



**UCC
Petaluma**

A Ministry of Hope | Open & Affirming
Servants of the Just & the Good.

Sun Mar 19, 2023

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*To Heal, Inspire and Empower in the Way of Jesus
So that all people may create lives of deeper meaning and greater value.*

News & Opportunities – Sunday and Beyond...

This Sunday: One Great Hour of Sharing

This 70+ year old ministry now includes 9 denominations who once each year offer millions of dollars to bring healing, inspiration, and empowerment to the globe. This special offering involves you in disaster, refugee, immigration and development ministries throughout the world. When people are displaced, you are part of the response and recovery, helping to provide relief to the most vulnerable. To learn more [click here](#). If you're not able to be with us on Sunday, you can make a donation on our [website](#) or send a check to the church and designate "OGHS" in the memo. Thank you for being powerful in this ministry with us!

Mark Your Calendar

March 19 3pm: LunaFest, Films By and About Women at SRJC Petaluma
See details in Opportunities for Spiritual Learning below.

March 23 1pm: North Bay Organizing Project's 2023 Issues Assembly
See details in Opportunities for Spiritual Learning below.

Mar 27: UCC Petaluma Bible Study. Join a long-standing, thoughtful group in Bible study on the 2nd & 4th Mondays of the month, in the church library at 10am. Rev Garnet is currently leading the group in a healing focused practice - a half hour or so of meditation & healing prayer practice followed by study of biblical healing stories. All are welcome, whether you have a lifetime of Bible study experience or none at all. To learn more, please contact Dorothy Wilcox at 707-540-1796.

Mar 28 11:30am: What Does Life Require of Me? - A Conversation
See details in Opportunities for Spiritual Learning below.

April 5: The Genesis Circle (Women's group): at 12:30pm in the Friendship Hall. This group meets on the first Wednesday of every month. To learn more about this group, please contact Dorothy Wilcox at 707-540-1796.

April 20 10am: UCC Petaluma Book Group is starting a new book: "Jesus' Alternative Plan: The Sermon on the Mount" by Richard Rohr. Read the first 3 chapters for our April 20th meeting! If you would like to learn how to join in the meaningful and valuable conversations of this inquisitive group, please contact Paul Eklof for details at Peklof@pacbell.net. We currently gather by zoom at 10a.m. using the Zoom ID: 282 945 1345 Zoom Password = "ucc"

Opportunities for Spiritual Learning & Action

Films By and About Women. LunaFest , SRJC Petaluma - March 19 3pm

The 2023 season of LUNAFEST® features seven short films that empower and inspire. LUNAFEST believes that sharing diverse perspectives can spark conversation, connection, and change. This year's stories are told from a variety of perspectives that champion women and gender nonconforming individuals, highlighting their aspirations, accomplishments, resilience, and strength. We're proud to amplify the inspiring short films by this year's selection of women and gender nonconforming directors. Our featured filmmakers are from all walks of life and range from poets to conservationists, activists, and educators. These stories remind us that when we come together, we all move forward. [Get tickets here!](#)

An inspiring Article on Curiosity

Curiosity offers wonderful benefits. It keeps one young, helps one learn and fosters better relationships. But, according to studies, we become less curious as we grow older. So, here are some tips to cultivate curiosity: 1) Ask questions. 2) Read outside of your field. 3) Be inquisitive about what your friends find interesting and why. 4) Practice saying less. 5) Immerse yourself in a topic. 6) Write. 7) Carry a notebook. 8) Learn about yourself. 9) Slow down. 10) Hang out with a child. [Click Here to read the article.](#)

Make a Difference regarding Gun Violence

While legislation was recently passed to enact common sense gun violence prevention measures, more needs to happen. This includes robust background check legislation, closing loopholes on gun sales (making sure it's difficult for people who want to commit violence to access weapons), safe storage laws, community violence prevention, and importantly an assault and high capacity weapons ban. [Click here to lift your voice in support of next steps in reducing gun violence.](#)

North Bay Organizing Project's 2023 Issues Assembly - Sat, Mar 25 1:00pm

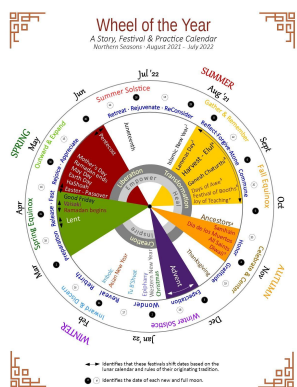
Community Church in Sebastopol will host this year's NBOP Issues Assembly. All are invited to participate in this process of Deep Democracy.



Host Family Opportunity

The Private and Public School F-1 Exchange (PSE) is an organization which provides a homestay program whereby we place high school students from all over the world into American homes for a cultural experience. They are looking for two host families for two students from France. If interested, you can check out their website at www.pse-edu.org. Please contact Flo Webb at fwebb@pse-edu.org or 480-650-5644 for more information.

2023 Wheel of the Year Published!



[Click Here to download a new Wheel of the Year for 2023.](#) This visual tool is a helpful guide to your spiritual practice - connecting your unique faith to the festivals of our tradition in relation to the traditions of billions of others around the globe & the unique practices of your household. If you would like a printed copy of the Wheel, we would be pleased to make one for you. Please reply to this email. You can also download a copy at our [website](#).

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Support Transgender Healthcare

The well-being of transgender and non-binary youth is being debated in legislative sessions across the United States. As of March 3 there have been 385 anti-LGBTQ bills introduced, with 108 of these bills aiming to end gender affirming healthcare for trans and non-binary youth. This places more than 54,000 trans youth actively taking life-saving gender affirming medical care at risk. This is the highest number of anti-LGBTQ bills ever introduced in a single legislative season. Please [click here](#) to send your support to congress to defend the marginalized and vulnerable in our nation.



MARCH BIRTHDAYS


1: Janet Talamantes
7: Robert Evans Heithaus
9: Anne Markum Bailey
26: Margaret Kullberg
27: Tom Joynt
28: Rebecca Cone
30: Ella Rae Smith '05

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

13: Bob and Marilyn Larsen
17: Paul Brown and Maureen Frances


Helping a Neighbor

Last Sunday some neighbors appeared at church to share the news of their missing father and asked for our help in sharing the Silver Alert below. Please be aware and share this opportunity to bring a beloved friend and family member home.



CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL
SILVER ALERT

AT-RISK/MISSING PERSON



Name:	Lawrence Atchison
Age:	64 Years Old
Height:	6' 00"
Weight:	200 Pounds
Hair:	Gray
Eyes:	Brown

THIS SILVER ALERT HAS BEEN ACTIVATED BY THE CHP ON BEHALF OF THE SANTA ROSA POLICE DEPARTMENT.

LAWRENCE ATCHISON WAS LAST SEEN ON FEBRUARY 27, 2023, AT APPROXIMATELY 1645 HOURS, IN SANTA ROSA, SONOMA COUNTY. ATCHISON IS BELIEVED TO BE WEARING A BLACK COLUMBIA ZIP-UP JACKET, BLUE JEANS AND BLACK SLIP-ON SHOES. ATCHISON IS BELIEVED TO BE ON FOOT.

IF SEEN CALL 9-1-1

Worship Sunday March 19, 2023

Gathered in Sanctuary at UCC Petaluma

Special thanks to our liturgist this week, Barton Smith

Gathering Light

“You are My Sunshine”

by Jimmie Davis and Charles Mitchell

Responsive Call to Worship

A Lord's Prayer

Adapted in dynamic equivalence by Rev. J Hubbard

One: Maker of Infinite Light¹:

**All: Let us honor that which is
even beyond light - your name.**

One: A world of ever-greater justice come,

**All: Let us be the cause this done,
on earth as it is in the heavens**

One: Offer us this day bread for the journey,

**All: And forgive us our error as we forgive
the error of others that is to be human**

One: Let us not be led only into temptation

All: But also delivered out of every evil

One: For Love is the lasting power,

**All: the only true home, the only real glory
in this world and evermore. Amen**

¹ Infinite Light is one of the 1000 names for God - this term is specifically the expression of the Kabbalist expression of Judaism.

Sing

“I Can See Clearly Now”

by Johnny Nash

I can see clearly now the rain is gone; I can see all obstacles in my way

Gone are the dark clouds that had me blind

It's gonna be a bright (bright) Bright (bright) sunshiny day

It's gonna be a bright (bright) Bright (bright) sunshiny day

I think I can make it now the pain is gone;

All of the bad feelings have disappeared

Here is that rainbow I've been praying for

It's gonna be a bright (bright) Bright (bright) sunshiny day

It's gonna be a bright (bright) Bright (bright) sunshiny day

Look all around, there's nothing but blue skies

Look straight ahead, there's nothing but blue skies

I can see clearly now the rain is gone; I can see all obstacles in my way

Gone are the dark clouds that had me blind

It's gonna be a bright (bright) Bright (bright) sunshiny day

It's gonna be a bright (bright) Bright (bright) sunshiny day

Poetry

Excerpted from "Questions about Angels," by Billy Collins

"Questions about Angels"

Of all the questions you might want to ask
about angels, the only one you ever hear
is how many can dance on the head of a pin.

No curiosity about how they pass the eternal time
besides circling the Throne chanting in Latin
or delivering a crust of bread to a hermit on earth
or guiding a boy and girl across a rickety wooden bridge.

No, the medieval theologians control the court.
The only question you ever hear is about
the little dance floor on the head of a pin
where halos are meant to converge and drift invisibly.

It is designed to make us think in millions,
billions, to make us run out of numbers and collapse
into infinity, but perhaps the answer is simply one:
one female angel dancing alone in her stocking feet,
a small jazz combo working in the background.

She sways like a branch in the wind, her beautiful
eyes closed, and the tall thin bassist leans over
to glance at his watch because she has been dancing
forever, and now it is very late, even for musicians.

Teaching Scriptures

Isaiah 8:6-8 For because this people refuse the waters of Shiloah (*She-low-ach*) that go softly, and melt in fear before Rezin and Remaliah's son; Now therefore, behold! The Author of Life brings upon them the floodwaters of the river, strong and many, even over the king of Assyria and all his glory: it will rise over all his channels, go over all his banks. And it shall sweep into Judah and overflow and go over, and reach even up to the neck; and its outspread wings shall fill the breadth of the land, O Immanuel.

John 9: 1-17 As he walked along, Jesus saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who’s fault ([sin](#)) is it, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents; he was born blind so that God might be revealed through him. We must work the works of the one who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as *I am* - in the world, *I am* - the light of the world.” When Jesus had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Shiloach (*She-low-ach*).” Then the man went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” The man kept saying, “*I am* he.” But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam (*She-low-ach*) and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.” Then they brought the man who had formerly been blind to the Pharisees.. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. The Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. The man said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” Some of the Pharisees said, “This man, Jesus, is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a [sinner](#) perform such signs?” And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” The man then said, “He is a prophet.”

Postlude

“You are My Sunshine”

by Jimmie Davis and Charles Mitchell

Observations for Lenten Practice Inspired by Henri Matisse

One of Matisse's central ideas was that painting should be "decorative," a word that comes from the Latin words *decorare* ("to make beautiful") and *decor* ("beauty, grace"). Rather than create realistic paintings, Matisse instead made paintings that are iconic, distilled versions of reality, like visual poems. These images are strikingly flat, with obvious brush strokes, surprising colors, unusual arrangements, and a dreamlike atmosphere. And for Matisse, the purpose of these paintings is to beautify, to "decorate" the spaces we live in, and so to bring some grace into our everyday lives.

Matisse and other modern artists didn't invent these ideas; they were inspired by art from other cultures and time periods. Think of Byzantine art, or Eastern Orthodox iconography, or Islamic geometric designs, or Moroccan textiles, or Persian rugs.

Suggestions for Lenten Practice Inspired by Henri Matisse

Inspired by Matisse, prayerfully discern a wall or space or even a corner in your home that might evolve beyond its current dimensions - it's current ability to help you "See.". What story, what Light, could this space help illuminate or reveal in your Life? Like "Bathers by a River," we're surrounded by patterns (on rugs, plates, pillows, floors, walls, curtains, tablecloths, bedspreads, towels, clothes, and so on). How might patterns be employed in the space you are hoping to transform or transfigure? Can you discover or recall from what part of the world the originate? How might your transformed space help you have the experience of the man blind from birth - inviting you to say, "I was blind and now I see." How might elements of your space encourage you to be "sent" - to *let go and stretch out*.

An Ancient-Modern Biblical Glossary

This glossary is offered as a resource for re-orientation to words that church and culture have often defined in one particular way, but now require more historical, metaphorical and nuanced understandings for use in a pluralist Christian community of spiritual learning. These are terms whose deeper and wider understanding invite reflective study. This glossary is not meant to be complete or definitive, but rather a starting place for your learning.

Sin (error): a word that communicates the understanding that human beings are not gods. Thus, humans are capable of errors, small and large, as we lack complete, god-like, perspective (the ability to "see"). The word sin arises from ancient archery which understands a sin to be the "missing of the mark (bullseye) when shooting an arrow toward an intended target." Thus when we hear the word sin, we are not speaking of how humans are originally "bad," - quite the opposite. Sin assumes the original goodness of humanity while acknowledging that humans are not gods and thus capable of error. Sin is a term calling humanity to humility, rooted in its original goodness.