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
Open

Faith Formation Coordinator Tirza Dawn

Congregational Administrator Joy Richards

Choral Director Andy DelMonte

KeyboardistJ. Althea

Handbell Director Karna Roa

> **Bookkeeper** Deanna Euritt

CustodianPaul Louden

Pastor Emeritus Rev. Gene Nelson



SALT & LIGHT

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF SEBASTOPOL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST DECEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

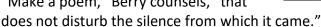
The Poetry of Advent

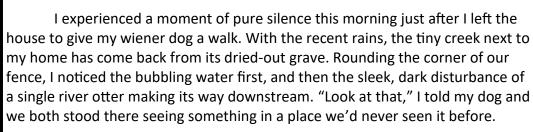
Rev. Dr. Benjamin J. Broadbent, Lead Minister

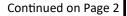
While I like to think of myself as a spiritual person, I have had to admit to myself recently that I'm afraid of silence. Perhaps it has always been so, but my fear of the quiet seems to have increased as I've grown older and become more hooked on screens and sounds. Sometimes I'm not even aware of how hooked I am, but then I catch myself moving from my phone to the TV and back to my phone and I realize I haven't enjoyed a moment of silence in hours.

One of the gifts of the Advent season in the northern hemisphere is that the days grow shorter, the dark nights grow longer, the weather grows colder and wetter, and we're given opportunities to settle into ourselves, to simply abide in the dark without distraction. Poetry can help with this practice of wintering.

The Advent Devotional we are using this year, published by The SALT Project, is called, "Heaven's Earthly Life: Wendell Berry and the Poetry of Advent." Berry is a Kentucky farmer-poet-writer who explores themes of nature, spirit, and place. The poem "How to Be a Poet," encourages the reader to "Accept what comes from silence. Make the best you can of it." In a world of so much chatter, the truest words come from silence. "Make a poem," Berry counsels, "that







The Poetry of Advent Continued from Page 1

"Found your hope, then, on the ground under your feet," Wendell Berry writes in another poem. "Your hope of heaven, let it rest on the ground underfoot." Those are some good Advent words because Advent means "arrival" and it is our time as Christians to prepare our hearts and minds for the arrival of God in the form of an infant human born on earth. In other words, the poet reminds us that our hope is not in some far-off land, nor through an escape hatch, nor even delayed until after death. Our hope is here, on this ground, in this place, with this dog, creek, otter, neighborhood, church. Out of silence comes all creation, and each of us a part of it.

No wonder the quiet is so scary. It contains everything, all hope, all peace, all joy, all love. "No place at last is better than the world," writes Berry, echoing one of the most famous lines in scripture: "God loved the world in this way: God sent a child to be born so that all people might learn that love is stronger than death." (John 3:16)

Open Leadership Council Positions Judy Davison, Alvin Hukins & Lori Lapham

Happy December everyone! May you find peace and light in this holiday season.

We, the Nominating Committee, want to let you know that we have been busy recruiting candidates for the following open positions on the Leadership Council:

- Council Officer for Personnel (Secretary)
- Council Officer for Finances (Treasurer)
- Council Member for Faith Formation
- Council Member for Care and Fellowship

Additionally, we are looking for a member of Community Church to serve on the Burbank Heights & Orchards Board.

After two Nominating Committee members unexpectedly resigned this Fall, it has taken us a bit longer to complete our nominations, but we're almost there. If there is a position that calls out to you, please let us know.

We look forward to sharing nomination profiles with you in the January issue of the Salt and Light Newsletter. Thank you for your patience.

Alvin Hukins: <u>ahukins@aol.com</u> Lori Lapham: loridap62@gmail.com

Judy Davison: jdavison95472@yahoo.com

DECEMBER 2025 WORSHIP Worship at the turn of Christian Liturgical Calendar

Worship Details...

We worship in the sanctuary on Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

Services are live streamed on YouTube & Facebook

Weekly bulletin and announcements available at www.uccseb.org

DECEMBER 7 – 2nd Sunday in Advent: PEACE

Today we light the second candle on our Advent wreath, the candle of "Peace." The Chancel Choir, directed by **Andy DelMonte**, shares worship music, we celebrate Holy Communion and **Rev. Dr.** Benjamin J. Broadbent, Lead Minister, preaches a sermon on <u>Matthew 3:1–12</u> entitled, "Good News from the Wilderness."

DECEMBER 14 – 3rd Sunday in Advent: JOY

Traditionally called "Gaudete Sunday," today we light the 3rd candle, the pink candle of "Joy." Three sisters will be baptized; the Handbell Ensemble, directed by **Karna Roa**, shares worship music; and **Pastor Benjamin** preaches a sermon on Matthew 11:2–11 entitled, "Are You The One?"

DECEMBER 21 – 4th Sunday in Advent: LOVE

Today we light the 4th candle, the candle of "Love." The Advent Children's Choir, directed by **Andy Del-Monte**, shares worship music and **Pastor Benjamin** preaches a sermon on <u>Matthew 1:18–25</u> entitled, "In This Strange Way."

DECEMBER 24 – Christmas Eve

4:30 – Family-friendly Candlelight Service with "Pop-Up" Pageant

7:00 – Traditional Candlelight Service with Handbells, Chancel Choir, and Sermon

DECEMBER 28 – 1st Sunday after Christmas

Today we continue the season of Christmastide with a service that includes more carols and more of the Christmas story. **Rev. Brian Plaugher** preaches a sermon on Matthew 2:13–23 entitled, "The Power of a Dream."



Coming in January... Día de los Reyes, Epiphany, Baptism of Christ Sunday, Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Weekend, New Members join, Annual Meeting of the Congregation

SPIRITUAL HOME



Victoria is a seeker. After she moved to Sebastopol in 1990 and married her husband, Stu, now deceased, she knew two things: she wanted to be a mother, and she wanted to find a supportive, progressive Christian community that lived out God's call to social justice.

When having a child proved difficult, a wonderful but challenging 3-year-old bi-racial boy named Colby joined their family. With the adoptive placement coming via the county, Colby required patience and specialized support to heal from emotional wounds. "When I began looking for a church, I knew I would have to find an inclusive community with an open message

that would welcome and affirm my African American son, a child who was bright and active but also sometimes challenging," said Victoria.

"I needed to find a place where my son would know he was loved unconditionally, not just by his parents, but by God and by his faith community." Searching local congregations led Victoria to the Community Church of Sebastopol, where she found a supportive faith community for her son, shared social justice values, and much-needed connection and support from other women.

Volunteers and staff at Community Church were patient and included Colby in youth activities. "It was important that Colby had a place to go that I was comfortable with, where he was learning a healthy theology and finding friends to connect with whose parents shared similar faith values to us." But along with support for her son, Victoria wanted to belong to a congregation she felt a deep spiritual connection to, one that centered Jesus' teachings and was committed to social justice and building community.

"I knew I had found my own home at Community Church when, after arriving late to the Friday morning Women's Spirituality Group after dropping my son off, I was in such a frazzled state that I declared that I just 'can't ever get here on time!' The response from the women in the group was to start laughing and say in unison, 'Of course you can't!'" Victoria immediately felt seen, heard, and supported, and those relationships have provided deep spiritual nourishment and connection for her over the years.

Today, Victoria is inspired by all the ways God is present at Community Church: through the depth of spirituality in our weekly meditation group; to our growing, more diverse membership; to our congregation taking stronger, more public stances on social justice and human rights issues. "This inspiration led me to answer the call to take on the Moderator leadership role at Community Church. I strongly believe together, as a community of faith, we can be a beacon of justice, hope, and refuge in these uncertain times."

Because of your generosity, our youth and adult programs create opportunities to find support, develop friendships, deepen relationships, and grow in our spirituality. Thank you for making our church a place where those seeking a supportive, affirming, inclusive, and justice-oriented faith community can find their spiritual home.

Written by: Jenny Douglas

Watch this space every month as we feature stories about how the individual members feel connected with the church.





Birthdays are also listed weekly in the Kindred Connection email sent every Thursday. If you would like to receive the weekly email, please contact the church office at 707-823-2484 or office@uccseb.org.

| December 1 | Alina Kingwill Peterson |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| December 3 | Jen Bredensen |
| December 3 | Santiago Basso |
| December 5 | Deanna Euritt |
| December 6 | Greg Nicholas |
| December 7 | Alvin Hukins |
| December 10 | Ginny Embry |
| December 11 | Jim Jenkins |
| December 11 | Amelia Cassells |
| December 13 | Elizabeth Thomas |

| December 13 | Judy Bredensen |
|-------------|---------------------|
| December 14 | Ruby Wood |
| December 15 | Daniella Kingwill |
| December 15 | Toni Cole |
| December 16 | Craig Allender |
| December 16 | Josie Cole |
| December 19 | Jack Dunlap |
| December 19 | Patty Raney |
| December 19 | Chris Malone |
| December 20 | Dick Zimmer |
| December 24 | Suzanne Albin |
| December 24 | Bruce Matson |
| December 26 | Lucy Moon-Shoulders |
| December 27 | Rowan Wright |
| December 28 | Mat Keller |
| December 28 | Jose Malone |

INTRODUCTIONS

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



scot Covington – A California native born in Roseville, Scot's family moved a lot while he was growing up. After graduating from high school in Pennsylvania, he returned to California for college and then began a career in the wine industry. Now retired, Scot lives in Forestville with his 14-year-old son Davis. Scot had been looking for a faith community to join and since attending services at Community Church, he has appreciated the warmth and inclusive feeling of the congregation. Welcome Scot.



Tirza Dawn – Tirza is a proud member of the West County Community where she

has raised her children in the splendors of ocean, forest, river, and orchard for the past 20 years. Tirza was a co-founder of the dhyana Center of Ayurveda and the Ayurvedic Yoga Teacher Trainings here in Sebastopol, which has been serving the community since 2010. Tirza's spiritual journey has woven many traditions, including Christianity, earth-based spirituality, Native American Church, and Vedic/Hindu lineages. Tirza has founded 3 non-profits with focuses ranging from ecological education through action sports, a circus arts intercultural peace organization, and projects dedicated to neurodiversity and autism advocacy. She currently attends semiwhere she is earning her Master of Divinity and, as part of her curriculum, is joyfully fulfilling her internship here at Community this congregation after hearing about its social justice work for so many years. Welcome Tirza.



Rachel Dovey – Rachel grew up Eastern Orthodox and baptized both of her children in the Orthodox Church. Dismayed by the church's slide into the far right, she thought she was done with religion until

INTRODUCTIONS cont.

WELCOME **NEW MEMBERS!**

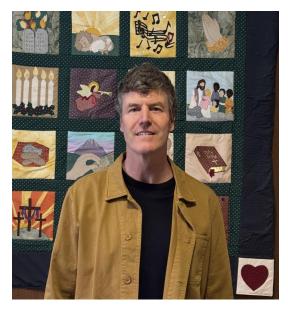
Rachel Dovey cont.

her kid saw a church with a rainbow flag and said, confused, "there are churches with rainbow flags? Can we go to one?" Her kid suggested Community Church because they flew a large and prominent rainbow flag. Rachel and Ethan, her son, came one Sunday roughly a year ago and they told each other later that it felt like walking into a hug. Rachel continues to hold onto her Christian-rooted faith because of her kid's openness to faith. Welcome Rachel!



Brook Haven Middle School who loves to draw, read graphic novels and comics, create interactive stories, and hang out with his friends. He was drawn to Community Church because it is affirming of who he is. Growing up Eastern Orthodox, he grew up loving the feast days, rituals, and stories of the saints, and was overjoyed to find a place where he can engage with the pillars of his faith in a place where he feels comfortable being himself. He likes to draw many things during the sermon such as dragons, skeletons, and weird little characters; so, if you see a dragon with anime

eyes and bloody fangs peeking out from the back of a pew, you'll know who left it there. Welcome Ethan!



Mark Lifvendahl - Mark spent his childhood in Illinois and Florida, and after college Mark explored many regions and cities before finally settling in Guerneville where he has lived for 30 years. Mark has an art gallery in Guerneville on Main Street and a home where he creates art. He spent many decades pursuing the teachings of yoga and Buddhism and even spent time in ashrams and monasteries in India and Thailand but an encounter with the Holy Ethan Dovey – Ethan is a seventh grader at Spirit two years ago changed Mark's heart. Mark is passionate about animal rights, plant-based eating, swimming in the Russian River, reading the Bible, and prayer. Welcome Mark!

INTRODUCTIONS cont.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



Maralee Wienert - Maralee Wienert is a widow with 2 beautiful children and 4 delightful grandchildren. She is a long-time nurse, a lifelong musician and an artist who among fellow human beings who seek to loves adventure. Her world travels started 60 years ago as a Peace Corps volunteer in village India. This week Maralee will be moving into a lovely tiny house on Bush Street in Santa Rosa. She is very glad to be joining this church community where she believes Christ would feel at home. Welcome Maralee.



Raina Woolfolk -

Raina came to Community Church out of a desire to experience peace and comfort be in service to the wider community in order that we would thrive together. This church had long intrigued her with its messages of inclusivity and acceptance. Raina believes in spiritual faith above rigid dogma and her mantra is "ever in gratitude." She participates in the Thursday midday meditation to which she brings an intimate knowledge of Celtic traditions. Welcome Raina.

GRAINS OF SALT & SPECS OF LIGHT



The INTER-CHURCH FOOD PANTRY basket is located in the entry to the Sanctuary. The item for December is Peanut Butter. Please don't leave perishables or expired food. To donate to or volunteer at the pantry, contact Mark Albin at 707.829.1492 or malbin@sonic.net.

All children grades TK - 5th are invited to sing with the **Advent Children's Choir.** The choir will rehearse with Andy DelMonte after worship each Sunday for 15 minutes starting on December 16 and ending the last Sunday of Advent. The children will sing in worship one Sunday in Advent and on Christmas Eve. Contact **Andy DelMonte** at (delmontemusic@yahoo.com) with any questions.

SAVE THE DATE — MEN'S RETREAT held at St. Columba's Retreat House in Inverness, January 30 — February 1, 2026. Scan or click on the QR code to register.

WOMEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP

Women's Discussion Group will no longer be meeting. It was born two years ago after Women's Retreat out of a desire for women to keep getting to know each other. We had a core group of around 16 and about 12 would show up for our meetings on the second Saturday of the month in the Fireside Room our first year. I usually led the group and coordinated others to take turns: Thank you Norma Watson, Sandy Rosen, Ann Shradar, Paula Pierce, Joanne Mason and Catherine Wulfensmith. Our last meeting was in December. Participation has been way down in 2025 and I feel it is time to end this program as there is no sustaining leadership. I am glad for the good times we shared and hope women will continue to attend Retreats to deepen fellowship.

DEDICATE A POINSETTIA FOR CHRISTMAS

Donate a poinsettia that will grace the altar for Christmas. Multiple dedications can be made per plant. Dedications will be printed in the service bulletin on Christmas Eve.

Click <u>HERE</u> to sign up online, or return the form, in the Narthex by Sunday, December 21st.

MEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP meets the first Tuesday of every month. December 2, 6 p.m., in the Fireside Room. Contact Stuart Mitchell at StuartMit@gmail.com.

DECEMBER 2025 Events at Community Church

DECEMBER 1 Prayer Shawls, 10 am, Fireside Room
DECEMBER 2 Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus

Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary

Men's Discussion Group, 6 pm, Fireside Room

DECEMBER 3 Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6

Online Bible Study, 5 pm, Zoom

DECEMBER 4 Meditation Group, 12 pm, Room 6

Women's Fellowship Card Writing, 2:30 pm, WF Drop-in Dreamwork Group, 5:30 pm, Room 6

Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room

DECEMBER 6 Accompaniment Training, 9:30 am, Fellowship Hall

DECEMBER 7 SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT: PEACE Worship Service, 10 am, Sanctuary

Godly Play (K-Grade 5), 10:15 am, Room 5

Kinship Time, 11:15 am, Bell Tower Courtyard

God & Donuts & Christmas Trees (Youth), 11:15 am, Gym Intergenerational Advent Craft, 11:15 am, Fellowship Hall Joyful Noise Food Pantry Fundraiser Concert, 4 pm, Sanctuary

DECEMBER 9 Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus

Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall Personnel Committee, 10 am, Chapel

Facilities Committee, 10 am, Fireside Room

Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary

Pastor-Parish Relations Team, 5 pm, Fireside Room

Outreach Committee, 7 pm, Fireside Room

DECEMBER 10 Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6

Online Bible Study, 5 pm, Zoom

Leadership Council, 6:30 pm, Media Room

DECEMBER 11 Meditation Group, 12 pm, Room 6

Drop-in Dreamwork Group, 5:30 pm, Room 6

Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room

DECEMBER 13 Second Saturday Lunch, Noon, Fountain Courtyard

DECEMBER 14 THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT: JOY

Worship Service, 10 am, Sanctuary

Kinship Time, 11:15 am, Bell Tower Courtyard God & Donuts (Youth), 11:15 am, Youth Lounge

Faith Formation Hour, 11:15 am, Various Finance Committee, 3 pm, Fireside Room Health & Safety Team, 3:30 pm, Room 6 Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary

DECEMBER 2025 Events at Community Church

DECEMBER 15 SALT & LIGHT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Prayer Shawls, 10 am, Fireside Room

DECEMBER 16 Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus

Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall Finance Committee, 3 pm, Fireside Room

Health & Safety, 3:30 pm, Room 6 Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary

Faith In Action Team, 5:30 pm, Fireside Room

DECEMBER 17 Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6

Online Bible Study, 5 pm, Zoom

Leadership Council, 6:30 pm, Media Room

DECEMBER 18 Meditation Group, 12 pm, Room 6

Drop-in Dreamwork Group, 5:30 pm, Room 6

Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room

DECEMBER 21 FOURTH SATURDAY IN ADVENT: LOVE

Worship Service, 10 am, Sanctuary

Godly Play (K-Grade 5), 10:15 am, Room 5 Kinship Time, 11:15 am, Bell Tower Courtyard

God & Donuts (Youth), 11:15 am, Gym

Intergenerational Pagent Prep Craft, 11:15 am, Fellowship Hall

DECEMBER 22 Ice Skating (Youth), TBD

DECEMBER 23 Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus

Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary

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DECEMBER 24 CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Family Friendly Candlelight Service with Pop-up Pagent, 4:30 pm, Sanctuary

Candlelight Service with Choir, Handbells & Sermon, 7 pm, Sanctuary

DEC 25—JAN 2 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

DECEMBER 25 Sunrise Rotary Christmas Toys & Dinner, 1 pm, Memorial Hall

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