

The TIE



From our pastor,
Rev. Elisabeth Middelberg

“Do not let your hearts be troubled”

(A reflection inspired by “Enfleshed” and
Rev. Lauren Van Ham)

Our very first scripture reading (John 14) for the month of May starts with these words: “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” We hear these words spoken on what is the 5th Sunday after Easter. Well, given what we are witnessing in today’s world, that sounds nearly impossible, doesn’t it?

In the same vein, given what was happening when Jesus himself spoke these words, it sounded nearly impossible as well. In preparing for Passover, Jesus had washed the disciples’ feet, he had spoken of his life and death and predicted Peter’s denial

of him. Jesus also told the disciples, he would be with them only a little while longer, told them to love one another. In this one evening we find many of the core elements of who Jesus was. I can only imagine that the room was filled with questions, fear and startledness. Emotions were running high, surely their hearts are troubled.

I don’t think Jesus was saying: “Don’t worry, it will be ok.” Both he and the disciples knew that what was already taking place and that which was to come was not ok. Just like we know that what we are seeing in the world is heartbreaking and worrisome and is not and will not be “ok.” I think Jesus is giving the disciples a place to land. He is acknowledging their fears and speaks words of assurance. He tells them to hold on when the days ahead hurt and the way out or forward is not at all clear. Yes, Jesus is preparing them for his death. But he is also assuring them that his presence will carry on, carry on in them.



Jesus reminds the disciples that the source of his wisdom, truth, and love – the source that allowed him to heal, to teach, to liberate people, it is the same source that is present in them when they carry his work forward.

The loss and the grief that the disciples are up against is real and theirs is a loss that should not have been. One that came about through cruelty and injustice. Just as so many of the losses we are witnessing come about through injustice, through exerting dominance.... Into the midst of these truths, Jesus speaks. Not to talk away the

Continued on the next page.

losses we are witnessing come about through injustice, through exerting dominance.... Into the midst of these truths, Jesus speaks. Not to talk away the pain, but to tell them to hold on. He expands their vision. There will be new life coming after a little while.

When I was away on vacation, Rev. Lauren Van Ham spoke a beautiful sermon on Earth Day. In it she spoke about how even at times when there were cataclysmic endings in our cosmological history, a sliver of regenerative energy remained, bringing new life forth, with capacities that the previous life did not have. She urged us to keep our hearts open even in the midst of losses and endings, to remain part of a larger consciousness.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled” is to me a reminder that forever, we remain connected to the presence of the One who creates and re-creates. This truth isn’t meant to make it easy, to fool us into avoiding our pain or grief. But it can carry us through the days when none of it makes sense, when resurrection is impossible to foresee. Something within us, something embodied through us, it is connected to God and connects us to each other. Forever and always - the lifeline that threads the past, present, and future together, the entirety of the cosmos that ever has been and ever will be - makes a home in and through the deepest parts of our being and the surface of our flesh.



So do not let your hearts be troubled, not because the trouble isn't real, but because you are not facing it alone. You never have been. We are urged to hold on to each other, to this ancient assurance, to the thread that has always run through every ending and every beginning.

Do not let your hearts be troubled. We are held.

Grateful to be on the journey together.

,
Pastor Elisabeth

MARIN INTERFAITH PRAYER BREAKFAST MAY 6



The Marin Interfaith Prayer Breakfast will be held on Wednesday morning, May 6, from 8 to 10 AM at Congregation Kol Shofar. Please contact Caran Cuneo for more details.

PRAYER PARTNERS

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



April 26 - May 2
Debra Smith

May 3 - 9
Annie Song-Hill

May 10 - 16
Bob and Sue Spofford

May 17 - 23
Tessa and Colin Templeman

May 24 - 30
Jim Turner

May 31 - June 6
Denise Walker

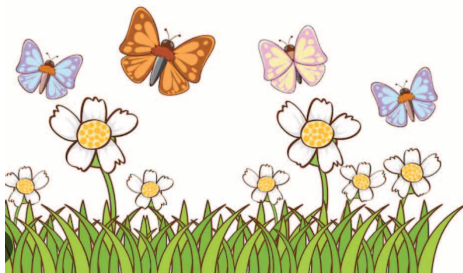
Come and Worship with us!



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

May 3	10 AM	Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month Sunday
May 10	10 AM	Mother's Day The Choir will sing the 23rd psalm
May 17	10 AM	Elizabeth Conway preaching (Pastor Elisabeth on retreat)
May 24	10 AM	Pentecost Sunday Church Luncheon
May 31	10 AM	Prayer Sermon Series begins

MEDITATIVE GARDEN RETREAT - SATURDAY, JUNE 27



Cathi Fuller and David Knopf will be hosting a half-day retreat in their garden on June 27, from 10 AM until 1 PM. It will be a Saturday morning time to integrate the practices of prayer that will be introduced by Pastor Elisabeth in her sermon series in May.

All are welcome and encouraged to spend this quiet time together in the Knopf-Fuller's garden and to enjoy a brunch meal together at the close.



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=c2V0RXEvdW9F4STNNSTlxbWFFTENuZz09>

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

May 7: The Board of Trustees will meet on **Thursday, May 7**, at 7:00 PM.

May 20: The Board of Mission will meet on **Wednesday, May 20**, at 12:30 PM

May 20: The Church Council will meet on **Wednesday, May 20**, at 6:00 PM.

May 27: The Board of Ministry will meet on **Wednesday, May 27**, at 11:45 AM.



KINDNESS — PASS IT ON!

Be Tolerant

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT



Landscape Project Planting

The landscape project along North San Pedro is almost done! California natives plants including manzanita, yarrow, Pacific Iris, golden poppies, and many others now grace the entrance to the church and further down around one of the pathways into Pilgrim Park.

The plants are small now, but with a little time and some recycled water, they will flourish. Again, we are grateful to Pilgrim Park Apartments, Inc., for sponsoring this project. Les Santos, the manager at Pilgrim Park,

had to do a lot of coordinating and negotiating, particularly with Marin Water to arrange for the recycled water connections and authorizations.

Another planting

Also newly "planted " is a new computer in the office. The old computer was slowing down and had some software glitches, so the Trustees decided it was time for Amy to have good tools. We know that Amy grows many miracles from the office.

Next Trustees Meeting will be Thursday, May 7, at 7:00 PM on Zoom.



To the Board of Trustees, First Congregational Church,

I am writing to thank you for your support of our Tax-Aide program this tax season. We greatly appreciate your willingness to help and your flexibility in providing us a workspace. We were especially grateful again this year to be able to use the Sanctuary for our waiting taxpayers as we have very elderly taxpayers.

Our volunteers at the Church prepared 210 tax returns this year for local residents (including prior year and amended returns) while open only day per week. Unfortunately we were unable hold a Saturday session this year. The average AGI of our taxpayers is \$52,100. Eighty-two percent of our clients filed Single, most of whom are divorced or widowed. Thirteen percent filed MFJ (married filing joint) and six percent filed as Head of Household. Sixty-seven percent of our clients are over 60 years old. This site provides an easily-accessible location for the many residents for the Terra Linda/Northgate area and provides an additional site in Marin County preparing returns. Without this site available, Marin AARP Tax-Aide would not be able to accommodate these taxpayers, as all our sites book up and have to turn people away at the end of the season.

I want to thank **David Knopf** for his graciousness and willingness to help. He dropped in several times. All our Counselors really appreciated the hot pot of coffee lovingly prepared for us each week by **Jackie Dema**, and we would like to thank her for the time and effort she put into doing that.

I am very happy with what we were able to accomplish this tax season. We truly could not have done this without your support. I look forward to being able to offer this service again next year on Wednesdays. This change to Wednesdays worked well for us and better accommodated the other groups wanting to use the space on Tuesdays.

With sincere gratitude,

Linda Bell
Northgate Shift Coordinator, Marin AARP Tax-Aide

REMEMBERING EASTER





BOARD OF MISSION MISSION MATTERS



BREAD FOR THE WORLD OFFERING OF 71 LETTERS !

Thanks so much to all you letter writers! On Sunday, April 26, after worship, we sent 71 letters to our U.S. Representative and our U.S. Senators urging them to act to help end hunger at home and around the world.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED NEXT STREET CHAPLAINCY DINNER MAY 5

The Board of Mission has committed to helping prepare and serve dinner for those in need four times this year. On Tuesday, May 5, a group of us will volunteer at the Street Chaplaincy dinner at the First Presbyterian Church in San Rafael. We need to be there from 4 - 7 PM. Please let Lucinda Ray know if you can attend.

PLEASE CONTINUE TO REMEMBER THE FOOD BANK

Please continue to bring in non-perishable food items.

Coffee, tea bags, cooking oil, boxed milk, peanut butter, canned goods, rice, cereal, and canned meat are especially welcome. Sugar and flour are also needed.



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. Our members are Louis Frost, Chair; Rev. Elisabeth Middelberg, Pastor; Gerry Grosz, Director of Music; Jackie Dema, Cathi Fuller, Cathy Krise, Charles Little, Cecil Sherrod and Tessa Templeman.



Agape Team

The Agape Team provides “compassionate connection to our church community through words of encouragement, cards, phone calls, home visits, and other support. Thanks to Helen MacLam, Jackie Dema, and Cathi Krise who write cards for birthdays and for love. And the Agape Team and the pastor for their continued home and hospital visits and rides to appointments and church. If you have or are aware of someone in need of prayer, transportation, pastoral visits or nourishment. reach out to the prayer chain, Pastor Elisabeth, or the church office.

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.

Community/ Fellowship Time and Spiritual Life

- **Meditation Tuesdays at 5 PM** Meditation continues every Tuesdays at 5 PM. Tell Elisabeth if you wish to join by Zoom or need a ride if you cannot attend in person.
- **Street Chaplaincy Dinner** Next cooking **May 5**. Come help us cook and serve for the unhoused.
- **Elders** Next meeting is Wednesday **May 13**: Best Friends and Bullies (**See page 9**)
- **Informal luncheon** after Pentecost and worship on Sunday, **May 24**.
- **Book club** Next meeting is Thursday **June 18** at 7:30 on Zoom. The book is *One Day, Everyone Will Always Have Been Against This*. (**See page 9**)
- **New members** Pastor Elisabeth will connect with Richard, Christopher, and Elizabeth, to see if there is a good time for a membership class.
- **Greeters** Currently we have Ed, Claire, Caryl, and Jackie. We could use one or more additional volunteers to greet people on Sunday mornings before worship.
- **Spring Retreat** will be **June 27**. **See page 3** for details Elisabeth will deliver a sermon series on prayer and suggests we use part of the time to make prayer beads.

May Brings Flowers, Moms, Asian Pacific Islanders, Pentecost, and More

Besides “the flowers that bloom in May,” this month in worship we will celebrate Asian and Pacific Islanders on May 3; Mothers and those in a mothering role on May 10, and the fires of Pentecost on the 24. In addition Elisabeth Conway, a world-renowned lion tamer, will be speaking on the Christian significance of *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* on May 17. On May 31, Pastor Elisabeth will begin a series of sermons on Prayer.

The next meeting of the Board of Ministry will be Wednesday, May 27th, 11:45-12:45 via Zoom.

ELDERS MEETING - MAY 13, 6:30 PM

Best Friends and Bullies We Have Known

As a youngster, did you have a best friend? Who was it, and what brought you together? What did you do together? Did you have any conflicts?

And Bullies! Were you bullied? Did you see others bullied? What did you do? Did you participate in bullying yourself?

These are our topics for May, specifically, Wednesday evening the 13th at 6:30 over Zoom.

Please join us. Here is the church's Zoom link:

Link to join all church Zoom meetings

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2011092691?pwd=c2V0RXEvWXF4STNNSTlxbWFFTENuZz09>

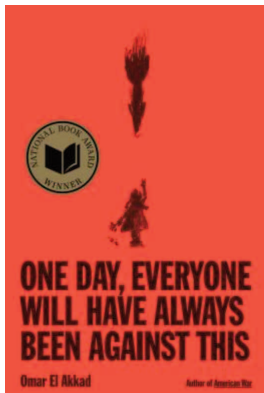
Meeting ID: ID: 201 109 2691

Password: FCCSR!

Call in number 1-669-900-6833



BOOK CLUB - THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 7:30 PM



The next meeting of the Book Club will be on Thursday, June 18, from 7:30 to 8:30 on Zoom. We will be reading *One Day, Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This*, by Omar El Akkad. This short book (187 pages) is available from both the Marin and Sonoma County libraries.

On October 25, 2023, after just three weeks of the bombardment of Gaza, Omar El Akkad put out a tweet: “One day, when it’s safe, when there’s no personal downside to calling a thing what it is, when it’s too late to hold anyone accountable, everyone will have always been against this.” This tweet has been viewed more than 10 million times.

As an immigrant who came to the West, El Akkad believed that it promised freedom. A place of justice for all. But in the past twenty years, reporting on the War on Terror, Ferguson, climate change, Black Lives Matter protests, and more, and watching the unmitigated slaughter in Gaza, El Akkad has come to the conclusion that much of what the West promises is a lie. That there will always be entire groups of human beings it has never intended to treat as fully human—not just Arabs or Muslims or immigrants, but whoever falls outside the boundaries of privilege. *One Day, Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This* is a chronicle of that painful realization, a moral grappling with what it means, as a citizen of the U.S., as a father, to carve out some sense of possibility in a time of carnage.

This is El Akkad’s nonfiction debut, his most raw and vulnerable work to date, a heartsick breakup letter with the West. It is a brilliant articulation of the same breakup we are watching all over the United States, in family rooms, on college campuses, on city streets; the consequences of this rupture are just beginning. This book is for all the people who want something better than what the West has served up. This is the book for our time.

MAY BIRTHDAYS



- 2 — Joshua Siroky
- 2 — Cecil Sherrod
- 10 — Val Sherer
- 10 — Brandon Siroky
- 23 — Cathi Fuller
- 23 — Cathy Krise
- 23 — Loreen Jackson
- 25 — Colin Templeman
- 25 — Jim Turner

WALKS with REVERENCE sponsored by the Marin Interfaith Council



**Monday,
May 11, 2-4 pm
Shoreline Park
San Rafael**

Canal District at Pickleweed Park- San Rafael
Meet at the picnic table near soccer field.
We will gather to share our intentions
before reverently walking in silence
and share our feelings and insights after together.
RSVP to Molly Arthur
molly6@pacbell.net or just show up!

JUNE WALK with REVERENCE

Sponsored by
Marin Interfaith Council and Project Adapt

Place: **Roy's Redwoods Open Space Preserve**
Two Hundred Ninety-three forested acres overlooking San Geronimo Valley



**Nicasio Valley Road
San Geronimo, CA 94963**
0.5 mi north of intersection
with Sir Francisco Drake Boulevard.
Date: Friday, June 19, 2026
Time: 10am - noon

Hosted by **Pat Carlone**



Description:
Walk with Reverence is for people of all ages and abilities. Whether moving at a moderate pace, a mindful stroll or a reflective sit, this gathering takes place monthly at different locations that celebrate the landscapes and waterscapes of Marin. The 2-hour format includes solo time, as well as gentle group facilitation, that supports finding harmony and kinship with the natural world. Each walk follows a similar format and will be hosted by members of the Marin Interfaith Council and/or the Marin Project Adapt Circle.

For this Walk we will gather at the entrance to the Preserve and move to a meeting spot just inside the entrance for a brief overview of the trails in the Preserve and how we can spend our morning there. Then we will venture out on our silent walks for an agreed upon period of time, returning to this or some other meeting spot for conversation and sharing of our experience.



Register for the Walk: Send an email with contact info to Pat Carlone at pccarlone@hotmail.com
By registering you are sharing your contact information to receive any day-of updates, such as weather conditions, that would necessitate a cancellation.

Parking:
Street parking only at the Preserve on both sides of Nicasio Valley Blvd. Please be respectful of local residents.

Do not block streets, gates, or driveways. There is one handicap parking spot at the entrance.

Questions or Concerns: Contact **Pat** at pccarlone@hotmail.com

TIE DEADLINE for JUNE 2026 TIE - JUNE 1

The deadline for articles and news for the JUNE 2026 issue of The TIE June 1. Please email your articles to lucindaray@aol.com by June 1.



Rev. Elisabeth Middelberg

Thursday mornings
or by appointment

Phone: 707 280-0382

Email: Elismid@yahoo.com

Amy Powers – Office Manager
























Monday and Thursday 10:30 AM - 2 PM

You can contact Amy by phone
or email any time.

Office Phone : 415 479-2747

Email: office@fccsanrafael.org

FCC Calendar **MAY** 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26  10 am - 11 am Worship, Church School & Child Care Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	27  5 pm TIE DEADLINE 5 PM	28  5 pm - 6 pm Meditation in the Sanctuary	29	30	May 1	
3  10 am - 11 am Worship, Church School & Child Care Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	4	5  4 pm - 7 pm STREET CHAP-AINCY DINNER 5 pm - 6 pm  Meditation in the Sanctuary	6  8 am - 10 am MORN INTERFAITH PRAYER BREAKFAST	7  7 am - 8 am BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING via ZOOM	8	9
10 Mother's Day  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	11  2 pm - 4 pm WALK WITH REVERENCE	12  5 pm - 6 pm Meditation in the Sanctuary	13  6:30 pm - 7:30 pm ELDERS MEETING ON ZOOM	14	15	16 Armed Forces Day
17  10 am - 11 am Worship, Church School & Child Care Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	18	19  5 pm - 6 pm Meditation in the Sanctuary	20  12:30 pm - 1:30 pm BOARD of MISSION Meeting on ZOOM  6 pm - 7 pm Church Council Meeting via ZOOM	21	22	23
24  10 am - 11 am Worship, Church School & Child Care Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	25  Memorial Day	26  5 pm - 6 pm Meditation in the Sanctuary	27  11:45 am Board of Ministry Meeting 11:45 via ZOOM	28	29	30
31  10 am - 11 am Worship, Church School & Child Care Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	1  5 pm TIE DEADLINE 5 PM	2  5 pm - 6 pm Meditation in the Sanctuary	3	4	5	6

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.