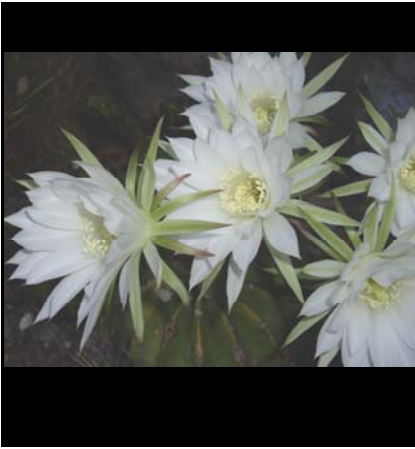




February 2010 **Our Church Tidings**



**Lent is a Season of Spiritual Growth & Learning;  
Two Adult Education Opportunities Coming Up**  
— see page 4

*Pastor's Offering*

**Give Us Our Daily Bread:  
Praying Wherever You are on Life's Journey**

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February, 17 with a Meditative Service of prayer, song, and self-examination. I would like to invite you to consider setting time aside to join with others at FCCA in the Sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. to begin the Season of Lent in an intentional way. During our Worship Services, we will be focusing on learning different forms of prayer. Beginning February 24, Rev. Randall Mullins will be offering a three Wednesday evening class called *Finding Our Home in Prayer*. In addition, a three session workshop called *Graceful Passages: Faithfully Facing Dying* will be offered Saturdays mornings, March 6, 13, and 20. This will be led by a team of FCCA members who are professionals in the field of end-of-life care.

**Why all the talk about chocolate?**

You may have some notions about Lent from your childhood. Often people think about Lent as giving something up or denying oneself frivolous pleasures. However Lent can also be a time for taking on a new practice that allows us to live our lives in a fuller and more meaningful way. The word "lent" comes from the root word "to lengthen." As we move into the spring the hours of sunlight lengthen. I like to think of the season of Lent as a time to "lengthening our lives," a time stretch and expand our lives in ways that allow more of the Divine Light to permeate our days.

**Don't know much about the history?**

The forty days of Lent correspond to the forty-day temptation of Jesus in the wilderness and the forty-year journey of Israel from slavery to a new community. The Season of Lent originated as the time that the Church prepared candidates, or "catechumens," for their baptism into the Body of Christ. It eventually became a season of preparation not only for catechumens but also for the whole congregation. Self-examination, study, fasting, prayer and works of love are disciplines historically associated with Lent. Repentance - literally, the "turning around" or reorientation of our lives towards God - is the theme of Lent. Often people will give up something or intentionally take on a new spiritual practice with the intention of deepening one's connection with God, with self and with neighbor.



**No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!**

*continued on page 2*

### Why the Ashen Smudge?

We begin the season of Lent with on Ash Wednesday with a service that allows time for silence and introspection. During this service, ashes are placed on the forehead of those who come forward as a symbol of our mortality and the reality that we have come from dust and to dust we will return. It is one of many Lenten and Easter rituals that remind us of our historical connection with the Jewish tradition in which prayers of repentance are made with sackcloth and ashes. With this sobering reminder of life's fragility, we begin a spiritual quest in which we consider the meaning of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. It is a time when we embrace the ramifications of "doing justice and loving mercy," as we anticipate the hope of new life.

I look forward to this season as a time when we can come together as a community and deepen our connection with God, with ourselves, and with our world. True prayer helps us to see ourselves more truthfully and to engage with our world more faithfully. I look forward to beginning this journey together.

May the Spirit of God be upon us,

*Rev. Laura*

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### Worship & Music & Song

The Music Program at FCCA is committed to providing quality music that supports the ministry and creates a space for people to experience Spirit through music. Outstanding, professional musicians/singers share their unique talents in support of the Sunday services each week. A variety of musical styles are reflected -- for Spirit moves all of us in unique ways! We are beginning rehearsals for Lent and Easter. Come and join us on Thursday evenings at 7:30. Childcare is provided.

Janice Peterson  
Director of Music

## February Worship Highlights

### Sunday, February 7

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany  
SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

#### *The Gift of African-American Spirituals*

Special Guest: *Daughters of Grace*  
*Stories of Hope from Midway Shelter*  
Special Guest: *Monique Huston*

### New Six-Week Sermon Series Begins ...

### *Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread:*

#### *Praying Wherever You Are On Life's Journey*

### Sunday, February 14

Transfiguration Sunday  
SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM  
Reception of New Members

#### *Mountaintop Moments: Prayers of Illumination*

Psalms 104: 1-13; Gospel of Luke 9:28-37

### Ash Wednesday, February 17

7:00 P.M.

*Create in Me a Clean Heart*  
A Meditative Prayer Service  
To Begin Our Lenten Journey

### Sunday, February 21

First Sunday in Lent  
*Deserted Places:  
Prayers of Preparation*  
Psalm 23; Luke 4:1-13; 31-37, 42a

### Sunday, February 28

Second Sunday of Lent  
*Hallowed Be Your Name:  
Prayers of Awareness*  
Psalm 139:1-12; Luke 10:38-42; 11:1,2

# Circle of Prayers



## Prayers of Care and Concern for

D. Mark Blank  
Donna Danielson  
Kitty Dankworth  
Emily Hirst  
Millie Mauldin  
Scott Meyerson

Danni Morgan-Pearce  
Lorie Morgan-Pearce  
Ruth Reynolds  
Jean Roper  
Larry Schulz

Prayers of Healing and Recovery for  
Lois Pryor, Jeanne Godchaux, David Bonachea

Prayers of Gratitude for  
All the Lay Leaders and Staff Members  
who have served faithfully during 2009

Prayers of Celebration for  
the Upcoming Baptism of the  
Lee-Dailey Family  
(Two Dads and a Baby!)  
**and**  
Emily Hirst as she celebrates her 99th birthday  
on February 13th

## February Birthday Blessings to:

05 Guy Mayes, Jr.  
Deg Powers  
Jeff Ray  
13 Emily Hirst  
20 Nancy McEachern  
23 Doug Henderson  
Sven Jensen  
Lily Rose Julca

## February

## Anniversary Blessings to:

14 Catherine & Randy Miller



## Lent & the Pussy Willow Tradition

The tradition of having pussy willow branches in the sanctuary during Lent really begins with Palm Sunday the previous year. In areas where palms do not grow many communities use the branches of the pussy willow in place of palms. On Ash Wednesday the community would bring the pussy willow branches inside the church and place them in vases of water. The catkins would bud and stay fresh for use in place of palms on Palm Sunday. After Easter, these same dried branches would be burned and used for the imposition of ashes during the following year's Ash Wednesday service. Even where palms are available, this is a lovely custom that reminds us of where the Season of Lent is headed.

May this season of Lent be a reflective blessing for you and your family.

Mike Engler  
and the Flower Ministry Team

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of First Congregational Church United Church of Christ of Alameda is to welcome all into an intentionally inclusive fellowship where we strengthen our personal relationships with God. Through the teachings of Jesus and in an atmosphere of love, we nurture, support and challenge one another, and are empowered to advance our strong tradition of social consciousness and service.

## Our Communion Offering on February 7 is Designated for Alameda Midway Shelter

The Midway Shelter will receive the proceeds from the February Communion Offering. This offering will augment our regular monthly donation and help toward the \$65,000 raised in Alameda each year that supports the operating budget for Midway.

Midway Shelter provides a safe, warm, caring place for the many women and their children who come to Midway for help and assistance. At Midway, they are given the opportunity to renew their lives, gain confidence, refresh their parenting skills and develop ways to move on in their lives and become participating members of the community.

We are helping to provide a much needed service through this ministry.

## Extra Outreach Action in February

Besides the Communion offering in February for the Midway Shelter, the Outreach Ministry Team is asking you to participate in an extra Outreach action on Sunday February 21. What is the reason and what is it for? As a Jubilee Church we have been involved in various actions promoting global debt relief for the poorest countries in the world. The global economic crisis forced an estimated 100 million more people worldwide into extreme poverty. Yet poor countries still send \$ 100 million per day in debt payments to wealthy countries. For just 40 cents per U.S. resident per year we can expand debt relief to countries which desperately need it.

The *Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation* (H.R. 4405) has just been reintroduced in Washington DC, and we are asking our Congress member Pete Stark to cosponsor the Jubilee Act. We will do that by signing a poster during Social Coffee hour, after the worship service on Sunday February 21. Later on we will take the poster and deliver to the office of our Representative Pete Stark in Fremont. Join Jubilee USA Network in the “Change Not Chains” Campaign to urge the Obama administration to support debt cancellation and tell Congress to pass the *Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation*. It is time for global change: time for a global economy that works for all. It is time to break the chains of debt to fight poverty and injustice.

Outreach Ministry Team FCCA

## FCCA Haiti Response

In response to the UCC call for disaster relief efforts, it should be reported that members and friends of FCCA responded with \$845.00 in cash and checks made out to *Wider Global Ministries* which were forwarded to UCC in Cleveland. It should also be noted that this figure does not reflect any individuals' donations that may have been made directly to the UCC website or mailed directly to the denomination offices .

## Lent is a Season of Spiritual Growth & Learning; Two Adult Education Opportunities Coming Up

***Finding Our Home in Prayer*** — On the three Wednesday evenings of February 24, March 3 & 10, 7:30 - 9:00 P.M. in the Miracle Room with Rev. Randall Mullins, we will create a comfortable space to talk about our experiences of prayer, praying together, “trying on” different forms of prayer, including Centering Prayer, praying with scripture, and guided meditation, and talking about the relationship of prayer and action and how we can be more mindful of the work of Love during the days and moments of our lives. **Please register on sign up sheet in the social hall or call the church office at 522.6012.**

***Graceful Passages: Faithfully Facing Dying*** — On the three Saturday mornings of March 6, 13 & 20, 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon in the social hall, a workshop will be offered, led by a team of FCCA members who are professionals in the field of end-of-life care, Rev. Jonathan Leavy, Hospital Chaplain; Scott Meyerson, RN; Liz Rogers, LCSW; Rev. Rebecca Cone, Spiritual Director. Pastor Laura Rose will also participate. **Please register on sign up sheet in the social hall or call the church office.**

## Midway Shelter Meals Upcoming Dates: Friday, February 19

One of FCCA's ongoing ministries is preparing meals for the women and children at Alameda's Midway Shelter. We are in need of some NEW people to step up and help with this vital ministry. On the third Friday, fifth Friday and fifth Sunday of the month volunteer chefs from our congregation provide a main course, side dish/salad, fruit/veggie, bread, milk/juice and dessert for 25-30 people. You only have to sign up for one portion of the meal, and one or more people can share a portion of it, to keep expenses and work time down. It really does not take a lot more time than it does to make a meal for your family. Meals in the past have included red beans and rice with greens, chili, ham and scalloped potatoes, spaghetti, and even roasted chickens from Safeway.

The signup sheet is on the board next to the food table, downstairs in the church social hall. The Outreach Team is currently working on some guidelines and recipes to make meal preparation easier. If you have questions or would like more information please speak to Teri Kennedy, 523-0714 or [tmkennedy325@gmail.com](mailto:tmkennedy325@gmail.com)

## Alameda Food Bank Opportunities

The Alameda Food Bank served over 3,300 households last year: 51% of the food recipients were under 18 years old. 45% were from single female households. It is estimated that they are still only reaching one third of the Alameda residents that don't have enough food to make it through the month. We are helping!

**Saturday, February 27** — We will be joined by Trinity Lutheran Church in Alameda for the 4th Saturday of food distribution for Food Bank clients at the trailer on Thau Way (right off Atlantic and Webster). This will require 7 volunteers each month to help with intake and food distribution directly to clients. We will meet for training from 10:00-11:00 AM, then distribute food from 11:00 A.M.-1:00 P.M., then clean up until 1:15 P.M.. You will be helping people choose their food for the month including perishable and non-perishable items. We will need a pool of volunteers that can take turns each month. The Food Bank has seen an increase in need! Please sign up at church or email Beth Kromer at [bakromer@comcast.net](mailto:bakromer@comcast.net) or call her at 865.3422. Your commitment to this important ministry in our community is appreciated by many people who have already benefited from your participation.

## A Midway Shelter Meal Reminder

There are funds specifically earmarked for meals to the Midway Shelter. We have older members who no longer have the energy to do the shopping and cooking, but still want to contribute to the Midway Meal commitment. They've donated the funds for groceries if some more energetic members will do the legwork. Speak to Deborah Dunster for more information.

## First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

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Rev. Laura Rose, Senior Pastor ([revlaura@fccalameda.org](mailto:revlaura@fccalameda.org))

Beth Kromer, Moderator

Moira Darone, Coordinator of Children & Youth Ministries ([YouthMinistries@fccalameda.org](mailto:YouthMinistries@fccalameda.org))

Rev. Jonathan Leavy, Minister-in-Covenant

Janice Peterson, Director of Music & Organist

Eric Mize, Pianist

Neil Genson, Church Office Coordinator & Tidings Editor ([neil@fccalameda.org](mailto:neil@fccalameda.org))

Leo Baculpo, Custodian

### Church Office Hours

Sunday, 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. • Monday, 9:00 A.M. to Noon • Tuesday-Thursday, 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

*A reminder that should you have business at the church, it's always a good idea to call the offices before stopping by.*

Sunday Bulletin Announcements: Wednesday by noon • Sunday Bulletin Inserts: Two weeks prior

Press Releases for Community Papers: At least 2 weeks before the event

**Confirmation Camp Dates Set!**

**Stories of the Spirit**

at Camp Cazadero

Saturday March 13 - Sunday March 14

Registration Information available online at

<http://www.ncncc.org/story/youth-outdoor-ministries/confirmation-camp-2010> or from Moira!

**Y.E.A.H. News:**

The disastrous earthquake in Haiti has made a big impact on our youth, so big an impact in fact that instead of raising money to support their own activities, they have decided to raise money for Haiti! This year we will be collecting supplies for *Baby Care Kits* to be mailed to **Church World Services**. New supplies can be dropped off with Moira starting immediately and the youth will be hosting a “**Baby Shower for Haiti**” on a date to be announced to mark the end of the fund/supply raising effort. **Church World Services** has determined the contents of each kit to be most helpful to those who receive them around the world and distributes kits based on need, not religious affiliation, race, or ethnicity. CWS asks that \$2 per kit be provided to help cover shipping costs from the CWS Warehouse to the location where it is needed. The March 7<sup>th</sup> offering in church will help cover these shipping costs and other program costs for CWS.

Each Baby Care Kit contains the following new items:

- Six cloth diapers
- Two T-Shirts or undershirts (on onesies, please)
- Two washcloths
- Two gowns or sleepers
- Two diaper pins
- One Sweater or sweatshirt (can be hand knitted or crocheted)
- Two receiving blankets (one can be a hand knitted or crocheted baby blanket)

CWS has already shipped kits to Haiti and has put out an urgent call for additional kits. Kits are distributed worldwide after disasters of many kinds. For more information about CWS Kits, you can go to their website at:

[http://www.churchworldservice.org/site/PageServer?pagename=kits\\_main](http://www.churchworldservice.org/site/PageServer?pagename=kits_main).

**Please speak to Moira about NCNC  
Summer Camp dates for all ages.**

**Sunday School News:**

Lent is coming up, and that means **One Great Hour of Sharing** boxes are coming up! Once again this year, we will be asking our children and their families to participate in the **One Great Hour of Sharing** offering by following the Sharing Calendar (to be distributed with the boxes). Boxes and Calendars will be distributed in church on **February 28<sup>th</sup>** and will be collected on **March 21<sup>st</sup>**. Like last year, we will be presenting the boxes to the church community on Palm/Passion Sunday (March 28) so if you forget your box on March 21<sup>st</sup>, you will still be able to turn it in the following week.

Lent is bringing yet another important thing for our Sunday School children this year! We will be learning The Lord’s Prayer. We will be beginning this process on **February 14<sup>th</sup>** and will be presenting our learning to the congregation on **March 14<sup>th</sup>**. Because the traditional language of The Lord’s Prayer does not allow for a lot of flexibility, and is not what I would consider to be “child-friendly,” we will be using slightly altered language. I am including that language below so that parents can help their children learn and practice at home. This will make for a great family devotional practice during Lent along side the Sharing Calendar for OGHS, please consider working these things into your family’s time together. The more frequently your children can attend Sunday School, the more they will be able to practice and learn this important prayer. When parents are equipped to reinforce the teachings that children get at church through Sunday School lessons, those teachings become more meaningful and valuable to children.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Our Creator who lives in heaven

Holy is your name.

Your Kingdom come,

Your wishes be done,

On Earth as they are in heaven.

Give us this day our daily meals,

And forgive us the wrongs we have done

As we forgive the wrongs that others have done to us.

Lead us not into temptation

But free us from evil.

For yours is the Kingdom,

And the power,

And the glory forever.

Amen.

If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know so we can work them out together! You can leave a message for me at the church or e-mail me at [youthministries@fccalameda.org](mailto:youthministries@fccalameda.org)!

## On-Going Small Groups for Faith Sharing & Fellowship

### *Women Spirit* – 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesdays at 6:30 P.M. in the Sanctuary

A monthly gathering for women to nourish the awareness of the Spirit in everyday life, to support one another and cultivate faith through friendship, and to share the spiritual practices that have sustained people of faith for centuries. Women of all ages are invited to gather on Wednesday, February 10.

### **Women's Fellowship — 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays at 12:00 Noon in the Social Hall**

Join us for our monthly salad bar luncheon on February 11 in the Social Hall. All women of the church are invited to attend. The cost is \$3 for those bringing salads or \$5 for those who do not. Eleanor Stallman at 521.2269 will take reservations or answer any questions.

### **Men's Spirituality Group — 1st & 3rd Wednesday, February 3 & 17, 7:00 P.M.**

Welcoming other men who are interested in discussing and exploring spirituality & faith, and to talk and listen about concerns that matter, the group gathers at the church from 7:00 - 8:30 P.M.. Contact John Pernick at 415.310.2654 for more info.

### **Faithful Families – March Event Host Wanted!**

Faithful Families is looking for volunteers to host monthly events for March, April and May. Right now there is nothing planned for March and it's getting to be a great time to do something outside with families and kids. If you want to be a host or for more information about Faithful Families please contact Amy Hersman at 510-749-0299 or [ahersman@gmail.com](mailto:ahersman@gmail.com). All families with children from newborn through elementary school age are invited to participate in our monthly events as we gather for fun and fellowship and to share the hopes, joys and challenges of nurturing the spiritual life of our children.

### **FCCA Supper Club**

An opportunity for Couples and Singles, across the generations, with and without children, to fellowship around a meal once a month in groups of 6, either in a group member's home or a restaurant of the group's choice, and get to know one another better. If you are interested in being part of a Supper Club group, contact Leslie Sullivan at [laptopshouse@aol.com](mailto:laptopshouse@aol.com).

### **Seekers in Faith: Explorations in Progressive Christianity 101**

#### **Monthly Group, 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesdays from 7:00 – 9:00 P.M. in the Miracle Room**

For those who seek to grow in their understanding and practice of faith through study and discussion. Whether you are full of questions, full of doubt, new to faith or have been a seeker on the journey for awhile, this will be an opportunity for all to go deeper and explore what it means to be a progressive Christian in today's world. This class continues to gather on the first Wednesday of the month on the following dates: 4/7, 5/5, 6/2 (Note we will not meet in March, so that all who wish to can participate in our weekly Lenten worship and study group).

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## A Note From The Editor

**Deadline for the February issue of this newsletter is  
MONDAY, February 22**

#### Editor's Note:

Please know that the deadline date is not an arbitrary one. It allows time for a thorough and thoughtful placement of articles, search and inclusion of photos and/or graphics and/or related websites that may compliment an article, the printing and distribution of hard copies of the newsletter, and the posting of pertinent material to our website in a timely and current fashion all the while affording time for the day to day operations of the church office. Also please know also that cooperation is most appreciated and blessed.