



The real work of the church is not all about work after all

By Rev. Kristi Denham

Have you been overwhelmed by the suffering you see in the world around you? Are you becoming more and more aware that every choice you make is intricately connected to everything else in the world, that the delicious strawberries you eat might have been farmed by workers who can barely feed their families, that the plastic box they came in will take 50,000 years to decompose, that global warming is being ignored and we aren't sure what to do about it?

We live so comfortably, plan vacations to the far corners of the world, are blessed with loving families, can plan grand weddings and reunions. Still, isn't it good to feel a bit guilty about the abundance we have? We cannot ignore the sufferings and consequences of our actions, but we can bless our time together, in community with one another and those we love, so we are renewed in our spirits for the work we feel called to do.

It's all about balance. Allowing ourselves to be renewed by joyful connections can give us the strength to do the work.

But more! Our joyful connections can actually be the work we feel called to do. That is clearly true for me! As a teen-ager, growing up in a segregated white community, I loved to dance. I felt passionately drawn to the justice work of Martin Luther King. I spoke up in defense of the Civil Rights movement in civics class, but I also quietly and deliberately crossed the lines to go dancing in black communities.

The work we do to build bridges of un-

derstanding, respect and joy is not always easy. Perhaps the only difference now is that the Band-Aid has been ripped off the wound of racism, sexism, homophobia and xenophobia that troubles our world.



Rev. Kristi Denham

I continue to attend the trainings provided by the Peninsula Solidarity Cohort. But my true passion continues to be bridge-building rather than confrontation. The work of the Peninsula Multi-faith Coalition feeds my soul.

Jesus called all people to a ministry of reconciliation. We say every week: "Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here." The real challenge is to walk outside our doors and cross those barriers created in our minds between rich and poor, black and white, Belmont and Oakland. This is the real work of the church.

But so is partying together, celebrating together, sharing meals together. The work of the church is not all about work. Sharing meals and conversations with folks once considered "other" is important.

This is the powerful work that Jesus spent most of his ministry doing. He overturned the money-changers in the temple once. The rest of his time he spent being with people different from himself, teaching and sharing meals, radicalizing the world for love.

When you have shared a meal with the other, they can be a friend. May we build the Beloved Community that Jesus and Martin Luther King envisioned through the radical work of partying together.

Please pass me the wine!

February 2018 Liturgy Themes

Feb. 3 ~ Women's Sunday; Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6; **I Corinthians 13:1-13;** Luke 4:21-30.

Feb. 10 ~ Evolution Sunday and All Jazz Service; Isaiah 6:1-8 (9-13); Psalm 138; I Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11

Feb. 17 ~ Like a Tree Planted by the Waters; Jeremiah 17:5-10; **Psalm 1;** 1 Corinthians 15:12-20; Luke 6:17-26.

Feb. 24 ~ Love Your Enemies; Genesis 45:3-11, 15; Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40; I Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50; **Luke 6:27-38.**

Annual Meeting after worship, Sunday, Feb. 10, in the CCB Dining Room. Come with or without food to share for lunch.

Pick up a copy of the Annual Report with all the issues we will discuss at church or call the church office to have a PDF sent.

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

Parish Personals . . .

Don Hughes died on Jan. 5 in hospice care in Modesto surrounded by family. He had had a massive stroke and was non-responsive after seeming to be on the mend the week before. His 90th birthday was celebrated in our church in October. **Mary** seems to be doing well knowing his last few weeks and months were full of family celebrations. A lifetime of memories will sustain her with the support of family and all of us. We will celebrate his life and memory in our sanctuary on Saturday, Feb. 16, at 2 p.m.

Rev. John Brooke no longer has a driver's license, so he depends on family to bring him down for church. He has been seeing old friends from out of town and assures me he is doing well and will see us soon. Prayers of support in the slowing down of life are appreciated.

Donna Carpenter, part of our extended family and member of our Wednesday night-Bible Study, has been struggling with nasty wounds on her legs that have taken forever to heal. She is optimistic that they are finally on the mend with the help of compressionsocks. Prayers for a full recovery surround her.

Sarah Cook has officially changed her last name to **Merkouria** and has moved to a new home in San Leandro. See Pastor Kristi for her new address.

Brenda Garner is walking with a cane now and might even make it to church if she can get an early start some Sunday soon. Prayers of strength and support continue.

Mary Beth Gray's mother, Phyllis Gray, died peacefully on Dec. 17, after complications from a stroke. Mary Beth and her family have appreciated all the support and prayers of the congregation.

Lois Shouse had a cardiac catheterization procedure on Jan. 31. Healing prayers have surrounded her since she had a brief bout with A-Fib and now this. May the results lead to full recovery and return of strength.

Sally Stewart has taken a fall and hurt her back. Please hold her in your prayers for healing and a full recovery.

Christy Brewer, mother of **Victoria**, one of our newest families, has learned that her dearest friend, **Marlena**, has had an aneu-

rism and, although they were able to stop the bleeding and flew her to UCSF Medical Center, she is not responding well to treatment. Prayers for a miracle and comfort for all who love her are most welcome.

Every Dollar Feeds Kids sends us a 'Thank You'

"We are very grateful for your support of Every Dollar Feeds Kids. Your generous gift of \$200, will provide hot, nourishing school lunches, complete with a vitamin and fresh fruit, for kids in and around Cuernavaca, Mexico.

"The world's economy has impacted us all, and as usual, those with the least have suffered the most. Poor families in Mexico continue to wake up and go to bed hungry. And hungry kids don't learn well.

"Even though food costs are spiraling in Mexico and throughout the world, your gifts will fund 263 meals. Thank you again for your support of EDFK and these children."

February Birthdays

- Feb. 2 Mike Venturino, David Salgado
- Feb. 5 Romeo Linares
- Feb. 6 Erika Mannie, Alex Medwid
- Feb. 8 Belinda Sims
- Feb. 11 Michelle Shirakura, Gabriel Denham
- Feb. 12 Jane Fernald
- Feb. 13 Daniela Salgado, Gunwoo Kim
- Feb. 14 Rose Whitmore
- Feb. 17 Paul Canavero
- Feb. 18 Katarina Canavero
- Feb. 21 Collin Lucett
- Feb. 22 John McKenzie
- Feb. 25 David Steinhauer
- Feb. 26 Andrew Altofer
- Feb. 27 Veronica Palmer, Danielle Chamberlin
- Feb. 28 Elizabeth Nordt

Note: If you haven't told us your family birthdays, please let Pastor Kristi know so we can celebrate with you. Thanks!

Camp scholarships will be the Special Offering for February

The Board of Social Action had a lively and productive meeting on Sunday, Jan. 27. They discussed many wonderful ideas for the year ahead.

The Special Offering for February will go to scholarships and camperships to ensure that we have plenty of funds available to those who might want to attend our weekend camp at Monte Toyon Campgrounds in the Santa Cruz mountains or our Vacation Bible School or any of the wonderful UCC camps at Cazadero or Tamarack this summer.

Envelopes will be in the pews all month. See the pastor if you'd like to request confidential help with costs.

Family Camp to expand to all our friends this year!

Family camp is scheduled for July 19-21 this year. This mid-summer gathering at Monte Toyon Campgrounds in the Santa Cruz mountains at Aptos is a time to deepen friendships, enjoy the wonders of nature, gather around campfires (hopefully outside this year), eat excellent meals prepared by others and celebrate our wonderful community of faith. Invite your friends.

Let's expand the welcome this year to include neighbors, best friends, even other churches. The cost is minimal, \$150 for adults and \$90 for children for two nights in the lodge and four meals together. Scholarships are available. Signup sheet is in the narthex.

PMC needs you — and soon

The Peninsula Multifaith Coalition, of which we are founding members, needs a liaison to represent our church at monthly meetings, usually on the first or second Monday of most months throughout the year.

Our next meeting is Feb. 11 at 7 p.m. at our church! Join us to hear a recap on all the projects at our MLK Day of Service and consider becoming a liaison for our church. Without a liaison at the monthly meetings, we will no longer be a part of this wonderful organization.

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**Peninsula Multifaith Coalition
presents:
PMC Speaker Series, 2019
Spiritual Growth Through Faith**

**March 13 through April 10, 2019
6:30 to 8 p.m.**

March 13	Congregation Beth Jacob, Redwood City	Hinduism
March 20	Island United Church, Foster City	Islam
March 27	Congregational Church of Belmont	Baha'i Faith
April 3	Mercy Center, Burlingame	Lutheran Christianity
April 10	Location TBD	Sikhism

Join us for a simple soup supper and a presentation from one of our many faith traditions here on the Peninsula. If your congregation might want to host on April 10, contact Rev. Kristi Denham at revkristi@aol.com or (650)218-3126

**Peninsula Multifaith Coalition
Presents our 6th Annual
MultiFaith Song Fest
Sunday, March 3, 2019, 3-5 p.m.
Mercy Center
2300 Adeline Drive, Burlingame**



Shimyo-en Buddhist Taiko Drummers at 2015 Song Fest

Lending a hand at MLK Service Day has different levels of meaning

By Greg Thornhill

The Peninsula Multifaith Coalition’s annual MLK volunteer day has become an annual ritual for my family. We really look forward to it every year. Maybe not too surprisingly, we tend to gravitate toward building projects. Over the past few years we’ve been involved in painting a world map on a playground, hanging backpack and coat racks in a school, building picnic tables and benches, and more.

I’m drawn to this event for many reasons. I’m a firm believer that our most noble calling in this life is to help others, and the MLK volunteer day is such a great opportunity to directly give back to our community. The icing on the cake is being able to work alongside folks of various faith traditions. What a powerful message to send to the broader community: Not only do we want to do good things, but we do so together with those of Islamic, Buddhist, Judaic and other traditions.

We seemingly live in a world that often gravitates toward highlighting our differences and the periodic violent interactions between people of our various faiths. It is for that reason that I believe it is so important to show the world that most of us celebrate peace and that which we share in common more than not, such as trying to make the world a better place. The MLK volunteer day does exactly this at the local level.

I was curious what kind of feedback I’d get from the kids about this event. I wasn’t sure if they just went along with their dad because he told them this is what we’re doing today, or if they truly got something out of it. When I asked Josette why she likes going to MLK day, she responded, “I like meeting new people from diverse cultures. I like that we do build projects because we can walk away seeing the work that we’ve done, like when we organized a library, did gardening work, and projects like that.”

Alyce saidd “Helping people and doing good work is a universal truth regardless of religion.” She also added, “this year were

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working with a guy our age who spoke little English, but we were still able to work together and joke around and have some fun while doing the project.”

Wesley’s feedback was, “Building was really fun. It was cool using all the tools and seeing other people use tools for the first time. Also, the schools don’t have much time or money and need to spend it on other things like events and supplies, so it was good that we could build stuff for them.” I think they said it better than I did!

This year I was asked to step out of my volunteer role and lead a build project. The site leader focused on gardening-related projects at Parkside Elementary School. The school strives to introduce the children to gardening, but their gardening site needed help. There were two project teams on the site. One team was responsible for revamping the garden beds: weeding, turning over the soil, repairing the irrigation, and generally bringing the beds out of a sad state of disrepair (thank you, Chamberlins for joining that team!) Our team worked on three different project builds — a three-stall compost bin, two portable potting carts, and a tool shed.

Needless to say, the plan was a bit aggressive! Even with a fair amount of pre-planning, pre-cutting of materials, labeling boards, and working a long day, we didn’t quite finish up the project on MLK day. A few of us were able to swing back to the site on Saturday and wrap up the projects.

On a personal level, it was so rewarding to work with some really great folks. I spent a fair amount of time with Jim Sell



and Ross Weir, both from St. Bart’s in San Mateo. We had a fun time shopping for lumber and materials, studying build plans and trying to organize the chaos that you might envision when 20+ volunteers descended on the site, wanting to be productive. We even had some great conversations over lunch on how to get more involved in multifaith initiatives addressing social justice issues and so much more.

I know that I will personally continue to participate in the MLK volunteer day for as long as I can. It’s a simple way to give

back while also making a statement to our community about what we stand for. I’m proud to hear Kristi saying that we have one of the highest, if not the highest, per capita participation in this annual event. I think it says so much about who we are that we support this coalition, and that we are so involved. When I think about attracting folks to our church, I’m confident that engagement in this type of outreach is a key ingredient to drawing people in. It’s part of what makes our congregation a special group of individuals.

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February 2019

3 Sun	10:30AM - 11:45AM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Women's Sunday Worship
5 Tue	6PM - 7PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Visit Hillcrest Juvenile Hall
10 Sun	10:30AM - 11:45AM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	All Jazz Worship Celebration of Evolution
	12PM - 4PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	All Church Annual Meeting/Dining Room
11 Mon	6PM - 9PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	PMC Board and Liaisons Meeting with Potluck dinner
13 Wed	3PM - 4:30PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	DVAC Committee of the Domestic Violence Council in church office.
	6PM - 7:30PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Bible Study and Potluck Dinner
16 Sat	12PM - 5PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Memorial Celebration for Don Hughes
17 Sun	10:30AM - 11:45AM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Worship - Like A Tree Planted By the Waters
18 Mon	6PM - 12AM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Home & Hope Hosting at Hope Lutheran Church
19 Tue	6PM - 7PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-site events	Visit Hillcrest Juvenile Hall
24 Sun	10:30AM - 11:45AM	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship	Worship - Love Your Enemies
25 Mon	7PM - 9PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Council in parlor.
27 Wed	6PM - 7:30PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Events	Bible Study and Potluck Dinner

Busy Spring schedule for confirmands

By Kristi Denham

Our Confirmation Class participated in the Martin Luther King Day of Service doing gardening and singing for seniors.

On Saturday, Feb. 2, at 10 a.m., they will visit the Hindu Temple in San Bruno and learn about this ancient faith tradition.

On Feb. 21, at 7 p.m. we'll visit a local Buddhist Sangha that meets at the College Heights Church on Hillsdale Boulevard in San Mateo. We'll practice meditation in the Zen Buddhist tradition and participate in a Dharma Talk following the half hour of silent meditation. Everyone in the church is welcome to join us. We can carpool from the church with a bit of prior notice.

On Sunday, March 17, noon to 2 p.m., we'll have a focused session after church on Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in our own Christian tradition. I am honored to be working with such open and thoughtful young people. Again, adults are welcome to join us.

PMC founders to be feted at the JCRC gala on Feb. 27

The Jewish Community Relations Council will honor the leadership of the Peninsula Multifaith Coalition at its annual gala on Feb. 27 in San Francisco with the Tom Lantos Memorial Humanitarian Award.

Founding members Rev. Kristi Denham and Dick Heiman along with current Board Chair, Rev. Connie Winter-Eulberg, will receive the award "for exemplary interfaith bridge building and community service. With its enormously successful Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service the coalition sets the bar for interfaith tikkun olam (repairing the world)."

The event, a fundraiser for the JCRC, will be at the San Francisco War Memorial Veterans Building, 401 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco, starting at 5:45 p.m.

with dinner followed by videos telling the stories of the honorees and short acceptance speeches.

Tickets are \$180 but some reduced rate tickets are available to PMC volunteers. For more information visit www.jcrc.org/bts2019 and for questions contact Sarah Fields at sfields@jcrc.org or 650.847.1715. Tell her Kristi sent you.

Time for Home & Hope in February

We will host Home & Hope at Hope Lutheran Church on Feb. 18 and 20. See Sarah Thornhill or Pastor Kristi for more information. Sign up here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0b4ba8ab28ab9-2018>

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Join us in celebrating

Worship in
Jazz

Sunday, Feb. 10, 10:30 am

Featuring
The Michael Medwid Quartet

The Michael Medwid Jazz Quartet will lead worship on Sunday, Feb. 10, at 10:30 a.m. at the Congregational Church of Belmont, 751 Alameda de las Pulgas. This group is a regular at Chocolate Fest in October, and now they will lead us on Jazz Sunday!

March Messenger deadline will be Monday, Feb. 25



THE MESSENGER
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BELMONT
751 ALAMEDA DE LAS PULGAS
BELMONT CA 94002