



## Lent Begins Ash Wednesday



Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22, is a solemn reminder of human mortality and the need for reconciliation with God and marks the beginning of the penitential Lenten season.

The English word Lent is a shortened form of the Old English word *lencten*, meaning “spring season.” Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness to fast and pray. This event was one of the factors that inspired the 40 days (excluding Sundays) of Lent.

You will have two opportunities to receive the imposition of ashes.

- 1) Come anytime between 12:30 and 1:00 p.m.
- 2) Come to an Ash Wednesday service at 7:00 p.m. with the choir and a meditation.

*#playlikeagirl*

## Organist Anna Lapwood Presents a Concert in Our Sanctuary in March

Get your tickets now for the Anna Lapwood organ concert in our sanctuary Tuesday, March 28. Ms. Lapwood is an extraordinary organist, as well as a conductor and a broadcaster with BBC radio.

While studying at Oxford University, she became the first female in Magdalen College’s 560-year history to be awarded its Organ Scholarship. Her passion for the organ is matched by her mission to support girls and women in music.

In the March 28 concert, she will present an eclectic program of music, playing our Merritt C. Speidel organ, one of the largest and most versatile organs on the West Coast. Works will include favorites by Bach and Debussy, new gems commissioned by Lapwood to shine a light on contemporary female composers, and Lapwood’s new transcriptions of some of the best-loved film soundtracks of our time.

Seats are reserved. Tickets are \$25, with discounts for students and youth. Tickets are sold through City Box Office. Purchase at <https://cityboxoffice.com/AnnaLapwoodOrganConcert>. The concert is expected to be a sellout, so don’t wait till it’s too late!

Masks are required at all times for this event. Full vaccinations and boosters are strongly recommended.❖



## ANNA LAPWOOD Organ Concert

MARCH 28, 7:00 PM

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF PALO ALTO

625 Hamilton Avenue  
Palo Alto, CA 94301-2016

650-323-6167 Fax: 650-323-3923  
[www.FirstPaloAlto.com](http://www.FirstPaloAlto.com)

# I Like It Here!

by Douglas Norris

We ended 2022 with a glorious celebration! The 2022 budget was adopted with a deficit of \$190,000. We ended the year with expenditures of \$600,544 plus a surplus of \$14,081! Praise the Lord! And thank you for responding to God’s work with faithful generosity.

Please continue to support and pray for our church. Pray especially for the bishop and district superintendents as they begin the process of appointing someone to be our pastor starting July 1.

You might be interested in the process. Our Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) was asked by District Superintendent Samuel Hong to submit a description of the church and what the church needs in a pastor. Of course, Jesus is not available but we pray that someone with most of the qualities we need will be appointed.

At some point, Superintendent Hong will bring a pastor to meet with the SPRC. Hopefully the interview will go well, but the committee can ask for someone else. I recall that when I left our church in 1974, I said “No” to the appointment and Manteca Church said “No” to their appointment. I was the next one who was introduced to the Manteca committee and we both—the church and I—were happily in ministry together.

February sees the beginning of Lent. We will have two opportunities for the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22—anytime between 12:30 and 1:00 p.m. and a full service in the evening at 7:00.

The Lenten theme is Mystery and Wonder. Sunday sermons will be:

Mystery and Wonder of the Mess We’re In	Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-13
Mystery and Wonder of Birth	John 3:1-15
Mystery and Wonder of Water	John 4:5-42
Mystery and Wonder of What God Sees	1 Samuel 16:1-13
Mystery and Wonder of Death	John 11:1-45

I pray you will join your church family in person or online at 10:45 Sunday mornings.

You are invited to participate in the Sermon Scripture Study. We meet on Zoom every Wednesday at 12 noon. The link is sent around 10:00 on Wednesday morning.❖



## Interested in Church Membership?

Some people have expressed interest in becoming members of the church. Pastor Doug will lead a get-together to talk about the meaning of membership. Write him at [douginorris@gmail.com](mailto:douginorris@gmail.com) to express interest or ask questions.❖

## Back by Popular Demand ...

Easter weekend is April 8-9. We will celebrate again this year with these popular activities:

### Easter Egg Hunt

Pastor G is planning an encore of this fun activity for preschool and elementary age children. Check next month for the date and details, and spread the word to friends and neighbors!

### Easter Breakfast

Mark your calendar. 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Easter Sunday on the patio. See Pam Cutkosky to help out with our annual festive breakfast.❖





**YOU** are cordially invited to

# Party at the Parsonage

Saturday afternoon Feb. 11, beginning at 2:00 p.m.

This will be an opportunity for our church family to gather together to enjoy greeting and visiting. If you would like, bring finger food and a favorite table game.

We look forward to seeing you.

—Doug and Ellie



## Stretching Our Faith Meets Weekly

Rev. Karen Paulsen invites you to “Stretching Our Faith” which meets *in person* every Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. in the Wesley Room.

Currently, the Stretching our Faith book group is reading *Unbelievable* by Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong, through Tuesday Feb. 7. Anyone is welcome to pop in for discussion as we dust off religious beliefs we never seem to review.

Tuesday, Feb. 14, we will begin discussing a new topic using another Bishop Spong book, *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism*.

Contact Karen by email at [retirekp12@gmail.com](mailto:retirekp12@gmail.com) if you are interested or want to know more.

Books can be purchased from Amazon or local booksellers.❖

## Covenant Class: New Study, New Time

by Linda Grossman

In January, the Covenant Class began reading *Do I Stay Christian?* Recommended to us by Bob Olmstead, it is a book for our time, a guide for the doubters, the disappointed, and the disillusioned. Spirit guide Brian McLaren addresses this powerful question that surprising numbers of people—including pastors, priests, and other religious leaders—are asking in private. Combining his own experience with that of thousands who have confided in him, McLaren helps readers make a responsible, honest, ethical decision about their religious identity.

The class has changed its meeting time to Sunday evening Zoom at 6:00 p.m. If you’d like to join the class for this 12-week journey, please contact Linda Grossman at 650-814-8779. The book study began Jan. 22 but you still are welcome to join.

The book can be purchased from Amazon or local booksellers.❖

## Great Decisions 2023 Discussion Series Begins February 19

As the football season winds down and we prepare for the season of Lent, we are also



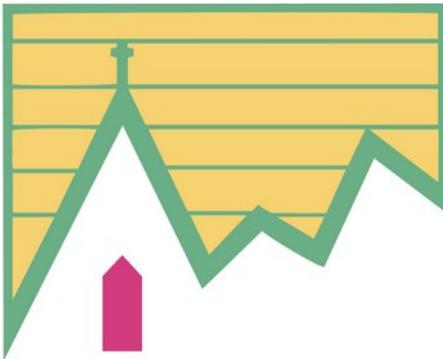
preparing for the return of the Great Decisions program that has been sponsored by First UMC Palo Alto for more than 30 years.

Each year we examine eight international issues and their policy implications for the United States. The program this year will begin Feb. 19 and continue each Sunday through April 16 (except April 9, Easter).

*continued on page 4*

## Sermon Scripture Study

meets every Wednesday at noon via Zoom. Join the pastor to read and discuss the scripture that will be part of the following Sunday’s worship service. The Zoom link is emailed Wednesday morning.❖



# Church FINANCES

Hallelujah! Our church finished 2022 with a *surplus* of \$17,644. This surprising result was due to (1) our member giving exceeding budget by more than \$100,000, and (2) our expenses coming in more than \$100,000 below budget. Thanks to all of you for your generous giving and your stewardship of church funds.

The approved 2023 budget forecasts a total income of \$607,000 and expenses of \$733,000—a deficit of \$125,000. This deficit can be covered by the cumulative budget reserve of \$211,000. Deficit budgets are, however, NOT sustainable over the long term. We need to find new and increased income sources.

Finally, the 2022 Joy of Giving reached a total of \$23,264. This is a new record! Thanks to each of you for your donations to the organizations supported in this year’s Joy of Giving.❖

## Great Decisions from page 3

You are welcome to attend any or all sessions. You may attend in person in Kohlstedt Hall or online via Zoom. If you decide to attend in person, masks are required.

You need not be a foreign policy expert to attend; just bring an open and eager mind. Newcomers and guests are welcome!

If you have participated in the past, it is likely that we have your contact information. If you would like to confirm that, please contact Lou Bellardo ([lou@bellardo.com](mailto:lou@bellardo.com)). You will need to register only once for the entire series. Find instructions for registering on the Church website at: <https://firstpaloalto.com/great-decisions-2023>. Reminders and the Zoom link will be pushed to all who have registered on the Thursday before each Sunday session.

The topics that are covered in the Great Decisions workbook prepared by the independent and non-partisan Foreign Policy Association are listed below. It is not necessary to purchase or read the workbook, but if you want to do so, you can use the Foreign Policy Association website at [https://www.fpa.org/great\\_decisions/?act=gd\\_topics](https://www.fpa.org/great_decisions/?act=gd_topics) in order to access information on how to order.

Energy Geopolitics	Politics in Latin America
War Crimes	Global Famine
China and the U.S.	Iran at a Crossroads
Economic Warfare	Climate Migration

On Feb. 19, we will cover Energy Geopolitics. The discussion of energy transitions and geopolitics will be led by Prof. Jim Sweeney, Professor of Management Science and Engineering and Senior Fellow at Stanford’s Precourt Institute for Energy Studies.

On Feb. 26, we will cover China and the U.S. We are pleased that the discussion of China and the U.S. will be led by Tom Fingar. Tom is a fellow at Stanford’s Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center who has held many senior positions in Washington including Assistant Secretary of State and Deputy Director of National Intelligence.

Sessions in March and April may not follow the order the topics are covered in the workbook.

If you have general questions, please contact Tom Fingar ([tom@fingar.net](mailto:tom@fingar.net)).❖





## We're Hiring! Help Us Find Our New Concert Coordinator

Our wonderful Jerry Johnson is retiring and looking to ease out of the job of Concert Coordinator for our church. Over 11 years, she has built our reputation as a premier

venue for concerts in our sanctuary and done an amazing job managing performing arts groups in our spaces. We thank her profusely!

Your Staff Parish Relations Committee, which hires staff for the church, has been advertising this position for several months. We are reaching out to you, the congregation, for help in spreading the word through your own networks and contacts.

**Perhaps you know someone who would be a good match for this position, or maybe this position interests you personally.**

In a nutshell, the Concert Coordinator:

- Oversees concerts in our facility
- Handles inquiries about renting our spaces and books concerts
- Manages our contracts with the arts groups that perform here
- Works with office staff, audio operators, and custodians to ensure smooth performances

This is a part-time position paid by the hour. During concerts, most of which are on weekends and evenings, the Concert Coordinator must be on site, but other hours are flexible.

There is a detailed job description on our church website, [firstpaloalto.com](http://firstpaloalto.com). See the Careers page under “About Us.” ([firstpaloalto.com/careers/](http://firstpaloalto.com/careers/))

SPRC thanks you for spreading the word!❖

—Pamela Cutkosky, Chair, Staff Parish Relations Committee  
[sprc@firstpaloalto.com](mailto:sprc@firstpaloalto.com)



## Joy of Giving— A Huge Success!

by Nancy Glaser, Chair, Social Action Committee

Each year during the Advent season, our church sponsors the traditional Joy of Giving campaign to raise funds for selected nonprofits both in our community and the world. Typically, there is a connection among members of our church and the organizations we sponsor. This year we sponsored the following organizations.

In our community:

- Ada’s Café
- Ecumenical Hunger Program
- UMCOR U.S. Disaster Relief

In the world:

- Global Uplift Project
- Wayo Wayo Kibra
- Ukraine Displaced Families

During the coming months, we will highlight each of the six organizations in Insights.

Thank you to all who contributed this year. A total of \$23,254 was raised, the most we ever recorded! Your donations will go to making the world a better place! Thank you.❖

Scripture is a sacred book meant to provoke us in ways that will move us toward God. And often, that is the very last thing we are looking for. We would rather have an answer, a simple plan, even a nicely tidy moral story. But Scripture gives us none of these things, because the holy is anything but domestic. We go looking to find a plan and instead are sent on a treasure hunt.

—Danielle Shroyer, *Original Blessing*

## Supporting Our Missionary Katherine Parker



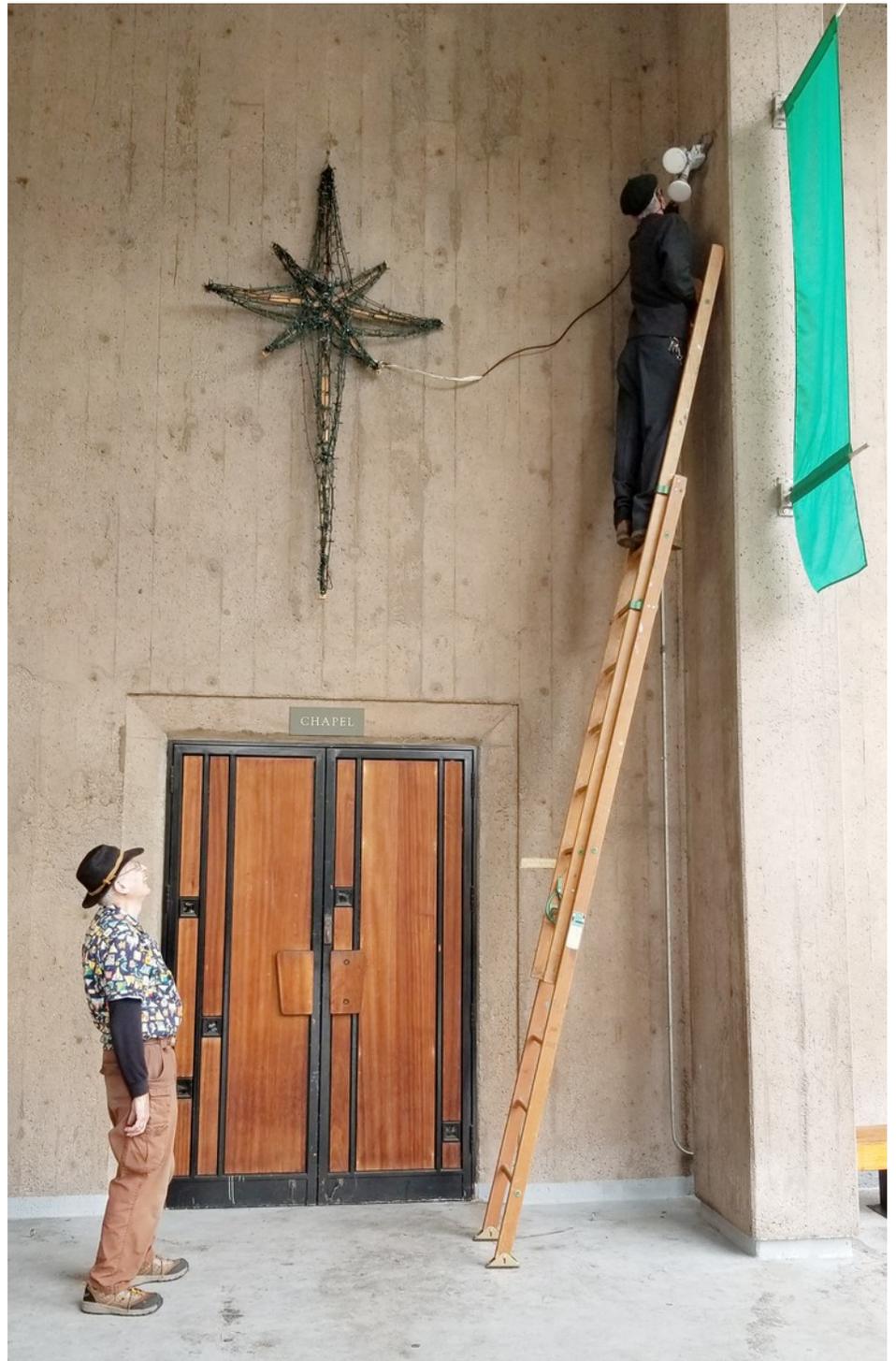
In support of United Methodist missionary Katherine Parker, our church makes a yearly contribution. In 2022, we made a \$2,500 donation.

Katherine serves in Nepal. She writes this brief summary of her activities:

“Highlights have included support of several projects including Ending Violence for Equality, ProACT (mental health), and CLIMATE (adaptation and mitigation). In November I was asked to join the leadership team of the United Mission to Nepal.

Your faithfulness in financial and prayer support is what enables me to be present in Nepal and ties our church together in connections around the world.

Your sister in service for Christ,  
Katherine”



## Thanks for Your Help!

The Sacred Space Guild and Worship Committee thank all who helped deck the halls and un-deck the halls (i.e., our sanctuary and outdoor spaces) for the Advent and Christmas seasons: Nancy Larson, John Larson, Mira Dabrowski, Pam and Mark Cutkosky, Carol Kumer, Linda Grossman, Debbie Krueger, Rick Allen, Peter Colby, Steve Wood, Julianne Stafford, and Alan Cooper.

We appreciate you!❖



VBS and Hotel deZink, June 2022



Trunk or Treat, October 2022

## Pastor G Marks First Anniversary at First UMC Palo Alto

by Pamela Cutkosky, Chair, Staff Parish Relations Committee

In December 2022 Rev. Gerardo García Palacios—Pastor G—celebrated his one-year anniversary since joining our staff as Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries.

I caught up with him in mid-January to ask about the high points of his first year with us and his plans for 2023.

Highlights of his year were:

**The Easter Egg hunt.** “This was the first community event I organized,” Pastor G said. “We did not have this tradition in the Latino church.” The community response to the egg hunt helped him develop an approach to engaging the community.

**Vacation Bible School (VBS).** “I liked the timing of the theme—God provides food for us—with Hotel de Zink.” One evening VBS kids packaged dinners for Hotel de Zink guests. “When the kids could see how they can help provide food, it was very meaningful. And I got good feedback from parents.”

**Trunk and Treat for Halloween.** This event exceeded expectations, with about 80 kids and their families attending. “What I loved was how the congregation responded and wanted to be part of it. We had 10 cars, and people wanted to participate.”

**Christmas Eve Family Service.** “I was surprised by the attendance and the engagement of the congregation and the community. All those kids wanting to be part of the pageant. It was amazing—and with no rehearsals!” Pastor G himself brought down the house, hamming it up as King Herod.

His year started with a warm welcome from Linda Grossman and Tom Fingar of SPRC. “Linda gave me a tour and introduced me to others in the congregation and the staff. She was so friendly and gave me good advice, too.”

In those early months, Pastor G said, “I learned about the ministries of the church and what had been done before and what were the expectations of the congregation.”

He jumped right into Sunday School and leading Children’s Moments in worship. His favorite Children’s Moments were “Strawberry Milkshake”—an analogy he used to promote the idea of church unity and then developed into a sermon, and lighting the Advent wreath with the children gathered around.

“I want to have the kids right there for the sacramental moments in church—the Advent wreath and also baptism and communion,” he said.

In 2023 Pastor G intends to be more intentional about working with youth and hopes to restart a youth group. He has been talking to staff at local high schools about service opportunities.

Pastor G also intends to continue building our children’s ministry.

*continued on page 8*

## What to Give Up for Lent



Give up complaining. Focus on gratitude.  
Give up harsh judgments. Think kind thoughts.  
Give up worry. Trust God to provide.  
Give up discouragement. Be full of hope.  
Give up bitterness. Turn to forgiveness.  
Give up hatred. Return good for evil.  
Give up anger. Be more patient.  
Give up pettiness. Become mature.  
Give up jealousy. Pray for trust.  
Give up gossiping. Control your tongue.  
Give up sin. Turn to virtue.  
Give up giving up. Persevere.  
—Author unknown

### **Pastor G** from page 6

He noted that we currently have one Sunday School teacher and just six congregation members who have passed the Safe Sanctuaries training to work with children. “We will need more support from the congregation to teach and work with kids,” he said.

Pastor G’s salary is paid for by a grant from the Centennial Endowment Fund. The Staff Parish Relations Committee is grateful to the CEF Committee for funding our grant request to help our church build its ministries for kids and families. ❖

## UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

by Nancy Olson

### **Circling a new year ...**

As we celebrated the turning of a New Year, around the world people honored the transition with a thousand creative traditions. Special meals, songs, games, and gifts all help us feel a new year has truly begun in our lives.

One curious theme found repeatedly in these new year cultural traditions is the circle. In Italy, round lentils are eaten to invite abundance and luck. In the Philippines, many eat 12 round fruits (anything from grapefruits to apples) for wealth and joy in each month of the year to come. And in the United States, we construct giant balls to drop through the air to mark the passing of one year to the next.

Why choose circles to represent newness and honor the passage of time? Perhaps they reflect our experiences. We often revisit circles we have traveled before, yet find new insight in them.

The Circle has long been a living symbol in the organized women’s groups within the Methodist Church. A continuous circle of social connection, education, support, action for women, children and families—ongoing, and yet seeking new ways to be of service.

A small part of A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition says: “Put me to doing.” That is exactly what members of United Methodist Women (now UWF) have been praying and doing—for generations.

Put to doing where love in action is stitched in pillows that comfort, dolls that soothe, and gatherings that unite. It shows through the smiles of girls and mothers brought together to share and heal outside prison bars that separate them, and it shows in Mexico where we support STEM education that helps young minds build bright futures.

Put to doing by joining with established programs like Save-a-Girl through Global Uplift or the Dress-a-Girl Project. There are many opportunities to be of service.

Put to doing each time you study and learn and share something new, and each time you educate others about environmental stewardship. You are put to doing each time you give prayerful support to the missionaries who represent us around the world. And put to doing by supporting Gum Moon and Mary Elizabeth Inn—our national mission sites right here in our own area.

Join me in revitalizing the Women’s Circle here at First UMC Palo Alto. Let us join together in friendship and community to learn about and participate in service projects that support women and children.

Please come to a 30 minute get-acquainted meeting in the Patio Room after church on Feb. 12. ❖



# Green Notes

by Nancy Olson

Random notes that give me pause ...

> It is now against the law in Massachusetts to throw out that used Halloween costume, ripped T-shirt, or moth-eaten sweater.

Massachusetts residents must recycle their old clothing and other textiles instead of tossing them in the garbage. Even though the regulations are focused primarily on larger businesses, individuals can do their part to help reduce the amount of waste produced in Massachusetts.

> Even states with some version of free community college have significant costs for students. To make the cost of college truly free, covering only tuition costs is not enough. We need to consider wraparound services: books and supplies, childcare, transportation, food, and housing—all issues that are challenging for many students.

> Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) poured down your sink may cost you money, time, and hassle—and they are also an environmental and public health issue. FOG builds up in sewer lines and clogs pipes causing backups in your home, and can spill raw sewage into streets, storm drains, and creeks. Repairing clogged pipes can cost hundreds of dollars to fix and thousands of dollars if the clog causes wastewater to spill out and damage bathrooms and floors.

Prevent sewer backups:

- Never pour grease down sink drains or into toilets.
- Try removing grease from plates and utensils by wiping oily dishes with a paper towel and placing it in your green compost cart.
- For small amounts of FOG, consolidate them into a compostable container (such as a paperboard milk carton) and place in your green compost cart.
- Don't pour FOG down garbage disposals. Put strainers in sink drains to catch food scraps and other solids, and empty the strainers into your green compost cart.
- Take large amounts of unwanted cooking oil (salad dressing, fryer oil) to the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Station.

We are extremely fortunate to have a convenient curbside program that is able to take not only our garbage and recycling, but also our compostables. We pay for the service—it makes sense to use it.

> I have added a new word to my vocabulary—NURDLE.

Every year, 200,000 metric tons of plastic pellets make their way into the world's oceans. Plastic pellets, NURDLES, are the building blocks of almost all plastic products. Trillions of NURDLES are produced annually, shipped to factories, and melted and poured into molds of plastic products.

Unfortunately, many of these NURDLES are discharged into our waterways during production and transportation. There NURDLES threaten marine wildlife and public health. For a fish, turtle, or seabird, it is easy to mistake a NURDLE for a piece of food. This is dangerous because NURDLES can block animals' digestive tracts, leading to starvation.



When will we learn ... ?

Well, it is a new year and we can renew our awareness and diligence in being good stewards of this precious Earth. ❖

# CONCERT NOTES

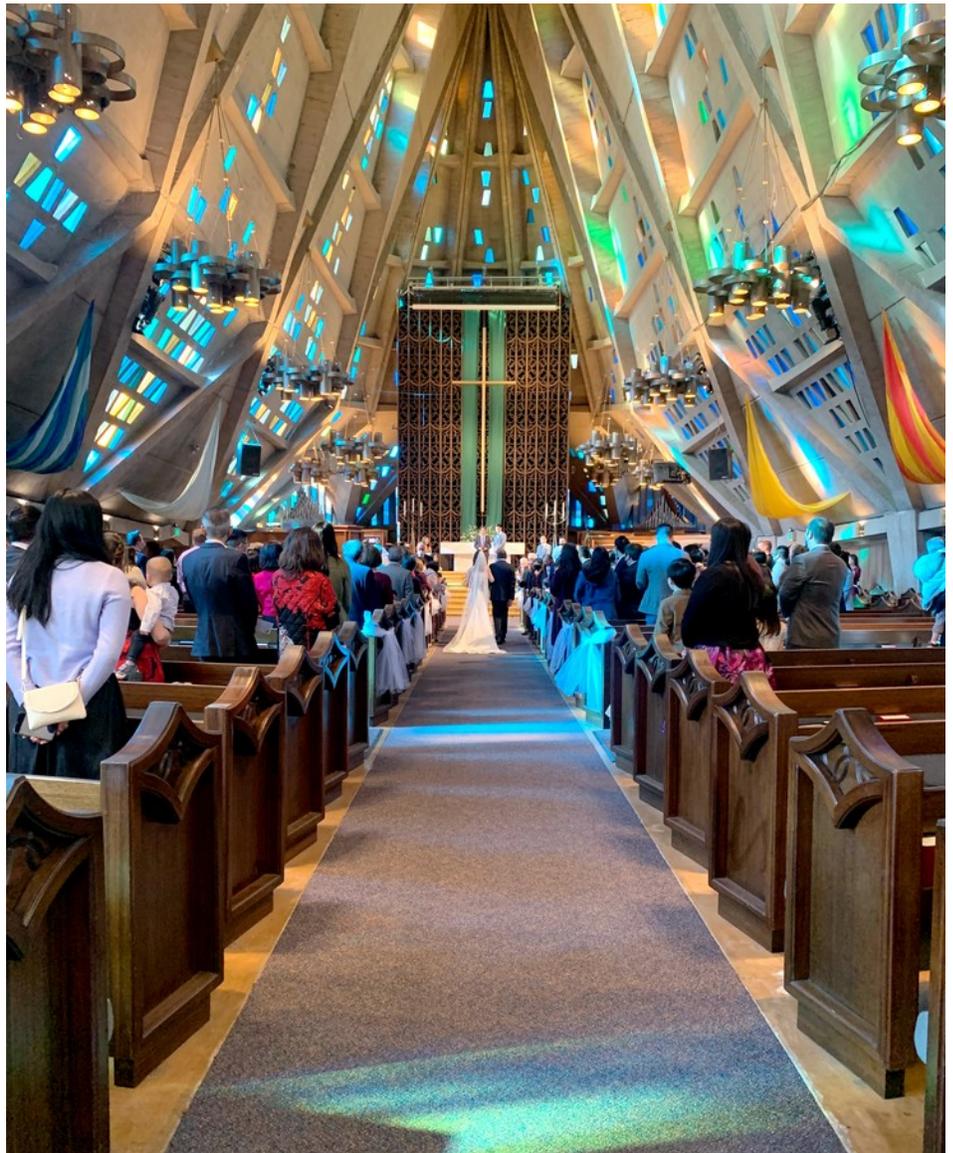
Presenting historically informed practices in 19th century repertoire always makes for a thrilling experience. On Friday, Feb. 10, at 7:30 p.m.,

**Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra** (PBO) presents “Old Friends Made New,” a rare opportunity to hear both of Saint-Saëns cello concertos—the impassioned first and the fiendishly difficult second—in one concert, performed by the unparalleled cellist Steven Isserlis. PBO also tackles its first ever performance of Brahms’ Second Symphony, often dubbed his “pastoral.”

See [philharmonia.org](http://philharmonia.org) for ticket information. Masks are required for all indoor events at the church. PBO requires proof of vaccination and booster.

Later in the month, on Saturday, Feb. 25, at 7:30 p.m., the **San Francisco Chamber Orchestra** (SFCO) will present a *free concert* entitled “Quartets and Quintets,” curated by SFCO’s new Music Director, Cosette Justo Valdes. The program includes Jonathan Bingham’s “Pareidolia,” a world premiere for string quartet, commissioned by the SFCO with the National Endowment for the Arts and Emerging Black Composers Project.

The line to enter usually begins soon after 7:00 p.m.❖



First UMC Palo Alto is a popular site for weddings as well as concerts and other community events. The sanctuary is well-known for its exceptional architecture and acoustics. Photo by Debbie Krueger



## First in Line

We were rushing to our next destination when yet another traffic light turned red. As usual, I had packed too many tasks into the day. Now we’d be even later. While I stewed in frustration, my son had a completely different reaction to being stopped. “Yes—I love this!” he shouted as we sat. “We’re first in line!”

What an important lesson on perspective. I focused on the negative, but he saw the good in the situation. As Proverbs 15:13 says, “A joyful heart brightens one’s face, but a troubled heart breaks the spirit.” (CEB)

—Janna Firestone, in Church Art Pro

## Check It Out

# Library Recommends Two New Books

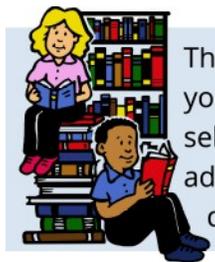
by Char Cutkosky

For grown-up readers, we have a recommendation from Carol Gleason (thank you, Carol!): *The Personal Librarian* by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray. *The Personal Librarian* is a historical fiction novel following real-life librarian Bella de Costa Greene, aka Bella Marion Greener, who worked as the curator for J.P. Morgan's collection of rare books and artwork and was instrumental in forming the Pierpont Morgan Library. Greene was the daughter of Richard Greener, the first Black graduate of Harvard University, and was forced to pass as white to pursue her career in the library sciences. Greene is now honored for her commitment to the arts, and as a trailblazer in the art collecting world.

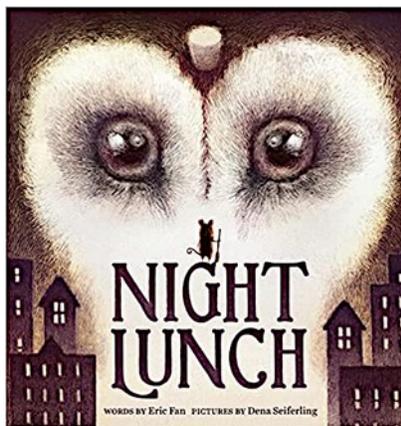
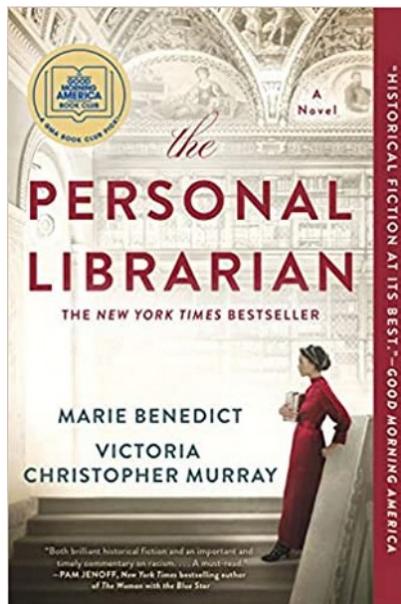
For kids, we have *Night Lunch* by Eric Fan, illustrated by Dena Seiferling. Featuring soft, atmospheric illustrations, *Night Lunch* follows an owl serving midnight lunches from a horse-drawn food cart to common, and often underappreciated, nocturnal suburban animals like foxes, badgers, and possums.

Unbeknownst to the owl, a little mouse who works as a street sweeper is watching hungrily from the sidelines. I recommend *Night Lunch* as a great way to introduce kids to the urban wildlife they might see around their own homes in the Bay Area.

As always, happy reading First UMC Palo Alto! ❖



The church library has a large collection of books for your enjoyment—both fiction and nonfiction—with selections for young children, emergent readers, young adults, and adults. Stop by after Sunday worship and discover a new book of interest or an old favorite.



## A Valentine's Day Prayer

Eternal and Loving God,

In your very being we discover the essence of relational, triune love. You are the Lover, the Beloved, and the Love that Flows Between Them. As one created in your image, empower me today to be a person of deeper love, encompassing heart, soul, mind, and strength, both for you and for those around me.

**Teach me to love those dearest to me**, those with whom I am most vulnerable and most guarded. Help us to rebuild trust and authenticity with each other.

**Enable me to forgive and to ask for forgiveness**, that I may share in the reconciling work of Jesus. May the impact of hurtful memories wane over time, along with ill will and resentment of others.

**Grant me deeper friendships** with those who can help me be the best version of myself. May they help me be accountable for my actions, offer me godly advice, and speak the truth to me without judgment.

**Sharpen my awareness of those who feel unloved and unlovable.** Strengthen my resolve to be an agent of hospitality to the lonely, of comfort for the frightened, and mercy for the hurting.

**Open my heart to a greater sense of your love for me.** A love that is tenacious, patient, and

*continued on page 12*

**Prayer from page 11**

unconditional. Remove the barriers that I have erected in my spirit that block the free flow of your love in my life. Work through my doubt, do not be deceived by my pride, and heal me of my guilt and shame.

Loving God, in you I find my truest and best self, as one created in your triune, relational image. Thank you for your grace, and thank you for your love. ❖

The Rev. Magrey deVega  
Senior Pastor, Hyde Park United  
Methodist Church, Tampa, FL

[hydeparkumc.org/valentines-day-prayer/](http://hydeparkumc.org/valentines-day-prayer/)



**FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

- 2/1 Lee Buttrill
- 2/2 Christy Fung
- 2/2 Heinz Erzberger
- 2/3 Asotolu Fifita
- 2/3 Leslie Furney-Howe
- 2/6 Nathaniel Sterling
- 2/10 Katie Bartholomew
- 2/11 Viliame Fifita
- 2/11 Sheila Gholson
- 2/11 Nathan Bailon
- 2/12 Jim Carpenter
- 2/12 Keith Perry
- 2/12 Sophia Sasaki
- 2/12 Amy Flaskerud

- 2/16 Kent Iglehart
- 2/16 Kaylee DeBacker
- 2/16 Lordess Tellis
- 2/17 Derick Anderes
- 2/18 Christopher Rahn
- 2/18 David Tsai
- 2/18 Jonathan Tsai
- 2/21 Carol Foster
- 2/22 Sheralee Iglehart
- 2/24 Rick Riley
- 2/25 Marianne Kombou
- 2/26 Victoria Crayton
- 2/26 Linda Holbrook

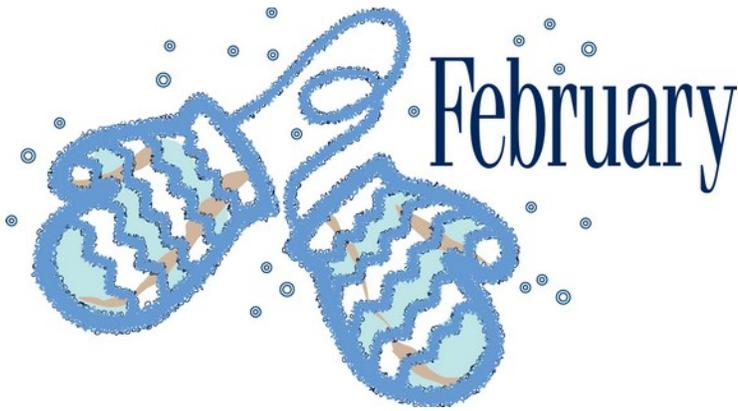
**& ANNIVERSARIES**

- 2/14/2009 Sandra Florstedt, Bill Davidson
- 2/8/1992 Blake Stafford, Julianne Stafford
- 2/14/1981 Dave Shelly, Pat Shelly



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)

December 2022 Income and Expense Summary	December 2022 Actual	Actual YTD 2022	Budget YTD 2022	Budget Annual 2022
<b>Income</b>				
Total Member Giving	102,674	424,190	311,588	311,588
Total Income All Other Sources	48,695	194,952	231,800	231,800
	151,369	619,142	543,388	543,388
<b>Expenses</b>				
Conference Tithe	12,604	57,563	48,000	48,000
Council on Ministries	7,137	17,289	56,670	56,670
Staff Parish Relations	29,336	350,890	401,378	401,378
Office and Finance	3,129	17,865	24,250	24,250
Board of Trustees	24,027	157,891	203,500	203,500
Total Expenses	76,233	601,498	733,798	733,798
<b>Excess (Deficit) of Income over Expense</b>	75,136	17,644	-190,410	-190,410



## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

→ In-person worship has resumed. Worship also is live streamed. **Masks are required for in-person activities.** Many activities continue to meet online via Zoom, as noted.

→ The church office is open, but the doors are locked. Please phone the office—or ring the electronic door bell—to be admitted. **Masks are required.** Office hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

### Sundays

- 10:00 a.m. Sunday School, ages 3–11
- 10:45 a.m. Worship in person and live streamed  
Check [firstpaloalto.com](http://firstpaloalto.com)  
or Friday e-news for the link.  
Snack-n-Chat, after worship
- 6:00 p.m. Covenant Class (Zoom)

### Mondays

- 7:00 p.m. Social Justice movie discussions  
(Zoom) See e-news for details.
- 7:00 p.m. Fiume di Musica Rehearsal
- 7:30 p.m. Bible Study

### Tuesdays

- 1:00 p.m. Stretching Our Faith
- 2:00 p.m. Bible Study, Channing House
- Noon Current Affairs Fellowship (Zoom)

### Wednesdays

- Noon Sermon Scripture Study (Zoom)
- 5:00 p.m. Upstream Contemporary Worship

### Thursdays

- 12:30 p.m. Meditations and Music
- 7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal

- 5 Couples group, noon
- 7 SPRC, 7:00 p.m. (Zoom)
- 11 Party at the Parsonage, 2:00 p.m.
- 12 United Women in Faith get-acquainted meeting,  
after worship for 30 minutes
- 14 Trustees, 7:30 p.m. (Zoom)
- 19 Great Decisions: “Energy Geopolitics,” 7:00 p.m.
- 20 Presidents Day  
Insights deadline
- 21 Finance, 7:30 p.m. (Zoom)
- 22 Ash Wednesday  
Ash Wednesday Service with Choir and  
Meditation, 7:00 p.m.  
Imposition of Ashes also available between  
12:30 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.
- 25 San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, “Quartets  
and Quintets,” free concert, 7:30 p.m.
- 26 First Sunday of Lent  
Sermon: “Mystery and Wonder of the Mess  
We’re In”  
Great Decisions; “China and the U.S.,” 7:00 p.m.
- 28 Church Council, 7:00 p.m.

#### Information for the next issue of the Insights newsletter is due Feb. 20.

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: [insightsfirsttpa@gmail.com](mailto:insightsfirsttpa@gmail.com) or bring them to the church office. Thank you!

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





**FIRST PALO ALTO**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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## FIRST PALO ALTO UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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**Next INSIGHTS deadline: Feb. 20**

