

## The TIE



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

### SHARING MEALS TOGETHER

For two years, we have met on-line, almost every week. We meet for support, for fellowship and to resource one another. We, in this case, are a group of about 8-10 chaplains who all work in different retirement communities in California. One of the chaplains had quite a bit of money left in her budget and suggested to her Executive Director, that it get used for a retreat for this particular group. And so, as I am writing this article, I find myself in Santa Barbara, enjoying this rare opportunity to meet in person with people who all know what it is like to be a chaplain.

We have some wonderful programming, and then of course share some meals together. I

love our time at the table maybe even more than the programming time. There are conversations that unfold, we laugh together, and we get to know each other in ways that are just delightful.

There is something that happens when we come to the table, sit down, and open ourselves up to be sustained not only by the food but maybe even more by being in each other's presence. Tables are such a place of human connection. And sharing tables with other people reminds us that there's more to food than fuel. We don't eat only for sustenance.

Rev. Barry Jones says that one of the most important spiritual disciplines for us may be to recover in the kind of world in which we live, is the discipline of table fellowship. In the fast-paced, tech-saturated, attention-deficit-disordered culture in which we find ourselves, we need to recover the art of a slow meal around a table with people we care about, and also with people we may not know that well.



His words reminded me of the times we have gone to La Hacienda after church and have a meal together. No place to go, nothing left to do, just allowing ourselves to connect with each other is such a gift, such a blessing.

Continued on the next page.

Continued from page one.

Next month we are organizing a meal after the service and bring in the food to share with one another. The table is a place to remember God's blessings and God's gifts we receive every day.



Next Sunday, October 6, we will observe World Communion Sunday. In churches all over the world, bread will be broken, and the cup will be poured. World Communion Sunday invites us to think beyond the walls of our own church. We will celebrate this Sunday with many other churches, and we will remember and stand in solidarity with people who will not be able to come to the table, either because they are in physical danger, because of food scarcity, or because people no longer have a community to be a part of.

We invite you to join us. It will be delightful to share a meal together at the table of God's grace, where we all will be sustained.

Kindly,

*Pastor Elisabeth*

## **DON'T BE TAKEN IN BY A SCAM**

If you receive emails which look like they come from the church, someone on a Board or the Church Council, or from the pastor, asking for donations via Paypal or other platforms, they are most likely part of a scam. Please check with the church or with the pastor if you receive emails asking for money.



## **PRAYER PARTNERS**

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



**September 29 - October 5**

Greg and Sher Ripley

**October 20 - 26**

Cecil Sherrod

**October 6 - 12**

David and Christina Santschi

**October 27 - November 2**

Cyndi Siroky

**October 13 - 19**

Val Sherer



# 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).***

October 6	10 AM	Worship	World Communion Sunday Neighbors in Need Offering
October 13	10 AM	Worship	Blessing of the Animals
October 20	10 AM	Worship	Rev. Mary Elyn Bahlert preaching Pastor Elisabeth presiding
October 27	10 AM	Worship	Pastor Elisabeth preaching



**Sunday, October 13  
10 AM**

**Bring your pet, on a  
leash, in a cage, or  
bring a picture**

**Everyone is welcome!**

**First Congregational Church of  
San Rafael**



## 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=c2V0RXEwWjF4STNNSTlxbWFFTENuZz09>

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](mailto:Knopf.david@gmail.com)

## MEETINGS, MEETINGS, MEETINGS -- VIA ZOOM

**Oct. 8:** The Board of Ministry will meet on **Tuesday**, Oct. 8, at 11:45 AM.

**Oct. 16:** The Church Council will meet on **Wednesday**, Oct. 16, at 6 PM.

**Oct. 17:** The Board of Trustees will meet on **Thursday**, Oct. 17, at 7 PM.

**Oct. 23:** The Board of Mission will meet on **Wednesday**, Oct. 23, at 1 PM.



## LUNCH TOGETHER OCTOBER 20 IN OUR COURTYARD

Let's meet again for an informal lunch in our own courtyard

Join us on Sunday, October 20, following worship. All are welcome! Sandwiches (options will be offered to "build your own"), chips, fruit, and cookies. Donations toward the cost of sandwiches are welcome.



## BOARD OF TRUSTEE'S REPORT



### More on Church Finances

How much pastor time do we need to develop the dynamic church we are becoming? This is a question the Trustees, Church Council, the Search Committee, and ultimately the congregation need to face. It matters as we try to attract applicants for our settled pastor position.

The last few years we have hired pastors for 60% time. And we have kept them busy. The applicants we received were mostly retired ministers. Would offering 75% time attract a wider range of applicants? Would that provide enough time for the outreach, liason, pastoral care, and resource development needed to help us grow?

But can we afford to pay for 75%? Not with our current income.

In November we will all be asked to reconsider our pledge of time and talent for next year. We will challenge ourselves to fund a budget with adequate time to attract quality candidates. Can you help?

In November we will ask for your answer.

### Landscape Upgrade Progress

On Sunday, Sept. 29, after worship, Bob De Haan presented information about the landscape upgrade along North San Pedro Rd., which will be sponsored by Pilgrim Park Apartments.

The Landscape architect designed the space using 3 principles:

1. Plants that are native to our area
2. Low water usage using recycled water
3. Low maintenance.



The design includes 5 or 6 coastal live oak along the road and clusters of manzanita, salvias, Douglas Iris, sage, western red bud and other local plants, mostly along the pathway and out from the pathway to downstairs.

Pilgrim plans on purchasing the plants this fall and begin planting once the rains start. In the meantime, the necessary permits are being sought from the county and Marin Municipal Water District. The cost and labor will be covered by Pilgrim Park, Inc., and the church will continue paying for the water.

The plan preserves almost all of the current trees and will add regular water to the pines”  
“In a few years,” Bob says, “it will look like a forest.”

## 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

## “OLDSTERS” MEET ON OCTOBER 23 — WITH A NEW NAME!

Okay, we're older, but old age is not what entirely defines us.

In our September meeting we talked about the benefits of getting older. Two that we stressed were the wisdom we accumulated over our years and the respect we have earned.



We have not just gotten old, we have become Elders in our tribes! Therefore the old Oldsters group is now going to be called the Elders, as befits a group of wise and respected people.

And in October, **The Elders** will be meeting on Wednesday, October 23, from 6:30-7:30, on the Church's Zoom link.

Our topic will be: What do we want to be doing in the final decades of our lives, and are we doing it? See you on Wednesday, October 23rd!

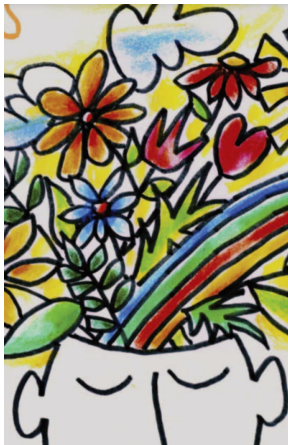
Let Charles Little know if you could use some assistance with the technology! (415) 342-2720. [barcaabuelo@gmail.com](mailto:barcaabuelo@gmail.com).



## BOARD OF MISSION MISSION MATTERS



### NEIGHBORS IN NEED OFFERING - OCTOBER 6



What is the United Church of Christ’s Neighbors in Need offering used for? One-third of the offering supports the Council for American Indian Ministry. Two-thirds are used by the UCC’s Justice and Wellness Ministries to provide grants to UCC churches and organizations as well as supporting a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.

In 2024, the Neighbors in Need theme is “Mental Health Justice For All!” This year’s focus is on Mental Health Justice. A just world for all is a world where the human rights and well-being of people with mental health challenges are respected, no matter who you are or where you are in life’s mental health journey.

God calls us to create a just world for all people living with disabilities and mental health challenges. God calls us to the work of justice for people experiencing stigma, invisibility, and marginalization by church and society. We are called to work to ensure that church and society reduces the stigma faced by those living with disabilities and mental health challenges.

Please give generously on October 6. Please write make your check out to First Congregational Church of San Rafael, with Neighbors in Need noted on the check.

### BOARD OF MISSION AGAIN SUPPORTS TWO LOCAL SCHOOLS

The Board of Mission administers the Pilgrim Hill Fund, which was founded at the time we renovated our sanctuary, over two decades ago. This year we again reached out to local elementary schools, inviting them to submit grant applications for a \$1000 grant. We awarded grants to two schools who applied this fall.



#### **Laurel Dell Elementary School**

Early Morning Reading Boost for Multilingual Learners

Our project seeks to implement a reading tutoring program for K-5 students, with a focus on multilingual learners, at Laurel Dell Elementary School.

#### **San Pedro Elementary School**

San Pedro 5th graders will attend a field trip to Angel Island after a study on immigration during the early 1900s. Students will draw connections between the immigrant experience with which they are familiar - the students' family, friends, neighbors, and many students themselves have experienced this journey and understand why people take such financial and other risks to come to the US.



## 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](mailto:isabella1472@comcast.net) or Annie Song-Hill [asonghill@gmail.com](mailto:asonghill@gmail.com) if you have a prayer request you would like included in the prayer chain.

### In September

"Bless be the Tie that Binds..."

**Sunday, September 8** We celebrated "Welcome Sunday" by bringing new friends and connecting with old friends. After a summer break, we enjoyed a full choir singing an upbeat arrangement of "Shine Jesus Shine," and we felt filled up with the glow of love infused in the service and sermon on the Greatest Commandment that we "love one another..." We also "became filled up" during Community Time on more fellowship and ice cream sundaes!



"Praying"

**Sunday, September 15** The choir sang another joyous piece, "Give Me Jesus," with the arrangement by our very own Music Director, Gerry Grosz. Gerry also led us in his musical interpretation inspired by the Mary Oliver poem "Praying." Rev. Elisabeth's readings and sermon carried the theme of "Becoming Prayer" throughout the service. Following worship, we enjoyed informal community time for our 3rd Sunday luncheon on the patio of La Hacienda.

**Sunday, September 22** An exquisite quartet of "If Ye Love Me" (by Thomas Tallis) was sung by Christina and David Santschi, Lucinda Ray and Charles Little. Heartfelt thanks to you all for sharing your musical gifts! The music offered healing for our souls, along with a thoughtful, heartfelt sermon in a service themed around the healing power of an all inclusive Love, the story of the woman "unbent" and being "seen" by Jesus.





## Coming in October

**Tuesdays at 5pm** “Meditation in the Sanctuary” will be continue to meet weekly. Thank you to Elisabeth for her experienced leadership in guided meditations and the reading of poetry for a contemplative opening centering time.



**Sunday, October 20** For our 3rd Sunday informal meal together, please join us for sandwiches (options will be offered to “build your own”), chips, fruit and cookies in the Courtyard for Lunch following worship. Donations toward the cost of sandwiches are welcome.

## Upcoming Worship Services

**Sunday, October 6** Neighbors in Need Special Offering and World Communion Sunday communion service with breads from around the world.

**Sunday, October 13** Blessing of the Animals in the Courtyard. Bring your friends and family members ...both two-footed and four-footed! At the end of the worship, your animal kin will be blessed. Snacks will be offered for all critters (including human ones).



**Sunday, October 13  
10 AM**

**Bring your pet, on a  
leash, in a cage, or  
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**Sunday, October 20** For our 3rd Sunday informal meal together, please join us for sandwiches (options will be offered to “build your own”), chips, fruit and cookies in the Courtyard for lunch following worship. Donations toward the cost of sandwiches are welcome.

**Next Board of Ministry meeting: Tuesday, October 8th on Zoom 11:45am**

## Praying by Mary Oliver

It doesn't have to be  
the blue iris, it could be  
weeds in a vacant lot, or a few  
small stones; just  
pay attention, then patch  
a few words together and don't try  
to make them elaborate, this isn't  
a contest but the doorway  
into thanks, and a silence in which  
another voice may speak.



## **Our Church Assessment Tool (CAT) is here!**

### **What is the CAT?**

The CAT is a Church Assessment Tool consisting of 90+-question online (or paper) assessment of a congregation that is completed by members of a church. We affectionately call it a CAT-SCAN. It generates a report called Vital Signs.

### **The Purpose of the CAT**

Using the Congregation Assessment Tool is like taking our church to a doctor, a travel agent, and a tailor. It gives all of us a read-out on the health of the church, a sense of where members think the church should head in the future, and a description of the church as a unique body of people.

The CAT is a benchmark tool of 90+questions that helps determine our congregation's current vitality, the priorities of where our congregation wants to head, the areas that need immediate attention, and our congregation's culture.

### **Who should fill this survey out?**

We hope that everybody connected to the church would be willing to fill out the survey. The more people fill out the survey, the better we understand some of the vital aspects of our community. This understanding will help us in many ways. We will be able to look at ways that we can serve the community and its ministries better, and it will help us in our search process for a settled pastor. The clearer we are describing who we are, what is important in the life of the church, the higher the chance that we will attract a pastor who is a good match for the church.

### **What is the next step?**

If you have provided us with a current email address, within the next week, you will receive a unique web link to complete the assessment online. If you would prefer to take the assessment using a paper copy, please let us know, and we will provide one for you along with a self-addressed stamped envelope. We will also make time and laptops available in the next couple of weeks after church, to assist people in filling out the form.



## OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

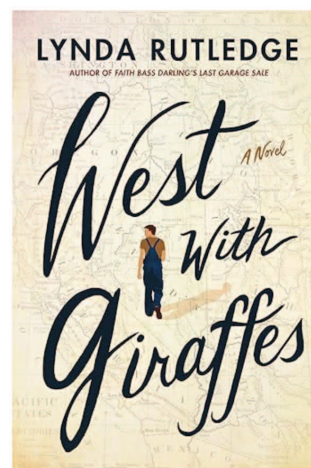
- 13 — Benjamin Dempsey
- 17 — Ann Dannecker
- 19 — Jean O’Leary
- 23 — Sher Ripley
- 25 — Tessa Templeman
- 25 — Deb Smith
- 31 — Bruce Weir

## BOOK CLUB RESUMES

After taking the summer off, the Book Club will resume. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, November 7, at 7:30 on Zoom. We will be reading *West with Giraffes*, by Lynda Rutledge.

It’s 1938. The Great Depression lingers. Hitler is threatening Europe, and world-weary Americans long for wonder. They find it in two giraffes who miraculously survive a hurricane while crossing the Atlantic. What follows is a twelve-day road trip in a custom truck to deliver Southern California’s first giraffes to the San Diego Zoo. Inspired by true events, the tale weaves real-life figures with fictional ones, including the world’s first female zoo director, a crusty old man with a past, a young female photographer with a secret, and assorted reprobates as spotty as the giraffes.

You can get copies at the Marin County and Sonoma County libraries., including audiobook versions and large print versions.



## TIE DEADLINE for NOVEMBER 2024 issue - Mon., OCT. 28

The deadline for articles and news for the November 2024 issue of The TIE is Monday, October 28. Please email your articles to [lucindaray@aol.com](mailto:lucindaray@aol.com) by Monday, October 28.



### Rev. Elisabeth Middelberg

Thursday mornings  
or by appointment

Phone: 707 280-0382

Email: [Elismid@yahoo.com](mailto: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](mailto:office@fccsanrafael.org)

# FCC Calendar **OCTOBER** 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>29</b>  10 am - 11 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	<b>30</b>	<b>October 1</b> 5 am - 6 am  Meditation in the Sanctuary	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b> 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM 10 am Neighbors in Need Offering	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 11:45 am  Board of Ministry Meeting 12 noon via ZOOM 5 pm - 6 pm  Meditation in the Sanctuary	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b> 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM 10 am  Blessing of the Animals	<b>14</b>  Columbus Day	<b>15</b> 5 am - 6 am  Meditation in the Sanctuary	<b>16</b> 6 am - 7 am  Church Council Meeting via ZOOM	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> Sweetest Day
<b>20</b> 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM 11:30 am  LUNCH in our COURTYARD	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> 5 pm - 6 pm  Meditation in the Sanctuary	<b>23</b> 1 pm - 2 pm  BOARD of MISSION Meeting on ZOOM 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm  ELDER'S MEETING ON ZOOM	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b> 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 5 pm - 6 pm  Meditation in the Sanctuary	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Halloween	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

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](http://www.FccSanRafael.org).