



Fed Family

Saratoga Federated Church Newsletter

Contents

- 2 Message from Pastor Sean Book Club
- 3 Love Your Neighbor Bridge Builders
- 4 The Chamberlains
- 5 Care Reflection Students Serving Others Memorial Celebrations
- 6 Care Update
- 7 Annual Meeting Report Points of Light
- 8 Allisons are Retiring SFC Foundation
- 9 Wedding Ministry Remembrances
- 10 Family Ministries
- 11 Living Life to the Full
- 12 Celebrations

Important Dates

July

11-19- Serve Week

16 - Book Club

August

15 - Bridge Builders Family BBQ

20 - Book Club

September

12 - Bridge Builders Respite Day

The Essential Church

Being The Church for Such a Time As This

You are essential! You are also here, a part of SFC, for such a time as this! What a strange and chaotic time we are living through. As we all contemplate what the next several months and even years will look like, there are a multitude of feelings and emotions that we are confronted with—anxiety, anticipation, sadness, grief, hope, fear, excitement, joy, frustration, anger, desperation, courage, solidarity and more.

It's during times like this that we can hold onto three things that give us tremendous strength and keep us grounded in our faith. First, we hold onto our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. One of my favorite old testament scriptures is Zephaniah 3:17, "The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in His love He will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing." My prayer for you right now is that you would allow God to celebrate and rejoice over you. I pray you will know and feel His love and grace toward you. I pray that His scriptures would come alive to you and that we would all gain strength from the Spirit of God within us.

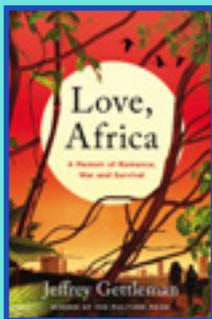
Second, we can also hold onto our history. SFC has a story, and so do you. Our stories are gifts for us as well as others. Paul told versions of his story over and over to his friends, enemies and the churches. My encouragement is to lean into your own story of God's grace in your life. He has been faithful and will continue to be, even when it feels like He is quiet or absent from our lives. Those of you who are older saints can look back and see the faithfulness of God over the long haul. Your roots go down deep into His marvelous love. This year we have all been reminded of our collective story at SFC. 100 years of God's faithfulness through the good times and the bad. What a legacy we have! Let's allow it to encourage us during this time.

Finally, let me encourage us all to lean into one another. We are the Body of Christ, and we are not made for isolation. One member needs the next and so on. I pray that our love for one another would be powerful during these times. I have been so encouraged by the practical love so many of you have displayed—reaching out to one another. Your generosity and care has been inspiring. As we continue to reach out to each other and those who are disconnected, I pray we would feel God's joy.

As we lean into God, our stories and one another, my hope is that we would leverage that strength for mission. Our mission is "transformation." God is transforming us to transform the world. He calls us to fill the world with love, justice and beauty. As we participate in this calling, we, in turn, are transformed—participation leads to transformation. May we all experience the transforming power of God as we live out the mission of God for such a time as this. Indeed, this is the essential church.

Women's Book Club

The July Book Club meeting will be held Thursday, July 16 at 12:15 pm via Zoom. We will be discussing *The Huntress* by Kate Quinn. This is a fascinating historical novel about a battle-haunted English journalist and a Russian female bomber pilot who join forces to track the Huntress, a Nazi war criminal gone to ground in America.



The August Book Club meeting will be held Thursday, August 20 at 12:15 pm via Zoom. We will be discussing *Love Africa* by Jeffrey Gettleman. A seasoned war correspondent, Jeffrey Gettleman has covered every major conflict over the past 20 years. This is a memoir about finding love and finding a calling in one of the most violent yet most beautiful places in the world.

For questions or more information about how to join the discussion via Zoom, contact Jeannie Hilt at (408) 984-2266.

From the Desk of Pastor Sean New Series (August 9 to November 1): Joy Ride - The Letter to the Philippians

Joy is one of the hallmarks of Christian spirituality. Wouldn't it be great if we all had more joy in our lives? In life, there are many joy-stealers, yet Jesus offered a special kind of joy (John 16). Sometimes vast segments of the church have reflected something other than joy out into the world. Certain parts of Christianity have become better known for their judgement than their joy. As a result, the church has lost much of its impact on its neighbors. When the followers of Jesus lack joy, our power is limited and so is our ability to love (Neh. 8:10, Zeph. 3:17, Ps. 16:11, Is. 12:3, Acts 2:28). But, God has BIG LOVE and invites us to go on a joy ride with Him that leads to transformation.

Life is not without its challenges, pain, heartache and even tragedy. There will always be nasty people, horrible circumstances, times of scarcity and loads of stress. And, of course, Jesus says that we must pick up our cross every day and follow Him. The cross was death and that doesn't sound joyful at all, but the parts of us being put to death are the parts that actually keep us from true joy. The parts that must be nailed to the cross are those that lead us to temporary, counterfeit solutions. We are dying to the kind of over-scheduled, self-centered, materialistic, anxious life that many of us get trapped into living.

We don't like to admit it, but in our search for joy, we often become driven toward the wrong things. As a result, we end up having way too much to do, people we need to impress, things we want to possess and worries to process. So how in the world are we supposed to smile more? I'm tired and frustrated just thinking about all that! The secret is freedom. Freedom from perfection

and performance. Freedom from approval and addiction. Freedom from shame and blame. And that's exactly what joyriding feels like—TOTAL FREEDOM! I'm talking about wind-in-our-hair, friends-by-our-side, full-tank, open-road freedom...like life is filled with possibilities and our imaginations have been untethered. What's going to happen next? I can't wait!

Joy Ride is a 12-week series through the letter to the Philippians from the Apostle Paul who wrote from prison believing he was close to death. He was the least likely person to be joyful, yet he was overflowing with joy! He allowed his joy to spill over onto others with thankfulness, confidence, generosity, friendship and much more. When we read Philippians, it's impossible not to feel the love Paul had for this congregation. His joy made life better and showed the love of God in powerful ways. His joy was also mutually transformational—it changed everyone! In this short letter (only 102 verses), Paul reveals who and what the "joy-stealers" are and how to overcome them. He also gives us insight into how things like gratitude, unity, sacrifice and focus can be pathways to more joy in our lives.

Philippians is the brutal truth about true joy in a world that often tries to steal, kill and destroy it—a world that offers temporary bandaids of happiness that are counterfeit substitutes. The letter is deep, practical, convicting and actually funny at times. So, hop in, buckle up, crank up the tunes and get ready for an adventure—a joy ride like no other!

Sean Miller, Lead Pastor

Love Your Neighbor

Serve Sunday: Week of July 11 to 19

With the current shelter-in-place order, we are organizing our Serve Sunday a bit differently. In an effort to allow plenty of safe distancing, we have planned a whole series of projects you can do as an individual or a couple or a family. We have spread out our project window over one whole week including both weekends beginning July 11. We will have a variety of projects, some of which you can do at home. While some projects are still being developed as this newsletter goes to press, we will be holding a food drive, planting outside the Saratoga Senior Center, cooking meals at home and much more. Check our church website for the latest details at www.saratogafederated.org/serve or simply [sign up here](#).

Every so often I get asked, “Why do we [normally] do Serve Sunday on a Sunday morning?” In the gospel of Matthew, chapter 22:36-40, Jesus is asked a very direct question and gives a very direct answer. “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

Unlike Jesus’ many parables, this



message is direct and clear: we are to love God and we are to love our neighbor. Since 2013, our church has been holding special serve days on Sunday mornings to make a point. This is worship; this is obedience to God; this is what the church should be about. We are not suggesting that service three days a year is sufficient to meet the intent of this command. We want everyone in the church to see service for and to and with your neighbor as an essential part of your everyday life, just as prayer and time in God’s word should be part of your everyday life.

Our hope with Serve Sundays is that you get an opportunity to serve in ways that may be new to you, or perhaps expose you to a new ministry. At the same time, we hope that serving alongside others provides opportunity to develop deeper relationships with the rest of the congregation than is possible while sitting in the pews on a Sunday morning. Equally important, we hope you are able to engage in worship as you serve.

*Jerry Bruce,
Minister of Church Operations*

Bridge Builder Events

Unfortunately our July 11 respite event had to be canceled. It is too soon to gather safely when so many of the children we serve are fragile.

On Saturday August 15, we will have a family picnic and dance party at a local park from 10:00 am to 12:30 pm. Details to follow. Email Debbie Lillo (dlillo@comcast.net) if you would like to participate. We are looking for a fun and informal band or DJ to help keep us moving to the music.

Our next scheduled respite event will be Saturday, September 12, assuming that it is clear we can offer the event in a way that keeps all of our children and volunteers safe. We plan to make this first event of 2020 a super special event that includes lots of fun for the children and a special brunch to honor the parents who have worked so hard during this shelter-in-place season.

Kids come from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. RSVP is required. Spots will fill quickly, so make your reservations early.

Buddies arrive at 8:15 am for breakfast and training. Early RSVP allows more families to participate.

A parent meal team will host a one-hour drop-in brunch for parents after drop-off.

Wendy and Brad Chamberlain Receiving a Legacy & Leaving a Legacy

Wendy and Brad Chamberlain have been working with Wycliffe Bible Translators for the last 25 years in Asia supported by SFC since the beginning! Wendy's grandparents were supported by SFC in their Bible translation work in South America and passed the baton to their granddaughter.

Wendy, Brad and their team completed a new testament translation in the third most common dialect of the Asian country they were stationed – a huge endeavor! In their words, that church has SFC's DNA, due to our support all the way through. After wrapping up their work and passing it on to the local people, Wendy and Brad have relocated to Seattle where Brad grew up and they met. Their two children are in college an hour and a half away and are making a huge transition as well! While they are both currently on furlough, Wendy and Brad will be continuing their work for Wycliffe from Seattle – Wendy as the Wycliffe Director of Communications for Mainland Asia and Brad as consultant to the ongoing translation work (now the old testament) in the dialect they worked with previously, and as support to the current coordinator of a consortium of Bible translation groups working together in Asia for communications/fundraising and strategic planning. It is an exciting transition to new ways of working for Wycliffe that will benefit from their combined years of experience and giftings. Brad is also working

50% of the time with a small church in central Seattle hoping to love the members well and reach out to the people who surround them in the city that are pro-spirituality but anti-institution. It is quite a call to shepherd this church, and it has given them a home in the heart of the city.



Due to sensitivity of the country for the work they have been doing, we cannot share the name, but wanted to share some of what is happening there. It is a country where expansion of Christianity is not favored by the government, and as such, the risks of conversion, for individuals (and for their families) are significant. Often people will not be public about their faith until the whole community has decided to follow Christ to avoid these pressures. The new church that has grown from their Bible translations work has several individual groups who also gather once a year and worship God together in their heart language, as well as discuss ways to create new Christian traditions for house blessings, weddings, funerals

and births. The groups have said they feel like the Acts church, living out what they read in that book. They are meeting in homes and the majority of people who attend became Christ-followers through healing by prayer. A typical "church" meeting, always held in someone's home, includes a reading of the word, some songs and the majority of the time praying for each other.

Personally, Wendy and Brad are facing many things. Brad's father passed away two years ago. Wendy's stepfather passed away recently. Brad is facing a new diagnosis of diabetes and all that entails. Both are dealing with transitioning to life in the States, along with their college-aged children, after 25 years of life in Asia, making new friends and developing new rhythms of life that fit where they live and caring for aging parents. They are also needing rest after years of investment and hard work. Thank God they have a little time to be on furlough to rest and restore and settle in to their new location! Please join us in continuing to pray for Wendy and Brad in their new roles at Wycliffe, for true rest and restoration in this new season, for deep friendships in their new community and that God will bless and multiply their work through Wycliffe in Asia, especially blessing the church that is growing up there. Also pray for new life to grow from this downtown Seattle church reaching the surrounding community in tangible ways.

Care Reflection

Grieving the Losses of COVID-19

Do you remember air travel before 9/11 and how that tragedy changed air travel from then on? The COVID-19 pandemic will change the course of history. There will be a point at which this pandemic will be in the past and a new normal will emerge. It is not clear what and how things will change, but some things will be lost.

We will all suffer loss and experience grief. Some losses are obvious, like when a loved one dies or a marriage ends. Other losses are harder to identify, like the loss of health, the loss of connection or the loss of a celebration. What have you lost during the pandemic? A loved one? A favorite morning ritual, sitting in a coffee shop with friends perhaps? Our family is very sad that we aren't able to celebrate our daughter's college graduation as we had envisioned. That sadness is a symptom of grief, and it is okay to grieve the losses of these special moments. Our grief is real, and so is yours. Everyone grieves differently and there is no perfect way to grieve. There

is no way to avoid grieving a loss. You can postpone grief, but to heal from it, you must go through it.

You may be familiar with the “five stages of grief” that psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross developed: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. David Kessler, who worked with Kübler-Ross, has added a sixth stage, finding meaning. I recently listened to a podcast where Brené Brown interviewed Kessler discussing this sixth stage and loss during the COVID crisis. There were many insightful moments in the [podcast](#). The comments, “if you can't feel it, you can't heal it” and “the meaning is not in the loss but in what we do after the loss” both resonated with me. Sheltering in place is giving people time to slow down, reflect and hopefully connect with God and others on a deeper level. It may be hard to think about how we will find meaning from the losses we are experiencing right now. I encourage you to think about it, though, and in time,

hopefully find meaning.

Here are some tips that may help as you process loss:

Identify the loss and the grief—this is an important step towards healing.

Talk to people—friends, family, a support group. Sharing helps lift our burdens.

Acknowledge feelings—there is no perfect way to feel. Moments of happiness and sadness are both okay!

Take care of yourself—exercise, eat regular meals and maintain a regular sleep schedule.

Express your feelings—keep a journal, write a letter, do a craft project. Get creative.

If you'd like to talk with someone or would like additional resources to help recover from loss, please email me at peggy.beck@saratogafederated.org.

Peggy Beck

Grief Ministry Coordinator

Students Serving Others

During this shelter-in-place season, a couple of our students chose serving others over boredom. Katelyn and Jack Aby offered to pick the oranges from their neighbors' tree and do some yardwork for them as well. Katelyn and Jack were able to make more than 10 bottles of orange juice from the oranges they picked. They



shared the juice with their neighbors and even used the leftover pulp to make muffins and jam. The neighbors with the tree were so pleased they said they would make a donation to the Second Harvest Food Bank in honor of their labor. All the neighbors who received bottles of juice said it was the best they had ever had.



Memorial Celebrations

Memorial celebrations at SFC will resume once loved ones are able to travel here, and it is safe to gather in numbers.



Care Update

Please Welcome Naz, Our New Care Associate

Nazanin (Naz) Tooyserkani is now our Care Associate for adults age 70 and older. This age span includes 199 people in their 70s, 153 people in their 80s and 30 people in their 90s. Our “flock of sheep” 70+ now totals 382. You can see immediately why Naz needs a team of 10 Care Deacons to help her identify and serve their needs. It is so helpful when you do your part. 27% of these seniors currently live alone, so we all need to keep a tender watch on each other.

In her new role, Naz is augmented by Peggy Beck, who remains on our Care Team in another specialized role. Peggy is our Grief Ministry Coordinator. In this role, she offers care to members and neighbors who are grieving a loss and those who are living with a grave illness. For more than four years, Peggy had two part-time roles, Care Associate for those 70+ and Grief Ministry Coordinator. The longevity of members requires more time for each focus, so Naz and Peggy have an active partnership.

Now hear from Naz in her own voice:

My name is Nazanin, but I go by Naz. My husband, Pirooz, and I are celebrating 32 years of marriage. We have three boys: Cameron (28), Darius

(24) and Bobby (24). I have joined the SFC Care Team, ministering to those 70 years and above. I am a registered nurse, and this role has prepared me well to serve as a Care Associate. Every patient and person is unique. Each one deserves our empathy and encouragement. Nursing trains you to pay attention. I see things every day that inspire me to pray for someone’s healing or hope.

Currently I work with hospice patients one or two days every week. I am happy to say that being a nurse serving the hospice population has been one of the most gratifying jobs I’ve had in years. It requires a kind heart and peaceful faith. Now I’ve added a second very satisfying part-time job—being a care shepherd for senior members. It is such a joy to connect with our older members, and when able, to serve them and always to pray for them. I love to pray for friends and strangers, with them out loud if they welcome it, and privately if not.

I’ve already noticed something during my check-in calls. When I’ve asked if members have any prayer requests, some replied, “Oh, my problems are insignificant compared to others,” or “No, we are all healthy.” I like this empathy for others, but it is

good for us to be reminded that our God cares about every aspect of our lives—big and small. God is never too busy, and our needs are never too small.



Psalm 91:14-16, “Because He loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.”

If I haven’t spoken to you yet, I invite you to reach out to me. Let’s talk and pray. My email is naz@saratogafederated.org.

Arvin Engelson, Pastor of Care and Counseling

*Naz Tooyserkani,
Care Associate for 70s-90s*

A Sabbatical for Arvin

Arvin Engelson, our Pastor for Care and Counseling, is eligible for a sabbatical this summer. Sean, our Lead Pastor, and the Elders have encouraged him to take full advantage of this opportunity for study and personal refreshment. Our Care Ministry is well positioned to cover needs in Arvin’s absence. They have responded

very effectively to the Corona virus. Our Care Team (Steph, Kathy, Naz, Peggy and Savoy) is prepared to monitor and respond to your private life needs as are the 30 volunteer Care Deacons. In addition to our Senior Staff, Chris Clark will be on-call for pastoral care as needed. Chris is a member, former pastor and currently

a hospice chaplain. We again refer you to the many practical resources on our [Care Ministry website](#) for your personal ministry of care during these challenging days. Arvin’s absence will be from July 19 to September 12.

Annual Meeting Report

SFC held its 2020 Annual Meeting on May 17 via Zoom webinar because of shelter-in-place restrictions due to COVID-19. Attendees were able to use their computers or phones to join the meeting. Approximately 100 people participated in the online meeting. 216 proxies were submitted to SFC before the meeting, which constituted a quorum.

Peggy Beck led a time of remembrance for those who passed away this last year and their names and pictures were shown. Those who had lost a spouse, parent, child or other family member, were also remembered. Those who passed away this last year include: Dave Akers, John Bond, John Britton, Rol Chapman, Karen Colson, Patti Craven, Dresden Erickson, Marlene Freitas, Emily Hendickson, Megan Keefe, Jim Kistler, Sheri Mahaffey, Jan Petrucha (2017), LaVerne Rettig, Ken Spring and Ralph Wood.

Nick Kepler gave the Council of Elders report and highlighted the hiring of Sean Miller as our new Lead Pastor, the series of interim preachers SFC enjoyed before Sean's arrival, the paying off of our external debt and the wonderful efforts of so many people to help others during COVID-19 shelter-in-place orders and to bring worship into our homes with video services.

Treasurer, David Akers, gave the Treasurer's Report, highlighting that we have received in revenue already the total budget target for this fiscal year. However, typical weekly giving is down at this point. SFC paid no interest on any debt in fiscal year 2019 – 2020. SFC received some generous gifts this year that have permitted SFC to be able to pay salaries and wages for all SFC staff during current shelter-in-place

orders and to add to the Sustenance Fund which is used in a variety of ways to help those in need who are connected to SFC in some way.

Nominating Committee Chair, Kevin Payne, gave the Nominating Committee Report and explained that because several elders will be termed out in June 2021 or will be leaving their positions, the Nominating Committee is recommending two additional elder positions to reach a total of 12 in order to maintain continuity. Kevin then presented the slate of candidates for the Elder Council, Care Deacons, Nominating Committee, Treasurer and Foundation.

Nick Kepler summarized two non-candidate items on this year's ballot: 1.) updating the title of Teaching Pastor to Lead Pastor; and 2.) authorizing SFC to hire a Children's Ministry Pastor, Minister or Director. Discussion was held and various questions were answered.

Kathy Storton announced that all candidates and the two non-candidate measures were approved overwhelmingly. A total of 216 proxies were submitted. Nine different candidates received one abstention vote each. One elder candidate received one no vote. There was one no vote on the pastor title change. Regarding the ability of SFC to hire a Children's Ministry Pastor, Minister or Director, there were two abstentions and five no votes.

Lead Pastor, Sean Miller, provided a pastoral update and thoughts. Nick closed the meeting in prayer.

The meeting ended at approximately 1:30 pm.

Points of Light

You know those Lenten and Advent special offerings we give each year? One of the recipients has been Points of Light. It is the organization that distributes the stuffed Easter eggs, Christmas stockings and gifts to the children of Oakland. You might have helped with those projects on one of our Serve Sundays. SFC's Local Outreach Team, through our sponsorship of the Points of Light (POL) program, is helping with a number of serious problems in the city of Oakland. Over 60% of the children in Oakland receive one or more meals each school day, but with the kids staying at home, the schools have no way to deliver the meals to those children without transportation. The Points of Light program is working with five different Oakland schools on a program in which POL picks up these meals and delivers them to the students' homes. POL has delivered over 15,000 meals. Additionally, POL is purchasing food for those families who are unable to provide for themselves. In normal times, POL has direct contact with over 700 children each week. God is at work in Oakland and Saratoga Federated Church is doing its part to help!



Our BIG News – The Allison's Are Retiring!

As we reflect on our years at Saratoga Federated Church, we are filled with so much joy despite the fact that there have been challenging times to work through with this current COVID-19 and racially charged season being one of them. God is so masterful at weaving those difficult moments, the times that stretch us, with the “smooth sailing” times to shape us into our best selves.

As our senior staff has talked and imagined what the next years could look like at SFC, we hear so much that is good and exciting and forward thinking. These conversations have caused us to dig deeply into our purpose, calling and contribution to the ministry here, both on a personal level and in respect to the greater good. As we have led in worship and in creating seasonal and special times of intergenerational celebration and reflection, embracing and inviting both the congregation and our wider community to know and experience God in fresh and authentic ways, we

have a sense of fulfillment in knowing that our humble gifts were used in the growth and building of the church.

We have been talking and wrestling and praying about when our time of retirement would come for several years and have come to realize that the time is now. We are sensing God pointing us in the way that we should go. For us, this is not a hard stop. It is more like a relay race. We are part of a team, and this is our time to pass the baton. We come to this decision in a place of peace, knowing that we will continue to love and cheer Saratoga Federated Church on knowing that we also are loved.

We will be spending the next four months continuing to work and worship with you, while working through this transition with Pastor Sean, the staff and the leadership team. Sunday, November 1, will be our last official day, but our hearts will remain with you as we embark on the next phase of our journey of faith.

With love and affection,
Bill & Diane Allison



SFC Foundation

SFC has a team of people dedicated to helping the church meet its long-term capital needs related to land, buildings and pastoral housing. Prior to formation of the Foundation, the church had acquired four parcels representing over half of our block all of which border on Park Place.

Over the past 20 years, the Foundation has been instrumental in helping the church with several projects. These include pastoral housing assistance for five different pastors, the acquisition of three key parcels on our block and several major refurbishment projects.

Major funding for Foundation projects comes primarily from three sources:

- Capital Campaigns, held when a particular need or opportunity arises,
- Estate Gifts, when church members leave a legacy gift for the church in their will or trust and
- Rental Income, currently being generated by the Cox building.

In addition, occasional gifts are received by the Foundation from church members who are interested in funding the long term mission of the Foundation.

The SFC Foundation team hosts periodic free seminars on estate planning which are designed to provide basic information and encourage people to be good stewards about planning for their legacy.

To find out more about how you can help the church in this vital area, visit us on our website at www.saratogafederated.org/foundation. On that page, you will also see a list of Foundation members and their contact information. We would love to answer any questions you may have about our mission.

Wedding Ministry Remembrances

The earliest wedding at Saratoga Federated Church that we find in our records was for Eliza Cross, daughter of Pastor William Hanna Cross, on October 2, 1902, located at the old Congregational Church. Since that time, we have hosted countless weddings for our SFC members, families and people in our community. The graceful simplicity of the Chapel and stately beauty of our Sanctuary have provided the perfect backdrop for couples, young and old, to recite their vows to one another and before God.

It has been a blessing for each of us to have been part of the Wedding Ministry for the last twenty plus years, although the tradition goes back over 100 years.

Many of you might remember Ruth Bruns serving as our Wedding Hostess. When Ruth retired in 1998, one of our pastors asked Melinda Chase to put together a new Wedding Team to serve the many happy couples eager to be married. Thankfully Cindy Staffield loved the idea of helping to design and partner in this ministry! We have worked with talented and fun women: Nancy Commins, Mary Jane Bruce, Diane Hartsell, Veronica Miller and currently Jane Hoffman and Kristin Gagnola. Mary Norton has been our amazing organist and music

coordinator. In addition, Diane Allison provides beautiful piano music, Ruthanne Adams-Martinez often provides her “heavenly” harp music and Jonathan Phillips has inspired us with his viola presentations.

Our team always views the wedding ceremony as a holy moment. It is a time to glorify God and give thanks for His plan for marriage and also for the weaving of lives and families. In the presence of family and friends, all couples are encouraged and guided to put God first in their marriages and to love, honor and respect their spouses. Meanwhile, sitting in the back, we often focus on silently renewing our own commitment and vows to our own spouses, for us 50 and 52 years! While serving others, we are blessed to be a part of these moments in a holy and beautiful setting at Saratoga Federated Church.

As with most ministries, we have had our “moments” that end up being the wedding stories people tell one another for years! While working in this ministry, we came to understand the complexity of individual and family relationships, the mountain of details that everyone faces when planning a wedding, including the high emotions and high stress that accompanies this lifetime event.

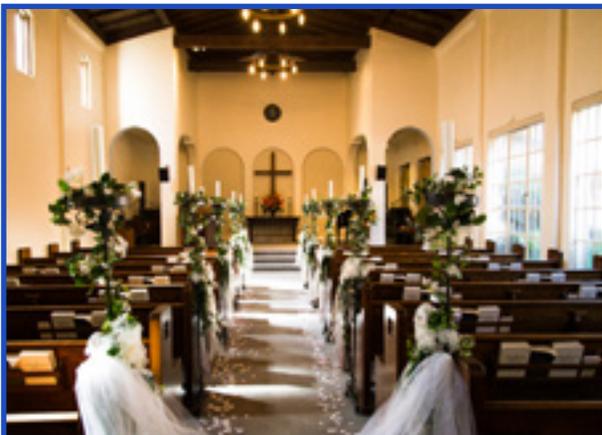


We giggled together as we remembered it was very important to keep tissue on hand, not only for the wedding party but also ourselves! We cried as we sent brides towards their waiting grooms. Ruth Bruns taught us that a well-prepared hostess always had a supply box including tic-tacs for bad breath, safety pins, thread and needle, bandaids and Tylenol.

We speak from our hearts when we say, that despite the distractions of ringing cell phones, “roaming” paparazzi photographers/videographers, nervous and anxious brides, grooms, attendants and family, we are very grateful for these lasting memories of joyful celebrations among our congregation, at this very special church, that means so much to all of us.

It is wonderful to contemplate future generations of Saratoga Federated brides and grooms recessing down the aisle with HUGE smiles on their faces, while chapel bells are ringing, “announcing” the new union! A NEW FAMILY!

*Melinda Chase and Cindy Staffield,
Wedding Coordinators*



High School

Our high school ministry, LifeHouse, benefits from a team of adult volunteers. Some lead our weekly programs, others in special events like Confirmation and Mexico. As we thank God for all those who give of their time, I want to highlight one.

Jenn Feldmeyer came to the church a few years ago with her husband, Steve. Jenn has a passion for youth ministry and started serving with us right away. In the past few years, she has been a faithful Bible study leader, teacher and activity chaperone. Jenn's dedication even had her on our houseboats trip while several months pregnant! Jenn shines with our girls, encouraging faith through the trials of high school. Jenn serves in other ways too. Recently with her husband, she hosted a virtual dance class during shelter-in-place.



Matt Hall, Director of Youth & Family Ministries

Junior High

MadHouse is blessed! We not only have terrific students, we also have amazing leaders. This month I would like to share with you about one leader in particular, Carolyn Cocanour. Carolyn's motivation lies in a heart dedicated to Jesus Christ and a desire to help students grow in their relationship with God. For over five years, Carolyn has been a committed small group leader of junior high girls. One of Carolyn's greatest strengths is that she relies on the word of God. Reflected in her ability to easily respond to student questions, are Carolyn's Biblical understanding and scripture memorization. In addition, you can often find students gathered with Carolyn laughing and playing card games in MadHouse. Carolyn is not just a support to her students. Other MadHouse leaders rely on and appreciate her compassionate spirit and immediacy in addressing their prayer needs. MadHouse is truly grateful for Carolyn's gentleness and gifts of teaching and counsel. Thank you, Lord, for the blessing of Carolyn.

Yvette Lee, Director of Junior High & Family Ministries

Children's Ministry

This Spring didn't quite go according to plan given the shelter in place, but some great things have been happening in Children's Ministry despite the circumstances! We have been holding Sunday school every week through Zoom where we sing praises to God, play games, hear Bible stories and have lessons about forgiveness, putting others first and staying strong when things get hard. Families are also sent weekly digital lessons that correspond to our themes and include at-home activities and discussion starters for families to use. Kids are working on a Sunday School Challenge checklist filled with ways they can model Jesus at home while we are not meeting in person. We loved being able to deliver Easter care packages to almost 60 kids...filling bags with Easter eggs, crafts, activity pages and other fun. We also did a drive-up care package delivery! Over 30 families signed up to come to church to get their Family Fun Care Package...filled with lots of treats and family activities and games. What a blessing to be able to see so many smiling faces in person. The smiles were a bit hidden due to masks, but we know they were there! We have been so blessed by all our teachers and leaders during these past months. It's been a joy to see SO many join in our live Sunday mornings, volunteer to contribute to the lessons and contact every child individually by phone, letters and emails. We have AMAZING volunteers!

This summer will continue to hold challenges, but the Children's Ministry team will continue to work hard thinking of ways we can worship, play and learn with the amazing kids and families of SFC.

Amy Sells, Interim Director of Children & Family Ministries

Bridge Builders

When we meet in-person, we have seven to eight Bridge Builders students. Four of them require 1:1 buddies every Sunday. The others participate in a class that requires 1-2 volunteers to assist the teacher. These volunteers are incredibly compassionate, dedicated and reliable because they understand that the families they support cannot easily attend church without them.

During shelter-in-place, these same volunteers have been praying for their students, mailing cards, enjoying video chats and dropping off crafts and other surprises.

We are so thankful for the dedication of these volunteers.

Debbie Lillo, Special Needs Ministry Leader

Living Life to the Full

As the inaugural year of our SFC MOPS group comes to a close, we wanted to share what a full and successful year it has been despite becoming a virtual group as we have sheltered in place!

We are 21 mamas strong and still growing! We have heard from wonderful speakers like Linda Ikeda, Valerie Plummer and Lucy Wedemeyer, learned about topics such as keeping our families healthy, emotional literacy and how we can fight against human trafficking. We have grown together through mom's nights out and even launched a regular playhouse playdate for anyone with kids 0-5 years old on the church campus! New mamas are stepping into leadership, and we are gearing up for next year.



If you are interested in learning more about becoming a grammie or auntie to our MOPS moms and children or are ready to sign up and serve in this way, please contact Melinda Chase at melinda@saratogafederated.org. It is anything from a Costco quiche to a homemade feast, and whatever it may be, it is SO much more than food to us!



All of this has literally been fueled and made possible by our very own aunties and grammies of SFC. Every meeting we have had a couple of beautiful souls volunteer to bring us breakfast! This gives our minds and bodies the freedom to rest and enjoy the company of other moms, learn about topics we care about, grow and share our faith, get creative, all while sending our littles downstairs to do the same.



Thank you to all of you who have prayed, volunteered and served this new ministry in all the various and many capacities. Our first year has been so fun and so full!

MadHouse Poster Contest Winners



MadHouse recently had a poster contest to be an encouragement to others. Congratulations to Valerie Sokolenko and Ryan Tong on their encouraging words.



Fed Family Deadlines

Aug 6, 2020 Sep/Oct Issue
Oct 1, 2020 Nov/Dec Issue
Nov 12, 2020 Jan/Feb Issue
Feb 4, 2021 Mar/Apr Issue

We're Moving

Keep in Touch

If you have moved, send your new address to Debbie Sturm at debbie@saratogafederated.org.



Saratoga Federated Church

(408) 867-1000
www.saratogafederated.org

Church Office:
20390 Park Place
Saratoga, CA 95070

Business Office:
14370 Saratoga Avenue
Saratoga, CA 95070

Congratulations!

July Anniversaries

William & Martha Thomas	July 6	79 years
Gordon & Andrea Anderson	July 7	20 years
Matt & Tracy Hall	July 12	6 years
Wade & Phyllis Meyercord	July 13	57 years
Bill & Linda Snider	July 14	47 years
Bob & Yvette Lee	July 14	36 years
Rob & Nancy Stump	July 14	36 years
Harry & Claudia Peabody	July 15	31 years
Kurt & Kathy Kroesche	July 15	25 years
Brian & Denae Haugen	July 15	13 years
Dennis & Robyn Swan	July 16	43 years
Michael & Donna Butcher	July 17	49 years
Steven & Jennifer Feldmeyer	July 18	11 years
Glenn & Janelle Aby	July 19	22 years
Steve & Marcia Wright	July 20	29 years
Thomas & Janice Berthold	July 21	47 years
John & Peggy Beck	July 25	28 years
Russ Krapf & Ellen Kahle-Krapf	July 25	11 years
Carl & Sheri Agers	July 27	24 years
Jim & Ruth Kolesar	July 29	3 years

August Anniversaries

Erick & Debbie Sturm	August 4	41 years
Eddie Babcock & Karen Chez	August 5	31 years
Henri & Barbara Jeanrenaud	August 6	43 years
David & Ann Fisher	August 8	67 years
George & Donna Lee	August 10	63 years
Robert & Karel Peer	August 12	58 years
CJ & TracyLyn Clark	August 12	8 years
Iain & Lindsay Roush	August 14	10 years
Carl & Sharon Liljenstolpe	August 15	56 years
Jack & Phyllis Dunstan	August 17	57 years
Joseph Park & Young Ja	August 17	52 years
Ray & Mary Coustier	August 17	35 years
Marty & Miriam Von Raesfeld	August 17	35 years
Tony & Carol Catron	August 19	59 years
Dick & Lynn Rowe	August 19	42 years
Larry & Carla Bjork	August 20	60 years
Chris & Barb Clark	August 20	43 years
Sam & Laura Wolfe	August 22	11 years
Doug & Marilyn Nagel	August 24	64 years
Keith & Dorothy Fraker	August 24	60 years
Dave & Mary Norton	August 26	48 years
Jeff & Barbara Cage	August 26	37 years
Cameron & Lisa Tulee	August 26	16 years
Ted & Elaine Clabeaux	August 30	63 years
Larry & Betty Hinman	August 30	51 years