

The TIE



**From our pastor,
Rev. Elisabeth Middelberg**

TURNING

The sight of some 30 backpacks, with enough notebooks, pencils, binders, markers etc. to fill those backpacks, is still etched in my mind. On the last Sunday of July, the space under the communion table was overflowing with “Back to School” items, which were delivered the next day to Ritter Center.

I have seen this heartwarming propensity towards “overflowing” now a couple of times at FCC San Rafael. In June, some 36 new pillows were brought to the Homeward Bound Program in Novato, and our food barrel had reached its maximum capacity a few weeks ago, which resulted in a donation of 152 pounds of food to the food bank.

There is always food during coffee hour, flowers for the altar and cards to sign for those unable to attend church. I am grateful for the generosity of so many people at FCC San Rafael.

September seems to be the month of the great turning....As much as January signifies the beginning of a new year, the month of September seems to impact the rhythm of the year to a much larger extent. There is no more denying that this summer too, will come to an end. Those of us working in the educational field know that to be true even more acutely. Children and grandchildren are heading back to school, and I need to remember to leave home a little earlier in the morning now that parents are dropping off their children and causing some gridlock.

Labor Day weekend is upon us, and on September 8, we will celebrate our Homecoming Sunday! It is a great Sunday to come back to church and make the Sunday services part of the rhythm of your week.

During the summer months, a search committee was established and the work to find a new settled pastor is well under way. We are engaging a company called “Holy Cow,” to assist us in the discernment process to make some critical decisions with regards to how the church wants to move forward. You can find information about this company, using this link: <https://holycowconsulting.com>.

I am quite excited about engaging with all of you in this process. Holy Cow uses an assessment tool (survey), which helps churches to name their strengths and identify growth areas with a concreteness that is derived from input from the larger congregational body.

Continued from page one.

In the last 6 years, some 3000 churches have used this assessment tool, so there is a lot of data that will be used to accurately interpret these surveys.

Just as September is a time of great turning in the year, so I think this interim period in the church has the potential to be a time of great turning. This is a time of spiritual growth and a renewed understanding of who we are as a community. We are invited during this interim time to allow for new directions to become visible.

Will you join us in this process? Everyone's voice, presence and prayers are such an integral part in moving forward. Here are some ways you can help:

1. Come join us for Homecoming Sunday, and then keep coming!
2. In a couple of weeks, we will make the survey available to all people connected into our congregation. Please fill it out. It can be done on-line, by hand and we will be able to assist people when needed.
3. Think about people you have not seen for a while and invite them back to church.
4. Please let family members who come to church from time to time, know that we would like for them to become involved too, and would love for them to fill out a survey.
5. Please pray or send blessings to the people in the congregation and to the people in the search committee. The search committee starts each meeting with prayers and has also asked for time during the week that people come together to be in prayer so that listening to God's Spirit remains at the center of what we do.
6. You are very welcome to join us for this time of prayer and meditation. We meet on Tuesdays in the sanctuary at 5:00 PM.

Thank you for all you are and for all you do.

Kindly,

Pastor Elisabeth

Please see page 10 for a poem shared by Pastor Elisabeth.

PRAYER PARTNERS

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



September 1 - 7
Ek Mahl

September 8 - 14
Clara Miller

September 15 - 21
Ray and Jean O'Leary

September 22 - 28
Milagro Ramirez

September 29 - October 5
Greg and Sher Ripley



Come and Worship with us!

***We will be worshipping at 10 AM inside the sanctuary.
The service will also be available streaming on YouTube (see next page).***

September 1	10 AM	Worship	Communion Sunday
September 8	10 AM	Worship	Welcome Back Sunday
September 15	10 AM	Worship	
September 22	10 AM	Worship	
September 29	10 AM	Worship	



It's approaching that time when we put up all the play toys for summer, and welcome back all our members. This is a time when the choir comes back together after and enlightened and inspires us with its beautiful music. At this point, we start looking forward to the fall and all the colorful times that brings us.

Following worship, we will share fun refreshment (more icy treats) with fellowship in the Courtyard.

We look forward to seeing you on **Sunday, September 8.**



ZOOM MEETINGS LET US GATHER TOGETHER SAFELY

We are also providing our Sunday worship service streaming on YouTube at 10 a.m. You can use either your computer, your cell phone, or your tablet. See below.

Link to join all church Zoom meetings

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2011092691?pwd=c2V0RXEvdWxkF4STNNSTlxbWFFTENuZz09>

Meeting ID: ID: 201 109 2691

Password: FCCSR!

Call in number 1-669-900-6833

SUNDAY WORSHIP IS NOW LIVE ON YOU TUBE

We broadcast live Sunday mornings on YouTube. Our channel address is:

- <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbqLXLjsBEmjdGuoOKnOykA>
- Then click on videos->live
- Subscribe and each week you will get a direct link.

We will also post a direct link each week in the What's Happening? email.

The whole service unedited will be available for a few days; then an edited version to include just the sermon will be posted.

If you are having trouble getting connected, email Knopf.david@gmail.com

MEETINGS, MEETINGS, MEETINGS -- VIA ZOOM

Sept. 3: The Board of Ministry will meet on **Tuesday**, Sept. 3, at 11:45 AM.

Sept. 18 The Board of Mission will meet on **Wednesday**, Sept. 18, at 1 PM.

Sept. 18: The Church Council will meet on **Wednesday**, Sept. 18, at 6 PM.

Sept. 19: The Board of Trustees will meet on **Thursday**, Sept. 19, at 7 PM.



LUNCH TOGETHER SEPT. 15 AT LA HACIENDA RESTAURANT

Let's meet again for an informal lunch on the patio of La Hacienda Restaurant, 3815 Redwood Hwy, San Rafael.

Join us on Sunday, September 15, at 11:45 AM, following worship. All are welcome!

BOARD OF TRUSTEE'S REPORT



How is the financial health of FCCSR?

This year our financial health is good, but future years could be difficult.

We made the 2024 budget with the anticipation of hiring a settled pastor with benefits at 60% time. We had supply preachers for several months, and Pastor Elisabeth was only available

for 50% time, so we have saved considerably on pastor compensation costs this year.

Currently our pledging is a little ahead of predictions. Several donors have paid for the entire year, so we expect pledging to equal expectations by the end of the year. Our rental income has also gone up a little bit due to new renters and some increased rent from our current renters. Rental income is about half of all our income.

Our operating expenses (utilities, supplies, janitorial, building maintenance) have been pretty much as expected, although utilities have increased \$1000 to date. We have some reserves which include 2 UCC conservative investment accounts (\$88,000) and several CDs with Redwood Credit Union (about \$40,000). We do not have an endowment.



The longer term problem is that when we have a settled pastor at 60% time we would have a year-to-year deficit of more \$20,000. Will 60% time be enough to attract good candidates and provide enough pastoral support time to help us fulfill our vision? Can we make this up through increased rents, increased pledging, fundraising or other sources? Should we be prepared to use our reserves?

These are questions the congregation will need to address this fall, as we think about the future of our church in preparation for the search for a settled pastor.

We should note that we negotiate pastor compensation costs according to a "Fair and Just" formula of the Northern California and Nevada Conference of UCC which includes experience, education, size of church, and local housing costs. Also included are health insurance and pension contributions.

Traffic Cones in the Courtyard



You will notice some red traffic cones around one of the cork trees. We have been unable to lower and level the ends of the iron gratings around the tree, so they can wobble and stick up $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch, creating a trip hazard. We believe the roots of the tree have raised the support frames underneath the grating, so we will be consulting with the arborist and other professionals on how to improve the safety.

ANGELS AMONG US. . .

I want to thank the FCC angels who helped me with Ralph's memorial service. And for helping with his clothing that will go to the local homeless folks. I feel so much love and support from our church family. Your halos are sparkling.

Val

THE INTERIM PROCESS -- HERE ARE THE NEXT STEPS:

- We appoint an Interim Search Committee to locate and recommend an interim pastor
The Interim Search Committee is Louis Frost, Megan Fuller, and David Santschi.
- We hire an Interim Pastor **Rev. Elisabeth Middelberg began on March 17, 2024.**
- We appoint a Search Committee **The Search Committee is Caran Cuneo, David Santschi, Annie Song-Hill, Lucinda Ray, and Cathi Fuller.**
- 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

SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE

Discernment in a settled pastor search is critical as our settled pastor will play a central role in the spiritual leadership, vision, and direction of our congregation. Discernment involves seeking God's guidance, wisdom and clarity to find the right person. This process requires prayer, careful consideration, and collaboration among church leadership and all members.



The Search Committee is made up of Caran Cuneo, Lucinda Ray, Annie Song Hill, David Santschi, Cathi Fuller and Pastor Elisabeth. Pastor Elisabeth held several "listening sessions" early on in the process. Our committee is currently reviewing our church website to ensure that it reflects who we are, our values and visions for the future, as well as our history and outreach to the local and global community.

Please engage with us in defining your overall satisfaction and energy as a member, your thoughts on attendance and the value of activities beyond worship. We want to ascertain how and where we can improve. It is a time to reevaluate our priorities.

We want to thank all of you for participating in the demographic survey that Lucinda recently conducted. If you didn't have a chance to fill out the survey, Lucinda will be calling you in the next several weeks. In September, we've hired Holy Cow Consulting to conduct a Congregational Assessment Tool. More information on Holy Cow Consulting can be found at <https://holycowconsulting.com/congregations/congregation-assessment-tool-cat/>.

Other churches in the Bay Area are also using this firm and tool to do exactly what we want to do: Involve and engage our congregation to guide us in developing our 2024-2025 church profile and outlining important skills we will seek in our Settled Pastor. I encourage and welcome your comments and suggestions. All are welcome.

Caran Cuneo, Chair



BOARD OF MISSION MISSION MATTERS



THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY ON BACKPACK SUNDAY



Ritter Center was very pleased with the generous donation and expressed gratitude to all. Here is what we collected this year:

- 30 backpacks
- 4 lunch bags
- 2 advanced-level calculators
- 4 high-school protractor-mechanical pencil sets
- 12 binders
- 10 sets of binder paper
- 3 pencil pouches
- 6 five-subject notebooks
- 36 one-subject notebooks
- numerous erasers, glue sticks, rulers, and pencil sharpeners
- 19 subject divider sets
- 36 marker sets
- 8 colored pencil sets
- 19 large sets of pencils
- 4 large sets of pens
- 29 elementary scissors
- 2 highlighter sets
- 18 crayon boxes
- 2 boxes of highlighters

FOOD BANK UPDATE - THANK YOU!

Thanks to your generous donation of non-perishable foods, **we dropped off 152 lbs of food in August to the San Francisco Marin Food Bank** located on Kerner Blvd in San Rafael. The food is weighed by the food bank staff before sorting and placing the cans and food collected on their grocery shelves. Let's remember to bring peanut butter, rice, cereal, canned goods on the first Sunday of the month so we can help those Marin residents facing food insecurity. The need is greater than ever, and as we approach the fall and winter months, we need to continue our efforts!

THE STREET CHAPLAINCY DINNER - September 3



Anice Flesh, Charles Little, David Knopf, & Chef Michael

The Board of Mission has committed to helping prepare and serve dinner for those in need four times this year. On Tuesday, September 3, a group of will be volunteered for the third time at the Street Chaplaincy dinner at the First Presbyterian Church in San Rafael: meat loaf, mac and cheese, rolls and butter, green salad, fruit, and cookies. We will also be volunteering for dinner on Tuesday, December 3.

It costs about \$250-300 dollars to purchase the groceries for each meal, at which we feed about 100 people. So where does the money come from? The Board of Mission is using money earned in previous years from projects like the SERRV sale.

BOARD OF MINISTRY REPORT

The Board of Ministry Team's key role in the church is to coordinate with the Pastor and Music Director in providing meaningful worship services throughout the liturgical year. We address the spiritual life of the church through the following areas: welcome and outreach, worship and prayer, fellowship, and education.



Agape Team

The Agape Team provides “compassionate connection to our church community through words of encouragement, cards, phone calls, home visits, and other support as needed. Leave a message in the church office or contact Jackie Dema or Cathi Fuller if you have a request.

Prayer Chain E-mail either Julie Dowling isabella1472@comcast.net or Annie Song-Hill asonghill@gmail.com if you have a prayer request you would like included in the prayer chain.

In August

August 4 Jazz Concert Wow! Gratitude was expressed by all who attended the Jazz and Ice Cream Social on August 4th. It was a joyful event with fabulous jazz music, a “full house” in attendance followed by ice cream sundaes and good chat enjoyed in the courtyard on a beautiful summer day.

Thank you to all who planned and wrote checks, shopped for ice cream and supplies, assisted with cleaning, set up, decorating, serving, greeting and take down, advertised the event, invited friends and family. Thank you especially to Gerry Grosz on the piano and Paul Eastburn on the bass for an outstanding concert! Encore please!

August 10

Some of us attended a beautiful **Celebration for the Life of the Rev. Kristi Denham** at the Congregational Church of the Peninsula on August 10th. We miss Kristi. Some of the stories shared are included in the tribute published in *The San Mateo Daily Journal* article. See the link:

https://www.smdailyjournal.com/news/local/influential-and-beloved-reverend-in-san-mateo-county-dies-at-75/article_8777c23e-39a3-11ef-8253-4f512fef4e2a.html

Also on Saturday August 10th, many members joined our neighbors at the annual **Pilgrim Park Picnic at Pilgrim Park** apartment Bob De Haan Center and lawn for a delicious picnic, fellowship and fun.

August 18 Our guest preacher, Rev. Jim Matulski, preached a challenging and hope-infused sermon that helps us to see the value of this Interim time as a “Sacred time” to go deep into questions of who we are and want to be as a community. Dr. Cindy Acker further lifted us up will exquisite heart-felt music.

August 24 Ralph Sherer's Celebration of Life was a warm, beautiful and meaningful celebration of Ralph's life. Numerous friendships formed through his volunteer time in so many different volunteer community organizations (AARP, Boy Scouts, Foresters, Toastmasters, Soccer coaching, FCCSR and many others). Many who attended spoke about the consistency in his presence, expertise shared with humility, and mentoring provided with kindness and humor. His son, Ralph's son Kevin gave a heart-warming tribute that described the many ways he was present for and devoted to his family, often busy with “projects” to improve the home, showing up to cheer their performances, and sharing the love of the great outdoors. s when grandchild

continued on the next page

A highlight was when grandchildren, Zachary and Jackie played their guitars while Jackie sang one of his favorite songs, "Hallelujah" by Leonard Cohen.

The service can be viewed on our church YouTube link:

https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=zz8_8_6x3EU

The link to Ralph Sherer's obituary is:

<https://www.marinij.com/obituaries/ralph-sherer-san-anselmo-ca/>



Coming in September

Meditation in the Sanctuary has been a source of spiritual sustenance and passion for our community involvements and has provided us with hope to face the tragedies and inequities in our world. We will continue to meet in the sanctuary, weekly on Tuesdays at 5-6pm except for the nights that we are cooking for the Street Chaplaincy Dinner (Sept 3 and Dec 3).

Sunday, September 8 Join us and bring a friend for our "Homecoming Service" when the choir returns and following an inspiring service, we will share fun refreshment (more icy treats) with fellowship in the Courtyard.

Sunday, September 15 Meet at 11:45 AM for informal lunch on the patio of La Hacienda Restaurant following Sunday worship and community time.



Wednesday, September 25 "Oldsters" group is continuing to meet monthly. See page 10 for more details.



Coming October 13: our beloved Blessing of the Animals service

Next Board of Ministry meeting All are Welcome! Tuesday, Sept. 3, at 11:45 on Zoom.

PICTURES FROM RALPH SHERER' S SERVICE



OLDSTERS' GROUP GROWS! — NEXT MEETING SEPTEMBER 25

Our Old Folks' group had its most well attended meeting in August with 11 souls contributing. Given the theme of the meeting, it was ironically relevant that four of our members had difficulty joining our Zoom meeting. One had lost the link and needed a fresh email, another needed telephonic assistance, a third got on but was unable to be heard or seen, and a fourth was unable to join us at all. Ironic because our topic for the month was Communication! And the first aspect of the subject that we spoke about was our difficulties communicating in this electronic age.



It is well known that, as we age, we often develop challenges to our ability to connect, through various modes, to other people whom, previously, we have communicated seamlessly. And lack of connection to others can lead to loneliness, depression, and even physical problems.

To quote an article from the *National Library of Medicine*, “The ability to communicate is essential if older adults are to solicit assistance with daily living activities; fulfill lifelong learning goals; gain access to health and legal information from print, broadcast, or electronic media; or enjoy intergenerational contacts with family members. Older adults need to communicate with their families, friends, neighbors, and with their lawyers and physicians through face-to-face interaction and over the Internet.”

And according to the *National Institute on Aging*, “Human beings are social creatures. Our connection to others enables us to survive and thrive. Yet, as we age, many of us are alone more often than when we were younger, leaving us vulnerable to social isolation and loneliness—and related health problems such as cognitive decline, depression, and heart disease.”

In our August meeting, eleven of us—the most yet—shared some of our difficulties as well as some solutions:

- difficulties with technology
- the limitations of technology (e.g. what we lose in texting as compared to speaking on the phone)
- problems hearing and thus misunderstanding
- the embarrassment of asking folks to repeat themselves
- our connections with our family and friends, and with younger people
- And not mentioned, but also relevant, the sense that we are being ignored

Most in the meeting found that sharing our difficulties, concerns and strategies was helpful. In fact, we were communicating, and connecting! Through our meeting we found a way to share and alleviate the problem.

The next meeting of the Oldsters' group will be on September 25, 6:30 – 7:30 via Zoom. Let Charles Little know if you could use some assistance with the technology! (415) 342-2720. Barcaabuelo@gmail.com.

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS



- 2 — Julie Dowling
- 4 — Greg Ripley
- 6 — Ray O'Leary
- 10 — Joan Roane
- 10 — Megan Fuller
- 16 — Will Godbey
- 21 — Josie Borden Hills
- 25 — TJ Dempsey
- 25 — Caryl Hodges

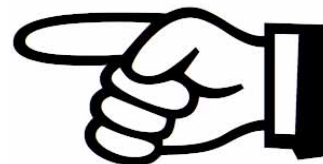
Shared by Pastor Elisabeth

Beloveds, know that -
God is with you in every pass,
Jesus is with you on every hill,
Spirit is with you on every stream, headland and ridge and lawn;
Each sea and land, each moor and meadow,
Each lying down, each rising up,
In the trough of the waves, on the crest of the billows,
Each step of the journey you go.

Mary MacDonald

TIE DEADLINE for OCTOBER 2024 issue - Mon., SEPT. 23

The deadline for articles and news for the October 2024 issue of The TIE is Monday, September 23. Please email your articles to lucindaray@aol.com by Monday, September 23.



Rev. Elisabeth Middelberg

Thursday mornings
or by appointment

Phone: 707 280-0382

Email: Elismid@yahoo.com

Amy Powers – Office Manager













Tuesday and Thursday 10 AM - 2 PM

You can contact Amy by phone
or email any time.

Office Phone : 415 479-2747

Email: office@fccsanrafael.org

FCC Calendar **SEPTEMBER** 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM</p>	<p>2 Labor Day</p>	<p>3 11:45 am  Board of Ministry Meeting 12 noon via ZOOM 4:00 - 7:00 pm  Street Chablaincy Dinner</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8 Grandparents' Day 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM 10 pm - 11 pm HOMECOMING SUNDAY</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10 5:00 - 6:00 pm + Meditation in the Sanctuary</p>	<p>11 Pecan Day</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM 11:45 am  LUNCH AT LA HACIENDA</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 5:00 - 6:00 pm + Meditation in the Sanctuary</p>	<p>18 1:00 - 2:00 pm  BOARD OF MISSION Meeting on ZOOM 6:00 - 7:00 pm  Church Council Meeting via ZOOM</p>	<p>19 7:00 - 8:00 pm  BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING via ZOOM</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 5:00 - 6:00 pm + Meditation in the Sanctuary</p>	<p>25 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm  CLUSTERS MEETING ON ZOOM</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>1 5:00 - 6:00 pm + Meditation in the Sanctuary</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>

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.