

## The TIE



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

### Notes and reflections on a Sunday in Church Life

*"God breathes through us so completely...  
so gently we hardly feel it... yet, it is our  
everything."* John Coltrane on  
Spirituality and Music

"Look what the cat dragged in." A couple of months ago I greeted Oak Dowling with those words when he walked into church after returning from one of his many Road Scholar trips. The next week Oak was back and told me he'd found the greeting so funny he just had to come back. I never understood what was so funny about it, but then you never quite knew where Oak's mind went. He was a brilliant man with a brilliant mind, who engaged anyone willing to take the time to sit next to him.

In one of his New Year letters, he wrote that in honor of his beloved wife Mary, who passed away a few years earlier, he would live his life to the fullest. And that he did. He passed away in Normandy, France, in late September, and his family is now finding a way to bring him home.

Oak was so well loved, by his family, by this church community, and by the people whose lives he touched. We will keep you informed of a future celebration of life. In the meantime, please keep Julie, Doug, and Julie's brother David, in your prayers.

That Sunday afternoon, the jazz concert that followed the announcement of Oak's passing was our balm in Gilead. Our pianist Gerry Grosz brought his friends Ron Belcher and Mark Lee, and the three of them kept us engaged and excited, simply letting the music carry us. It was mesmerizing to watch the piano, the bass, and the drums flow into each other. Afterward, I asked the drummer how they create such harmonies on the spot. He said, "We just follow whoever is leading and add to what's being created."



There is deep learning about listening and about hearing one another, in jazz. Sometimes it's clear who is leading and who is following. Other times, it's hard to say. The music itself seems to lead, and everyone follows.

Continued on the next page.

If you missed this concert, make sure you join us the next time. Our thank you to Gerry, Ron, and Mark for the gift of that afternoon, and to Cathi, Meghan, and several others for treating us to an ice cream social afterward. We may be able to repeat giving out ice cream after the Blessings of the Animals Service on October 11.

It is deeply sustaining to see how much initiative everybody is taking in helping out, organizing projects, and taking care where care is needed in our community. Sometimes it's clear who is leading and who is following in our church, too, and sometimes it's hard to say. (It can lead to some complications when chairs and tables need to be put away...) But after all is said and done, it is the music itself, it is God's Spirit, which leads, and everyone follows.

Grateful to be on the journey together,

*Pastor Elisabeth*



**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**

### **PRAYER PARTNERS**

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



**September 27 - October 3**

Lorene Jackson

**October 4- 10**

Amy Kaufman, Sean and Cio

**October 11 - 17**

Cathy Krise

**October 18 - 24**

David Knopf and Cathi Fuller

**October 25 - 31**

Jill Krippendorf



# *Come and Worship*

**w i t h u s !**

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

**October 4      10 AM      World Communion Sunday  
“Come to the Table of Joy”  
Rev. Jess Shine preaching**

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.

**October 11      10 AM      Blessing of the Animals**



**Sunday, October 11  
10 AM**

**Bring your pet, on a  
leash, in a cage, or  
bring a picture  
Everyone is welcome!**

**October 18      10 AM      Sacred Earth, Sacred Work, Part 1  
Creation as a Blessing**

**October 22-24      NCNC Annual Gathering in Oakland  
See page 5 for details**

**October 25      10 AM      Sacred Earth, Sacred Work, Part 2  
Healing Relationships**



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

## **MEETINGS, MEETINGS, MEETINGS -- VIA ZOOM**

**Oct. 7:** The Board of Mission will meet on **Wednesday, Oct. 7**, at 12:30 PM.

**Oct. 7:** The Board of Trustees will meet on **Wednesday, Oct. 7** at 7:00 PM.

**Oct. 21:** The Church Council will meet on **Wednesday, Oct. 21**, at 6:00 PM.

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



**KINDNESS — RESPECT OTHERS**



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT



### Periodic maintenance

Just like our houses, our bodies, and even our souls, the church facility need maintenance, too. For example:

- The sewer system needs to have the roots invading the pipes scoured with water-blasting twice a year.
  - The gutters need to be cleaned out before and after the first storms.
  - Fire extinguishers need yearly certification and often replacement.
- Trees need yearly evaluation and often pruning or treatment.
  - Carpets need cleaning three or four times a year.

One of the jobs of the Trustees is to keep up with these on-going needs.

**Next meeting: Wed., October 7, 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.

See Pastor Elisabeth or Moderator Caran Cuneo for more details.

## JAZZ CONCERT



### HALLOWEEN JOKES

Which monster plays tricks on Halloween? Prank-enstein!  
Why are graveyards so noisy? Because of all the coffin.

What is a vampire's favorite ice cream flavor? Vein-illa.  
Why was the Jack-o'-lantern afraid? It had no guts.

What do witches put on their bagels? Scream cheese.  
What is a ghost's favorite meal? Spook-ghetti.

Who does Frankenstein go trick or treating with? His ghou- friend.  
How do you fix a broken Jack-o'-lantern? With a pumpkin patch.



## 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

- 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](mailto:isabella1472@comcast.net) or Annie Song-Hill [asonghill@gmail.com](mailto: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.
- Future reports will include the many instances when Church members provide transportation and other support to people, making them members of the Agape Community.

### Community/ Fellowship Time and Spiritual Life

- **Elders Group:** “Advice to Your 20-Year-Old Self.” Tuesday, October 6 at 6:30 PM. (See page 9)
- **Book Club:** Thursday Oct.22, at 7:30 PM on Zoom. *Holding the Line*, by Barbara Kingsolver (See page 9)
- **Meditation** continues Tuesdays at 4:30 PM with an ever-enlarging group of meditators!
- **3d Sunday Luncheons** were superseded by Church events in September. Those who wish could break bread together in a restaurant of choice on Sunday, October 18.

### Worship

- Reminder: The Northern California Nevada Conference Gathering will be in Oakland, Oct. 22-24, Thursday-Saturday. Since it's nearby, many parishioners might enjoy attending. (See page 5)

### Music

- Gerry Grosz' Jazz Kitchen trio played their Jazz Concert in the Sanctuary on September 27 to a large audience and wild acclaim, and the subsequent Ice Cream Social was a slurping success!
- Regarding September's music, Gerry noted how happy he was that, working closely with Pastor Elisabeth, he was able to program the music to support the themes of the services. He also noted that the choir worked hard, adapted beautifully to last minute changes, and sang beautifully.

**Next meeting of the Board of Ministry:** Tuesday, Oct. 27, 11:45 AM, on Zoom

## ELDERS MEETING

### TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 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?



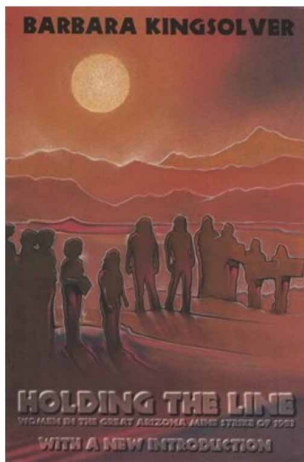
Of course we can't live our lives over again, and we'd rather not have regrets, but what concerns did you have then that you now realize were not that important? We'll meet over Zoom on Tuesday, October 6 from 6:30 to 7:30. Please join us. Here's the link and info:

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, OCTOBER 22, 7:30

On Thursday, October 22, at 7:30 PM on Zoom, we will be reading *Holding the Line*, by James Rebanks. 285 pages. This book is available from the Marin County library as a book and from the Sonoma County library as an e-book, using their Hoopla app. Here's what it's about:

This is Kingsolver's first non-fiction book, and it is the story of women's lives transformed by a signal event. Set in the small mining towns of Arizona, it is part oral history and part social criticism, exploring the process of empowerment which occurs when people work together as a community. Like Kingsolver's award-winning novels, *Holding the Line* is a beautifully written book grounded on the strength of its characters.

Hundreds of families held the line in the 1983 strike against Phelps Dodge Copper in Arizona. After more than a year, the strikers lost their union certification, but the battle permanently altered the social order in these small, predominantly Hispanic mining towns.

At the time the strike began, many women said they couldn't leave the house without their husband's permission. Yet, when injunctions barred union men from picketing, their wives and daughters turned out for the daily picket lines. When the strike dragged on and men left to seek jobs elsewhere, women continued to picket, organize support, and defend their rights even when the towns were occupied by the National Guard. "Nothing can ever be the same as it was before," said Diane McCormick of the Morenci Miners Women's Auxiliary. "Look at us. At the beginning of this strike, we were just a bunch of ladies."



## OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

14 — Anice Flesh  
 17 — Ann Dannecker  
 19 — Jean O'Leary  
 23 — Sher Ripley  
 25 — Tessa Templeman  
 25 — Deb Smith  
 31 — Bruce Weir



**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](http://fccsanrafael.org)**

## **TIE DEADLINE for the NOVEMBER 2026 TIE IS OCTOBER 26**

The deadline for articles and news for the October 2026 issue of The TIE is Monday, October 26. Please email your articles to [lucindaray@aol.com](mailto:lucindaray@aol.com) by Monday, October 26..



### **Rev. Elisabeth Middelberg**

Thursday mornings  
 or by appointment

Phone: 707 280-0382

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

# FCC Calendar OCTOBER 2026

| Sun                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Mon                                                                                                                             | Tue                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Wed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Thu                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Fri                                         | Sat                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>27</b><br><br>10 am - 11 am<br>Worship Church School & Child Care<br>10 am - 11 am<br>Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM                                                                                                                            | <b>28</b><br><br>5 am<br>THE DEADLINE 5 PM   | <b>29</b><br><br>5 am - 6 am<br>Meditation in the Sanctuary                                                                                                                                                    | <b>30</b><br>October 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>3</b>                                    |                                             |
| <b>4</b><br><br>10 am<br>Worship Church School & Child Care<br>10 am - 11 am<br>Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM<br>10 am - 11 am<br>MECHBOHS IN NEED OFFERING                                                                                       | <b>5</b>                                                                                                                        | <b>6</b><br><br>5 am - 6 am<br>Meditation in the Sanctuary<br>6:30 am - 7:30 am<br><br>ELDERS MEETING ON ZOOM               | <b>7</b><br><br>10:30 am<br>BOARD OF TRUSTEES Meeting via ZOOM<br>2 am - 8 am<br><br>BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING via ZOOM | <b>8</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>10</b>                                   |                                             |
| <b>11</b><br><br>10 am<br>Worship Church School & Child Care<br>10 am - 11 am<br>Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM<br>10 am - 11 am<br><br>BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS | <b>12</b><br><br>Columbus Day                | <b>13</b><br><br>5 am - 6 am<br>Meditation in the Sanctuary                                                                                                                                                    | <b>14</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>15</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>16</b>                                   | <b>17</b><br>Sweetest Day                   |
| <b>18</b><br><br>10 am<br>Worship Church School & Child Care<br>10 am - 11 am<br>Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM                                                                                                                                  | <b>19</b>                                                                                                                       | <b>20</b><br><br>5 am - 6 am<br>Meditation in the Sanctuary                                                                                                                                                  | <b>21</b><br><br>6 am - 7 am<br>Church Council Meeting via ZOOM                                                                                                                                          | <b>22</b><br>6:45 am - 6:55 am<br>OCT ANNUAL GATHERING - OAKLAND<br>7:30 am - 8:30 am<br><br>BOOK CLUB reading HOLDING THE LINE | <b>23</b><br>OCT ANNUAL GATHERING - OAKLAND | <b>24</b><br>OCT ANNUAL GATHERING - OAKLAND |
| <b>25</b><br><br>10 am<br>Worship Church School & Child Care<br>10 am - 11 am<br>Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM                                                                                                                                  | <b>26</b><br><br>5 am<br>THE DEADLINE 5 PM | <b>27</b><br><br>11:45 am<br>Board of Ministry Meeting 11:45 via ZOOM<br>5 am - 6 am<br><br>Meditation in the Sanctuary | <b>28</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>29</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>30</b>                                   | <b>31</b><br>Halloween                      |

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).