



Fed Family

Saratoga Federated Church Newsletter

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Important Dates

September

- 17 - Women's Book Club
- 17 - Young Moms' Zoom Connection

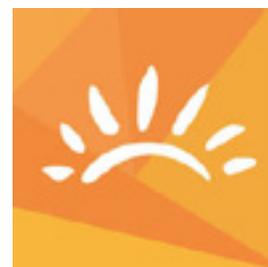
October

- 15 - Women's Book Club
- 17-25 - Serve/BD Week
- 18-24 - Invisible Disabilities Week

SFC Partners to Serve Our Community

Partnering is what we do – all the way back to when two churches partnered, or federated, together in 1920. Today we are excited to share that this October our Serve Sunday effort is linking up with the Beautiful Day (“BD”) team. Like we did in July, our Serve projects will span a 9-day period, from Saturday, October 17 to Sunday, October 25. Two of our projects will take place at nearby Payne Elementary school and will be done in partnership with the Beautiful Day organization. Morgan Griffith and Neal Locke will be leading those two projects which run in four shifts from Saturday, October 17, in the morning through Sunday, October 18 in the afternoon.

Today BD is “a growing group of government agencies, community organizations and people from all walks of life serving others by addressing all sorts of needs across Santa Clara County.” It began as a service outreach from Westgate Church, much like our Serve Sunday, and has grown to include thousands of people serving throughout the county over a weekend in mid-October. SFC is constantly looking for ways to leverage relationships for greater kingdom impact. This service



partnership with BD is just one more example of ways we can join hands with brothers and sisters in the broader church to love our neighbors.

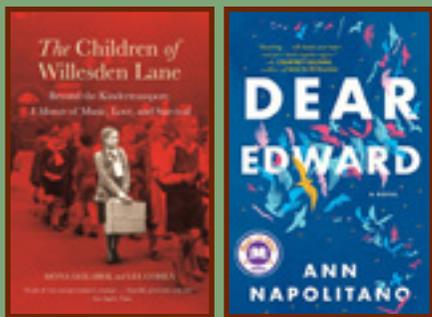
Another partnership that has been happening a bit under the radar for over a year now is the Rotating Safe Car Park program running in Saratoga. Modeled after similar programs around the country, the Saratoga Ministerial Association runs a program wherein various churches take turns utilizing their parking lot at night, one month at a time, to host a small number of vehicles, so people living in their cars have a safe place to park for the night. While we are not currently a host site, we encourage any of you to participate as a volunteer in the program for one hour in the evening or one hour in the morning.

More information about these service opportunities is available on the Serve page of our website at www.saratogafederated.org/serve.html.

Women's Book Club

The September Book Club meeting will be held Thursday, September 17, at 12:00 pm via Zoom. We will be discussing *The Children of Willesden Lane* by Mona Golabek.

Based on the true story of her mother, Mona Golabek describes the inspirational story of Lisa Jura Golabek's escape from Nazi-controlled Austria to England on the famed Kindertransport.



The October Book Club meeting will be held on Thursday, October 15, at 12:00 pm via Zoom. We will be discussing *Dear Edward* by Ann Napolitano. This is a novel about a young boy who must learn to go on after surviving tragedy. It is an illustration of all the ways a broken heart learns to love again.

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 A Season of Change

Remember what life was like last year before COVID-19? Very different. Do you remember what things were like for you 10, 20, 30 years ago? Probably very different, at least in some ways. What was your family like? How about your marriage? Your job? Your kids? Your church? Your faith? Take a moment and reflect.

Change is just a reality of the life God gave us.

When Jesus came and spoke words of life to people 2,000 years ago, He brought change. When the Apostles went out into the world, they brought change. When there was a great persecution in the early days of Christianity, there was change. When Peter went and met with Cornelius, there was incredible change. When the early church in Jerusalem was trying to figure out how to reach, accommodate and love those who were far from God (the Gentiles in this case), there was more change. After the Roman empire fell, Gregory the Great (540-604) began a monastic movement (think Gregorian chants) and ushered in needed change for Christianity. In 1053, there was a Great Schism between eastern and western Christianity, and there was change. 500 years ago, a monk in Germany nailed 99 theses (propositional statements) to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg Germany and ushered in the Protestant Reformation. Massive change would occur over the next 150 years!

Change. It's a part of life. Through all the change, Jesus continues to build His church. He continues to build His church through the power of His spirit and people, people like you and me. In the midst of it all, that has been one

thing that never changes. "I will build my church..." We can rejoice in this. We can also experience tremendous peace, joy and peace in the midst of a life that seems to always be changing on us, joy and peace because we have a great God who never changes and whose plan is steadfast.

Some of you can remember the first day you walked into Saratoga Federated Church. Some of you remember the Sanctuary being built or some other change to the campus. Others may remember their wedding day, a baptism, confirmation celebration or a memorial service. We remember potlucks, outreach events, camps and trips—so many trips to Mexico! The older we are, the more memories we have as we look back over the long story of God's faithfulness. These stories, like the stories of scripture and the history of the church, remind us how much God loves us and about the privilege it has been to serve Him, especially through all the change.

2020 has been a year of change for Saratoga Federated Church. There have been leadership changes. Together we have faced a pandemic, social unrest, sadness at watching our kids miss big moments in their lives, hard economic realities and more. We have learned to engage worship gatherings, youth group, Life Groups and pretty much everything else online. We have learned how to love one another without being present physically and how to celebrate without high-fives. We have shown generosity to our community and to one another in creative ways. We have said goodbye to old friends and welcomed new ones.

So much change.

As we step into a new season and look to a new year (which is just around the corner), I am thankful for the foundation that has been laid and the work that has been built over the last 100 years. Imagine all the change that has taken place over a century! Saratoga Federated has been a place that glorifies God. We are living life in God, with others and for others. As we look ahead to the holidays and 2021, that will not change. We will continue to pursue Jesus and growth in Him with everything we have. We will continue to lean into community and connection as we love one another. And we will seek to shine brightly as lights in the world to show Jesus, the way, the truth and the life to everyone.

Sometimes it can feel like everything is changing suddenly. It is difficult to imagine things in a different way. On top of this, change is just hard and scary at times, but really life is always changing, and our God is a God who changes things. During a difficult but hopeful time in ancient Israel's story, God spoke to them and said, "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." God loves to do new things, and He wants us to see His work and participate.

In the weeks and months to come, we will continue to experience more change. We are searching for new leadership for our worship ministries. We are focusing on how to reach young families through our Children's Ministry and contemporary worship gathering while continuing to grow and improve our traditional gatherings as we pass on our legacy of faith. We are creating vision for the new year that will bring us all together, and we are asking God how we can impact the community around us for Jesus and

see many that are far from God trust in Him. All of this will bring even more change!

I believe God made us for change. We are "resurrection people" and that means people of life and growth and hope. We change because we are alive, and we grow and we hope for something different, better, new. We are made for change by a God who never changes. Our hope in the midst of change is fixed on Him, "the author and perfecter of our faith."

My invitation to you this week, month and year is to hold onto Jesus as we follow Him on the greatest adventure ever!

"May the Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26)

Sean Miller, Lead Pastor



Adult Sunday School

Group Meeting
via Zoom
An In-Depth Study
of 1 Corinthians

This in-depth study looks at the history of Corinth including the social aspects, the pagan worship which many of the Corinthian believers came out of and how those beliefs and customs tainted their worship of our Lord, and how Paul (the writer of 1 Corinthians) counters those false beliefs. We will also look at the Greek texts to garner a more complete and nuanced picture of what Paul was writing.

The class meets via Zoom every Sunday morning at 9:30 am.

The Zoom meeting opens about 9:15 am. The class typically ends at 10:30 am.

To receive an invitation to the class, email Randy Schneider at crschneider@pacbell.net. He will add you to the list and send an invitation for the class at approximately 9:15 am on Sunday mornings. Email Scott Fritz at gfritzs@nccn.net to receive a page of notes the night before the class which you can fill out during the class.

Local Outreach Team

The Local Outreach Team has been busy supporting local ministries who are responding to urgent needs created by our current pandemic situation. If you are looking for ways you can join in the efforts to help, here are a few highlights from three of the ministries SFC supports:



Points of Light

Dedicated to reaching the youth of Oakland for Christ, Points of Light (POL) has many creative and innovative programs including the Christmas celebration and Easter egg hunt that SFC supports by preparing Christmas stockings and stuffing Easter eggs. During the current COVID-19 period, POL has been addressing the serious food insecurity of many youth and their families in the area by delivering grocery donations and partnering with the Oakland Unified School District to help facilitate meal distribution. So far they have delivered over 75,000 meals! In addition, POL has been fostering positive interactions between youth and local police including a graduation celebration parade to graduates' homes led by local police officers.



How can you help? The programs to reach youth in Oakland are in need of our prayers and financial support! Please pray for protection for all those working in difficult situations and for receptive hearts to hear the word of God. You can send financial donations to <https://poloakland.org/give>.



Servant Partners

Located near downtown San Jose, Servant Partners is working hard to support families with food donations, grocery store gift cards and rent assistance. In addition, goodie bags full of arts and crafts, snacks and letters to 20 middle school students on the east side were distributed as Servant Partners works to build relationships in the community.

How can you help? Annika John, who grew up at SFC, says:

There is a desperate financial need in our community, more so than ever before. Because of this, our ministry has created a stimulus fund for our neighbors, and some people are donating portions of their stimulus checks they don't need.

If you haven't already, would you consider partnering with us by financially supporting the families in my marginalized community so they can afford food and rent? Any contributions will make a significant impact. There are two ways we are gathering donations (both are tax-deductible):

- Venmo @shalomiglesiadelpacto (memo COVID-19)

- Mail a check to me (1022 Locust Street, San Jose, CA) made out to Shalom Iglesia del Pacto with "COVID-19 Stimulus" in the memo.



CityTeam San Jose

The need for food assistance requests has doubled as a result of job losses experienced by many in the last few months, and CityTeam has responded by opening three new food distribution centers bringing the total number of food pantries to seventeen. In addition, they are providing daily to-go meals and food boxes to hundreds of people in the San Jose area. Residential programs and overnight shelters continue to operate within public health guidelines that have been established.

Glen Peterson, SFC member and President of CityTeam, writes:

How you can help during this time:

- Please pray. We ask for the Lord's guidance and protection as we do all we can to fulfill our mission to share God's unconditional love.
- Support: As we continue to deliver our services and adapt our programs, we appreciate your ongoing financial support in order to continue serving our neighbors experiencing homelessness and hunger.
- You can give directly to Cityteam's Covid relief efforts at <https://www.cityteam.org/coronavirus/>.

Love One Another

Jesus tells us the second greatest commandment, after loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, is to love our neighbor as ourselves.

As a church, we are committed to Life in God, Life with Others and Life for Others. It is timely for us to ask, how can we love our neighbor when we don't know our neighbor or understand our neighbor's reality, especially when our neighbor is different than we are? How do we love our neighbor across racial divisions?

We live in the reality that the kingdom of God has come and will come – the already but not yet nature of God's reign on earth. Because the kingdom has not come in all its fullness, there is brokenness and sin in the world. We see God show up in the brokenness and invite us into His work of redemption.

Part of that brokenness is racial, ethnic and cultural divisions, whether it appears as a simple failure to understand our neighbor or extends to outright racism.

We hope to provide resources to help each of us fulfill the second great commandment. We want to bridge divides, to draw people in from the edges of the circle so that we can come together to better know one another, better know our neighbors and better empathize with one another.

How do we do this? First we look to scripture to see what the Bible says about injustice and oppression and how we are to treat one another. Second we look to pastors and theologians of color to learn what books they recommend we read as we seek to get to know our neighbor; specifically, in such a time as this, as we seek to understand better the Black experience in America. Third

we will offer opportunities for dialogue and conversation. Additionally we are planning to serve together across races and ethnicities.

While the command to love our neighbor as our self is always true, perhaps the way in which we live it out changes over time. We are exploring this together. We won't always get it right, and we want to work with one another as we improve. Our intention is to provide a Christian perspective on this subject rather than a political perspective. Because of our commitment to focusing on Jesus, we have revised the section on our website which offers recommendations on racial reconciliation. Most of the books recommended on our website are now based on the recommendations of theologians and pastors of color. We have removed some resources because they seemed unnecessarily divisive.

What is next for us? We hope you will join us for a four-week parenting seminar, *Raising Peacemakers: Conversations about Jesus, Race and Parenting* with April Diaz. While primarily focused on parents, all are welcome to join us on Thursday, September 10 and continuing the next three weeks. The first workshop will give us scriptural understanding of race and justice, and the following weeks' workshops will provide parenting advice for specific age groups.

We will be providing more opportunities to learn how to love our neighbor, and we hope you will join us on this journey.

With deep respect for you,
Sally Bryant, Pastor of Adult Ministries
Nick Kepler, President of the Council of Elders

Life Groups

RightNow Media is the Netflix of Bible study videos! We have made this resource available free on our website. You can watch these short videos together online, then move to a Zoom call for discussion. You may be interested in *The Power of Knowing God* by Dr. Tony Evans. God gives every Christian the tools for building an active relationship with Him and experiencing His presence in our daily lives. In this six-part series, Dr. Evans shares how prioritizing God over all else will transform us from the inside out.

There is a new group beginning in September that will look at *The Story*, the story of God's love affair with humanity. This curriculum looks at the unfolding progression of Bible characters and events from Genesis to Revelation. If you have ever wondered how all the books of the Bible fit together, this group is for you! Contact Sally Bryant at sally.bryant@gmail.com for more information.

Insider Outsider: My Journey as a Stranger in White Evangelicalism and My Hope for Us All by Pastor Bryan Loritts. Pastor Bryan is lead pastor at Abundant Life Christian Fellowship in Silicon Valley. In this book, he explores what it is like as a person of color in predominantly white evangelical spaces. This book will help us identify the pitfalls that keep Sunday morning the most segregated hour of the week. The book offers us a glimpse of what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called "life together." For more information, contact Sally Bryant at sally.bryant@gmail.com.

Estate Planning Seminar

Your SFC Foundation is again offering its free estate planning seminar. Come learn about the latest tax-sensitive tools to effectively manage your legacy giving. The content will be presented in easy to understand terms.

Our presenter will be Ray Sheffield again this year. Ray is part of our congregation and is an accomplished Estate Attorney in San Jose.

The seminar is free and there is no obligation. The SFC Foundation provides this seminar periodically as a service to the congregation and to the community. Everyone is welcome, so please invite a friend. This seminar will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, September 23, at 5:00 pm. Please help us prepare by [pre-registering here](#).

You can also register by contacting Jerry Bruce at (408) 867-1000 ext. 249 if you plan to attend.

For more information about the Foundation, visit www.saratogafederated.org/foundation.html.

Church Budget Update

Our recent fiscal year ended June 30, 2020, and it was marked by extraordinary generosity on the part of the congregation. Many gifts in December of last year and a few large gifts amidst the COVID impacted economy this spring helped us report donations well in excess of our reduced budget for 2019-20. We are extremely grateful to God and the congregation for that outcome.

You may recall we reduced our budget last year from the prior year as we entered the budget year without a Lead Pastor. Our reduced spending last year was approximately \$2,400,000. To maintain our normal level of staff and programs, we budgeted \$2,500,000 in spending for the current new year. This level of spending does not include cost of living increases for the staff, nor does it include any new investment in areas we would like to invest further in such as Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Worship Arts and Communications. Other than some unique large gifts this spring and summer, overall donations to the church are down. This is not unexpected given the economic impact of the COVID response measures.

Despite this decrease in donations, it is our desire to retain all of our faithful staff if at all possible so that when the campus opens up again, we can resume

our on-campus ministry work in all areas as effectively as possible. To that end, we have secured a government sponsored Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan, which can become a grant, of nearly \$335,000. This amount is equal to just 2.5 months of salary based on our 2019 payroll. It is our expectation we will qualify for complete forgiveness of this loan after December 31, 2020. The Elders have not yet determined whether to retain this government grant or to repay it. This decision will be made later in the year after we have more visibility into our financial position.

For now, we covet your prayers for wisdom. We always encourage each person/family to seek God's will for their giving and to respond as God guides you. We are hoping that donations this year will equal or exceed \$2,600,000, thereby enabling us to move forward with raises and some modest investments, while continuing to build a prudent reserve for future expenses. We pray that our church will grow in its effectiveness at spreading the gospel and nurturing Christians to greater Christ-likeness.

Jerry Bruce, Minister of Church Operations



Mary Norton

Mary Norton is retiring! Her last official SFC Sunday will be on September 6. Later that week, Mary and her husband, David, are heading east to their new home in Omaha, NE.

Mary was born and raised on the family farm in Door County, Wisconsin. She started playing the piano at age 4, and has embraced music as an integral part of her life, her career and her faith to this day. Mary just celebrated her 70th birthday, so she has a long legacy of using her gift of music to the glory of God... and she's not finished by any means! She attended Moody Bible Institute in Chicago as a music major. She met



her future husband, David, there. They built a home and life together which eventually included two daughters, Kristi and Jennifer.

Mary served in a number of churches as their organist before coming to SFC in 1989. When asked if she had a highlight from these 31 years, she said, "My favorite times of playing organ has always been from day one to accompany the congregational singing, especially when the Sanctuary has a full choir, and I can hardly hear myself even with all the stops pulled out."

Mary shared a favorite memory that occurred shortly after SFC's Sanctuary remodel in 2006, "A Chinese couple had their wedding at SFC. Since the groom was a violinist, he asked 12 of his friends to come and play along with me at the organ. It was a wonderful chamber orchestra. Part of the service included the congregational singing of *How Great Thou Art*. Verse 1 in English, verse 2 in Chinese and verse 4 in what language people were comfortable singing. The Sanctuary was quite full as it was a big wedding and listening to the last verse, "When Christ shall come..." being sung in multiple languages and the voices so full you could hardly hear the



strings and organ, was an experience like no other." Sounds like a glimpse of heaven!

Mary has had an amazing career as a music performer and educator. She has invested in the lives of countless students as well as the ministry of worship at SFC with skill, passion and enthusiasm. The Choir, Orchestra, Handbells and congregational worship all claim you as a special friend! Mary, you will be sorely missed, but your legacy will live on as we hear new hands at the piano and organ, and as we remember your life of service to God and His church through music.

David Norton



David Norton is a familiar face to many of you, especially if you attend the 11:00 am service. He has served as our Lead Usher for a number of years and has been a willing and welcoming presence on Sunday mornings as well as special events. His calm, assured and friendly nature have been a blessing to both newcomers and longtimers. As David and his wife, Mary, leave us to enter a new season of life in retirement,

we say farewell with hearts of gratitude and love. Our prayer is that the coming well-deserved years filled with family, travel and whatever new adventures await, are sweet, relaxing and a continuation of your walks of faith.

If you'd like to send a note of thanks, or keep in touch, the Norton's new address will be:

17526 O Street
Omaha, NE 68135

Village Preschool

Under the current state mandates, we are so saddened that Village Preschool won't be able to open in September. I trust that God has a plan for us. With all the praying that we have done these past months, I believe He has spoken to my heart about how to lead during this time. As always, my first intention is to serve Him, listen for His voice and guidance as this is where I place my hope and where I gain my peace.

All my years of teaching and guiding children and families at Village Preschool has been my greatest joy. We have cared so deeply about our children, how they develop, and the environment they are growing in. We miss all our families and want them to come back to Village as soon as it is safe to do so. Health and safety is our first priority, and we will continue to pray that Village Preschool will be able to open safely in the coming months. Even though we have required guidelines to follow, the underlining dedication to these precious little ones is the utmost importance to us.

Even in these challenging times, we are so grateful for the blessings that come our way. We were able to do some wonderful improvements of vinyl flooring and outside storage cabinets for the school as we anticipate reopening.

We join you all in welcoming Savoy Stevens, our new Minister to Children and Families. She will be fabulous and lead our children and families with such a loving and Christian heart. We continue to appreciate and value all the dedicated support we have felt from the SFC community.

Linda Kerin Garvey, Village Preschool Director



We are VERY excited about our new Bridge Builders logo!!

Thank you, Sage Stevens (buddy graduate)!

Bridge Builders

Bridge Builders Ministry is different during shelter-in-place, but we continue to reach out to our families. Volunteers continue to pray for and send notes to the kids, we are checking in with parents, our elementary students join the Children's Ministry Zoom calls and our 11:00 am teens/young adults are doing videos and activities sent home. We look forward to participating in SFC October Invisible Disability activities.

We are launching new things: all families and buddies meet bi-monthly for 15 minutes of "Grace" worship and prayer before dinner. Our 11:00 am students meet a few times a month by Zoom as well. We are planning a fun musical distanced family gathering for our Sunday families and volunteers on September 12. A life-group for high functioning young adults launches soon.

Since we are not together in person, our ministry is not nearly as well "seen" right now, so here is a reminder of what we do:

Bridge Builders launched in 2003 hoping to bridge the gap between special needs families and the church community. We embrace individuals and families of all ages touched by disability, removing barriers as they find their value in Christ and a place of full belonging in the church.

We call room 109 The Cove because we hope it is a place of beauty, protection and shelter where our friends can see God and find rest and restoration. It is equipped as a sensory room for all students and a classroom for our older students.

Our buddy ministry provides 1:1 support to students in 9:30 am preschool, elementary and middle school classes, in 11:00 am youth class and during respite and family events.

At 11:00 am, our Friends Alive class for teens and young adults studies God's word in creative and developmentally adapted ways, worships together and looks for life and service application. Some teen students are able to spend part of the hour in the traditional youth programming with buddy assistance. Teen and young adult peers provide friendship as they assist with the class.

Quarterly respite events allow parents to drop off their children with special needs along with siblings 12 and under for four hours of creative and developmentally appropriate fun. Every child is given a 1:1 buddy, and a leadership team and volunteer nurse supervise and assist when needed.

Debbie Lillo, Special Needs Ministry Leader

Children's Ministry

Blessing our Children & Grandchildren

Rituals can remind us who we are and whose we are. At the end of every Zoom Sunday school gathering, we share a blessing for our kids and families. The word blessing evokes a sense of warmth and protection and suggests that no life is alone or unreachable. It's a ritual you may want to adopt in your house too.

In the Old Testament, a blessing held great potency and importance in the life of the family, and in the New Testament the emphasis is more on spiritual rather than material blessings. Speaking a blessing over your children or grandchildren is a powerful way to express encouragement and goodwill. Children are never too young or too old to hear affirmations of God's loving-kindness. A blessing can be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture or words of encouragement and guidance. A blessing can be offered in order to ask God's spirit to overflow from the child's life in such a way that blesses others, while it can also be prayed over a child for the purpose of declaring God's protection, joy or wisdom.

A prayer is talking to God while a blessing is speaking to a person. A blessing is characterized by compassion, grace and kindness. Blessings are generous in spirit and intended for everyone. Proclaiming a blessing does not replace prayer and intercession, rather it is a companion to them. Here is a simple way to share a blessing with your kids be they toddlers, teenagers or parents themselves.

Look them in the eye and speak directly to them. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the words. Begin by saying your child's name and "I bless you in the name of God/Jesus/The Holy One etc." Then personalize the blessing. For example, "May you know that you are fully accepted and truly loved by God." Every person is different and every blessing is different. Let your heart and the Holy Spirit guide you as you remind your children and grandchildren who they are and whose they are.

Savoy Stevens, Minister to Children & Families

Youth Ministry

Middle & High School Ministries - *With Others*

The MadHouse and LifeHouse launched our fall programming in August as students went back to school. Our first teaching series was called *Squad Up: We're Better Together*. We talked about how everyone wants a squad — a community of people that cares for us, supports us and gives us a place to belong. We all want to be part of a community that feels like family. That kind of community is not easy to come by, but it is exactly what Jesus had in mind for His followers when the church first began.

Building friendships can be challenging especially during a pandemic. Even in the best of circumstances, there is always something that seeks top priority: the pressures of school, extra-curricular activities and filming that perfect TikTok. Often we allow our busyness and personal comfort to keep us from noticing the people around us and investing in new relationships.

This fall our middle and high school students are being challenged to develop the spiritual habit of Christlike community. One of the ways we are doing that is with a list of discussion starters designed to help students spark conversations with new people, especially people who aren't like them. This list includes just-for-fun questions, get-to-know-you questions and questions about life's most important ideas.

The students' goals with this activity will vary: more meaningful conversations with other believers at school, or getting to know their Bible study group better or better understand someone who seems different from them? All of those goals are valid, and we are celebrating every step of growth!

If we want to grow spiritually, we need to be engaging in Christlike relationships with others — with people who share our beliefs and with people who do not. I encourage you to take up the challenge. Who can you start a conversation with today?

Matt Hall, Minister to Youth & Families



Care Reflection: What Do We Believe When We Cannot See?

Of the 61 million adults in the United States with a disability, approximately 57 million (94%) do not use a visible mobility device such as a cane or wheelchair. I am one of them. I have had an invisible disability, Crohn's Disease, for nearly 50 years.

A few weeks before my first year of high school, I started throwing up, experiencing acute pain in my stomach, losing weight and hair. Something was terribly wrong. Two years later I was diagnosed with Crohn's, a chronic autoimmune disease in the intestinal tract.

Per the Americans With Disabilities Act, passed 30 years ago in July, a person with a disability has "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment," or has been "regarded as having such an impairment."

I did not learn Crohn's was a disability until 14 years ago, and I first read this in the ADA while doing research for this article: "An impairment that is episodic or in remission is a disability if it would substantially limit a major life activity when active."

I walk around with a disability sequestered by skin. Without a visible cue, people seem to either not believe it exists or believe it and forget. If my deformed intestines were located on the outside of my body, might people believe and remember?

What do we believe when we cannot see?

If those of us with invisible disabilities seek to cross the great visual

divide, we need to share our stories. People do not have x-ray vision.

For my first 40 or so years with Crohn's, I repeatedly felt silenced and fell silent. I felt shame and embarrassment not believed. My husband, Cork, whom many of you know, is still hearing some of my



Crohn's stories for the first time.

God sustains me. I know that I am beautifully and wonderfully made, that God will see me through and that God has a plan for me that glistens with its light and promise. God knows what and why God does.

When I disclose my disease to someone, here's what does not help me:

- 1) "But you don't look sick." Well I am. While meant to support, this statement unintentionally denies truth.
- 2) "I had a really bad stomach ache two weeks ago. I understand."

Unless you have a chronic intestinal disorder, you really don't.

Here's what does help me:

- 1) "I'm so sorry. That must be so hard."
- 2) "What can I do?"

Each one of the millions of Americans with invisible disabilities is one individual. Not all of them want the same things at the same time.

I like it when people occasionally ask me "How are you feeling?" rather than the standard "How are you?" It acknowledges that you remember. It makes me feel I matter.

Some people may not want to talk about it. I certainly didn't want to for a long, long time especially as a teenager.

Now I do. Five to 10 years ago an anger started to burble up inside of me, and I had grown so very weary of hiding my true self. I felt so disconnected from people. God has taught me that "being strong" doesn't necessarily mean we need to be silent. Sometimes it means we need to speak.

Alison (Al) Carpenter Davis, former Care Deacon

To support or be supported by Saratoga Federated's response to the Invisible Disabilities Association's Invisible Disabilities Week, October 18-24, contact the SFC Care Ministry team at care@saratogafederated.org or (408) 867-1000 ext. 239.



Care Update: Zoom Connections

As a mom to young children during a pandemic, I have had ups and downs adjusting and grieving what life was before SIP and with new regulations to keep us all safe and healthy during COVID. I am thankful that I have my family, friends and care team to help me through it when I need support and encouragement. We all need these people in our lives especially when things change or get challenging. As I talk to other moms, feelings of stress, being overwhelmed and/or isolation have or are setting in. We need each other. We need to be creative with how we connect while this pandemic is happening. The Care Team is hosting Zoom Connections as one way to connect. I hosted our first one in August that focused on

staying sane during COVID when you are raising young children. We had some great conversations around scripture, stress relievers and music! The next one will be on Thursday, September 17, from 5:30 to 6:30 pm. The focus will be “Home-school moms weigh in to help moms with remote learning.” We will discuss questions like: How do you balance your day? How do you establish expectations? What are some fun things to do while learning remotely?

Peggy Beck will host two Zoom Connections focusing on the practice and blessing of journaling. Laurel Smith will provide guidance on how we can benefit from journaling by connecting more deeply to our Creator

and our inner selves. We will share ideas of what has worked for each other and brainstorm prompts to get us started. I expect a few stories and laughs along the way! The Journaling Zoom Connections will be Wednesday, September 30 at 3:00 pm *Journaling Basics: Just Another Chore Or a Blessing?* and Thursday, October 15 at 7:00 pm *Journaling: Processing the Positive and Negative Impacts of the Pandemic*. Come to one or both!

[Sign up here to attend the Zoom Connections](#), or contact the Care Ministry at care@saratogafederated.org.

Looking forward to seeing you on Zoom!

Steph Giamanco, Care Ministry Associate for 20s and 30s

Invisible Disabilities Week October 18 to 24, 2020

Mark your calendars! Let's support and encourage our SFC family and neighbors with invisible disabilities. Watch your email for opportunities to volunteer to bring a meal or write a card during Invisible Disabilities Week from October 18 to 24, 2020. Read the Fed Family article by our own Al Davis to learn more.

If you have an invisible disability, we invite you to use this [confidential form](#) to bring awareness of your disability to the SFC Care Team. The form can also be used to share a care need or prayer request.

The National Event:

<https://invisibledisabilities.org/seminarsandevents/invisible-disabilities-week/>

About Invisible Disabilities:
<http://cdrnys.org/blog/development/did-you-know-invisible-disabilities/>

To learn more/determine if you have an invisible disability:

<https://www.ada.gov/pubs/adastatute08.htm#12102>



Worship Ministry Update

Worshipping God together is a gift. Music and the arts are such powerful and beautiful vehicles for people to praise God, proclaim His truth, be open to His Spirit and connect with Jesus. At Saratoga Federated Church, we have been blessed for over a decade to have Bill Allison leading the charge in this area. Bill (and of course Diane) have served faithfully and inspired all of us to come before the throne of God in amazing ways. In addition, Bill has been a pastor to so many and has also led our community life and overall communications as a part of his calling among us.

In the next several months, we will be seeking and searching to find new leadership in the area of Worship/Arts and oversight for Communications and Community Life—three large and strategic areas for the mission of SFC. This will be no easy task as we have some big shoes to fill! It is with prayer and collaboration that we move forward in faith toward what God has for us.

As we move into this new chapter, we are mindful of three distinct callings upon us. First, we value our legacy. We want to maintain, and if possible, even strengthen our traditional worship ministry to those who have established a beautiful legacy of faith as they seek to worship and connect with God each week. Second, we value the next generation. We want to help all those who have carried the mantle of faith at SFC for many years to pass on that amazing legacy to the next generation. We truly want to be a multigenerational church.

Finally, we value unity. We want to be one church, united in faith, mission, values and vision. We may have three distinct worship environments which all feel and look different, but we are one body united by one Spirit.

In an effort to maintain our traditional worship ministry, we will be seeking leadership that understands the art of this kind of worship gathering. We will also be looking for a leader who can recruit, mentor, love and shepherd volunteer leaders who can use their gifts to build up the body of Christ. We desire to see our choir, orchestra, hand bells, piano, organ, Kids Choir, etc. continue to have impact in worship gatherings.

In an effort to reach the next generation for Christ and continue to be a multigenerational church, we will also be seeking someone to lead our contemporary worship gathering. This is a critical area of ministry for us, especially at this time. We have a great group of part-time leaders and volunteers who are committed to reaching young families, singles and those who don't feel drawn to a traditional worship service with the message of Jesus each week. The

music, atmosphere and feel of this environment, as you know, will be much different than either our chapel or traditional gatherings. We need a leader who is uniquely gifted and called to lead authentically and creatively in this way.

With these values and callings in mind, we are aware that finding one person to fulfill both of these leadership positions will be a huge challenge. There are few leaders who truly possess the skill set and capacity to lead at the highest levels in both areas. It may also require someone with significant leadership experience, at the pastoral level, which brings with it a significant cost. In light of this, one alternative option we are looking at is hiring two part-time leaders who can focus on these three very different worship gatherings—one to lead our chapel and traditional gatherings and another to lead our contemporary gathering. Both of these leaders must be able to work with large volunteer teams. It may be that this is a temporary solution and we find that we can hire one leader in a full-time role in the future.

In this time of transition, Bill will be passing the baton to Lindsay



Roush and others to lead in the more traditional elements of our online service, as well as laying groundwork for the near future when we are able to return to worshipping in person.

It is the heart of SFC to see our members and attenders find their place in ministry and serve as God calls them. Whether we find one person or two to lead the entire department, we are committed to involving as many of you as possible in the future of our Worship/Arts Ministry. Our calling, as leaders, is “to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” This is what we are committed to doing.

So as we move ahead, we will pray. We invite you to pray with us so that we may make ourselves available to God to receive His guidance and wisdom. We will be communicating ways you can join us in prayer during this time. Please watch for those and get involved. We will also collaborate. The Senior Staff and Elders are in conversation and are working with others to navigate our way forward. As we prayerfully work together, we will continue to update all of you with our progress.

I’m so blessed to be working with you and among you. I’m thankful for the legacy that we are passing on and for the love that Saratoga Federated Church has for God, one another and those who are far from Jesus. I am praying along with you for God’s wisdom as we move into our future together.

Peace and Love,
Sean Miller, Lead Pastor

MOPS is Back

At MOPS we gather and support moms. We believe in the simple but revolutionary idea that remarkable things happen when moms come together and support each other. This year has been filled with lots of trials and uncertainty, but we moms need to support each other now more than ever!

The MOPS theme for this year is *Decide To Rise*. Is it possible that through this MOPS community of ours, each of us could reignite a sense of strength, joy and courage back into ourselves, our homes and our culture during this season?

This is the year we arise as mothers to awaken a weary and sleeping world. The year to accept and believe that God will fulfill His promises to you, and to embrace your motherhood as a catalyst, not a constraint, to His plans and promises for you.

MOPS begins Monday, September 21, from 8:00 to 8:30 pm via Zoom. Following that evening, we will post a calendar of future meeting dates.



MOPS

For more information, feel free to contact Lanie Iannucci at lanie@rail.com or Lindsay Roush at cantaresempre@gmail.com.

We have lots of opportunities for you to connect, learn and be filled up this year. No matter your stress level, and schedule we are positive there is something for you. We also have a special surprise this year for all registered members!

Registration is now open for MOPS 2020-2021. You can sign up at www.mops.org/join.



Fed Family Deadlines

Oct 1, 2020 Nov/Dec Issue
Nov 12, 2020 Jan/Feb Issue
Feb 4, 2021 Mar/Apr Issue
Apr 7, 2021 May/June Issue

We're Moving Keep in Touch

David & Mary Norton

17526 O Street
Omaha, NE 68135

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

Connected?

Want to reach others at SFC?

Our church database is readily accessible from your mobile phone. If you already have a login and password just go to https://sfc.ccbchurch.com/mobile_login.php in your phone's web browser.



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!

September Anniversaries

Mike & Carol Van Buskirk	September 1	41 years
Jeff & Jordan Clark	September 3	4 years
Tim & Lisa Furlong	September 5	11 years
Jerry & Mary Jane Bruce	September 6	40 years
Corky & Al Davis	September 6	40 years
AJ & Stacey Szenda	September 6	17 years
Michael & Meghan Goss	September 6	12 years
Roy & Ana Cook	September 7	18 years
Horst & Janet Brenner	September 9	42 years
Jeff & Tracy Fell	September 9	24 years
Joe & Kari Charvez	September 10	9 years
Jeff & Rebecca Bond	September 11	21 years
Tim & Olivia Rollinson	September 11	1 year
Bob & Lois Tomlin	September 12	56 years
Ron & Cathy Oleson	September 12	39 years
Richard & Julia Moss	September 12	33 years
Shaun & Sandy Collard	September 13	24 years
Jim & Norma Marshall	September 14	68 years
Jean-Pierre & Lisa Wuelser	September 14	29 years
Nick & Gail Kepler	September 14	24 years
Mark & Heather Regoli	September 14	18 years
Dave & Christie White	September 15	41 years
Kevin & Carole Payne	September 15	30 years
Timothy & Susan Hall	September 17	37 years
Will & Rachel Allison	September 18	5 years
Lance & Amy Archer	September 25	16 years
Scott Kamsler & Linda Bishop	September 26	33 years
Lance & Debi Chapman	September 26	28 years
Dave & Nancy Sheets	September 28	57 years
Jim & Sylvia Ellingwood	September 29	18 years
Denny Huebner & Wendy Mbagara	September 30	9 years

October Anniversaries

Jerry & Marilyn Nistler	October 5	52 years
Don & Judy Simpson	October 5	29 years
Keith & Cindy Mueller	October 5	18 years
Bob & Joan Leonard	October 6	58 years
Robbie & Lanie Iannucci	October 11	12 years
Josh & Becky Cormier	October 11	6 years
Andrew & Sylvia Aldridge	October 13	41 years
Daniel & Dorothy Araldi	October 16	16 years
Harvey & Elaine Knoernschild	October 19	40 years
Matthew & Elizabeth Brading	October 19	1 year
Eric & Dee Dee Dunstan	October 21	14 years
Dan & Cyndy Linebarger	October 25	34 years
Russ & Lauren Spence	October 25	34 years
Stan & Debra Sells	October 28	25 years
Nate & Katie Currie	October 28	20 years