By Michael Barber

As Vivaldi’s Four Seasons plays softly in the background, Susan Hill’s dining room takes on the air of an elegant social event. Flower arrangements in small tin pots adorn the table. Each guest is treated to a gourmet salad, a glass of white wine and a fancy dessert covered in red berries.

For the four Piedmont Community Church women gathering together for the first time, it’s an occasion.

Througthey are otherwise friends and have been working as a team for several years, it turns out that designing flower arrangements for Sunday morning worship services is very much a solo sport.

“You’re doing it by yourself,” said Sue Coffin. “I sometimes listen to a book, though it’s difficult to multi-task.”

Dining with Sue are Lonnie Simonson, Alice Wong Roth and host, Susan Hill. Conversation is lively and diverse with topics of flower arranging and church life blending nicely with compliments on the meal.

“It’s from Whole Foods,” Susan reveals. “I’ve learned to let the professionals do all the work.”

Everyone laughs.

“Being able to make arrangements to glorify the Lord is such a gift.”

- Susan Hill
Floral Designer

See ‘Designing’, Page 2
‘DESIGNING’, Continued from Page 1

“I always think of the people I’m making the arrangement for.”

- Lonnie Simonson
Floral Designer

“Our group is relatively anonymous,” Susan said. “That way we don’t have to fear public criticism.”

More laughter.

But the conversation turns slightly serious as the women focus on the task at hand - recruitment. Each of the women assumes multiple volunteer roles within the church, so they are pleased to share this opportunity with others who share their passion for petals.

“We’re willing to train,” Sue said. “Most people are not used to doing the size arrangements the church needs.”

Their system is relatively simple, though each order requires about four hours of time.

Alice is currently in charge of the group, taking requests from congregants eager to shell out $85 for two custom arrangements in honor, or memory, of someone special. She contacts the group by email and a volunteer among them emerges. From here, the real work begins.

“It’s not all fun and games,” Lonnie said. “It’s a job,” Alice chimes.

Once the order is received, flowers matching the donor’s preference must be gathered from one of their favorite suppliers and arranged days ahead of time. Some of the women do their best work at the church while others prefer the solitude of home.

The women consider their task to be an important part of church ministry, especially when making an arrangement in memory of person who has passed.

“It’s very meaningful,” Susan said.

“Being able to make arrangements to glorify the Lord is such a gift. It’s also a gift you can use to glorify an individual. It’s very important to develop a sense of respect for the past and to acknowledge the people who have influenced us. Of course, it’s also very sad, but a wonderful way to communicate using flowers.”

“I always think of the people I’m making the arrangement for,” Lonni said.

Susan, a Master Gardener, also finds the arrangements to be a good way to reconnect people to the beauty of the earth, especially those who have not grown up around gardens or yards densely populated by plants and flowers.

“It’s a way of bringing God’s glorious creations and the complexity and the textures and color indoors,” Susan said.

“People would miss them if they weren’t there,” Lonnie said. “I think it really enhances the service. It’s one of my favorite ways to do service.”

As their time together winds down, Susan turns her attention to her guests, offering a final beverage.

“I have coffee and tea, if anybody wants that,” she said.

“I’m happy with wine,” Lonnie said.

Videos Show Church in Action

If every picture is worth a thousand words, then moving pictures must write volumes.

The inclusion of short, shareable video pieces on PiedmontChurch.org and social media outlets (including the church’s Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter accounts) has expanded Piedmont Church’s reach in the wider community.

As we grow our social media presence, please consider following, liking and sharing the videos that show the world what God is doing here.

Endowment Brick Ceremony May 20, Deadline April 10

The Endowment Committee will conduct a formal unveiling of bricks, purchased by members an friends of Piedmont Community Church to benefit the Endowment fund.

Each brick will contain the name of an individual or family recognized for their contribution to the church.

Refreshments will be served in the courtyard immediately following the 10:30 am worship service.

Deadline for placing a brick order is April 10. For more information, contact Bob Leslie, Endowment Development Committee Chair, at (510) 654-5125
In Celebration of the ‘Lost Cause’

On the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb....
Luke 24:1

One of this year’s big films Darkest Hour is about Winston Churchill and his efforts to lead Great Britain during WWII.

I recall the story of Churchill who in the last few years of his life was invited to give the graduation speech at his old public school. It was a small town and no one excepted Churchill to accept but he did it and became a major event.

Everyone turned out, there were banners and bands and when it came time for the speech, Churchill stood up and looked across the crowd from behind the podium. He said, “Never give up!” and then sat down.

His words remind me of the paradox of Easter – Lost Causes Are The Only Ones Worth Fighting For.

This is the paradox of the cross. Selfless love is a lost cause. Loving one’s enemies is a lost cause. Interpersonal harmony is a lost cause. The perfection of human beings is a lost cause. Some would say that global warming and gun violence in America and conflict between the world’s religions are lost causes.

Maybe they seem lost because they’re so important and we seem so far away from solving them. But that was the message of that day on Golgotha. Lost causes are the only ones worth fighting for.

We Christians of all people should understand lost causes. The church, of all institutions and groups, should understand the paradox within which lost causes are won.

What “never give up” really means is don’t give up when they think you’re going to. Hang in there a little longer.

That’s what Jesus did. One Easter Sunday in the dawning rays of the early morning sun, the lost cause of the cross looked completely different.

I look forward to celebrating that lost cause with you soon.

DR. WILLIAM MCNABB
Senior Minister

Seniors Set to Brainstorm Future Involvement

Church member Susan Elliot joined the Seniors Sharing Coffee and Conversations group held at the church on March 21, for an animated discussion of how to vitalize senior participation in the church program.

Three questions motivated the conversation: How do we start? What can we do? How can we be effective?

Happy memories were shared about past programs over the years, including the Thursday club for trips sightseeing and movie discussion groups. Not to mention the retreats and houseboat adventures. I must have gone on five retreats.

I loved them!

The separateness from everyday life, the companionship sustained my spirit and gave me much joy. I still remember the gentle rock of the houseboat.

Some viable goals explored were reviving the bus that brought homebound seniors to the church and the activities that brought them together for work, prayer and joy.

Please join us at our next meeting at the church, April 4, when Dr. Don Ashburn will join us in conversation.

DR. WILLIAM MCNABB
Senior Minister

Tiny Time Commitments Help Big Time

Many of our volunteer activities take minimal time and effort and are great ways to get to know folks at the church in small settings.

New members will enjoy this easy way to contribute to their church and meet new friends.

USHER OR GREET at the 10:30 am service (simple training sessions available). Check your calendar and sign up after church.

SET UP FOR CHURCH DINNERS
Contact Jay Foreman at jayforeman777@yahoo.com

HELP IN THE KITCHEN with our volunteer cooking crew, Loaves and Fishes. Contact Steve Wuebbens at sawuebbens@gmail.com

PROVIDE A MEAL through our Food Angels for a member going through a difficult time. Contact Linda Rice at ljrice@sbcglobal.net

Tiny Time Commitments Help Big Time

Many of our volunteer activities take minimal time and effort and are great ways to get to know folks at the church in small settings.

New members will enjoy this easy way to contribute to their church and meet new friends.

USHER OR GREET at the 10:30 am service (simple training sessions available). Check your calendar and sign up after church.

SET UP FOR CHURCH DINNERS
Contact Jay Foreman at jayforeman777@yahoo.com

HELP IN THE KITCHEN with our volunteer cooking crew, Loaves and Fishes. Contact Steve Wuebbens at sawuebbens@gmail.com

PROVIDE A MEAL through our Food Angels for a member going through a difficult time. Contact Linda Rice at ljrice@sbcglobal.net

Visit us at our next meeting at the church, April 4, when Dr. Don Ashburn will join us in conversation.
Ebony O’Brien, 8, sits on a giant bean bag chair with her Toy Cup Poodle, Bailey, by her side while a crowd of people pass through the Piedmont Church Treasures Sale Saturday, March 10. Ebony and her family recently moved from Australia to Piedmont. The annual sale, benefitting an upcoming Mission trip to Mexico where 18 homes will be built for impoverished families, took 80 volunteers a full week to set up.

BY SUE COFFIN

Piedmont Community Church’s 2018 Treasures Sale raised nearly $34,000 with the efforts of the hard-working Treasures Sale team. Proceeds benefit the Mexico homebuilding mission. Thank you to all who donated their lightly used items to the effort to send our youth to Mexico to build 18 houses.

Applause and gratitude goes to Linda Adams, Tami Becker, Nancy Brahm, Ellie Campbell, Selma Chin, Joan Chow, Doug Clementson, Rick Coffin, Jan Crago, Amy Edgerly, Roger and Karen Eliassen, Veronika Feigerl, Mary Fielder and Robert McCafferty, Wayne Guidici, Patti Heilbron, Sara Hirsch, Dottie Hutch, Mittie Igo, Kim and Jim Kellogg, Aija Koch, Joan Leonard, Rebecca Litteneker, Margaret Lum, Lynne Robertson and John Finston, Kristi Marcelle, Chris Modera, Sally Moed, Bill Molmen, Janet Peterson, Lizz Polzak, Toni Polzak, Marion Schmidt, Kate Sovocool, Helen Steers, Christy White, Charlie Wood, Bob & Judy Wright, Mitchell Wright, and Jan Zovickian.

In addition to the crew who put in hours of preparation, we had an additional group of cashiers for the 2-day sale.

Thank you for all your help: Rick Coffin, Larry & Margaret Lum, Steve Senter,Kate Sovocool, Kathy Hull, Helen Steers, Zookie Todd, Christy Guidici, Donnaluci Williams, Ann Lin, Audrey Sung, Deb Obendorf, Shelagh Udovch, Lynn & Brad Olander, Dottie Hutch, Caroline Benson, Linda McClain, Adam Thacher, Rita Liston, Janet Peterson, Ron Koch, Anne Lenkert, and Toni Polzak.

We were also lucky to have the help of several merchants in pricing, spotting valuable items and repairing: J Sahadie Jewelry, Ken Katz, Rick Hudson Estates, and the bike guys, Sean and Josh.

I sincerely hope every team member has treated themselves to a massage, manic-pedi, glass of wine, a good book, a bouquet of flowers or whatever is a treat. You deserve it.
Bellot Family One Of 18 To Receive New Home In April

BY REV. SCOTT KAIL

The Bellot’s are one of our families that we will be building a house for the first week of April. There are nine of them living in a two room dwelling, that the father, Daniel, has built, on a small piece of land that they are purchasing with monthly payments.

Daniel, his wife Lizeth and his sister Flor are factory workers making $206 a week combined. Their parents Ramon and Luz Maria live with them along with their children Carlos, 1, Flor 13, Gerardo, 7 and Lizeth’s sister Violeta, 19.

Two of the children attend primary school and walk to classes each day. The area they live in is called Ojo de Agua on the outskirts of Tijuana.

We are eager to meet them and build them a new home with a locking front door and two windows.

The statistics show that once they have their new home (that we will build with love and care at no cost to them) they will all have an 80% greater chance for staying healthy, finishing school, enjoying safety and maintaining a much higher standard of living.

I hope you will join us in praying for the Bellot family and others as we head down to Mexico on Easter night. There are 300 of us and we will be building 17 other homes as well.

Each year, this Missions trip serves to be transformative for not only the families we build for but all of those who go.
New Member Reception

If you have become a member of Piedmont Community Church within the past 18 months, you are cordially invited to a reunion featuring appetizers and desserts held on Tuesday, April 24 from 7-9 pm at the home of Dr. Bill McNabb and his wife, Maureen.

This is a great opportunity to meet other new members, hear about the many ways you can engage in the vibrant and multi-faceted life of your church and share your experiences.

Please RSVP to Joan Chow at jmchow@comcast.net by April 17.

The address is 352 Wildwood Avenue, Piedmont.

Bible Sunday is April 22

BY LESLIE QUANTZ

Each year, Piedmont Community Church gives Bibles to our third-grade students as a way to enrich their lives.

These Bibles are presented to them during the 10:30 am church service.

If you have a third grader, you will be receiving and email from Leslie Quantz asking if you want to participate. We also include older children who are new to Piedmont Community Church and haven’t received a Bible in the past.

If you haven’t received an email from Leslie and would like your child to participate, please contact Leslie at leslie@piedmontchurch.org.

Shanna Farrell is New Church Nursery Coordinator

BY LESLIE QUANTZ

Shanna Farrell has been hired as Piedmont Community Church nursery coordinator.

She grew up in Hawaii and attended the University of Hawaii, Kapiolani campus.

Shanna moved to Oakland in 2014 to pursue a career as a paralegal. She met her husband Eric in Oakland and they moved back to Hawaii for a short time.

They are back in Oakland where they live with their three children Faith, Tyler and Lilianna.

We like to spend time together traveling in our RV and going to local performing arts performances,” Shanna said. “I am so excited to be working in the church because I believe all good things come from God and it is important to give back.”
Endowment Fund Seeks Contributors

BY RICK EIGENBRODE

I have been attending Piedmont Community Church for more than 35 years. The sanctuary today is even more beautiful than when I first walked through the door. What we see and experience today is the result of the vision, the generosity, the dedication, the commitment and the faith of many individuals over the years.

Two of those individuals were Wallace and Mary Alexander. Piedmont Community Church opened its doors 100 years ago this past January on land donated by the Alexanders. Their generous gift started it all. But maintaining and updating the church facilities is the responsibility of each generation of members and friends of the church who worship here.

Today, that responsibility lies with us.

Most of you have – or will - receive in the mail a beautiful brochure about the Wallace and Mary Alexander Founders Circle that honors contributors to the church’s endowment fund. Contributions to the fund will help secure the financial viability of this church – our church - for next 25, 50 or 100 years.

Four years ago, the Board of Trustees established the Alexander Circle to honor those who make gifts of $500 or more to the Endowment Fund, or those who have included the church in their estate plans.

Since then, well over a hundred families and individuals have joined the Alexander Circle. We honor and remember their generosity in the inscribed bricks on the walkway in our courtyard. The brick walkway is expanded each year to recognize those who have joined the Circle in the past 12 months.

This year’s class of bricks will be unveiled on Sunday, May 20, after the 10:30 am service. If you are not yet members of the Alexander Circle and now wish to contribute to the church’s endowment fund, you can take the first step to buy a brick by April 10 and do your part to help ensure a strong financial future for this church and its ministry.

If you are already a member of the Alexander Circle, we invite you to add to your initial gift as a sustaining member.

Current gifts are not the only way to support the Church’s financial future. We hope you will also consider including the Church in your estate plan.

Contributions to the endowment fund represent additional giving opportunities for us. These are over and above the generous giving we seek each year through the Stewardship campaign to support the church’s annual operating budget.

By comparison, we might want to think of the endowment fund as a 401k or an IRA for the Church to which even small contributions made over time can grow into a significant sum in the future.

I hope you will consider becoming a new or sustaining member of the Alexander Circle with a contribution to the endowment fund that reflects the importance of this church in your life.

Editor’s Note: Deadline for brick orders is Tuesday, April 10.

Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter - Oh My

In addition to checking out the church website at PiedmontChurch.org frequently, please consider following us on Facebook at Facebook.com/PiedmontCommunityChurch, on Instagram @PiedmontCommunityChurch and on Twitter @Piedmont_Church.

These social media connections help us reach the wider community. Your support of these efforts is greatly appreciated.

MONTH OF SUNDAYS

Each Sunday, we gather to celebrate our faith and our friendships. All are welcome to participate in worship at 9 and 10:30 am.

APRIL 1
Easter Sunday
Sunrise Service, 6:30 am
Worship at 9 and 10:30 am

APRIL 8
Rev. Dottie Hutch, preaching
THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

APRIL 15
MEXICO CELEBRATION SUNDAY

APRIL 22
Dr. William McNabb, preaching
NO SUCH THING AS NORMAL PT 1, EVERYBODY IS WEIRD Romans 3:10-18

APRIL 29
Dr. William McNabb, preaching
NO SUCH THING AS NORMAL PT 2, THE LONGING TO CONNECT Mark 2:1-12

Sunday School

We invite you to continue traveling through the Bible in one year:

April 1 – Easter Sunday, everyone together in Sanctuary

April 8 - Daniel: God Saves Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, “God helps us stay strong.”

April 15 - Daniel: God Saves Daniel, “God won’t let us down.”

April 22 - John: Jesus is Coming and John the Baptist Prepares the Way, “God came to be with us.”

April 29 - John: Jesus Answers Nicodemus’ Tough Questions, “Jesus isn’t afraid of hard questions.”

Contact Leslie Quantz with questions at Leslie@PiedmontChurch.org or (510) 547.5700 x109

Contact Leslie Quantz with questions at Leslie@PiedmontChurch.org or (510) 547.5700 x109
APRIL CALENDAR

Saturday, April 7 – Volunteer to Serve Lunch with CityTeam (ages 12 and over), 11 am – 2 pm, 722 Washington Street, Oakland

Saturday, April 7 – Volunteer to Serve Dinner with CityTeam (ages 14 and over), 5-7 pm, 722 Washington Street, Oakland

Sunday, April 8 – Psalm 23 window dedication, 10:30 am

Monday, April 9 – Needles and Hooks Shared Interest Group, 2-4 pm, Guild Parlor

Friday, April 13 – Kidz Club, 3:30 pm, Youth Room

Saturday, April 14 – Ed Bartlett Memorial Service

Sunday, April 15 - Mexico Celebration Sunday

Monday, April 16 – Needles and Hooks Shared Interest Group, 7-9 pm, Clara Barton Room

Sunday, April 22 - Bible Sunday

Saturday, April 28 – Berkeley Men’s Shelter, 6:30 - 8 pm, call (510) 547-5700 to volunteer

RECURRING EVENTS

Sundays
Rock Youth Group, 7-8:30 pm, Youth Room

Mondays
Spiritual Formation Group, 4:30 pm, Guild Parlor

Tuesdays
Small Group Bible Study, 7 pm, home of Bob and Judy Wright
Rock Pizza Lunch, 12:45 pm, Youth Room

Wednesdays
LiveWire, 2:30- 3:30 pm, Youth Room

Thursdays
Women’s Bible Study, 10 am, Guild Parlor

Saturdays
Men’s Bible Study, 7:30 am, Founder’s Room