SALT & LIGHT COMMUNITY CHURCH OF SEBASTOPOL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST MARCH 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



The Kaleidoscope

Rev. Dr. Benjamin J. Broadbent, Lead Minister

In his book, "The Wood Between the Worlds," Brian Zahnd claims that the cross must be the center of the Christian understanding of the world. The crucifixion of Jesus is not just an historical event that happened almost 2,000 years ago. Jesus'

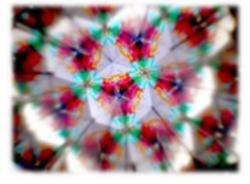
death was also a revelatory event. In contrast to images of God in antiquity as violent warriorkings, the image of Jesus hanging on a cross discloses God as non-violent, compassionate, and willing to experience the suffering of the world, rather than to mete it out.



Zahnd describes the cross as containing a "kaleidoscope" of meanings which change in color and emphasis depending on how one is viewing it. His brief list of interpretations of the cross includes:

- The pinnacle of divine self-disclosure *and* the eternal moment of forgiveness
- Divine solidarity with human suffering *and* the enduring model of discipleship
- Supreme demonstration of divine love and the beauty that saves the world
- Overthrow of "the satan" and the shaming of the principalities and powers
- The unmasking of mob violence and the condemnation of state violence
- The exposé of political power and the abolition of war
- The sacrifice to end sacrificing and the healing center of the cosmos
- The re-founding of the world around an axis of love *and* the death by which death is conquered
- The tree of life recovered and revealed

This Lent, we have been focusing our worship on "Cross Talk." Our hymns and prayers and sermons have attempted to peer through the kaleidoscope while turning it slowly and noticing what new shapes emerge. Our faith formation programs, and devotional resources have offered tools to all willing interpreters with the hope of



providing fresh glimpses of what Jürgen Moltmann calls "the crucified God."

But we dare not meditate too deeply upon the crucifixion without also marveling at the resurrection. Without the empty tomb on Sunday morning, all "cross talk" is morbid and defeatist. On Easter, the women are the first to receive the good news that "he is not here" and "he is going ahead of you." From the mouths of those women, we learn that death and violence have not prevailed. New life prevails. A new humanity is born. "Now go and tell the others." (Mark 16:6–7)

March 2024 Worship

Worship Details:

We worship in the sanctuary on Sundays at <u>10:00 a.m.</u> Services live streamed on our church's <u>YouTube channel</u> & <u>Facebook page</u> Weekly bulletin and announcements available at <u>www.uccseb.org</u>

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.

March 3 – 3rd Sunday in Lent

Today our Chancel Choir provides worship music and Rev. Benjamin Broadbent, Lead Minister, preaches a sermon on <u>I Corinthians 1:18–25</u> entitled, "Cross Talk: Foolish Power."

March 10 – 4th Sunday in Lent

Today we receive the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering, music is provided by Hosanna Bauer and Michael Ost, and Rev. Rachel Knuth, Associate Minister, preaches a sermon on <u>Ephesians 2:1–10</u> entitled, "Cross Talk: Victory Over Death."

March 17 – 5th Sunday in Lent

Once again we receive the OGHS special offering, the Handbell Ensemble provides worship music, and Pastor Benjamin preaches a sermon on <u>Hebrews 5:5–10</u> entitled, "Not Punishment, but Solidarity."

March 24 – 6th Sunday in Lent: Palm Sunday

We begin worship with a lively procession of palms and choir and children. Pastor Benjamin preaches a sermon on Philippians 2:5–11 entitled, "Cross Talk: A Humble Arrival."

March 28 – Maundy Thursday @ 6:30 p.m.

On this day commemorating Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples, we gather in the sanctuary for an evening Tenebrae Service with Holy Communion and Washing of Feet.

March 29 – Good Friday, 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.

On this day commemorating Jesus' crucifixion, the pastors will host a 3-hour vigil in the Chapel that will include readings of scripture, meditative music, and labyrinth walking. Participants are welcome to come and go at any time.

March 31 – Day of Resurrection

6:30 a.m. – Interactive Easter Sunrise Service for all ages in the Fountain Courtyard 10:00 a.m. – Easter Sunday worship in the sanctuary with Handbell Ensemble and Chancel Choir

Coming in April... Sundays in the season of Easter, Creation Care Sunday, practicing hospitality

Lent: A Season to Cultivate Grief Resources with (and for) Children

Pastor Rachel

How can families talk about the death of Jesus? And, what resources are out there for families, when a loved one dies?

Lent is a season when the church acknowledges liturgically that death is part of life. It can be an opportunity for parents and grandparents to bring conversations about death and dying into family life, to normalize the topic at a time when a loved one's death may not be imminent. For each of us, we have the opportunity to think about what it means to be "present and accounted for" when a family member is ill or dying. The cyclical holy seasons in the church like Lent and All Saints Day, give us little touchpoints throughout the year to do just that.

Here are some ideas to talk with children about the death of Jesus:

- Lent is a great time to attend Godly Play and worship. Godly Play is very age-appropriate in its approach, with open-ended questions intended for the child to wonder for themselves about the mystery of Easter.
- Deepen your family's Holy Week practices. Bring your children to the Maundy Thursday service, which includes a lot of sensory elements.
- Walk through a cemetery and share with your child what you believe about death and resurrection.

Good picture-books about Lent & Holy Week:

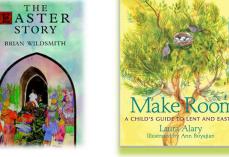
- Make Room by Laura Alary
- The Easter Story by Brian Wildsmith
- The Mystic Bible by Alexandra Sangster

Here are some good children's books on death and dying:

- Dragonflies & Waterbugs
- Badger's Parting Gifts
- The Goodbye Book (younger children)
- Kindred Souls (older elementary)
- Remembering Your Grandparent workbook
- When Dinosaurs Die
- Death is Stupid
- The Invisible String
- The Heart and the Bottle
- My Father's Arms Are a Boat

Your Pastors can be a source of spiritual support to you and your family in a time of grief. And, our local Memorial Hospice center offers free grief services to the community that many have found useful. May the Holy One bless you this Lenten season, when we remember that we have come from dust, and to dust we shall return.









What are our Youth Groups up to?

Pastor Rachel

Our Middle & High School Youth are exploring the themes of "feeding" and "building" this spring. They've been busy building community and a sense of belonging through fun activities... like a "Nailed It"-style bake-off, a cooking competition (thank you, guest judges: **Brian Wetzel** and **Carter Bell**), sushi & mochi making in the dark when the power went out, and a chill games night with Spicy Uno, and a game where several youth were diagnosed with Perpetual Yoga Disease. In February, the High Schoolers who are going on the SALT Trip to Tijuana put on a burrito fundraiser, spearheaded by **Kristen DelMonte** with **Sheina Curtis** helping in the kitchen. Huge thanks to the parents who pitched in, and to all who participated, we raised \$2266 that day!

Power Outage = No Prob!





We Made Sushi!



And There Were Burritos...





Rebuilding Together Sebastopol

Andrea Card

Have you been looking for an opportunity to give back to our local community? Have you wondered what the Outreach Committee spends their time doing? Do you want to participate in a One-Day Mini SALT (<u>Service And Learning Together</u>) Trip? Join the Outreach Committee in a day of service with our friends at Rebuilding Together Sebastopol! Save the date for Saturday, April 20th. "Neighbors helping neighbors, like the barn-raising of old, is the American spirit in action.

Rebuilding Together is the leading national volunteer organization that in partnership with communities was born of that spirit as people came together to help their neighbors in need repair their homes." This organization has a vision of providing safe homes and communities for everyone. The services provided change from year to year, so we are still awaiting more information. We hope to have an idea as to the scope of work prior to the date of service. Our own Glenda Elvy was a recipient of work by Rebuilding Together when they installed an electric chairlift for the stairs at her home – making her home accessible and safe.

Members of the Outreach Committee, and other dedicated members of our wonderful church, have volunteered over the years with this organization and have found the work very satisfying. Last year the project was working at a woman's home in her yard. She was an elderly woman who had become disabled and needed a walker, so was unable to do any yard work. She adores her yard and was proud of the plants that grew in it, but the weeds had taken over. With Rebuilding Together, a group of volunteers was able to prune, weed, and clear pathways. The homeowner was there and participated with the group as much as she could by sharing where important plants were hiding and having lunch with the group. Not only was the group able to provide a service but they were also able to form a connection. Previous volunteer groups have worked at the Senior Center - cleaning and landscaping, while others worked at individual homes painting, repairing decks, roofing, and flooring.

On April 20, the day will start at Ives Park for breakfast and assignments of duties along with your group leader for the day. You will receive a T-shirt from Rebuilding Together in the morning upon check-in. Lunches are provided and brought to your worksite, while at times there is even the opportunity to switch jobs throughout the day to get a different working experience as well. Not always are jobs completed in one day of service but Rebuilding Together will finish the project for the homeowner.

Families and individuals are encouraged to participate (children under 14 just need a parent to volunteer with them). More details to come, along with sign-ups!

Contact **Peggy Porter** at <u>pporter501@gmail.com</u> or (707) 291-6353 for more information or consult the <u>Rebuilding Together Sebastopol</u> website to learn more about this great organization and to watch the short television special done on Rebuilding Together Sebastopol!



Inspiring Experiences of Godly Play

Terri Harper & Janice Eurgubian

Terri Harper

I am a member of the Godly Play Team. When I sit in our community circle with a group of K-5th graders and wonder to-



gether about Bible stories, sharing ideas about how we might interact with them, and what they might be saying to us as individuals or as a community, my heart is overwhelmed with gratitude for being included in the child's perspective.

On February 10th, I was privileged to join a group of potential Godly Play volunteers, Pastor Rachel, and our facilitator Jill, to participate in a genuine Godly Play lesson about creation. To experience the gentle presentation using beautiful creation boards was calming, thought provoking, and allowed me to experience others in a safe and genuine environment. We were encouraged to share as little or as much as was comfortable. Afterwards, as I reflected on the experience, I felt so blessed to be a part of this program that would facilitate a similar experience for our children.

Jill presented a lesson around the child's spiritual development, and reiterated the importance of children having a safe sanctuary where they are free to explore thoughts and ideas about the world around them. This exploration is encouraged without judgment but with love, acceptance, and kindness.

As I prepare to lead a lesson I am strengthened in my faith while seeking the path to help guide each child through their own spiritual journey. My prayer for each child that passes through our doors is that they will be given the opportunity to form their faith in the safety of a community that accepts their wondering and ideas about God our Creator, Jesus our Brother, and the Holy Spirit within us.

Janice Eurgubian

When Pastor Rachel invited me to attend the Godly Play workshop, I wasn't sure what to expect. Memories of my own childhood religious education involved an hour of Saturday morning drudgery reading and answering questions from a text better written for adults. This is what Godly Play is NOT.

Rather, I learned that Godly Play is place of discovery. Held in what becomes a child's sanctuary, it is where children through story, play and wondering are guided by two adults (door person and story teller) in the exploration of God's presence in their lives.

Children are greeted at the door (threshold) and prepared to enter into the circle where they share; ask for God's presence; and answer wondering questions about a story that is presented from memory and with objects. Children are then invited to play, during which time adults do not interfere unless they are asked to help. Children have an opportunity to feel self-sufficient and are treated seriously and with deep respect.



Godly Play is built on the principles that religious language is best passed along using a multi-sensory process; and children find greater pleasure and are more attuned to their work when given choices.

Jill Gidlund, who provided the training, which is built on the pioneering work of **Jerome Berryman**, modeled a type of delivery I would hope to emulate and is sure to fascinate and encourage reflection from nearly any child or adult I could imagine.

Holy Envy Book Study

Judy Davison

During December and January Faith Formation Hour, we had a book study of *Holy Envy* by Barbara Brown Taylor. She was an Episcopal Priest who taught World Religions at a small college in Georgia. In this book, she shared the ways her faith has been enriched by learning about the traditions of other faiths. Buddhism is one of the faiths she shared.

Our group was interested in visiting our local Buddhist Temple for a service. They have In-person services the first Sunday of the month at 2:00 p.m. On February 4, seventeen Community Church folks joined them for their monthly Shotsuki Hoyo Memorial Service. We were warmly welcomed and included in the service and their fellowship time that followed.

Our connection with their congregation goes back to World War II. While their congregation was interned by our government, their temple was vandalized and set on fire. The youth group from the Community Church guarded the temple on Friday and Saturday nights to protect it. Our two congregations have had a special bond since that time.

It is our hope that we can continue to foster this connection. We encourage you to visit one of their services and we want to let you know about this upcoming fundraiser:

Chow Mein Lunch!

Sunday, March 10, 2024—11:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. \$15 per plate

> <u>Tickets at the Door Only</u> Indoor Seating and Take-out Available

In the Enmanji Temple's Memorial Hall 1200 Gravenstein Hwy, So. Sebastopol, CA 95472 707-823-2252



NORTH BAY ORGANIZING PROJECT

Judy Davison

When I was asked last year to be the church representative for <u>North Bay Organizing Project</u> (NBOP), I had no idea how much I would learn about this remarkable organization and myself. I was raised in a church with a strong sense of community. Helping and giving to others is a huge part of my faith. I grew up supporting civil rights, nonviolence, social and racial justice.

NBOP reflects many of my personal values and those of our own church. We are one of 20 faith, labor, student, and nonprofit coalitions that make up NBOP in Sonoma County. We fight against unjust policies that continue to victimize our marginalized members of this community. We are a very diverse, grassroots, multi-issue organization, which focuses on uniting people to gain leadership skills and social power.

NBOP leaderships celebrate the unique backgrounds and share their lived experiences, that honors who you are becoming. The energy and wisdom of these young leaders is contagious.

So often we feel helpless, that we can't make a difference, but showing up as you are is what we need in this group. This is my invitation to you to put your faith into ACTION!!! You can help by:

- Joining the church core team.
- Help with phone calls or mailers.
- Signing up to participate in local events and actions.

There are tons of ways you can contribute your gifts and talents. Please contact me for more information. Judy Davison at (707)486-7755 or <u>Jdavison95472@yahoo.com</u>.



A New Home for the CAZ Vesper Altar

Kathy Bell

Some of you may have noticed a new (old) addition to our campus near the entryway to the sanctuary. The old Altar from Vesper Point at Camp Cazadero was salvaged during the sale of the property and recently installed here. Many of us have years of memories worshipping at Vesper Point with this Altar that was built and installed in 1965. The symbols on top looks to be the male and female symbols with a peace sign in the middle, as if to say – PEACE to ALL who enter here! We also have the cross from Caz and hope to install that this spring. It's nice to have a little piece of Caz on our campus to remind us of the many lives that were touched and changed at Camp Cazadero. Big thanks to **Steph Fraine**, the **Bell family** and **Brian Wetzel** for making this happen.







Extravagant Welcome Jane Huneke

When I joined the church in 2001 I was newly divorced, new to the area and didn't know a soul. I would sit in the back of the sanctuary and go immediately to my car after worship. Trying to make conversation during coffee hour was a lonely time. I felt like the new kid in school who eats lunch by herself because everyone else is with friends. I remember my high school principal telling us as freshmen that to get the most out of our high school experience we needed to become involved in the activities of the school. Over the years I joined a women's group and the adult mission trips. Friendships developed and I began to feel more at home at church.

We want to extend an **Extravagant Welcome** to visitors and new members. How do we do that? I'm suggesting that we volunteer to adopt a new member for a month after they join. That might include:

- Inviting them to sit with you during worship
- Introduce them to folks during Kinship time
- Tell them about the different committees and activities and encourage them to join
- Encourage them to sign up for Nine to Dine, the Women's Discussion Group, the Men's Group, choir or the handbell choir
- Have tea together and get to know each other

It's only a one month commitment and it will help break down barriers for them to become fully participating members of the congregation. Building connections with each other is how we build friendships. If you're interested, contact me, **Jane Huneke** at 707-889-6852 or <u>jane.huneke1@gmail.com</u>.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

Steve Beck

2024 marks the 75th year of the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering (OGHS) supported by our denomination. This Special Offering allows the United Church of Christ to respond to both natural and humancaused emergencies where quick action is necessary to help people whose lives have been abruptly upset. Working with both domestic and international partners, our donations to OGHS provide timely responses to provide food, water, shelter, and health care, as well as resettlement for displaced persons.

At Community Church will are asking for your donations in worship on Sunday, March 10, and Sunday, March 17. As you are determining what you can contribute, recall the ways many Sonoma County residents had their lives upturned when wildfires destroyed their homes, and also reflecting on what that would mean to you if you had been one who lost your home when whole neighborhoods were destroyed.

95% of each dollar given to OGHS goes to meeting human needs. The remaining 5% is used for promotional materials. As climate change impact intensifies and/or political instability drives thousands to seek safety and opportunities for their children, the need to support this offering is becoming increasingly important. Any amount you can contribute will help those who find their lives turned upside down through no fault of their own.

		MARCH BIRTHDAYS		
March 1	Maya Malone	March 17	Lori Babcock	

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March 1	Lily Pelton	March 18	Karyl Clendenen-Drennon
March 1	Ann Shradar	March 19	Bree Cassells
March 2	Linda Basso	March 19	Mary Culberson
March 3	Connie Blackstone		•
March 3	Nancy Degenkolb	March 20	Joyce Cox
March 3	C.J. Hudlow	March 20	Christine Vincent
March 4	Pam Kruse	March 21	Eliana Curtis
March 5	Hope Madden	March 22	Carter Bell
March 5	Susan Olson	March 22	Taylor Davison
March 5	Denelle Tognozzi	March 23	Esme Arendt
March 6	Ross Galleto		
March 6	Julie Davis	March 23	Bridget Hole
March 10	Leslie Wood	March 26	Josh Bradley
March 11	Joella Falkingham	March 26	Elliot Butterfield
March 11	Elena Larssen	March 26	Erin Butterfield
March 11	Curt Nichols	March 26	Josephine Nirmala
March 12	Avy Card		-
March 12	Owen Thomas	March 26	Olivia Stoll
March 12	Reece Thomas	March 28	Rhoda Bloom
March 13	Maria Culberson	March 30	Emmett Burton-Young
March 14	Michelle Bruggemann	March 30	Lois Michelsen
March 15	Luis Quezada	March 30	Margarette Murakami
March 16	Cecelia MacKillop		-
March 16	Sara Poisson	March 31	Zoe Dillard

MARCH 2024 Events at Community Church

March 1	Safe Church Policy Training, 11 am, Room 6
March 3	3rd 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
	Middle School Youth Group, 4 pm, Laguna de Santa Rosa Trail
	High School Youth Group, 5 pm, Laguna de Santa Rosa Trail
March 4	Prayer Shawl Ministry, 10 am, Fireside Room
March 5	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus
	Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall
	Men's Discussion Group, 6 pm, Media Room
March 6	Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room
	Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6
	Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
March 7	Meditation Group, Noon, Room 6
	Women's Fellowship Card Writing, 2 pm, Fellowship Hall
	Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
March 9	Leadership Council Orientation Retreat, 8 am, Media Room
	Second Saturday Luncheon, Noon, Fellowship Hall
	Women's Discussion Group, 2 pm, Fellowship Hall
March 10	4th 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
March 12	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
March 13	Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room
	Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6
	Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
March 14	Meditation Group, Noon, Room 6
	Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
March 15	Salt & Light Newsletter Deadline for month of April

MARCH 2024 Events at Community Church cont.

March 17	5th 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
March 18	Prayer Shawl Ministry, 10 am, Fireside Room
March 19	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus
	Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall
March 20	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
March 21	Meditation Group, Noon, Room 6
	Associate Minister PPRT, 4 pm, Fireside Room
	Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
March 24	Palm Sunday, 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
March 26	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus
March 27	Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room
	Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6
	Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
March 28	Meditation Group, Noon, Room 6
	Maundy Thursday Service, 6:30 pm , Sanctuary
	Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
March 29	Good Friday Prayer Vigil, Noon, Chapel
March 31	Easter Sunday
	Easter Sunrise Service, 6:30 am, Fountain Courtyard
	Easter, Worship Service, 10:00 am, Sanctuary
	Kinship Time, 11:00 am, Bell Tower Courtyard

How to write an article for the *Salt & Light Newsletter*

The best way to win the hearts of others is by sharing our own story.

Some questions to guide your writing process:

- 1. What excites you about the ministry/project you're working on/event you're planning? What inspires you? What motivates you?
- 2. How does the project or subject you're writing about, reflect your personal values— as a follower of Jesus, as a child/parent/neighbor, as a member of our church?
- 3. How do your spiritual beliefs inform your hopes and dreams for a more just, equitable, loving community?
- 4. Who is most benefited by this ministry/project/event, and why?
- 5. How have you changed since being involved in this ministry/project/event?
- 6. What do you want others to know about this ministry/project/event?

Some details to remember:

- Articles should be 300-500 words
- Email your submission to <u>office@uccseb.org</u>
- Submissions are due by the 15th of every month
- Including photos or graphics will catch people's attention!

For example...



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