



# The Spire

April 2022

## Pastor's Page

The war in Ukraine has hit me particularly hard. It's so familiar. I went to Croatia, a former republic of Yugoslavia, in 1994 after having spent the previous two years in Romania. All of the architecture you see in Ukraine is similar to the buildings, homes, and apartments I lived among and saw every day. When I went to Croatia, the Balkan war in which Yugoslav republics, having gotten out of the grip of the Soviet Union, were breaking apart into separate countries, was in a state of ceasefire that had not yet hardened into permanent peace. Every building and street showed war damage; either destruction or, at minimum, shrapnel pockmarks. They used to say that only the first mortar shell is dangerous for people outside because, after that, the siren sounds and everyone scrambles for cover. The people who were my neighbors, the fruit and vegetable vendors, the post office personnel had all lived through that war from 1991-1992 (longer as it migrated to Bosnia and then Kosovo, Serbia). They had suffered and were still suffering from post-traumatic stress. Some had become alcoholics. Others were injured and could no longer work. The effects of war are horrible, even for the survivors, for decades.

For ten years from 1994 to 2004 I taught in the Evangelical Theological College in Osijek, Croatia. The school was not large, but our student body of around 100 always included a number of Ukrainians. I'm still in touch with some: Fedor, Viktor, Natalija, Oksana, and Valsily. Some are pastors, some are church-support staff. Some are taking in displaced people in their homes and church facilities. Others are providing relief to refugees across the borders. Many of them had helped unload trucks of humanitarian aid for the refugees of the Balkan war while they were students in Osijek. Now as adults with families of their own their lives are turned upside down by another needless war.

The scenes of destruction are so familiar to me. Shortly after I arrived, Rev. Endre Langh, who was elected bishop of the Reformed Church in Croatia as it reorganized after the war, took me on tours of the villages surrounding Osijek where we had Reformed Churches. Nearly all of them had been destroyed. Villages like Laslovo, Korogy, and Tordinci were completely flattened. The church in Hasten still had an unexploded mortar in the corner of the tower. I had to take services there for years because the pastor was a refugee in Hungary. I always looked up at that tower with a bit of concern. Some of the local farmers, after the war, tried to get back into their fields too quickly, before de-mining had been finished. Some were killed.

I hate war. I know we all do. The suffering it causes is as immeasurable as it is senseless. The damage to buildings will take decades to repair, after it's over, whenever that may be. The damage to lives can be permanent. The human capacity for evil, from commanders to individual combatants seems limitless too. I admit, it is depressing.

But limitless too is our capacity for good. As Russian author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn said, the line between good and evil passes through every human heart. There has been an enormous outpouring of love and practical support

for the people of Ukraine from every quarter of this country. Ironically, this horrible catastrophe has united Republicans and Democrats as we all dig deep to help. Our Ukrainian Supper fundraiser netted over \$8,000.00 which we sent to Mercy Corps who is

supporting local aid organizations. Our giving to the One Great Hour of Sharing supports Presbyterian Disaster Assistance which sends support to our partner organizations there.

There are Presbyterian Ukrainians, although in that part of the world they call themselves Reformed. Most are ethnically Hungarians who live on the western side of the Carpathian mountains in far West of the country. They are probably safe from the shelling at this point, but no doubt are flooded with displaced people. They will be receiving help through PDA.

In this season of Easter, we pray for peace. We pray for reconciliation. We pray for restoration and healing. We pray for our brothers and sisters in harm's way, and for those providing help. We cling to the hope of resurrection; Jesus is alive in every act of giving, every act of comfort, every expression of love. We grieve, but not as those without hope. We long for a future of swords beaten into plows and spears into pruning hooks. We practice resurrection.

Reformed Churches near Osijek, Croatia



Hasten



Korogy



Tordinci



Laslovo

## Deacon's Spotlight

Spring has Sprung! The thermometer continues to ride a roller coaster from 30's to almost 80 degrees. Flowers are beginning to bloom and trees are getting buds that will open into leaves and/or flowers. We are in the middle of the season of Lent.

We are thankful that COVID is declining and we can attend church without masks! (Please don't throw those masks out! It may make an annual reappearance or several appearances). We are able to get back to doing home visits. We have flowers ordered to deliver to our shut-ins on Palm Sunday. We will mail collegiate care packages the end of April! Wish you all a wonderful Easter with friends and family! Keep the Ukrainians in your prayers!

Respectfully,

Roberta Elliott

## Kathya....

Please keep Kathya, her family and her country in your prayers.

## Worship Service Videos

You can watch videos of our worship service at 11:30 Sunday morning at our Youtube channel or watch the recording of the service anytime.



## Central's Meal Share

Remember: if a meal is needed for a church member, contact Linda Riley at [lriley@cox.net](mailto:lriley@cox.net). If you are unable to reach Linda, you can call Debbie at the church office.

## New COVID Masking Guidelines

Session has approved the recommendation from the Worship Committee that mask wearing at church will now be optional. Feel free to continue to wear a mask and distancing is still recommended.

## Hospitalizations

During this time of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have discontinued hospital visitations for now.

## *What I have Learned...*

It has now been over 4 months since I had the first knee surgery. Who could have anticipated that a simple knee replacement that is done hundreds of times each day would result in two additional trips to the O.R., followed by months of therapy. I am calling this! What have I learned during this extended period of recovery? The number one thing is that you, my friends and family of Central Presbyterian have been a true gift from God. I have been showered with such love that I scarce can take it in. This has included your prayers, visits, cards, texts, emails, delicious food, flowers, books, rides to and from 4 months of physical therapy, and even gift cards to relieve Mike from having to cook. He has learned to make excellent toast. I am now making progress with the physical therapy. I drove for the first time yesterday and can only anticipate a complete return to my independence. I pray God's love will rain down on you all and that you realize the second thing I have learned is what great things a few of God's people can do in seemingly ordinary ways.

All my love and gratitude,

Janis McClure

## Officers of Central Presbyterian Church After Forthcoming Installation

### Session

Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024
Sandy Barron	Debi Wilkinson	Cissy Rose
Mike McClure	Margaret Sparkman	John Spain
John Hale	Suzanne Bethell	Ruthie McRae

### Deacons

Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024
Renda Cook	Betty McSwain	Martin Hyatt
Jo Hardy	Larry Hall	Suzanne Spain
Linda Riley		Jackie Franklin
Roberta Elliot		Robert MacAfee

### Trustees

Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024
Ken Cowan	Carl Rose	Stanhope Wilkinson

### Care Committee



Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month, a group of caring individuals meet at Sweet Bay at 12:00 over lunch, we discuss visiting the shut-ins of our church. We team up and then go to visit those who aren't able to come to church. Please join this important mission of our church.

### April Birthdays

David King	04/06
Jan Whitt	04/06
Gloriette Miles	04/08
Debbie Hardgrave	04/16
Galen Hunter	04/21
Suzanne Bethell	04/26
Joetta Kastel	04/27
Stanhope Wilkinson	04/30



### Flower List for April

April 3	-	Mandy Fry
April 10	-	Open
April 17	-	Larry Hall
April 24	-	Charles and Renda Cook

Every Sunday morning, it is a treat to get that first look at the weekly flowers. There are many openings on the flower calendar. Please help us fill in the dates.

## Central Presbyterian Church

### Minutes of Stated Session Meeting March 15, 2022

**The regular meeting of the session was called to order at 6:05pm by Pastor Steven. The devotional was given by Cissy Rose on prayer and what God is doing for us is different for each person.**

Present: Pastor Kim, Pastor Steven, Margaret Sparkman, Suzanne Bethell, Cissy Rose, Mike McClure, Ruthie McRae and John Spain. Sandra Barron and John Hale by zoom and Debi Wilkinson was excused.

**The docket and minutes were approved, and a quorum was declared.**

Clerk Report : Liz Haupt's membership was transferred to Bethel Community Presbyterian in San Leandro, CA March 9th.

Pastor Report: A summary of the pastor's activities is included with the session packet. We will have an Ash Wednesday service. A \$10K grant was approved for Circle of Friends Movement.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Building & Grounds: Jeff Jones will do the repairs on the New Vision Home. Also, will ask him about repairing the screen on the back porch. The state volunteers will do landscaping cleanup around the house saving \$850. Getting a couple of estimates on a new ice maker.

Christian Education: No report

Outreach: No report

Worship: No mask requirements for now. Communion went well. Signature pads are in the pews. New offering box near doors on the Rogers Ave. entrance.

Personnel: No report

Stewardship: There was a shortfall of \$10K for March P & L account. \$20-\$23K is needed each month to operate. Ruthie will look into having the electric co. do an energy evaluation on the New Vision and Sweet Homes due to high bills. No report from the Stewardship committee.

Visionary: No report.

New Business: Plan next Project Regen. Meeting. Mike will re-do the financial evaluation and reduce our new norm on attendance.

Next month's devotional will be given by Margaret Sparkman. The meeting was adjourned with prayer by Pastor Steven Kurtz at 7PM. May 17th is our next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Sparkman, Clerk of Session

## Sweet House Help Needed

The programs at the Sweet House include meals on Friday and Saturday evenings, every other week. Help is needed in meal preparation, set up (served buffet style) and clean up. If you could help with any of those tasks on any schedule that suits you, please let us know. This is an opportunity for our congregation to be directly involved, to meet some of the participants, leaders and parents, and to show love in a practical way. Please let Debbie in the church office know if you can help.

## Flower Calendars

The Flower Calendar (or both this year and next) have been returned to the bulletin board, across from the choir room on the east side of the building. Please help fill in the empty dates.

## Food Court

While we no longer enjoy the sights and sounds of the food cart going down the center aisle, we still need to bring non-perishable food items every Sunday. The Clearinghouse has a need for food that is greater than ever.

## April 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>27</b> Loose Change Sunday 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 12:30 PM Korean Worship Service	<b>28</b> 10:30 AM Monday Morning Seekers-SR	<b>29</b> 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Venturing Crew-Classroom	<b>30</b> 7:00 PM Choir Practice	<b>31</b> 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Nar-Anon Meeting-Classroom	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b> Back Pack Sunday 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 12:00 PM Worship Committee-P 12:30 PM Korean Worship Service	<b>4</b> 10:30 AM Monday Morning Seekers-SR 6:00 PM Citizens Climate Lobby	<b>5</b> 10:30 AM PW General Meeting-P 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Venturing Crew-Classroom	<b>6</b> 7:00 PM Choir Practice	<b>7</b> 8:30 AM Merry Muffin Makers-FH/Kit. 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Nar-Anon Meeting-Classroom	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 2:00 PM 2nd Sunday Supper
<b>10</b> 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 12:30 PM Korean Worship Service	<b>11</b> 10:30 AM Monday Morning Seekers-SR	<b>12</b> 10:00 AM Hannah Circle-Lib. 5:00 PM Esther Circle-Lib. 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Venturing Crew-Classroom	<b>13</b> 7:00 PM Choir Practice 6:00 PM Pints with the Pastor, F.S. Brewing Co.	<b>14</b> 11:00 AM Retired Teachers, FH 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 6:00 PM Maundy Thursday Service 7:00 PM Nar-Anon Meeting-Classroom	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 6:30 AM Ecumenical Sunrise Service 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 12:30 PM Korean Worship Service	<b>18</b> 10:30 AM Book Club-Lib. 10:30 AM Monday Morning Seekers-SR	<b>19</b> 12:00 PM Care Committee Meeting at Sweet Bay 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 6:00 PM Session Meeting-SR 7:00 PM Venturing Crew-Classroom	<b>20</b> 5:30 PM Bridges 7:00 PM Choir Practice	<b>21</b> 5:30 PM Third Thursdays-FH 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Nar-Anon Meeting-Classroom	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> Loose Change Sunday 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 12:30 PM Korean Worship Service	<b>25</b> 10:30 AM Monday Morning Seekers-SR	<b>26</b> 12:30 PM Knitting Group-Lib. 6:00 PM Deacon's Meeting-SR 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Venturing Crew-Classroom	<b>27</b> 7:00 PM Choir Practice	<b>28</b> 6:00 PM Enneagram Meeting - SR 6:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous Meeting-P 7:00 PM Nar-Anon Meeting-Classroom	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>