



# ETC Monthly

**Berkeley Chinese Community Church**

**柏克萊中華基督教會** December 18, 2016

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## From Pastor Sharon

Dear Ones,

This year like every year, we experience longer nights and shorter days as winter approaches. In any given 24 hours, there are more dark hours than light - this is something we adjust to every year. The winter darkness also manifests itself in the many incidents of humankind's inhumanity as well as in the tragedies of immense proportions like earthquakes and fires. This year, the winter darkness feels even more intense - the Ghost Ship fire tragedy just happened in which many lives were lost. The recent elections have generated protests far and wide painting a picture of a nation divided. And that is only in our own backyard. There are the acts of violence, terror and war as well as the continuing threats to our environment.

This winter in particular we crave more warmth, more light, literally and figuratively. This winter in particular, we need Christmas - we need to hear God's promise for the world in the birth of the Prince of Peace, the light of hope in the darkness. What a fabulous gift for a bleak season - the hope for peace, the hope that each of God's children can become an instrument working together to build a peace-filled and just world, God's Beloved Community! And at BCCC, we have begun to sense what this gift might be like as we took the first steps on our New Beginnings journey together with all church fellowship luncheons once a month and small group conversations and all church retreats! We have reason to celebrate, folks! With gratitude, we celebrate BCCC's New Beginnings AND the birth of Jesus Christ! We look forward to celebrating with you in our midst. We invite you to also express your gratitude to God - Christmas Offering envelopes are enclosed for your convenience. Come join us for our special Christmas events and worship services listed below.

- Tuesday, 12/13, 10:30 am - Senior Center Christmas Program followed by lunch (Entrée - Roast Chicken).

- Saturday, 12/17 - Caroling event, meet at church at 2:00 pm to share the Christmas story and carols in 3 local residential homes.
- Saturday, 12/17, 5:30 pm - Traditional Chinese mochi soup dinner followed by a talent show featuring members of the congregation.
- Sunday, 12/18, 4th Sunday of Advent, 9:30 am - Cantonese Worship (preacher: Mr. Sau Wing Lam); 11:00 am - Youth led worship service featuring Sunday School Children's Christmas Play.
- Saturday, 12/24, 6 pm Christmas Eve Worship Service in partnership with Haven Berkeley Church. Come join us for family friendly Carols and Candles service and stay for hot cocoa, tea and snacks. All are welcome!
- Sunday, 12/25, Merry Christmas! Celebrate Jesus' birth at BCCC: - 9:30 am - as we share our favorite breakfast "goodies"; -11:00 am - as we worship and praise God together in All Church Bilingual Christmas Service. Special Christmas music will include musical offerings by BCCC Quintet with voices from Cantare Con Vivo.

May God bless you and yours this Christmas season,

Love & Blessings,



## From the Moderator

**Darlene Hamady**

As I sit here contemplating what to write for this column—I'm still disturbed, as are many, by the presidential election results. The UCC daily devotions that I receive each day in my email are very inspiring and reassuring. These short daily devotions are responses or commentaries to quoted scriptures followed by a prayer. Through these scriptures, as we say in UCC, God Is Still Speaking, *(the comma at the end of the sentence is intentional per Gracie Fields to her husband George Burns in a note to him read after her death, "never place a period where God has placed a comma)*

Ever since I turned 70 years old last December, I've been thinking, "I have more behind me than ahead of me." Quinn G. Caldwell, Pastor of Plymouth Congregational church in Syracuse, N.Y. wrote "The Moment I'm In" inspired by Isaiah 57:15 "... (commit) to be present in the now...to notice where I am now, to look for the gifts of God in the moment I'm inhabiting instead of the ones I am not." His prayer: "God, you may inhabit eternity, but I can only manage one moment at a time. Let the moment be the one I'm in. Amen"

The same scripture from Lamentations 3: 22-23 inspired two writers and also spoke to me. Matt Fitzgerald, Senior Pastor of St. Paul's UCC of Chicago wrote: "...you have to grow old to know that God is faithful. You can experience God's faithfulness in youth, but only as an abstract claim or a future guarantee. As you age God's promise is fulfilled. It is the long haul that reveals the joy of fidelity." His prayer: "Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me."

Mary Luti, a long time seminary educator and pastor wrote: "...this past election day, momentous as it is, is no different from any other. Like every day it's a gift from God...like every day, it's a precious clearing in which to meet again the Steadiness that undergirds each change and chance, and in that meeting to believe again that no matter what befalls us or our fragile democracy, God will not fail to hold the good of all creation. God will not fail to be God. God will not fail." Her prayer: "Unceasing are your mercies, O God, new every morning. Great is your faithfulness."

Kenneth L. Samuel, Pastor of Victory for the World Church, Stone Mountain, Georgia, inspired by 2 John 1, 5 writes: "Given the bitter wrangling of this past election cycle, love for one another is still our most pressing

need. That love places our common concerns above all partisan rivalries." His prayer: "God let love for all your children be the validation of this and every election. Amen"

Because God Is Still Speaking, there is always Hope; and we are reassured that God is always with us.

## SAFETY PINS

In response to the recent presidential election there is a growing movement to wear safety pins to symbolize support of those in our midst who could be vulnerable under the incoming administration. My best friend has been doing her part by making special safety pins with a small American flag attached. Molly-Baskette, Senior Pastor of First Congregational UCC, our sister church here in Berkeley, wrote a UCC daily devotion about this on Saturday, November 12, 2016:

God does not promise us safety. What god does is invite us into the safety of each other, if we will accept the challenge and call." Her prayer: "God, divided, we are so vulnerable. Together, we make your defense real and visible and durable. Give us courage to stand up for one another. Amen" Wearing a safety pin will show our personal commitment to be involved in a wider church ministry.

As a reminder: Molly Baskette is the pastor of our sister church up on Dana and Channing Way here in Berkeley that suffered huge loss due to a recent fire. BCCC has committed to our Thanksgiving offering to help in their recovery efforts. Another way to help is to attend a music concert at Lake Park Methodist Church, 281 Santa Clara Avenue, Oakland on December 18th at 6 pm



## New Beginnings Update

**Darlene Hamady**

On Sunday, November 13, 2016 BCCC held its 2nd New Beginnings conversation. Right after the 11am worship service an informative power point presentation created by Pastor Sharon and based on the New Beginnings Assessment Report about our church was presented to the English worshipping community. The same material was interpreted for the Cantonese worshipping community by Tricia Wong. This material covered information regarding the data regarding the demographics and age range of our congregation and the surrounding neighborhood.

The original mission of the founding of our church and a brief history of BCCC through the decades was reviewed. In light of this information the question was posed as to what do we do today? People were asked to think about and share their ideas and proposals. As in the first conversation, we broke up into 3 small groups.

We had a light lunch (thanks to Cindy Wong for ordering pizzas from Costco and picking up the fixings for a healthy and delicious kale/coleslaw salad and bringing in the Chinese red bean soup; and to Roger Jennings for picking up the pizzas). Then the groups adjourned to different areas of the church to begin the small group conversations. Each group chose a scribe to record "what" was said but not "who said it" to encourage honest sharing. The material gathered will be compiled by Helen Chan.

The New Beginnings facilitators and leaders: Diane Huie, Vem Chuang, Frances Chan, Edward Lai, David Louie, Tricia Wong, Cindy Wong, Virginia Sung Lai, Pastor Sharon and Darlene Hamady, will meet on Sunday, November 27, 2016 after worship service to follow up on conversation #2 and plan for next steps. We will keep you posted!

## Praises and Prayers

**Mabel Low**

"tempus Fugit" .... translated is "time flies". Here it is, December and we are trying catch up on praises and prayers.



Praises that we were able to have our 11<sup>th</sup> Cantare Fun Fest on Nov. 5th. Children from several Oakland schools participated in a mini concert in front of family

and friends. Refreshments were served and goody bags were given to the singers. There were games and prizes for all of the children who thoroughly enjoyed the activities of the day. Many thanks to the many BCCC family and friends who helped to provide this "fun day" for over 70 happy kids. Special thanks to Rusty Huie who popped corn for several hours to insure that there was popcorn for everyone to enjoy.

Praises and congratulations to Marisa and Vem Chuang who hosted a Fellowship Lunch on Nov. 6th to celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary. During the luncheon, Vem re-proposed to Marisa which was a very loving gesture to cement their special relationship. For their "second honeymoon", they went on a cruise to Mexico.

Praises and prayers to May and Ty Bing Wong who recently celebrated their 68th Wedding Anniversary. We do admire them for their devotion to each other and although they are not able to join us very often, we want them to know they are constantly in our thoughts and prayers.

Praises for the musical group "Something and Maybe Everything" (S.A.M.E.), started by 5 middle school students a few years ago. Grandparents Pearl Chinn and Pastor Sharon and Nowell MacArthur are so proud of their granddaughters Ligaya Chinn (the band's manager) and Ikaika Gunderson (composer, arranger, lyricist, guitarist & back-up vocalist). They have performed locally in school events and most recently in the San Francisco "Raise the Roof" Musical Fundraiser last month in response to FCCB's fire disaster. We wish them much success.

Praises for our annual fund raising Thanksgiving Luncheon held on Nov. 20th. Instead of serving the traditional turkey dinner, the menu was "Turf and Surf", much of it planned and prepared by Cindy and Wing Wong. Thanks to the many "helping hands" who worked together to insure that the luncheon was a success. We do appreciate those who worked in the kitchen, those who baked and donated cookies, those who helped set up the dining room which was beautifully decorated with floral arrangements made by the JULIETS under the guidance of Irene Tang, and those who cleaned up. Thanks also to Debbie Schram who designed and produced the tickets and Cindy Wong and Rose Lee who sold and distributed them. Thank you also to those who attended as well as those who brought guests. It took the efforts of many to assure that a good time was had by all. Again... our grateful thanks!!!

On Nov. 26th, at the All Church Fellowship, our sanctuary and social hall were beautifully decorated at the Hanging of the Greens. The evening's activities concluded with Christmas carol singing. A lovely way to begin the Advent season.

As this issue of the ETC goes to press, our Cantonese Fellowship along with the Board of Missions is planning to prepare dinner for the Homeless Shelter in Berkeley on Sat. Dec. 10th. A report on this project will be given in the next issue of ETC.



Prayers for our Mother Church, the First Congregational Church of Berkeley who suffered a disastrous fire in late November. The Church Council voted to donate all of our special Thanksgiving offering to them, a gesture that expresses our concern and care for the FCCB family. Incidentally, it was FCCB who many years ago helped us to get started as a mission and it was because of them that we are here today.



Moderator Darlene Hamady, Mabel Low and Pastor Sharon delivered the "We are Family" card and donation to Rev. Molly Baskette of First Church Berkeley.

We have members of the BCCC family who are experiencing challenging and/or difficult situations. Please keep in thought and prayer Diane and Barbara Mims, Morrison Chun, May and Ty Bing Wong, and Lily and Arthur Wong,

As this is our last issue of the ETC for the year 2016, we want to thank all who read this Praises & Prayers portion to find out about the BCCC family and members. We would love to hear from "voices from our past" so please feel free to drop us a line and let us know how and what you are doing. So, until we hear from you, we want to wish you all a very BLESSED CHRISTMAS and pray that the Year 2017 will be filled with much hope and promise for all.

### December Birthdays

We wish a Happy Birthday to our brothers and sisters in church: **Darlene Hamady, Pastor Sharon**

**MacArthur, Bernice Young, Gerry Lim, Madison Schram, Muriel Granada, Lauren Young, John Ho, Nellie Kwong, Ruby Wong, Bill Lee, Pat Lowe, Janet Young and Warren Chin.**



### A Cry for Justice in Hymnody

**Vicky Jennings**

An evening featuring Dan Damon's music, was hosted by BCCC, Sunday evening, November 6, 2016. The theme "A Cry for Justice in Hymnody" were hymns texted and composed by Dan Damon, over 75 people attended. A delightful evening of congregational singing was presented by Dan, his co-professor, Dr. Nancy Hall, and their class of students from the American Baptist Seminary of the West. (class is held at Graduate Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA.) As an outgrowth of his work as a pastor in an urban, multi-cultural setting, much of Dan's work focuses on social justice issues. Dan states that his writing is part of his prayer life, thus the texts such as "When Human Life is Bought and Sold", "When Jesus Was a Refugee", and many more. It was a joy to hear Dan's beautiful piano accompaniment, including a wide variety for music styles. The evening concluded with light refreshments in the Fellowship Hall.



### Senior Center Programs for Nov./Dec.

**12/6 Speakers :** Laura and Tony Bushman will do a presentation with DVD on their trip to the Easter Island, 10:30 am. Lunch Entrée: Sam See Chow Mein.

**12/13 Annual Christmas variety show** with singers, musicians and circus acts. Carol Jan Lee will lead Christmas carols and professionals-Ben Fong-Torres, pianist George Yamasaki and guitarist Kurt Huget. 10:30 am. Lunch Entrée: Roast Chicken.

**BCCC FAMILY ALBUM**

**NOVEMBER-DECEMBER**



ETC Monthly November /December 18, 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 'Their Angels' 11 am, Cantonese Fellowship: Yi-jin/Tai Chi class 5 pm, potluck dinner 6:30 pm, Prayer Meeting 7:30 pm
<b>4</b> All Church Holy Communion Bilingual Worship 11am; Speaker: Rev. Sharon MacArthur; December Birthdays and Fellowship Lunch	<b>5</b> No El Cerrito Bible Study for the rest of the year	<b>6</b> Senior Center	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Cooking for Homeless in Berkeley 4:30 pm
<b>11</b> C: Elder Peter Chang E: Rev. Alvin Louie	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Senior Center	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> Albert Zee Memorial Service 11 am; Christmas Caroling 2 pm, All Church Fellowship 6:30 pm, Talent Show 7 pm
<b>18</b> C: Mr. Sau Wing Lam E: Rev. Sharon MacArthur	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> Senior Center Winter break	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> No Romeo/ Juliet Lunch Fellowship	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Christmas Eve Service with Haven Church 6 pm
<b>25</b> Gather and share favorite breakfast goodies 9:30 am; All Church Bilingual Christmas Sunday Service 11 am Speaker: Rev. Sharon MacArthur	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Senior Center Winter break	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>

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