

SALT & LIGHT

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF SEBASTOPOL

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

APRIL 2024 NEWSLETTER

Easter: The Other Side of the Cross

Rev. Dr. Benjamin J. Broadbent, Lead Minister

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Pastor Emeritus

Rev. Gene Nelson



In her March 10 sermon, Pastor Rachel described a two-sided cross in the chapel of the Holy Wisdom Monastery outside of Madison, Wisconsin. One side of the cross is a crucifix, a depiction of the suffering Jesus looking out across the prairie with compassion. The other side of the cross is empty, a symbol of the risen Christ whom violence and suffering and death could not hold.

Throughout Lent this year, we engaged in “Cross Talk,” thinking, praying, preaching, singing, feeling, and moving our way through meanings of the cross, the image at the center of our faith. It has been important to remember that the cross always gestures forward to the resurrection. For Christians, the cross is not merely an instrument of torture and terror. Mysteriously and wondrously, it is also the very means of forgiveness, reconciliation, and salvation.

March 31, Easter Sunday, begins a 50-day season of Easter – notably 10 more than the 40 days of Lent – where we find ourselves on the other side of the cross. Whereas during Lent we dared to look ahead to the empty tomb, during the Easter season we should not forget the cross. They are two sides of the same proverbial coin. No death without the promise of new life, no risen Christ who was not first crucified. As Jesus put it, *“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit”* (John 12:24).

For humans, it is very natural to want all the good stuff in life without having to go through the hard stuff. We want no-risk, high-benefit investments. We hope that soured relationship will work itself out on its own. We wonder why everyone can’t just get along. Pondering the story of Jesus, we wonder whether, and why, this gentle rabbi had to die the way he did.

Many forms of suffering are avoidable and should be avoided, but suffering is a part of life whether the season is Lent or Easter. Here, on the other side of the cross, we realize we’ve been given a gift. The gift is resurrection, a promise of a new life, not just then and there, but here and now, and not just to me and my kind, but to humankind and all creation. This gift of resurrection does not remove suffering but reframes it. Grief, loss, and death are no longer defects and defeats, but the very means by which we discover the extent of God’s compassion and love. Instead of avoiding suffering, we move through it, dying to the old self that must be left behind, and rising to the new self, our true self, which has been waiting all this time to be revealed.



April 2024 Worship

Worship Details:

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

Easter Season Worship Theme: "The Other Side of the Cross"

April 7 – 2nd Sunday of Easter

Today we celebrate Holy Communion, our Chancel Choir provides worship music, and **Rev. Benjamin Broadbent**, Lead Minister, preaches a sermon on [I John 1:1–2:2](#) entitled, "So Joy May Be Complete."

April 14 – 3rd Sunday of Easter

Today our worship music will be led with guitars. **Pastor Benjamin** preaches a sermon on [I John 3:1–7](#) entitled, "Knowing God Means Doing Right."

April 21 – 4th Sunday of Easter / Creation Care Sunday

We will dedicate an Earth Day art piece emphasizing the need to avoid single-use plastics. The Chancel Choir sings and **Pastor Benjamin** preaches a sermon on [I John 3:16–24](#) entitled "Putting Love into Action."

April 28 – 5th Sunday of Easter

On this Apple Blossom Parade weekend, our Handbell Ensemble and a special guest provide music. **Rev. Rachel Knuth**, Associate Minister, preaches a sermon on [I John 4:7–21](#) entitled "To Love as God Loves."

Coming in May... Ascension Day, Mothers' Day, Blessing of 5th Graders and their Bibles, Children's Choir, Day of Pentecost, Blessing of Faith Formation programs and participants, Blessing of Middle School SALT Trip participants



April 2024 Faith Formation Hour

11:15—12:15 in the Fireside Room

April 7

Church Chat — Hospitality Part I

Join **Pastor Benjamin, Terri Harper, Victoria Mayster**, and members of the Warm Welcome Team for a session on Hospitality as Spiritual Practice, the Ministry of Greeting & Ushering, and Best Practices to Welcome Newcomers.

5th—7th Grade Bible Class—See next page.

April 14

Church Chat – Hospitality Part II

Join this second session on the spirituality of hospitality as practiced by greeters and ushers. Followed by a lunch for folks willing to serve as Head Ushers this year.

GUEST SPEAKER Mary-Frances Walsh, Executive Director of NAMI Sonoma County (National Alliance on Mental Illness), hosted by **Garth Watson** in the Chapel.

5th—7th Grade Bible Class

April 21

Church Chat—Marketing the Church?

Linda Basso, a marketing professional and business coach, joined our congregation last year. She will be leading a session on what it could look like to “market” – make our church more visible – to the wider community, or, in Jesus’ words: “Let your light shine.”

INTERGEN EARTH DAY ART with **Kathy Matthies** in Fellowship Hall. People of all ages welcome to make beautiful art from upcycled water bottle caps!

5th—7th Grade Bible Class

April 28

GUEST SPEAKER Hayley Bly, Boys & Girls Clubs of Sonoma-Marin

Hayley Bly speaks about the work of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Sonoma-Marin, hosted in the Sanctuary by **Gary Bachelor**.

5th—7th Grade Bible Class



INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE for 5th - 7th GRADERS

11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m., Room 6
April 7, 14, 21, 28, May 5, 12

Pastor Rachel



5TH - 7TH GRADE
BIBLE CLASS
SUNDAYS, 11:15 - 12:15
ROOM 6

BIBLES PRESENTED IN WORSHIP ON MAY 12

Our church has had a tradition of gifting Bibles to upper-elementary age children. To prepare them to receive their Bibles, we offer a Bible class, so they know how to begin to read it. I'm so thrilled to be offering a class on the Bible for 5th-7th Graders, hurrah!

Because of the pandemic, we haven't been able to do this for a number of years. So this year we are catching up, and reaching up to 7th Grade to include all the youth who never received a Bible from the church. (Next year we'll be back to offering a Bible class for 4th & 5th Graders again— I see you, future 4th & 5th Graders!)

I will be leading a 6-week Bible class (April 7 - May 12) during the Faith Formation Hour on Sundays, 11:15 - 12:15 in Room 6. We have a lot of ground to cover! But we will have fun. We're going to learn some songs to help us remember the books of the Bible,

make our own little scrolls, do skits to act out Bible verses, and you'll get to quiz your parents at home to see what they know about the Bible, too. We'll even learn some fun words like "pseudepigrapha," yeah dude, pseudepigrapha, ask your parents about that one. I'm also going to bring in a Hebrew Bible and a Greek Bible, so the students can see what some ancient writings looked like.

The final class will be May 12 (to learn about the Book of Revelation), and the students will receive their Bibles from the church, along with a Blessing in worship that day.

If you happen to have a very unique (ex: passed down through generations, in another language) Bible, and you'd be willing to let the class view it, please let me know, by April 15. It would be nice for the students to be able to see different, well-loved Bibles.

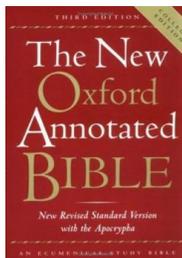
I'm looking forward to exploring the Bible with this class of 5th-7th Graders.

Wait... I feel like a beginner: Can I come to the Bible Class?

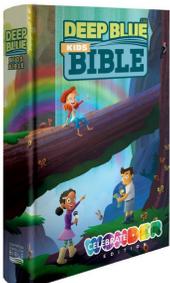
Pastor Rachel

How amazing to be curious about the Bible! I am cheering you on!

The 5th-7th Grade Bible Class is designed for our 5th-7th Graders. But, if you're an adult who would like to engage with the Bible, and don't exactly know how to get started, here are some DIY tips:

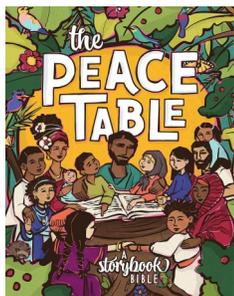


- Get a Bible! There are a zillion translations out there. I really like a New Revised Standard Version, because there's at least an attempt at inclusive language that is also true to the original Hebrew and Greek. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha is a great study Bible to get you started.*



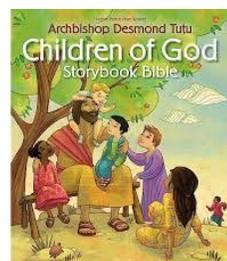
- There is also no reason adults can't read children's Bibles, which tend to have more pictures, maps, and explanations in the margins. I personally love children's Bibles. If this sounds good to you, I'd recommend *Deep Blue Kids Bible (published by the Episcopal Church), which is a complete version. And a couple of beautifully illustrated Bibles (with most of the "main" Bible stories): The Peace Table Storybook Bible, and The Children of God Storybook Bible by Desmond Tutu.*

- Set aside time for reading your Bible. You might light a candle and read a passage with your morning coffee.



- Start with one of the Gospels— right now in worship we are generally following the Gospel of Mark, which happens to be the shortest and likely earliest-written Gospel in our Bible. He has a more sparse writing style. Let me know what you think about how Mark tells the story of the birth of Jesus, I'd love to hear your thoughts.

- After reading a passage, notice any words or phrases that stick out to you. Let yourself wonder about its meaning. Write the word down on a little piece of paper and put it in your pocket for the day, so you can come back to it.



- Look at maps, look up things you aren't sure about, get curious and go down a scripture rabbit hole to learn more. If you use the internet to do research, be choosy about which web sites you get information from.

- Ask God to help you understand what the passage might mean to *you, in your life.*
- Read and discuss passages with your family and/or friends.

I wish you all the best on your choose-your-own Bible adventure, and would love to hear how it goes for you.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

April 1	Sara Margulis	April 27	Sharon Fennema
April 1	Jilian Gonzales	April 28	Chris Chang Weeks
April 1	Charlie Williams	April 28	Eleonora Wiser
April 5	Jeff Boal	April 29	Christine Ford
April 5	Becky Wessling	April 29	Brooke Bell
April 5	Quent Cole	April 30	Nancy Shimetz
April 6	Irma Bachelor	April 30	Isabel MacKillop
April 6	J. Althea	April 30	Sabina Malone
April 8	Jessica Steyn		
April 11	Tony Given		
April 12	Caitie Carciere		
April 14	Charlotte Mitchell		
April 15	Scott McGinnis		
April 17	Roger Wilson		
April 17	Emilia Poisson		
April 19	Lorinda Bradley		
April 21	Jessa Drury		
April 21	Russ Reimer		
April 21	Marshall Clark-Cupp		
April 24	Ethan Arnold-Peterson		
April 25	Dave Madsen		
April 25	Dennis Olson		
April 25	Terri Harper		
April 26	Kathy Matthies		
April 27	Deidra Warner		



BIRTH OF A NEW CHURCH PROGRAM—WOMEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP

Ann Shradar

Being new to this church community, I was looking forward to attending the Women's Retreat last October at Westminster Woods. The gathering turned out to be a wonderful experience. I was given a warm welcome and enjoyed connecting at meals and in the small group discussions. Several of us mentioned that we would like to have some way to keep the connections going without waiting a year for the next retreat. **Bobbie Johanson**, our Leadership Council member for the ministry of Care and Fellowship, agreed that this was a good idea. She picked up the ball and ran with it. This resulted in a new program, Women's Discussion Group, under the Women's Fellowship umbrella. The first meeting was in November 2023.

Women's Discussion Group began with an informal tea in Fellowship Hall. The discussion topic was: Stress, how we cope with it. In December, we met at Bobbie's home for a sharing of Christmas traditions, favorite ornaments, stories and of course, Christmas cookies. January's topic was New Year's Resolutions, goals, and star words. It was a cold rainy day and we decided to meet in the Fireside Room for cozier future gatherings. In the month of February, **Bobbie Johanson** led the group with fond memories of Valentine's Day. Grandchildren seemed to be the beneficiaries currently. The topic didn't take long., so we played the game *What's Yours Like?*, with much hilarity. March's topic centered around a discussion of healing—what it means and what we have experienced.

Our group has been varying in size, from 8-12 participants. It is never the same women as people come when it fits their schedules. Every month new folks join in. We are now meeting in the Fireside Room at 2 p.m., the second Saturday of each month, for an hour and a half but could go longer if the discussion were still engaging. No food or drinks are served but you are welcome to bring water (or goodies) as the spirit moves you. Bobbie starts us off with a quick check-in where each person shares their name and a little about how they are and what is going on with them. Then the topic is introduced and people may share as they wish. There is laughter and support and a growth in knowing each other. We close in prayer.



Barbara Whitson brought forth an idea at our first meeting that has spawned another new program, Warm Welcome. The idea is to help visitors to our church on Sunday morning feel at home and get introduced to our congregation in a meaningful way. **Jane Huneke, Bobbie Johanson, Pastor Rachel, Norma Watson, Stuart Mitchell** and I are working to keep the Visitor Gift Bags updated . We make sure every visitor receives a nametag and a giftbag. Please contact **Bobbie Johanson** if you want to help with this ministry.

Our Topic for April 13 is Warm Welcome—what does it feel like, look like? How have you been welcomed (or not) in different settings? We hope women will bring a friend to our gathering as an act of warm welcome. Potential future topics include Value of Friendship, Our Parents, Inclusiveness, Mental Health, Attitudes about Aging based on writings of our former pastor, **Lizann Bassham**, which will be led by her mother, Sandy Rosen. Do you have something in mind? Our group is fluid, casual, and most importantly, friendly. Mark your calendars on the second Saturday of each month and join us for deepening connections. This congregation has energy and is responsive to new ideas. I am glad to be involved.

APRIL 2024 Events at Community Church

- April 1 Prayer Shawl Ministry, 10 am, Fireside Room
- April 2 Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus
Men's Discussion Group, 6 pm, Media Room
- April 3 Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room
Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6
Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
- April 4 Meditation Group, Noon, Room 6
Women's Fellowship Card Writing, 2 pm, Fellowship Hall
Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
- April 7 **2nd Sunday of Easter**, Worship Service, 10:00 am, Sanctuary
Kinship Time, 11:00 am, Bell Tower Courtyard
Faith Formation Hour, 11:15 am, Various Locations
Nine-to-Dine Group Luncheon, 12:15 pm, Media Room
- April 9 Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus
Facility Committee, 11 am, Fireside Room
Personnel Committee 4 pm, Fireside Room
Joint Minister's PPRT 5 pm, Fireside Room
Outreach Committee, 7 pm, Fireside Room
- April 10 Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room
Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6
Food Pantry Meet, 1:30 pm, Fireside Room
Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
- April 11 Meditation Group, Noon, Room 6
Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
- April 13 Second Saturday Luncheon, Noon, Fellowship Hall
Women's Discussion Group, 2 pm, Fireside Room
- April 14 **3rd Sunday of Easter** Worship Service, 10:00 am, Sanctuary
Kinship Time, 11:00 am, Bell Tower Courtyard
Faith Formation Hour, 11:15 am, Various Locations
Head Usher Lunch, 12:15 pm, TBD
- April 15 Prayer Shawl Ministry, 10 am, Fireside Room
Salt & Light Newsletter Deadline for May

APRIL 2024 Events at Community Church cont.

- April 16 Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus
- April 17 Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room
Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6
Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
Leadership Council, 6:30 pm, Media Room
- April 18 Meditation Group, Noon, Room 6
Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
- April 21 **4th Sunday of Easter**, Worship Service, 10:00 am, Sanctuary
Kinship Time, 11:00 am, Bell Tower Courtyard
Faith Formation Hour, 11:15 am, Various Locations
Middle School Youth Group, 4 pm, Laguna de Santa Rosa Trail
High School Youth Group, 5 pm, Laguna de Santa Rosa Trail
- April 23 Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus
- April 24 Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room
Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6
Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
- April 25 Meditation Group, Noon, Room 6
Summer Worship Planning, 5 pm, Zoom
Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
- April 28 **5th Sunday of Easter**, Worship Service, 10:00 am, Sanctuary
Worship Service, 10:00 am, Sanctuary
Kinship Time, 11:00 am, Bell Tower Courtyard
Faith Formation Hour, 11:15 am, Various Locations
HS SALT Pre trip Meeting, 5 pm, Youth Lounge
- April 30 Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus



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