

TRAINS OF THOUGHT by REV. SALLY TRAIN



Impermanence

Spring is in the air. Fruit trees are resplendent with blossoms. Bulbs have burst forth in joyful blooms. The earth is coming alive again as it does every year.

It is fitting that in the month of April we would celebrate Holy Week and Easter and reflect on the themes of death and rebirth. As we contemplate the mystery of the resurrection story - so central to our sacred texts - we sense a truth in it whether or not we "believe" it to be "literally true." We sense that love is indeed stronger than hate. We know in our hearts this eternal truth: that which is divine, pure, and holy cannot be killed.

We see all around us that new life arises out of death - that death is, in fact, necessary for new life to emerge. The seed must crack open for the plant

to emerge. In the same way, when our hearts break, they somehow grow larger, capable of more love and more compassion. We know from experience that we must let go of old ways of thinking and old ways of doing things so that new growth can manifest. The cycle of birth, growth, and death are never ending. Such is the way of the world. Such is the world God made. And God said, "It is good."

Last week, Charles Little talked with us a bit about his experience of meditation, a practice he shares with his brother Ben. Charles is currently accompanying Ben through his final stage of life toward that transition we call "death." He said

they were reflecting on the idea of "impermanence."

Impermanence and a great story

I was struck by that because I have been thinking a lot about impermanence lately. Like many people, I sometimes resist change. I like the security of things that feel permanent - my home, my routines, my family, my beliefs. It is

tempting to think that permanent things are of more value than things that are not. Yet in a funny way, it is just the opposite. We take delight in children precisely because they will not stay children. We cherish them because we know our time with them is limited. They will grow up and be children no more.

When the blossoms of spring open, we are once again enthralled with the beauty of a daffodil precisely because we had to wait all winter for it - precisely because it is fragile, and we know it will not last.

(continued on the next page)

I love orchids. My brother gave me a beautiful orchid plant that bloomed for months. I loved that plant. I cared for it as best I could – misting it every day, fertilizing it weekly. I was thrilled every time a bud would open to reveal the exquisite beauty of those exotic flowers. I grieved a little every time one would wither and drop to the table. Finally, the last blossom dropped, and I was never able to get the plant to bloom again. I gave it to a friend who has better luck with such things (and better “orchid” light in her house.)

A different friend brought me gift: an artificial orchid that looked absolutely real. You could not tell the difference between it and a growing orchid. It was exquisitely beautiful and best of all... it did not require any work! I did not have to water it, or mist it, or worry about it at all. It was simply beautiful all the time – like a wonderful piece of artwork. I loved it!

However, over time, I stopped noticing it. I did not need to lavish love or attention on it. It did not need it. There was no reason to mist it. There was no reason to check to see if a bud had opened or a blossom had fallen. Neither happened. It ceased to delight me because it never changed. I stopped seeing it. I finally gave it away and went out and bought myself a live orchid that I knew would not last but would bring me joy while it was alive.

As I contemplate my impermanent orchid, I see the wisdom in God’s creation. I smile at the whimsical fun of never-ending change. I give thanks for both the solid rock of God’s presence and the undulating waves of life’s constant movement. I strive to wake up every day and say, “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.” For tomorrow will be different. What I have today is... today. And it is good.

I cherish the time I have with my loved ones. Every moment is precious. I trust that when this phase of life - this cycle of time - ends, a new cycle will begin. There will be a renewal of some sort, a rebirth - for such is the way of the world. Such is the world God made. And it is indeed good.

Pastor Sally



APRIL CARE TEAM

The Care Team for April is lead by Anice Flesh (415-306-7902), with David Knopf and Michael Chan.

PRAYER PARTNERS

Please remember the following members of our church family in prayer. Pray for their welfare and growth in faith and discipleship.



April 1 - 6
Richard and Denise Walker

April 7 - 13
Lise Adams

April 14 - 20
Kelly Anderson

April 21 - 27
Colleen Beery

April 28 - May 4
Jack Bransford



SPIFF UP THE CHURCH DAY SATURDAY, APRIL 13 9 AM - NOON

Join our soul-satisfying work in our next Spiff-Up-the-Church Day, Saturday, April 13, 9AM to 12 AM. We will clean, polish, wash, garden, prune, trim, weed, scrub, pick-up, fix, munch and kibitz.

Our 7th Day Church of God renters will be deep cleaning the Oak Room on a future Sunday (which is not their sabbath), and the larger MDDL Church will have a crew join us as well.

EASTER EGG HUNT ON YOUR MARK, GET SET, GO!

Children will hunt for Easter eggs on the front lawn after church on Easter Sunday. Since some of our older children are particularly adept collectors, younger children will get a head start. Our teens will help the Easter Bunny get organized to spread out the eggs which have prizes, candy, and some healthier treats inside.



ORDER A LILY OR AZALEA FOR EASTER

You are invited to order an Easter lily or colorful Azalea in honor or in memory of a loved one. The plants will be placed in the altar area of the Sanctuary on Easter Sunday, April 21, 2019. The lilies are \$10.00 each, and the Azaleas are \$20 each. Order forms are in the church office.



MUSIC AND MEDITATION APRIL 10

The First Congregational Church of San Rafael will continue our Lenten series of Soup Suppers entitled "Music and Meditations." Readings and guided meditations have included a number from the Christian mystics: Hildegard of Bingen, Thomas Merton, St. Theresa of Avila, and Dr. Alan Hunter on the themes of the Breath of God and the Sacred Fire and Light.

Our next meeting will be on the theme of the Healing Heart and will include readings or guided meditation as well as silent meditation from Celtic mystics, Dr. Howard Thurmond and Dr. Flora Wuellner. The next meeting will be held on Wednesdays, April 10 at Hilary Spaulding's home. Following the time of meditation, we will enjoy a simple soup and salad supper together. Please join us. If you would like to bring a soup, salad or bread, or need directions, please email Hilary Spaulding at Hilary.Spaulding@glims.com



Come and **Worship** **w i t h u s !**



April 7 Communion Sunday The Anointed One

In John 12: 1-8, we read the story of Mary using expensive perfume to anoint the feet of Jesus. It is an extravagant gesture. The question is raised whether it was wasteful or appropriate. Pastor Sally will reflect on the deeper meaning in the story and what it can teach us about being disciples. As an added treat, Helen MacLam will talk about her experience with music and meditation and how those things have helped her grow spiritually.

April 14 Palm Sunday

We will read the story in Luke 19: 28-45 which describes Jesus's triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem. He is given a hero's welcome. Pastor Sally will discuss the symbolism in the story and reflect on what it means to be a true hero. We will talk about the heroic work that brings peace. As an added treat, Colleen Beery will share with the children and us her knowledge of Mindfulness which can help bring peace to our hearts and calm our emotions.

April 18 Maundy Thursday

At 6:30 PM Just as Jesus gathered with his close friends to share a Passover meal, so we will gather to share a simple meal of soup and bread. Feel free to bring your favorite soup or salad to share or a loaf of good bread. **About 7:15** As we move to the sanctuary, we will be treated to a ritual hand washing reminiscent of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples in a sublime gesture of love and humility. In our short but holy worship service, we will hear the story of Jesus's last earthly days as recounted in the Gospel According to Luke interspersed with music and songs. Pastor Sally may offer a brief meditation on a bible passage. The service will conclude in meditative silence.

April 19 Good Friday

The sanctuary will be open from Noon until 3 PM for those who wish to come, meditate, and pray.

April 21 Easter Sunday

Join us for this most holy of days when we celebrate the resurrection of Christ. When we celebrate the victory of life over death! When we celebrate the transformative power of the Spirit! There will be an Easter Egg Hunt for the children, our magnificent flower cross gracing our sanctuary, and inspiring music to lift our souls. Join us for this most special of all days!

April 28 Peace of the Living Christ

In the Gospel According to John 20: 19-29, the Risen Christ appears to the disciples and says three times "Peace be with you." Each time he says it, the circumstances are different, and it is followed by a different message. Pastor Sally will reflect on each of these messages and what they have to teach us about finding and maintaining peace – shalom.



Thursday, April 18 Maundy Thursday

6:30 PM We will share a simple meal of soup and bread followed by a short meditative worship service that includes communion. Feel free to bring your favorite soup to share or a loaf of good bread.



Friday, April 19 Good Friday

12 noon - 3 PM: The sanctuary will be open and prepared for prayer and meditation.

Sunday, April 21 Easter Sunday

Easter Lilies will be used to decorate the altar on Easter Sunday. You may order your own Easter lily for \$10.00 and then take it home with you after the service. Please see your bulletin for an order form or contact the church office.

8:30 AM Flowering of the Cross: All are invited to bring flowers from their garden to decorate the cross. Please come half an hour early if possible to allow time for the decorating before worship begins at 10 AM.

10 AM Easter Worship

Easter Egg Hunt: Children of all ages are encouraged to join in the Easter Egg Hunt following the worship service.



Choral Concert



Featuring Portola High School Choir
from Orange County, CA
Adrian Rangel-Sanchez, Director

Wednesday, April 3, 2019 at 7 pm

First Congregational Church of San Rafael
8 North San Pedro Road, San Rafael, CA 94903

acfea
Tour Consultants
Performing Arts Tours Group 1995

\$20 suggested donation at the door,
benefiting Every Dollar Feeds Kids, Inc.
For more information contact concerts@acfea.com

This concert is a great opportunity to hear some wonderful music and to support Every Dollar Feeds Kids. The concert by a traveling chorus from Portola High School in Orange County will be a great break in the week.

Sean Dougherty, president of the board of VAMOS! will be there to give an update of the good work EDFK supports. EDFK works directly with VAMOS! to provide nutritious lunches for children in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Let all your neighbors and friends know. Refreshments will be served following the concert.

LET'S PACK THE PLACE!



BOARD OF MISSION MISSION MATTERS



IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO DONATE TO ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING



This annual offering was received on Sunday, March 31. However, if you missed worship on the 31st, you can still participate in this offering of the United Church of Christ that supports disaster, refugee, and development actions.

Just make your check out to First Congregational Church of San Rafael and also write One Great Hour of Sharing on the bottom left of the check. Put it in the offering the next time you are in worship or mail it to the church office. People in need all over the world will be glad you did!

DON'T FORGET THE FOOD BANK



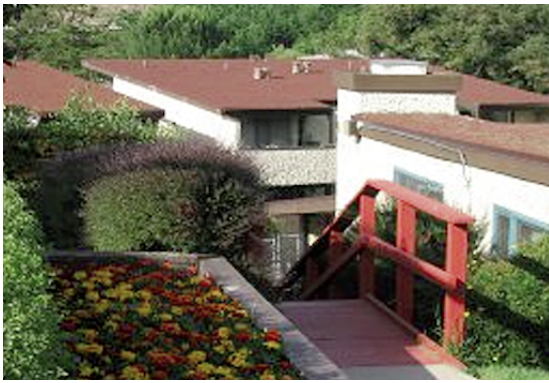
You can leave your contributions for the Food Bank in the narthex. Peanut butter, tuna, canned soup, pasta, rice, and other staples are always needed.

Suggestion: Some in our congregation routinely purchase the same one specific item each time they shop (for example rice or peanut butter) and bring it to church when they come. It makes remembering to do it easier!

BOARD OF MISSION MEETING APRIL

The Board of Mission will meet on April 28 after worship, from 11:30-12:30 in the Oak Room. We will be discussing the various mission activities for the upcoming year, and exploring the possibility of volunteering and the Food Bank and participating in a Habitat for Humanity work day this spring or summer. All are welcome to attend,





PILGRIM PARK NEWS

The absence of a Pilgrim Park update last month did not mean that the winter rains had washed everything away. Rather, the lack of reports simply meant that we did not have much to report. But, that has changed.

better days; and (2) replacing three second story decks and the second story entrance to Nancy's Smith's apartment. The second contract will take a few weeks. With these three new decks, we will have replaced all of the second storey decks. After the decks are completed, Francisco and our landscape gardener will rebuilt several patio and other fences.

More Repairs and renovation – With a break in the weather (2/18), two contractors are busy (1) replacing some windows and siding that had seen

New landscaping for No. San Pedro entrance to church and Pilgrim Park – With the church's help in creative thinking and planning, Pilgrim Park will landscape both sides of this entrance. The first phase to prune the oak trees on either side of the entrance is complete. Ironically, John Starkweather and I planted the three oaks on the SMART side of the entrance about 30 years ago. Denise Walker and Val Sherrer have agreed to work with David Knopf and Bob De Haan to plan creative and welcoming landscaping on both sides. We welcome other church members to join our small and creative group. Contact Bob De Haan to join in the fun. Pilgrim Park will fund and do the heavy lifting to carry out the group's plans.

Mid year operating update – The 61 units are full, and the operating results are on budget.

Bob De Haan

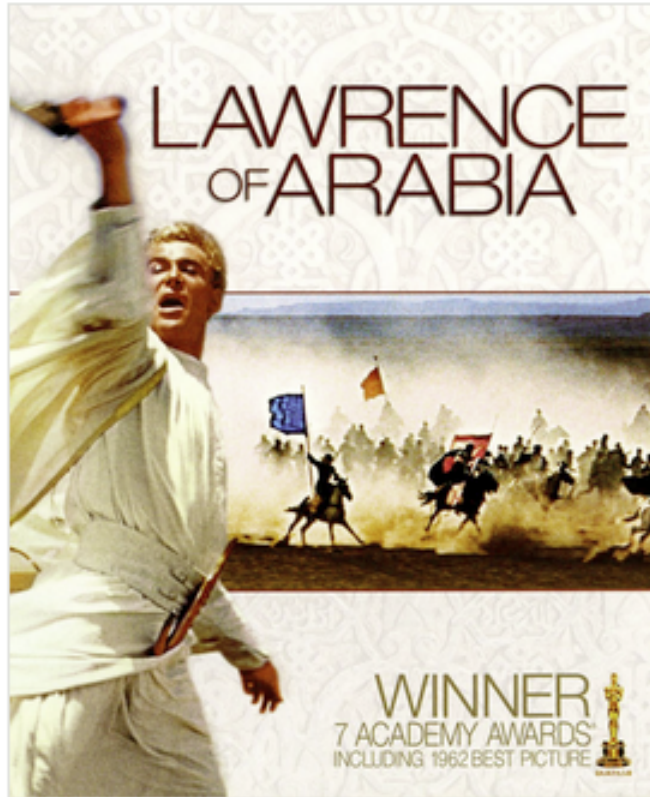
THE INTERIM PROCESS -- HERE ARE THE NEXT STEPS:

- ☒ We appoint an Interim Search Committee to locate and recommend an interim pastor
- ☒ We hire an Interim Pastor - **Rev. Sally Train began November 8, 2017.**
- ☒ We appoint a Search Committee -
**Megan Fuller, David Knopf, Alana Intrater, Anice Flesh,
Michael Meehan, Helen MacLam, Annie Song-Hill, Oak Dowling**
- ☒ We create our Church Profile, a description of our church to be read by potential pastors
- ☒ The Search Committee will consider all potential candidates
- ☐ The Search Committee will select possible candidates
- ☐ The Search Committee will interview these candidates
- ☐ One candidate will be recommended to the congregation
- ☐ The congregation will have an opportunity to meet the candidate
- ☐ We will vote on the recommended candidate
- ☐ We will join in worship to install our new pastor

MOVIE NIGHT APRIL 26 - LAURENCE OF ARABIA

This year we're re-visiting some of the great classic movies, and in April, we're going back 57 years to David Lean's monumental *Lawrence of Arabia*. It was 1962's most-awarded picture, edging out "To Kill a Mockingbird" for the best picture Oscar. It also takes us back to the days when a cast of thousands of actual humans (and camels) performed for real . . . in the desert . . . in front of real cameras and lights, not inside a computer.

The deeper reason to revisit *Lawrence* is that the middle east, and our understanding of it, has changed so much since we first saw the film. In the 60s we accepted the story largely as told: a simple tragedy of Lawrence's noble intentions for the Arabs undone by the greed of the British and French empires. Today, we understand that this was but a tiny early chapter of a vastly more complex history . . . one more tragic and insoluble than we could have imagined in 1962.



On the FCCSR website, you can explore several interesting papers that trace the connections between the events of the movie and subsequent realities in the middle east.

7 PM Friday April 26 in the De Haan Center at Pilgrim Park

You can view the trailer for *Laurence of Arabia* on the FCCSR website.

A one dollar bill met a twenty dollar bill and said, "Hey, where've you been? I haven't seen you around here much."

The twenty answered, "I've been hanging out at the casinos, went on a cruise and did the rounds of the ship, back to the United States for a while, went to a couple of baseball games, to the mall, that kind of stuff. How about you?"

The one dollar bill said, "You know, same old stuff ... church, church, church."

APRIL BIRTHDAYS



2 — Barbara Miller
3 — Bob Spofford
4 — Colleen Beery
9 — Bob Bandettini
10 — Scott Faraci
11 — Jill Krippendorf
14 — Hilary Spaulding
24 — Lucinda Ray
26 — Michael Meehan

GOLDEN GALS — APRIL 9

The Golden Gals will meet on Tuesday, April 9, at 10 AM, at the home of Jean Nadell. Bring a bag lunch.



TIE DEADLINE for the MAY Issue - Monday, April 22

The deadline for articles and news for the May 2019 issue of the TIE at the church office by Sunday, April 21. Or, email your articles to lucindaray@aol.com by April 22.



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Rev. Sally Train – *Interim Pastor*

Wednesday 10:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Phone (925) 216-9706

sallytrain@comcast.net

Amy Powers – *Office Manager*

Tuesday 11 AM- 2 PM



















Wednesday 9:30 AM - 2 PM

Thursday 9:30 AM - 2 PM

Office Phone: 415-479-2747

office@fccsanrafael.org

FCC Calendar April 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care	April 1 April Fool's Day	2	3  7 am Choral Concert - EDIFK Benefit	4  7:40 am Choir Rehearsal	5	6
7  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care	8	9  10 am Golden Girls monthly meeting	10  6 pm Music and Meditation	11  7:40 pm Choir Rehearsal	12	13  9 am - 12 pm STIFF UP THE CHURCH DAY
14  10 am PALM SUNDAY Worship, Church School & Child Care	15	16	17	18  6:30 pm Maundy Thursday Soup Supper and Service 7:40 pm Choir Rehearsal	19  12 pm - 3 pm Good Friday Meditation	20
21 Easter  10 am EASTER Worship, Church School & Child Care	22 Earth Day  5 am TIE Deadline for April 2019 issue	23	24  7 am Church Council Meeting 7 PM	25  7:40 am Choir Rehearsal	26  7 am Movie Night Laurence of Arabia De Haan Center Pilgrim Park	27
28  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 11:30 am Board of Mission Meeting	29	30	1	2  7:40 pm Choir Rehearsal	3	4

This calendar is also available on the church's website in interactive form. There you can click on any event to see more details. Check it out at www.FccSanRafael.org.