

Niles Discovery Church



United in God's love for everyone's journey ... no exceptions.

January Volume 15 Number 01

UPCOMING WORSHIP

January 4

"Fear of the Dark and the Fear of God" Matthew 22:13

January 11

"Hampered by Brilliance" Exodus 33:18-23

January 18

"None So Blind" John 9

January 25

"The Dark Night of the Soul" Sayings of St. John of the Cross



ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING DATE SET February 8

The Cabinet set Sunday, February 8, following worship, as the date for our Annual Budget Meeting. The meeting will be held at the Ma-Cultural Center cau (where we will be meeting for Sunday Services), immediately following worship. The Annual Financial Report should be available in late January for your review prior to the meeting.

WORSHIP MOVES TO 109 J STREET

Sunday morning worship services will now be held at the Macau Cultural Center, 109 J Street. Parking is across Niles Blvd.; the entrance is on J Street. There is an elevator and stairs to the second floor (where worship services will be held) and the third floor (where the children's Sunday School will meet). The Adult Sunday School class will do some experimenting of their own to figure out where or even if they will meet during this time between facilities.

We will need to set up and clean up the chairs, the sound system, and the keyboard each week. People are encouraged to come early to help.

"We can look at this as a spiritual experiment," Pastor Jeff said. "We have a couple months to experiment with what is really essential for us to be a worshiping community."

The new year is a great time to join the choir. Choir rehearses at 7:30 p.m. each Thursday at Fremont Congregational Church, 38255 Blacow Road. For more information, contact Jonathan Borchardt.

Our temporary office is in a trailer parked next to a similar construction trailer in the parking lot at 36600 Niles Blvd. This space will be used by Cecilia and Randy for their work. Pastor Brenda and Pastor Jeff will work out of their homes and coffee shops. "You might think of these as 'community office hours'," Pastor Jeff said. He encouraged people to make sure they have the Pastors' cell phone numbers and to watch the church's Facebook page for announcements from him and Pastor Brenda to track where they are and when. Pastoral counseling will need to take place in people's homes.

AV SYSTEM GRANT RECEIVED

Thanks to some hard work by Ann Melious and Pastor Jeff and some amazing generosity from the Fremont Bank Foundation, the church has been awarded up to \$90,000 for purchase and installation of a state-of -the-art audio/visual system at our new church facility at 36600 Niles Blvd. This is exciting news and we're very grateful.



Pastor Jeff pointed out to the Fremont Bank Foundation that by including the best system available, we will make our church building not only an asset for our worship of God and service to our neighbors, but also a community asset. We look forward to the facilities being use for concerts, community meetings, documentary screening, and educational events.

HELP WANTED

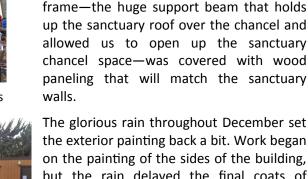
If you can help set up our chairs on Sunday morning (any Sunday please morning), arrive at 109 J St. early. The doors will be opened by 9:00 a.m., by 8:30 a.m. on January 4.

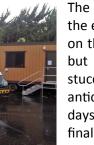


Work continues at a steady pace at 36600. The carpentry work in the sanctuary began in earnest with the installation of the natural wood ceiling, a job requiring much skill and precision. The steel moment



Exterior painting in process





Office trailer delivered Dec 15



Kitchen, with new fridge and freezer



Counter support in women's restroom

The glorious rain throughout December set the exterior painting back a bit. Work began on the painting of the sides of the building, but the rain delayed the final coats of stucco and color. As of press time, it was anticipated that there would be some dry days at the end of the month to get the final coats of paint and stucco completed.

Thankfully, the exterior paint is not in a critical path holding up other work. The interior painting was completed and most of the doorframes and doors were installed and painted. The countertop supports in the bathrooms were completed, and a new refrigerator and freezer were delivered and moved into place in the kitchen. As the painters finished up, the electricians began installing lighting fixtures.

The rain throughout the month did reveal that we have a couple of leaks in the building, which we are working to diagnose and remediate. We're grateful not only for the rain, but for revealing these problems now when it's easier to fix them and before they caused any damage. As we begin 2015, the project continues to be on target with our revised schedule, and we continue to plan for a move-in date in late February or early March.



Preparing wood for sanctuary ceiling



Floor is full of the sanctuary ceiling



Sanctuary ceiling is almost complete



Installing acoustic panels in the Fellowship Hall

Jeff's Jottings

I guess it was three years ago or so, I was leading the "Time with the Children" in worship, making a point about how light is helpful because it allows us to see what's there and that makes us feel safer. Laura considered what I said and then pointed out that we can't see the stars in the light. We need dark for that. From that moment on, I have pondered the gift of darkness.



I typically associate darkness – I suspect most of us typically associates darkness – with malevolence. From the imagined monsters under the bed or in the closet to the imagined dangerous animals beyond the light of the campfire to the imagined mugger down the dark alley, darkness evokes feelings of anxiety. So, too, with the darkness within: we fear our anger and our hatred – toward others and toward ourselves.

And right there, I just did what Christianity too often does. Too frequently Christianity has used "darkness" as a synonym for sin, ignorance, spiritual blindness, and death. Some feelings are "dark," feelings like anger, hatred, vengeance. This language, sadly, pits day against night, identifying God with the sunny part of the day and leaving us to deal with the rest on our own time. And this language implies things about dark-skinned people that are not true.

Far too much theology has framed things as either/or, explaining reality in opposing pairs: good/evil, church/ world, spirit/flesh, sacred/profane, light/dark. I know I have done it, and probably do it, even though I think it is pitiful shorthand for the way things really are. The world is much more an experience of both/and. None of us is perfectly good nor horribly evil; we are both good and bad. And the separation of spirit and flesh is actually counter to the very miracle we just celebrated: that God's love takes on flesh and that we experience spirit and flesh together in Jesus. That's what the incarnation is all about.

Why do we think of light as good and darkness as bad? God doesn't. Speaking for God, Isaiah says, "I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places, so that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name" (Isaiah 45:3). Perhaps it's time to think about "the treasures of darkness."

We are embarking on a season that feels like darkness to me. We don't have a place to call home right now. The church staff is scattered - Randy and Cecilia working out of a trailer, Pastor Brenda and I working out of our homes. We're renting one space for worship and another space for choir rehearsals. What will it be like during this time? How will we find our way forward?

The answer to our anxious questions might be framed this way: "We need to learn to walk in the dark."

I will begin a sermon series on January 4 inspired by Barbara Brown Taylor's latest book, Learning to Walk in the Dark. During the coming weeks we will look at the role of fear in our spiritual and community journeys. We will explore the possibilities of being hampered by too much light. I will reflect on blindness and what St. John of the Cross called, "The Dark Night of the Soul." And in February, Pastor Brenda will finish the series with a reflection on "Our Lady of the Underground."

While I suspect I will quote from Taylor's book during this series (she's one of my favorite preachers, so I enjoy her writing), you might want to read along yourself. I certainly hope that will not be necessary, but it may be beneficial.

I look forward to exploring with you how learning to walk in the dark might enhance our journeys and carry us through this time of "in between-ness." I look forward to seeing you in church.

Peace, Pastor Jeff

Pastor Jeff's personal blog is at jeffsjottings.wordpress.com. He is publishing his sermons there so you can leave feedback or comments. He has started another blog, "Does God Care When My Mom Kills Slugs?" where he answers kids' theological questions. You can read it at askrevjss.wordpress.com.





CONGRATULATIONS TO ...

... Pastor Emeritus Don Anderson and his wife Janette who became great-grandparents on December 4 with the birth of Orion Michael Gaisor.



STAY IN TOUCH WITH THE WIDER CHURCH

You can subscribe to the emailed newsletters from the UCC Conference by going to http://bit.ly/QFhbEz and entering you email address. You can subscribe to the weekly email newsletter from the DOC Region by going http://conta.cc/ to SlhyQL and typing in your email address.

You can subscribe to email newsletters from the national settings of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) at http://bit.ly/n1MzfK and the United Church of Christ at http://j.mp/odlTLO.

MINISTRY TEAM MEETINGS SCATTER

Because we don't have a fulltime facility, for the next few month Ministry Teams will be meeting on a varied schedule. You are always welcome at Ministry Team meetings. Here are their plans for January:

The Ministry of Spiritual Life Team will meet over lunch at a restaurant in Niles (to be determined that day) on January 4, following worship.

The Ministry of Christian Education Team will meet on January 5, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Judy Hollowell's home.

The Ministry of Property Team will meet on January 5 at 7:30 p.m. at the Hollowell's home.

The Ministry of Social Concerns Team will meet on January 5 at 7:30 p.m. at the Adamson's home.

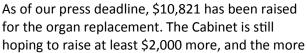
The Ministry of Evangelism and Outreach Team will meet on January 5 at 7:30 p.m. at the Palleschi's home

ORGAN TO BE REPLACED

Rather than moving an organ that's about 40 years old, the Cabinet voted several months ago to raise money to purchase and install a "new to us" organ at 36600 Niles Blvd. Our Director of Music, Jonathan Borchardt, pointed out that the organ at 255 H Street is a first generation electronic Allen Organ and that, with technological improvements, Allen is now producing their sixth generation of instruments.

Jonathan estimates that for \$12,000 to \$19,000 we can have a four or fifth generation instrument. This instrument would be more

versatile than our current organ. Because of improved digitization, the sound would be significantly improved. A new instrument would be much more reliable. Plus, the cost of moving the old organ is about the same as the cost of installing a new organ.





we raise, the better the instrument we can get. If you would like to contribute toward the purchase of a new organ, you can send a check to the church, marked "organ." You can also go to the church's website and click on the "donate" button at the top of the page, where you can make a donation to the Construction Angel Fund for the organ. Talk to Helen Boyer if you would like to donate shares of stocks or mutual funds that have increased in value without needing to pay tax on the capital gains.

MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS

If you have your bank automatically send a check to the church, please make sure the name on the check is Niles Discovery Church and it is addressed to PO Box 2265, Fremont 94536.



Momen's Tellowship News



Women from both NDC and Fremont Congregational Church joined together to enjoy the annual Christmas potluck held at Fremont Congregational Church on December 15. It was a delicious experience as we shared the dishes we had brought. Music leadership was provided by Marilyn Rasler who brought copies of the words and music for us; Joy Hurst who led us in singing and Sandy Thomas who accompanied us with her ukulele. After we sang "Jingle Bells," Irene Vollbrecht commented that she was probably the only one of us who had ridden to church in a sleigh on wintry mornings. We had an afternoon of happiness and joy.

MILDRED REYNOLDS LAP ROBE TYING GROUP



During 2014 we donated 64 lap robes. The recipients were Palo Alto Veterans Hospice, Emeritus at Atherton Court, S.A.V.E., Giving Hope which is part of the Human Services Department of City of Fremont, and two of our church members. There is never a charge for the lap robes and the materials are donated.

The next meeting will be January 28 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Judy Molander's home. Sewing/quilting skills not required. Let Dorletta Larsen know if you plan to attend as lunch is provided.

EVENING FELLOWSHIP



The Evening Women's Fellowship had 20 reservations for our annual **Christmas Tea.** This year our event was held at Tyme for Tea on December 19.

The next meeting of the Evening Women's Fellowship will be January 14, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at the home of home of Shirley Dunlap.

Jim and Sandy Thomas, Dorletta Larsen, Judy Molander, and Pastor Jeff Spencer attended the retirement celebration for Rev. Dr. Paula Pociecha on December 7. Paula has been a leader of women's ministries for the DOC regional office for 11 years.

UPCOMING FELLOWSHIP EVENTS

March 14—Women's Spring Renewal at Woodland Christian Church

September 25 to 27—Women's Fall Retreat at Mission Springs





CABINET "PLEASED" WITH STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN RESULTS



The official pledge campaign for financial support of the church's ministries in 2015 concluded with results that "pleased" the Cabinet. As of this edition's press deadline, the church received 51 pledges totaling \$174,059. This compares to last year's 62 pledges totaling \$179,712 for 2014.

While the campaign is officially concluded, financial pledges are welcome at any time. To make a pledge of financial support for 2015, mail a pledge

form to the office (attention Cecilia Le) or fill out the online pledge form on the church's website. Call the church office for assistance.



ADULT EDUCATION DISCUSSION INSPIRES POETRY

During a recent Adult Sunday School Class, Ray Kingsley shared a poem he had written recently on a topic they were discussing. The members of the group felt it was so special it should be shared with *The Bell* community ...

The Heart of God

I believe the heart of God lives with the broken people, The poor, the hungry, and the sick, The oppressed and the depressed, The addicted, the exploited, and the refugees, The forgotten and the invisible, ...Prodigals, and Samaritans too. God has a special love

When the broken people, empowered by this love, Rise up out of their brokenness, And begin to help each other, That is what I call the Kingdom of God.

for all of these.

...Ray Kingsley



SPECIAL OFFERINGS

The January special offering will go to Tri-City Volunteers, an organization with deep connections to our congregation. Started by women from our predecessor congregations, Tri-City Volunteers provides food assistance and low cost clothing and household items to the residents of Alameda County. As the largest client-direct food bank in the area, TCV serves up to 16,000 individuals every month through their food cart and bag lunch programs. With a staff of 10, a volunteer force of almost 1,900, and a budget that barely breaks \$600,000, TCV is extremely efficient in distributing over 6 million pounds of food annually.



Thanks to your generosity, the December special offering for the ministries of Puente de la Costa del Sur raised \$1,730.

You can see the schedule of special offerings at http://bit.ly/1jp11fD or call the church office and Randy will mail you one.

LET THE PPRC KNOW

The Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) wants to hear from you. Contact any PPRC member – Ron Adamson, Mark Twist, Judy Molander, Dena Hokom, Annie O'Hare, Sandy Thomas, Pastor Jeff Spencer, and Pastor Brenda Loreman – if you have a concern about the life of the church that you want to explore. If you have a church relationship that's hurting and want some assistance in healing it, speak to one of them.

JOIN OUR EMAIL LISTS

requests,

an-nouncements,

Simply go to our website www.nilesdiscoverychurch.org, look for the "Our Email Lists" paragraph toward the bottom of the front page, click on the link, and start filling out the forms. You can select what email lists you want to join – for the newsletter, the weekly

the

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD



Members and friends of Niles Discovery Church are invited to submit short notices that may be of interest to the rest of the congregation. Note, no commercial notices or partisan political announcements are allowed (to keep us from running afoul of regulations). Niles Discovery Church makes no representations or endorsements about the events or services listed.

prayer

weekly

and more.

Earl Lectures: Be|Art|Now, the 112th Earl Lectures and Leadership Conference, brings you into conversation and reflection with theologians, artists, communities, and art itself. Guided outings will focus on the intersections between arts, spirit, and social change. Featuring performances and lectures by artist-activists Adriene Thorne {pastor, dancer}, Michael Franti {poet, musician, composer}, Jinho "The Piper" Ferreira {playwright, musician, police officer}, and Tim Holmes {sculptor, philosopher}. For more information, contact Earl Lectures Coordinator Maren Haynes at mhaynes@psr.edu or call 510.849.8218.



Please Fray For...

BECAUSE OF THEIR HEALTH CONCERNS:

Don Dillion, Sr.; Taylor Johnson; Carl Nordling;

Kay McFarland; Edrea Espinoza; Janet Butcher;

William "Butch" Butcher;

John O'Donnell; Charlotte O'Donnell; Jerry Hollands;

Rebecca BoyerTaylor;

Jan Filip;

Diana Roeding; Diane Kindle;

Girven Hunter;

Ken Young;

Isaiah Espinoza-Carter;

Sarah Boyer; Ryan BoyerTaylor; Fred Anderson; Julia Parks;

Peg Tait;

Erika Keesis-Segura's husband, John

Segura;

Ed Espinoza, Isaiah and Aiyanna's

grandfather;

Alison Kieft's daughter and son-in-law,

Kimberly and Mike Kolbe;

Karen Engelsen, Wendy Goodfellow's

sister;

Jo Carroll, Suzy Mahusay's sister;

Rod Reyes' niece, **Tatiana**; **Rod Reyes' grandmother**;

Bill Palleschi's parents;

Mike Foster's mother, Jan Richards; Carol Easter's mother, Barbara;

Nancy Walker's mother and father;

Dorothy Williams' daughter

Belinda Williams.

ALL WHO ARE GRIEVING, ESPECIALLY:

Bob Monkman and his family as they grieve the death of Bob's brother, Michael Monkman, on December 21;

Michael Veronin and his family as they grieve the death of Michael's mother on December 20;

the family of the Rev. David Borglum, the Fremont Congregational Church, and the Filipino-American Evangelical UCC, as they grieve the death of David on October 31;

Bob Monkman and his family as they grieve the death of Bob's step-father John "Jack" Hanadel on October 30;

the family of Teresa Gumbert, as they grieve her death on October 25;

Wendy Goodfellow and her family as they grieve the death of her aunt, Joan Baker;

the family of Mary Alice van Doorn, including Steve Cooper, as they grieve her death on August 3;

the extended family of Otis Highbaugh, as they grieve Otis's death on July 10;

Judi Eaton and her extended family as they grieve the death of her father and member of our church, Rollie Eaton on June 19.

Prayers continue on page 8



Most months, one or both of the pastors invites you to join them for a no-host lunch on the third Sunday of the month. This month, our pastors invite you to join them on Sunday, January 18, at The Rose Garden, 33348 Alvarado Niles Rd, Union City, at about 12:15 p.m. Consider carpooling.





BROOKDALE LUNCH

Join church people living at Brookdale (formerly Merrill known as Gardens and Emeritus) in Fremont for lunch on January 13 at noon. Either Pastor Brenda or Pastor Jeff will attend. If vou would like participate (whether you live at Brookdale or not), please call Irene Vollbrecht (510-792-4642) to let her know by the Monday morning preceding the lunch. Non-residents Brookdale in Fremont are welcome, but it costs \$11.



PASTORS' SCHEDULES

Cecilia has new work hours; see below. Pastor Brenda and Pastor Jeff are working out of their homes. Please call your pastor if you would like to make an appointment or have him/her come by for a visit.

Church

510-797-0895

Jeff's mobile

510-579-8851

Brenda's mobile

510-828-4107

Pastor Jeff's Sabbath day is Friday and his day off is usually Saturday. Pastor Jeff will be on Study Leave January 26 through February 1.

Pastor Brenda takes Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays off. Pastor Brenda returns from vacation on January 6. Pastor Brenda will be on Study Leave January 28 through February 4.

Cecilia Le's hours are Sundays, 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and Thursdays, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Randy Fewel's hours are Mondays, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Wednesdays, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Continued From Page 7



<u>STUDENTS WHOSE STUDIES INCLUDE FOREIGN TRAVEL</u>, including Samantha Rasler, that they learn new academic, personal, and spiritual things, and that they return safely when their foreign studies are finished.

PEOPLE WHO ARE SUFFERING FROM PERSONAL BETRAYALS.

EVERYONE IMPACTED BY THE POISONS OF RACISM and FOR THE DAY WHEN OUR SOCIETY NO LONGER SUFFERS FROM THAT AFFLICTION.

FAMILIES, INCLUDING FAMILIES IN OUR CONGREGATION, where there is conflict and disturbance, thinking especially of the children who are powerless and vulnerable in these situations.

PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS OR IN NEED OF IMPROVED SHELTER.

THE SAFETY (AND IN SOME CASES SAFE RETURN) OF MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION AND OUR FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES SERVING IN THE MILITARY, including: Chris Swint, Scott Swint, Ben Gonzales.

<u>PEOPLE WHO ARE UNEMPLOYED AND UNDER-EMPLOYED, ESPECIALLY MEMBERS</u>
<u>OF OUR CHURCH</u>, that they find employment that fills their hearts and souls.

<u>THESE LEADERS OF OUR CONGREGATION</u>: members of the Cabinet; the Construction Team; Pastor Jeff Spencer; Pastor Brenda Loreman; the Care Team.

<u>PEOPLE (AND ALL OF CREATION) AROUND THE GLOBE</u> suffering from natural disasters, from human-made disasters, and from repression, violence, and war.

ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD, that we embrace ways to lessen the impact of global climate change.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY SEEKING TO LIVE CLEAN AND SOBER LIVES.

THE POLITICAL LEADERS OF OUR COMMUNITIES, STATES, AND COUNTRY.

REFUGEES, ASYLUM SEEKERS, INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS, RETURNEES, AND STATELESS PERSONS.

PEACE THROUGHOUT THE EARTH.

A reminder about this prayer list:

If you have a prayer request that you'd like added to this list (or removed) please let Pastor Jeff know.

January 2015						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
				◀ From Dec 29 Ced	cilia on vacation	
				◆ From Dec 29 Pas Pas The passion of the pa	stor Brenda on vacation	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9a Adult Sunday	6:30p MCE meeting		7:30p Spiritual	7:30p Choir Rehearsal	***	
School	(Hollowell's)		Direction Group A (Diane's')			
◆ From Dec 29 Past vacation	stor Brenda on					
9:30a Choir Warm-up	7:30p MP meeting (Hollowells)					
10a Worship &	7:30p MSC meeting					
Sunday School	(Adamsons')					
12p MSL meeting						
(TBA)	40	40	44	45	40	47
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9a Adult Sunday School	7:30p FMT meeting (Ken Young's)	12p Emeritus lunch	7p Evening Women's Fellowship (Shirley Dunlap's)	7:30p Choir Rehearsal		
9:30a Choir Warm-up		7p Construction Team (Adamsons')				
10a Worship &						
Sunday School						
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9a Adult Sunday School	12p Daytime Women's Fellowship (Fremont Congregational Church)	5p Bell deadline	7:30p Care Team meeting (Dena's)	7:30p Choir Rehearsal		
9:30a Choir Warm-up	7:15p Cabinet (Hollowells')					
10a Worship & Sunday School						
12:15p Lunch with the Pastor (Rose Garden)						
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
9a Adult Sunday School	Pastor Jeff on Study Leave to Feb 1 ▶					
9:30a Choir Warm-up		7p Construction Team (Twists')	Pastor Brenda on Stud	ly Leave to Feb 4 ▶		
10a Worship &		7:30p Book Group	10a Lap Robe Tying	7:30p Choir Rehearsal		
Sunday School		(Irene's)	Group (Molanders')			
12p Communion						
Elders Training						



NILES DISCOVERY CHURCH

Rev. Jeffrey Spencer, Senior Pastor Rev. Brenda Loreman, Associate Pastor PO Box 2265 Fremont CA 94536

Phone: 510-797-0895 nilesdiscoverychurch.org



NILES DISCOVERY CHURCH



The Bell is First Class

If you received this issue of *The Bell* through the US Mail, then you received it first class. You can help reduce our costs (roughly \$1.50 per issue you receive in the mail) by receiving The Bell via email. Simply go to our website www.nilesdiscoverychurch.org, look for the "Our Email Lists" paragraph toward the bottom of the front page, click on the link, and start filling out the forms. You can select what email lists you want to join – for the newsletter, the weekly prayer requests, the weekly announcements, and more. Then, please let Randy Fewel in the church office (510-797-0895; randy@nilesdiscoverychurch.org) know that you don't need The Bell via the US Mail any more.

HELP WANTED

- If you can help set up our chairs on Sunday morning (any Sunday morning), please arrive at 109 J St. early. The doors will be opened
- by 9:00,a.m. by 8:30 a.m. on January 4.