



## Town Hall to Feature Film and Q&A with Producer

Mac Heller, producer of the movie “Rigged,” a 70-minute documentary about voter suppression, will join First UMC Palo Alto at a community Town Hall on Sunday, Sept. 20 at 7:00 p.m., for an online screening followed by a question and answer session with Heller.

The film tells the stories of suppressed voters in North Carolina, Texas, Wisconsin, and Missouri, with commentary from many leaders of the voting rights movement. “Rigged” is narrated by Emmy- and Tony-award-winning actor Jeffrey Wright.

“Rigged” has been shown by the Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church in Selma, the League of Women Voters, the Congressional Black Caucus, and many more.

Find registration details on the church website, more about the film at [www.riggedthefilm.com](http://www.riggedthefilm.com).

“Rigged” is also available on Amazon Prime.

## FIRST Workspace Is Coming Soon!

by Nancy Glaser

First UMC Palo Alto will be offering below market leased private offices to nonprofit organizations. Five offices will be located on the lower level of our building. The rooms being converted to office space are the Stuart Youth Center, the McGiffen Room, and the three small rooms adjacent to these spaces. Current users of the spaces have been notified and agreed to move to other areas of the building.

The purpose of this project is to create operating income for our church budget during these challenging times. Much



like the income from concerts, dance groups, weddings and other activities, this new source of income will be increasingly important for the financial health of our church. We are blessed to have such a useable, lovely, and large property in a prime location in downtown Palo Alto. Our business model is driven by offering affordable space, a great downtown location, good parking options, standard technology, access to conference rooms and other commercial services that meet the basic requirements of nonprofit organizations.

This income generating idea came from Vicki Veenker, Chair of the CEF Committee. She introduced the idea on March 31 at the annual grant approving meeting. Group gatherings had already been limited by COVID-19 restrictions. I heard of her idea and realized I had experience in this work and offered to head the project. It has been a great project with many church people pitching in. These members have been instrumental in getting this project up and running.

Janet and Bill Nicholls – the hardest working and “can do” couple I know!

Lou Bellardo and Robert Lasater – working on our WIFI capabilities with Bud Buttrill and Susan Stephens assisting.

Jerry Johnson and Ruthie Waters – clearing out the VBS and greeting card materials stored over many years.

*continued on page 2*



# Patient Attention May Yield Valuable Discoveries

For many people, the coronavirus pandemic has been a test of patience – or worse. Medically vulnerable people face an anxious time of hyper-vigilance. Furloughed workers wait on hold or in virtual lines for assistance. Special events have been canceled or rescheduled to future dates with continued uncertainty.

Everyone is impacted by assorted frustrations and inconveniences. Many of us are learning the benefits of slowing down, being present (even virtually) to others, and patient attention – a quiet and steady perseverance.

Interestingly, scientist Isaac Newton did some of his best work when the plague forced Cambridge University to close. At home, the inquisitive student invented calculus and developed groundbreaking theories of gravity and optics. Later Newton called 1666 his *annus mirabilis* (year of wonders) and reportedly said, “If I have made any valuable discoveries, it [owes] more to patient attention than to any other talent.”

What have you discovered during the COVID-19 crisis? What appreciations have you developed for aspects of life you may have previously taken for granted? What has social distancing taught you about the value of neighbors, church, community volunteering?

During the pandemic, what have you learned about persistence and God’s presence? What empathy do you now feel for writers of words such as “I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope” (Psalm 130:5, NIV)?

The Newsletter Newsletter, Sept. 2020

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## Workspace from page 1

Both Rev. Dr. Debra Murray and Rev. Ann Duncan – for connections to volunteers and for moving out of the Stuart Youth Center without a complaint.

There are other individuals still to be tapped to give a hand with financial planning and reporting, evaluating the potential of additional rooms to be converted for lease in the future.

Charlotte Cutkosky, Hope Crockett, and I are working to improve our social media efforts, upgrading the information on all the operating income possibilities on the website, using targeted messages on Facebook, and using Next Door more effectively.

You will be seeing an outside banner on our church property

soon announcing FIRST Workspace with contact information to learn more about the rental spaces. Please spread the word to friends, neighbors, and colleagues alike. The only restriction for leasing these spaces is that the organization must be a qualified 501(c)(3) organization.

If you are interested in volunteering your talents with First Workspace, please let Nancy Glaser know at her email: [glasernancy@gmail.com](mailto:glasernancy@gmail.com) ❖



(From left) Bill Nicholls, Nancy Glaser, Ruthie Waters, and Janet Nicholls sort out supplies that had been stored in the rooms that will be rented to nonprofit organizations.



# Gearing Up for Rally Day!

by Pamela Cutkosky

Sept. 13 marks Rally Day, our traditional kickoff to the Sunday School year and our many fall traditions.

One thing Rally Day won't be this year is traditional. We won't have balloons in the sanctuary, songs and a clap-out to Sunday School in the Patio Room, or kid-friendly foods on the patio for Snack 'n' Chat. But yes, we ARE starting up Sunday School again! We ARE gathering our community of young Christians back together!

Teacher Pam and Teacher Alicia will be teaching Zoom Sunday School for children age 3 through 5th grade. We have a new curriculum called "Celebrate Wonder," with new online ways to celebrate the beauty of God's creation and the promises in the Old Testament stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And we've learned a thing or two about online community and "distance learning" from our virtual Sunday School experiment last spring and our virtual VBS this summer. Kids loved getting a packet of craft supplies, activities and Bible stories delivered at home, and connecting with church friends over Zoom.

**New and exciting this fall:** Rev. Ann Duncan will be offering Confirmation class for youth, both a group for middle schoolers and one for high schoolers. Parents and kids: Check your email and mailboxes for more information about Rally Day, Sunday School, and Confirmation. For more information or to sign up for Sunday School, contact Pastor Ann: [ann@firstpaloalto.com](mailto:ann@firstpaloalto.com). ❖



Thank you to everyone who mailed postcards to our students! Please keep the new school year in your prayers.



## This Year's Walk Is Everywhere

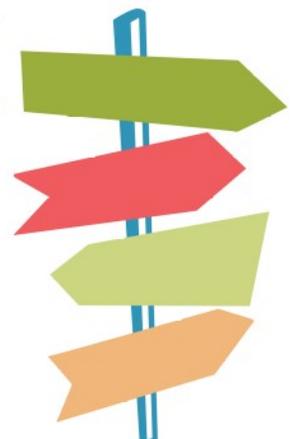
by Robert Lasater

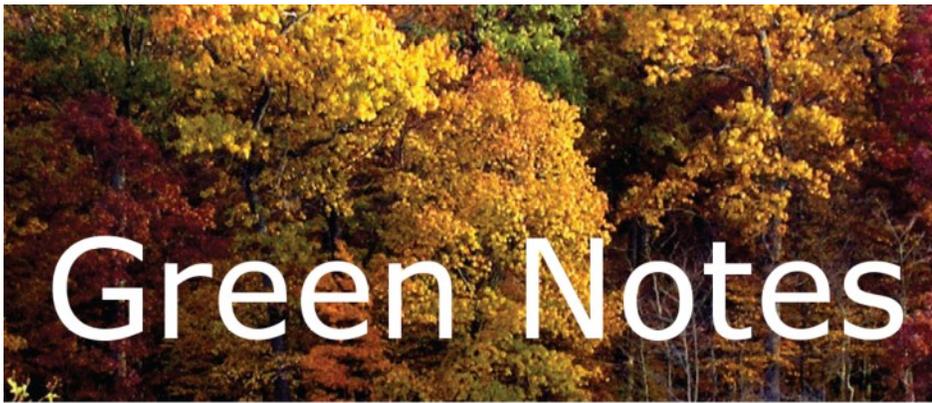
Autumn is approaching and that means the Walk to End Alzheimer's is also approaching. First UMC Palo Alto will have a team again this year and we invite you to join and help us raise funds for this important cause. The Walk benefits the Alzheimer's Association, the largest group dedicated to working to find a cure and providing counseling and other services for victims and caregivers.

This year the Walk Is Everywhere. Although we will not be gathering in San Jose on a Saturday morning, teams are encouraged to hold their own Walk events, in person or virtually online.

Donate or join our team at: [tinyurl.com/FUMCPA-Alz-Walk](https://tinyurl.com/FUMCPA-Alz-Walk)

Watch your inbox for email about our Walk. Thank you for your support!





# Green Notes

by Nancy Olson

While our individual and national attention is divided between the pandemic and the upcoming election, the earth continues to warm and the seas continue to rise.

Through the pandemic, we have lost lives, jobs and a sense of normality. As Congress invests in recovery, we should create jobs that produce less pollution, not more. Our health and our kids' futures depend on it.

While we "shelter," our government has rolled back 100 rules protecting clean air and water, and others that aim to reduce the threat of human-caused climate change. Environmental Defense Fund has filed 45 suits against the government. The courts ruled against the proposed rollbacks 43 times or the administration withdrew the action.

Most recently the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was tremendously weakened – limiting public review of federal infrastructure projects. The NEPA change is likely to have an outsized impact on low-income neighborhoods that are already disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards. The suits against the NEPA rollbacks are expected to result in lengthy court battles.

Of course, I am biased. I am in favor of environmental restraints on new polluting projects that contaminate air, land, and water. I want to preserve our national parks and landmarks. I want environmental justice when it comes to approving new mining and drilling sites in sacred locations and in already impacted areas.

Many don't agree. They say, 'Without regulations we can provide more jobs,' but the jobs would have low or moderate pay and provide even bigger profits for those at the top.

The new rule affecting NEPA will allow agencies to develop categories of activities that do not require any environmental assessment at all. This will save money for the developer and agency.

Wherever you stand on the issues, it is important to participate in voting. I hope you vote with me, and the social principles of the United Methodist Church.

## Optimism Is Grounded in Hope

"I am fundamentally an optimist," said anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela. "Part of being optimistic is keeping one's head pointed toward the sun, one's feet moving forward. There were many dark moments when my faith in humanity was sorely tested, but I would not and could not give myself up to despair."

Some say optimism is naïve, and distinguish it from hope. But Mandela's 27 years in prison and other sufferings would indicate that, in his case, optimism is anchored in deep hope.

Our hope is grounded in God's power to bring life from death, primarily in Jesus' resurrection, and in other acts of deliverance. God brings joy from sorrow, healing from brokenness, love from hate. We can't fathom what goodness awaits us down the road. (Could Mandela, in prison, imagine becoming South Africa's first black president?!) So we keep looking up and moving forward. Such optimism is rooted in profound hope — and is a gift of God.

The Newsletter Newsletter, Sept. 2020



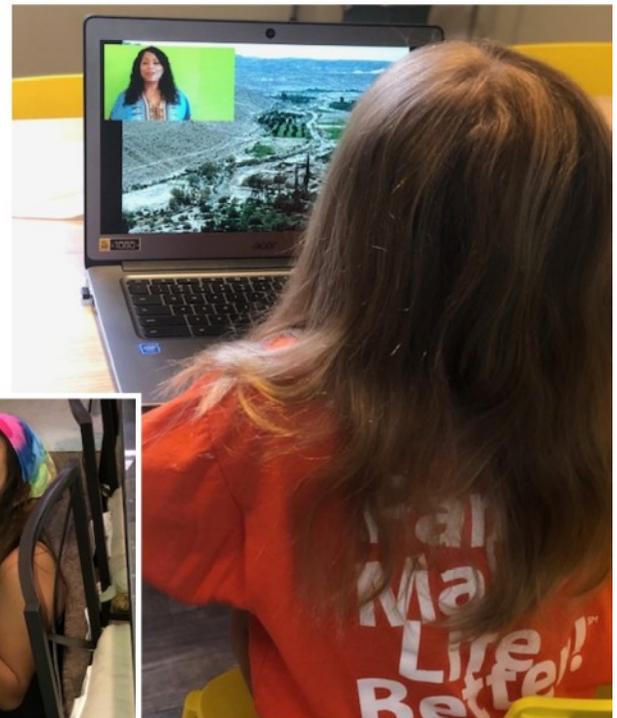


## Fun! Treats! Learning! Kids Enjoy Virtual VBS

by Rev. Ann Duncan

We had a great time at Compassion Camp, our virtual Vacation Bible School, in July. Families received all of the supplies they needed as well as lots of fun treats. More than 40 kits were delivered to children, including many families we reached through outreach on Facebook. We joined together in Zoom calls and the children had access daily to Bible stories, craft activities, and songs. We learned about compassion for ourselves, our community and our world. Most of all, we learned that we are loved!

My hope is that we will see many of these families again this fall in Sunday School, through social Zoom activities, and perhaps through social distancing events such as pumpkin carving and container gardening. If you know of a child in your neighborhood who might want to join us, please let me know. Please keep our children and youth in your prayers for health, safety, and the desire to learn more about God's love for them.



Children and youth enjoyed Compassion Camp, a virtual VBS experience that included hands-on activities at home and social interaction via Zoom during the week of July 27-31.



The congregation rallied in August to collect items requested for people evacuated from the fire zones in Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties.

Photos by Ann Duncan

## Disaster Relief Team Is at Work

Director of Disaster Response for the UMC California-Nevada Conference, Sonja Edd-Bennett, is working with those coordinating efforts on the ground this fire season in each of the currently affected areas. There are many ways to be part of the solution during any disaster. She has listed several important options below.

### Prayer

Pray for all those whose lives have been impacted by these fires, including firefighters, relief workers, and those who are survivors of previous fires.

### Cash Donations

Cash is the most flexible and manageable way to donate to response and recovery. Consider donating online to California Nevada Annual Conference Disaster Fund ([cnumc.org](http://cnumc.org)) and UMCOR Advance #901670 ([advance.umcor.org](http://advance.umcor.org)), or mail a check with a memo to the church office.

### Relief Supply Kits

The conference is collecting hygiene kits, school kits, and fire buckets/cleaning buckets to help those affected. The kits will be housed at the conference office and distributed as requests come in. If you are interested in assembling these relief supply kits, please contact [disaster@calnevumc.org](mailto:disaster@calnevumc.org).

### Whoa!

During this and all times of disaster, please refrain from collecting and sending donations that have not been specifically requested.

From [cnumc.org](http://cnumc.org)



## Hello, First Palo Alto Readers!

by Charlotte Cutkosky

Looking for something new to read while sheltering in place? Here are our recommendations for September:

For adults, *Midnight in Chernobyl* by Adam Higginbotham. Higginbotham writes for *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *Smithsonian*. The book made him a finalist for the Carnegie Medal in nonfiction while making the *NY Times* “10 Best Books of 2019” list. He brings his talent as a journalist to this intensive account of the Chernobyl disaster, forming his extensive research and interviews with survivors into an account that “reads like ... a movie” (*Wall Street Journal*).

For kids and teens, *Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls*, by Elena Favilli and Francesca Cavallo. The book presents the stories of world-changing women from history and from today, featuring lavish illustrations – a different illustrator for every woman. The stories are told in short tidbits, like a book of fairy tales, perfect for reading before bed and getting to know women like Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Frida Kahlo, Malala Yousafzai, and more throughout the year. And if you like it, it’s part of a series!

# Learning Lessons in Community

by Nancy Olson

Greetings to each of you! I have missed seeing you and being able to meet together. It is difficult to write an article about future United Methodist Women(UMW) events when we do not have a clear idea what is on our horizon. But it is helpful for us to remember Hope:

For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with endurance.”

—Romans 8:24-25 New English Bible

While we shelter in our homes, the UMW has been busy at the national, international and conference level providing food and aid where it is desperately needed. Our El Camino Real District has been experimenting with various means to bringing us closer in the duration of this pandemic and when we start to resume a more natural life.

There have been webinars, conferences, Zoom meetings – I have learned so much about current technology, and have so much more to learn. I attend a monthly meeting with members of other District UMWs. We are considering joint UMW meetings and ways to share resources. We are considering Zoom meetings, with breakout sessions so each individual UMW member has a voice. We are open to all suggestions! UMW is open to all women of the church.

I attend a monthly webinar on Just Energy For All. The recent meeting centered on the partnership with the UMW and the NAACP to help a small southern town with its energy source severed to unite in a community solar program.

Let us pray that we have learned lessons about ourselves and our community during this forced time of reflection. When we come back together, let it be with more patience, understanding, compassion for our diverse ideas and circumstances.

Our church is providing many opportunities to stay in touch. See the calendar, page 9. During this time of isolation, it is good to have avenues of contact.

I am happy to see faces and speak with people I care about, and to meet new friends. But I have missed seeing YOUR face if you have not participated. I worry that if we have to continue our organization via online means, YOU won't be there.

Please let me know if you do not have internet connections. Let me know if you never intend to have online connections. Let me know your suggestions for keeping connected. We will work something out!

Please call and leave a message on my caption phone answering machine: 650-327-8009 or a text message on my cell phone: 669-224-



8284, or drop me a note at home or in care of the church (Nancy Olson, c/o FUMCPA, 625 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94301). My faulty hearing does not permit me to hear on the phone, another reason I like zooming – seeing faces helps me with lipreading.

God bless us all. Hope! ❖

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## Essential Work

The concept of vocation, Latin for “to call,” previously referred only to a calling to church work. But then Martin Luther emphasized the importance — and even sanctity — of all types of labors. The reformer pointed out that “God doesn’t need our good works, but our neighbor does.”

RJ Grunewald, in a blog post titled “God Makes Pizza,” describes how this looks today: “God is busy about his work in the midst of your work whether you realize it or not. The laundry, the spreadsheets, the phone calls and the cups of coffee are all deeply spiritual because God is at work in the world. [God] is serving your family, your coworkers, and your community through the work you do. God is at work providing ‘daily bread’ through the work that you do, no matter what that work is.”

The Newsletter Newsletter, Sept. 2020

# SEPTEMBER

## Anniversaries

9/02/1965 Bud & Judy Buttrill  
 9/12/1971 Simone & Salome Bikai  
 9/06/1975 Lou & Patty Bellardo  
 9/15/1979 Rick & Diane Allen  
 9/04/1982 Rick & Trish Riley  
 9/08/2013 Michael & Ann Reddick  
 9/13/2018 Patrick & Coreen Riley



# SEPTEMBER

## Birthdays

9/01 Elsa Nimmo	9/19 Jim Gibbons
9/01 Tanya Buxton	9/20 Emma Keep
9/02 Caroline Bowker	9/21 Patricia Collman
9/03 Jill Perry	9/21 Sally Irizarry
9/03 Graeme Crangle-Hall	9/23 Ben Hickman
9/04 Chuck Roberts	9/23 Lino Bailon
9/05 Annie Edwards	9/26 Sara Salsbury
9/06 Coral Baglin	9/27 Brian Hamachek
9/06 Annette Rahn	9/28 Peter Michel
9/08 Bernice Smoll	9/28 Sandra Wilson
9/08 Jill Kispert	9/28 Karen Paulsen
9/11 Stephen Black	9/29 Marshall Serkes
9/14 Will Buxton	9/29 Ellery Price
9/16 Mark Cutkosky	9/29 Owen Price
9/16 Linda Suzuki	9/30 Bob Chatfield
9/19 William Hickman	



## Finance Update

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](mailto:lou@bellardo.com)

July 2020 Income and Expense Summary-- FINAL	July 2020 Actual	Actual YTD 2020	Budget YTD 2020	Budget Annual 2020
<b>Income</b>				
Total Member Giving	29,138	234,289	232,775	415,728
Total Income All Other Sources	4,839	94,804	142,399	230,870
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>33,977</b>	<b>329,093</b>	<b>375,174</b>	<b>646,598</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Conference Tithe	3,055	29,653	33,542	57,500
Council on Ministries	2,005	7,467	23,689	42,325
Staff Parish Relations	28,738	222,401	234,853	389,382
Office and Finance	1,132	9,514	11,012	19,200
Board of Trustees	6,889	75,656	114,658	182,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>41,819</b>	<b>344,691</b>	<b>417,754</b>	<b>690,407</b>
<b>Excess (Deficit) of Income over Expense</b>	<b>-7,842</b>	<b>-15,597</b>	<b>-42,580</b>	<b>-43,809</b>



- 1 SPRC, Zoom meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 8 Trustees, Zoom meeting, 7:30 p.m.
- 13 Rally Day in the Park, 2:00 p.m.
- 15 Finance, Zoom meeting, 7:30 p.m.
- 20 Town Hall, Zoom event: “Rigged” screening and Q&A with producer, 7:00 p.m.
- 20 Insights deadline for October issue
- 22 Church Council, 7:30 p.m.

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

- All activities are via Zoom except Sunday worship which is available on Facebook and YouTube.
- The church office is operating remotely and can be contacted by phone or email.

### Sundays

- 9:30 a.m. Bible Study
- 10:45 a.m. Worship, live streamed and pre-recorded. Find links at [firstpaloalto.com](http://firstpaloalto.com).  
Virtual Coffee Hour, after worship
- Time TBD Sunday School (begins Sept. 20)
- 12:30 p.m. Community Affairs small group

### Mondays

- 7:00 p.m. Social Justice team hosts movie discussions. See the church e-news for movie details.
- 7:30 p.m. Bible Study small group

### Tuesdays

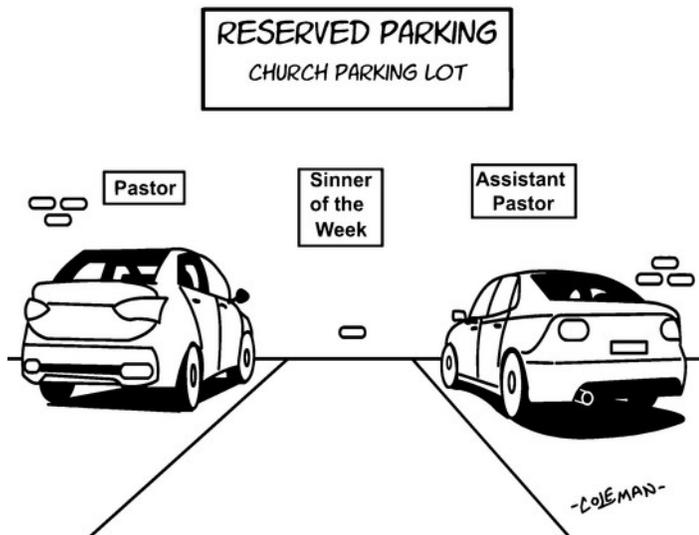
- Noon Community Chats & Check In
- 2 p.m. Bible Study, Channing House

### Wednesdays

- 7:00 p.m. Upstream Bible Study and Contemporary Worship Service

### Thursdays

- Noon Community Chats & Check In
- 8:00 p.m. Chancel Choir



Our electronic giving page is always open! Give at [firstpaloalto.com/give](http://firstpaloalto.com/give) or text Give to 1-650-376-6784 for a link with instructions. Your generosity makes our mission possible. Thank you!

**Information for the next edition of the Insights newsletter is due Sept. 20.**  
 Photos of church events are accepted at any time. Include photographer’s name, date of photo, and brief description of the event. Everything is subject to editing. Please send submissions to Insights editor Michele W. Conway: [insightsfirstpa@gmail.com](mailto:insightsfirstpa@gmail.com) Thank you!



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FIRST PALO ALTO  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## FIRST PALO ALTO UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Inside this issue of **INSIGHTS**  
**SEPTEMBER 2020**

- “Rigged” Town Hall, p. 1
- First Workspace, p. 1
- Rally Day, p. 3
- Compassion Camp, p. 5
- Disaster Relief, p. 6

**Next INSIGHTS deadline: Sept. 20**

