

# Woodside World

## NEWS of CONGREGATION and COMMUNITY

**Woodside Church is a progressive Christian community committed to nurturing freedom, honesty and diversity, where members and friends live Jesus' way of social justice.**

Rev. Dr. Deborah DeMars Conrad, Pastor

Anne Oper, Office Manager

### **from the pastor...**

In my office, there is a print of a painting done by Stephanie Bell Burke, an artist from North Carolina. Stephanie and I grew up in the same church in South Carolina, and have known each other about all our lives.

The painting is Einstein, the creative genius. I like it for a number of reasons. One, because I like creative geniuses. Also because in the painting, Einstein's skin looks a little less white than usual, so this particular Einstein becomes a reminder that genius isn't the bailiwick of just one bunch of folks. Third, because it is a little abstract, it engages me just a little differently each time I look at it; sure, in part it depends on my mood, but it also is about light and color and season and who knows what else.

Today, as we approach inauguration weekend and feel the sense of heaviness that is blanketing so much of our nation, here's what I notice about the painting today: it is in many ways just a bunch of stray marks.



The field is the paper itself, which, in Stephanie's artistry, becomes part of the image. It means all the other stuff gives shape and meaning to what's really going on underneath. Art is as much about the "space between" as it is about the colors and images we add; then, the images we add do something to the field. I can draw squiggles; I've done that since I was a small child. But

putting the squiggles together in a way that communicates something, in a way that changes what is true, *that* is the work of artists and poets.

It is also the work of activists, world-changers. Stray marks add up to something. Something Genius.

The word on a lot of minds this week is "resistance." As our nation moves into a new chapter, with perhaps less confidence and stability than in previous transitions, we fear the promises this president has made, we fear the precedents he is setting, we fear the no-holds-barred approach the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress is adopting. Resistance is the order of the day for people of faith – resistance to those people and policies that would denigrate women, immigrants and refugees, gay and transgender men and women, people of color, people who are not Christian,

people of lesser economic means. Resistance to the escalation of capitalism and corporatocracy, which are already eating us alive, and which are so inconsistent with biblical commands. Resistance is the word.

But if resistance is the call, then "how?" is the question. We are people of varied skills and gifts and ideas and interests; getting us all on the same page is tricky. Plus, we might say, we are a small church, or we just live in Flint, not at all near the seats of power, or we have little time. How are we to work together, or feel like our contributions matter?

And I look at Stephanie's Einstein. A bunch of stray marks that come together to form powerful art. And even the background itself that becomes part of the image, not merely a canvas but part of the portrait.

This week, I'm taking my highest hope from the idea that we are the stray marks. What we do adds up to something, even if it seems small or remote. We have power to become the promising vision that the prophets told. We, together, are the artistry of the Creator. Genius.

Throughout this newsletter, there are opportunities for resistance. Gathering, writing, protesting, planning. Events related to inauguration, but also events related to our ongoing life together here, a congregation constantly resisting the beckoning of empire. You can find yourself here. You can make a mark.

So, join in, in whatever way satisfies you. And then, Sunday, let's make our marks together.

We're setting up a banner-sized paint project, and you are invited to make stray marks. Not words or images or slogans, please; just stray marks of all shapes and sizes. We'll hang it in the sanctuary, as a reminder of this truth: Resisting is a very holy thing to do. And the beauty of who we are together is a reflection of the genius of the Creator.

With you on a compelling journey,

*- pastor deb*

Stephanie Bell Burke's work is her own, and we are thankful for permission to reprint her image here. You can find more of her work available for purchase at [www.artandsoul.pro](http://www.artandsoul.pro).

## STANDING AGAINST THE CURRENT

*If you're looking for ways to observe this moment in our nation, to resist the ugliness that seems epidemic, to live the Jesus way, here are some options during inauguration weekend.*

**WOMEN'S MARCH ON WASHINGTON:** There is a bus from Flint going to DC for the post-inaugural rally on Saturday. At the moment, it is full, but you never know how that may change. See off the group at Sam's Club on Corunna Rd, 9:30 pm tomorrow (Fri), and see if a seat may open up. The group will return about 2 am Sunday.

**THE WOMEN'S MARCH ON THE CAPITOL: CAN'T GO TO WASHINGTON? JOIN US** 1-4 pm on Saturday. Women and men will gather in solidarity with the Women's March on Washington which happens at the same time. Pastor Deb, Jay and Leslie Cummings and others are going. If you want to carpool, meet at Woodside at noon.

*Woodsider Kathleen Reid notes this is for "folks that want to leverage their voice against rhetoric of the past election cycle that has taken aim at insulting many of us - women, immigrants of all statuses, those with diverse religious faiths; particularly Muslims; people who identify as LGBTQ; native and indigenous people, black and brown people, people with disabilities, the economically impoverished and survivors of sexual assault."*

**KNOW YOUR MUSLIM NEIGHBOR**, 1 - 4 pm this Sat, Jan 21, at the Flint Public Library main branch. For youth and adults (high school and up), this program is all about Islamic beliefs, customs and rituals to help us understand our Muslim neighbors. A great way of combatting the fear that is driving our national angst.

**AN INTERFAITH PRAYER AND DIALOGUE SERVICE** is at 7 pm, Inauguration Day, Fri, Jan 20 at Unity of Bay City. There will be leaders of various faiths, including Muslim, Jew, Christian, Budhhist and Athiest. This is an opportunity to honor our differences and stand in solidarity with one another for the common values that unite us. Following prayer and dialogue there will be an opportunity for open Q&A and fellowship. This is a free event, and all are welcome who seek to honor and understand our differences and the values that unite us. Click [here](#) for more info.

**UNITY IN DIVERSITY**, Feb 11, 7 pm. As long as we're talking about understanding, note this upcoming community event, of which Woodside is a co-sponsor. It's an evening of Arts and Expression, an interfaith feel-good time. Watch this space for more details.

**NATIONAL GENERAL STRIKE:** If none of those events works for you, there is also a national general strike on Inauguration Day, with people across the country refusing to work, shop or go to school. Read more: <http://inthesetimes.com/article/19660/trump-inauguration-sick-out-general-strike>.

**FIND WHAT WORKS FOR YOU** and make a mark. Genius.

## THIS WEEK AT WOODSIDE 1/22 - 1/28

<b>SUN: 1/22</b>	9:30 am	Adult forum
	11 am	Worship <i>then, conversation and coffee</i>
<b>MON: 1/23</b>		Office Closed
<b>TUE: 1/24</b>	7 pm	Writers' Group Meeting
<b>WED: 1/25</b>	4:30 pm	Voices Group
<b>THUR: 1/26</b>	6:30 pm	Daybreak Worship Service

## IN THE CONGREGATION

**DAYBREAK** is your place to continue the conversation. Every other Thurs, (next one is Jan 26), at 6:30 pm, we'll ponder themes that emerged during Sunday worship. Plus, coffee and childcare. We hope to see you there.

**A BOYCOTT TO CHANGE THE WORLD** - Woodside's *Community Life and Social Justice Committee* is learning more, and some committee members have already taken action. To learn more and receive e-mail updates, go to: [www.injusticeboycott.com](http://www.injusticeboycott.com). Or join the committee: 4 pm, Feb 6 at church.

**WOODSIDE WRITERS GROUP!** Yet another way to participate in the life of the congregation, WWG will meet for a boost of energy and grace. Would you like to help prayers and liturgy? Pen an occasional blog or newsletter editorial? Would you like to send cards to folks in need of care or correspond with Woodsiders incarcerated in Michigan? Maybe craft devotions for Lent? If you are even mildly curious, join us in the library at 7 pm Tue, Jan 24.

**BANNER SUNDAY!** Join in this Sunday from 10am to noon, as we create together a banner that will hang on the sanctuary front wall. Read Pastor Deb's editorial for more info...

**PRAYERS** are requested for *Ron Fader* and *Kathy DeBarr*.

## LOOKING AHEAD

**NEW MEMBER CLASSES** will be starting on Sundays during Lent, beginning Mar 5 at 9:30 am. If you are new to Woodside or want to renew your Woodside life, these sessions are what you need. Best part: no obligation! You can attend the class and then decide whether you feel member-ish. For those who choose, we will be receiving new members on Easter, April 16.

**CLEAN UP OFFICE DAY** - Yes, we are going to try this again. The regular office got a really nice cleaning, however, a lot of items have been pushed back into Annie's office, which has its challenges involving staying uncluttered. If you are available on Fri, Mar 3, from 1 to 4 pm, we will tackle Annie's office. Just show up - we'll remind you.