

The TIE



From our pastor,
Rev. Elisabeth Middelberg

A World of Care

"Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another; do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the immigrant, or the poor."

Zechariah 7:9-10

In this seventh chapter, the prophet Zechariah is handed a question: should the people continue a ritual fast they've kept for decades? He never really answers it. Instead, he tells them that God was never all that interested in the fasting itself, that rituals, however sincere they feel, can quietly become about us rather than about God. What God asks for instead is kindness and mercy, care for one another. That, Zechariah insists, is what it has always meant to belong to God.

Like most of you, I am familiar with the stories and admonitions in the scriptures calling us to care for one another, but I recently came upon the work of Ai-Jen Poo which expanded my thinking and understanding of the world of care quite a bit.

Ai-jen Poo is a community organizer who has spent more than 25 years building a movement to change the way our country values and supports caregiving and receiving care. Ai-Jen holds that care, how we care for each other and how our own need for care over a lifetime is a guiding ethic. She says that in this world where we are trying to navigate so much division, care is a shared experience that can bring us together.

Think about it...

Caring may well be the greatest shared experience among all human beings. When a child is born, we will take on the responsibility to care for that child. When loved ones get sick, when people age, those closest to them will help in caring for them. We find this way of caring in every culture, in people of all religions, in people in any or all the political structures in the world. It is an incredibly unifying experience once we tap into it and into its ability to connect.

Ai-Jen Poo created the "1 Million Care" campaign in which she asks people to share their stories of care. The campaign functions as a unifying force and as a groundswell to build political will to shift public policy, to create greater access to care and to create policies that will protect the most marginalized among us.

Continued on the next page.



This week the world lost someone who, for many of us, personified what justice and care in action can look like. Dolly Parton died at 80. The singer Jelly Roll said she might be the last universally beloved American we'll ever see. If that's true, it's a sad thing to say about our country, and at the same time, it says everything about the love people had for someone who gave her care away so freely, to absolutely anyone.

She started the Imagination Library which sends free books to young children no matter their family's income. By the end of last year, the program had given away over 300 million books. She supported children's hospitals and medical centers. When wildfires hit East Tennessee, she helped families who lost their homes. She also gave to medical research, including work that led to the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. Much of her giving came from a simple idea: if you have something, find a way to share it.

I love that idea: If you have something, find a way to share it. Dolly Parton believed that "if you help somebody, you help yourself too."

Tributes from around the world poured in the very next day. From the Buckingham Palace Band, who played the theme song of the movie "9 to 5" to the Empire State building in New York, which glowed pink in her honor. Whether you liked her music or not, she earned people's respect and love by living out her values, by showing us that care truly connects us to each other.

In the end, maybe that's the truest tribute of all, not just the songs or the lights, but the simple fact that so many people, for so many reasons, felt cared for by her. That's the world of care Zechariah asked us to build, one act of kindness and care at a time.

Grateful to be on the journey together.

Pastor Elisabeth



WE RECOGNIZE BOB DE HAAN'S MANY TALENTS



PRAYER PARTNERS

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



August 30 - September 5
Judy Girard

September 6 - 12
Richard Groh

September 13 - 19
Dick Hastings

September 20 - 26
Caryl Hodges

September 27 - October 3
Lorene Jackson

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).***

THEME OF THE WORSHIP SERVICED IN SEPTEMBER: COME TO THE TABLE

(Click the words: COME TO THE TABLE above)

September 6	10 AM	The Table of Hospitality
September 13	10 AM	The Table of Love Welcome Home Sunday Includes Church Luncheon All are welcome to the meal
September 20	10 AM	The Table of Peace
September 27	10 AM	The Table of Grace
	2 PM	Free Jazz Concert and Ice Cream Social

A recent church luncheon!





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=c2V0RXEvWXF4STNNSTlxbWFFTENuZz09>

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/UCbqIXLjsBEmjdGuoOKnOykA>
- 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 Trustees will meet on **Thursday, Sept. 3**, at 7:00 PM.

Sept. 16: The Church Council will meet on **Wednesday, Sept. 16**, at 6:00 PM

Sept. 23: The Board of Ministry will meet on **Tuesday, Sept. 22**, at 11:45 AM.

Sept. 30: The Board of Mission will meet on **Wednesday, Sept. 30**, at 12:30 PM.



KINDNESS — PASS IT ON!



BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT



How is the church doing financially?

In the last annual meeting in February 2026, the congregation approved a deficit budget that anticipated using some of our reserves. The good news is that so far this year, that deficit is very much smaller.

As of the end of July, we had anticipated expenses of about \$151,808 but had spent \$144,476. This does not include our benevolence contributions which we pay at the end of the year and some salaries then due.

Our income was up substantially. We had anticipated \$111,184 income to July 2026, but had about \$152,398 income. This is a bit misleading because several pledgers have paid for the entire year already, and the total includes a generous one time donation. Rent income and plate offerings are also up.

We still anticipate at the end of the year that we will need to draw some from our reserves, but this should be much smaller than originally budgeted. We continue to be cautious in our expenses, particularly because we have an aging facility which could need repair.

Next meeting: Wed., Sept. 9, at 7 PM.

ANNUAL GATHERING - OCTOBER 22-24

If you are interested in attending, this is a perfect opportunity to gather with other UCC churches, as the conference takes place in Oakland. You can choose to attend only one day or multiple days. First Congregational Church of San Rafael can have up to 3 delegates (those are the voting delegates). Others can attend and learn, share, and be inspired! October 22 (begins 2:45 PM) and ends Saturday at noon Oct, 24, 2026 |



City of Refuge United Church of Christ - 8400 Enterprise Way, Oakland, CA
We are Better Together!

The Northern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ joyfully invites you to our 2026 Annual Gathering, where, for the first time, our Annual Gathering and Fall Gathering will come together as one inspiring conference-wide event. Centered around the theme “Better Together,” this year’s gathering will inspire us to strengthen our connections across congregations, ministries, and communities as we worship, learn, discern, and serve together.

Throughout the weekend, participants will experience:

- Inspiring worship that nourishes our faith
- Dynamic keynote speakers
- Interactive workshops for clergy, lay leaders, and ministry teams
- Engaging Youth Ministry experiences
- Exhibitor booths highlighting ministries, organizations, and resources
- Fellowship, networking, and opportunities to build lasting relationships across the Conference.

Register now to get Early Bird prices!
Early Bird prices end September 21.

FREE!

LIVE JAZZ CONCERT

ICE CREAM SOCIAL



Sunday, Sept. 27, 2 PM

GERRY GROSZ JAZZ KITCHEN

**Come enjoy live jazz music. Following
the concert, slurp up cool ice cream at
an old-fashioned ice cream social.**

FREE!! (Donations will be accepted.)

Everyone is welcome!

First Congregational Church of San Rafael

8 North San Pedro Road, San Rafael

fccsanrafael.org



BOARD OF MISSION MISSION MATTERS



BACKPACK SUNDAY - A Big Success

Wow! What an amazing collection of 43 backpacks and many school supplies you donated on July 26. And thanks to Megan Fuller for counting all the supplies and delivering them to Ritter Center, where they were distributed to Marin County students who needed them. Thank you all so much!



Backpacks:	43	Pencil boxes:	7
3 Gift cards totaling	\$150	Rulers:	29
Lunch boxes	6	Subject Dividers:	3 pkgs
Binders:	23	Pencils:	300+
Binder paper packs	8	Pens:	200+
Binder pouches	38	Glue Sticks:	50
Notebooks:	56	Markers (pre-school):	27 sets
Composition books	9	Markers (elementary):	24 sets
Index cards	4	Crayons:	45 boxes



STREET CHAPLAINCY DINNER SEPTEMBER 8

Our next Street Chaplaincy dinner will be on Tuesday, September 8. We need a team of about 7 volunteers from 4 to 7 PM to help prepare and serve the meal, at the First Presbyterian Church in San Rafael. Everyone who does this finds it a very worthwhile experience. Please speak to a member of the Board of Mission if you can help.

FOOD BANK DONATIONS

Thanks to the generosity of you, our congregation, we are helping fight hunger in our community. According to the San Francisco - Marin Food Bank, the passage of the federal reconciliation budget included a staggering \$186 billion cut to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This has been our community's most effective tool for reducing hunger. This legislation has reversed decades of progress and will push millions of families nationwide—including thousands in our community—deeper into crisis.



Let's continue to do our part to solve hunger in our community. Our last barrel of food collected was given to the food bank and weighed in at 78 pounds. Let's beat that amount in the coming weeks, bringing non-perishables (no glass please) and depositing them in the food barrel in the narthex.

Thank you for taking a stand to end hunger in our community!



BOARD OF MINISTRY REPORT

The Board of Ministry's role in the church is to coordinate with the Pastor and Music Director to provide meaningful worship through the liturgical year. We address the spiritual life of the church and nurture community through worship, prayer, outreach, fellowship, spiritual nurture, and education.



Special Gatherings in September

As is traditional, we welcome parishioners back to church in September, even if we never went away! **Sunday, September 13th** will be Welcoming Sunday when we will gather after the service for a community luncheon.

Then on **Sunday, September 27**, from 2:00 to 3:00 pm, we and our guests will be treated to a Jazz Concert starring the Gerry Grosz Jazz Kitchen, a three-piece ensemble. Following the concert we adjourn to the patio for an Ice Cream Social! Don't miss it. And bring your friends!

Pastoral Care/ Agape/ Prayer Chain

- Agape. The Agape Team provides "compassionate connection to our church community through words of encouragement, cards, phone calls, home visits and other support as needed." E-mail either Julie Dowling isabella1472@comcast.net or Annie Song-Hill asonghill@gmail.com.
- Pastor Elisabeth, as well as members, are always reaching out to members who have been unable to attend worship.
- While Helen MacLam is unavailable, Birthday Cards for members will be prepared by Jackie Dema and Cathi Krise.

Community/ Fellowship Time and Spiritual Life

- Book club: Thursday Sept. 3, at 7:30 PM on Zoom. *The Place of Tides* by James Rebank.(see page 9)
- Elders Group: "Advice to Your 20-Year-Old Self." Wednesday, Sept. 30th at 6:30 PM. (see page 9)
- Meditation continues Tuesdays at 4:30 PM with an ever-enlarging group of meditators!
- On Tuesday Sept 8th members are encouraged to volunteer for the Street Chaplaincy Dinner. (See page 7).
- There continues to be concern about how few people are visible in the sanctuary on YouTube during the service. You are encouraged to move toward the front and center of the church, and our AV Guy, Will Godbey, will be consulted when he returns regarding the placement of the cameras.

Worship

- Pastor Elisabeth will be preaching throughout September, mainly from the Lectionary.
- Plan Ahead! The Northern Calif. Conference of UCC churches will be in Oakland, Oct. 22-24. Thursday-Saturday. Since it's nearby, many parishioners might enjoy attending.

Music

- Gerry shared his happiness with the small but mighty choir and reported that he is working hard to find new, appropriate music.
- A number of parishioners wondered whether we could have more hymns like "Open My Eyes." Gerry noted that the attraction may be that it is in 6/8 time. He and Pastor Elisabeth will keep their eyes open for more tunes in that rollicking time signature.

SEPTEMBER ELDERS - WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 6:30-7:30 on ZOOM

Fellow Elders,

Imagine that you had the opportunity to go back in time to chat with your 20-year-old (or thereabouts) self. What advice would you give?

- First, what were you doing when you were in your twenties?
- What was worrying you then?
- What choices were you contemplating and which did you make?
- Would you suggest different choices for your 20-year-old self?
- How did your choices turn out?
- And perhaps you have no advice for your young self. What did you do that turned out well?



Of course we can't live our lives over again, and we'd rather not have regrets, but what concerns did you have then that you now realize were not that important? We'll meet over Zoom on Wednesday, Sept. 30th from 6:30 to 7:30. Please join us. Here's the link and info:

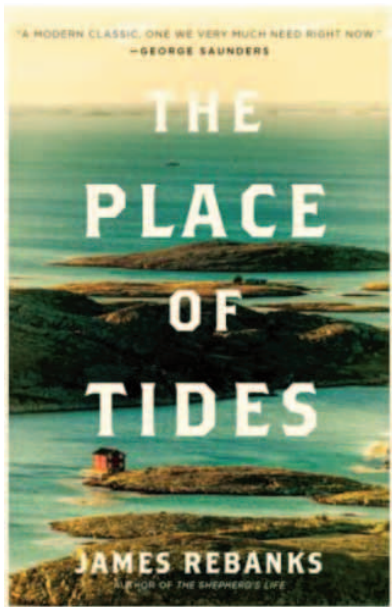
Link to join all church Zoom meetings

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

Meeting ID: ID: 201 109 2691

Password: FCCSR!

BOOK CLUB - THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 7:30 PM



On Thursday, September 3 at 7:30 PM on Zoom, we will be reading *The Place of Tides*, by James Rebanks. 285 pages. It is available from both the Marin and Sonoma County libraries as a book, an e-book, and an audiobook. Here's what it's about:

Many years ago, James Rebanks met an old woman on a remote Norwegian island. She lived and worked alone on a tiny rocky outcrop, gathering the down of wild Eider ducks: a centuries-old trade that had once made men and women rich, but had long been in decline. Back at home, Rebanks couldn't stop thinking about the woman. Years passed. Then, one day, he wrote to her, asking if he could return. Bring work clothes, she replied, and good boots, and come quickly: her health was failing.

And so he travelled to the edge of the Arctic to witness her last season on the island. This is the story of that season. It is the story of a unique and ancient landscape, and of the woman who brought it back to life. As Rebanks follows her from the rough, isolated toil of bitter winter into the summer light, his understanding of her life and work - and of his own - is utterly transformed. What began as a journey of escape becomes an extraordinary lesson in self-knowledge and forgiveness.

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

COMING IN OCTOBER



**Sunday, October 11
10 AM**

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

Everyone is welcome!

**First Congregational Church of
San Rafael
8 North San Pedro Road
fccsanrafael.org**

TIE DEADLINE for OCTOBER 2026 TIE IS SEPTEMBER 28

The deadline for articles and news for the October 2026 issue of The TIE is Monday, September 28. Please email your articles to lucindaray@aol.com by Monday, September 28.



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.

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FCC Calendar **SEPTEMBER** 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am-11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	31 September 1 5 pm-6 pm  Meditation in the Sanctuary	2 7:30 am-8:30 am  BOOK CLUB reading THE PLACE OF DOGS	3 7 am-8 am  BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING via ZOOM	4 7 am-8 am  Church Council Meeting via ZOOM		
6 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am-11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	7 Labor Day	8 4 pm-7 pm  STREET CHAPLAINCY DINNER 5 pm-6 pm  Meditation in the Sanctuary	9 7 am-8 am  BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING via ZOOM	10 7 am-8 am  Church Council Meeting via ZOOM	11 Period Day	12
13 Grandparents' Day 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am-11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM 11:30 am-12:30 pm WELCOME HOME SUNDAY LUNCHEON (11:30 AM)	14 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am-11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	15 5 pm-6 pm  Meditation in the Sanctuary	16 6 pm-7 pm  Church Council Meeting via ZOOM	17	18	19
20 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am-11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	21	22 5 pm-6 pm  Meditation in the Sanctuary	23 11:45 am  Board of Ministry Meeting 11:45 via ZOOM	24	25	26
27 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am-11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM 2 pm JAZZ CONCERT & ICE CREAM SOCIAL	28 5 pm  THE DEADLINE 5 PM	29 5 pm-6 pm  Meditation in the Sanctuary	30 11:15 am-2:15 pm  BOARD of MISSION Meeting on ZOOM 6:30 pm-7:30 pm  ELDERS MEETING ON ZOOM	1	2	3

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.