

**Community Church of
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**United Church of
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Broadbent

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Andy DelMonte

Keyboardist
Tim Imbach

Handbell Director
Karna Roa

Custodian
Paul Loudon

Pastor Emeritus
Rev. Gene Nelson



SALT & LIGHT

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF SEBASTOPOL

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

SEPTEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

Radical Hospitality

Rev. Benjamin J. Broadbent, Lead Minister

When I was a junior in college at Pacific University, I did not want to spend a “January Term” taking one class in the Oregon rain. Instead, I organized a trip with four other students to Quetzaltenango in Guatemala to work for the month on building houses with a Habitat for Humanity project. Upon arrival, a family in the project welcomed us into their current home – walls of crumbling plaster and a patchy thatch roof punctuated with slits of sunlight splashing through it onto the packed dirt floor.

What struck me most, however, was not their poverty, but their hospitality. They had prepared for us. They’d swept, washed, and aired. Five comfortable chairs were set out. Fresh food simmered on the stove. There were smiles and laughter, expressions of interest, the offering of gifts. We were already overwhelmed when the family insisted on singing for us. What other gifts could we possibly imagine? All our needs – and more – had been provided for.



The Bible describes this kind of radical hospitality. In Genesis 18, Abraham hosts three visitors who turn out to be angels. In Hebrews 13:2, the fledgling church is encouraged: “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.” Throughout the Gospels, Jesus accepts hospitality and extends it to others without regard for convention or propriety. It’s no exaggeration to say that he threatened the authorities because he insisted on eating with all the wrong people.

What if “radical hospitality” became the hallmark of Community Church, the thing for which we were known? What would that require of us? An initial response might be from a place of scarcity: “Well, it would cost a lot, and it’s hard to get people to volunteer, and we need to worry about our own members first.” It’s true that hospitality takes effort and intention, but what if it didn’t require us to give anything other than what we already have at our disposal?

In Matthew 14, the disciples tell Jesus to send away the crowds because, “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.” This is impossible.

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They either have nothing, or they have something. The question is whether they trust God to bless what they have and multiply it to fulfill needs that are beyond their control.

I think we can be a people of radical hospitality, trusting God to bless what we have. Like the family in Guatemala, we can anticipate the needs of the strangers we meet and let them know that they are welcome here, offering the food and friendship God has provided without judging whether it is enough. If what we have is offered with God's blessing, it is already, by definition, enough.



“Meet our September 20 Guest Preacher and Presenter”



Rev. Dr. David Vásquez-Levy serves as President of Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. One of the UCC seminaries, PSR justice that prepares theologically and spiritually rooted leaders to work for the well-being of all. A committed pastor, a nationally recognized higher education and immigration leader, and a sought-after speaker, Vásquez-Levy leads at the intersection of faith, higher education, and social change. His innovations have led to increase access in theological education and leadership formation. Originally from Guatemala, Vásquez-Levy has lived in four countries, including working on a refugee resettlement in Canada, and taught courses and led international study and service trips across the globe.



SEPTEMBER 2026 WORSHIP

The Season after Pentecost

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

SEPTEMBER 6 – 15th Sunday after Pentecost / Gathering of the Waters

This morning we gather for multi-generational worship. We will gather and bless the waters of summer and celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion. **Rev. Benjamin J. Broadbent**, Lead Minister, preaches a sermon for all ages on [Matthew 18:15–20](#) entitled, “How to Be an Adult.”

SEPTEMBER 13 – Launch Sunday

Today we launch the ministry program year of our church which stretches until Memorial Day weekend next May. Our Chancel Choir, under the direction of **Andy DelMonte**, makes its debut and **Karna Roa** plays our organ. **Pastor Benjamin** preaches a sermon on [Exodus 14:19–31](#) entitled, “Ambivalent Deliverance.”



SEPTEMBER 20 – 17th Sunday after Pentecost

Today the Handbell Ensemble, directed by **Karna Roa**, makes its debut and we welcome a guest preacher, **Rev. Dr. David Vasquez-Levy**, President of the Pacific School of Religion, who will preach on [Exodus 16:2–15](#) a sermon entitled, “Desert Sustenance.”

SEPTEMBER 27 – Outreach Sunday

Today we will receive the Neighbors in Need Special Offering of our denomination, the United Church of Christ, and we will celebrate our church’s various outreach commitments. **Pastor Benjamin** preaches a sermon on [Matthew 21:23–32](#) entitled, “Let Your No Become Yes.”

Coming in October... Neighbors in Need Special Offering, World Communion Sunday, Pledge Drive Kick-Off, New Members Join, Recognition of 30, 40 & 50+ year members





SEPTEMBER 3

Sophia Broadbent-Bell
David Kilpatrick

SEPTEMBER 4

Greg Davis

SEPTEMBER 5

Chris Stoll

SEPTEMBER 7

Jane Huneke

SEPTEMBER 9

Renee Murakami

SEPTEMBER 10

Greg Yaylian
Michelle Bowman

SEPTEMBER 11

Sheina Curtis

SEPTEMBER 13

Kathy Bell
Jack Christensen

SEPTEMBER 14

Fran Rasmus

SEPTEMBER 15

Paula Pearce
Henry Knuth

SEPTEMBER 16

Joshua Hovden

SEPTEMBER 19

Reena Burton
Linda Delgado

SEPTEMBER 21

Judy Hawkins

SEPTEMBER 23

Carleen Madsen
Henry Allen
Hugi Basso

SEPTEMBER 24

Lisa Pruitt

SEPTEMBER 25

Jim Furber-Dobson

SEPTEMBER 26

Spencer Allen
Drew Thomas
Kelly Allen

SEPTEMBER 28

Markus Wiser
Tirza Dawn

SEPTEMBER 29

Edwin Wilson
Jonah Knuth

SEPTEMBER 30

Carmen Yeager

Youth Ministry in a Changing World

Tirza Dawn, Faith Formation Coordinator

One of the great gifts of serving as Faith Formation Coordinator is that our pastor is always placing new books in my hands. Recently he lent me *The End of Youth Ministry?* by Andrew Root. While the title sounds alarming, the book isn't really about the end of youth ministry at all.

Instead, Root explores how the world around teenagers and families has changed dramatically over the past few decades. Youth ministry hasn't become less important; if anything, it has become more essential. But perhaps it needs to respond to different needs than it once did.

Today's teenagers are growing up in a world unlike any previous generation. They are more connected than ever through technology, yet many report feeling increasingly isolated. Their schedules are packed with academic, athletics, music lessons, jobs, volunteer commitments, and college preparation. Parents naturally want what is best for their children—to help them thrive, stay safe, discover who they are, and prepare for meaningful futures. With so many wonderful opportunities competing for their time, youth group can sometimes feel like just one more activity on an already overflowing calendar.



Yet I wonder if what many teenagers are longing for is not another achievement but another kind of presence.

Young people need adults who will simply show up. They need mentors, trusted elders, and caring friends who will listen without rushing to fix them. They need face-to-face conversation, shared meals, laughter, storytelling, service, silence, prayer, and adventures that cannot be experienced through a screen. They need places where they can ask hard questions about faith, identity, purpose, and belonging. And they need to know they will be met with compassion rather than judgment.

Perhaps one of the greatest gifts the church can offer today's youth is not a busier schedule but a slower pace. A community where they can breathe deeply, unplug, build genuine friendships, encounter God, and discover that they are deeply loved just as they are.

As we begin our new program year on Launch Sunday, September 13, we will begin our **Confirmation Class** for our 8th and 9th graders where they begin a meaningful journey of exploring Scripture, Christian tradition, and what it means to build a relationship with God and with Jesus in today's world.

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The day before Launch Sunday, we will be joyfully participating in **Porchfest**, a nationwide celebration of music and community. This year Porchfest is located in our neighborhood and the Community Church of Sebastopol will be hosting a DJ stage, dance party, craft tables, coffee, lemonade and baked goods stand as we extravagantly welcome our neighbors to our campus. We hope our youth will help that day be great by making iced lattes, sell cookies, create crafts, dance, laugh, and enjoy the freedom of walking together through our neighborhood in a safe, family-friendly community festival. Fundraising during the event will also help support future youth activities and adventures.

Sign up to volunteer for a 2-hour shift at Porchfest on September 12.

Later in the spring, our youth will be participating in the **Our Whole Lives (OWL)** retreat, where they will thoughtfully explore topics of sexuality, relationships, identity, and spirituality in a caring, respectful, and faith-filled environment.

All of our **God & Donuts** youth have an exciting and relaxing year ahead, with service projects, field trips, gatherings, “kick backs” and new opportunities to build friendships—not only within our own congregation but with teens throughout our wider community.

Youth ministry is about reminding our young people that they belong: to God, to one another and to a community that delights in walking alongside them. In a world that often asks young people to perform, produce, and achieve, the church has the beautiful opportunity to offer something different: a place where they can simply be known, be loved, and grow into the people God is calling them to become.

If you know a teenager who is looking for connection, purpose, or simply a place to belong, we would love to welcome them. And if you are an adult who has ever wondered whether you have something to offer the next generation, the answer is yes. Sometimes the greatest gift we can give our youth is simply our presence.

Call out for a male youth leader for God and Donuts 2026/27 program year! If you are feeling the call to have fun and discover new and innovative ways to engage our youth ministry, contact Tirza Dawn, Faith Formation Coordinator, at faithformation@uccseb.org.



I CAN FLY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

Garth Watson

On Sunday, July 26, during the UCC service, a choir performed a new choral piece, “If I Could Fly Where the Warm Air Flows.” Many have asked about the process behind writing this piece. While there are countless technical books, online articles, and videos about music composition, I didn’t read or watch any of them. Instead, this piece grew from community, curiosity, and a beautiful morning in Blucher Valley.

A Tap on the Shoulder

The journey began in 2020. **Brian Plaugher** was inviting volunteers to join the choir, and **Sonia Larssen** tapped me on the shoulder, persuading me to sign up. At that moment, I had zero music theory knowledge and no formal singing experience—just childhood memories and a love for singing from the pews.

I quickly realized that singing harmony parts is much harder than it looks! To keep up, I started taking voice lessons and enrolled in an online music class. When the class ended, my tutor casually said, “Okay, you are now ready to write a song.” My immediate thought was, *Yikes, that’s not going to happen! Don’t you need a special talent or divine inspiration for that?*

Inspiration in the Valley

I put the idea on the back burner. Then came a quiet morning on our porch, watching the sun warm Blucher Valley. I noticed four grey herons flying low, in formation, up the valley. A short while later, I saw them again, flying in the same direction but much higher. They had found a thermal, a rising column of warm air, and were spiraling upward.

Over the next two hours, dozens of other birds joined them. Most were turkey vultures, but there was also a mix of red-tailed hawks, red-shouldered hawks, and Cooper’s hawks. These are species that usually do not get along. Yet, they completely put aside their territorial squabbles to share the thermal, working together—and just having fun together—in the sky.

I kept track of the herons until they were a short line of specks, still topmost in the column. Before the thermal began to collapse, the sky was filled with incredible sight, making the 60 to 70 birds hard to count. As the column finally faded, the birds peeled away, and the herons certainly got a wonderful boost to their migration.

A Spark of Meaning

Right then, a phrase popped into my mind: “*If I could fly where the eagle flies.*” I chose an eagle because it felt a little more poetic than a turkey vulture! The melody and the words arrived at the exact same time. Imagine my sheer joy at finally receiving that elusive divine inspiration!

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Over the next few days, I developed what would become the third verse of the song. Because I have always been fascinated by bird flight and love watching documentaries about it, I decided to build out the other verses around different species. I added verses about an owl's flight and an albatross'



flight, anchoring them with a refrain and a final verse that imagines the singers themselves soaring together in a thermal.

Building the Harmony

The song lived in my head for about three years as I figured out how to develop it into a full choral piece. I envisioned a structure where the different choir sections mirrored the birds:

- **The Basses** start by singing about the albatross, flying low and catching an assist from the ocean waves.
- **The Tenors** take over next, singing about the owl gliding silently through the forest.
- **The Altos** rise up to sing about the eagle using thermals to soar high and look for prey.

The Full Choir and a Soprano Soloist bring it all together, inviting the audience to imagine everyone flying together in a warm thermal.

Flight Requires a Community

This song would simply not have been possible without the community of people who carried me along the way, both technically and emotionally. **Sonia Larssen** gave me the initial push to start. **Bonnie Brooks** helped me build my vocal skills and kept me going when I felt discouraged by a lack of progress. **DeAnne Reader** was instrumental in developing my musical skills, keeping me motivated to finish the composition, and beautifully arranging and playing the piano accompaniment. **Andy Delmonte** shared his immense technical skill to make the piece more accessible to sing, while masterfully interpreting and directing it. UCC leadership, staff and community provide an environment where we can all flourish.



SAVE THE DATE

— 2026 —

PORCHFEST

— SEBASTOPOL —



SATURDAY

SEPTEMBER 12TH

— NOON — 6PM —

NEIGHBORHOOD LOCATION:
BELMONT TERRACE, SEBASTOPOL

LIVE MUSIC ★ COMMUNITY ★ CONNECTION

SEPTEMBER 2026 Events at Community Church

SEPTEMBER 1	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary Spiritual Exploration Group, 5 pm, Zoom Men's Discussion Group, 6 pm, Fireside Room
SEPTEMBER 2	Coffee & Care, 10 am, Offsite
SEPTEMBER 3	Meditation Group, 12 pm, Room 6 Women's Fellowship Card Writing, 2 pm, WF Room Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
SEPTEMBER 6	15TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST/GATHERING OF WATERS Worship Service, 10 am, Sanctuary Kinship Time, 11:15 am, Bell Tower Courtyard Church Chat, 11:15 am, Chapel Safe Church Training, 11:15 am, Media Room
SEPTEMBER 7	Prayer Shawls, 10 am, Fireside Room
SEPTEMBER 8	Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary Pastor Parish Relations, 5 pm, Fireside Room Spiritual Exploration Group, 5 pm, Zoom Outreach Committee, 7 pm, Fireside Room
SEPTEMBER 9	Coffee & Care, 10 am, Offsite Facilities Committee, 6:30 pm, Fireside Room
SEPTEMBER 10	Meditation Group, 12 pm, Room 6 Drop In Dreamwork Group, 5:30 pm, Room 6 Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
SEPTEMBER 12	Second Saturday Lunch, 12 Noon, Fountain Courtyard PORCHFEST, 12 Noon, Campus
SEPTEMBER 13	LAUNCH SUNDAY Worship Service, 10 am, Sanctuary Wondering Circle, 10:15 am, Room 5 Launch Lunch, 11:15 am, Memorial Hall Personnel Committee, 12:15 pm, Fireside Room Confirmation Class, 5 pm, Youth Lounge
SEPTEMBER 15	SALT & LIGHT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall Finance Committee, 3:30 pm, Fireside Room Handbell Ensemble, 4:00 pm, Sanctuary Spiritual Exploration Group, 5 pm, Zoom FIAT Team, 5:30 pm, Fireside Room

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SEPTEMBER 2026 Events at Community Church continued

- SEPTEMBER 16** Coffee & Care, 10 am, Offsite
- SEPTEMBER 17** Meditation Group, 12 pm, Room 6
Drop In Dreamwork Group, 5:30 pm, Room 6
Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Music Room
- SEPTEMBER 20** **17TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**
Worship Service, 10 am, Sanctuary
Wondering Circle, 10:15 am, Room 5
Kinship Time, 11:15 am, Bell Tower Courtyard
Church Chat, 11:15 am, Chapel
Confirmation Class, 5:00 pm, Youth Lounge
- SEPTEMBER 21** Prayer Shawls, 10 am, Fireside Room
Health & Safety Team, 3:30 pm, Fireside Room
- SEPTEMBER 22** Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus
Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall
Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
Health & Safety Training for Ushers, 4 pm, Zoom
Spiritual Exploration Group, 5 pm, Zoom
Leadership Council, 6 pm, Media Room
- SEPTEMBER 23** Coffee & Care, 10 am, Offsite
- SEPTEMBER 24** Meditation Group, 12 pm, Room 6
Drop In Dreamwork Group, 5:30 pm, Room 6
Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm, Choir Room
- SEPTEMBER 27** **OUTREACH SUNDAY**
Worship Service, 10 am, Sanctuary
Wondering Circle, 10:15, Room 6
Kinship Time, 11:15 am, Bell Tower Courtyard
Church Chat, 11:15 am, Chapel
AP Search Committee, 12:30 pm, Fireside Room
Confirmation Class, 5 pm, Youth Lounge
- SEPTEMBER 29** Grounds Team, 9 am, Church Campus
Shower Program, 9 am, Memorial Hall
Handbell Ensemble, 4 pm, Sanctuary
Spiritual Exploration Group, 5 pm, Zoom
- SEPTEMBER 30** Coffee & Care, 10 am, Offsite



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