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Rev. Dr. Curran Reichert, Minister

Notes from the Pastor

As we walk slowly through these Lenten weeks that lead us into deeper reflection on our way to celebrating the emergent new life within and around us, I offer you, Beloved, a few reflections from the retreats I have been participating in these past couple of months.

The first retreat in mid-January was with a group of Clergy Women who are deeply engaged in Parker Palmer's "Courage" work (<http://www.couragerenewal.org/parker/>). Rev. Alan Claassen introduced some elements of this work during his tenor at FCC, and I sneak it in whenever I can. The work is based on developing circles of trust. Trust takes time, and the group of which I am a part has been meeting together for ten years. On our retreat, we examined the idea that we serve a holy Mystery.

"The G-d we serve is like an eternal lake whose waters are always calm and clear like glass, reflecting truth to all who gaze upon them. A million, million reflections and the lake remains the same. It is not your job to stir the waters but to show the way to the lakeside." *The Art of Pastoring* by William Martin

The second retreat, in late January, was with a different group of clergy with whom I trained at the national CREDO event sponsored by the UCC several years back. We meet once a year to talk, pray, eat, and share best practices. This year, we spent lots of time walking along the edge of the ocean in Carmel and sharing our joys, hopes, sorrows and dreams.

I was reminded that this is exactly what Jesus did with his disciples; they regularly broke bread and walked together along the shores sharing insights and heartaches. It sounds simple, but I am reminded of the importance of taking time to really connect with one another. At the heart of discipleship is walking together - sharing mountaintops and valleys with one another as we go through this lifetime together. I encourage you to take some long walks with friends this month.

Lastly, I went to an amazing new center for renewal called Multiversity 1440 (<https://1440.org/>). It is a remarkable place nestled in the Santa Cruz mountains. There I was able to partake in some of the leading thinking around community development, civil conversation, and spiritual depth. The convener of the event was Krista Tippett whose company, "On Being" (<https://onbeing.org/>), is producing the most listen worthy podcasts on the air. Much of the event was taped and I hope you will listen to the wide variety of voices who spoke about the importance of finding joy in the struggle for justice and peace. Here are a few tidbits that stood out to me:

- We want the world to recover its capacity for lightness and joy. We cannot call it forth in others without embodying it ourselves.
- Always be more generous than you think you can be.
- All deep friendships are based on mutual forgiveness.

I am truly grateful for your support of my own personal and professional development. I feel fed and nourished and ready to walk beside you toward the Easter Season, when again we will remember our own call to be people of the Resurrection.

May the mysteries of the Spirit bless and keep you always, Rev. Curran

Message from the Moderator

What's New with Council: Your FCCS Council is well into 2018, thinking together and planning for the ongoing work of our Church. This year we are grateful to have all five Members-at-Large positions filled by chairs of existing committees. In addition to serving their own committee, they also serve as liaison to a second committee to report in to Council. While this new configuration adds another meeting to each chair's busy month, we find that our communication and planning as church leadership is much improved. We are finding additional ways to support one another personally, as well as planning together the projects, events, and ongoing work that keeps FCCS vital, responsive, caring, and joyful.

Those serving on Council this year include:

Moderator	Elizabeth Griego	Members at Large (5)	Dotty Abbott
Vice Moderator	Joan Howarth		Jan Edwards
Secretary	Kathleen Gray		Mary Beth Halsey
Treasurer	Susan Kelchner		Alan Kelchner
Ex officio	Curran Reichert		Janice Mattison

Learning about and Communicating with Council: Council meets the first Thursday of every month from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. in the Community Room. We have added to our monthly agenda a time for an **Open Forum** so that anyone from the Congregation is welcome to share questions, suggestions, and concerns. Also, the Council agenda and minutes are now posted on the website. We solicit and welcome your input and questions! If you would like to just sit in and see what Council is up to, you are welcome to do that too.

Council's Biannual March Retreat will focus on *Looking for Seekers Who are Looking for Us*: Our Leadership Retreat on March 17 will focus on furthering Joy and Extravagant Welcome in the work of our Church. Specifically, we will plan how to find the right new members, how to make them feel welcome, and how best to connect them with our congregation. If you have good ideas about the new membership process, you are invited to share your thoughts with anyone on Council.

We're Proud: FCCS is Making a Difference to Creation Justice in the Sonoma Valley!

In the photo at the left, the small figure at the podium in Burlingame Hall is May Boeve, Executive Director of 350.org (and daughter of Tim). On February 12, the Earth Care Committee sponsored her excellent and informative discussion about climate change with 200 of Sonoma's concerned environmentalists joining us.

On February 20, Sharon Duggan, co-founder of *Our Children's Trust* spoke about the current federal lawsuit against the Trump administration filed by 21 young Americans and climate scientist James Hansen. A photo of these inspirational young people is below right. Thanks for turning out for these two great events everyone!



Earth Care Committee

Sign Up for 100% Renewable Energy with Sonoma Clean Power's Evergreen Plan

A large majority of Sonoma County residents already have switched from PG&E to Sonoma Clean Power's 42% renewable energy. However, only 1% of Sonoma County residents have signed up for the Evergreen plan — the 100% renewable (geothermal) energy package that also is available from SCP. Let's be part of the solution and increase that renewable percentage today!

Signing up for Evergreen you will pay approximately \$13-\$16 per month more for renewable energy. That's one lunch at a restaurant in a month. To sign up for Evergreen, go to <https://sonomacleanpower.org/your-options/evergreen/> or call at 855-202-2139.

New Study Shows Deodorants, Perfumes & Soaps Emit As Many Air Pollution Chemicals As Do Cars & Trucks.

40% of the chemicals added to consumer products wind up in the air! For consumers looking for a greener solution, the study's best advice is to "use as little of the product as you can to get the job done."

-John Donnelly

Education Committee

- "Spirit Café" on Sunday afternoons continues to offer meditative, spiritual opportunities for church and community members. Check the church calendar on our FCC website (www.sonomaucc.org) for time and dates.
- Rev. Alan Kelchner and Rev. Curran will be offering a Lenten class, "Our Edgy, Progressive Denomination." This 4-week class began Wednesday, February 28, from 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary.
- The "Women's Renewal Retreat" has 16 women enrolled. It will be held March 2-4 at the Santa Sabina Center in San Rafael.

-Sara Donnelly

Stewardship

The Meaning of Stewardship

Most of us are members of a number of different groups or institutions. For example, I am a member of Costco, belong to Body Fusion Sonoma, and my monthly book group. I volunteer weekly as a member of Jack London Park Partners and the Friends of the Library. I am also a member of the First Congregational Church Sonoma. How is my membership in the church different than all of my other memberships?

My 40-year association with FCC involves true stewardship. When most people hear the word "stewardship," often in an annual appeal, they brace themselves and their wallet, either to open it or to get a firmer grip. Many definitions of the word *stewardship* involve the words "control, organization, supervising, and managing." To a large extent, those words are appropriate. However, the definition of stewardship that particularly meets my beliefs comes from dictionary.com: "*The responsibility of overseeing and protection of something worth caring for and preserving.*"

As a member of Costco or Body Fusion, I get benefits of belonging as long as I pay my money. In volunteering with Jack London Park Partners and the Friends of the Library, I am putting action into my beliefs about the importance of those institutions. My membership in the church, however, involves purpose. Richard J. Leider, author of *The Power of Purpose*, identifies purpose as "... a goal outside of ourselves" and that "only when our focus is larger than ourselves can meaning be deeply savored and long lasting, not just a goal completed and then forgotten." To me, stewardship in the truest sense involves far more than just opening my wallet during pledge season. It involves standing side by side with other members in the beliefs of our church whether it be earth care, social action or caring for each other.

In the coming months, I hope you will consider being part of a Moment of Mission during the 10:30 service and offer a glimpse of what stewardship in FCC means to you. We are all members of this little church on West Spain Street and sharing how we find purpose in this aspect of our life will bring meaning to all of us.

-Mary Beth Halsey

Hospitality Committee

'Heads Up' From Hospitality

Our thanks to all of the Fellowship Team members who are creating a warm and welcoming time after the 10:30 a.m. worship service each Sunday. Here is the schedule for March and April:

March 4: Hospitality Committee with a Birthday Cake

March 11: Team 5 -Dave and Susan Berry, Rudy Doormann, Lory and Eugene Campagna, and Mary Beth Halsey

March 18: Team 6 -Janet Engelbrecht, Elizabeth Palmer, Lori Barron, Dotty Abbott, Marge Evans, and Susan Harris

March 25: Team 7 -Cozette Shenks, Kit Conforti, Kathy Jewell, Joan Brady, Lori Anderson, and Cheryl Franzini-Pegan

April 1: Easter Sunday -We ask the congregation to bring breads or similar snacks. The Hospitality Committee will provide setup and cleanup.

April 8: Team 1 -Ellen LaBruce, Janice Mattison, Garen Patterson, and Janet Volkman

April 15: Team 2 -Alexanne Bassett, Pat Noel, Randy and Linda States, and Gitte Cochrane

April 22: Team 3 -Margie Mitchell, Bev Pearson, Bill Hutchinson, Kim Pack, and Elizabeth and Bob Griego

April 29: Team 4 -Patricia Henley, Taras and Diane Lumiere, and Kathleen Gray

-Linda States

Caring Friends

"Caring" is contagious!

If this sounds familiar, it is because a core belief of "Caring Friends" is that everyone connected with our community will have opportunities to help others. Many of you demonstrate this on a regular basis. You make and deliver soup. You drive people to medical appointments. You call and email folks to ask how they are and to offer what they may need. You honor our Covenant.

Our small committee serves as a dispatch unit when there is a need. If more hands and feet are required, we put the word out. Invariably, many of you respond. Please don't hesitate to contact me or Curran, or any of the wonderful Caring Friends members (Lory Campagna, Sara Donnelly, Susan Harris, Carolyn Osburn, and Bev Pearson).

With gratitude!

-Jan Edwards

West Spain Thrift Shop

The Thrift Shop was packed the day it re-opened on Thursday, Jan. 18, and business continues to be fairly brisk.

In February several of our regular workers were out of town, or had the flu or other ailments, so we thank all of the volunteers who stepped up to fill the gaps. We appreciate the flexibility and commitment of all the volunteers who work so hard to keep the shop in order.

Our donations have been up since the October wildfires, but not everything we get is useable or sale-able and in fact there has been an overflow of discards throughout our valley. FISH and Bon Marche are not currently accepting donations. In the past we have passed our unwanted items on to those two organizations along with Goodwill and others.

We really need someone who is able to drive our unwanted items to Goodwill or elsewhere. If you're interested, please contact me at patriciads@comcast.net.

We have had some success lately selling goods on eBay and will continue to explore that way increasing our revenue. And we can always use more volunteers in a variety of roles so please let me know if you're interested.

-Patricia Serota, Shop Manager

Social Action Team

One Great Hour of Sharing yearly collection is March 11.

"I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do." - Edward Everett Hale (This can be you!)

One Great Hour of Sharing, as part of Our Churches Wider Mission, is the special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God's message of love and hope to people in crisis. The UCC works with international partners to provide sources of clean water, food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, and emergency relief and rehabilitation. OGHS also supports domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response. Please plan to give generously this year! Disaster relief is top priority this year.

The Social Action Team wants to continue our connection with the Springs Community after our successful November Food Drive and December Coat/ Toy Drive. We will have an Easter Egg Hunt and Food Basket giveaway on Saturday, March 31 on the church campus at 10 a.m. All are invited! There will be a "work party" on Friday, March 30 to organize food baskets and fill eggs, from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. in the Community Room. Come join the fun!

Do you or your family have stuffed bunnies, ducks, or chicks hiding in your closet? This would be a good time to donate them to the Thrift Shop so we can add them to our Easter basket giveaways!

We are trying to be supportive of the students and citizens who are rallying against gun-violence. Stay tuned for more information!

-Janice Mattison



Your Hospitality team warmly invites you to a Finger Food Potluck on April 1, 2018

When: After the 10:30 a.m. worship service

Where: In the Community Room

Who: Everyone

Why: To celebrate and enjoy each other's company.

- If you would like to, wear your favorite Easter bonnet.
- To help with setup and cleanup, contact Gitte, Kit, Linda, or Lolo.
- Info to follow in announcements, blasts and bulletins.

"What will you do
with your one wild
and precious life?"

This question, posed by poet Mary Oliver, is the kind that inspires us in the Poetry of the Heart discussion group. We will use Roger Housden's new book "Ten Poems for Difficult Times." Reading just one extraordinary poem a week—each one a gem of heartfelt insight—we will be invited to look more deeply into our own lives and personal and spiritual challenges. An added priceless bonus is that, in heart-warming conversation, we get to know each other better than we ever can on Sunday. This group is open to oldies and newbies alike, whether affiliated with our church or not. It is the perfect gift for oneself or for anyone in need of solace and inspiration. Mark your calendar and tell friends.

"Ten Poems for Difficult Times" will be published in March and is available for preorder now. Our first meeting will be Monday, April 9, at 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. when we will determine our on-going meeting time.

-Janet Volkman

The FCC online calendar has:

- ✓ Information on all FCC on- and off-campus events
 - ✓ All FCC meetings
- ✓ Deadlines and due dates
 - ✓ Curran's schedule
 - ✓ Room availability

Access it via our website, www.sonomaucc.org
then select "Calendar" at the top of the page.



Happy
March
Birthday!

5 – Annika Baumgarten
6 – Candi Horton
10 – Bill Hutchinson
16 – Patricia Serota
27 – Dotty Abbott
29 – Mary Cort
30 – Jan Edwards
31 – Viola Butler

*If you know of a birthday that isn't
listed, please let Angela know.*

April Grapevine submissions will be accepted up to noon on Thursday, March 22.

First Congregational Church of Sonoma
252 West Spain Street
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