

SALT & LIGHT

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF SEBASTOPOL

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

FEBRUARY 2024 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

**Congregational
Administrator**
Joy Richards

Choral Director
Andy DelMonte

Keyboardist
J. Althea

Handbell Director
Karna Roa

Bookkeeper
Deanna Euritt

Custodian
Keith Brown

Pastor Emeritus
Rev. Gene Nelson



Cross Talk

Rev. Dr. Benjamin J. Broadbent, Lead Minister

Historian Tom Holland calls the cross, “The most recognizable symbol in the history of the world.” Certainly, crosses are everywhere, not only on the inside and outside of churches. I was at Kohl’s recently and it seemed like half of the jewelry on offer featured some sort of cross pendant. Tattoos of crosses express trusting faith, grief over staggering loss, and joy at being loved beyond measure.

Holland observes that we have largely lost the emotional punch of the original symbol. After all, the Roman Empire used crosses to execute criminals. More specifically, crucifixion was used to make an example of rebellious slaves. It was not only an excruciating way to die, but a humiliating one. Crosses were posted along roads to deter potential rebels from challenging the power of the state.

So, how did the cross become the enduring symbol not of the empire, but of the persecuted church? The earliest followers of Jesus were forced to grapple with a doubly bewildering set of experiences. On Friday their leader, the hoped-for Messiah, Son of God, and Savior, did not vanquish the powers of the world, but was put to death by them, and on a cross no less. Then on Sunday morning, his tomb was empty, but he was not gone. Starting with Mary Magdalene, Jesus appeared to his followers over the course of 50 days.

This Lent, our worship theme will be “Cross Talk.” Our prayer practices and hymns and sermons will wrestle with the cross as the central symbol of our faith. We will shadow box with various meanings of the cross, even when those meanings don’t agree, and even when we don’t agree with each other. The cross can mean:

CROSS TALK

- A sign of Christ’s atoning sacrifice
- A lampooning mirror of the world’s violence
- Solidarity with the poor throughout history
- The end of scapegoating
- The final self-emptying stage of the Incarnation
- Christ’s final victory over evil
- The necessary labor required to bring about the resurrection

A “Training” That’s Really a Retreat

Pastor Rachel Knuth

Imagine (re)learning Bible stories in a way that nourishes your own spiritual life, while supporting the spirituality of our church’s children. This is what Godly Play does – and we have a training coming up. I say “training” but it’s really more like a retreat!

A few years ago, some outside community friends of mine reserved Room 5 for an evening meeting. The room was set up for Godly Play, which means a large carpet space in the center of the room, and baskets on wooden shelves along the walls. Inside each basket is a story– for example, the Jonah story has blue wooden “waves,” a small boat, and a wooden whale that has an opening for Jonah to be swallowed. It



even has a fig tree! And, in the Godly Play classroom, one wall of shelves is all art supplies, with paints and crayons, paper, and special trays. My friends asked what all these materials were, and I said, Oh that’s Godly Play, which is how we tell Bible stories for “Sunday School.” One of them replied, “I wish that’s how my Sunday School had been, these pieces are beautiful.” I smiled, “Yes, they’re hand-crafted. The idea is to tell our faith stories in a playful yet reverent way, to support children’s spiritual lives.” What I didn’t say was, “And children who enter into the stories with their imaginations remember them later in life.” What I didn’t say was, “Yes, and you should hear the thoughtful and compassionate responses children have when they think deeply about the characters in a story.” What I didn’t say was, “And I love being a Storyteller in Godly Play because I take the story deeply into myself as well, and it nourishes my own spiritual practice.” I just smiled and invited them to come to worship that Sunday.

I’m pleased to share that we are re-igniting our Godly Play program, beginning Sunday, February 11. Children K-5th Grade will be invited, after the Children’s Message during worship, to walk over to Room 5 with the leaders, for a story and art response. Parents then sign out their children when the service ends.

To support the program, we have an expert Godly Play Trainer, Jill Gidlund, coming on Saturday, February 10, 9:00am – 1:00pm. Anyone who’s interested in Godly Play can come. Please [RSVP](#) or let me know by February 5: pastorrachel@uccseb.org. The training itself will be very spacious with a slower pace and time for reflection. I hope you’ll come and rediscover how the stories of our faith are meaningful both in your life and the lives of our church’s children.

FEBRUARY 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

February 4 – 5th Sunday after the Epiphany

Today we gather for Intergenerational Worship and celebrate Holy Communion. Participants in this year's 3 – 5th Grade Sacraments Class help lead worship and the Chancel Choir sings a special "Communion Meditation." **Rev. Rachel Knuth**, Associate Minister, preaches a sermon entitled, "From Font to Table."

February 11 – 6th Sunday after the Epiphany / Transfiguration Sunday

On this last Sunday of the season after the Epiphany, the Handbell Ensemble shares worship music and **Rev. Benjamin Broadbent**, Lead Minister, preaches a sermon on [Mark 9:2–9](#) entitled, "Tell No One."

Lenten Worship Theme: "Cross Talk"

During Lent, worshippers are asked to bring non-perishable food items into the sanctuary and to place them at the Communion table. We will celebrate Holy Communion weekly for the first 5 Sundays in Lent.

February 14 – Ash Wednesday

6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary – Contemplative Service with Imposition of Ashes.

February 18 – 1st Sunday in Lent

Our theme this year is "Cross Talk," and we will be exploring different theologies of the cross. Today we begin the 6-week journey through the season of Lent. The Chancel Choir sings "Jesus Christ the Apple Tree" and **Pastor Benjamin** preaches a sermon on [Mark 1:12–13](#) entitled, "It Begins with Temptation."



February 25 – 2nd Sunday in Lent

We continue in the season of Lent, a Youth Ensemble provides special music, and **Pastor Benjamin** preaches a sermon on [Mark 8:31–38](#) entitled, "Dire Predictions, Strange Paradoxes."

Coming in March... Lent continues, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunrise Service, Easter Sunday

Living Lent in Your Daily Life: A Smash(book)ing Idea

Pastor Rachel Knuth

To support your Lenten reflections, I propose: The Smash Book.

First, the Why:

We are hungry for reflection time, yet our world moves so fast. Lent is a time when we are (counter-culturally) invited to slow down and attend the lengthening of days with some intention. Lent is a season to think about God's story and how it lives in each of our life's stories. (And, how our life's stories live inside God's greater story). These are the stories of how people encounter suffering, and how God comes alongside us. Making a smash book can be a practice that supports just a small moment of reflection time each day— just for you, just in support of your spiritual growth as you listen for God in your life. Besides, confession and repentance, two of the themes of Lent, can be pretty intense to think about— taking time to reflect and be renewed throughout these 40 days and 40 nights can really help us process and integrate. Reflection helps us to see the overarching arc toward resurrection: that death and ruin do not get the final answer, but that Jesus leads us into new life.



And the What:

You take an empty spiral-bound notebook or whatever you have at home, and you write, paste memorabilia, capture ideas, or draw in it, using whatever scraps and things you have around. There doesn't have to be any order or precision. That's why it's called a smash book. You just smash all kinds of things in a book.

Of course, the How:

Collect simple items from your daily living throughout your 40 days of Lent, which symbolize how you relate to God's story of life, death, and resurrection. And put them in your smash book. Maybe you paste a bulletin cover, or you write in sharpie a word you heard that might be God's word in your life. Maybe you print a photo of someone you care about, confessing your intention to connect with them more. Maybe you cut out newspaper clippings of people who tell of their experience of repentance and resurrection. The idea is that you collect little glimpses of God's story as it's reflected in your daily life, and you keep it in your smash book. You might even lay your book out in your household where everyone contributes to the smash book each day.

Then, on the Saturday before Easter, when we quiet ourselves in preparation for resurrection, you can spend some time looking through all the ways you've glimpsed God and confessed and been grateful for new life. And pray thanks for the times when God's love overcomes all the world's forces of death.

And that's really it— an invitation to intentionally be present to your spiritual life during Lent, by pasting serendipitous messages and signs into a notebook: Your Lenten Smash Book. I'd love to hear how it goes!

Our 40-day journey of Lent is, in some sense, a journey with Jesus to the cross. Indeed, along the way, he bids us, “take up your cross and follow me.” With care for each other, and in service of the world God loves, let us dare to wonder what he meant and to lean into what we discover.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

February 3—Christian Roa

February 4—Terry Beck

February 4—Nathan Knuth

February 5—Laura Pearsall

February 9—Chris Warner

February 9—Amy Scribner

February 14—Jennifer Halleck

February 14—Sandy Hendrickson

February 15—Brian Wetzel

February 15—Martha Kautz

February 15—Joan Carter

February 16—Parker Warner

February 16—Ruth Grant

February 16—Laura Simpson

February 18—Sonja Larssen

February 19—John Henel

February 20—Nico Bagley

February 22—Bethany Nelson

February 22—Gary Weeks

February 22—Theresa Weigel

February 23—Jean Boal

February 23—Judy Davison

February 26—Elliot Sanderson

February 28—Erika DelMonte



FEBRUARY 2024 Events at Community Church

February 1	Women's Fellowship Card Writing, 3 pm, Fellowship Hall
February 4	5th Sunday after Epiphany , 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, Youth Lounge High School Youth Group, 5 pm, Youth Lounge
February 5	Prayer Shawl Ministry, 10 am, Fireside Room
February 6	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall Men's Discussion Group, 5:15 pm, Media Room
February 7	Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6 Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
February 8	Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
February 10	Godly Play Training, 9 am, Room 5 Second Saturday Luncheon, Noon, Fellowship Hall Women's Discussion Group, 2 pm, Fellowship Hall HS Youth Group Burrito Making, 4 pm, Memorial Hall Kitchen
February 11	6th Sunday after Epiphany , Worship Service, 10:00 am, Sanctuary Kinship Time, 11:00 am, Bell Tower Courtyard Faith Formation Hour, 11:15 am, Various Locations
February 13	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall Facility Committee, 11 am, Fireside Room Personnel Committee 4 pm, Fireside Room Lead Minister PPRT 5 pm, Fireside Room Outreach Committee, 7 pm, Fireside Room
February 14	Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6 Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary Ash Wednesday Service, 6:30 pm, Sanctuary
February 15	Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room Salt & Light Newsletter Deadline for month of March
February 18	1st Sunday in Lent , Worship Service, 10:00 am, Sanctuary Kinship Time, 11:00 am, Bell Tower Courtyard Faith Formation Hour, 11:15 am, Various Locations MS & HS Youth Group, 5 pm, Youth Lounge

FEBRUARY 2024 Events at Community Church cont.

February 19	Prayer Shawl Ministry, 10 am, Fireside Room
February 20	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall
February 21	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
February 22	Associate Minister's PPRT, 4 pm, Fireside Room Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
February 25	2nd Sunday in Lent , 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
February 27	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall Warm Welcome Team, 11:30 am, Fireside Room
February 28	Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6 Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
February 29	Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room

We Did It!!!

To: Community Church of Sebastopol
Stone Creek Zen Center
Sequoia School
First Congregational Church Santa Rosa



Thank you one and all for participating in the Holiday Gift Bags for the people experiencing Homelessness who are residents of Sam Jones Hall. It is a huge undertaking to put together 175 bags, and it took all of us working together to do it!

When we delivered the bags, the shelter supervisor's first question was, "Will you do it again next year?" She went on to say that we are the only ones who bring anything to the residents for Christmas. They look forward to it and are very appreciative.

Thank you so much for helping with this huge project! Everyone's contribution helped make it possible!

The Outreach Committee Community
Church of Sebastopol

Community Church of Sebastopol
1000 Gravenstein Highway N
Sebastopol, CA 95472



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