



THE SEER

March 2014

From David



Making All Things New: Meeting Yourself on Life's Journey

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This month we enter the season of Lent. The word Lent is from the Latin, meaning the lengthening of days. And that is what we get to see over the next months until Easter – the days will lengthen and the nights shorten. Noticing this the birds will migrate in our direction, the flowers will bloom and spring will have come. Together we will celebrate the new life that comes to us in the cycle of a year. It will be spring. As we examine our inner lives we will notice the new life that comes to each soul and we will celebrate a resurrection of the heart. With this new life, within and with out, we will proclaim: Christ is risen! Christ is risen, indeed! So, I welcome you into the season of Lent.

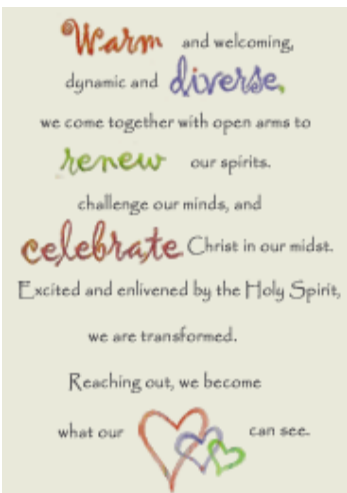
our lives to the exclusion of God's Spirit. We make ourselves busy, we fill our heads with opinions, our hearts indulge in drama, and some of us become experts in our field, filled to the brim with important facts. Our distractions are limited only by our imagination. As we walk the Lenten path, we become aware of all this obstacles to our spiritual experience. We meet our distraction and we meet our longing for something more in life. As distraction is stripped away we find our hearts and lives opening to God in ways completely new and unexpected. This is the basic pattern of the spiritual life – stripping down and opening to the Spirit of God. As the old self of distraction dies, the new self of one's life in God finds expression. In this way, Lent is a time for Meeting Yourself on Life's Road.

This year during Lent we will continue the theme that we started during Advent in the weeks before Christmas: Making All Things New. As we celebrate the new life that is all around us, we acknowledge that it is God who is making all things new, who transforms our lives. It is up to us to make space for this transformation. That is what Lent is all about – making space for God.

Our Sunday Worship will center on some stories as told in the Gospel of John. Each is a story of a particular person: Jesus, Nicodemus, the person born blind, the woman at the well. These are ordinary folk, who meet themselves as their paths intersect with Jesus. We will tell their stories as we reflect upon our own stories of transformation.

As we meet God on our Lenten journey we become aware of all the ways that we fill up

(Continued on page 2)



LARGE PRINT COPIES OF THE SEER WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE NARTHEX

(Continued from page 1)

I invite you to take a look at this SEER for special services during Lent, Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday as well as added events such as book studies, Bible Studies, etc....

Here I am wishing you a meaningful and “emptying” Lenten journey.

Peace, David

Ash Wednesday

March 5 is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Lenten period. There are two services on Ash Wednesday, after Bible Study at 11:30 am and during meditation which starts at 6:30 pm. Ashes will be available for those who choose imposition of ashes.

Maundy Thursday

Maundy Thursday we reflect upon the sorrow of Jesus as he is taken to the cross. This year, we will be using Mary Oliver’s poem, “Six Recognitions of the Lord” at the center of our worship. We will strip the altar, share communion and wash feet. Our time together begins with a simple soup supper at 6 pm, with the worship beginning at 6:45 on April 17.

Dressing the “Altar” for Lent

During the Lenten season we will be dressing the “altar” at the front to the sanctuary with the ordinary and everyday things that fill our lives. These everyday items will be brought by members of our spiritual community to church on each Sunday of Lent and placed on the altar space. This will be done to signify how we encumber our lives with good and beautiful things while progressively making less room for God. During our Maundy Thursday Service, April 17, those who brought things will be invited to take them off the altar space as we “strip” the altar and make space for God.

Sunday Book Study:

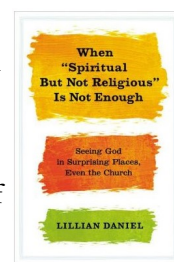
When “Spiritual But Not Religious” Is Not Enough: Seeing God in Surprising Places, Even the Church

By Lillian Daniel

Lillian Daniel is a United Church of Christ pastor in Illinois who has caused quite a stir in writing this book. Here, she

take on the culture and those folks who claim a spirituality without religion. She is a “Still Speaking” author and is known by many in our church for her Still Speaking devotions available by email from the national setting of the church.

Study begins at 9:30 on March 16. Books are available in the church office.



Community News

Ministry of Shared Food

In recent weeks, several members of our dear community have been in special need of our prayers and other support. A group of folks came up with the idea of getting together in the church kitchen once a week and preparing meals for anyone of our members who needs them. Still very loosely organized, the idea is being tested at this writing. Smells

great, and the fellowship is warm, welcoming, and full of love and good humor. If you are interested in joining in this project, either cooking or helping to fund it, watch for more details as plans progress. Or--contact Martha Stefenoni via email at stefenonim@gmail.com for more information.

Annual Fiscal Meeting February 23

A congregational meeting was held on February 23 to consider and vote on a budget for calendar year 2014. It is vital to all in leadership that the budget provides adequately for the needs of the church, while reflecting respect and appreciation for members who generously share their treasure. As is true for most of us and our families, we "live" on our income, with small but cautiously treated reserves. Thanks are due the F&M team, who worked diligently for many weeks to ensure the budget proposal they presented was ready for

the congregation's consideration. The budget passed by 32 members present still lacks just under \$5000 to balance. Participation in Pick-a-Parties and other fundraisers will be especially appreciated this year, and your ideas for fundraisers you'd like to help organize will be welcomed! It is never too late to make a new or supplemental Pledge or Faith Promise.

—Submitted by Kathy Johnson

Recital Lockup

Several times a year we have recitals and concerts in our sanctuary. The income from these events is a great boon to our church finances, however, we need a few people who have keys to be available from time to time to open up the church and close it up when the event is over. Usually, the

events are on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon. There is a \$50.00 stipend you can get for doing this. Please let Evelyn Smith know if you are willing to be on the list for recital lockup.

FISH Donations—First Sunday of the Month

BE LIKE JESUS

Except make it non-perishable fishes and loaves. Whoever has food is to share with those who have none.

Bring non-perishable food on the first Sunday of the month

for FISH, our local food pantry.

FISH always needs paper grocery bags. Monetary donations are always welcome.

Do you have news for the SEER or Newsletter?

If you have any information for the SEER, Newsletter, the bulletin, or any other publication of the church, please send it to: louise_penna@yahoo.com. The deadline for the SEER is typically the third Wednesday of every month.

5th Annual Pick a Party!



Here comes our most FUN program of community building and pain-free fundraising: Pick-a-Party is back! How will you participate?

If you're new to Pick-a-Party, it's simple and fun.

Start by thinking about what kind of party you'd like to host, service you could offer, or event you could organize—on your own or with a friend or two. Decide how many people could participate, and how much it should cost. Proceeds go straight to the church operating budget; in some years we have raised over \$4500 to supplement our income.

Be Creative! Past parties/services have included batches of cookies delivered to donor, a hike and brunch or lunch, sing-alongs, home-made brunch (Pastor David baked bread!), one-on-one lessons, wine-and-food pairing taught by our

resident sommelier, dinner parties, movie night with dinner or dessert, play-reading, many more.

Or—if hosting doesn't work for you, plan on signing up to attend an event—or five! Or six! Or more!

Forms are available NOW in Friendship Hall.

Save these dates:

Deadline for submitting party forms: Sunday, March 16

Sign up for Parties; Friendship Hall after 10:30 service:

Sunday, April 6

See you at the Party!"

—Submitted by Kathy Johnson

Sabbatical Leave—Pastor David Parks-Ramage

Pastor David will take his first sabbatical leave this summer from June 9 to September 21. He will spend his sabbatical time traveling in California and the Southwest visiting sacred sites and innovative churches. He will also include a period of solitude with the Nada Hermitage Spiritual Life Institute in Crestone, Colorado.

The Council has approved his Sabbatical Leave Proposal. A copy is available for review in the Church office.

The Worship Team is developing a list of Sabbatical Pastors for worship and pastoral care during David's absence. The

Personnel Committee is developing a compensation plan for the sabbatical ministers and a possible stipend for part of David's trip. A Sabbatical Planning Committee is developing a Sabbatical Plan that will cover all aspects of Church ministry during the sabbatical period.

Points of contact for this effort are the Moderator, the Pastor, Worship Team Chair, or members of the Sabbatical Planning Committee.

Submitted by Bill Gibson, Member, Sabbatical Planning Committee

Thank You!

One of the treasured members of our congregation, Jona Matevish has served us well, often, and in so many ways. She has capably steered our Stewardship efforts for the past two years. She sings in the choir, prepares coffee once a month, has helped with art and other projects, lends her voice and passion to our worship as liturgist, jumps in where there is a need to fill, and does it all with Grace, Love and Commitment to our church. Thank you, Jona!

Another big Thank You goes to Judy Cramer and Jeanne Thomas, who—along with everything else they do—joined to make recent fundraisers FUN and successful. Did you see

them in the kitchen, and get one of the yummy baked potatoes they prepared on Playoff Sunday? Admire the transformation of Friendship Hall into a Love Fest and Cabaret? Thank You, Judy and Jeanne!

A vital community is fueled by individuals who get involved: thanks to all those who help ours thrive! If you have skills you'd love to share—or if you're willing to lend a hand in any way—talk to one of our Nominating Committee: Hannah Wallstrum, Stacey Hamilton, Chris Alexander, and Kathy Johnson.

In Harmony - Our Church Music Ministry

FAMILY CHOIR—Save the Date!

- Sunday March 2 at 9:30am
- Sunday April 6 at 9:30am
- Sunday May 4 at 9:30am

Folks of all ages and musical backgrounds are welcome to sing in Family Choir, especially children! Come to the sanctuary at 9:30am and learn a simple song that we'll offer in worship. No preparation or special attire needed!

CHANCEL CHOIR

We have openings in our Chancel Choir and always welcome new singers! The chancel choir performs an anthem weekly during services. Repertoire ranges from gospel music to contemporary arrangements to traditional anthems. Rehearsals are in the sanctuary Thursdays 6:45- 8:15pm and Sundays 9:30-10:10am. New and drop-in singers encouraged; an on-going commitment is not required. Join us!

Questions? Want to get involved? Contact Leann at leannconleyholcom@gmail.com.

Children's Program and Church School News

Thank you, everyone for your support of our Children's Program. Special thanks to Martha Stefenoni for bring the 6-day old lamb to worship for the Children's Message and to Ruth Webber for fabric.

The Church School could use donations of tall bookcases of any type, packages of new crayons, note pads of any kind and new stickers.



Questions? Talk to Charlotte Asher.

How's Our Attendance?



Date	8:30	10:30	Total
Jan. 5	5	95	100
Jan. 12	10	72	82
Jan. 19		73	73
Jan. 26	5	68	73

No Count for Blank Boxes

eScrip

Dear Supporters of First Congregational UCC Santa Rosa
We Need Your Help!

Please support us through eScrip - we can earn tens of thousands of dollars each year! Shopping at OLIVER'S is a WIN for us!

If you have a card - use it every time you shop. If you don't have a card, go to the store and get one today. It's free! Be sure to add all of your debit/credit cards as well as grocery cards to your account so we can earn from local grocers and the eScrip Dining Program too. Go to www.escrip.com/addmorecards and select the card(s) you'd like to add from the drop down box. If you do, it means more contributions for us!

...If needed, I can provide your Supporter ID so you can log into this add card feature! Email me and let me know if I can help!

Please take a few minutes to do this-we are counting on you! Thank you!



—Submitted by Judy Adams

Ruth's Good News!

February 2, 2014

Matthew 5:1-12 passages and the Super Bowl? Pastor David said that people “poor in spirit” can look beyond the playbook, the rituals for a football game. Upside-down thinking results in creative solutions. To react intuitively, use strengths from within. Beyond traditional textbook actions, your response to crisis calls on spiritual sources. David told about training to be a swimmer. Coaches often told him to “Reach Deep.” The “poor in spirit” know that love and compassion undergirds life. They are blessed in the kingdom of heaven. Minister Deb Smith was liturgist on Communion Sunday. Drew Fagent brought little Henry and sister, Olivia, to help sing in the Family Choir. Charlotte Asher told the children about how great our lives depend on water, as quiet, persistent rain patted on our roof. Rain at last! Our Fellowship Hall Cake was in honor of Ruth Hucklebridge’s 90th birthday.

February 9, 2013

On the second day of real “winter rain,” our community celebrated love. The Biblical words, 1 John 4:7-12, 16-21, were interpreted by David as drops resonated on the church roof. “When we are aware of God’s love, our response rises in us, our love asks for our full self, all body, mind and spirit.” He contrasted morality, religiosity and God’s call with the proselyte who knows all the ritual, but is insufferable in his life with others. “Life is about love. Perfect Love casts out all fear.”

Rebecca Allington was liturgist, and used Shakespeare’s word when she called for the offering. Hymns were lovely popular songs: *Edelweiss, Let Me Call You Sweetheart, Love Me Tender*. Charlotte Asher introduced a 6-days-old baby lamb to the children when she described shepherd’s concern for the 100th lamb that was missing. Martha Stefenoni brought the little one from her ranch.

A potluck at lunch bridged the gap between church and an opera concert at 2pm. *Larissa Lorenz and Christa Durand, and pianist, Richard Riccardi presented delightful operatic works.*

(www.inlovenithopera@weebly.com).

February 14, 2014

Love Fest Cabaret in a transformed Friendship Hall began at 7pm. The room was all pinks, red hearts and sparkling lights. Forty guests who bought tickets were offered a variety of snacks, beer, wine and water. Music from several eras of jazz filled the room. Several bottles of wines were offered at a silent auction. Judy Cramer, Kathy Johnson, Winnie Hogoboom, and friends set it all up. The Cabaret was arranged and

performed by Chris Alexander, Evelyn McFadden and her son, daughter, spouses. About twenty songs about Love were presented to an appreciative audience. This fundraiser added to our year’s income with \$300.

February 16, 2014

Winnie Hogoboom read the Scripture: Matthew 5:13-37, with too many suggestions about what not to do. Pastor David asked us what we thought about it. Some said it was very Old Testament, laughed about the difference between murder and anger, lust and divorce. We looked at Psalm 139 and asked “Is God so high, we can’t reach him?” We can live in the Divine Milieu, between pure and profane, a middle place. Martin Buber philosophized about the difference between I and it (objectifying another person), or I-thou (where God is in our hearts and we empathize with each other).

The choir presented the music commissioned by our church when Ron Hawks was music director: “Blessed be the One.” Maureen Taber, mother of Charlotte, missed the service. She has received a full time job teaching in Cloverdale and used the time to set up her new classroom. Other friends from church were invited to help too.

February 23, 2014

Andrew Conley-Holcom made thoughtful considerations about Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18, full of “shall nots.” To begin with, Andrew said that negative rules about behavior don’t work as well as positive teaching. Be positive and show the respect you have for yourself, and for others. When you set up a frame of reference that shows a positive behavior, you are more likely to settle any disturbances and differences with grace toward others.

Jimmie Donaghy sang and accompanied himself with wonderful chords on our Steinway piano. Hannah Wallstrum was liturgist. She reads a text with such understanding of its meaning, as you may expect from a skilled teacher of forensics at SRJC.

Debi Stewart described the excellent Bible study class led by Andrew on Thursdays. She was grateful for the better understanding she gets from his explanations.

Diane Morris added a rosebud on the altar for her great-granddaughter, Caroline Flower Simoes, born February 19. Charlotte Asher caught the fascination of six little girls at Children’s Time by showing a single extension on her comb. The moral of her story: Supporting others produces better results.

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Good News Please: Send interesting items to let First Congregational UCC members feel closer to each other. [\[ber@comcast.net\]\(mailto:ber@comcast.net\) or 415-939-0696.](http://ruthweb-</p>
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February 23, 2014

After worship service, our Congregational Fiscal meeting was a quick and agreeable approval of the new budget for 2014. Moderator Kathy Johnson led the coordinating of team budgets. Kathy and David stressed our need for more volunteers to help. Our bookkeeper, Maggie Robinson is a volunteer spending hours to fiscally arrange our current finances. The deficit budget we approved is for \$202,023. We will get some help by renting parts of the building, and a work study program from Santa Rosa Junior College for our secretary, Rebecca Weaver. We will need some increases in Faith Promises, for sure. We will still be short \$4,749 unless something happens. Something usually does. Ruth Bogart and Dale Webb were elected to be delegates to the UCC spring Conference.

February 24, 2014

Mary's Pizza for lunch. Ruth Hucklebridge and too many others were ailing today. There were seven "Get well" cards to sign, addressed by Betty Scherfee, and signed by all seven. We tried to stop sharing our own medical news. Life has its own way to move along. Dolores Seymour recognized two clippings Diane Morris brought, publicity in the P-D about mother-daughter dinners, and the Mother of the Year. We saw recipe clippings from the 1950s. Women's Fellowship made money for the deficit budget by selling Brownie Surprise Jars. They put ingredients for Brownies in a one-quart mason jar. "To make the Surprises, add eggs, oil and vanilla, stir and bake." This was a church-made, baking mix. "I liked getting together that way," said Colleen Trowse. A little later, our church kitchen was busy with young-retired women making dinners for some on our prayer-list.

Caring Hands

All knitters, crocheters, needle crafters, etc. are invited to gather together on Monday mornings at 10:00 in the Fire-side Room. This small group invites all to come and enjoy the conversation as they knit prayer shawls and small hats

for children. The re-formed Caring Hands group has joined forces with Project Linus (a national program that knits/crochets blankets for children in crisis).

CD's of Sermons

If you have missed a Sunday service or wish you could hear that special sermon/choir anthem again, you can. Jeff Wilson is creating high quality CD's which are available in the church office to borrow.

Making Connections

Women's Fellowship



All women and their friends are invited to gather for lunch with the Women's Fellowship at noon March 24th at Mary's Pizza Shack on Summerfield Rd. The topic this month will be "What is a new thing you recently learned?"

Men's Fellowship

The Church Men's Group meets at 8:30 a.m. near the church library in Friendship Hall on the first and third Saturday of each month.

Caring Corner



For reasons of confidentiality, last names of people on the prayer list are not being listed. If you would like your last name or the last name of an immediate family member to appear on this list, please let Carmen know. Otherwise, last names will not be announced.

We Pray For ... Adrien Avis, Gwen Birkedal, D.Jayhne Edwards, Rebecca Schroeder, Eunice Lamb, Howard Whitmore, Brian Robinson, Brian McFadden, Dylan Gifford, Meg

Scherfee, Reva Kesling, Ruth Gibson, Robert Jayne, Johanna, Lenny Kesling's family, Cheri Dumuy, Al Vuldivia, Bonnie Belisle, Jack Lawrence, Paul, Cathy, Camilla Sommers, Elizabeth Schultz, Sam Walker, Linda Duckett, Cindy, Carson, Carly, and Gracie, Christine Williams, Grace Mueller, Ruth Hucklebridge, Teri McClanahan, Dana Alexander, Kenny Chubak, Minnie Coates.

March Birthdays

1 st Nancy Turner	18 th Christine Thompson	27 th Adeline Whitmore, Margaret Rouse
4 th Joan Walker	21 st Linda Balfour	28 th Honah Lee Thompson
9 th John Robinson, Jan Lawson	23 rd Gwen Birkedal, Mark Adams	31 st Sarah Gibson Lopez
13 th Ann Rose Tyko	25 th Bob Graham, Jim Duckett	



March Volunteers

	<i>Worship Assistants</i>	<i>Coffee Hosts</i>	<i>Sunday Flowers</i>
Mar 2	Gayle Madison	Betty Scherfee	
Mar 9	Carrie MacFarlane	Carrie and Mac McFarland	
Mar 16	Jona Matevish	Stacey and Gretchen	
Mar 23	Evelyn Smith	Evelyn Smith	
Mar 30	Rebecca Schroeder	Rebecca and Roger Allington	

Contact Jeanne Thomas if you are willing to sign up for hosting Coffee Hour after worship.

Coffee Hour News:

I would like to thank the following people that hosted coffee hour in February:

2/2/14 - The children of Ruth Hucklebridge brought a birthday cake for her 90th birthday - congratulations Ruth
 2/9/14 Thank you to all who participated in the LOVE FEST POT LUCK!
 2/16/14 Jona Matevish
 2/23/14 Winnie Hogoboom

Coffee Preparation:

Making coffee for coffee hour is a piece of cake, probably easier than the way you make coffee at home - No measuring, no scooping, - just push a button and wait a few minutes and bingo a carafe of delicious coffee. And you only have to do this one Sunday each month so please call me and I will give you the 10 minute tour. I would really like to talk with you! Jeanne Thomas (707-544-0751)

—Submitted by Jeanne Thomas

March Calendar

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Santa Rosa, CA

Mar 2014 (Pacific Time)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
23 8:30am - The 9:15am - Adult 10:30am - Worship	24 10am - Caring 12pm - Women's	25 9am - Toddler 7pm - The Light	26 10am - Bible 6:30pm - Meditati	27 9am - Toddler 5:30pm - Alpha 6:45pm - Choir	28	1 9am - UCC Men's 6:30pm - AA Set 8pm - AA Meeting
2 8:30am - The 9:15am - Adult 10:30am - Worship	3 10am - Caring	4 9am - Toddler	5 10am - Bible 6:30pm - Meditati	6 9am - Toddler 5:30pm - Alpha 6:45pm - Choir	7	8 6:30pm - AA Set 8pm - AA Meeting
9 8:30am - The 9:15am - Adult 10:30am - Worship	10 10am - Caring	11 9am - Toddler 7pm - The Light	12 10am - Bible 6:30pm - Meditati	13 9am - Toddler 5:30pm - Alpha 6:45pm - Choir 6:45pm - Fires of	14	15 9am - UCC Men's 6:30pm - AA Set 8pm - AA Meeting
16 8:30am - The 9:15am - Adult 10:30am - Worship	17 10am - Caring	18 9am - Toddler	19 10am - Bible 6:30pm - Meditati	20 9am - Toddler 5:30pm - Alpha 6:45pm - Choir	21	22 6:30pm - AA Set 8pm - AA Meeting
23 8:30am - The 9:15am - Adult 10:30am - Worship	24 10am - Caring 12pm - Women's	25 9am - Toddler 7pm - The Light	26 10am - Bible 6:30pm - Meditati	27 9am - Toddler 5:30pm - Alpha 6:45pm - Choir	28	29 6:30pm - AA Set 8pm - AA Meeting
30 8:30am - The 9:15am - Adult 10:30am - Worship	31 10am - Caring	1 9am - Toddler	2 10am - Bible 5:45pm - Nominati 6:30pm - Meditati	3 9am - Toddler 5:30pm - Alpha 6:45pm - Choir	4	5 9am - UCC Men's 6:30pm - AA Set 8pm - AA Meeting

First Congregational United Church of Christ • 2000 Humboldt St.,
 Santa Rosa, CA 95404 • 707-546-0998 • Fax 707-546-0990 •
 email: firstuccsr@gmail.com

Sunday Services - 8:30 a.m. THE GATHERING - 9:15 a.m. Over Coffee -
 10:30 a.m. Worship Celebration- Children's Sunday School

