

Community Church of
Sebastopol
United Church of
Christ
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Rev. Dr. Benjamin J.
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J. Althea

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Bookkeeper

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Paul Louden

**Member-in-
Discernment**

Ross Pimentel

Pastor Emeritus

Rev. Gene Nelson



SALT & LIGHT

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF SEBASTOPOL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST APRIL 2026 NEWSLETTER

Lazarus, Come Out!

Rev. Dr. Benjamin J. Broadbent, Lead Minister

There are no miracles in the Gospel of John, only *signs*. The raising of Jesus' friend Lazarus from the dead, in chapter 11, is the seventh and final sign. This assertion of God's power over death is threatening to the authorities who begin conspiring to kill not only Jesus, but also Lazarus (11:53 & 12:10).

In "Lazarus, Come Forth," a book about the power of nonviolence, Father John Dear writes: "This Gospel story sets the path for the rest of our lives. We are no longer dead but summoned to live life to the full. That means, we have to renounce our complicity with the culture of death and do what we can to help everyone else live life to the full" (pp. 172). A pretty succinct summary of the Easter message.

There is a surprising detail that connects the story of Lazarus's raising to the resurrection itself. *Soudarion* is the Greek word for the piece of cloth used to wrap the head of a corpse. When Lazarus emerges from the tomb, his head is wrapped in a *soudarion*. Jesus says, "Unbind him, and let him go." In the story of the Jesus' resurrection, when Peter eventually enters the tomb, he finds the *soudarion* "rolled up in a place by itself." The use of the same word is a literary way of connecting the two stories and saying what happened then happened here. Jesus is unbound. Death was overcome. Death is overcome again.

If raising Lazarus was a sign, the purpose of the sign was to show what Jesus proclaimed: "I am the resurrection and the life" (11:25). The sign is not the thing, but points to the truth that Jesus embodies the defeat of death and the fullness of life, both then for Lazarus and the disciples, and now for you and me, and all creation.

In these days of fascism and fear, Christians who believe in human rights and in the separation of church and state are finding their voices to advocate and struggle for a political system marked by justice and equity rather than corruption and bullying. In that context, we can hear Jesus' command, "Lazarus, come out!" as a call to step out of the tomb of death and despair and into the fresh air of life abundant.



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Read from a queer perspective, the call to “come out” is a call to embrace the fullness of one’s embodied truth rather than hiding in the tomb of shame. In his book, “Coming Out as Sacrament,” Chris Glaser describes coming out as “an act of both courage and vulnerability that, like other sacraments, serves as means of grace.” Coming out is a political (not private) action that chooses fullness of life over half-dead existence, and it makes a difference in the world we live in.

As Easter people living in a Good Friday world, we are called to “come out” of the tomb, to resist the culture of death, and to step into fullness of life with courage and vulnerability. We do this grounded in the conviction that what *was* then – the resurrection of Jesus from the dead – *is* now – the risen Christ already victorious over the powers of division and death. And if you find it hard to believe in miracles, that’s okay. There are signs of the resurrection everywhere.

*Image: “Resurrection of Lazarus,” Julia Stankova (2006)



Save the Date All Church Camp August 28-30

It’s a wonderful weekend for people of all ages filled with community, nature, peace, fun, music, dancing, crafts, swimming, reflection and so much more at the local camp Westminster Woods in Occidental. Theme for the weekend TBD.



APRIL 2026 WORSHIP
The Day of Resurrection & the Easter Season

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*

APRIL 2 – Maundy Thursday

6:30 p.m. service in the sanctuary with ritual Washing of Feet, Sacrament of Holy Communion, and Tenebrae readings

APRIL 3 – Good Friday

Noon – 3:00 p.m. vigil in the chapel with readings, silence, and stations of the cross

APRIL 5 – Easter Sunday / Day of Resurrection

- 6:30 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service in the Fountain Court-yard
- 10:00 a.m. Easter Worship Service in the Sanctuary with Handbells, Organ, Choir, and Brass

APRIL 12 – 2nd Sunday of Easter

Today we continue the 50-day Easter season (10 more days than the season of Lent) and hear the story of Peter's sermon on the resurrection found in [Acts:2:22–32](#).

APRIL 19 – 3rd Sunday of Easter

The Chancel Choir shares worship music and Rev. Gene Nelson, Pastor Emeritus, preaches a sermon on [Luke 24:13–35](#) entitled, "Emmaus Still Happens."

APRIL 26 – 4th Sunday of Easter

Today our in-house band, All Things New shares worship music and Rev. Benjamin J. Broadbent, Lead Minister, preaches a sermon on [Acts 2:42–47](#) entitled, "All Things in Common."

Coming in May... final musical offerings for the year from the Handbell Ensemble & Chancel Choir, Bible Presentations to grades 4–6, Graduate Recognition, Ascension Day, Pentecost, Strengthen the Church Special Offering of the UCC

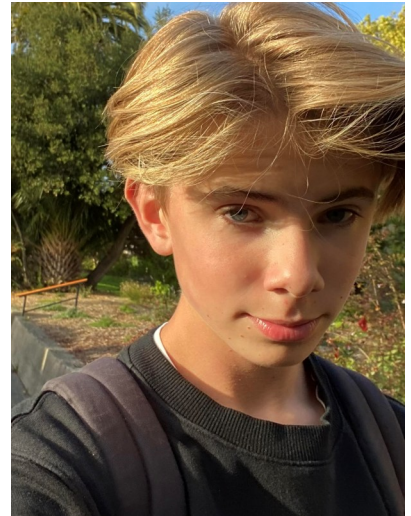
*Image: "Christ Breaks the Rifle," Kelli Latimore



NURTURING SPACE

Henry is a thoughtful, kind, and quietly funny young member of our Community Church. A lover of music, positivity, and meaningful connection, Henry brings curiosity and warmth wherever he shows up, especially on Sunday mornings.

Henry first began attending church as a child, tagging along as his mom brought their family through the doors. At that age, he described church as something he experienced passively, pleasant, and familiar, but not yet deeply his own. Like many young people, he didn't yet know what role faith or community might play in his life. What he did know was that it felt like a welcoming and safe place to be.



Over time, relationships transformed Henry's experience of church. Joining the tech team gave him a way to contribute and belong, offering both responsibility and connection. "Being on the tech team is really fun, and it's nice getting to know other kids my age," Henry shared. "I probably wouldn't get to know them any other way." Working alongside others who were supportive and encouraging helped him feel valued, while programs like confirmation class invited him to explore faith in a thoughtful and engaging way.

Henry is especially grateful for the people who make up this community. "I'm just so thankful for all the people," he said. "It's really amazing." He also speaks warmly of Pastor Ben's teaching and the way sermons invite reflection rather than repetition. "A lot of the sermons I remember from months back, and that's just really cool to me," Henry shared. "They're really thought-provoking." One recent sermon, in particular, stayed with him, exploring what it means to reflect love outward into the world. "Pastor Ben had this sermon about being a mirror and a window, that we mirror Jesus's love and are a window into something greater than ourselves," Henry said. "I thought that was really powerful."

Today, church is something Henry truly looks forward to. "I love coming," he shared. "It's made Sundays my favorite day of the week now." Through meaningful relationships, engaging teaching, and opportunities to contribute, his faith has become something alive and personal. He describes the Community Church as unique, rooted in kindness, open curiosity, and learning that continues beyond the walls of the sanctuary. Being part of this community has helped Henry grow, reflect, and feel connected to something greater than himself.

Henry's story is a reminder that the church's greatest impact often unfolds quietly, through relationships that nurture belonging and spaces that invite young people to participate fully. When we invest in the life of this church, we invest in the growth of individuals like Henry and in a community that continues to shape lives with care, intention, and hope.

Written by Reena Burton

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

BIRTHDAYS IN APRIL



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

1	Sara Margulis	17	Emilia Poisson
1	Charlie Williams, Jr.	19	Kloie Berndt
5	Jeff Boal	21	Jessa Drury
5	Catherine Wulfensmith	24	Ethan Arnold-Peterson
5	Quent Cole	25	Dennis Olson
6	Irma Bachelor	25	Terri Harper
6	J. Althea	26	Kathy Matthies
7	Devon Wright	27	Deidra Warner
11	Tony Given	28	Chris Chang Weeks
14	Char Mitchell	28	Eleonora Wiser
15	Scott McGinnis	29	Brooke Bell
15	Laura Willoughby	30	Nancy Shimetz
16	Tom Boag	30	Isabel MacKillop
17	Roger Wilson	30	Sabina Malone



SCHOOL SUPPLY DONATION DRIVE



Starting April 12, 2026

The Mission & Outreach Team is collecting Backpack supplies. All donations will be taken To our Village Closet, a local Sonoma County Organization that supports children and youth Impacted by foster care and kinship care situa tions.

Please donate only new, high-quality supplies to the basket in the church entry by **July 12, 2026.**

- Lunch boxes
- Metal water bottles (adult size)
- New tennis shoes (youth - adult sizes)
- Pencil bags/boxes
- Crayons (36-count or less)
- Crayons (oversized for small hands)
- Binder divider tabs • Character folders (2 pocket)
- Spiral notebook (college & wide)
- Lined paper (college & wide)
- Composition books (college & wide)
- 3 ring binders (1-inch or smaller)
- Glue sticks
- Kids scissors (left & right-handed)
- Markers (24-count or smaller, thin & thick)
- Ice packs (for lunch boxes)
- Hand sanitizer (5-oz size)

For more information, please contact Kathy Matthies kathleenmatthies57@gmail.com .



REBUILDING TOGETHER SEBASTOPOL/PETALUMA

Submitted by Peggy Porter



May 2, 2026

Rebuilding Together is a national nonprofit that organizes volunteers to assist seniors and people with disabilities with home repairs and yard maintenance, helping them remain in their homes longer. Inspired by the tradition of neighbors helping neighbors, this organization leads community-based efforts nationwide.

Each year, the Community Church forms a volunteer team to support local Sebastopol residents. All skill levels are welcome, and families can participate together—it's a great way to put faith into action and connect with others.

For more information, contact Peggy Porter at 707-291-6353 or pporter501@gmail.com.

Volunteering with Rebuilding Together offers a fulfilling experience for individuals and groups alike. Participants have expressed how rewarding it feels to make a tangible difference in someone's life, whether by painting a fence, repairing a leaky faucet, or simply sharing a friendly conversation with a homeowner. The program not only strengthens the safety and comfort of community members' homes but also builds lasting relationships among volunteers and recipients.

Since its founding, Rebuilding Together has improved thousands of homes across the country, fostering resilience and independence for those who might otherwise face challenges staying safely in their residences. By joining these efforts, you become part of a movement dedicated to compassion, generosity, and practical solutions for community well-being.



APRIL 2026 Events at Community Church

APRIL 2	<p>MAUNDY THURSDAY</p> <p>Meditation Group, Noon, Room 6 Women’s Fellowship Card Writing, WF Room Drop-In Dreamwork Group, 5:30 pm Room 6 Maundy Thursday Service, 6:30 pm, Sanctuary Chancel Choir, 7:30 pm, Choir Room</p>
APRIL 3	<p>GOOD FRIDAY</p> <p>Good Friday Prayer Vigil, Noon—3 pm, Chapel</p>
APRIL 4	<p>HOLY SATURDAY</p>
APRIL 5	<p>EASTER SUNDAY</p> <p>Easter Sunrise Service, 6:30 am, Fountain Courtyard Easter Worship Service, 10 am, Sanctuary Kinship Time, 11:15 am, Bell Tower Courtyard</p>
APRIL 6	<p>Prayer Shawl Group, 10 am, Fireside Room</p>
APRIL 7	<p>Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary Online Bible Study, 5 pm, Zoom Men’s Discussion Group, 6 pm, Fireside Room</p>
APRIL 8	<p>Facilities Committee, 6:30 pm, Fireside Room</p>
APRIL 9	<p>Meditation Group, 12 pm, Room 6 Drop-in Dreamwork Group, 5:30 pm, Room 6 Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room</p>
APRIL 11	<p>Second Saturday Lunch, Noon, Fellowship Hall</p>
APRIL 12	<p>2nd SUNDAY OF EASTER</p> <p>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, Gym Personnel Committee, 12:15, Fireside Room</p>
APRIL 14	<p>Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary Online Bible Study, 5 pm, Zoom Pastor-Parish Relations Team, 5 pm, Fireside Room Outreach Committee, 7 pm, Fireside Room</p>
APRIL 15	<p>SALT & LIGHT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE FOR MAY ISSUE</p>

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APRIL 2026 Events at Community Church cont...

- APRIL 16** Meditation Group, 12 pm, Room 6
Drop-in Dreamwork Group, 5:30 pm, Room 6
Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
- APRIL 19** *3rd SUNDAY OF EASTER*
Worship Service, 10 am, Sanctuary
Kinship Time, 11:15 am, Bell Tower Courtyard
God & Donuts (Youth), 11:15 am, Youth Lounge
Church Chat, 11:15 am, Chapel
Safe Church Training, 11:15 am, Media Room
APRIL 20 *Prayer Shawl Group, 10:00 am, Fireside Room*
- APRIL 21** Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus
Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall
Finance Committee, 3:30 pm, Fireside Room
Health & Safety Team, 3:30 pm, Room 6
Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
Leadership Council, 6 pm, Media Room
Online Bible Study, 5 pm, Zoom
FIAT Team, 5:30 pm, Fireside Room
- APRIL 23** Meditation Group, 12 pm, Room 6
Drop-in Dreamwork Group, 5:30 pm, Room 6
Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
- APRIL 26** *4th SUNDAY OF EASTER*
Worship Service, 10 am, Sanctuary
Godly Play (K-Grade 5), 10:15 am, Room 5
Kinship Time, 11:15 am, Bell Tower Courtyard
Bible Workshop, Grades 4-6, 11:15 am, Room 6
God & Donuts (Youth), 11:15 am, Youth Lounge
- APRIL 28** Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus
Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall
Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
Online Bible Study, 5:00 pm, Zoom
- APRIL 29** Leadership Council, 6:30 pm, Media Room
- APRIL 30** 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

HOLY WEEK & EASTER

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE on April 2, 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary with ritual Washing of Feet, Holy Communion, special Choral Anthem, and Tenebrae readings (Tenebrae=shadows). All ages welcome.

GOOD FRIDAY VIGIL on April 3, Noon – 3:00 in the Chapel with silence, readings, and stations of the cross. Come for any portion.

GOOD FRIDAY Solidarity Vigil with Sonoma County Sanctuary Coalition at the County Jail, 2777 Ventura Way, Santa Rosa, April 3, 5:00-6:00 p.m.

EASTER SERVICES on April 5 are for people of all ages:

Easter Sunrise Service at 6:30 a.m. in the Fountain Courtyard for all ages

Easter Worship Service at 10:00 a.m. in the sanctuary with Handbell Ensemble, Chancel Choir, Trumpets, Easter Lilies, and Sermon.

Velocity Handbell Concert 2026: Light and Motion

Friday, May 15, 2026

Sebastopol Community Church
Save the date for Velocity's Spring Concert featuring the world premiere of Christian Guebert's "Five Spacetime Movements."



SPECS OF LIGHT

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.



WOMEN'S COFFEE & CARE discussion group meets on Wednesdays, 10 a.m. at Café Moore. Contact **Norma Watson** at normawatson1949@gmail.com.

ONLINE BIBLE STUDY meets Wednesdays, 5:00–6:30 p.m. via Zoom. Contact **Gail Thomas** for the link at 707.758.0295.

MEDITATION GROUP meets Thursdays, 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. in Room 6. Contact **Mary Culberson** at 707.525.1730.

DREAMWORK GROUP meets on Thursdays, 5:30–6:30 p.m. in Room 6. Contact **Raymond Dougherty** at 707.338.2500.

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