

# SALT & LIGHT

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF SEBASTOPOL

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## MAY 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



## A Presence Closer than Your Breath

Rev. Dr. Benjamin J. Broadbent, Lead Minister

One of the requirements of candidates for ministry in the United Church of Christ is to write an "Ordination Paper." In that many-paged paper, the candidate describes their personal understanding of God's call upon their life followed by their theological understanding of major Christian themes and their institutional understanding of the history and polity of the U.C.C. When I was endeavoring to accomplish this assignment, I remember getting hung up on the Christian idea of "providence."

I don't remember "providence" being covered in any course I took in seminary, so I had to research it myself. Since that time, I've come to understand providence as the important observation that God, in God's mercy, provides creation and all its creatures with everything they need to live and even thrive. As Marilynne Robinson said in a recent interview, "It's as if God created the world for the purpose of human delight."



And yet, human needs are so often left unmet. One effect of sin is that it tempts us to insist on our own autonomy. Imagining ourselves as independent of the God who provides, we see through a lens of scarcity, which leads us to judge others, fear the future, hoard resources, and harm ourselves. And yet God relentlessly pursues us. Like a chess master, for every move we make to thwart God's purposes, God has a counter move.

- When the disciples thought they'd steer Jesus' ministry toward insurrection, he countered by offering himself as a sacrifice to show them what love looked like.
- When they despaired at his death and wanted to retaliate, Jesus rose from the tomb as a sign of victory over violence.
- When they wanted to hold onto him, he ascended from a singular location so that he could be anywhere for anyone.
- When they sat around doing nothing and wondering what to do next, he provided the Spirit, which he also called an "Advocate."

Community Church, does God continue to provide all we need to carry out the ministry to which we are called? By faith, we must answer yes. God provides us with people to collaborate on the all the work that matters. God provides land to gather on and buildings to house our programs. God provides financial resources and the generosity needed to let those resources flow into and through our community. Whenever we're tempted to imagine ourselves as isolated and self-sufficient, the Holy Spirit provides us just enough discomfort to wake us up.

## May 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](http://www.uccseb.org)

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

### **May 5 — 6th Sunday of Easter**

Today we celebrate Holy Communion, our Chancel Choir provides worship music, and **Rev. Benjamin Broadbent**, Lead Minister, preaches a sermon on [John 15: 9-17](#) entitled, "So That You May Love."

### **May 9 – Ascension Day**

### **May 12 – 7th Sunday of Easter / Ascension Sunday**

On this Mothers' Day, our Spring Children's Choir will share music, 5th – 7th Graders receive Bibles with a blessing, we recognize high school graduates, and we receive the Strengthen the Church special offering of our denomination, the United Church of Christ. **Pastor Benjamin** preaches a sermon on [Psalm 1](#) entitled, "Like Trees Planted By Streams."



### **May 19 – Pentecost Sunday**

On this 50th Day following Easter, we celebrate the "birthday of the Christian church." The Chancel Choir sings one more time before summer and we bless this year's Faith Formation leaders as well as the Middle School SALT Trip participants. **Pastor Benjamin** preaches a sermon on [John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15](#) entitled "When the Advocate Comes."

### **May 26 – 1st Sunday after Pentecost / Trinity Sunday**

Today begins our summer worship series with special music by church members and friends. Our guest preacher is church member, former Youth Ministry Coordinator, and seminary student **Ross Galletto**.

**Coming in June...** Pride Sunday, Blessing of High School SALT participants, Fathers' Day, New Members join, Open & Affirming Sunday

## May 2024 Faith Formation Hour

11:15—12:15 in the Chapel

**May 5** – Guest Speaker: **Rebecca Fein of Verity** (see article on page 6)



**The 5-7th Grade Bible Class** continues , led by **Pastor Rachel** and members of the **Scribner-Sanderson Family**, for Class #5 in a 6-part series.

**May 12** – **Church Chat: God & Country, Part I**

We will watch and briefly discuss the first half of “God & Country,” a film from director **Dan Partland** and producer **Rob Reiner**, which looks at the implications of Christian Nationalism and how it distorts not only our constitutional republic, but Christianity itself. Featuring prominent Christian thought leaders, the film asks: What happens when a faith built on love, sacrifice, and forgiveness grows political tentacles, conflating power, money, and belief into hyper-nationalism? Watch trailer [here](#).

**The 5-7th Grade Bible Class** continues , led by **Pastor Rachel** and members of the **Scribner-Sanderson Family**, for Class #6 in a 6-part series.

**May 19** – **Church Chat: God & Country, Part II**

We will watch and briefly discuss the second half of “God & Country.”

**May 26** – **Meet Ross Galletto**. Today’s guest preacher is a member of our church who is attending seminary and applying to become a “Member-in-Discernment,” the beginning of a process that can lead to ordination into ministry in the United Church of Christ. Come get to know **Ross** today in the Fireside Room.





**PICTURES OF WORSHIP AT COMMUNITY  
CHURCH  
PALM & EASTER SUNDAYS**

**Stuart Mitchell**









## OUTREACH COMMITTEE HOSTS GUEST SPEAKER FROM VERITY

### Kathy Matthies & The Outreach Committee



On Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup> after worship, the Outreach Committee welcomes **Rebecca Fein**, Executive Director of [Verity](#), to inform us more about their work in Sonoma County.

Verity is a Sonoma County non-profit that offers rape crisis intervention and counseling. They have a 24/7 hotline available, and they provide crisis intervention to anyone affected by sexual assault, including survivors, their family and friends, and those who have been sex trafficked. Verity also provides trauma care and counseling services for adults and children over the age of 6. And, Verity offers community education (in both English and Spanish), going into classrooms and community centers to teach prevention strategies in the wider community.

For the past five years, the Outreach Committee has directed some of our congregation's Wider Mission funds to support Verity and their important work in Sonoma County. We've also led gift card drives at Christmas. People who have escaped sex trafficking often have nothing, and gift cards can really help. We believe the work of Verity is worth championing because their services truly impact the lives of women in Sonoma County.

Here are a few words about **Rebecca Fein**, from her bio:

**Becky Fein** is a long-time advocate for survivors of sexual assault and violence, and has demonstrated her unwavering dedication to supporting survivors throughout her career. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to Verity, having spent several years at Active Minds, where she made significant contributions to the field of mental health and advocacy. She holds a bachelor's degree in Sociology from UC Davis, and a Master's in Public Health, with an emphasis in sexual assault prevention and survivor empowerment from Columbia University. Mom of two, Becky spends her evenings and weekends chasing toddlers and working on DIY home improvement projects!



The Outreach Committee is pleased to host the Executive Director of Verity, **Rebecca Fein**, as our Guest Speaker during Faith Formation Hour on May 5th, 11:15-12:15 in the Chapel. For more information about both our Guest Speaker and the Outreach Committee, contact **Joyce Cox** at [b-j-cox@att.net](mailto:b-j-cox@att.net).

## MAY BIRTHDAYS

May 1	Robert Field	May 17	Marilyn Lerum
May 1	Gene Koch	May 17	Ben Sumrall
May 2	Debby McLeod	May 18	Andrea Card
May 3	Lisa Gonzalez	May 18	Ronnie Peterson
May 4	Dave Bell	May 19	Morgan Thomas
May 4	Pollie Joy Richards	May 20	Celeste Hole
May 5	Stacie DelCarpio	May 21	Stephanie Camara
May 5	Genia Thorhaug	May 21	Barbara Deedler
May 5	Prudy Tucker	May 22	Ren Davis
May 6	Danielle Berndt	May 22	Rian Sanderson
May 7	Rosemary Manchester	May 23	Camie Sumrall
May 7	Zeb Young	May 23	Bill Phillips
May 9	Jenna Canfield	May 28	Celia Cummings
May 9	Emerson Dowdney	May 29	Peggy Rousch
May 10	Solveig Davidson	May 29	Mary Coleman
May 10	Lisa Dawson	May 31	Isaiah Sawyer
May 10	Judy Peterson		
May 10	Forrest Templin		
May 11	Debbie Stewart		
May 11	Muriel Weaver		
May 13	Mark Albin		
May 14	Karen Perry Erdman		
May 15	Mike Moore		
May 16	Will Stoll		
May 17	Bob Curtis		



## NORTH BAY ORGANIZING PROJECT UPCOMING EVENT(S)

**Judy Davison**

In the March Salt and Light newsletter, I shared my involvement as our church's representative to NBOP. This non-profit organization has sought to elevate the voices of locals connected to immigration reform, housing and tenant protections, Latino students, and much more. They recently held a weeklong, in-depth training course to learn how to productively settle disagreements with many diverse groups to the best of their abilities and to enhance their leadership skills. The participants came away inspired, connected, and informed!

Also, this month, they got wonderful news! NBOP was one of 361 organizations nationwide to receive a two-million-dollar grant from a billionaire philanthropist! "The funds will allow the organization to deepen its roots in its ongoing community work for those who have been historically marginalized. We're going to keep doing what we do best - keep listening and build power," said **Belén Lopez-Grady**, executive director of NBOP.

NOW, the celebration time is approaching! On June 8th, there will be a lively annual fiesta and fund raiser! The title is Cultura Y Cambio (Culture and Change). The event will have live music, dancing, games, food, and events for all ages. This will be held at Penngrove Park, 11800 Main Street in Penngrove, CA. The timing is from 4pm to 9pm. PLEASE JOIN THE FUN! They need support from each member organization. In a couple of weeks, I will provide posters and flyers with all the information and a sign up sheet for those interested in attending. PLEASE SAVE JUNE 8th for a fun, worthy time!

We have been asked to provide a themed basket for a raffle that day. We have chosen a movie theme. If anyone can donate a large, lovely basket for the items, that would be great. We'd also appreciate any - sized item with a movie motif or a cash donation to aid with putting the basket together. Some ideas may be popcorn, gift cards, candy, movie trivia game, cups, and chocolate, needed by May 19. To contribute items, please contact **Judy Davison** at 707-486-7755 or [jdavison95472@yahoo.com](mailto:jdavison95472@yahoo.com).

**ALL CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOMED AND GREATLY APPRECIATED! THANK YOU VERY MUCH!**





## CELEBRATE! CELEBRATE!

Beth Larssen

A historical event in the life of our church happens Saturday, May 4t, at the City of Refuge UCC, near the Oakland Coliseum: the Installation of our new Conference Minister, **Rev. Davena Jones**. This is likely to be a vibrant, musical and joy-filled event!

**Who is Davena?** This lifelong member of one of the historic African-American churches in the UCC, Rev. Jones is a San Francisco native and blessed with a lively and generous style. She served as a NCNC Associate Conference Minister for eight years, focusing on Youth and Young Adult Ministry and Anti-Racism Ministry. At the Northern California Nevada Conference last spring, I was impressed by her unvarnished assessment of the status of churches which was balanced by her enthusiasm and her belief in a positive future, as she lead a call and response of “I am the Conference,” with the entire room joining in.



Then you ask, “What is a Conference?” Our church is part of the Bay Association, which is part of the geographically larger Northern California Nevada (regional) Conference, which belongs to our National office, housed in Cleveland, Ohio. I think of the Association, Conference and National entities as supporting local churches with curriculum, tools for outreach, legacy planning, disaster relief efforts, church camping and mission programs.

Then: “**UCC**” = United Church of Christ. What interests me is how the UCC differs from other denominations in how we govern ourselves. Part is our history: five different “streams” contributed to the founding of the UCC 67 years ago: Congregational, Evangelical, German Reformed, Christian and Black Churches. In these days of entities splintering apart, it is refreshing that our story is one of merger.

The leaders formed a model that let each church decide the style of governance they wanted. When our denomination meets bi-annually at General Synod, each church gets a voice and a vote on an initiative, but it is the local church that decides if and how it might act on the initiative. I think this flexibility helps us tackle social issues quickly.

Our church began in 1889 as “First Congregational Church of Sebastopol,” honoring the historical congregational model of having the lay people decide matters like selecting ministers, dealing with finances, including purchase and development of buildings. So, we differ from Presbyterian churches in that the Presbytery (the regional gathering) makes a decision and all parishes must follow. We differ from the Methodists and Roman Catholics where clergy are placed in a local church.

**Why does this matter to me?** Early in my teen years, my church was family for my widowed mother, sister and me. Also my church stood up to our East Bay neighborhood as we committed to build HUD housing on our church’s property. My neighbors feared integration. Swastikas were scratched on our church doors. Threats to our Pastor and his family were phoned to their home. I took a date to the city council meeting that approved the housing. That housing is still integrated, as is the street I grew up on. I’m grateful for these early life experiences that helped me understand the importance of anti-racism work. And now, I celebrate this Installation of a clergywoman who lets her light, her fire and grit show. It is part of what our denomination stands for. I think the UCC is about merging, not splintering; and welcoming instead of judging.



June is Pride Month at the Community Church of Sebastopol



SONOMA  
COUNTY  
PRIDE.



Saturday, June 1, 2024

10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Kathy Matthies

'Heroes, Sheroes and Queeroes' is the theme for this year's Pride Parade on **Saturday, June 1**, and the Community Church of Sebastopol will be participants. We need volunteers to march in the parade representing our church. Marching in this parade celebration is affirming our Opening and Affirming promise to our community. It is a fun, hopeful and family friendly celebration. Costumes representing the theme are welcomed. Some fun costume ideas can be found on Amazon see link [here](#)

If you would like to help or participate, please email **Judy Hawkins** at [jodyha@gmail.com](mailto:jodyha@gmail.com) Look for activities and guest speakers to follow during the month of June.



**SEBASTOPOL INTER-CHURCH FOOD PANTRY**  
**May is “Canned Soup with a Pull-Tab” Month at Community Church**

**Rev. Rachel Knuth, Associate Minister**



Hey have you noticed there’s a grocery cart in the hallway by the church office? Our church gladly accepts donations for the Sebastopol Inter-Church Food Pantry, which is an Outreach ministry of our church, in partnership with other local churches. You can place your donations right into the cart, and they’ll be taken over to St. Stephen’s Episcopal, where the pantry is housed. (Thank you to the volunteers from our church who do this!!)

Our church collected food for the pantry as a spiritual practice during Lent. The idea was to connect our weekly Communion sacrament with Jesus’ proclamation to “go and do likewise.” As we have received nourishment at our Communion Table, we go out into the community to share nourishment with others. Volunteers at the pantry noticed that our church delivered high-quality items that helped stock the shelves with desirable items.

And we are still going strong with our collections! In April we declared “peanut butter and jelly” month, and our congregation responded with awesome and copious amounts of pb&j!

For May, the Inter-Church Food Pantry would love to receive canned soup with a pull-tab. Volunteers have found that not all people who come to the pantry have access to a can opener, so that’s why the pull-tabs are so important. And, they’d love to stock the shelves with some more soup.

When I go shopping, I like to pop an extra something in the cart for the pantry. I choose high quality items that I myself would buy for my family– which usually means organic and avoiding plastic containers. If you’re aiming to donate from items you already have at home, that’s fine too– just please, no expired foods.

Of course, if you have delicious canned items you want to donate that are not related to the theme of the month (or you happen to get soup that doesn’t have a pull-tab) we will still take it! Gladly! Just pop it on in to the grocery cart by the church office.

Thank you for your generosity, and for “being the church” in this way. If you’d like to get involved in the Inter-Church Food Pantry Ministry, contact **Mark Albin**, Inter-Church Food Pantry committee chair, at [malbin@sonic.net](mailto:malbin@sonic.net).

## MEETINGS THAT DESERVE A ROUND OF A-PAWS

Rev. Rachel Knuth, Associate Minister



Have you ever been to a boring meeting? Oh gosh I sure have. A number of years ago I was in a meeting where about 45 minutes was spent determining whose job it was to replace the soap in the soap dispenser. I couldn't believe I had left my young children at home and paid a babysitter to be there.

But I've also been part of meetings that have felt deeply meaningful and connecting, ready to broaden my thinking. Whenever that happens, I notice that the vibe at the meeting is engaged and exciting, even if (maybe especially if) there's healthy and respectful

disagreement about an idea. People's creativity seems opened up and there's a sense of "flow." I always go home from those meetings daydreaming and inspired. I can tell the Holy Spirit is moving and energizing the people in the room, myself included. I think people in general want to have meaningful experiences and to feel like they have something to contribute towards a greater goal.

So what makes a good church meeting? If you're a frequent leader of meetings, I'd love to hear what works best for you. And if you're a frequent attender of meetings, I'd love to hear what you notice about how a good vibe is fostered, and what makes you leave the meeting satisfied and inspired.

Here are a few tried and true techniques I really like:

**When the facilitator clearly states the purpose of the meeting.** It sounds simple, but when the facilitator opens the meeting with the purpose, it can totally get people focused.

**When there's a prayer before we get to work.** One of the cool things our Leadership Council does is pray together at the beginning and ending of each meeting. The prayer time connects us to each other and to God. I love being able to take a deep breath, get centered, and thank God for the work ahead, it reminds me we are being the Body of Christ. What a gift to be a spiritual community that also gets rad things done.

**When the facilitator has an agenda, with time allotted for each topic — and the more specific each topic is, the better.** For example, an agenda with no time designation, and the general topic "Apocalyptic Literature" might lead to a long meandering discussion about how Harry Potter is apocalyptic (or not) and nothing will get decided, but maybe someone will mention Revelation or the "little apocalypse" in Mark, and someone else might say — how can any apocalypse be "little?" Whereas, an agenda that spells out, from 2:00-2:20 p.m. the topic is "What 3 things do we want participants in the *Apocalyptic Literature in the Bible* class to know, by the time the class ends?", will have a more focused conversation.

**When the facilitator promotes creativity by either sending the discussion topics ahead of time, or giving space for creative thinking to happen during the meeting.** I was at a school meeting once where parents were to brainstorm in small groups — we were given sharpies and poster paper and we got to jam on ideas together, make a poster, and then present it to the wider group. We had a whole half-hour to work together, luxurious. But even before the brainstorming sesh, the facilitator had us

Continued on Page 15



## MAY 2024 EVENTS AT COMMUNITY CHURCH

- May 1  
Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room  
Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6  
Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
- May 2  
Meditation Group, Noon, Room 6  
Women's Fellowship Card Writing, 2 pm, Fellowship Hall  
Pride Parade Meeting, 5 pm, Fireside Room  
Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
- May 4  
All Church Workday, 9 a.m., Campus
- May 5  
**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  
Middle School Youth Group, 4 pm, Youth Lounge  
High School Youth Group, 5 pm, Youth Lounge
- May 6  
Prayer Shawl Group, 10 am, Fireside Room
- May 7  
Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus  
Men's Discussion Group, 6 pm, Fireside Room
- May 8  
Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room  
Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6  
Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
- May 9  
Meditation Group, Noon, Classroom 6  
Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
- May 11  
Second Saturday Luncheon, Noon, Fellowship Hall  
Women's Discussion Group, 2 pm, Fireside Room
- May 12  
**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
- May 13  
MS SALT Pre-trip planning, 4 pm, Youth Lounge  
HS SALT Pre-trip planning, 5 pm, Youth Lounge
- May 14  
Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus  
Facility Committee, 11 am, Fireside Room  
Personnel Committee 4 pm, Fireside Room  
Lead Minister's PPRT 5 pm, Fireside Room  
Outreach Committee, 7 pm, Fireside Room

## May 2024 Events at Community Church cont.

- May 15  
Salt & Light Newsletter Deadline for June  
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
- May 16  
Meditation Group, Noon, Room 6  
Associate Minister's PPRT, 4 pm, Fireside Room  
Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
- May 19  
**First Sunday of Pentecost** Worship Service, 10:00 am, Sanctuary  
Kinship Time, 11:00 am, Bell Tower Courtyard  
Faith Formation Hour, 11:15 am, Various Locations
- May 20  
Prayer Shawl Ministry, 10 am, Fireside Room
- May 21  
Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus
- May 22  
Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room  
Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6  
Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
- May 23  
Meditation Group, Noon, Room 6  
Pride Parade Meeting, 5 pm, Fireside Room  
Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
- May 26  
**2nd Sunday of Pentecost**, Worship Service, 10:00 am, Sanctuary  
Kinship Time, 11:00 am, Bell Tower Courtyard  
Faith Formation Hour, 11:15 am, Various Locations
- May 27  
Memorial Day Holiday, Office Closed
- May 28  
Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus
- May 29  
Staff Team, 10 am, Fireside Room  
Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6  
Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
- May 30  
Meditation Group, Noon, Room 6  
Women's Fellowship Card Writing, 2 pm, Fellowship Hall  
Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room



## Meetings that Deserve a Round of A-Paws cont...

connect with each other on a personal level. He asked us to go around and name something we personally cared about, that was related to the topic, but just about ourselves. I left feeling like I had gotten to know my group-mates, and contributed ideas toward a greater goal.

### **When the facilitator ends on time.**

**Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow** says one of the best things leaders at all levels of church leadership can do, is agree that spiritual leadership is the primary purpose – he says, “Sure, the church has to run and people have to do things, but at the highest level of church leadership, a smoothly running church should not be the goal, rather a faithfully living one should be.” Being a faithful living church that both tends and strives to be the Body of Christ – that sounds like a value I can get behind.

## ***GRAINS OF SALT***



***This space is reserved for small announcements—no graphics. The announcement should be 3-4 lines in size.***

## ***SPECS OF LIGHT***



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