

SALT & LIGHT COMMUNITY CHURCH OF SEBASTOPOL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST JUNE 2021 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 of Faith Formation Rev. Lacey Hunter

Associate Minister of Congregational Care Rev. Rachel Knuth

Handbell Ensemble Director Karna Roa

> Keyboardist J. Althea

Congregational Administrator Chris Chang Weeks

> Bookkeeper Deanna Euritt

Custodian Maria Mojica

Pastor Emeritus Rev. Gene Nelson

Revisiting our Open & Affirming Commitments

Rev. Benjamin Broadbent, Lead Minister

In 1996, Community Church began a two-year process toward becoming an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation. The result was a formal vote in 1998 authorizing a statement affirming lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and

welcoming all into full participation in the church's life and leadership. Our official certificate, dated 1999, hangs in the sanctuary entryway.

I've had several conversations with people who were a part of the original process. It was not easy for our congregation, they've told me. Some folks didn't think it was a big deal and were ready to vote in favor of it right away. Others didn't understand why we needed to make a statement - "aren't we already welcoming to everyone?" Still others could not affirm something they thought was against their beliefs. Most felt deeply that this was an important process. If we wanted to claim to follow Jesus as an inclusive Christian church, we needed to state unequivocally that we are open to and affirming of LGBT people.

It's been 25 years since our congregation began the ONA process. As the Open & Affirming Coalition of United Church of Christ says, "Your church's

1998 Open & Affirming Statement

The Mission of The Community Church is to be a community in which we worship God and share the love of Jesus Christ. We seek to teach the message of Jesus to all ages and to put our faith into action. We cherish, honor, support and serve each other and the world, in all our diversity.

We thank God for the diversity among us. We affirm that every person has worth as a special and unique creation made in God's image. As Christians, we experience God's reconciling love. In response, we seek to embrace justice and to stand with all who suffer discrimination, isolation, and alienation. In this spirit, our family of faith is open to all. We welcome and affirm people of every religious background, sexual orientation, family composition, physical and mental ability, ethnicity, age, and gender.

We encourage all people to participate fully in every aspect of our church's life and ministry, sharing in worship, fellowship, membership, and leadership. We celebrate the variety of talents and perspectives which continue to enrich us as we journey together in this community of faith.

JUNE 2021 WORSHIP

This month we are making a transition from online-only worship, to hybrid in-person outdoor/online worship:

- On June 6 and 13, worship will happen at 10:30 a.m. online via Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83296554538
- On June 20 and 27, in-person worship will happen at 10:30 a.m. in the Fountain Courtyard and will be live-streamed at: https://www.youtube.com/c/thecommunitychurchofsebastopol

See weekly emails or visit www.uccseb.org for more details.

June 6 – 2nd Sunday after Pentecost / Holy Communion

On this second Sunday after Pentecost, we will celebrate our last Zoom-style Holy Communion. Rev. Dr. Benjamin J. Broadbent, Lead Minister, preaches a sermon, "Flipping the Script," on Jesus' strange parable of the strong man found in Mark 3: 20 – 35.

June 13 – 3rd Sunday after Pentecost

Today Rev. Rachel Knuth, Associate Minister of Congregational Care, is our preacher. Both the Old and New Testament texts for the day are about God using someone/something small to achieve something big, the story of God choosing David in I Samuel 15 and the mustard seed in Mark 4.

June 20 – 4th Sunday after Pentecost / Fathers' Day

Today we gather in the Fountain Courtyard for in-person worship which will also be live-streamed on our church's YouTube channel. Rev. Broadbent preaches a sermon on the story of David and Goliath in I Samuel 17 entitled "Goliath's Gonna Fall."

June 27 – 5th Sunday after Pentecost / Open & Affirming Sunday

In our denomination, the United Church of Christ, today is designated as Open and Affirming Sunday. Rev. Lacey Hunter, Associate Minister of Faith Formation, is our preacher.

Coming in July... More Hybrid In-Person Outdoor/Online Worship, First in-person Holy Communion in 15 months!

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, + Sunday Potluck Brunch June 13, 2021 12:30 p.m. Fountain Courtyard

Community Church folks of all ages who identify as LGBTQIA+ are invited to this time of community building and celebration of Belovedness.

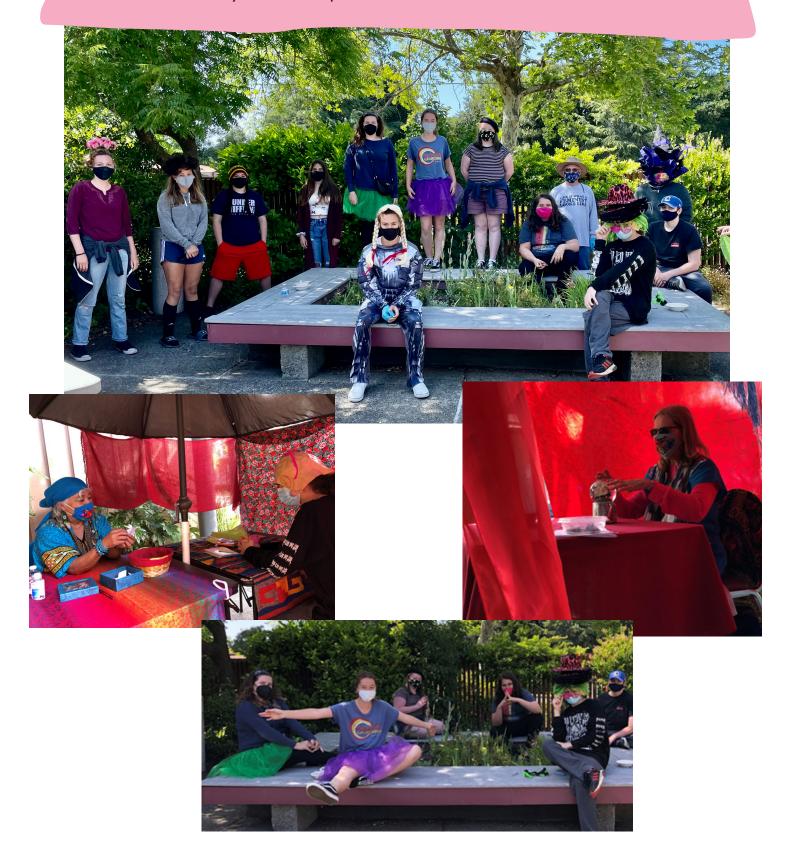
RSVP with Pastor Lacey at pastorlacey@uccseb.org

Masks required

Non-alcholic beverages provided. Please bring your own dishes and utensils.

Youth Group Celebrates Year End with Circus Festivities

Youth group end of year Circus Celebration included fortune telling booths, water balloons, costumes, ice cream sundae booth, chalk art & games! 15 Middle and High school youth members attended. Thank you to Beth Larssen, Alicia Sanchez, Kathy Bell and Larry Stallings for all of the creativity and leadership!®



Care Note from Pastor Rachel

Dear Friends,

One of my favorite Godly Play stories to tell is also the longest one, the Great Family. It's the story of Abram and Sarai, and their journey from Ur, across the desert, to Mamre. I love the way the story describes Abraham and Sarah aging, it says, "when they are very old and full of years..." It's a meaning-filled phrase, "full of years." (For more on the topic of aging with dignity, check out Louise Aronson's book, *Elderhood*). To be in relationship with those who are "full of years" is both transformational and a gift, for all of us in community. It can also be life-saving for our elders.



June is Elder Abuse Awareness Month, set aside by the World Health Organization at the United Nations. Elder abuse can happen to any person over the age of 65, and in America, 1 in 10 people (about 5 million) experience



some form of elder abuse each year. It's quite alarming, because actually for every instance of reported elder abuse, 24 cases go unreported. Some of the most common categories of elder abuse include physical abuse, sexual abuse, financial exploitation, emotional abuse, and neglect.

Elders are more at risk for abuse when they don't have access to support structures, are functionally and financially dependent on others, have mental health issues, and most of all-- when they're socially isolated. Through the pandemic, we've all had a taste of what social isolation feels like, so hopefully our society has

grown in compassion for all people whose lives are touched by isolation. Because isolation is such a high risk factor for elder abuse, reaching out to our elders is a key solution. We can care for the well-being of our elders by looking for ways to draw them into community, calling them on the phone to check in, sending cards, and teaching our children and youth to treat others with respect, no matter what their age. We can talk with elders we know about how to avoid scams, notice if they seem depressed, ask them whether they're getting regular meals, pray for them, and most of all-- listen, listen with the ear of the heart.

If you're worried an elder you know might be experiencing elder abuse, what can you do? Anyone can report abuse to Adult Protective Services: 707.565.5940. You can also contact a clergyperson-- your Pastors are all mandated reporters. You might check out our congregation's Safe Church Policy (posted on the church web site), which is currently being revised by a team this spring. The team is covering some really important ground as we consider deep questions about how to create a safe environment for our most vulnerable members and visitors, including children, youth, and elders. Keep an eye out for the freshly revised version in the coming months. You can participate in Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15th at 1:00pm, by attending a presentation on how to recognize and report cases of elder abuse through the Sebastopol Senior Center: https://www.sebastopolseniorcenter.org/classes-workshops. And of course, you can pray for all our elders, who are part of our communal body, for their well-being and health, with gratitude for those who are "full of years."

This Elder Abuse Awareness Month, I invite you to become familiar with signs of elder abuse, and to reach out to an elder in your life with a phonecall or card just to be in relationship, and let them know you're thinking of them.

Remembering Helen Sokolis

October 18, 1921 - May 2, 2021

This Eastertide we mourned the loss of our beloved church member, Helen Sokolis, who died at the age of 99 ½. Helen was such a pillar of our community--both within our church, and in our wider town-loved by so many for her twinkling spunk and care for others. Helen had been suffering from breathing challenges for several months, moving between skilled nursing and the hospital. After a respiratory crisis, she remained in a medically supported coma with comfort care. She died peacefully in her sleep on a Sunday afternoon, with family surrounding her.

Helen joined Community Church in 1947, when the church had been located downtown, and she could recall the time when train tracks went down Main Street Sebastopol. Helen served the church in all the ways God called her, volunteering to help out with many projects, meals, and events over the years. Helen always wanted to help others, and from her hospital bed wondered how she might contribute to her community in practical and concrete ways.



In recent weeks, I have prayerfully received stories from many of you, and am honored to gather these words to share:

Joyce Cox writes, "Helen is the one person who always asked about my mother each week. She used to bring her seedless blackberry jam each year... I always think of her doing huge, fabulous Women's Fellowship Teas!... Certainly a model of aging wonderfully, at her 90th birthday party, she was in high heels, working the crowd all afternoon. We should all be so lucky!"

Evelyn Bishop remembers Helen, "Her talents as a cook, seamstress, hostess, friend, really endeared her. She was like a sister. Every time I spread a sandwich I remember her constant admonition when we were making tea sandwiches: 'Be sure to spread clear to the edges.' God has blessed us again with a treasured person."

Steve Beck writes, "Helen was the life blood for years of many parts of our church life... For many years male members of the choir were asked to provide music as the ladies ate lunch. Tom Larssen took the initiative to find songs a mostly older crowd would recall singing when they were young and preparing us to do our best. Helen was one of our biggest fans asking us to come back again and again.... As a choir member, I would usually see Helen arrive greeting everyone near the end of our practice... I stopped to greet her with a comment I knew would make her laugh, which I loved to hear.... I hope we really are reunited in Heaven after we die. She was very special to me, and very sorry I will not have the opportunity to greet each other when we return to live Sunday worship, but my loss is tempered by the knowledge she no longer struggles to get her next breath."

Chris Jenkins was with members of Women's Fellowship cleaning and relining drawers in the Fellowship Hall Kitchen on May 2nd when they received the news that Helen had died. She writes, "We were reminiscing about Helen and how she would have been cheerfully helping us if her health allowed. She would have brought cookies or cupcakes and maybe jello salad to sustain us.... I have such a sad heart right now. She was my inspiration. She encouraged me to lead the Fellowship and enthusiastically helped whenever she could. She was my link to the history of our church before I joined (1982). I thought of her as the energizer bunny:she just kept on going-until



Remembering Helen Continued from page 5

she didn't. She was a saint of our church."

And here are more words I've heard people say about Helen: "She was one of our stalwart members whom everybody loved;" "She was a pillar in our community;" "I feel so sad she's gone;" "She always wanted to help others;" "She was my role model;" "Helen made people feel like they were at home when she was around;" "Lots of people in Sebastopol knew Helen, even people outside our church;" "Heaven has surely gained another angel;" I'm going to miss her so much, I already do."

I had the privilege of visiting Helen in the days before she died, and I add my memory, of holding her hands and singing together "Let There Be Peace on Earth" and "Here I Am, Lord." I will never forget her saying, "Every morning I wake up and pray. I thank God for the night, and I ask God what kind of mischief I might get up to today." And to Helen, "mischief" usually meant how she might help someone or be of service to others.

I know Helen touched many lives, both as a church volunteer and community leader, and friend to many. Please don't hesitate to reach out if I might be of spiritual support to you as you process this loss. And, I invite you to hold Helen's family in prayer as they grieve her passing. She will be missed.



Warmly, Pastor Rachel



Congratulations to our own Beth Trivunovic (second from right) for receiving a Rotary Teacher of the Year Award for Innovation along with the Kindergarten teaching team at Gravenstein Elementary School! As part of the team, Beth brought a special focus on Social Studies and making sure the most cherished traditions of their Kindergarten could still happen, including virtual field trips to places like the San Francisco Opera. Congratulations to you and your team, Beth ®

Revisting

Continued from page 1

ONA covenant is the beginning, not the end, of your journey of faith! An Open and Affirming church keeps its word of welcome by living according to its commitments. Your ONA covenant is an opportunity to grow, to build new relationships, and to become a visible and trusted partner with your LGBTQ neighbors and their families!" www.openandaffirming.org

As we continue our faith journey as an Open & Affirming congregation and revisit our ONA commitments, here are some possible areas of exploration:

▼ Form an ONA Ministry Team that continue encouraging our congregation to "live according to our commitments."

- ▼ Frame our ONA statement as a "covenant," a mutual agreement we are making to one another.
- ▼ Take time to build relationships with our "LGBTQ neighbors and their families" so that we can learn how to "become a visible and trusted partner."

▼ Formally add words such as "identity and expression" after the word "gender" to make clear this church's embrace and affirmation of transgender, non-binary, and gender queer people.

▼ Consider whether there are new or other words we want to include in our covenant such as citizenship status, country of origin, language, and marital status so that we can extend our ONA commitments according to God's extravagant love.

Our congregation has been enriched beyond measure by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people who have served and led our congregation as faithful children of God. Our Open & Affirming commitments are an important part of what distinguish us as a church in West County. I look forward revisiting and reaffirming our commitments with you as we live into Jesus' own desire "that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete." (John 15:11) &

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY - May 19, 2021

Summary of what was accomplished during the Leadership Council Meeting:

- Discussed and reviewed Ben's sabbatical proposal to take place February thru April 2022 to focus on deepening his writing practice
- ♦ Shared what people need from each other to feel safe
- Financial report: April ended with a positive net result of \$30K

For discussion in the future:

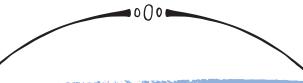
- Safe Church Policy update will be ready in June
- Request has been made by the Facilities Committee to replace the flooring in the Fellowship Hall kitchen and ante-room.
- Leadership Council retreat is scheduled on July 3, 8:00 a.m. to noon.
- Discussion will continue on Ben's proposed sabbatical.

Quick Updates:

- Conestoga Huts: We have received \$6,500 in donations to build the huts. The Outreach Committee has submitted the permit application to the City of Sebastopol.
- Camp Caz property has been listed for sale for \$3.5 million. More details forthcoming.

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:

Robert Curtis – Moderator Kathy Bell – Council Officer for Personnel John Henel – Council Officer for Finances Tom Terry – Council Officer for Facilities Joyce Cox – Council Member for Outreach Larell Fineren – Council Member for Faith Formation Kathy Matthies – Council Member for Care and Fellowship Linda Roa – Council Member for Worship and Arts Danelle Tognozi - Clerk®



Spring Garden Cleanup Grooms the Campus

Thank you to Debbie Stewart, Joyce Cox, Larry Stallings, Roger Wilson, Jane Huneke, Judy Peterson, Judy Davison, Marna McKenzie, Barbara Whitson, Ginna Scribner and Chris Chang Weeks who helped weed, trim, prune on Saturday, May 22. Even the dogs were eager helpers! The industry of the group was only limited by the capacity of the dumpster which was filled to overflowing several times, and needed to be tamped down by Roger. This project need not be limited to the older members of the church. We welcome all ages to come join the next gardening workday.





From the Bookkeeper's Corner

Summer Blessings to Everyone! Here are a few financial housekeeping notes:

My Hours

As I get into the groove of taking over the bookkeeping tasks from Julie Reimer, please note that my hours vary from week to week. However, I usually check emails and phone messages on Mondays and Wednesdays and will normally be available as follows:

Mondays and Wednesdays between 10AM—3:00PM Email – financial@uccseb.org Church Phone/Ext. – (707) 823-2484, ext. 103

Reimbursements and Accounts Payable

Please see the revised reimbursement form for out-of-pocket expenses. I issue checks every 1st and 3rd Monday. Note that reimbursements require copies of receipts and the signed approval of a Pastor, Staff, or Council Member for the applicable area. This is a slight change from the past when committee members also signed check requests.

Online Giving

Thank you all for your generous support of our lovely church community and ministry! If you use the online giving feature of Realm, please make sure you select the appropriate fund. There will usually be 4-6 options to choose from pending our seasonal special offerings and projects. So make sure you scroll through to find what you need.

In particular, if you have made a pledge to the church and want to set up a one-time or recurring payment, please make sure you select Local Ministry Pledge and Wider Mission Pledge rather than the General/Unpledged fund. This tells Realm to reduce your pledge balance for each payment. I try to correct this each month so you will get the credit.

In some cases, the fund General/Unpledged is okay if you do not have a pledge or want to make an additional offering. Also, you can always use the General/Unpledged selection and add a note for a specific offering if not listed. I will make sure it gets to the right place.

Member Statements

As in the past, I continue to email/mail quarterly statements for your review and for tax purposes. I am happy to answer any questions you have about your statements, so please reach out to me if needed.

Live long and prosper! Deanna Euritt

Is It Too Much to Ask?

Is it too much to ask That there be a day without conflict once in a while? That peace reign not only in the heart but also in the world?

Is it too much to ask that kindness be the first response in our community? For ego and negativity to take a back seat today?

Is it too much to ask That sadness or misery shed their power and loosen their hold? Just for these hours?

Is it too much to ask For delight in ordinary order and beauty be felt? Or in seeking a smile, find many?

Is it too much?

murielweaver may 2021

Singing in a Pandemic

by J. Althea, Church Keyboardist

In the last week of March 2020, Brian Plaugher, then Minister of Music, and I began to make video recordings of music for online worship services. A handful of singers from our chancel choir volunteered.

First we tried Zoom, but we quickly realized that Zoom sounded like a bunch of garbled bubbles in an empty oil barrel. So Brian found a couple of apps for music video recording. I'm NOT a techie. I don't "intuit" computer things, so I was worried about it. Gladly, the first one was very easy to learn. However easily learned, there were several glitches. Does anymore remember the time that my square was playing the piano upside down? Several times there was a 3-4 second lapse between the video and the audio.

So, after about 3 months, we changed to another app and we've been using it ever since. It has more features, but it was more difficult for me to learn. Brian, who was still at Community Church, helped me. After that, Karna Roa helped me several times. I'm proud to say I have wrestled this with this app and won!

And now, drum roll please....



We're approved for groups to sing together, outdoors, distanced, fully vaccinated, and with special singers' masks! Beginning mid-May, about a dozen of us have been doing just that and we are elated. The group is comprised of singers from the Chancel Choir, and other singers who have participated in the videos we've been using. Some singers from the Choir are not ready to join in yet for various reasons, and in respect for them, we're referring to this group with a temporary moniker: "The Singers In The Wild."

Occasionally, we'll be recording this group for worship in our weekly sessions. If you'd

like to know more, and possibly join in and be a Singer In The Wild, email me at jalthea101@gmail.com.

1	Brian Plaugher
1	Lincoln Warner
2	Garik Goodell
2	Keith Blackstone
2	Chris Hudlow
3	Mariel Wurfel
4	Paul Downing
6	Jan Barrow
6	Brian Purcell
6	Richie Goodell
6	Casey Card
8	Susan Shaw
9	Kasey Babcock

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

9	Ethan DelMonte	
12	Rachel Allen	
13	Antonio Trevino	
13	Cassius Nelson	
14	Nathan Nelson	
14	Jim Hooper	
15	Bob Holland	
15	Jamie Malone	
15	Blythe Osner	
15	Alex Hunt	
16	Elise Lovejoy	
17	Maebel Trivunovic	
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- 18 **Ainsley Curtis**
- 18 Anabelle Bagley
- Alicia Sanchez 21
- 22 Gary Bachelor
- 22 Beth Larssen
- Bernie Hovden 24
- 26 Joe Plaugher
- 26 Sam Dowdney
- Charlotte Asher 28
- 28 Juniper Gonzales
 - 29 **Marie Cotton**
 - 29 Tyler Whitehorn

Events in June at Community Church

Most 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 1 Grounds Team, 9:00 a.m., church campus Handbell Ensemble, 4:30 p.m. Zoom Men's Discussion Group, 11:30 a.m., Fountain
- June 2 Staff Team, 10:00 a.m., Zoom Women's Bible Study, Fountain Courtyard Handbell Ensemble, 2:00 p.m., Sanctuary
- June 3 Handbell Ensemble, 1:00 p.m., Sanctuary Outdoor Chancel Choir Singing, 7:00 p.m., Fountain Courtyard
- June 6 2nd Sunday after Pentecost, 10:30 a.m., Zoom Conversation with the Bible, 9:15 a.m., Zoom Kinship Time, 11:45 a.m., Zoom
- June 7 Mandala making workshop, 10:00 a.m. Fountain
- June 8 Grounds Team, 9:00 a.m., church campus Handbell Ensemble, 4:30 p.m. Zoom
- June 9 Staff Team, 10:00 a.m., Zoom Women's Bible Study, Fountain Courtyard Handbell Ensemble, 2:00 p.m., Sanctuary
- June 10Handbell Ensemble, 1:00 p.m., Sanctuary Outdoor Chancel Choir Singing, 7:00 p.m., Fountain Courtyard
- June 11 Card Writing Ministry, 1:00 p.m., Zoom
- June 12 Second Saturday Lunch, 11:30 a.m., Bell Tower
- June 133rd Sunday after Pentecost, 10:30 a.m., Zoom Conversation with the Bible, 9:15 a.m., Zoom Kinship Time, 11:45 a.m., Zoom LGBTQIA+ Sunday Brunch, 12:30 p.m., Fountain Courtyard
- June 15 Salt & Light Newsletter Deadline Grounds Team, 9:00 a.m., church campus Facilities Committee, 11:00 a.m., Fountain Handbell Ensemble, 4:30 p.m. Zoom Pastor-Parish Relations Team (Ben)
- June 16Staff Team, 10:00 a.m., Zoom Women's Bible Study, Fountain Courtyard Handbell Ensemble, 2:00 p.m., Sanctuary Leadership Council, 6:30 p.m., Zoom
- June 17Handbell Ensemble, 1:00 p.m., Sanctu**ary** Leadership Retreat Planning, 1:00 p.m., Fountain Courtyard Outdoor Chancel Choir Singing, 7:00 p.m., Fountain Courtyard
- June 20 4th Sunday after Pentecost/Father's Day,

- 10:30a.m., Fountain Courtyard Conversation with the Bible, 9:15 a.m. Zoom Covid Creativity Expo, 11:30 a.m., Bell Tower Courtyard
- June 22 Grounds Team, 9:00 a.m., church campus Handbell Ensemble, 4:30 p.m. Zoom
- June 23 Staff Team, 10:00 a.m., Zoom Women's Bible Study, Fountain Courtyard Handbell Ensemble, 2:00 p.m., Sanctuary
- June 24 Handbell Ensemble, 1:00 p.m., Sanctuary Leadership Retreat Planning, 1:00 p.m., Fountain Courtyard Outdoor Chancel Choir Singing, 7:00 p.m., Fountain Courtyard
- June 27 5th Sunday after Pentecost, 10:30 a.m., Fountain Courtyard Conversation with the Bible, 9:15 a.m., Zoom
 - Kinship Time, 11:30 a.m., Bell Tower
- June 29 Grounds Team, 9:00 a.m., church campus Handbell Ensemble, 4:30 p.m. Zoom
- June 30 Staff Team, 10:00 a.m., Zoom Women's Bible Study, Fountain Courtyard Handbell Ensemble, 2:00 p.m., Sanctuary

Suspended until further notice:

- Showers
- UkeStars

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