the music at the UCC Annual Gathering. Also providing music at Annual Gathering will be Dean and Nancy Gilman.

On Mother’s Day, May 11, a cast of thousands (the Women and Girls’ Chorus along with youth and adult dancers and a drummer) will present the very lively anthem “Ubuntu.” Here is an explanation of what the term means, from South Africa’s Archbishop Desmond Tutu:

Ubuntu is a concept that we have in our Bantu languages at home. Ubuntu is the essence of being a person. It means that we are people through other people. We cannot be fully human alone. We are made for interdependence, we are made for family. When you have ubuntu, you embrace others. You are generous, compassionate. If the world had more ubuntu, we would not have war. We would not have this huge gap between the rich and the poor. You are rich so that you can make up what is lacking for others. You are powerful so that you can help the weak, just as a mother or father helps their children. This is God's dream.

As Rev. Renie is fond of saying, you do not want to miss this!

On May 18 The Rolling Tones Handbell Choir will present “I’ve Got Peace Like a River.” This will also be the last Sunday that the full Sanctuary Choir sings, as Deborah and Marlan Shanks are traveling outside of the country, returning the end of June. The rest of the

Sanctuary Choir will of course continue to sing through the end of June.

Calling all bell ringers, vocal and instrumental soloists and/or groups, and dancers:



I am looking for people of all ages—children, youth, and adults--to present special music this summer. Please feel welcome to come up and volunteer if you have music you wish to share with the congregation during our worship services. I will be away for a time this summer, so the sooner you can come and speak with me about what you might like to do, the better. I am also looking for someone to accompany the July 20 worship service; please speak with me if you might consider serving CCC in this way.

Out and About: Dean and Nancy Gilman and Gail Mason participated in the performance by the Cantare Chorale and the San Joaquin Delta College Choir of Mozart’s Requiem and Ramirez’ Misa Criolla on April 6 in Walnut Creek. Jazz Gorilla provided music on April 11 for Winter Nights at the Unitarian Church in Walnut Creek, a program helping to provide shelter for those who are homeless. Shelby Riddle performed with the San Francisco Scottish Fiddlers on its spring tour April 10-20. Stuart Blackie participated in the Benicia High School Band’s Spring Break Tour to Chicago.

Stewardship

Michelle Cavagnuolo

“And In The End, The Love You Take Is Equal To The Love You Make.”

My house was a Beatles house. We had many albums, which I would stare at endlessly. I would carefully remove the LP from the sleeve and spend hours perusing the cover art, liner notes, and attempt to interpret the lyrics through monster stereophonic headphones. I found solace in the lyrics of McCartney/Lennon. Favorites come to mind, but The End, off Abbey Road, the Beatles last album as a band, has a timeless message that carries through what must have been the hardest time with the band's difficult decision to split.

“And In The End, The Love You Take Is Equal To the Love You Make.”

I find myself writing this article thinking about that profound and resonating message as the means by which we seem to wrestle with questions of giving “enough.” We struggle with resources, our money, our time, or both. Can we, do we, have enough? The church is not immune to such questions. In the last two years as Stewardship Chair, I have come into understanding that while questions are necessary for information, it is not what guides most of the truly divine and life altering change that occurs before us. It is ultimately faith nurtured by love.

We have a truly unique church. It is governed by its congregation, with the leadership voluntarily offered by those with business, educational and life experience guiding the decisions we make together. There is no one person more important than another. Together, we each trust that ultimately it is through the will of our Lord that we are gathered to achieve a common good that is greater than ourselves.

As we begin our annual Pledge Drive, I would ask that you reflect on how Community Congregational is changing your life and those in our communities and the world around us. I ask that you take a moment to pray or meditate on how we continue to contribute to your walk in faith with love and understanding.

In essence, we are all stewards of our church, if in the end the love we take is equal to the love we make.



We need your gifts and talents for
Congregational Care Committee, please
come to our next meeting on May 25th at
9:15 in the fellowship hall.

- Anna Antuatasi



Congregational Care

Fellowship

Laura Pyles

In fellowship we commune together, sharing interests, ideals, and experiences. Amazingly, and especially in our Church, we follow services to continue this connection around good food.

So many have blessed us with contributions this year, for which your Fellowship Chairs are sincerely grateful. Opportunities to participate abound. Check out the calendar posted on the refrigerator in the Fellowship Hall, or ask Laura Pyles or Susan Stofan.



Common Ground Update

Nora Gauger

The April meeting for Common Ground was held at CCC Fellowship Hall Wednesday, April 28th, with a good attendance of over 30 (including several new people interested in joining), and 5 of our members.

Now that the basic issues of organizing are mostly out of the way, we of Common Ground are able to begin to focus on what actions are member organizations have already taken and what new opportunities for common action are coming up. Our Vallejo members have already begun regular meeting with the mayor and various council members to keep conversation going on social justice issues such as Homelessness. Our CG committee working on this has planned three group walks in key Vallejo neighborhoods on May 18th. The purpose will be to better understand neighborhood issues and begin relationships with local churches in the areas selected. Walks are mostly about one mile long. If you are interested in taking part, see Dale Stanley, Nora Gauger, or Pastor Renie. On May 22, Saint Mark's Lutheran,

Pastor Todd's Fairfield church, is sponsoring a strategy session on Homelessness and hopes all of us with concerns about this issue will participate. It will be held at their church (St Mark's Lutheran, 1600 Union Ave., Fairfield, CA) from 6:30 to 8:30. A number of Solano Agencies dealing with this very complicated problem have been invited, including our CG partner "The Children's Network," which bring groups together whose concern is the condition of children in Solano County, and "First Place for Youth," the organization who helps aged-out foster children and to whom we donate our Easter baskets to provide supplies for their teenage clients being placed in new apartments. We will be trying to arrange car pooling for CCC members as this is an issue high on our priorities for action. "Voces Unidas," the Latino CG member group that has been so active in getting better services for under-served Solano County Latinos is asking help with their upcoming campaign to prepare DMV tests now non-documented immigrants will be eligible for licenses after January 1,

2015. This is a big undertaking—in Reno when licenses became available, over 90% of those taking the test failed. "Voces Unidas" does not want the same thing to happen in Solano County, and so wants to shepherd new applicants through the paperwork and help them prepare for the test. There will be a kick-off event on June 14th (the same day as our Breakfast for the Vallejo street people) but the main campaign will start on August 28th. For questions, interest in signing up for any of these events, or just inquiries about "Common Ground," please check the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall or speak to Dale, Nora, or Pastor Renie. Everyone who has been involved in our effort to get "Common Ground" up and operating will be gratified to know how much energy and enthusiasm was evident at this meeting and how many comments we heard looking forward to being able to sign up for specific actions furthering our goals of making Solano County a more humane and just place for those in need.

*I expect to pass through this world but once.
 Any good therefore that I can do,
 or any kindness that I can show to my fellow-creature,
 let me do it now.
 Let me not defer or neglect it,
 for I shall not pass this way again.
 - William Penn*

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Lemon Gnocchi with Spinach and Peas

Yield: Makes 4 servings
 Active Time: 10 min
 Total Time: 20 min



ingredients

- 1/2 cup frozen baby peas (not thawed)
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 teaspoon dried red-pepper flakes
- 1 garlic clove, smashed
- 3 cups packed baby spinach (3 oz.)
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
- 1 1/2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 pound dried gnocchi
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan (optional)

preparation

Simmer peas with cream, red-pepper flakes, garlic, and 1/4 teaspoon salt in a 12-inch heavy skillet, covered, until tender, about 5 minutes.

Add spinach and cook over medium-low heat, uncovered, stirring, until wilted. Remove from heat and stir in lemon zest and juice.

Meanwhile, cook gnocchi in a pasta pot of boiling salted water (3 tablespoons salt for 6 quarts water) until al dente. Reserve 1/2 cup pasta-cooking water, then drain gnocchi.

Add gnocchi to sauce with cheese and some of reserved cooking water and stir to coat. Thin with additional cooking water if necessary.



Pastor's Ponderings

Rev. Renie Stamm-Kirk



Mornings are interesting in my house now that I have an additional mouth to feed. They usually start around five am when my

older dogs bladder wakes her and she will wake me to go out. Well of course my puppy cannot tolerate being left out so all three of us must go out. Upon arrival back in the house our cats have figured out it's morning and therefore their feeding times so by the time I get back in the house two cats and two dogs want breakfast... Try as I might to convince them that 5:15 is too early for breakfast and that we should really all go back to bed, the dogs have started their morning wrestle and the cats their morning song. This is morning for me, they care not that it might in fact be my day off. They need food to sustain them, and since I am the only human up at this hour I am in fact the one who is responsible to answer their needs. Those of you who have pets know my morning ritual, having a puppy and an older dog has changed it dramatically but it has also changed the joy level. Prior to the puppy my older pup Claire did a lot of sleeping, not a lot of play, she loved her walks but she did not run around with the joy she now seems to have. Jessie my puppy has brought a happy puppy

energy to us all, an energy I wish I could bottle. She always wags her tail when she sees anyone, and when it's someone she knows the joy she displays is wild and loving and happy!!! She makes people smile just to walk by her and if you have the benefit of petting her or getting one of her hugs it's like medicine to any wound you might have. I think puppies and churches should have a lot in common, except for the potty training, well that's another article. Puppies bring joy to people, they have the potential to make you feel extra special, they love us, they need us, they can't wait to see us. Imagine a church who did that, brought light and joy into people's lives, a church that every time you were present in it you felt extra special, a place that you need as much as needs you, a place that's just not the same with out you... can you imagine a church like that? I can, though sometimes we aren't always aware of how special we can be in someone's life. Community Congregational, tries to be a welcoming and loving place, in a world that continually presses down upon us. Community Congregational is a place of joy and light, a place that folks miss when they're away from, and a place that wags it's tale for the new visitor... I know this sound funny and silly, but seriously if we can

capture just a small amount of the energy of puppy love, and share it with each other and those who come in contact with us, imagine how wonderful it can be.

"Everyone around was in awe— all those wonders and signs done through the apostles! And all the believers lived in a wonderful harmony, holding everything in common. They sold whatever they owned and pooled their resources so that each person's need was met. They followed a daily discipline of worship in the Temple followed by meals at home, every meal a celebration, exuberant and joyful, as they praised God. People in general liked what they saw. Every day their number grew as God added those who were saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

So what's my message this month?

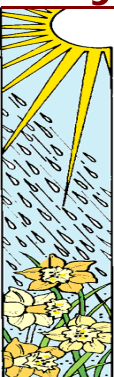
Go act like a puppy with each person you meet! Enjoy life and celebrate all that is good around you!

With Blessings & Gratitude,

Pastor Renie



Prayer Requests



*Peg Stone
Helen Nelson
Alice Burgess
Sione Atuatasi
Edward Olm (Dale's father)
Jennifer Green, her daughters Elizabeth,
Victoria and Isabella*



Prayers for our leaders

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

**Community Congregational
Church**

United Church of Christ

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**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 (Anna Atuatasi) know. We don't always hear about a need right away. Thanks!



- May 4 Clements, Joseph Sr.
- May 8 Beatson, Leslie*
- May 9 Stamm-Kirk, Katie*
- May 11 Stamm-Kirk, Renie*
- May 13 Radesky, Jan*
- May 13 Watson, Kathy
- May 15 Benton, Lydia
- May 18 Cooper, Asha
- May 18 Hill, Matthew
- May 27 Blackie, Stuart*
- May 28 Beatson, Jack
- May 28 Radesky, Mike
- May 31 Wong, Gary

ENJOY THE BRIDGE *ONLINE!*

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.



**COMMUNITY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Located at: 1305 West Second Street
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MAY 

2014