

With her letter, Judy Brooke shared this photo of her father at one of his favorite spots by the ocean.

Brooke family wishes to honor Rev. John and Gretchen Brooke in The Walk

By Micki Carter

The *Messenger* article last month about The Walk that is taking shape in the CCP Back Forty attracted the attention of Judy Brooke, the oldest daughter of the late Rev. John and Gretchen Brooke. Judy and her sisters Suzi and Sally, saw an opportunity to memorialize their parents as part of The

Walk.

Here's a portion of the letter that Judy sent to CCP:

"It has been about three and a half years since our dad, and past minister of CCB, John Brooke, died on Feb. 7, 2021) and, due to COVID and other factors, we were not able to arrange a timely memorial service for him — in spite of your wonderful offering to host such an event (thank you, Micki, for your generous communication at that time).

"We however wish to express our gratitude, even if long overdue, for the love and support extended to our family during the time prior, during and after his passing.

See BROOKE FAMILY, Page 9

We are an Open and Affirming Congregation valuing everyone's race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, class, physical and mental abilities.

Pastor Jim asks for your participation in upcoming congregational survey

By Rev. Jim Mitulski

Holy Cow! Your Opinion Matters!

Dear friends,

In the next week you will receive a link to an online survey asking about your experience of the Congregational Church of the Peninsula. This will assist the church leadership in making plans for the present and future of our church.

We want to hear from you whether you're a member or non-member, whatever your age, however long you have been coming, whether you attend regularly, infrequently or from time to time.

This survey is used by Protestant Churches in denominations like ours from across the country and will help us in establishing priorities as we move forward.

This is a good time for us to be doing an inventory like this. We are one year into our merger. We are financially stable. We have the strongest financial asset base we've ever had. We have good relationships with other UCCs in the country and with our Conference.



Rev. Jim Mitulski

We are generous with our benevolence funds to an extraordinary degree. We know we need to make changes, and we are engaged in making them. The bylaws committee is working on a leaner structure to meet our current needs.

We also face some challenges. Even with the merger, our attendance and membership is small and continuing to gen-

tly decline. Our congregation is aging, with less than five high schoolers regularly in attendance, and few members under 50.

Interest in Christianity generally is at an all time low, especially in California, and that is especially true of younger people. But we believe that we offer something valuable to our members and to our community. In order to influence our future, we have to plan, experiment and take some risks.

It is vital that we hear from you over the next month. When you get the link, take the online survey. We will have hard copies at church if you prefer to do it by hand. Let me say it again: your opinions, hope, fears, dreams all matter. We'll be talking about this in church throughout the month.

You can learn more below from these links. Go to the Holy Cow Webpage, follow them on Facebook, and if you have questions speak with me, email me or call me.

Holy Cow is coming your way!

- With love,
- Pastor Jim

Here's a recent testimonial from Olivet Presbyterian Church in NY:

"The benefit of going through this process is it clarified for us the areas we need to work on. It opened discussion for us in our church Session. The work with this team was a very worthwhile and supportive experience." (September 2024)

Go to the Holy Cow Consulting <u>homep-</u> age to learn more about them and what they offer.

Go to this <u>webpage</u> and watch the video to understand what a Congregational Assessment Tool is.

I looked at a lot of examples of FAQs from churches and I liked the one I read <u>here</u> best. I liked it so much that rather than copy it over, I thought you should see how it was presented in their form. So thank you, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Wisconsin.

Join Pastor Jim for a special National Coming Out Day service

You are invited to join Pastor Jim as he preaches the National Coming Out Day sermon for the weekly chapel service at Pacific School of Religion on Tuesday, Oct. 8, at 11:10 a.m., either either online or in person.

The school is located at 1798 Scenic Ave. in Berkeley and chapel is held in the Bade Museum in Holbrook Hall on the left as you enter the campus.

Here is the livestream <u>link</u> Meeting ID: 852 1603 6980 Passcode: 972235 Or go to the website at <u>www.psr.edu</u>



The Good Hope Luncheon at Harry's Hofbrau was very well-attended this month!

Pastor Warren's Wonderings

By Rev. Warren Dale

It is such a special two weeks. On Tuesday, thousands of people carry flags representing various sports onto the field. After marching into the stadium, we ascend the stairs to our places in the stands, and the flags of more than 50 nations are brought in by dancers celebrating the countries that have participated in the Games.

Oh, it is not the Olympics, but very similar. Over 11,000 athletes will participate this October in the Huntsman World Senior Games. Georgi, her daughter, and our daughter-in-law will compete in the power walking events. I will play eight days of volleyball in consecutive divisions.

Various team members will be seen all over the town of St. George, Utah. They will be sharing their joy in participation, wearing their medals to the engraving sta-



Rev. Warren Dale

tion, into town for meals at local restaurants and often on the planes as they travel home to their destinations all over the world (35 countries). The athletes will be joined by close to 2,500 volunteers.

Our volleyball team has played together for over eight years. We have won bronze,

silver, and many gold medals. But the true greatness of this event is that we get to participate with age bracketed friends.

Last year, the captain of the first team I ever played for, The Dinosaurs, won his first gold medal, defeating the team I was on. I was so glad for him. I congratulated him and told him how pleased I was for him. The games' mission is to color the world with peace, health, and friendship.

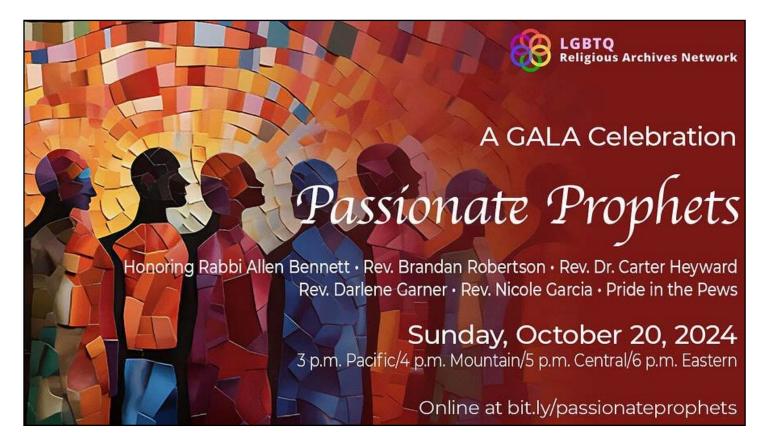
This annual experience reminds me of what we can do when we work on a common

goal: participation. I think of how we could apply this to the needs of our community: feeding the hungry, housing for all, education opportunities and safety for all. All possible with full participation in coloring all with peace, health, and friendship.

Two years ago, I remember noticing a team from Iran playing on the volleyball court next to where we were playing. I went over and said, "How glad I am that you are here." The book of Deuteronomy reminds of how to love our enemy:

"He provides justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt." (Deuteronomy 10:18–19)

Blessings to you all, Rev. Warren



Chocolate Fest Countdown: Time to party at our sweetest fundraiser yet!

By Jill Visor

We are in the final weeks before Chocolate Fest 2024, the event that defines CCP as the Chocolate Church, and excitement is in the air! Please make sure your calendars are set for Oct. 19, from 1 - 9 p.m., and get ready for a day filled with chocolate delights and community spirit.

So in the spirit of Countdowns (drumroll please)...

10. Encourage your friends, family and colleagues to purchase their tickets if they haven't already. Remember, the more the merrier – and who wouldn't want to indulge in an experience filled with chocolate delights? Chocolate Fest is not just about the sweet treats; it's about creating memories with friends and loved ones. After all, chocolate tastes even better when shared!

9. Help with contacting vendors for door prizes. Do you have a favorite local restaurant or hair dresser or coffee shop? Drop by and ask them about donating a gift certificate for a great cause. Offer to buy a gift certificate if they donate one – after all, you are going to use their services in the future! Let Carol Chivers, Micki Carter or me know if you need more information. And visit your own "regifting closet" for that white elephant that might make a great CF door prize or donate a bottle of wine!

8. Post on social media or maybe to a neighborhood group you belong to or other online gathering. Micki can provide you with great artwork.

7. Put up posters. If there are any public places you access which have a board for posting fliers, please get a few from Micki and help spread the word.

6. Be an ambiance creator. Maura Whitmore will be hard at work creating a magical space for the event, but there is a lot to do with two separate spaces this year (Dining Room and Sanctuary). If this is something you like to do, sign up (see #5) or let her know.

5. Volunteer to help the day of the event. Our volunteer team is the backbone of Chocolate Fest. Your spirit of giving back and dedication to making this

event a success is what makes it truly great. As we approach the big day, let's ensure all volunteer roles are filled (click here) and everyone is prepared.

4. Focus on social action. As you know, Chocolate Fest this year has a goal of raising money both to support LifeMoves, whose mission is to end homelessness by providing interim housing, support services and collaborative partnerships, and to support the work of CCP. Let's keep this spirit of generosity alive and remind everyone of the positive impact their participation has.

3. Pick out your outfit to wear! Remember, there will be pictures that live for



eternity, maybe even in future editions of this newsletter.

2. Get excited! Envision yourself touching, smelling, tasting the chocolate. Give yourself over to your chocolate-cravings!

1. Celebrate the Chocolate! Enjoy the day tasting handmade truffles, caramels, toffee, bonbons, chocolate cheesecake, chocolate mousse, and every kind of artisanal chocolate imaginable in the warm ambiance of wine and prosecco and jazz.

As we enter these final weeks, let's keep the energy high and the enthusiasm flowing. Let's make this year's Chocolate Fest unforgettable!

Have a gift card you won't use or a couple of bottles of wine? Donate it as a prize for Chocolate Fest!



Send this to your friends and let them know what a treat Chocolate Fest is!

Moderator's column Creating new Mission Statement to be top priority as CCP writes bylaws

By Maura Whitmore

Happy Fall, to you all!

The Council of CCP, at the behest of the Bylaws Committee, needs all of us to consider, or re-consider if you wish, our current Mission Statement.

It has become clear to us that we must unequivocally define our Mission, because:

• The church as a non-profit organization is accountable to one thing: the Mission of the organization.

• The church's job is to set the policies for the staff and teams to carry out the mission.

• It can create committees to do the work to recommend policies for adoption.

Everything in the new bylaws (spending, worship, operations...) hinges on The Mission. We cannot proceed with writing new bylaws and restructuring our organization to be more stream-lined and functional, if we don't have a clear mission.

While we are writing new bylaws to serve the Congregational Church of the Peninsula, we adopted a new Mission Statement at our last Annual Meeting It's a much shorter version than CCB had in the past. There was lots of discussion, but eventually the motion passed. To refresh your memory, here is the Mission Statement from the CCB bylaws (which we will continue to operate under until we adopt new CCP bylaws).

"As members of the Congregational Church of Belmont, United Church of Christ, we accept each other's diversity and remain open to one another's spiritual

interpretations as we strive to:

• Worship together seeking spiritual growth, inspiration and inner peace;

• Develop a close relationship with God;

• Experience the joys and risks of allowing God to work within each of us;

• Be aware, with humility and love, of the individual struggles and joys within our collective lives;

• Minister faithfully and effectively to one another as an extended family within the local community;

• Do justice in the world God loves;

• Practice inclusiveness and openness to provide a sense of worthiness and acceptance of all people;

• Enable each of us to live a meaningful life.

We undertake this mission with the help of Jesus Christ."

After considerable discussion, we voted

to adopt this new Mission Statement for CCP:

"As members of the Congregational Church of the Peninsula, United Church of Christ, we value each other's diversity and remain open to one another's spiritual interpretations as we strive to create safe spaces for spiritual growth and to do justice in God's world."

The vote was Yes (24), No (3), Abstain (2) and the motion passed. Then a member moved that the Bylaws Committee revisit the wording of the Mission Statement. The motion was seconded and passed. So now we are revisiting.

Now is the time to weigh in on the wording if you think it should be different. Eighty-three percent of us thought the new statement was good, but not all of us. If you would like to make a comment, or suggestion to me, please do so. I will compile your input and publish the findings ASAP.

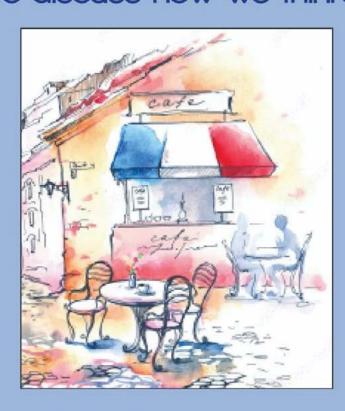
I know this is a long, tedious article. (Didn't we already vote on this? Everything is fine the way it is!) But please, if you have any input, email me.

I am your Moderator, Maura, <u>Modera-</u> tor@ccpeninsula.org.



The nursery downstairs got a much-needed face-lift, thanks to Troop 27 Scouts, led by Arthur W. for his Eagle Project. Scouts painted and added crown molding as part of a general makeover to provide a welcoming space for families.

Join us for a **DEATH CAFE** to discuss how we think about dying.



We promise it's not as dark as it sounds.

We talk about end-of-life issues (that we may not even care to think about) over coffee or tea and cake.

Sometimes we laugh!

Third Thursdays of the month, at 1:30-3 p.m. Oct. 17, Nov. 21 & Dec. 19

Congregational Church of the Peninsula 751 Alameda de las Pulgas, Belmont CCPeninsula.org • 650-593-4547

Social Action in action: providing housing for a special population

By Linda Howard

Young adults aging out of the foster care system are among those most at-risk to become homeless. The foster care system does not ensure that these young people have a safe, affordable place to live. As a result, they end up in unsafe conditions, often on the street, doing whatever is necessary to survive.

When the Social Action Board learned of the opportunity to support another church taking on the challenge of helping this group, we jumped at the chance to give financial support through the Lyman Covenant fund as part of our church's social justice mission.

New Beginnings Housing will be a small, affordable multi-housing residential village located in a historically redlined district in San Mateo. Consisting of five 264-square-foot units, this safe affordable housing will be reserved for five young adults raised in foster care.

The vision for the New Beginnings Project began with the dedication of Rev. Dr. Marlyn Bussey, pastor of the St. James AME Zion Church of San Mateo. She saw firsthand as a high school counselor for 25 years, that students who were wards of the state in the foster care system walked a treacherous path when they aged out of foster care.

These individuals often face big challenges acquiring medical care, post-secondary education, emotional support and affordable housing. As a result, these young adults often matriculate not into school and a successful adulthood, but onto the streets with no roof over their heads.

The location of the housing project will be at 831 Monte Diablo on property owned by the church. The project itself will be managed by the St. James Community Development Corp.

E a c h o f the five studio apartments will have a kitchen, a bathroom, appliances and a living space. In addition, there will be a shared open space that will create a sense of community.

Services necessary for transitioning youth into work-ready adults will be part of the plan. The funding for New Beginnings not only goes for "brick and mortar" housing, but for wrap-around services such as providing a caseworker who will meet with the residents to help them access city, county and state services.

The goal of the New Beginnings project will be to demonstrate a successful model of how the faith community and philanthropy



can collaborate to ease the current housing crisis that exists in the Bay Area for an especially vulnerable population.

The Congregational Church of the Peninsula welcomes the opportunity to support St. James AME Zion of San Mateo as they embark on this journey to build much needed affordable housing for at-risk young adults making their way in the world.

The Social Action Board, using funds from the Lyman Covenant Fund, is deeply gratified to donate \$5,000 to support this project.

Don't forget to bring your pet for the Blessing of the Animals on Oct. 13!

Please make sure your animal is secured or leashed. You may also bring a picture of your friend or pet for the altar, or some other token that represents them. Don't miss this longstanding CCP tradition!



John and Gretchen in 2005

Brooke Family

Continued from Page One

"This church community was also so supportive during mom's convalescence at home, which included many choir members traveling in December 2014 to Cotati to sing to her, occurring just hours before she passed —"singing her home", she might have called it.

"Dad and Mom (Gretchen) loved the Belmont church and community, and I believe they would be very heartened to know what an active, thriving and "faith-in-action" church CCP continues to be.

"Dad/John had his longest, and I believe one of the most special tenures of his ministry with CCB. After his retirement, he and mom continued to make the 90-minute drive to Belmont on many Sundays to attend church after their move to Cotati, and mom even continued to sing in the choir for a while.

"I am very delighted and moved to read about Bob Donovan's vision and the church's support of creating a sacred space in the Back Forty for walks, celebratory moments and quiet reflection. I believe both mom and dad would have loved this also.

"Rachel and I, joined by my sisters Suzi and Sally, and Sally's son Jazari, would like to make a contribution in dad and mom's names towards the creation, development and maintenance of this sacred space. If possible, a bench or spot for reflection or visiting would be fitting. An 'In memory of John and Gretchen Brooke' plaque or something similar, would also be meaningful to us, and maybe to others.

"With heartfelt gratitude and love, Judy Brooke and Rachel Vasquez, Suzi Hajjar, Sally Brooke Burr and Jazari Burr."

A check toward this effort was received as well.

Sunday mornings may have some new looks

By Mike Venturino

It's your birth month! Be sure to come to worship and have cake!

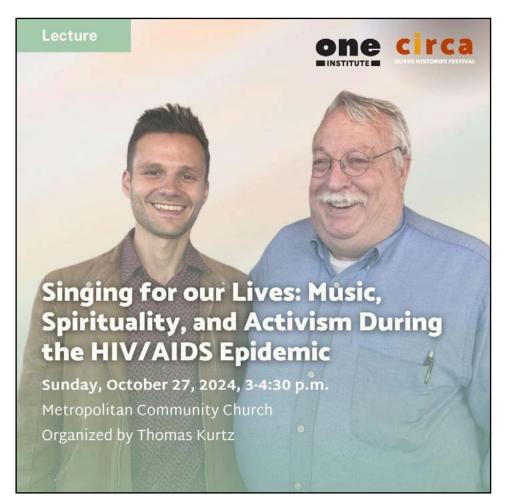
Starting in October, we'll celebrate our community members' birthdays on the first Sunday of their birth month. We'll sing as always and, of course, have cake after the service.

We will check the upcoming birthdays and send out invitations during the last week of the previous month.

The Deacons will also be asking us to fill out attendance forms on Sunday mornings. We'd like to get an idea who is coming to church in addition to just the total number in worship that morning. There will be pads of the forms on the pews. We promise sharpened pencils!

The beginning of the service may have a different look, too. The blessing candles that we've seen recently are one example. Another possibility is to have the choir process in to lead the first hymn. We're looking at other possibilities to mix up the morning a bit.

Remember, CCP is always looking for people who, in addition to helping with communion, liturgy and ushering on Sunday morning, would like to be involved in worship planning. We'd love to hear your ideas. Speak to Pastor Jim or me.



Easy Going Green!





No one quite remembers why we took this picture in the Narthex of CCP but we think it was about 2010. How many can you identify? Here's our list (sort of left to right): Paul Anderson, Jean McCampbell, Bob and Ella Mae Donovan, Keith Howard, Doris Brown, Gary Brandenburg, Martha and Bob Goodman, Don and Mary Hughes, Belinda and Bob Sims, Lois and Bob Shouse, Barbara White, Dorothy Skanderup, Pat Farquhar and LInda Howard.



United Church of Christ @UnitedChurch

"As people of faith, called to love our neighbors, the **#UCC** denounces xenophobic, racist & violent rhetoric & actions against immigrants in the U.S. We stand with the Haitian community in Springfield, OH."

-Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, GMP/ CEO



United Church of Christ @UnitedChurch

It's important to show Christian voices that, not only oppose book bans, but affirm the freedom to read. We're enriched by a diversity of stories, and that's what we publish @ThePilgrimPress.

– Rev. Rachel Hackenberg, publisher



Celebration of Life for Karen Conklin

Rev. Polly Moore has shared that the Celebration of Life for Karen Conklin will take place at College Heights Church on Saturday, Oct. 26, at 2 p.m. College Heights is located at 1150 W Hillsdale Blvd, San Mateo CA 94403.

Many of you may remember Karen from Fellowship Camp or other church events.

Chairperson needed for Family Sharing Program

For many years our church has participated in Family Sharing. This program, administered by Samaritan House, provides gifts for families at Christmas.These are hard working families who otherwise would struggle to provide gifts and food for their families during the holidays.

In order for CCP to continue participating in this program, a chairperson is needed. The chairperson coordinates volunteers and organizes the operation. In mid-October, Samaritan House sends out an informational packet with clear, concise and easy to follow directions on HOW, WHEN and WHAT to do. If you are interested in learning more about volunteering for this position, please email Linda Howard at <u>roswell.linda20@</u> <u>gmail.com</u>. A firm deadline is Oct. 15.

Book group starts VP Kamala Harris' memoir in October

The Chat 'n Chew book group has started reading Vice President and presidential nominee Kamala Harris' memoir *The Truths We Hold: An American Journey* as their October selection.

In November, they will read *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, which is the San Francisco Public Library's choice for One City One Book.

The book group also offers as special thank you to Reach and Teach Books in San Carlos for ordering their books at a discount The group meets via Zoom on Tuesdays

from 1:30-2:30 p.m. Join the Zoom <u>here</u>.

The Messenger October 2024 13

Upcoming worship themes and preachers

October

- Oct. 6: World Communion Day, and anniversary of founding of the MCC Churches. Guest preacher, Rev. Terri Echelbarger, interim pastor of Unitarian Universalists San Mateo and MCC minister
- Oct. 13: National Coming Out Day and observance of St. Francis of Assisi with Blessing of the Animals (bring your companion animals for a special blessing); Rev. Jim Mitulski preaching
- Oct. 20: Chocolate Sunday; Rev. Jim Mitulski preaching
- Oct. 27: Reformation Day; Rev. Warren Dale preaching

November

- Nov. 3: Time Change! Feast of All Saints and All Souls with Communion
- Nov. 10: Veterans Day remembrance
- Nov. 17: Stewardship Sunday
- Nov. 24: Thanksgiving Sunday
- Nov. 28: Thanksgiving Day

December

- Dec. 1: First Sunday of Advent and World AIDS Day (5 p.m.)
- Dec. 8: Second Sunday of Advent and Madrigal Concert (5 p.m.)
- Dec. 15: Third Sunday of Advent
- Dec. 22: Fourth Sunday of Advent
- Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Candlelight, Carols, and Communion 8 p.m.

Office admin Lea shares a farewell note

By Lea Mavroudis

Hello friends,

It is with a heavy heart that I report that I will be leaving my job at CCP as of Oct. 11. I will be starting a new job at Sutter Health in Berkeley, which offers an easier commute and some wonderful new opportunities.

This all happened much faster than I thought it would. It went from "I might have a job connection for you, send me your resume" to "you're hired" within a matter of a few days. I wish I had more time to wrap things up properly here, but I'm currently doing my best to leave things in such a way that it will be easy for the next person to pick it up!

It has been wonderful getting to know you all these past few years and I will truly miss you. I'm planning on staying in touch and visiting on some Sundays and other church occasions when I can. I would love to stay in touch via social media as well. You can find me on Facebook or Instagram.

Thank you all for your kindness and support over the past four and half years. I will always hold CCP and its community in my heart. Wishing you all the very best!

With love,

Lea



Lea and her fiancé Jaye



Pastor Jim and Fr. Tom Dowling on a recent visit

Send help to victims of Hurricane Helene

Hurricane Helene made landfall in Florida on Sept. 26, traveling north into Georgia, North and South Carolina, and eastern Tennessee. It devastated homes, businesses and infrastructure and took more than 100 lives.

The United Church of Christ has a history of supporting communities as they recover from disasters. The support continues long after the initial devastation as communities heal.

Please consider a gift to the Hurricane Helene Relief Fund. Your support will ensure that these communities will know that people care as they rebuild their lives. You may donate by check, cash or using the QR code. Please indicate that you wish your donation to go to the Hurricane Helene relief effort.

Calendar for October 2024

1 Tue	1:30pm - 2:30pm	Off-site events	Online Book Group
3 Thu	6рм - 7рм	Off-site events	Thursday Night Prayer & Check-in
	7:30рм - 9рм	Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
6 Sun	10:30am - 12:00pm	Worship	Sunday worship
	11:30ам - 12:00рм	Church Events	Coffee Hour
	5рм - 6рм	Off-site events	Zoom worship with Pastor Warren
8 Tue	1:30pm - 2:30pm	Off-site events	Online Book Group
10 Thu	6рм - 7рм	Off-site events	Thursday Night Prayer & Check-in
	7:30рм - 9рм	Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
13 Sun	10:30am - 12:00pm	Worship	Sunday worship
	11:30am - 12:00pm	Church Events	Coffee Hour
	1:00pm - 5:00pm	Chocolate Fest	Chocolate Fest prep
	5рм - 6рм	Off-site events	Zoom worship with Pastor Warren
14 Mon	9:00am - 9:00pm	Chocolate Fest	Chocolate Fest prep
15	9:00am - 9:00pm	Chocolate Fest	Chocolate Fest prep
Tue	1:30рм - 2:30рм	Off-site events	Online Book Group
16 Wed	9:00am - 9:00pm	Chocolate Fest	Chocolate Fest prep
	6:30рм - 8рм	Off-site events	Trustees Meeting (Zoom)
17 Thu	9:00am - 9:00pm	Chocolate Fest	Chocolate Fest prep
	1:30рм - 3рм	Church Events	Death Cafe
	6рм - 7рм	Off-site events	Thursday Night Prayer & Check-in
	7:30рм - 9рм	Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
18 Fri	9:00am - 9:00pm	Chocolate Fest	Chocolate Fest prep
19 Sat	1рм - 9рм	Chocolate Fest	Chocolate Fest 2024
20 Sun	10:30am - 12:00pm	Worship	Sunday worship
	11:30ам - 12:00рм	Church Events	Coffee Hour
	5рм - 6рм	Off-site events	Zoom worship with Pastor Warren
21 Mon	6:00рм - 7:00рм 🔤	Church Events	Deacons' meeting
22 Tue	1:30рм - 2:30рм	Off-site events	Online Book Group
23 Wed	7:00рм - 9:00рм	Church Events	CCB Council Meeting
24 Thu	6рм - 7рм	Off-site events	Thursday Night Prayer & Check-in
	7:30рм - 9рм	Church Events	Choir Rehearsal
26 Sat	9:00am - 9:00pm	Church Events	Jimi Crawford Memorial Service
27 Sun	10:30am - 12:00pm	Worship	Sunday worship
	11:30am - 12:00pm	Church Events	Coffee Hour
	5рм - 6рм	Off-site events	Zoom worship with Pastor Warren
29 Tue	1:30pm - 2:30pm	Off-site events	Online Book Group
31 Thu	6рм - 7рм	Off-site events	Thursday Night Prayer & Check-in
	7:30рм - 9рм	Church Events	Choir Rehearsal



November Messenger deadline will be Oct. 25

