

SALT & LIGHT

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF SEBASTOPOL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

JANUARY 2023 NEWSLETTER

The Community Church of Sebastopol

United Church of Christ
707.823.2484
www.uccseb.org
office@uccseb.org

Lead Minister

Rev. Dr. Benjamin J. Broadbent

Associate Minister

Rev. Rachel Knuth

Handbell Ensemble Director

Karna Roa

Keyboardist

J. Althea

Choral Director

Andy DelMonte

Congregational Administrator

Joy Richards

Bookkeeper

Deanna Euritt

Custodian

Michael Sadler

Pastor Emeritus

Rev. Gene Nelson



Through Christ All Things

Rev. Benjamin Broadbent, Lead Minister

Through Christ all things were made;
without Christ nothing was made that has been made. – John 1:3

As the Christian liturgical calendar moves from Advent through Christmas to Epiphany, we in the church have a sense of new beginnings. It could be said, without much exaggeration, that Christians are those who come who expect newness. The fate of the world and our lives is not fixed but open, the status quo is constantly being interrupted by a wild and holy Spirit bent on renewing the earth and reconciling all creatures.

"Sure, sure," I hear someone saying, "But what does that look like in practice, especially when everything seems both broken and stuck?" I think the answer has something to do with Epiphany, which means a "to shine forth," or "to show." The presence of God's love is not always obvious, but sometimes it is. Sometimes God's presence shines forth in an epiphany that cannot be ignored.



- If you were in worship on December 18, you might have glimpsed an epiphany in the Re-affirmation of Baptism. A young transgender person who grew up in this congregation released his former name and was affirmed with a new name.
- If you went caroling last month, you might have witnessed an epiphany on the doorstep of someone in a wheelchair closing her eyes and singing along with familiar and abiding words, "...heaven, and heaven and nature sing."
- Perhaps your glimpse of God's shining forth was something only you noticed, a person's unique smile, a genuine 'thank you,' a generous financial gesture, a glorious crisp winter evening.

In her painting, "Through Him, All Things," Lauren Wright Pittman uses the image of Christ as a prism shining light in all the colors of the rainbow. The light of Christ shines, yes, and it shines diverse colorful beauty in all the earth. By faith we affirm that this is the nature of all things. Through Christ, the light of the world, all things are created, and all things sustained, and all things made beautiful and new. This is the true epiphany always on offer for those who have eyes to see.

JANUARY 2023 WORSHIP

2023 Epiphany Theme: "We Keep Seeking"

We worship in the sanctuary every Sunday at 10:30 a.m.
Services live streamed on our church's [YouTube channel](#) & [Facebook page](#)
Weekly bulletin and announcements available at www.uccseb.org

January 1 – 1st Sunday after Christmas Day

Today we gather for Intergenerational Worship to celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion. **Rev. Benjamin Broadbent**, Lead Minister, preaches a sermon on Matthew 2:13–23 entitled "We Keep Seeking."

January 6 – Feast of the Epiphany

January 8 – Epiphany Sunday / Baptism of Christ

Today we hear the story of **Jesus'** baptism in Matthew 3:13 -17. The Chancel Choir sings and **Pastor Benjamin** preaches a sermon entitled "Let It Be So."

January 15 – 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany

On this **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** Holiday Weekend, our worship is led by **Rev. Kristen DelMonte** and **Rev. Gene Nelson** while **Pastors Benjamin** and **Rachel** are on a ski trip with the Confirmation Class. The Handbell Ensemble provides worship music and the Gospel text is John 1:29–42 in which **John the Baptist** describes **Jesus** as the "Lamb of God."



January 22 – 3rd Sunday after the Epiphany

Today a small ensemble performs the song "From a Distance" and **Rev. Rachel Knuth**, Associate Minister, preaches a sermon on Matthew 4:12–23 entitled "Rash Decisions by Fishy People."

January 29 – 4th Sunday after the Epiphany / Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Following worship, we gather for our annual meeting. In worship, we receive new members, a Youth Ensemble shares music and **Pastor Benjamin** preaches a sermon on Matthew 5:1–12 entitled "Strange Blessings."

Engaged Membership

Rev. Benjamin Broadbent, Lead Minister

All who are curious about the Community Church of Sebastopol and our denomination, the United Church of Christ, are invited to attend a New Member Class on Sunday, January 8, 11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m. in the Media Room. Please RSVP to the church office by Wednesday, January 4. Let us know whether you require childcare and/or whether you have any dietary restrictions. Those who attend the class may decide whether to join the church later in the month.



We will welcome new members into the life of Community Church during worship on January 29. Encouraged by the congregation, new members will respond to these questions from the Book of Worship of our denomination, the United Church of Christ:

1. Do you desire to affirm your Baptism into the faith and family of Jesus Christ?
2. Will you resist the powers of the world which demean people and harm the earth, and do you desire the freedom to be fully yourself in Christ?
3. Will you strive to deepen your understanding of what it means to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?
4. Will you attempt, by the grace of God, to follow in the way of Jesus as his disciple, to resist oppression and violence, to show love and justice, and to embody the work and word of Jesus Christ as best you are able?
5. As a member of the church of Jesus Christ, do you intend to grow in the Christian faith, joining in the dynamic movement of God's people in this local congregation and as part of the global church by sharing in its joys and sorrows, listening to and learning from people older and younger, and by sharing your own gifts and perspectives so that together we may celebrate Christ's presence and serve this community and the world in Christ's name?

As engaged members, we are asking each other to fulfill these commitments:

- To take this church to be our faith community
- To endeavor to deepen spiritually in the Christian faith
- To attend services of worship as regularly as life allows
- To support the church financially from within one's own circumstance
- To aspire to a leadership role
- To serve faithfully as the church in the wider community

Safe Church: A Care Note from Pastor Rachel

Dear Friends,

As a parent of teenagers, I am always feeling like I'm catching up with what is going on with technology, and especially with the content on their electronic devices. Recently, I looked at the ads popping up on an app on my child's phone, and was pretty upset by what I saw: highly sexualized commercials. I had to figure out next steps to remove this content. (I'm not sure the problem is totally solved, but it's improved...for now... somehow there are always more workarounds to the workarounds.) Why would this kind of content even be on an app aimed at people under the age of 20? Ugh! I suppose on the positive side, this episode prompted more conversation about sexualization in media, and how we can keep thinking about staying healthy around technology.

Parents of children and teenagers these days are often caught in the double bind of wanting to provide a safe environment while also allowing their children to connect with peers. It is an issue that requires constant vigilance. I bring all this up in the context of Safe Church because the teams who have written and revised our Safe Church Policy have had to grapple with online safety— how can we provide safe and connecting programs in this always-unfolding social environment with technology?

As you may know, our Safe Church Policy was originally created by a team in 2018, and recently revised in 2021. With the revision, one of the topics the team expanded upon is social media and how to be safe in all our communications, especially texting. An example of how Adult Volunteers (like Youth Group Leaders, Confirmation Mentors, event planners, etc.) can safely communicate with youth is by adding a second adult (usually a parent) to a texting thread. A simple strategy to remember this, which we'll cover in the Safe Church Training, is to remember the two-adult rule: the policy states that we will have two background-checked adults with children and youth at all times during our programs. This is true for both in-person and virtual settings.

Our church is striving to create a wholesome environment for our young people. Part of creating a healthy place for our youth is about building camaraderie through service-oriented Christian programming. Another part of it is our robust Safe Church Policy. Indeed, we are a church seeking to "provide a safe and secure environment for children, youth, and vulnerable adults, as a reflection of the love and hospitality we have come to know in Jesus Christ" (from the preamble to the policy). You can read the full policy on the church's web site or [Read the Safe Church Policy Here](#).

A Safe Church Policy is more than just background-checks and the two-adult rule (though it is definitely those things too!). In the Safe Church Training for Adult Volunteers, we'll talk about honoring the spiritual lives of children, including simple ways to engage with children, without objectifying them. We'll think through strategies for being a trustworthy adult presence in the lives of our youth, without seeking to be a "peer." We'll talk about self-care and boundary-setting. And we'll think through some "gray area" scenarios and how to handle them.

So! Save the Date for January 8th, 12-1:30pm! I'll be leading a Safe Church Training for Adult Volunteers, required for all volunteers who work with children and youth. This is also open to all parents of children and youth. I'll also be offering a separate training for the youth-only, during a Youth Group gathering on January 8th, 5-7pm. Our young people need to know what the policy says too.

I look forward to engaging in conversation with many of you at this training and beyond. And if anyone has figured out how to totally block ads on all of social media, let me know!

Warmly,

Pastor Rachel





- **Reena Burton** for using beautiful calligraphy on the confirmation certificates.
- **Lisa Dawson, Judy Peterson and Patty Raney** for their participation on the Burbank Heights Board of Directors. They have been serving in this capacity for over 15 years each!
- The **Elvy** children for donating a projector in their parents' names, **Lud and Glenda Elvy**.
- **Joyce Cox** and **Judy Davison** for spearheading the gift bag ministry for the homeless -- over 180 bags!
- **Andy DelMonte, Karna Roa, Althea**, our **Children's Choir, Handbell Choir**, and **Chancel Choir** for their gifts of music to enhance our worship services throughout December.



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Jan 3	Gary Gordon	Jan 16	Destiny Stone
Jan 4	Tom Dilly	Jan 17	Rhonda Matheny
Jan 4	Melody Anderson	Jan 17	Joan Martin
Jan 5	Pat Dille	Jan 19	Beth Trivunovic
Jan 6	Marge Holland	Jan 20	Benji Margulis
Jan 6	Diana Wilson	Jan 21	Steve Bradley
Jan 7	Marlene Hooper	Jan 23	Joanne Matson
Jan 7	Bryan Peterson	Jan 23	Jane Rasmus
Jan 8	Hollace Vaughn	Jan 25	Bill McMillion
Jan 8	Susan Nestor	Jan 26	Paula Berndt
Jan 8	Sharon Olson	Jan 28	Garth Watson
Jan 8	Kim Buckman	Jan 29	Emily Davis
Jan 12	Gail Thomas	Jan 29	Yvette Morris
Jan 13	Yvonne Johnson	Jan 30	Alan Murakami
Jan 14	Vicki Reno	Jan 30	Gene Nelson
Jan 15	Julie Smith	Jan 30	Jordan Cassells
Jan 15	Brenda Flynn		

Wondering Circle



Wondering Circle is our Sunday morning program for children up to grade 5. It is a vibrant and growing community of children and adult volunteers. In the month of December, we had around 10 children per week attending Wondering Circle. They engaged the Advent story in imaginative ways– thinking about the prophets, the holy family, shepherds, and magi. Research has shown that this style of storytelling and story-wondering encourages children to remember Bible stories, because they have imagined themselves inside of the story. It is really pretty profound, when children are given a quiet moment to reflect, they often have deep insights. Recently, when wondering about the shepherds hearing choirs of angels in the night, they were asked, “I wonder where you might be in this story?” One child answered, “I would like to be with the sheep because nobody expects too much from them, but they get to see and notice everything.” Another child responded to the story with a gray-scale pencil drawing of a shepherd with sheep– the only color on the page a bright glowing star.

After the scripture story is told in worship (Children’s Message), children and adult volunteers walk over to Room 5 for art, prayer, and singing. The “Leader” settles the group in with circle songs and a gathering time, and then leads a discussion about the story using “Wondering Questions” from Godly Play. The “Helper” assists the children in accessing art supplies, sits alongside any who need assistance, and supports the “Leader” in creating a sweet space for the children.

We are currently looking for more parents and adult volunteers (background-check required) to shepherd the children in Wondering Circle. Please contact **Pastor Rachel** if you are interested in joining this dynamic team: pastorrachel@uccseb.org.

DATE	LEADER	HELPER	SCRIPTURE
January 8	Terri Harper	Larry Stallings	Baptism of the Lord
January 15		Ashley Arnold	Second Sunday after the Epiphany
January 22	Pastor Rachel	Terri Harper	Third Sunday after the Epiphany
January 29			Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

Guest Speaker: Kirstyne Lange
Sunday, January 22 at 12:00

Our congregation is delighted to welcome **Kirstyne Lange**, President of our local chapter of NAACP, as a guest speaker on January 22 at noon in the Sanctuary.

As her web site says, "Diversity makes us strong; Inclusion makes us special." As we seek to be a congregation growing in our capacity to love, we often wonder how we might strengthen our diversity, equity, and inclusion? Come hear Ms. Lange share her thoughts, grounded in experience and insight, about race and privilege in Sonoma County. This event is free and open to the public— invite your friends to church and stay to hear our guest speaker!

Here are a few words from her bio: "**Kirstyne** has dedicated her life to diversity, equity, and inclusion. As a long-term resident of the San Francisco Bay Area, **Kirstyne** prides herself on creating policies of inclusion in education, government, and law enforcement. She earned Public Administration with an emphasis in Nonprofit Management from Sonoma State University. In the spirit of paying it forward, **Kirstyne** served on the Mills College Board of Governors, advocating for alum and student initiatives in addition to being a founding board member of the Sonoma County IOLERO - CAC, advocating for safer policing and oversight policies. **Kirstyne** was on the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion committees for a number of K12 independent private schools and is the founder of KAL Consulting, an inclusivity consulting firm in the North Bay area.



Kirstyne serves as the President of the Santa Rosa -Sonoma County NAACP Branch, board member on the Elsie Allen High School Foundation, the CLEAN Committee, Santa Rosa's Community Advisory Board, Sonoma County Tourism Board, and Community Matters. She continues to volunteer with the Mills College Alumnae of Color Committee, Save Your Six - a Title VI Civil Rights Protection advocacy group for students and coaches club volleyball."

Adult Education: If you are interested in thinking strategically about Adult Education offerings, like a monthly speaker series and other programs, please contact **Pastor Rachel:**pastorrachel@uccseb.org.

UNLEARNING URGENCY
A Special Program with Elena Larssen
A day for reflection, conversation, laughter, and lunch
Saturday, January 7, 10:00 to 3:00



What: Coming out of COVID, many people are facing changed rhythms to daily life, different demands upon their time, and new found priorities. We have learned some things about ourselves, but are we adapting and gaining insight from the crises inside and beside us? With scripture, heartfelt conversation, and a sprinkle of light-hearted humor, **Rev. Elena Larssen** will lead us through a day of renewal for the new year.

Our presenter: Elena grew up in our church and is the daughter of **Beth & Tom Larssen**. She has been a conference minister in Minnesota, Lead Minister at First Congregational Church of Long Beach, and currently serves in Cleveland at the national setting of our United Church of Christ as Minister of Volunteer Engagement. **Elena** is married to **Rev. Mark Pettis**, mother of **Thomas**, and working toward her PhD at Pacific School of Religion.



Who: All interested adults of any gender. Childcare available upon request.

Where: At Community Church in the Chapel and/or Fellowship Hall.

Cost: \$30 covers lunch and honorarium for **Elena**. You may register and pay through Realm or in the church office. Submit a check to the church office made out to "Community Church of Sebastopol" with "**Unlearning Urgency**" in the Memo line. 50% discount available upon request.

More Information? Contact **Bobbie Johanson** at 707.823.7126 or bjohanso@sonic.net. This event is sponsored by Women's Retreat Committee.

Names(s) _____

If you need childcare, for how many children? _____

Dietary restrictions for lunch? _____

\$ Included: _____



Thresholds

We release with care...

...**Walt Taddeucchi**, husband of **Norma Taddeucchi**, who died September 22.

...**Suzanne DeKozan**, church member, who died October 30.

...**Peg Anderson**, church member, who died November 3.

...**Stuart Wilson**, church member, who died November 4.

...**Diana Iverson**, former church member, who died November 19.

...**Glenda Elvy**, church member, who died November 23.

First-Ever Fifth-Sunday Intergenerational Pumpkin Party!

By Pastor Rachel

Our intergenerational lunch and program on October 30 was a delight! Fifty-four people, ranging in age from 4 to 92, gathered at nine tables of six. After a pumpk-tastic lunch, the nine groups carved and adorned nine pumpkins, which were then taken to bring harvest cheer to elders in our church community.

Here are some comments people had after the event:

"I liked that the seating was mixed up so we could meet new people,"

"I got to chat with people I didn't know well,"

"The discussion went well. Our food was tasty. And the pumpkin carving really involved the kids."

Huge thanks to all who participated, and especially to **Kathy Matthies** and **Scott McGinnis** for showing up with power tools to take the guts out of the pumpkins! (And **Kathy** made soup, thank you!) We are pondering a Fifth-Sunday Intergenerational gathering again on April 30, 2023. If you are interested in helping out with that, please let me know: pastorrachel@uccseb.org.



Events in January 2023 at Community Church

January 1	1st Sunday after Christmas, Worship Service, 10:30 am, Sanctuary Kinship Time, 11:30 am, Bell Tower Courtyard
January 3	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Shower Outreach Program, 10 am, Memorial Hall Men's Discussion Group, 6 pm, Fireside Room Parents of Youth Grades 6-12, 7 pm, Zoom Meeting
January 4	Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
January 5	Women's Fellowship Card Writing, 3 pm, Fellowship Hall Chancel Choir Rehearsal, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
January 7	Unlearning Urgency w/Elena Larssen, 10 am, Chapel
January 8	Epiphany Sunday/Baptism of Christ, Worship Service, 10:30 am, Sanctuary Advent Book Club, 9:30 am, Chapel Wondering Circle, 11 am, Room 5 Kinship Time, 11:30 am, Bell Tower Courtyard New Member Orientation, 11:45 am, Media Room Safe Church Training for Adult Volunteers, Noon, Chapel Youth Grades 6-12, Safe Church Training, 5:00 pm, Youth Lounge
January 10	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Shower Outreach Program, 10 am, Memorial Hall Facilities Committee, 10 am, Fireside Room Pastor-Parish Relations Team, 4 pm, Fireside Room Outreach Committee, 7 pm, Fireside Room
January 11	Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6 Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary Leadership Council Meeting, 6:30 pm, Media Room
January 12	Chancel Choir Rehearsal, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
January 14	Second Saturday Lunch, 11:30 am, Fellowship Hall
January 15	2nd Sunday after the Epiphany, Worship Service, 10:30 am, Sanctuary Advent Book Club, 9:30 am, Chapel Wondering Circle, 11 am, Room 5 Kinship Time, 11:30 am, Bell Tower Courtyard Salt & Light Newsletter Deadline
January 16	Prayer Shawl Group, 10 am, Fireside Room
January 17	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Shower Outreach Program, 10 am, Memorial Hall
January 18	Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6 Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
January 19	Chancel Choir Rehearsal, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
January 22	3rd Sunday After the Epiphany, Worship Service, 10:30 am, Sanctuary Advent Book Club, 9:30 am, Chapel Wondering Circle, 11 am, Room 5 Kinship Time, 11:30 am, Bell Tower Courtyard Kirstyne Lange, Guest Speaker, Noon, Sanctuary Youth Leaders Spring 2023 Overview, 5 pm, Youth Lounge
January 24	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Shower Outreach Program, 10 am, Memorial Hall
January 25	Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6 Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
January 26	Chancel Choir Rehearsal, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
January 29	4th Sunday After the Epiphany, Worship Service, 10:30 am, Sanctuary Kinship Time, 11:30 am, Bell Tower Courtyard Annual Meeting of the Congregation, Noon, Memorial Hall
January 31	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Shower Outreach Program, 10 am, Memorial Hall

January 2018 - 2023: 5 years of caring! By Chris Jenkins

I would like to recognize the dedicated members of the Women's Fellowship Care Card Ministry. We began our ministry in January 2018 and have sent 1,965 cards over the last 5 years! We are using money from past fundraisers to pay for stamps and cards. Thank you to: **Mary Coleman, Pat Furber, Marlene Hooper, Chris Jenkins, Bobbie Johanson, Joanne Matson, Barbara Nichols, Sharon Olson, and Norma Watson.** Thank you to **Pastor Rachel** for beginning our monthly meetings by leading us in prayer for each person who receives a card. This ministry fulfills the early Ladies Aid Society's mission (now Women's Fellowship) of the original 1889 Community Church which was formed "for the purpose of giving aid to the Congregational Society, combining our efforts to give both spiritual and financial aid".



Youth Group Spring 2023

Exciting SALTy things are in the works for Youth Group this Spring! SALT = "Service And Learning Together"

Sneak Preview: In gatherings this Fall, many of you have expressed an interest in eco-justice and climate hope, as something you are passionate about. And so, we are planning our Service And Learning Together (SALT) trip in June 2023 to revolve around the theme of eco-justice, in particular caring for our watershed— lakes, rivers, laguna, and ocean. We have an awesome trip location, along with Spring Youth Group activities in the works. All shall be revealed at our gathering on January 8th – after we spend some time learning about the church's Safe Church Policy!

Here are some upcoming dates for your calendar:

For Parents:

- January 3 at 7pm, Parent-Only Zoom, for meet-n-greet, overview of the Spring program, and the beginnings of a multi-year vision for Youth Ministry at Community Church. [CLICK HERE to Join Zoom Meeting](#)
- January 8, 12 - 1:30, Safe Church Training for Adult Volunteers – Parents Welcome

For Youth:

- January 8, 5 - 7pm, Safe Church Training for Youth + SALT Trip Reveal! (Dinner provided)
- April 22, Earth Day Evening Fundraiser Event
- June (exact date TBD, but probably late-June) SALT Trip

Please feel free to be in touch with Pastor Rachel for questions or to check in: pastorrachel@uccseb.org.

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