

SALT & LIGHT

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF SEBASTOPOL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

JUNE 2020 NEWSLETTER

**The Community Church of
Sebastopol
United Church of Christ**

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Lead Minister

Rev. Dr. Benjamin J. Broadbent

Associate Minister of Faith Formation

Rev. Lacey Hunter

Associate Minister of Congregational Care

Rev. Rachel Knuth

Minister of Music

Rev. Brian Plaugher

Pastor Emeritus

Rev. Gene Nelson

Handbell Ensemble Director

Karna Roa

Keyboardist

J. Althea

Congregational Administrator

Chris Chang Weeks

Bookkeeper

Julie Reimer

Custodian

Maria Mojica



Stewardship of Incarnation

By Rev. Dr. Benjamin J. Broadbent, Lead Minister

In February, Pastor Rachel mentioned a book to me called "Beyond the Offering Plate: A Holistic Approach to Stewardship" with the suggestion that maybe it could guide our summer worship services. I ordered a copy. Then the pandemic hit. While sheltered at home, I've had a lot more concentrated reading time, for which I am grateful because my stack of "want to read" books was formidable.

When I finally made it to "Beyond the Offering Plate," I discovered the premise of the book to be that Stewardship is a powerful theological frame that can help us think about a wide range of human activities and values. I was particularly struck by chapter 5, written by Margaret Aymer, which begins:

"I was originally to write about 'the stewardship of privilege,' However, I have come to reject the suggestion that privilege be stewarded. Instead, I propose a different tack. I believe that Christian faith calls us to the stewardship of incarnation. Such stewardship serves as an ethical critique of (un)earned privilege."

"Stewardship of Incarnation" is our theme for worship this summer. At a recent worship planning meeting via Zoom, participants brainstormed meanings of stewardship. The words we came up with included: care, management, cherishing, preserving, safekeeping, and safeguarding. In this time of Covid-19, these words resonated with our desire to preserve what we have grown to love while protecting those we cherish. If we had had the time, we would have brainstormed (is "heartstorming" a thing?) meanings of incarnation. I'll suggest a few: embodiment, enfleshment, real people in actual situations, vulnerable bodies, diversity in particularity.

Dr. Aymer, citing the story of Pentecost in Acts 2, says that "incarnational variety should be understood as a gift of God to be celebrated." For our church this summer, the season after Pentecost, "Stewardship of Incarnation" might mean noticing and honoring the variety of forms of embodiment that come as God's gift to individuals, to communities, and to the world. Aymer says the purpose of this work is "to live more fully as ourselves, created in the diverse and multivalent image of the God who chose to become fully, particularly, wonderfully incarnate."

Other themes we will cover this summer include: Stewardship of Technology, Stewardship of the End of Life, Stewardship of Time, and Stewardship of Work. If you would like to read "Beyond the Offering Plate," you can order it here.

(<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B074F3V7HG/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?encoding=UTF8&btkr=1>)

Summer 2020 Worship

During the month of June we expect to continue worshiping online with videos posted every Sunday morning. See www.uccseb.org and weekly All-Church emails for links to our church's YouTube channel and Zoom gatherings.

This summer, our theme is "Stewardship of Incarnation."

- ❖ Stewardship can mean many things: safeguarding, cherishing, conserving, protecting, including. What does it mean to you?
- ❖ Incarnation can mean many things: embodiment, showing up, solidarity, birth, accompanying. What does it mean to you?
- ❖ Drawing on *Beyond the Offering Plate: A Wholistic Approach to Stewardship*, we will be using the lens of "Stewardship" to explore what is precious and important to us as followers of Jesus Christ.

June 7 – Trinity Sunday – Matthew 28: 16 – 20 & 2 Corinthians 13: 11 - 13

Our theme for today is "Stewardship of Bodies." How does God as Trinity live in our bodies and not just as an idea? We celebrate Holy Communion and Pastor Benjamin preaches a sermon entitled "Kissing without Touching."

June 14 – 2nd Sunday after Pentecost – Romans 5: 1- 8

Today we offer a blessing to our high school and college graduates and focus on the theme of "Stewardship of the Mind." Pastor Benjamin preaches a sermon entitled "From Suffering to Hope."

June 21 – 3rd Sunday after Pentecost / Fathers' Day

Matthew 10: 24 – 39

Today the theme is "Stewardship of Incarnation" and Pastor Lacey, Associate Minister of Faith Formation preaches a sermon entitled "Precious in God's Sight."

June 28 – 4th Sunday after Pentecost / Pride Sunday

Matthew 10: 40 – 42

Today our theme is "Stewardship of Community" and we celebrate our identity as an Open & Affirming congregation in the United Church of Christ. We receive new members into our fellowship and Pastor Benjamin preaches a sermon entitled "Filled with Pride."



Church Goin' Mule by Marshall Blevins

Coming in July... discerning whether to return to public worship in some form, Independence/Interdependence Day, Stewardship of Time, Money, Technology, and End of Life

Watch for the Tuesday check-in email for updates on how the church is preparing for a safe return. We want to assure our members that we will NOT be re-opening until it is safe to do so. Please continue to practice social distancing, washing hands and checking on those most vulnerable.

Opportunities Over Obstacles

By Michael Ott, Moderator

The Leadership Council's regular meeting was held on May 20 via Zoom video. The Council continues to work through these challenging times with the goal of finding opportunities over obstacles to come together and strengthen our faith. This desire is expressed in Galatians 6:10: "so then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."

During this COVID-19 crisis, doesn't it feel like we aren't sure what we are seeing, feeling or hearing is real? But we can be sure that God will hold us through our questioning. Pastor Lacey phrased it as "new ways to see the Divine." There are new, different and enhanced ways that we can connect as a congregation to share and sustain God's presence – pairing up on regular phone calls for stay-in-touch conversations, relying on our kindred groups to "take care of their own", listening to each other's longings and capturing those that feel left out due to a technology gap that separates them from our ministry programs.

Now is the time to increase our leadership capacity in our faith formation, outreach, worship and arts and care and fellowship ministries. We can take advantage of this time to build strong lay leadership that is grounded and engaged and ready for deeper work.

As we work towards a safe return to the physical church, we need to look to our church community and wider community values for guidance. Some of these values include honoring safety, centering the vulnerable, maintaining transparency and setting appropriate boundaries for caring and communicating. Our work will respect and lean on the covenantal nature of our connectedness and be grounded in our mission.

We pray that our deeper work now will result in a stronger, more compassionate and grace-filled church community when we can return in body as well as spirit. ☸

Leadership Council Meeting Summary – May 2020

The Leadership Council met for our regular meeting via Zoom teleconference on May 20. A summary of discussions and actions are highlighted below.

Financial Report: The financial report was presented. We are \$31,540 ahead of budget year to date. Pledges are still strong. Facility revenue was only \$400 in April due to the closed campus. Facility payments made earlier in the year are keeping us ahead for now. Expenses are within the expected range.

Payroll Protection Plan (PPP): Council voted to approve a PPP loan from Small Business Association through our bank West America Bank for \$43,000. This is a loan, but will be turned into a grant if we spend it on payroll and utilities and maintain our staff over an 8-week period.

COVID-19 and Ministry Support: Staff is holding worship planning meetings every Tuesday, staff meetings on Wednesdays and various all-church emails are sent out each week. Pastor Lacey reported that there are Faith Formation meetings, Adult Bible Study and Godly Play story time zoom groups. Pastor Rachel is working with Kindred group leaders and reaching out to isolated members with regular one on one phone pal chats.

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Faith Formation: Formed in Grief

by Pastor Lacey

For many of us, June brings a kind of playful warmth and excitement as the days extend into light. This year is different. While the sun will continue to do her thing, our rhythms of life have changed and with this undoubtedly, comes some grief. It can be tempting to turn away from this grief, but I find myself asking more and more, "In this time of extended light, what might our grief reveal to us?" For me, June always comes with grief. When I was sixteen years old, my father passed away after a year and a half long battle with cancer. Each year, when Father's Day comes around in June, my heart sinks. His death day is March 9 and just before the shelter-in-place ordinance came down, Sharon and I were able to visit the redwood tree in Northern California where my father's ashes rest. It was the first time in eight years that I visited him there and the first time I introduced Sharon to him. Part of what my grief has taught me is that my father and I have been forming a relationship with one another, even in death. We are bound to one another in the rain, in a redwood tree whose roots are part of an expansive underground network of connection, and in discernment conversations now about what world I want to be part of creating. Even in death, we are connected and our relationship continues to unfold.

As we enter the month of June, the fourth month of sheltering-in-place, I wonder what the griefs associated with Covid-19 are teaching us. What do all the deaths that are part of this time, of both people and ways of living, connect us to? How are we, The Community Church of Sebastopol, connected to the disproportionate rate of COVID deaths within black and brown communities? How will our relationships to those who are poor and disabled and elders continue to unfold after death?

Part of what grief has taught me is that our unfolding relationships with the dead require something of us. With my dad, it has required of me an ongoing, caring attentiveness to my body and a commitment to live from a place of tender creativity, as he did. In these days as the light stretches further and further, what will our grief reveal and overturn and what connections, in life and in death, will we find ourselves inescapably bound to? ☘

Summer Youth Group Program

Meets Every Sunday in June on Zoom

Middle School 11am-12pm

High School 1-2pm

June 7 – Watch Party & Discussion

June 14 – Game Day

June 21 – Service Projects You Can Do from Home

June 28 – Camp Caz Games, Songs & Traditions

A Care Note from Pastor Rachel

Dear Companions on the Journey,

In these precarious times, many clergy around the country are hearing from members of their congregations that folks are feeling anxious and stressed. We are in a time of pandemic-shift that can bring up emotions, for sure. Spiritually, it can also activate within us a longing to be grounded and connected to God.

Rev. John Dorhauer, General Minister & President of the United Church of Christ, recently said, "We are all going to suffer loss before this ends. We all need something to sustain us through the long days that have come and are yet to come. I pray that you find your grounding in those things the faith has given us, for just such a time as this. Paul once wrote: 'rejoice in all circumstances.' Faith offers us the capacity to do that—but it doesn't come without some discipline, cultivation, and even at times a heavy cost. This is one of those times."

Here are a few (free!) resources I've curated to help you get through the current moment we're in:

A few scriptures to anchor you and bring comfort:

- ❖ Hebrews 6:19
- ❖ Psalm 121
- ❖ Lamentations 3:22-23
- ❖ John 14:27

A few web sites to nourish your heart and mind:

https://www.ucc.org/daily_devotional This is the link to sign up for daily devotionals from our denomination, the United Church of Christ. When you sign up, devotions come right to your email.

<https://www.ourbibleapp.com/> This web site links you to Our Bible App, which offers progressive Christian devotions and meditations. When you download the app, you can view on your device.

<https://www.headspace.com/covid-19> This is a secular resource for meditation, and is free during the covid-19 crisis.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBWYLRKoUCc> This link takes you to the YouTube of a musician-couple who pray/sing a Kyrie for the Pandemic.

A local resource to support your emotional health:

The Sonoma County Warm Line (707) 565-2652 is a free, private call line for folks experiencing stress or other emotional side effects of the pandemic and shelter-in-place order, or know someone who is. Behavioral health professionals staff the warm line, and are available to talk 7 days a week, 10am-7pm. They are able to provide support, guidance, education, and referrals. Spanish & English.

And, please don't hesitate to reach out if I might be of spiritual support to you in these times of uncertainty.

I encourage you to take a quiet moment each day to be in a spirit of prayer, to cultivate practices that will sustain you through such a time as this.

May God's peace be with you, this day and every day.

Warmly,

Pastor Rachel

The Community Church of Sebastopol Celebrates Our High School Graduates

This month the pastors will be delivering prayer shawls to each graduate. A special Blessing of the Graduates will be offered during the June 14 online worship service.

- ❖ Margaux Jame
- ❖ Jane Rasmus
- ❖ Isaiah Sawyer
- ❖ Rory Sterling
- ❖ Jessica Steyn



Chloe Madden is graduating from Credo High. Next year she will be taking a gap year and going to New Zealand on a program through National Outdoor Leadership School. In the fall of 2021, Chloe will be attending Colorado State University Fort Collins, where she will be studying chemistry and outdoor education. ☼

Ava Whitehorn is graduating from Analy High School. Her time there has been filled with scholastic and athletic achievements, as well as wonderful service to her community. Ava plans on attending Cal Poly in the fall. Ava's family is proud of her in every way! ☼

LC Meeting

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Safe Return Task Force has been created and will begin to meet weekly. Pastor Lacey reported that there are plans to take time this summer to explore how to build and promote leadership capacity and strength.

Memorial and Endowment Guidelines: In a previous meeting, there was discussion about transferring funds from unused Memorial and Endowment accounts to be available for other uses. For example, the stained-glass window acct #8765 was originated in 1998. The original donor is unknown and the account has been inactive since 2001. It was approved to move the \$655 from acct #8765 to acct #8775 - Memorial Undesignated Receipts which will make the funds available for grant requests.

Pastor Rachel Sabbatical: Pastor Rachel expressed concern about the availability of classes and other learning resources during her scheduled Fall Sabbatical. It was agreed to wait and see if it's beneficial for her to take Sabbatical in the fall.

Facilities: The landscape team is working in accordance with the Social Distancing rules. Team members come to the campus and do landscape projects independently. There are 7 or 8 members maintaining the campus at this time.

Care & Fellowship: The Prayer shawl and card writing ministries continue. The Men's group is meeting via Zoom. The Apple Pie sale has been cancelled. Women's Fellowship is planning a craft sale in the Fall.

Faith Formation: Kendall Tripathi-Clark is stepping down as Council member for Faith Formation due to family commitments. The nominating committee will be notified and will offer a candidate for a Council approval vote.

Outreach: Joyce reported that the 2nd Saturday lunch is still happening. Gift certificates from Taco Bell and Subway are being handed out. The Food Pantry has been given a \$1,200 grant. Safe Parking program has 2 to 3 people using the parking lot at night. The Adult Mission trip to Redding has been rescheduled for September 27 through October 2nd.

Worship & Arts: The Worship team met for some brain storming about future Sunday worship ideas.

The congregation is invited to discuss these items as well as any other issues, concerns, ideas or appreciations to any of the Council Members. The Council Members are:

Michael Ott – Moderator
Kathy Bell – Council Officer for Personnel
John Henel – Council Officer for Finances
Larry Stallings – Council Officer for Facilities
Joyce Cox – Council Member for Outreach
Open – Council Member for Faith Formation
Bobbie Johanson – Council Member for Care and Fellowship
Linda Roa – Council Member for Worship and Arts

Denelle Tognozzi, Scribe ☸

Events in June at Community Church

All in person gatherings at Community Church are suspended. Check our online calendar at <https://uccseb.org/Calendar.php> for updates when changes are made to the Shelter-in-Place order for Sonoma County.

June 2	Noonday Prayer, 12:00 p.m., Zoom
June 3	Staff Team, 10:00 a.m., Zoom
June 4	Safe Return Task Force, 11:00 a.m., Zoom
June 7	Trinity Sunday, Worship recordings on YouTube Summer Middle School Youth Group, 11:00 a.m., Zoom Drive Thru Blessing, 11:30 a.m., Parking Lot Summer High School Youth Group, 1:00 p.m., Zoom
June 9	Noonday Prayer, 12:00 p.m., Zoom Pastor Parish Relations Team (Ben), 4:00 p.m., Zoom
June 10	Staff Team, 10:00 a.m., Zoom
June 11	Card Writing Ministry, 11:00 a.m., Zoom Safe Return Task Force, 11:00 a.m., Zoom Chancel Choir, 7:15- 9:15 p.m., Zoom
June 13	Second Saturday Lunch, 11:30 – 1:30 p.m., Courtyard
June 14	Graduate Blessing, Worship recordings on YouTube Summer Middle School Youth Group, 11:00 a.m., Zoom Fellowship Hour, 11:30 a.m., Zoom Summer High School Youth Group, 1:00 p.m., Zoom
June 16	Noonday Prayer, 12:00 p.m., Zoom
June 17	Staff Team, 10:00 a.m., Zoom
June 18	Safe Return Task Force, 11:00 a.m., Zoom Chancel Choir, 7:15- 9:15 p.m., Zoom
June 21	New Members join, Worship recordings on YouTube Summer Middle School Youth Group, 11:00 a.m., Zoom Fellowship Hour, 11:30 a.m., Zoom Summer High School Youth Group, 1:00 p.m., Zoom
June 23	Noonday Prayer, 12:00 p.m., Zoom
June 24	Staff Team, 10:00 a.m., Zoom
June 25	Safe Return Task Force, 11:00 a.m., Zoom Chancel Choir, 7:15- 9:15 p.m., Zoom
June 28	Pride Sunday, Worship recordings on YouTube Summer Middle School Youth Group, 11:00 a.m., Zoom Fellowship Hour, 11:30 a.m., Zoom Summer High School Youth Group, 1:00 p.m., Zoom
June 30	Noonday Prayer, 12:00 p.m., Zoom

Event Changes:

- Santa Rosa Pride Parade - cancelled
- Rise Up! Just, Art, Spirit Camp postponed

Suspended until further notice:

- Facilities Team
- Handbell Ensemble
- Men's Group
- Outreach Committee
- Showers
- UkeStars

June Birthdays

- 1 Brian Plaugher
Lincoln Warner
- 2 Garik Goodell
Keith Blackstone
Chris Hudlow
- 3 Mariel Wurfel
- 4 Paul Downing
- 6 Brian Purcell
Richie Goodell
Casey Card
Caleb Peterson
- 9 Kasey Babcock
Ethan DelMonte
- 12 Rachel Allen
Matthew Melone
- 13 Antonio Trevino
Cassius Nelson
- 14 Nathan Nelson
Jim Hooper
- 15 Bob Holland
Jamie Malone
Blythe Osner
- 16 Elise Lovejoy
- 17 Maebel Trivunovic
- 18 Ainsley Curtis
Annabelle Bagley
- 21 Alicia Sanchez
- 22 Gary Bachelor
Beth Larssen
- 24 Bernie Hovden
- 26 Joe Plaugher
Sam Dowdney
- 28 Juniper Gonzales
- 29 Marie Cotton
Tyler Whitehorn

Congregational Care (Continued from page 5)

Noonday Prayer

Join Pastor Rachel for a moment of prayer every Tuesday from 12:00-12:30. The time will include a short devotion, silence, and intercessory prayer. To create a safe space for all, the group will maintain confidentiality, and will begin and end on time. Follow this Zoom link to participate: <https://zoom.us/j/97618694289>, Password: 3SFarE. Come, nourish your spirit with prayer. ☸

Prayer Circle

We hold in prayer... All people who are graduating or experiencing life transitions during this precarious time. All people for whom health crises continue, even while we are focused on covid-19-- those who continue to journey with cancer, stroke, broken bones, addiction, and depression. All people who are homebound including Connie Blackstone, Jack Curtis, and Glenda Elvy. God, we pray your Presence surround these beloveds with comfort and care, and connect us spiritually even while we are apart. Amen. ☸

Kindred Groups

Kindred Groups are the church's neighborhood groups, all named after apples. Our Kindred Groups continue to check in with one another in these times of physical isolation. Kindred Group Leaders have made connections with their groups by sharing poems, emailing greetings and prayers, and gathering on Zoom. Kindred Group Leaders also share pastoral concerns with the Ministers. Thank you, Kindred Group Leaders, for being a point of connection and a shining light in our midst! For more information about Kindred Groups, contact Pastor Rachel: pastorrachel@uccseb.org. ☸

Online Resources:

Faith Formation blog: Check out this blog for prayers of lament, grief and solidarity. <https://commchufaithformation.wordpress.com/blog/>

Kyrie for the Pandemic

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=zBWYLRKoUCc&feature=emb_title

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