

Community Church of
Sebastopol
United Church of
Christ
707.823.2484
www.uccseb.org
office@uccseb.org

Lead Minister
Rev. Dr. Benjamin J.
Broadbent

**Congregational
Administrator**
Joy Richards

**Faith Formation
Coordinator**
Tirza Dawn

Choral Director
Andy DelMonte

Keyboardist
J. Althea

Handbell Director
Karna Roa

Bookkeeper
Deanna Euritt

Custodian
Paul Louden

Seminarians
Tirza Dawn
Ross Pimentel

Pastor Emeritus
Rev. Gene Nelson



SALT & LIGHT

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF SEBASTOPOL

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

February: Metamorphosis

Rev. Dr. Benjamin J. Broadbent, Lead Minister

Because **Easter** is a moveable feast (the Sunday after the first full moon occurring on or after March 21, the spring equinox), the season of **Lent** (40 days plus 6 Sundays preceding Easter) begins earlier or later based on the date of Easter. Because **Ash Wednesday** (the first day of Lent) changes, the season of **Epiphany** (which begins on January 6) can last between 4 and 9 weeks. This year, Epiphany lasts 6 weeks, ending on February 15, the last Sunday before Lent, also known as **Transfiguration Sunday**.

The word “Transfiguration” comes from a story common to the synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Jesus goes up on a mountain with a few of his disciples and his true identity as God’s child is revealed to them. In this story, the Greek work translated as “transfigured” is *metamorphoó*. I think it is poetic that right here near the beginning of a new year, at the culmination of the season of Epiphany, the story we tell is one of metamorphosis. What we thought we understood and could control now reveals itself to us as deeper mystery and a more fruitful challenge that we could have anticipated.



With this idea of a mysterious metamorphosis in mind, I want to reflect on a few aspects of our life together as a congregation to provide something of an update, but also to share how I interpret the time in which we find ourselves.

- At the Annual Meeting of the Congregation in January, we passed a 2026 budget that does not include funding for an Associate Minister position. Because we landed about \$85,000 short of our pledge goal, and because our rental income has decreased over the past two years, it did not make sense to include a budget line we could not afford.
- While disappointing, the reality is that our Associate Minister Search Committee, which formed in June of last year, has looked at only six ministerial profiles, only three of which warranted an initial interview, and only one of which might have been a good fit. That candidate

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backed out of a second interview because they decided they were not prepared to move their family. This tracks with a national trend that people are not relocating, especially not to expensive regions such as Sonoma County.

- In the meantime, our congregation is experiencing one of the most successful and generous periods in our church's history, having gathered intent cards totaling \$883,493 toward our \$1.2M 3-year capital campaign goal, and an additional \$400,671 toward our 2026 Local Church & Out reach budget, for a total of \$1,284,164. What a faithful response and a major achievement.
- With regard to the Capital Campaign and the projects we intend for it to fund, the Leadership Council, with support from the Finance Committee, is working to determine how best to pay off the \$425,000 loan our church took out so that we could complete work on the sanctuary roof before the rainy season began. Additionally, a Capital Projects Team will need to form to begin the work of prioritizing projects that were part of the campaign prospectus, receiving bids from contractors, and authorizing the work to begin. Also, a Facilities Maintenance Plan Task Force will be drafting a comprehensive, long-term plan that will help us shift from reactive repairs to pro-active maintenance.
- Finally, we are going into a new governance year in the life of our congregation with an open seat on the Leadership Council. My sense is that last fall's Capital Campaign was a heavy, and successful, lift for our congregation, and there is some understandable fatigue among volunteers. A question I have for the year to come is, "How do we make ministry humane, sustainable, and life-giving for volunteers and staff alike?" Another is, "What less important things can we say 'no' to so that we say a whole-hearted yes to more important things?"

On the Mount of Transfiguration, the disciples were terrified. What they were seeing and hearing was not what they had expected. Moses and Elijah suddenly appeared out of nowhere. A cloud descended. A great light shone. A voice boomed from the cloud. They had not signed up for any of this. And yet there they were, bathed in the glow of a transformational moment, a metamorphosis that would change them, change their community, and change their world. What would you do in light of such a bewildering experience? Step-by-step, you walk back down into the world you are called to love.



FEBRUARY 2026 WORSHIP

The Turn From Epiphany to Lent

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

FEBRUARY 1 – 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Today we continue in the season of Epiphany. 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 [Matthew 5:1–12](#) entitled, “Foolish Wisdom.”

FEBRUARY 8 – 5th Sunday after Epiphany

Today the Handbell Ensemble, directed by **Karna Roa**, shares worship music and **Pastor Benjamin** preaches a sermon [Matthew 5:13–20](#) entitled, “Salt & Light.”

FEBRUARY 15 – 6th Sunday after Epiphany / Transfiguration Sunday

Today the Chancel Choir, directed by **Andy DelMonte**, shares worship music and **Pastor Benjamin** preaches a sermon on [Matthew 17:1–9](#) entitled, “Major Metamorphosis.”

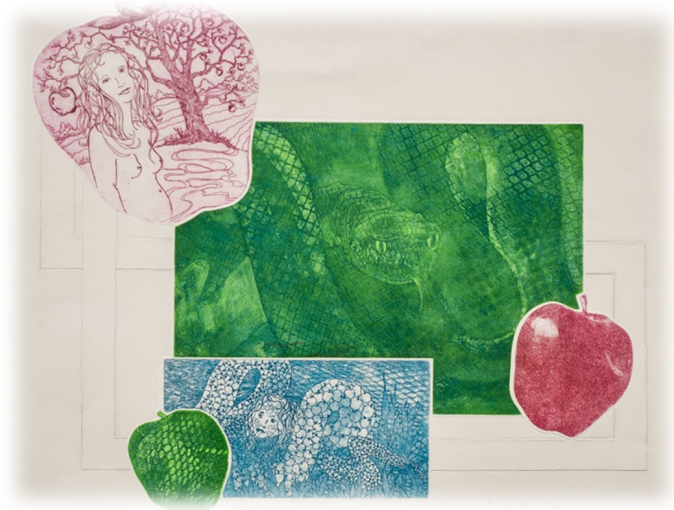
FEBRUARY 18 – Ash Wednesday

6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary:
Contemplative Service with
Imposition of Ashes

FEBRUARY 22 – 1st Sunday in Lent

As we begin the 40-day season of Lent, All Things New shares worship music and Pastor Benjamin preaches a sermon on [Genesis 2:15–17; 3:1–7](#) entitled, “The First Sermon.”

Coming in March... continuing the season of
Lent, Palm/Passion Sunday



OPEN DOORS

"I've always been involved with kind of edgy things," Tirza shares. "The adventure has woven in and out of my spirituality my whole life." As a child, she lived in a Christian commune with no running water or electricity, where her first memories are of making food together and gathering in community. As an adult, she carried that spirit forward by creating a peace-based activist circus in San Francisco, choreographing large-scale performances, teaching yoga and Ayurveda, and leading others into spiritual practice through movement, ritual, and service.



Before coming to Community Church, that same adventurous spirit was forged by years of intense responsibility and care.

Tirza raised two children largely on her own, including a son with significant special needs who requires "24/7 care. There's no stopping. There's no break," while she navigated a toxic marriage, built a business by necessity, and held her family together through years of instability. "My son is my greatest teacher," she shared. "He shaped who I am, what it means to really support somebody who exists outside of what we consider the norm."

In 2020, both of her children moved to Southern California. Tirza found herself traveling back and forth monthly, carrying love, responsibility, and grief, while quietly asking what her life was becoming now that survival was no longer the only task.

Community Church entered her life gently, through relationship. She had been around the grounds for years, using the kitchen for Ayurvedic cooking and attending her daughter's basketball games, but it wasn't until she helped a client get to church that she stayed herself. "I was really struck by Pastor Ben's sermon," she said. "He was speaking truths I really felt." With a history of Christian trauma, stepping into a church was not easy, yet she found herself feeling unexpectedly at home.

Dreams of entering seminary had first come into view years earlier, when her children were small. "I quickly realized that was insane," she says, laughing. It was only later, when her children were living in Southern California, that she had the space, and a nudge from a dear friend, to feel the timing was right to say yes.

As part of her seminary program, Community Church opened its doors. What began as an internship soon grew into deeper involvement and a role in faith formation. "Every single conversation here is about giving," Tirza said. "How can we help? How can we support? That's my language."

Today, Tirza describes her life as shaped less by crisis and more by meaning. She is healing her relationship with God and Jesus, becoming "a baby again" in faith, trusted and held during a time of transformation. Moments like baptisms feel especially sacred. "From the indigenous lineage I study, the holy waters are the holder of the Holy Spirit," she shared. "Everything we do with the water is so so so sacred. Each baptism is the deepest honor."

At Community Church, her years of parenting, caregiving, and resilience now fuel a larger purpose: helping create sanctuary and community for neurodiverse kids like her son. "Parents can't do it alone," she said. "We need teams. We need community." Community Church is a stepping stone on that path, a place where survival has softened into contribution, and where a life shaped by care is being trusted, nurtured, and shared.

Written by Linda Basso

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

BIRTHDAYS IN FEBRUARY



Birthdays are also listed 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.

February 2	Andrew/Alethea
February 4	Terry Beck
February 4	Nathan Knuth
February 5	Laura Pearsall
February 7	Ralph Hamblin
February 9	Chris Warner
February 9	Amy Scribner
February 9	Monica Plisskin
February 14	Samantha Harris
February 15	Brian Wetzel
February 15	Joan Carter

February 16	Parker Warner
February 16	Ruth Grant
February 18	Sonja Larssen
February 19	John Henel
February 20	Nico Bagley
February 22	Beth Nelson
February 22	Gary Weeks
February 23	Judy Davison
February 26	Elliot Sanderson
February 28	Erika DelMonte

St Patrick's Day Dinner Fundraiser



Join us as we continue to support the Flourishing Together Capital Campaign to make Community Church of Sebastopol's facilities more safe, beautiful, and accessible.

The Outreach Committee will hold a dinner to raise funds for the Capital Campaign.

A complete Corned Beef & Cabbage dinner to come together and show our support.

Saturday, March 14 5-8 p.m. in Memorial Hall

\$40.00 per person \$20.00 per child

Sing along to our favorite Irish songs!

Opportunity Drawing gift baskets to win and a Silent Auction.

General Public is Welcome. Tell all your friends!

Register online with [Realm.](#)



Lenten Soup Supper & Faith Journey Sharing



Join us for Mondays during Lent to have soup together followed by a sharing of someone's faith journey testimony.

Here are the dates to put on your calendars:

- Monday, February 23 - Soup Supper and Faith Journey Sharing #1
- Monday, March 2 - Soup Supper and Faith Journey Sharing #2
- Monday, March 9 - Soup Supper and Faith Journey Sharing #3
- Monday, March 16 - Soup Supper and Faith Journey Sharing #4
- Monday, March 23 - Soup Supper and Faith Journey Sharing #5

The schedule:

- 6:00 p.m. for potluck soup supper in Fellowship Hall
- 6:30-7:15 p.m. Faith Journey in the Church Chapel
- The people sharing their Faith Journey are still being determined currently. Look for bulletin announcements on the schedule and who will be sharing.

Soups are needed. We are looking for volunteers to bring soups for these dates. If you can bring a soup, email Kathy Matthies at kathleenmatthies57@gmail.com



EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME!

MEET OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Andrew/Alethea Davis



Andrew Jackson Davis grew up in the tiny village of Averill Park, New York, just twenty minutes east of Albany, with his mother Nancy and his brother Tom. He studied education, philosophy, theater, and music at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts, graduating in 1990. He moved to the Bay Area in May 1990 and has served as an early childhood educator and volunteer youth minister for over 35 years. Andrew came out as Queer and Trans on Halloween of 2021 and goes by Alethea Soaring Eagle when in feminine garb. Andrew is a life-long Christian in the liberal faith tradition and has moved to West Sonoma County to live out the rest of his life in faith and humble service. Welcome Andrew/Alethea!

Katrina & Rob Harris (Eli & Samantha)



Rob is a veteran of the wine industry who farms and sells about 400 acres of grapes from all over Sonoma County. He enjoys live music and anything in or on the ocean. Katrina is a seasoned Registered Nurse who currently works as the Nursing Director at an ambulatory surgical center in Santa Rosa. She enjoys gardening, riding horses, and her many pets of various sizes, shapes, and species. Rob and Katrina both relish time spent with their children and chasing their many activities. Eli is 10 years old and in the fifth grade at Gravenstein Elementary School here in Sebastopol. He plays soccer and flag football and is a proud member of the Sebastopol Sea Serpent Swim Team. He lists playing outside, math, and dinosaurs as his favorite things. His little sister, Samantha, a 6 (almost 7!) year-old first grader at Gravenstein. She participates in gymnastics and plays soccer and softball. Her favorite things include her rother, unicorns, and singing in the backseat. They are all excited to be here. Welcome Rob, Katrina, Eli & Samantha.

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MEET OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Tommy Hickox & Greanna Holiman (Clarke)



Tommy is an active member of the local community who enjoys connecting with others. He brings a background in Culinary Arts and hopes to support the church's many outreach missions and help to spread God's love. He appreciates the welcoming atmosphere of the Community Church of Sebastopol and is looking forward to deepening his faith and building meaningful relationships within this spiritual home. Tommy is excited to officially become part of the church family and serve alongside its members.

Before finding Jesus, Greanna always loved to pray, encouraging her friends and family to do so often. Once Jesus came into her prayer, everything shifted as she felt his unconditional and eternal love enter her world and decided

to follow his light. She has spent her life caring for children through being a private nanny and working alongside farmers to get their produce into the hands of the community. She is honored today to become a member of the most high-spirited and joyful congregation she's ever experienced (and she church shopped quite a bit). She looks forward to strengthening her connection with God, the splendor of the natural world, and each one of you in the years to come as a member of Community Church. Greanna and her son Clarke were baptized in worship last Sunday. Welcome, Tommy, Greanna, and Clarke.

Holly Locey



Holly has been married to her high school sweetheart, Jack, for 52 years. They have 2 grown daughters and 2 wonderful granddaughters. She worked at 1st Presbyterian Church in Santa Rosa as Children's Director for about 15 years and started coming here about a year ago and joined the choir, which she has enjoyed very much. She has never felt such a warm connection with so many people so quickly as she has here. It's truly been a healing experience. Welcome, Holly!

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EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME! Cont...

MEET OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Julie Hodge & Henry Milcoff



Julie is a pediatric Hospice Chaplain for By the Bay Health. She has four kids, Zoe (20), Olive (18), Hazel (17), and Henry (14). Her family has lived in Sebastopol for 12 years and they love camping, hiking, and being in nature. Big Sur is one of their favorite spots. Julie spent the first part of her life growing up in Indiana and New York City. I came out to the west coast in 1999 and obtained her Master of Divinity degree from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley and is an ordained minister. On Julie's to-do list this year is to start writing a book, join an indoor soccer team, and meditate more.

Henry is 14 years old. He attends Summerfield Waldorf School & Farm and is finishing his 8th grade year. He will be attending Analy High School next year. He likes to play basketball and golf and has a pug named Otis. He has 3 sisters and is looking forward to visiting his oldest sister in Germany next month. Welcome, Julie and Henry.



February 2026 Events at Community Church

<i>FEBRUARY 1</i>	4th SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY Worship Service, 10 am, Sanctuary Kinship Time, 11:15 am, Bell Tower Courtyard Church Chat, 11:15 am, Chapel
<i>FEBRUARY 2</i>	Prayer Shawls, 10 am, Fireside Room
<i>FEBRUARY 3</i>	Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary Men's Discussion Group, 6:30 pm, Fireside Room
<i>FEBRUARY 4</i>	Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6 Online Bible Study, 5 pm, Zoo
<i>FEBRUARY 7</i>	Jean Boal Memorial Service, 2 pm, Sanctuary
<i>FEBRUARY 8</i>	5th SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY Worship Service, 10 am, Sanctuary Godly Play (K-Grade 5), 10:15 am, Room 5 Kinship Time, 11:15 am, Bell Tower Courtyard Church Chat, 11:15 am, Chapel Intergenerational Gym, 11:15 am, Memorial Hall
<i>FEBRUARY 10</i>	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall Personnel Committee, 10 am, Chapel Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary Pastor-Parish Relations Team, 5 pm, Fireside Room Outreach Committee, 7 pm, Fireside Room
<i>FEBRUARY 11</i>	Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6 Online Bible Study, 5 pm, Zoom Facilities Committee, 6:30 pm, Fireside Room
<i>FEBRUARY 12</i>	Meditation Group, 12 pm, Room 6 Drop-in Dreamwork Group, 5:30 pm, Room 6 Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
<i>FEBRUARY 14</i>	Second Saturday Lunch, Noon, Fellowship Hall
<i>FEBRUARY 15</i>	<i>SALT & LIGHT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE FOR MARCH ISSUE</i> 6th SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY/TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY Worship Service, 10 am, Sanctuary Kinship Time, 11:15 am, Bell Tower Courtyard Church Chat, 11:15 am, Chapel

February 2026 Events at Community Church cont...

FEBRUARY 16	<i>President's Day Holiday, Church Office Closed</i>
	Prayer Shawls, 10 am, Fireside Room
FEBRUARY 17	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus
	Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall
	Finance Committee, 3 pm, Fireside Room
	Health & Safety Team, 3:30 pm, Room 6
	Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
FEBRUARY 18	<i>ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE, 6:30 pm, Sanctuary</i>
	Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6
	Online Bible Study, 5 pm, Zoom
FEBRUARY 19	Meditation Group, 12 pm, Room 6
	Drop-in Dreamwork Group, 5:30 pm, Room 6
	Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
FEBRUARY 21	Leadership Council Orientation Event, 8 am, Media Room
FEBRUARY 22	<i>1ST SUNDAY IN LENT</i>
	Disaster Recovery Trip Meeting, 9 am, Chapel
	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, Youth Lounge
	Search Committee, 12:16 pm, Fireside Room
FEBRUARY 23	Lenten Soup Supper, 6 pm, Fellowship Hall
	Lenten Faith Journey, 6:30 pm
FEBRUARY 24	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus
	Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall
	Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
	Leadership Council, 6:30 pm, Media Room
FEBRUARY 25	Women's Bible Study, 10 am, Room 6
	Online Bible Study, 5 pm, Zoom
FEBRUARY 26	Meditation Group, 12 pm, Room 6
	Drop-in Dreamwork Group, 5:30 pm, Room 6
	Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room





GRAINS OF SALT & SPECS OF LIGHT



MEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP Tuesday, February 3, 6:00 p.m. in the Fireside Room. Topic: "Reflecting on Stability." Contact **Stuart Mitchell** at stuartmit@gmail.com / 707.328.0228.

SANCTUARY FLOWERS beautify our worship space every Sunday. To sponsor flowers in honor of a person or event, sign up on the poster in the Narthex.



TRANS 101 program at Shomrei Torah in Santa Rosa: "Trans Journeys" in-person at Congregation Shomrei Torah, Feb 22, 2:00 p.m. See flyer in Narthex.

DISASTER RECOVERY OPPORTUNITY TRIP 2026

Informational Meeting on Sunday, February 22, 9:00 a.m. in the Chapel. No construction experience is needed. Flyer available on the table in the Narthex.

INTER-CHURCH FOOD PANTRY

Shopping basket is located in the sanctuary entryway. The requested item for February is Peanut Butter. No perishable or expired food. To volunteer, contact **Mark Albin** at 707.829.1492 / malbin@sonic.net.

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1000 Gravenstein Hwy N
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