

**PLYMOUTH**  
United Church of Christ



**Pastor:**

Rev. Lois  
Mueller

**Associate**

**Pastor:**

Marjorie  
Matthews

**Ministers:**

All Members

**Office Staff:**

Bruce  
Tutcher

# Upbeats

News and Views from the  
Jazz & Justice Church

## June 2010

### *IN THE MEANTIME . . .*

Beloved Community ~

One of our “little theologians,” Olivia Gardner-McBride, recently asked her moms an important question. As the family passed a homeless person on the street, Olivia asked: “Why don’t people with homes just invite a homeless person to live with them? That way, everybody will have a place to live!”

Olivia’s question, posed with all the sweet innocence and searing insight unique to children, got me thinking and praying about two important and interconnected spiritual practices, generosity and gratitude. How does our relationship with God encourage us to become more generous people? How does our relationship with God encourage us to become more grateful people?

It often seems to me that those “g” words, generosity and gratitude, are two sides of the same coin. The most generous people I know are also the most grateful people I know, and – since we’re speaking of “g” words – they are also the most Godly people I know.

My dear grandmother, Mae Alice Simmons Frazier, who recently celebrated her 97th birthday, is one of those generous, grateful, Godly people. She’s never had much in the way of wealth or material resources, but she loves to share whatever she has. If she has only five dollars, she’ll give half to someone in need. If she receives a sweater for Christmas, she immediately begins thinking about a friend or relative who lives in a colder climate and probably needs the sweater more than she does. If there’s only one piece of cornbread left, she’ll ask one of her children or grandchildren, “Baby, do you want to split this piece of cornbread with Mama?”

Mama is also one of the most grateful people I know. She lives with the devout belief that whatever she counts as “hers” in this life – her time, her talents, her resources – truly belongs not to her, but to God. She gives heartfelt thanks for each and every blessing, whether it’s the gift of a new great-grandchild or the gift of the new rose bush my Aunt Dorothy recently planted by the front porch. At age 97, her sense of wonder and delight are not the least bit diminished. Here is a woman who was only four years old when her own mother died, who grew up in segregated Muskogee, Oklahoma, and who has lived most of her life in one of the meanest ghettos of Los Angeles . . . , and she still begins each and every day with the exclamation, “God has been so good to me!”

(cont. on pg 2)



(cont. from pg 1)

Following my recent birthday and our recent stewardship season here at Plymouth, I find myself asking more and more often, "Am I being a good steward of my life? Am I using well and wisely the time, talents, and material resources God has entrusted to me?" I even sat down recently to design a complicated "matrix" so that I could undertake a detailed "assessment" of my personal stewardship and develop a "strategic plan" for my life.

It was a very frustrating exercise! In fact, it was so frustrating that I ended up feeling like a complete failure and had to go to God in prayer (and tears), at which point the Holy One said to me, "It's not about assessment, sweetie pie. It's about attitude. A five-year-old girl and a 97-year-old woman are already modeling the way for you. Just try to live more like them."

Thank you, Olivia and Mama, for helping show me the way.

Love and blessings, *Pastor Marjorie*

# Ballot Recommendations

*for the June 8, 2010  
Statewide Primary Election*

### SUMMARY.

- Proposition 13: **YES**
- Proposition 14: **NO**
- Proposition 15: **YES**
- Proposition 16: **NO**
- Proposition 17: **NO**

Below are the ballot recommendations for the June 8<sup>th</sup> Statewide Primary Election from the California Council of Churches IMPACT. We are sharing this as an alternative viewpoint as you prepare to vote. IMPACT analyzes propositions on the basis of how they will impact the most vulnerable among us. For further information and a more detailed explanation of their rationale, visit <http://www.calchurches.org/June10BallotDL.pdf>.

The five propositions on the June, 2010 ballot cover a wide range of issues. For once, our elections are not about raising funds through bond acts, but this is a test of what we value about our democracy. We have two propositions, Propositions 14 and 15, calling for changes in the way we elect officials, and they have potentially far-reaching implications for our future election processes. We have two others, 16 and 17, that are something of a test for our willingness to accept or question corporate campaign finances behind our election issues. Only Proposition 13 – the 2010 Proposition 13 — is reasonably uncomplicated. California Council of Churches IMPACT has deliberated on all of the issues and offers our recommendations above.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* **Save the date for the Picnic!** \*  
 \* Our annual Worship in the Park & Picnic will be Sunday, **August 29<sup>th</sup>** in Roberts Regional Park. \*  
 \* Look for more details in the July/August newsletter. \*  
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## Thank you from our Historian Emeritus

### Jean Lindberg

What can I say that will let you all know just how overwhelmed and bewildered I am by all the special attention on the Sunday of my presentation? I knew there would be something, but I never dreamed it would be such an all-out loving demonstration of appreciation and caring. Thank you all so much.

I loved everything: The chair by the lectern, the dainty corsage, the guests from Church Women United, the gorgeous bookends, the fabulous red roses and, of course, all of the smiling faces and especially the ones who made it happen, Rev. Lois, Marjorie, my Margaret and Mary Lou, Marylin, Carolyn and Bob.

Thank you all and much love,

Jean

(PS I hope to be here a Long Time)

## PLYMOUTH CHURCH CAMP!

We're hoping to have our first all-church camp this summer at wonderful Wellspring Renewal Center. Wellspring is situated on the edge of Hendy Woods State Park on the Navarro River. We'll have some group activities with plenty of time open for swimming, hiking, art, blackberry picking and relaxing. If you'd like to attend, we need to know ASAP so that we can reserve our spaces. Please email ([plymouthoakland@sbcglobal.net](mailto:plymouthoakland@sbcglobal.net)) or call (510-654-5300) if you'd like to sign up. The details are below. For more information call or email ([revlois@sbcglobal.net](mailto:revlois@sbcglobal.net)) after June 14th.

**Friday, August 20—Sunday, August 22**

**Wellspring Renewal Center**

**Philo, CA (visit [www.wellsprg@pacific.net](http://www.wellsprg@pacific.net))**

**Improved Accommodations & meals** -- \$195/adult, \$95/child; **Rustic Accommodations & meals** -- \$170/adult, \$95/child; **Tent Cabin & meals** -- \$115/adult, \$60/child, **Camping & meals** -- \$105/adult, \$60/child; Children; (4-17 years old – under 4 are free)

## “Strengthen the Church”

**June 6**

This special offering helps grow the UCC's future by funding the Stillspeaking Ministry, new and renewing churches, youth and young adult ministries, and lay and pastoral leadership formation — especially among women and people of color; administered by your church's Conference, Local Church Ministries, and the Stillspeaking Ministry.

# JUNE 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	1	2	3	4	5
6 11:00 am Worship	7	8	9 Scripture Meditation, 1 pm	10 Fellowship Lunch 12:00	11	12
13 11:00 am Worship Birthday Sunday	14	15	16 Scripture Meditation, 1 pm	17	18	19
20 <b>Father's Day Summer Begins</b> 11am Worship	21	22 7:00 pm Church Council Retreat	23 Scripture Meditation, 1 pm	24	25	26 Oakland Care Center Wor- ship 3 pm
27 11:00 am Worship	28	29	30			

## June Birthdays

Dianne Winne June 2

Avram Gur Arge June 5

Roger Glenn June 11

Bruce Tutcher June 11

Linda Rich June 19

Sandy Gess June 19

Nicole Winston June 20

Elizabeth Hasychak June 21

Raymond Freitas June 22

Rev. Kelly Childress June 28

## **Java Jeremiah, Cappuccino Corinthians & Latte Luke**

Join Pastors Lois & Marjorie for Coffee & Conversation

**4 Thursdays, 7-8:30 pm**

**June 17, 24 & July 1, 8**

Caffé Trieste

4045 Piedmont Ave. Oakland, CA



### **Our Community in Life**

#### **Congratulations to our graduates:**

Cotys Wilson-Sandefur is graduating from eighth grade and will enter high school next year.

Olivia Gardner-McBride and Maya Gilliam will enter kindergarten next year.

#### **Congratulations to Selena Wilson & Susan Ode!**

We had **two** of our members honored at a May 20<sup>th</sup> ceremony by the Piedmont Recreation Department. Selena was honored as a Betty C. Howard Service Award Recipient. Susan Ode was honored as an Outstanding City of Piedmont Volunteer for her work with their Environmental Task Force.

**Come and soak in the renewing waters  
of community prayers for healing.**

**Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. June 1st**

We will take a summer break and return the 1st Tuesday of October.



#### **FIRESIDE ROOM**

Plymouth United Church of Christ

424 Monte Vista Ave.

Oakland, CA 94611

(510) 654-5300 [www.plymouthoakland.org](http://www.plymouthoakland.org)

For further information or to arrange individual healings sessions

call **Carolyn Collins, M.Div.**,

at **(510) 827-0009**

or email her at [bardee1@yahoo.com](mailto:bardee1@yahoo.com).

## **National Night Out**

Tuesday, August 3

6:00-8:30 pm

Plymouth Church Courtyard

Please come to help provide hospitality to our neighbors. We'll have information about Earthquake Disaster Preparedness and other items of concern to the community.

**And Music, of course!**



Council will not meet on June 8<sup>th</sup>, but will have a retreat with a dinner at Rev. Lois' home on Tuesday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, at 6 pm.



## Conference Minister Mary Susan Gast Retires

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

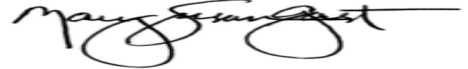
You won't generally find me in tears while I'm proof-reading *The Pacific*. But it was different two weeks ago as I went through the Annual Gathering edition. It was different, and I was in tears, as my long-range overview converged with my chronological calendar to bring into focus the reality that this year's Annual Gathering [my 15th!] will be my last as your Conference Minister.

I had intended to wait until summer to tell you that I plan to retire in February 2011. I figured that Annual Gathering 2010 was way too early to be saying any goodbyes. But when I saw the outline of the closing worship service and realized that the benediction I delivered would mark more than the closing of one more Annual Gathering, I recognized that, for the sake of transparency in both our community and business life, I needed to let you know before we met on May 13.

We have walked together for more than 13 years so far, through times of uncertainty and duress, with great faith and joy and mutual encouragement, into hope and strengthened covenant and spiritual undauntedness. So why would I choose to retire now, with so many dreams coming to fruition and so many visions for new ministry taking shape? I will turn 65 on October 27, and while that landmark birthday does not necessitate retirement, it is a reminder to me that it takes a lot more effort to keep up the pace I have set for myself, given that I really am constitutionally unable to tone it down in intensity or pull it back in scope. And I am attuned to a new call in the wind, a call to do more writing, to concentrate on some particular justice issues, to reconfigure my life in a new harmony with God's melody of creation and redemption, Last Saturday I advised the Conference Council of my intent to retire. They will be consulting with Rev. Susan Towner-Larsen, Minister for Conference Relations with the national setting of the UCC, on the process for selecting an Interim Conference Minister and for preparing to search for your next called Conference Minister. The transition will be in good hands.

I predict that we will have a farewell celebration early in 2011. We certainly will do a lot of ministry together in the next 9 months. And next week at Asilomar we will, as always, look to the future.

With inexpressible gratitude: for all the love you have given me, and all of the wild expectations you have inspired in me,



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**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**