First Congregational Church of San Rafael
November 2026

The TIE



From our pastor,
Rev. Elisabeth Middelberg

"Take care of him, and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." — Luke 10:35, NRSVUE

Reading one of Rev. Cameron Trimble's meditations on the Good Samaritan, I learned that October 29, the day I am writing this, is the United Nations' International Day of Care and Support. Her focus was on how often the role of the Innkeeper is overlooked. After the Samaritan treats the wounds of the man who was robbed, takes him to the inn, and stays with him for the night, the wounded man still needs care. We do not know how long the Innkeeper cares for him, only that he does, in the way that caregivers do, by tending to the person in his care.

I felt sad not to have known there was an International Day of Care. It was a stark reminder that the enormous amount of caregiving that takes place everywhere is almost never recognized. So much of it happens out of sight. Recently a friend of mine, a pastor in Dallas, wrote that his mother had passed away in England, and he thanked his siblings for taking such good care of her at the end. It is what we hope and pray for: that our loved ones who live far away are tended to lovingly when we ourselves are not able to do so.

Maybe all of us in our church community have been, or still are, caregivers at some point or another. I think we have all experienced this sense of extending ourselves to include another person in our presence. But what is it that gets extended: our attention, our presence?

In thinking about this, I came across the root of tending in Latin, tendere, "to stretch." The caregiving sense of "tend" is a shortened form of "attend," from ad-tendere, "to stretch toward." So when we tend someone, we are literally stretching ourselves toward them. That is a beautiful way to express what caregivers do. It also helps us understand the fatigue that sets in when we stretch toward another too far or too long. To attend to someone is to be pulled a little past our own center, and it may cost something.



I imagine the Samaritan understood this, which is why he compensated the Innkeeper for his time and expenses. Most of the caregiving we do is not compensated financially, nor would we want it to be. But it is important to recognize when we have

Continued on the next page.

stretched too hard or for too long, especially when there is no finish line in the work of caring.

Is there such a thing as easing the stretch? Bringing ease to our own bodies and minds is one way to stay close to our own center: a walk with no one's needs in it, a body allowed to be unattended to for a while, some time in prayer in which we imagine God stretching God's spirit out toward us. These are small ways of loosening. A stretch that is never loosened becomes a strain.

Or, and this is harder for caregivers, we can let someone else stretch toward us and allow someone else to care for us. Care is a mutual reaching. At a recent retreat I attended, the teacher said that the care you extend needs to include the care you have for yourself. I would add that no one can stretch toward others indefinitely without something or someone stretching toward them.

I think of the Innkeeper, whose name we never learn, and of all who tend without being named. Blessings to you if you are a caregiver, and blessings to you if you are learning how to be cared for. Let me close with this blessing:

A Blessing for Those Who Tend

You who have stretched yourselves toward another,
who have leaned past your own center,
hear this blessing.
May you be held as you have held.
May there be a loosening in you,
a long exhale after the long reach,
and may you not mistake that rest for failure.
May the One who stretched out the heavens
stretch toward you now,
and may you rest
in the tenderness you have so long offered.
Amen.



Grateful to be on the journey together,

Pastor Elisabeth

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS!

Set your clocks back one hour on Saturday night, October 31.



PRAYER PARTNERS

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



November 1 - 7
Frank Lindh

November 8 - 14
Judy Johnson

November 15 - 21
Brian Johnson

November 22 - 28
Helen MacLam

November 29 - December 5
Clara Miller

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).

November 1 **10 AM** **Rev. Jess Shine preaching**
All Saint's Day
Please bring a photo of a loved one

Rev. Jess Shine, MDiv, has over two decades of experience leading organizations and congregations. He has served as guest faculty at The Chaplaincy Institute and hosts FluidSpirit, a weekly podcast (available on Patreon and Spotify). Rev. Shine is also a certified coach.

November 8 **10 AM** **Rev. Kevin Omi preaching**

Rev. Omi is a retired UCC Minister and Spiritual Director

November 15 **10 AM** **Elizabeth Conway preaching**

Elisabeth Conway is a student at SFTS

November 22 **10 AM** **Thanksgiving Sunday**
Pastor Elisabeth preaching,
Followed by a Church Potluck

November 29 **10 AM** **First Sunday in Advent**
Pastor Elisabeth preaching
World AIDS Day



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/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



Nov. 4: The Board of Trustees will meet on **Wednesday**, **Nov. 4** at 7:00 PM.
Nov.18: The Board of Mission will meet on **Wednesday**, **Nov. 18,** at 12:30 PM.
Nov.18: The Church Council will meet on **Wednesday**, **Nov. 18,** at 6;00 PM.
Nov. 20: The Board of Ministry will meet on **Friday**, **Nov. 20,** at 11:45 AM.

KINDNESS — PASS IT ON

Visit a sick friend



SAVE THE DATE

The annual Candy Making party will be on Dec. 13, after worship, at Lucinda Ray's house. Lunch first and then candy making.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT



FALL BACK
Daylight Savings ends Sunday, November 1, so fall back. Set your clock back one hour, and enjoy the extra hour.

PRESS AHEAD
This is the time of year we need to plan next year's budget, and that means knowing how much pledge income we can expect. So consider:

* We are growing;
* We have an active mission program rooted in social justice;
* Our worship, music, and preaching are extraordinary;
* Our building is nearly 75 years old so it has significant maintenance needs;
* We love our trees, but they need treatment and expert pruning;
* We made a faith budget last year with a significant deficit. Our actual deficit will be much lower, but we still will have to draw on reserves. Next year could be worse.

Your pledge helps us plan for all this and keep our community strong.

You should have received a pledge letter with a gold financial pledge form and a green Time and Talent Support form.
Both build our community!

Bring these to church on All Saint's Day, Sunday, November 1, get them to the office, or give them to Val, our Financial Secretary, who keeps everything very confidential. (We will have extra pledge forms available at worship for several Sundays.)

Are you a pledger who has pledged the same amount for a few years? Isn't it time to add up the COLAs (Cost of Living Adjustment) missed and increase your pledge at least that amount? Maybe more.

What a great way to press ahead to a gratifying ThanksGIVING.

Next meeting: Thursday, November 5, at 7 PM on Zoom.





BOARD OF MISSION
MISSION MATTERS



NEIGHBORS IN NEED OFFERING - THANK YOU!

Thank your for your generosity. Our offering for Neighbors in Need was $498. This annual offering is used by the United Church of Christ's ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States.

NEXT STREET CHAPLAINCY DINNER IS TUESDAY, DEC. 1



Our next Street Chaplaincy dinner will be on Tuesday, December 1. 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.

THANKSGIVING GROCERY BAGS

Help make Thanksgiving a "filling" holiday for a family with food insecurity:
We are participating once again in providing bags of Thanksgiving dinner items for families with financial challenges identified by Ritter House Services. Each bag would ideally be "filled" with the following items:



A box of stuffing mix
A can of cranberry sauce
Canned vegetables (green beans, corn, etc.)
Gravy mix or canned gravy
A box of cornbread or dinner roll mix
A dessert item (such as cake or pie mix)
A gift card to a local grocery store towards the purchase of a turkey or main entrée. (The gift cards are especially needed as turkeys have become very difficult to afford.)

f you wish to participate, please bring your items or filled bags or gift cards to church services in November before Thanksgiving week (November 26th).

FOOD BANK DONATIONS



Let's continue to do our part to solve hunger in our community. Bring non-perishables (no glass please) and deposit them in the food barrel in the narthex. Also, please bring diapers, sizes 4, 5, and 6. 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.

Pastoral Care/ Agape/ Prayer Chain

- 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.
- Cathy Krise and Jackie Dema continue to send greeting cards to members with illnesses, birthdays, absences from church, and other appropriate reasons. In this connection the Ministry Board will be encouraging all church members to bring in their excess greeting cards for this program.
- Elisabeth pointed out how good and valuable the Prayer Chain is. Not only do we pray but also keep in touch with the important life events of church members and attendees.

Community/ Fellowship Time and Spiritual Life

- **Elders Group**: "Advice to Your 20-Year-Old Self." Thursday, December 17 at 6:30 PM. (See page 8)
- **Book Club**: Thursday Dec. 10 at 7:30 PM on Zoom. *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek,* by Annie Dillard. (See page 8)
- **Meditation** continues Tuesdays at 4:30 PM with an ever-enlarging group of meditators!
- **Sunday Luncheon: Potluck Nov. 22 after our Thanksgiving service**

Worship



In November we will be treated to three visiting preachers. Of course we will miss Elisabeth's sermons while she is not preaching. But the replacement ministers will offer interesting and different perspectives, keeping in mind the critical points: Talk about God and talk about 20 minutes.

November 1: Rev. Jess Shine.

November 8: Rev. Kevin Omi

November 15: Elizbeth Conway - SFTS student

Our special features in November will begin by honoring Dia de los Muertos on Nov. 1, followed by our Thanksgiving celebration on November 22. A Community Potluck will follow church on that day.

On November 29th we will observe World AIDS Day and the beginning of Advent.

Music

Gerry noted how happy he is that, working closely with Pastor Elisabeth, he is able to program the music to support the themes of the services. He also noted that the choir works hard, adapts beautifully to last minute changes, and sings beautifully.

Next meeting of the Board of Ministry: Friday, Nov. 20, 11:45 AM, on Zoom

ELDERS DISCUSS CHRISTMAS
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 6:30-7:30 on ZOOM

Fellow Elders,

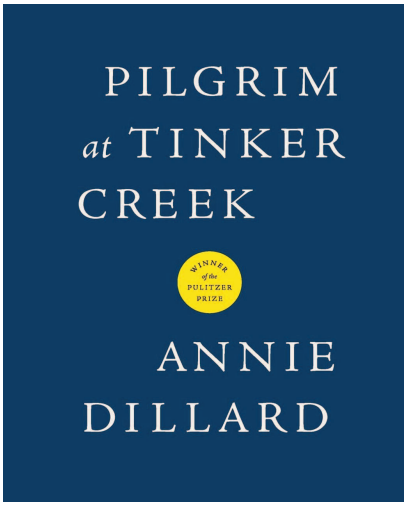


First, Checking In: Reporting on any follow-up we may have had following our discussion of "What would you do if you learned you had only six months to live?" Thoughts,
changes, or accomplishments?

Topic for the December: Christmas! Best Christmas you ever had? Worst? Saddest? Best present? Worst? Any story about Christmas.
Please give some thought to these questions before the meeting to facilitate our discussion.
We're meeting At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 17 over Zoom.

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, DECEMBER 10, 7:30 PM



On Thursday, December 10, at 7:30 PM on Zoom, we will be reading We will be reading *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* by Annie Dillard. This book was the winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1975. It is available from both the Sonoma and Marin Country libraries as a book, an audio book, and an ebook.

"The book is a form of meditation, written with headlong urgency, about seeing. . . . There is an ambition about Dillard's book that I like. . . . It is the ambition to feel." — Eudora Welty, *New York Times* Book Review

Pilgrim at Tinker Creek is the story of a dramatic year in Virginia's Roanoke Valley, where Annie Dillard set out to chronicle incidents of "beauty tangled in a rapture with violence." Dillard's personal narrative highlights one year's exploration on foot in the Virginia region through which Tinker Creek runs. In the summer, she stalks muskrats in the creek and contemplates wave mechanics; in the fall, she watches a monarch butterfly migration and dreams of Arctic caribou. She tries to con a coot; she collects pond water and examines it under a microscope. She unties a snake skin, witnesses a flood, and plays King of the Meadow with a field of grasshoppers. The result is an exhilarating tale of nature and its seasons.



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

16 — Eckhard Mahl

SAVE THE DATE!
HOLIDAY CHORAL BY CANDLELIGHT
DECEMBER 5 AND 5

Candlelight Choral Concert

Marin Symphony Chamber Chorus

Saturday Dec. 5 at 7:30 PM
Sunday Dec. 6 at 4 PM
Mission San Rafael
$45
This concert includes Lucinda Ray, Charles Little, Christina Schiffner Santschi, and David Santschi.



TIE DEADLINE for the DECEMBER 2026 TIE IS NOVEMBER 23

The deadline for articles and news for the December 2026 issue of The TIE is Monday, November 23. Please email your articles to lucindaray@aol.com by Monday, November 23.



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 NOVEMBER 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Daylight Saving (End) 10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	2	3 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm Meditation in the Sanctuary	4 7 pm - 8 pm BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING via ZOOM	5	6	7
8 10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	9	10 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm Meditation in the Sanctuary	11 Veterans Day	12	13	14
15 10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	16	17 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm Meditation in the Sanctuary	18 12:30 pm BOARD of MISSION Meeting on ZOOM 6 pm - 7 pm Church Council Meeting via ZOOM	19	20 11:45 am Board of Ministry Meeting 11:45 via ZOOM	21
22 10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM 11 am - 12 pm POTLUCK) LUNCHEON	23 5 pm TIE DEADLINE 5 PM	24 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm Meditation in the Sanctuary	25	26 Thanksgiving Day	27	28
29 10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	30	1 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm Meditation in the Sanctuary	2	3	4	5

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.