



# News from First Christian Church of San Jose

80 South Fifth Street, SJ 95112  
December 2015

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

## From the Pastor

### *Welcoming the Season of Darkness*

I can remember at least a half dozen times when I almost wrecked on the 280. It wasn't texting. It was the moon - rising in full glory above the east hills of the Valley. I almost drove out of my lane in drop-jawed awe at its beauty.

Nature is always showing off and I always fall head over heels for her beauty. The night sky remains as one of her great wonders for me and every once in a while I just have to get somewhere to see it.

Darkness makes me realize how vast this universe is and how small my patch of existence is. This doesn't make me feel insignificant, it just makes my problems feel less dramatic than I imagine them to be. It makes me feel honored to be part of the magnificent web of life.

Advent invites us to make friends with the dark and to allow the nights to stretch out before us. Advent nights are times when we may be visited with words of hope from visitors – real or imagined. The difference doesn't really matter all that much. It's the impact that counts.

I invite you to welcome the season of darkness by considering the gifts of longer nights. If you want, you can join me for a more in-depth exploration by picking up a copy of Barbara Brown Taylor's book, *Learning to Walk in the Dark*. It is chocked full of insights about the challenging effects of living in endless light and encouragement to make room for darkness to do its good work of bringing rest, dreams, and calm to the senses.

Let's join together this season to refresh our spirits – *Dana*



## FCC Happenings

Rev. Sandhya Jha was our guest in worship on Sunday Nov. 22. She concluded our "What I Believe" series with her message on "What Really Matters About Race". Sandhya is a Disciples of Christ pastor, former CCNC-N regional staff member, and now director of the Oakland



Peace Center and Director of Interfaith Programs at East Bay Housing Organizations. Her latest writing, *Pre-Post-Racial America: Spiritual Stories from the Front Lines* is available from Chalice Press.

### Rev. La Tonya Bynum, regional minister for



CCNC-N was with us on Sunday, October 25. A church potluck followed our worship service. Thanks to everyone who brought food to share, and to Bob S. for grilling freshly caught salmon, and to his grandson Asa for helping!

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## December Calendar

**December 6 worship** – Rev. Evelyn Vigil, a chaplain at the Main Jail, will be preaching and sharing more of her experiences of being a spiritual presence in the Correctional System.

**Monday, December 7, 6 p.m. – Closing the Gap Chorus** will be singing in a holiday concert with 3 other choruses at St. Joseph's Basilica at 80 S. Market. Check with Anna Brown about getting tickets for the concert \$13 in each or \$20 for two.

**Wednesday, December 16, 6:45 p.m. – FCC Board of Elders meeting** at Lorraine's house

**Saturday, December 19, 5:30-7:30 p.m. - Recovery Café SJ's Holiday Celebration** – a great time for all FCC people to come and mix it up with Café members

**Sunday, Dec. 20 – All Church Christmas Eve Service and Potluck.** Sign up with Lorraine and let her know if you can bring something for the lunch.

**Saturday, January 9, 1:00 p. m. – Regional MLK Award Ceremony and Service** at the First Christian Church in Watsonville.

**Sunday, January 10 - Congregational Meeting** following worship to discuss upcoming construction on our building, our hopes and ideas for the life of our church in the coming year, and the budget for 2016.

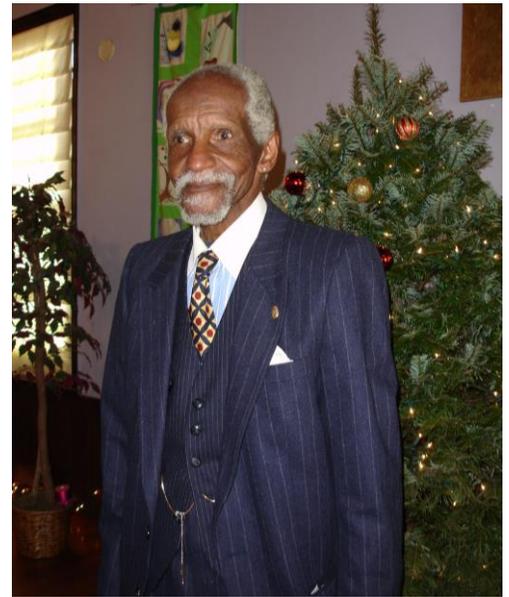


*Michael F., John R., & Gerry T. Sharing a Meal*

## Meet an Elder

### Charlie Craig

Being an Elder at FCC, I try to remember that I am a member of this community that I dearly care for. I try to remember that I have to try to be compassionate, open and supportive.



As a board member, I have to be aware of the opinions of other voices in the community and be honest and listen without judgements. Listen: Listen... Listen. I have to be respectful and supportive when it is possible.

There are times when my own personal life is stressed and I am there physically but my thoughts and emotions are hard to be there. This saddens me at times because I want to be there as a board member helping the Church Community to move forward.

Prayer helps me with the task to try to stay connected. This church community helps me work through being what I want to be as an Elder. I feel that this community gives love, understanding, and forgiveness. I could give you so many names of people in our community now and those who have moved on or passed away.

Finally thanks all of you for your support in helping me be a better Elder to serve our community.

*– Love, Charlie Craig*

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A happy group of workers from Los Gatos United Methodist Church spend a day in Worshipful Work at FCC to reach out to support missional work in other churches and organizations. *Thanks to our friends at LGUMC!*

### From the Board

Our board of elders met on October 21, and again on November 18. Items of note include:

- A review of church investments with the Christian Church Foundation, Disciples Church Extension Fund, and the Neuberger-Berman Fund. (See financial report for more details.)
- A property report included heaters being checked out, wiring to separate heaters, so they're not all on one circuit, and leaves cleared off the roof. Trees in the back were trimmed by Mike of DST. Issues going forward are heat, kitchen stove, and the roof.
- Future construction in the social hall – The City of San Jose grant to improve the social hall for RCSJ and upgrading our kitchen to a teaching kitchen is on the San Jose City Council meeting of December 8 for approval. Once that happens, and a building permit issued, the project will go out to bid.
- A group of board members will be meeting this month to look at options for our worship space once construction starts. If you have ideas or requests, let Virginia, Dana, Linda L. or Walter Hudson know your ideas and/or concerns.
- Church elders Linda Lappin, Virginia Parks, Liz Throne, Bob Stienstra and Lorraine Glick attended an elders' retreat on October 23, and 24 at the Christian Church in Pacific Grove. Reports were shared at the November board meeting. Sessions on unpacking the New Testament, the Old Testament, giving prayers at the table, spiritual practices, changes in the role of the elder in the Disciples history, what and who make up our regional office, along with networking were offered as what really mattered about attending the retreat.

The next board meeting is Wednesday, December 16, 6:45 at Lorraine's house. All are welcome to attend!

### Financial report

Year to Date Financial report:

Income: \$122,310.

Expenses: \$125,064

Net Income/Loss: -\$2754

## Poet's Corner

### A Fish Story

During world war two I was drafted into the army. After basic training the company was sailed to the Soloman island of Guadalcanal. Our duty was to supply construction and road building equipment for the war in the South Pacific. It was the waning time of the fighting.

While swimming in the Coral Sea I saw a coconut in the shallow water. Young native children would often use the coconuts to play games. I shook the coconut and could hear water sloshing. I went to shore and got an axe to split it and see what was inside. Inside was a tiny fish about two inches in length, alive and swimming lively. I gave it its freedom and it swam away into the Coral sea. How the tiny fish got into the coconut is a mystery of mysteries.

– *Ralph Hietala*

### A Recipe box

During each visit with my 87 year old Aunt Nancy we tackle another box of family memorabilia. In November it was a box of recipes from her Mom, Aunt and Grandmother who lived in a rented duplex in Lexington, MA from the 1890's to the 1970's. The box was about four times the size of your oldest cake pan and filled with loose slips of paper with recipes; handwritten, clipped from the newspaper, tucked in stamped envelopes from their friends and in booklets from food companies. Many were clipped together with straight pins or tiny, round, heavy, steel paper clips.

It took all day to look through the recipes, dated from 1921 through 1959. Did you know that pimentos and pineapple were popular casserole ingredients back then?

Desserts dominated the collection, which is strange because our family ate dessert only on special occasions. The ones that started with "3 cups of sugar, 1 cup of shortening" got tossed into the recycle bin. Aunt Nancy kept a few sweet bread and meat recipes. Cousin Joanna kept the blender book and mincemeat pie recipes. A cookie recipe kept appearing in the jumble; called church

windows, stained glass windows or cathedral windows. I'd never heard of these cookies and decided to keep and contemplate that recipe. Coconut, walnuts, colored marsh mellows and chocolate chips. Hmm; maybe for a very *special* occasion. I know! I'll bring them to our Christmas potluck on December 20th! We'll see how we like them!

– *Virginia*

### The day before kindness

The perfect child in the white flowered dress  
Turned around in her seat and said  
You are so stupid

She must have been reacting to the answer I  
gave the teacher  
But it has been decades and I don't know what  
I said then  
But I remember what I said after

I said, Deana's such a know it all  
And turned to see her sitting behind me.  
I never guessed that I'd hurt her  
Until she threw mean words at me.

Before I knew kindness  
I caused pain  
Before I knew that I had caused pain  
The pain had to land on me

I know even more now  
I know guilt for my cruelty  
And sorrow, and more about broken bridges  
Because I cannot change what I have done

But I know now that everyone I meet is an opportunity  
To build a bridge, or start a battle

– *Linda Lappin*