Great Decisions
discussion series
begins Feb. 9. See
details, page 3.

Guessing Game Returns
by Charlotte Cutkosky
It’s February, and with February comes the return of the First Palo Alto UMC Library Valentine’s Day Guessing Game! Every February, we set out a jar of candies and challenge congregation members of all ages to guess the amount. The people with the nearest guesses in three categories (children, youth and adult) will win a prize at the end of the month. Watch the bulletin and e-news for further details!

This year, our theme is “Love the World,” and we will be setting up a display of books exploring life in other countries.

To start, we have acquired pioneering graphic novelist Marjani Satrapi’s *Persepolis* and *Persepolis 2*. These autobiographical graphic novels follow Marjani’s young life growing up in Tehran and experiencing—through the eyes of a child—continued on page 9

New Director Begins Work with Children, Youth and Families
by Colleen Crangle

On Jan. 7, the Rev. Ann Duncan started work as our new Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries at First Palo Alto.

Ann is the daughter of two United Methodist ministers and the granddaughter of a United Methodist minister. She grew up in western North Carolina, also spending several years in Nashville.

Ann graduated from Duke University and has a Master of Divinity degree from Boston University School of Theology. She met her husband, Nathan, in Boston, where he was also in graduate school. They married in July 2007 in Asheville, North Carolina.

In 2008 they joined the Peace Corps and lived for a year and a half in Togo, West Africa. While there, Ann worked as a Girls Education and Empowerment volunteer, promoting the importance of women in the overall development of the country and teaching English in the local middle school.

Upon returning to North Carolina in 2010, Ann became a youth pastor and then received her first appointment, as pastor of Hoyle Memorial UMC. Subsequently she was the pastor of St. Timothy UMC, where she was ordained in 2016. Most recently, she served at Maggie Valley UMC. In addition to preaching and other pastoral duties, Ann has designed and implemented retreats for women and youth, and been active in church-community ministries such as a community garden, an alternative high school and a Dinner Church program.

Ann and Nathan have two children, Roan and Emmalena (goes by Lena) and two dogs. The family is excited about their move to California and becoming part of our church and community. We are very happy to welcome them and look forward to getting to know the whole family, dogs included!
Friends,
Grace and peace to you in this New Year. May Christ our Lord bless you and keep you throughout the days to come.

Early this morning the work of a group of faithful leaders of our United Methodist Church pertaining to the division that we continue to experience over whether LGBTQ+ persons will be fully included in the life and ministry of The UMC was released. While it is not solely the work of the Council of Bishops, it is work that has had the full support and engagement of the Council.

Just yesterday the Council of Bishops held a conference call at which time we received an updated report on what is being called the Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace Through Separation. While a conference call of 90 bishops connecting from places around the world can be difficult, the response was hopeful and thankful to God for a process that has been done carefully, respectfully and lovingly.

The Protocol is the work of a diverse group of United Methodist bishops and other leaders from across the connection which allows for traditionalist churches to form a new denomination while preserving The United Methodist Church. It also calls for holding in abeyance all administrative or judicial processes addressing restrictions in the Book of Discipline related to self-avowed practicing homosexuals or same-sex weddings beginning January 1, 2020. The authors of the Protocol referred to this abeyance as “...one expression of reconciliation and grace through separation...”.

Approval of the Protocol would also initiate the process of organizing the US jurisdictions into a region alongside regional bodies in Africa, Europe, Eurasia, and the Philippines with flexibility to adapt the Book of Discipline to enable each region to better serve in their social contexts. Provisions for continued funding to eliminate racism within the UMC and support for racial-ethnic ministries is another integral and critical piece of the Protocol. You can find the full press release by journalist Sam Hodges at UMNews.org.

I want to ask that all of us take time to prayerfully consider the Protocol document and pray for our General Conference delegation and all the delegates who will gather in Minneapolis in May for the 2020 General Conference of The United Methodist Church. May they too be Spirit-led as they consider the work before our beloved Church.

I strongly believe that this Protocol document deepens our work of Christian conferencing on the matter of the full inclusion of ALL God’s Children. May it bring us healing as we work together in God’s mission for the transformation of the world.

Your Sister in Christ,
Bishop Minerva G. Carcaño

Key Points of the Protocol Highlighted
A 16 member panel of UMC bishops and leaders proposed the Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace Through Separation, a mediation agreement to preserve the United Methodist Church and allow traditionalists to form a separate denomination. The proposal requires approval by the 2020 General Conference, scheduled to meet in May in Minneapolis.
Great Decisions 2020 Schedule Is Now Set!

All sessions are on Sundays from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in Kohlstedt Hall (on the lower level). You need not be a foreign policy expert to attend. Just bring an open and eager mind; newcomers and guests are welcome!

Feb. 9: Climate Change and the Global Order
Discussion leader: Thomas Fingar, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford
Climate change has become one of the defining issues of our time. As much of the world bands together to come up with a plan, the U.S. remains the notable holdout. What is the rest of the world doing to combat climate change? What impact will the effects of climate change have on global geopolitics?

Feb. 16: India and Pakistan
Discussion leader: Asfandyar Ali Mir, School of Education, Stanford
India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi rode a wave of Hindu nationalism to a historic reelection in 2019. His first order of business was to revoke the special status granted to the Kashmir region, inflaming the rivalry between India and Pakistan. How will the Kashmir situation affect the region, both economically and politically?

Feb. 23: Red Sea Security
Discussion leader: Nancy Okail, Center for Democracy, Development, and Rule of Law, Stanford
The Red Sea has remained vital for global trade since the time of ancient Egypt. Once home to the spice trade, the Red Sea now sees millions of barrels of oil a day transported across its waters. With major nations like China, France, Italy, and the U.S. building large ports and bases in the region, what does the future of the region look like? How important is Red Sea security for global security? Can the region be a place of global cooperation?

The discussion is richer when attendees have read the background article in the Great Decisions book published by the Foreign Policy Association. You can get yours for $25 on Sunday mornings after church or at any of the evening sessions.

If you have general questions, please contact Tom Fingar (tom@fingar.net).

Coming in March:

Mar. 1: U.S. Relations with the Northern Triangle
Discussion leader: Thomas Fingar, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford

Mar. 8: Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking
Discussion leader: Beth VanShaak, Psychology/Public Mental Health and Population, Stanford

Mar. 15: China’s Road into Latin America
Discussion leader: Harold Trinkunas, Deputy Director, Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford

Mar. 22: The Philippines and the U.S.
Discussion leader: Donald Emmerson, Director, Southeast Asia Program, Stanford

Mar. 29: Artificial Intelligence and Data
Discussion leader: Andrew Grotto, Director, Program on Geopolitics, Technology, and Governance, Stanford

The congregation welcomed Rev. Ann Duncan and family with cake at Snack and Chat on Jan. 12. Photo by Ben Conway

SNACK & CHAT
On the Patio • Sunday mornings after worship

INSIGHTS  February 2020
**Protocol from page 2**

- The General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) of the UMC would provide $25 million over four years “to the traditionalist Methodist denomination established pursuant to this protocol.” The new denomination would give up further claims to United Methodist assets, including those of general boards and agencies.
- GCFA would escrow $2 million to help other potential new denominations.
- To support communities historically marginalized by racism, GCFA would allocate $39 million over eight years to strengthen Asian, Black, Hispanic-Latino, Native American and Pacific Islander ministries, as well as Africa University. Of that total, $13 million would come from funds the separating traditionalist denomination chose to forego.
- After the 2020 General Conference in May, there would be a special General Conference for the remaining denomination. “The protocol also references a plan which calls for a special general conference of the post-separation United Methodist Church. The purpose of the Special Session would be to create regional conferences, remove the current prohibitions against LGBTQ persons, and to repeal the Traditional Plan,” said a press release from the negotiating group.
- A (non-U.S.) central conference would be able to choose with a two-thirds vote to affiliate with a new Methodist denomination. The vote deadline would be Dec. 31, 2021, and if no vote is taken the conference remains in The United Methodist Church.
- An annual conference, whether in a central conference or U.S. jurisdictional conference, also could vote to affiliate with a new Methodist denomination. A vote of 20 percent or more at an annual conference session would be needed to have the disaffiliation vote, and a disaffiliation vote would have to pass by 57 percent. The disaffiliation vote deadline is July 1, 2021.
- The leadership body of a local church considering disaffiliation could determine a threshold of a simple majority or two-thirds for the vote on whether to separate. Decisions about disaffiliation must be made by Dec. 31, 2024.
- A local church affiliating with another Methodist denomination “pursuant to the protocol” would keep its assets and liabilities.
- The pension plans of The United Methodist Church would remain in place for all current clergy and lay employees, even if they affiliate with another Methodist denomination under the protocol.


I will continue to keep you informed as I am informed. Let’s remain prayerful that the much needed healing amongst us has started.

Shalom,
Reverend Dr. Debra Murray

A diverse group of UMC bishops and leaders proposed the “Protocol,” which would preserve The United Methodist Church and allow traditionalist congregations to form a new denomination. Photo umnews.org
A Message from Staff Parish Relations  
*Presented Sunday morning, Dec. 22, 2019*

The Staff Parish Relations Committee. SPRC. What is it? What does it do? Who’s on it? We, the current members of SPRC, want to introduce ourselves, explain the committee’s role, and offer a message as we embark on a new chapter in this our 125th anniversary year.

SPRC is the liaison between the Pastor and church employees (the “staff”) and the congregation (the “parish”). SPRC has duties towards the Pastor and employees and duties towards the congregation.

Our first duty is to encourage, strengthen, nurture and support the Pastor and church employees, always showing respect for their positions. At the same time, we are required to confer with the Pastor and employees on the effectiveness of the church’s ministry, and advise on priorities in the use of their gifts and time. On a practical level, we perform annual evaluations of the Pastor, hire new employees, and set salaries in cooperation with the Finance Committee. Every December we share with the Pastor and the Bishop our recommendation for pastoral leadership for the coming year.

There is one additional responsibility laid on SPRC. It is the briefest of all and perhaps the most important: to promote unity in the church. Unity is not uniformity. Our church body thrives on spirited debate about our future. We have differing opinions on our church’s place in the world and different preferences on how worship should be conducted. We have different countries of origin, a range of educational attainments, diverse spiritual and natural gifts.

The prayer of SPRC for the coming year (2020) is that we be one body with many parts, honoring each person’s contribution, bearing with each other as we make mistakes, all working to the same end of a strong and growing congregation doing God’s work in the world.

To play our role, SPRC welcomes interaction. You may contact any SPRC member by email or phone number listed below. We seek to be active listeners, available to all those who have messages, hopes and concerns that we need to hear. Today as we light the Advent candle of love, may God greatly increase our love for each other as we move together into our future in the First United Methodist Church of Palo Alto.

In Christ,

Sandra Florstedt (Chair), sflorstedt@gmail.com, 415-990-6780 *(3rd from right in photo)*
Pamela Cutkosky, pamelareasner@yahoo.com, 650-328-5208 *(2nd from right)*
Jim Gibbons, gibbons@ee.stanford.edu, 650-851-5445 *(right)*
Tom Fingar, tom@fingar.net, 650-428-1990 *(left)*
Colleen Crangle, crangle@stanfordalumni.org, 650-218-5660 *(2nd from left)*
Tim Crockett, tim.crockett1@gmail.com, 650-329-9685 *(3rd from left)*
One step forward. Two steps back.

There is some good news. And when looking closely, it is really a sign that we as consumers have to be even more alert to dangers to our earth:

• Good news: Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and SC Johnson are ending their memberships with the Plastics Industry Association, which has advocated against plastic bans nationwide and worked to undermine statewide progress on plastic pollution.

Not so good news: Many of the largest consumer goods companies, including Nestlé, Unilever, PepsiCo and Proctor & Gamble, have signaled their intent to make plastic packaging more recyclable, reusable, compostable, or from recycled content. Meanwhile they are continuing and even increasing the manufacturing of products wrapped in single-use plastic or disposable packaging made from other materials.

Companies are investing in risky emerging chemical conversion “recycling” technologies, which offer false hope and lock in demand for plastic packaging. Companies have obscured the true impacts of packaging behind confusing marketing terms, sustainability language and industry alliances, hoping that consumers will continue to believe the false promise that plastic can be improved. These misleading claims that a product is compostable, biodegradable, or made from plants, does not mean that the product is good for the environment or will reduce plastic pollution.

Let us try to avoid single-use packaging. We have a lot of power in what we choose to buy and use. Big companies have the power to produce—but we have the ultimate power in our individual and incremental choices in whether or not we will buy their products.

• Never Too Old to Learn Something New (I am a good example): I have been recycling receipts of all kinds for years. Oops! Should not have been doing this. Many inks used to produce the customer copy are not good for the environment. So please join me in NOT recycling any receipts in 2020. Thank you!

continued on page 8
Donations Make a Difference in Kenya

by Brenda Birrell, Program Director at One Dollar For Life

Many thanks to the generous First Palo Alto UMC donors who contributed to One Dollar For Life’s Girls’ Equality Project (GEP) through Joy of Giving 2019. GEP provides reusable sanitary supply kits that enable girls to manage their periods so they can stay in school and reach their educational potential. $1295 from the 2019 Joy of Giving campaign provided kits to 259 girls. The kits, which are sewn by local women for local girls, cost $5 each to make and are then distributed free of charge to the girls.

$450 from Joy of Giving was used to provide beehives in Kenya. The hives are sustainable and ecologically clean and produce 25 pounds of honey each year, boosting agricultural output in the Nyeri area.

Many thanks to the hardy band of decorators who gave up a Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon to deck—and then un-deck—the halls (well, the sanctuary) for Advent and Christmas: Mira Dabrowski, Pamela Cutkosky, Mark Bateman, Peter Colby, Nancy Larson, John Larson, Curt Gleason, and Lois Hammar. Additional thanks to Mark Cutkosky, Charlotte Cutkosky and Peter Colby for hanging the Christmas Eve services banners and to Janet Nicholls for installing the Christmas-themed feather flags.

FUMC cookie bakers were up to the task of providing Christmas Eve hospitality for families attending the 5 p.m. service. Thank you Carol Gleason, Carol Kumer, Colleen Crangle, Jill Kispert, Lois Hammar, Sandra Florstedt, Michele Conway, Mira Dabrowski and Pamela Cutkosky for providing cookies. Thanks to Pam for stirring up hot chocolate and hot cider and special thanks to Lois, Michele, and Carol Kumer for setting up the tables and cookie trays, monitoring the tables, and cleaning up afterward. And finally, thank you Peter Colby for building a fire in the patio fireplace to create a warm and festive atmosphere!

Canine “Minnie” delivers the pet supplies we collected to Life Moves for the pets of those living on the streets. Photo by Colleen Crangle

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Joy of Giving 2019 Results

reported by Nancy Glaser

We had a successful Joy of Giving campaign this year. See the results below. Thank you to everyone who made donations!

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Total Donations</th>
<th># Donors</th>
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<tr>
<td>One Dollar for Life (ODFL), the Girls’ Equality Project</td>
<td>$1,745</td>
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<td>SEEDS</td>
<td>$1,415</td>
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<td>Ecumenical Hunger Program (EHP)</td>
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<td>Baby Basics</td>
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<td>Wayo Wayo Soccer</td>
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<td>Other donations: UMCOR</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td><strong>Grand Total Donations:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$8,440</strong></td>
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Thank You!

Canine “Minnie” delivers the pet supplies we collected to Life Moves for the pets of those living on the streets. Photo by Colleen Crangle
UMW: Facing Change Together in New Year

Each new year brings the promise of change. As we face change, however it can sometimes feel more like a threat than a promise. The church is a human institution, flawed, yet beautiful, a mess of siblings in Christ striving to understand God’s purpose for us and striving to take care of one another. That’s how United Methodist Women operates.

United Methodist Women (UMW) has 150 years of history to guide us in change. Each day, each new year, is a chance to start again with the knowledge of the days and years before. We don’t start over—we start again. We start again because our faith calls us to be Christians in thought, word and deed.

UMW seeks to be a place where all women are welcome, inclusive of sexual orientation, where we can work together on shared commitments to spiritual growth, mission with women, children and youth, and empowerment of women in the United States and around the world.

The United Methodist Women invites each woman of the congregation to join us in an activity to make new friends and to support mission projects. Contact Nancy Olson for more information, nso2431@icloud.com.

Green Notes from page 6

- The current Environmental Protection Agency just approved the broader use of sulfoxaflor, a pesticide that reduces bees’ ability to reproduce. The EPA’s decision not only removed previous restrictions, it also adds new uses for the toxic bee-killing insecticide. At the same time, the administration pulled the plug on the Dept. of Agriculture’s study of bee populations, which beekeepers use to monitor bee colony decline.

- The Endangered Species Act is the world’s strongest law of its kind, protecting more than 1,600 plants and animals. Since it was passed in 1973, the law has not only kept more than 99 percent of protected species from going extinct, it has also helped hundreds to recover. The administration has moved to make major changes to this important conservation law. For the first time, the economic costs of protecting at-risk wildlife are now allowed to supersede the actual survival of the species. And industry will be welcome to bulldoze, mine and drill in the critical habitats of protected species. EXTINCTION IS FOREVER.

the overthrow of the Shah, and the 1979 Revolution. Persepolis strikes a balance between young Marjani’s take on the events surrounding her, and her day-to-day life as a child and preteen. Persepolis 2 picks up where the first novel left off, when teenage Marjani immigrates to Vienna and attempts to start a new life away from her family. Satrapi’s books are considered some of the finest graphic novels ever written. (Please note: while they are comics, they are not intended for young children.)

We hope you will take a look at the books on display, and try your hand at the guessing game! As always, happy reading First Palo Alto UMC!
A Prayer for February 26

Merciful God, you called us forth from the dust of the earth; you claimed us for Christ in the waters of baptism. Look upon us as we ... bear the mark of ashes, and bless our journey through the desert of Lent to the font of rebirth. May our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; our prayer, the chant of humble and grateful hearts.
—Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers

Finance Update

Dec 2019 Income and Expense Summary--DRAFT

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<th>Income</th>
<th>Dec 2019 Actual</th>
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<th>Budget Annual 2019</th>
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<td>Total Income All Other Sources</td>
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<th>Excess (Deficit) of Income over Expense</th>
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<th>Budget Annual 2019</th>
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The Finance Committee thanks you for your generous and gracious support and requests that you continue to keep your pledges current. Please direct inquiries to Lou Bellardo: lou@bellardo.com

Birthdays & Anniversaries

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>Christy Fung</td>
<td>2/13</td>
<td>Amy Flaskerud</td>
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<td>Melissa Rose</td>
<td>2/15</td>
<td>Dottie Huffstutler</td>
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<td>2/2</td>
<td>Heinz Erzberger</td>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>Kent Iglehart</td>
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<td>2/3</td>
<td>Jean Aitchison</td>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>Kayli DeBacker</td>
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<td>2/3</td>
<td>Asotolu Fifita</td>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>Lordess Tellis</td>
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<td>2/18</td>
<td>David Tsai</td>
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<td>Vilitati Bikai</td>
<td>2/18</td>
<td>Jonathan Tsai</td>
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<td>Claudette Kayne</td>
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<td>Christopher Rahn</td>
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<td>Nathaniel Sterling</td>
<td>2/21</td>
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<td>Jim Carpenter</td>
<td>2/8/1992</td>
<td>Julianne Stafford &amp; Blake Lundberg</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Keith Perry</td>
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Information for the next edition of the Insights newsletter is due Feb. 10.
Photos of church events are accepted at any time. Include photographer’s name, date of the photo and a brief description of the event. Everything is subject to editing. Please send your submissions via email to Insights editor Michele W. Conway: insightsfirstpa@gmail.com or bring them to the church office. Thank you!
Inside this issue of **INSIGHTS**

**FEBRUARY 2020**

• New Director, p. 1
• Guessing Game, p. 1
• The “Protocol,” p. 2
• Great Decisions, p. 3
• Joy of Giving Results, p. 7

Next **INSIGHTS** deadline: Feb. 10