

SALT & LIGHT

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF SEBASTOPOL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

JULY 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

Choral Director

Andy DelMonte

Keyboardist

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Karna Roa

Congregational Administrator

Joy Richards

Bookkeeper

Deanna Euritt

Custodian

Keith Brown

Pastor Emeritus

Rev. Gene Nelson



Sexuality is a Gift from God

By Pastor Rachel Knuth



To celebrate this year's Our Whole Lives/ Sexuality and Our Faith ("OWL") students and facilitators, I asked a parent to order a sheet cake. This seemed like a good idea— people love cake! Plus: A lot of effort had gone into the whole spring. Our class of 16 students in 8th and 9th grades participated in 26 classes, facilitated by adult volunteers (who volunteered their time preparing and

leading lessons). Their parents— who had gotten them to the classes and supported the curriculum at home— were coming to worship to participate in a blessing. So, YES: Let there be cake! Let's honor and celebrate their good work, and share cake at Kinship Time! And so, I asked a parent volunteer to order a white sheet cake with red scrolling letters (for Pentecost, the color representing the Holy Spirit), saying, "Sexuality is a Gift from God."

All seemed well, until the day the cake was to be picked up. Suddenly the parent volunteer got a call from the bakery saying that the person who does the piping on all their cakes was not comfortable writing those words on our cake.

It made me wonder, what theology might keep someone from writing this on our cake? What might someone believe about God, and about sexuality, that would prevent them from knowing this statement to be true?

The truth is that we live in a culture where sexuality is not honored as the holy, sacred gift that it is. Human sexuality has been sexualized in our media and used to harm through sexual abuse, oppression, and violence. All around us all the time, we are bombarded with harmful messages about sexuality, used to demean people and sell us stuff. This hyper-sexualization only encompasses a narrow definition of sexuality: sexualization. But the OWL curriculum examines sexuality more broadly, and imagines it in five overlapping circles: intimacy, sensuality, sexual identity, sexual health and reproduction, and sexualization. At the center of these circles is our values. And our values include the idea that church is a trustworthy context for people of all ages to learn and receive honest information about human sexuality that affirms the dignity of all people, and encourages personal responsibility.

Continued on Page 2

Sexuality is a Gift from God

By Pastor Rachel Knuth

When we say that sexuality is a gift from God, we reject harmful sexualization and embrace a justice-centered and embodied understanding of love. We're saying that we are— all of us— created in the image of God. As **Rev. Molly Phinney Baskette**, of the Berkeley UCC, says in her book *How to Begin When Your World is Ending*, "Christians are all about the body. Our theological word for it is 'incarnation'-- which means we are enfleshed, that we live in bodies." We believe in God's Word made flesh, in the person of Jesus Christ, who inhabited a human body. And so through the incarnation we understand that God reveals Godself through enfleshment. God's love is an embodied love, expressed in simple ways like the intimacy of holding the hand of someone who is boundaried, consensual, relational, sexuality. As our national office of the UCC states, "The purpose of sexuality is to enhance human wholeness and fulfillment, to express love, commitment, delight, and pleasure, to bring new life into the world, and to give glory to God." It is a holistic view that is both whole and holy.

A few hours after the parent volunteer learned about the cake, another baker had been identified, who would write those lovely scrolling letters. That same afternoon, in response to the cake scenario, the owner of our local Sebastopol ice cream shop responded by donating 10 pints of ice cream so that our OWL class could have an ice cream party. And on Sunday morning we really did celebrate by sharing cake. I'm so proud we are a church where we affirm whole-heartedly: Sexuality is a gift from God.

- * Thank you to the 29 people that gathered for an intergenerational work day around the church campus on May 20th.
- * Thank you to **Jane Huneke, Barbara Whitson, and Judy Peterson** for organizing the work day.
- * Thank you to our new Custodian, **Keith Brown**, for loving our facilities like we do!
- * Thank you **Chris Chang Weeks, Joanne Matson, Bobbie Johanson, Nancy Shimetz and Judy Hawkins** for volunteering to staff the office while our Congregational Administrator was on vacation.
- * Thank you to **Kim "Buck" Buckman** for replacing lock boxes that had been vandalized (again).
- * Thank you to all who participated in our STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH Offering of the United Church of Christ. Donations totaled \$768 from our congregation.



JULY 2023 WORSHIP

Worship Details:

This summer, we worship in the sanctuary on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. Services live streamed on our church's [YouTube](#) channel & [Facebook](#) page Weekly bulletin and announcements available at www.uccseb.org

July 2 – 5 th Sunday after Pentecost

On this Independence Day weekend, we gather for intergenerational worship and celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion. **Rev. Benjamin Broadbent**, Lead Minister, preaches a sermon on [Matthew 10:40–42](#) entitled “Holy Welcome.”

July 9 – 6 th Sunday after Pentecost

We welcome a guest preacher, **Sana Sunia**, Lead Musician and Director of Youth Ministry at Wellspring UCC in Santa Rosa. Sana will preach on [Matthew 11:28](#): “Come to me, all you who are weary and I will give you rest.”

July 16 – 7 th Sunday after Pentecost

Rev. Rachel Knuth preaches a sermon on The Parable of the Sower found in [Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23](#).

July 23 – 8 th Sunday after Pentecost

Pastor Benjamin preaches a sermon on the Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds in [Matthew 13:24–39, 36–43](#).

July 30 – 9 th Sunday after Pentecost

Pastor Benjamin preaches a sermon on the Parable of the Mustard Seed in [Matthew 13:31–33, 44–52](#).

Coming in August... More “Hospitality,” more guest musicians, Blessing of the Backpacks, worship at All Church Camp Weekend



Community Church of Sebastopol Graduate Blessing: June 4, 2023

On Sunday, June 4, we celebrated our high school and college graduates.

2023 High School Graduates:

Marin Broadbent-Bell
Emma Field
Jonah Gonzales
Charlotte Michell
Ethan Trevino
Theresa Weigel
Tyler Whitehorn
Mariel Wurfel

2023 College Program Graduates:

Kristen DelMonte: Masters in Educational Leadership,
Sonoma State University
Elena Larssen: Doctor of Ministry,
Pacific School of Religion

Blessing for High School Graduates

God of journeys, endings, and new beginnings, we give you thanks for these graduates: **Marin, Emma, Jonah, Charlotte, Ethan, Theresa, Tyler, and Mariel**, and ask your blessing upon them. We are grateful for the people they are, and the young adults they are becoming, and all the ways your love and light shines through them in our world.

God, their paths have not always been easy. They have experienced loss and loneliness, fear and anxiety. They have had to work hard to grow through challenges, both personal and societal. These have not been easy times. And still, through it all, your love has guided them.

From the time they tucked their first grade legs under small wooden chairs, up to the moment they threw their mortar boards in the air this week, you have been present. Through parents who made sandwiches and kept calendars and made them go to bed on time— well, most of the time, through teachers that really “saw” them, through Sunday School leaders and Confirmation Mentors— you, O Holy One, have been near.

We know you have been near, because we can feel it too— It has given our church community such deep joy to witness these graduates striving so very excellently: to care for others, to sing and make music, to lead protests against gun violence, to act on stage, to make a friend totally crack up, to study hard even when they wanted to take a break, to include someone that was being left out, to be the people you are calling them to be. What could be more wonderful than witnessing each of them shining their light? We cannot help ourselves but to give thanks to you for the gifts you have planted in each one of them.

And so we ask your blessing upon their bodies, minds, and souls, as they take their next steps. Bless them and give them a sense of direction— or at least a sense of purpose, a sense of wonder, a sense that in everything you are walking with them and gently guiding them to the heart of things. Bless them as they build your kin-dom of peace.

This is a time of transition and letting go, of reflection upon what has come before, and of release into what comes next. And because each of these graduates emerges from the ecosystem of their families, we pray your blessing upon their parents and siblings. As dynamics shift, we ask you to bless them, come near when they experience the grief that comes with change. Send your Spirit of tenderness and care.

God, we are changed because we have known and been known by **Marin, Emma, Jonah, Charlotte, Ethan, Theresa, Tyler, and Mariel**. We give you thanks and praise for them, and pray your everlasting presence, your blessing and your nudges toward growth, will be with them always. We ask this blessing in the strong name of Jesus, our companion on the journey, Amen.

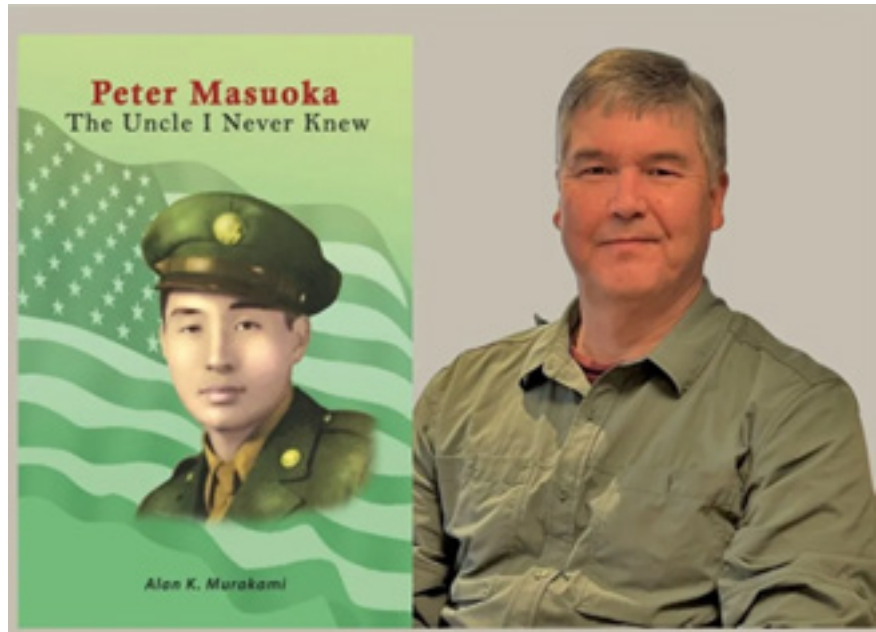
"The Uncle I Never Knew"

Alan Murakami

On Sunday, August 6, at 11:30 a.m. in our sanctuary, **Pastor Benjamin** will interview **Alan Murakami**, member of Community Church and author of "*Peter Masuoka: The Uncle I Never Knew*." The event is free and open to the public. Books will be available for purchase.

Alan Murakami, a retired school psychologist, grew up in the Community Church of Sebastopol. He is the son of long-time church member **Margarette Murakami**. She and her older brother Peter grew up in Sebastopol. Peter was a popular athlete and student body officer at Analy High. When World War II began, Margarette and her family were detained and moved to an Internment camp in Colorado. Peter joined the U.S. Army and was part of a Japanese regiment serving in Europe. He was killed during a battle in France.

On March 25, Community Church member **Dale Dougherty** interviewed Alan Murakami, about Alan's recently published book. Below is an introduction by Dale. The full interview can be found here: <https://www.sebastopoltimes.com/p/alan-murakamis-the-uncle-i-never#details>.



"On Memorial Day for every year that Alan Murakami can remember, his family went down to the National Golden Gate Cemetery in San Bruno to lay flowers beside the grave of Peter Masuoka, his uncle. During Covid, Alan decided he had the time to write about his uncle and his Japanese American family. Peter, who grew up in Sebastopol, died in France fighting for his country in the 442nd Battalion in World War II, all the while his family was held in an internment camp in Colorado.

Alan's grandfather was a first-generation Japanese American, known as Issei. Alan's mother and her brothers, including Peter, were second generation, known as Nisei. As a member of the third generation, Alan had filled a shoe box with scraps of paper where he had jotted down what members of his family had said about Peter. He started with the shoebox and began trying to piece together the life of the uncle he never knew. Peter Matsuoka's story and the Matsuoka-Murakami's family story are an important part of the history of Sonoma County, which some of us might not know so well."

Come to Paradise!
Community Church Disaster Recovery Trip 2023
Sunday, October 15 - Friday, October 20

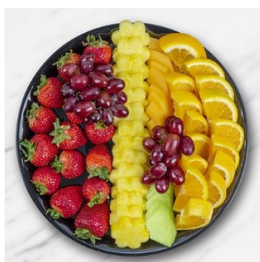
Join our work group in Paradise! We will leave Sunday, October 15, after church and return Friday, October 20, in the late afternoon. We will be working with a wonderful group called [Hope Crisis Response Network](#). This is the same group we worked with in Middletown and Paradise; rebuilding houses burned in the Camp Fire. We will also help with a large distribution center. This will be our church's 16th Disaster Recovery Trip!

We have extremely comfortable housing in rooms with twin beds and attached bathroom. We are fortunate enough to have Kathy Matthies coming to coordinate food! We work on the job site from 8:00 a.m., until about 3:00 p.m. We typically have several houses we work on as well as distribution centers. Working as a team, we get a lot done to help people get back into a home. It is a fun and rewarding experience. The cost will be about \$250 per person to cover food and housing.

We can take 14 people. Now is the time to commit! Please let **Joyce Cox** know you intend to go at b-j-cox@att.net. You are welcome to call me at 707-829-0750.

CALLING ALL BAKERS & SAVORY MAKERS

Our Kinship Hour after church is in need of supplies of cookies, breads, fruit, and savory brunch bites to serve. To help, contact **Kathy Matthies** at kathleenmatthies57@gmail.com.



JULY BIRTHDAYS

July 1 Allie Hole
 July 4 Malone Harper
 July 5 Sandy Rosen
 July 6 Eian Galletto
 July 8 Nancy Lee
 July 8 Andrew Liput
 July 8 Ryan Hole
 July 9 Norma Watson
 July 9 Paul Feige
 July 10 Issac Trevino
 July 11 Bob Best
 July 11 Eva Norton
 July 11 Margot Dowdney
 July 14 Chris Jenkins
 July 15 Hosanna Bauer

July 15 Storm Davis
 July 16 Norma Taddeucci
 July 17 Luanne Buchanan
 July 17 Judy Stupfel
 July 18 Joy Richards
 July 19 Diane Krautner
 July 19 Dorothy McKoin
 July 19 Charles Williams

July 20 Jane Hynes
 July 22 Tamar Knuth
 July 24 Barbara Nichols
 July 25 Hal Roa
 July 25 Marna McKenzie
 July 25 Chris Dillard
 July 27 Andy DelMonte
 July 27 Brandon Cassells
 July 27 David Richards
 July 29 Michella Trevino
 July 30 Rob McKoin
 July 30 Janice Eurgubian
 July 31 Sean Wood



SUMMER WORSHIP BEGINS AT 10 A.M.

Apple Pies on the Horizon

Pastor Rachel Knuth



The apple blossoms have bloomed and now we await the gravensteins. And while we are waiting, we are making plans for pie!

Every year in August, our church bakes over a thousand pies. We are in our 51st year! We sell them out of the back of Memorial Hall, it's a drive-thru situation, with customers coming onto our church campus and purchasing pies to-go.

One of the most fun things about how our church does this, is that it is a huge intergenerational community builder. People of all ages find themselves elbow-deep in sticky apple juices. Grandmotherly types teach younger children to crimp crusts. Teenagers jump in to help sell or tend the ovens with older adults. Decisions have to be made about whether to mop the floor— it's sticky, but it's maybe going to get stickier! Grace abounds. This is what being a community looks like! Everyone works hard and has fun.

The Apple Pie Team designates the funds to support camperships of all kinds, including SALT Trips and All-Church Camp Weekend scholarships. Because of the generosity of the Apple Pie Team, our youth and families are able to go to places in nature to discover God's grace in community.

So go ahead and mark your calendar for August 11-13! There are lots of ways to get involved, but it all begins with signing up: [YES! I'd like to join the pie-making extravaganza!](#) Please note: There is a special Youth volunteer time on August 12, 9am-1pm (lunch provided). **We look forward to seeing you there!**

All-Church Work Day

By Jane Huneke & Pastor Rachel Knuth



The All-Church Work Day was intergenerational, super fun, and productive! The Grounds Team is thrilled to report that 29 people gathered for an intergenerational work day around the church campus on May 20th. People worked beside old friends and new acquaintances, and an AMAZING amount of hearty, outdoor work was accomplished. Plus, we had fun working together and sharing pizza at the end of the morning.

Additionally, our Youth Group joined the All-Church Work day and had a blast! Youth and volunteers cleared out overgrown ivy so it could be hauled away to compost. A fun time was had by all! Huge thanks to **Jane Huneke, Barbara Whitson, and Judy Peterson** for leading the work day.



If you enjoyed this activity, the Grounds Team meets every Tuesday morning from 9 a.m. - 12 noon to weed and trim. Extra hands are always welcome. If you missed out on this work day, another one is planned toward the end of summer to tackle the overgrowth of ivy at the south end of the parking lot. Just ask our youth group how much fun it is to pull ivy. They have the technique down to a science.



All-Church Work Day pictures cont....



Grounds Team debuts **ADOPT-A-PLOT**

Jane Huneke

The Grounds Team is starting a new program called **ADOPT- A-PLOT**. Family and friends can "own" a small portion of the garden and tend it whenever the unwanted weeds pop up. This wouldn't take much time and the plots would be manageable. If you are interested in adopting a plot, please contact **Jane Huneke** jane.huneke1@gmail.com. Many hands make light work. Thanks for participating!

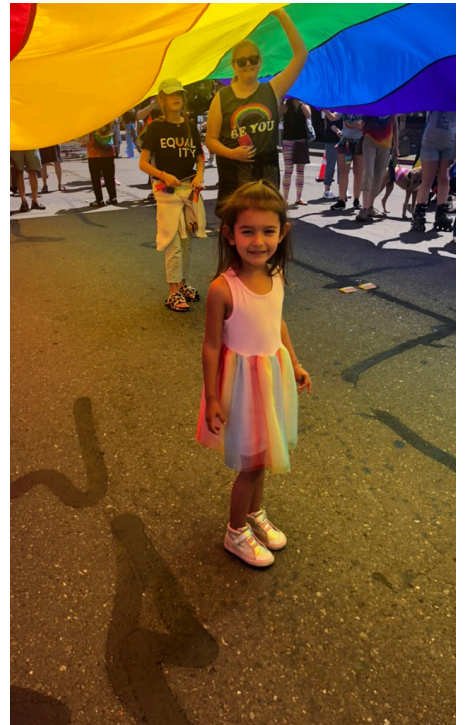
Memorial Service

You are invited to a memorial service as we remember, with thanksgiving, the lives of Bill and Mary McMillon:

July 29, 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary.



2023 PRIDE PARADE PICTURES



**It's Time to Sign Up for
All Church Camp Weekend
August 25-27, 2023
Westminster Woods**

Pastor Rachel Knuth



There is really nothing like breathing the air in a stand of redwoods on a misty morning with a cup of coffee in your hands. The only thing that could improve on that is to be in that place with a community of faithful people of all ages who experience God in the beauty of the earth. This is what All-Church Camp Weekend is all about.

I attended last year with my family. Because my spouse was out of town for work, my nice Dad came in his place. He had a great time, made new friends, and loved the beauty of the place combined with laughter (one of his favorite things is to laugh) and just enjoyed watching my children play. Although at first, he didn't know many people, he ended up having a great time, and left feeling like he'd had meaningful conversations with folks he hadn't met before. He also said the closing worship service meant a lot to him.

Everyone in our church is invited to spend the weekend August 25-27 together at beautiful Westminster Woods outside of Occidental. The theme of the Camp this year is "Living Water," and there will be opportunities to experience the life-giving presence of God through a nature hike, arts and crafts, shared meals, campfire songs, and a "Talent-No Talent" (TNT) show. The All-Church Camp Weekend Planning Team is **Kathy Bell, Sheina Curtis, Bobbie Johanson, Kathy Matthies**, and myself— you may hear from us as we look for volunteers to help lead specific activities throughout the weekend. :-)

Pricing varies depending on housing, and there is a Saturday-only option as well. Please follow the link below to see all the possibilities. Camperships are granted through the Apple Pies Fundraiser— see the other link in this newsletter to sign up to help with Apple Pies!

Click Here to sign up-----> [YES! I'm going to Camp!](#)

The deadline to sign up for Early Bird pricing is July 2, and the final deadline is August 6.

Trade your "screen time" for some "green time" with your church community. All are welcome!

SUMMER WORSHIP BEGINS AT 10 A.M.

July 2023 Events at Community Church

SUMMER WORSHIP BEGINS AT 10 A.M.

July 2	5th Sunday after Pentecost , Worship Service, 10:00 am, Sanctuary Kinship Time, 11:00 am, Bell Tower Courtyard Church Chat, 11:15 am, Fireside Room
July 3	Prayer Shawl Ministry, 10 am, Fireside Room
July 4	4th of July, Church Office Closed Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall
July 6	Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall Women's Fellowship Card Writing, 3 pm, Fellowship Hall
July 7	Second Saturday Lunch, 11:30 am, Fellowship Hall
July 9	6th Sunday after Pentecost , Worship Service, 10:00 am, Sanctuary Kinship Time, 11:00 am, Bell Tower Courtyard
July 11	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall Facility Committee, 10 am, Fireside Room 9-to-Dine Planning Committee, 11:15am, Pastor Rachel's office Men's Discussion Group, 6:30pm, Fireside Room
July 12	Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6
July 13	Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall
July 15	August Salt & Light Deadline
July 16	7th Sunday of Pentecost , Worship Service, Kinship Hour, 11 am, Bell Tower Courtyard
July 17	Prayer Shawl Ministry, 10 am, Fireside Room
July 18	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall Finance Committee, 3pm, Fireside Room
July 19	Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6 Leadership Council, 6:30 pm, Media Room
July 20	Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall
July 23	8th Sunday of Pentecost , Worship Service, Kinship Hour, 11 am, Bell Tower Courtyard
July 25	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall
July 26	Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6
July 27	Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall
July 29	Bill & Mary McMillon Memorial, 11 am, Sanctuary
July 30	9th Sunday of Pentecost , Worship Service, Kinship Hour, 11 am, Bell Tower Courtyard

Blessing of the Backpacks: August 13

If you're headed back to school this Fall, bring your backpack to worship on August 13, and you'll receive a special blessing. The Mission & Outreach Team will also be collecting back-to-school items for local children who need backpack supplies. Be on the lookout in the August newsletter for more details, including a donation list. For more information contact **Pastor Rachel**: pastorrachel@uccseb.org. In the meantime, Save the Date for a Blessing of the Backpacks on August 13 in worship.



PRIDE SUNDAY



Community Church of Sebastopol
1000 Gravenstein Hwy North
Sebastopol, CA 95472



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