



News from First Christian Church of San Jose

80 South Fifth Street, SJ 95112
October 2016

Rev. Dana Bainbridge, Pastor
<http://www.fccsj.org>

From the Pastor

When I was about 5 years old and started attending church with my grandmother, I asked her one day, "What is Pastor Pringle's other job?" My Grandma didn't understand. "What does he do when I go to school?"

It is a question a lot of people wonder about. What should a pastor do with his or her time? Grandma said Pastor Pringle basically studied the Bible and prayed on the other days. That was once thought to be the primary role of a pastor, but these days most pastors I know have many roles. They coordinate programs, officiate at weddings and funerals, visit the sick, do capital campaigns, provide social services, manage buildings, work with Boards and committees, and are called upon to be involved in civic activities.

I once heard Thich Nhat Hanh say that if a person is teaching the dharma (the Buddhist teachings), that is ALL they should do. He was speaking with the understanding that being a spiritual teacher is a sacred trust, and requires time for sustained reflection and meditation, and continued learning from other teachers. There are ways that spiritual traditions do this.

The Unitarians, who highly value the intellectual aspects of pastoral work, give their pastors two months every summer for study leave. A number of spiritual teachers and writers I know take a 30-day retreat every year. It is a time of grounding. A time to tool for teaching and filling up the well that will need to be drawn from every week.

I am grateful that our congregation has in its pastoral contract that the pastor is to take a sabbatical every five years. Our Board has agreed that I will be away soon, from December 26 to March 26, for my first sabbatical here. I will return to work Monday, March 27. During my sabbatical I plan to take a lot of time for prayer, meditation, study and writing. I am eager to begin it by taking my daughter, Hannah, to Vietnam to visit the place where she lived the first year of her life. There are four of us going and we have a lot to pack into our

two weeks there. I also have applied to do work study at Esalen Institute at Big Sur. If I'm accepted I'll work 25 hours a week or so in the laundry or kitchen in exchange for room and Board and while I'm there for a month will be able to take an in-depth class called *How We Change and Why We Don't: The Art and Science of Transformation*, with Cassandra Vieten.

It is such an honor to work in a congregation that values the importance of reflection, looking deeply. I have had many amazing experiences these past eight years here, and look forward to having time to emotionally digest it all. To truly take it in.

Before I go I'll be getting a line-up of good speakers for you for Sunday mornings and making sure all the things needed to keep FCC operating well will be taken care of.

Thank you for this gift. I'm honored to be able to have this time....

— Pastor Dana

Construction Update

We've waited a long time, but the wheels are turning now. Recovery Cafe SJ just contracted with Charities Housing to be the Project Manager for the renovations of the Social Hall, kitchen and two classrooms. Charities Housing is an extension of Catholic Charities and has extensive experience in building affordable housing and non-profit renovations. Over the next 3 months or so they will be putting a bid packet together and receiving proposals from contractors. It is anticipated that a decision about a contractor will be made in December, if everything goes as anticipated. Construction could start in January or February.

Meanwhile, we are also grateful to HomeAid of Northern California for gathering donations and support to renovate our pantry. We anticipate new refrigeration equipment, flooring and shelves in the pantry in October or November. What generous support we are receiving from our community to support the work of Recovery Cafe SJ!

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Church Parking

Here's a review of where you can park while at FCC.

On Saturdays and Sundays, you can park anywhere that is not marked "Westwood Properties," as Catholic Charities only uses their spaces during the normal work week.

Monday through Friday, park only in spaces marked "Church Use Only", space #2-9. Downtown Streets Team has given up their two spaces, #10, #11, so those spaces are also open for FCC parking.



Proposed Worship Time Change The FCC Elders Want Your Input

We plan to move back into our sanctuary for worship on the first Sunday of Advent – November 27. At that time we are considering changing our Sunday morning schedule to the following:

- Worship 10:00 a.m.
- Fellowship 11-11:30 a.m.
- Adult Forum 11:30 am -12:30 pm

The primary reason for this change would be to create an opportunity for us to have educational – learning and discussion time – as a congregation. For some time, we have had very little educational programming and experiences in the church. It is often difficult for people to commute here for evening sessions during the week. So this is a way we could provide an educational hour for our learning and growth.

Please give the Elders your feedback. On Sunday, October 16 we will have a brief discussion after worship about the change.

Elders: Virginia Parks, Lorraine Glick, Bob Stienstra, Charlie Craig, Linda Braswell, Linda Lappin, Walter Hudson.

From Red to Black . . . (and hopefully, not back again)

by Lorraine Glick, church treasurer

If you look at our financial report each month in the bulletin, you will notice that we are doing well at staying on the plus side of the financial ledger. A couple of members have asked me how it has been achieved.

It wasn't that long ago that we were operating in the red, and periodically pulling money from our savings in the Christian Church Foundation.

In 2014, we finished with a -\$73,000 (including the \$62,000 for the roof that was financed with a loan through Disciples Board of Church Extension.) In 2015, our net income was +\$6800. Now year-to-date we have a +\$15,000.

We started pulling out of the red when RCSJ began paying half of Dana's salary July 1, 2015. First Christian Church is operating with a half-time pastor position. Secondly, RCSJ began operating four days a week last August, and their rent increased by \$200/month. They now contribute \$950/month plus a share of utilities.

One third of our budget comes from offerings, another third from RCSJ contracted work by Pastor Dana, and the other third from building use and parking lot income. Those 3 congregations sharing our building, the 30 spaces rented in the parking lot, and a non-profit in our social hall also means our property is experiencing a lot of wear and tear that requires increased maintenance.

It is important that we continue to stay in the black because 2017 will bring a lot of changes due to construction and the pastor's sabbatical. RCSJ will be out of the building for approximately 6 months while the social hall is remodeled. Pastor Dana will be on sabbatical for the first three months of the year, and during that time FCC will be responsible for her full salary. We also hope to have a staff person added to FCC to handle clerical issues and some maintenance items. These items are estimated to cost an additional \$40,000.

The take-away? Rejoice that our budget is doing so well, but be prepared for unusual expenditures in 2017.

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Politics: God's and Ours

FCC Friends: If you want to join an exciting but early morning mix, consider this Adult Christian Education class at nearby St Pauls United Methodist Church.

This class discusses the hottest of hot potatoes for American Christians and here's why:

Just as we as citizens approach our national elections, we as Christians need perspective on our tradition and practice of affirming God's election/selection of the Israelites through Abraham and us through Jesus. But Politics has to do with the orderly intentional design of a people and their culture so we shall address these topics:

- The primary directives of a New Society (how Torah teaches us to live)
- What if we are the Aliens, Immigrants, and Pilgrims—how do we get our green card?
- How do we deal with our wickedness and not just wicked ones?
- Do we endorse the Jiminy Cricket gospel (let your conscience be your guide) or not?
- Just what are we aiming for as a people or as a nation?
- Is there anything you are willing to go to jail for? Is there anyone...?
- Living in Resistance in Babylon or San Jose

We meet every Sunday until Advent at 9am in the Oxford Room.

For more info, contact Walter Hudson:
wlhudson49@gmail.com



Rev. Nicole LaMarche, Pastor of Silicon Valley Progressive Church, visited FCC in August



Barbara Goldstein, Director of Public Art for San Jose, Gave a Talk About the "Floats" on 5th Street



The Congregation Enjoys Barbara's Presentation

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Enjoy some photos from our August Service Day with our friends from Los Gatos UMC



And for all the cat and dog lovers at FCC...
(Source: christianfunnypictures.com)



♥ Dear Lord, we thank you for this food we are about to eat. Please don't let us get caught. Amen. ♥

