



The Bridge

March 2015 Community Congregational Church UCC

www.cccucc.org

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

Rev. Renie's
Office Hours

Tues & Thurs. & by appointment

Happenings

1
10:00 AM Communion Sunday
Worship
12:00 PM Middle and High School
Youth Group

3
10:00 AM Women's Coffee
7:00 PM Rolling Tones Rehearsal

5
7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal

8
10:00 AM Sunday Morning
Worship
12:00 PM Middle and High School
Youth Group
4:30 PM Common Ground—Team
on Public Transportation

10
10:00 AM Women's Coffee
7:00 PM Rolling Tones Rehearsal

12
7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal

14
8:30 AM
Second
Saturday —
Feeding our
friends on
the street



15
10:00 AM Sunday Morning
Worship
12:00 PM Middle and High School
Youth Group

17
10:00 AM Women's Coffee
7:00 PM Rolling Tones Rehearsal

19
7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal

22
10:00 AM Sunday Morning
Worship
12:00 PM Middle and High School
Youth Group

24
10:00 AM Women's Coffee
7:00 PM Rolling Tones Rehearsal

26
7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal

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28
9:00 AM Building and Grounds
Work Day

29



10:00 AM Sunday Worship
12:00 PM Middle and High School
Youth Group



Campus Enhancement

Jim Lessenger

Construction on the new parking lot started at 7:30 in the morning Monday, February 16. By the following Sunday, Westgate Construction was two days ahead of schedule. Fortunate for us, but bad for the state, there has been no rain and we don't expect any. So, the weather is perfect for construction.

The previous Friday, we scoped the sewer system and found it completely blocked in several places and disintegrated in others. It will require extensive reconstruction at several points and will exceed our \$5,000 estimate by about one thousand dollars. There is a leak under the first parking level which explains the unstable slope and rapid growth of weeds and plants. This money is out of our Capital Improvement Fund and is not covered by our lender, Cornerstone Fund.

On Thursday, February 19, Greg Cox and I met with Hilton Ham and his crew from Westgate. We decided to make the retaining walls concrete instead of wood because concrete is less expensive to construct and it will last longer. I signed change orders for the following:

Addition surveys to fix the location of the concrete stairs.

Removal and replacement of the concrete pad in front of the main doors.

Sewer reconstruction.

Rebuilding the storm drains between the two buildings. It was not done to code in the first place and is draining into the sewer system.

The lighting system is ordered and Cornerstone is cutting the check for the initial payment. We are planning to place a concrete vault next to the lights to hold the battery box. That will add about \$1000 to the cost.

The change orders and two invoices were authorized and sent to Cornerstone by Priority Mail..

Cornerstone was badly hit last week due to the severe storms, but is catching up.

We will need guards when the concrete is poured. It will be brushed concrete.

A personal note: It is a pleasure to be able to work with real professionals at all levels of this project. Cornerstone, Greenshine, Westgate, Jim Goring, the Church committee, etc. have all been exceedingly helpful and professional in all of our interactions.

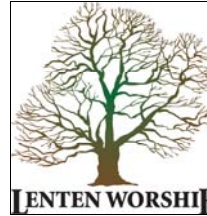


Music Matters

Barbara Hamm

Lent is the time that traditionally has been associated with looking at the frailty of our human existence and the knowledge that we were both created from the dust and shall certainly return to it (Gen. 3:19, Eccl 12: 7). This is indeed true. But what Rev. Renie included in the Ash Wednesday liturgy was earthshaking—dustshaking, if you will:

So let us be marked
not for sorrow.
And let us be marked
not for shame.
Let us be marked
not for false humility
or for thinking
we are less
than we are
but for claiming
what God can do
within the dust,
within the dirt,
within the stuff
of which the world
is made,
and the stars that blaze
in our bones,
and the galaxies that spiral
inside the smudge
we bear.



Music during the March Sundays of Lent

- March 1 – “Come to Us,” Sanctuary Choir, with Leslie Lessenger, flute
- March 8 – “O Lord, Have Mercy,” Sanctuary Choir & congregation
- March 15 – “Adoramus Te,” Sanctuary Choir; **and** “Be Still My Soul,” Rolling Tones
- March 22 – “The Lord Is My Light,” Leslie Blackie, vocal solo
- March 29 – Gathering Music by the Rolling Tones
“You Are Mine,” Women and Girls’ Chorus
& “Holy, Holy, Holy,” Sanctuary Choir

[from “Blessing the Dust: A Blessing for Ash Wednesday” – by Jan Richardson]

This essentially says yes, we are dust, but we’re not marked for shame nor false humility. We should not think less of ourselves than what we are, but claim what God can do with this dust, with the material of which the world, including us, was made—the stars that blaze in our bones (scientifically, we arose from the heavier elements with which supernovas populated interstellar spaces). We come from the fire, literally. We are all “starbursts,” if you will. This consecrates and elevates that dust which composes us, not to be minimized, not to be marginalized, but to matter. To make a difference. A stunning affirmation was posted on Facebook by our own Michelle Cavagnuolo, in which she says she was bent on “giving, not giving up.” [What we may deprive ourselves of in Lent may not have been all that good for us anyway—meat? chocolate? caffeine? gossiping? griping? What virtue is there in giving up those things?] Michelle emphasizes the “giving” aspect: What can we add to this dust to bless ourselves and others? God, help me to add compassion, for myself and others, and to regard this dust of which I am made not as debris fit for the dustbin [the “what a worm am I” mentality], but as the temple of the Holy One who breathed life into a piece of dust at creation and called it good. It provides an entirely different view of the Ash Wednesday ashes on the forehead, doesn’t it!

Rehearsals:

*Women and Girls’ Chorus Rehearsals – March 1 and March 15, following fellowship hour

*Sanctuary Choir – every Thursday at 7 pm in the sanctuary



I am scheduled for hip replacement surgery on March 19. The CCC music program will continue in my absence, ably executed for the next several Sundays by Deborah Shanks and all our other fine church musicians. Thank you, Deborah! And thank you to the CCC Church Council!



Parking Lot Closure, But NOT the Church

This is an exciting time in the life of the church, in a few weeks our parking lot will have had a much needed face lift. Meanwhile it will be necessary to park elsewhere as construction goes on. (That Does Not Mean Staying Home.)

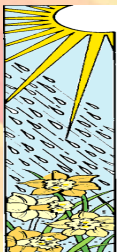
We will need to park on the street. The entrance to the church will only be from the street. Walking down the sidewalk between the CE building and the sanctuary and then through the choir room.

Plans for assistance have been made for Sunday mornings. At curb side in front of the church will be a drop off point for those who would have difficulty walking. A Greeter will be waiting to assist you on your way to service. Drivers who have dropped off passengers, will then park along West M, West 2nd St. and Raymond Street. Those who cannot make the walk from their car, a ride will be provided. Others are encouraged to walk the short distance. After service and or fellowship a ride to your car for those who need assistance will be provided. And drop off passengers will be waiting for you to pick them up.

Thank you for understanding the need for alternate parking. If you can help with these plans or have your own thoughts about parking, please email them to sendmail2jackie@sbcglobal.net.

Thanks.
Campus Improvement Parking Committee

Prayer Concerns



Barbara Hamm
Pastor Renie
Peg Stone
Jennifer Otero, 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

Pastor's Ponderings

Rev. Renie Stamm-Kirk



You're out with your friends on a Friday night and suddenly you notice that one of them has switched from her favorite microbrew to... lemonade? Is it time for Lent already? Giving up something for Lent sometimes evokes head-scratching in non-Catholics, but what might seem like just another Catholic eccentricity can actually be a practice with deep spiritual significance.

Lent, the period of 40 days that precedes the celebration of Easter, has its origin in the early days of the Church. Converts seeking to become Christian, who at that time were mostly adults, spent several years in study and preparation. Under the threat of Roman persecution, becoming a Christian was serious business, so their process of preparation was intensive! Then they went through a final period of "purification and enlightenment" for the 40 days before their baptism at Easter. The rest of the Church began to observe the season of Lent in solidarity with these newest Christians. It became an opportunity for all Christians to recall and renew the commitment of their baptism.

Today we know Lent as a season of conversion: we acknowledge the ways we have turned away from God in our lives and we focus on turning our hearts and minds back toward God. We are

accustomed to hearing from those who give up odd tidbits of affluence—chocolate, pies, potato chips, or the television remote control. But what do those acts really mean? we want to ask. What do they mean for us or to God? Sometimes we get the impression that if we are willing to sacrifice something we really enjoy, that will surely make God happy. That if we forego something that gives us great pleasure, then ours must be a holy offering unto God. But what does that say about God? Like God's radiant countenance shines most brightly at human deprivation. Like God will tolerate some happiness on our part, but not too much, mind you. Like Lent is a retributive season of punishment for our comforts and pleasures. Hmmm. I don't think so.

Many believe you need to fast or give up something you love, i.e. chocolate, or meat... but if we are totally honest with ourselves these are not the things that get between us and God.... Isn't it more like Fear, Worry, Self Loathing, Competition & Hate that get's in your way between us and God? Do you honestly think God cares if you give up chocolate? No I think God is much more interested in what separates us from loving one another!!!

In the season of Lent I will invite each of you, myself included to

give up Fear, Worry, Envy, Competition & Hate

Let's start with fear: It takes a tremendous amount of honesty to face our fear, and to acknowledge that what we often fear the most is losing what we have and losing who we think we are--losing our money, our possessions, our status, our family, our place, our lifestyle, our identity. Losing control over our own lives and the lives of others, a control that brings us a sense of security in this world.

In other words, fear of losing what we have and who we think we are motivates us to try to save our lives.

Yet Jesus said, this is precisely how we lose our lives. This is how we lose our soul. This is how we lose the deepest, most vital, most God-connected part of who we truly are. This is what keeps us from following Jesus. This is what keeps us from becoming Christ-like in our very being, in our presence, in our daily living.

Join Us each week as I invite you to give up what gets between you and God!!!

*With Blessings & Gratitude,
Pastor Renie*

The phrase
"do not be afraid"
is written in the Bible
365 times. That's a daily
reminder from God to live
every day being fearless ♥

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



- Mar 4 Mason, Gail*
- Mar 11 Watson, Jim*
- Mar 17 Wyatt, Pat*
- Mar 20 Gilman, Dean*
- Mar 21 Olm, Adam*
- Mar 22 Hicks, Rhonda*
- Mar 22 Lessenger, Leslie*
- Mar 25 Mitchell, Deanna
- Mar 31 Esparza, Jillian*

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.



2015

COMMUNITY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Located at: 1305 West Second Street
For mailing use: PO Box 187
Benicia, CA 94510

