



THE SEER

April 2014

From David



FLASH! Christian Faith Highly Relevant to YOUR Life!

We Walk From Palm Sunday to Easter

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Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

-Romans 6:3-5

God in Jesus knows this. God in Jesus knows helplessness, our inability to ultimately direct our fate, If there is a theme for Holy Week, Palm Sunday to Good Friday, it is this: we know what it is to have our lives fall apart. Faith enlivens us, allows us to carry on.

Wait for it...Wait for it...Wait for it.

In the 70's television hit, M.A.S.H., Radar O'Reilly would often hear the helicopters before anyone else. He'd call out "wait for it, wait for it, wait for it" and finally everyone else was able to hear the aircraft, incoming, with the wounded. We walk a very human path along life's road, seemingly to the end. We suffer big disappointments, small deaths along the way. Perhaps we never realize our dreams, perhaps are disappointed by a relationship. We might encounter our own insignificance and helplessness. And Jesus died on the cross...wait for it -- time in the tomb - - wait for it -- the women make their way to the garden -- wait for it -- He is Risen! He is Risen, he is Risen indeed! As we faithfully wait, new life comes to us.

Baptized into Christ Jesus, Baptized into Death

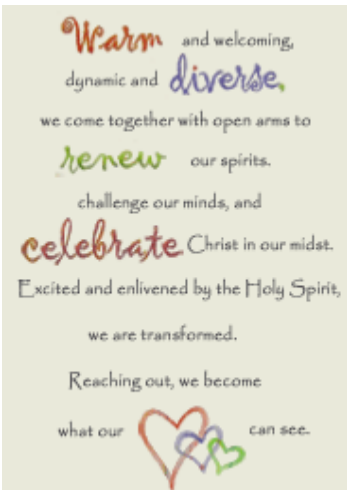
In this short passage from his letter to Romans, Paul summarizes the gospel, shows great understanding of human life. In Christ, we acknowledge that the mystery of the universe, God, is in our human lives. God is with us, lives the lives we live, suffers the pains of living, just as we do; God in Christ, as one of us, knows death. In our lives we will experience wounding, loss, suffering and death -- guaranteed. This is the human route, a pattern that is repeated in each human life. And the universe, God, is awake to our lives.

Faith, not belief, faith, is relevant to our lived lives. Each of us moves from the high expectation of Palm Sunday to the betrayal and desertion of the last supper on Thursday, to death on Friday. As we live our lives we see great promise and we see the destruction of promise as we move towards our death. And

Baptized into Newness of Life

Finally, we discover that our lives are paths of discovery. We pass through the dark nights of destruction and disappointment,

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

(continued from page 1)

experiencing the sickness unto death -- all of us, we cannot escape. But, we find at the darkest point what the psalmist discovered, there is a brightness in the depths, "darkness is as light to you." So, Paul says that we are baptized into newness of life. We discover the kindness at the heart of things, the joy that cannot be vanquished, the peace that is ours as we live in harmony with our experience in the world.

You see, faith shows us the pattern of human life. In faith we have the courage to walk the lonesome valley of our despair. In faith we are able to walk from Palm Sunday as we rise on Easter. I am grateful that in Christ I find the life that is forever made new in all circumstance.

Blessings,
David

Holy Week—2014 (April 13 to 19)

Each year Christians all over the world observe Holy Week. From Palm Sunday to Good Friday, the focus of the church is upon the story of Jesus' last week, from his entry to Jerusalem to his death on Good Friday. At First Congregational UCC we mark this week with a number of gatherings and services.



Palm Sunday, April 13

On **Palm Sunday** we commemorate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. On this day Jesus rode into town on a donkey as people heralded his arrival with high expectations for liberation from their Roman oppressors. They took off their coats and threw Palm branches in Jesus' path -- the donkey's feet never touched the ground.

Wednesday, April 16

Bible Study, 10:00 am: We will study the Easter text, John 20: 1-18.

Meditation: We watch in silent vigil allowing the story of Jesus' betrayal, denial and death come close to us and to our stories, our lives.

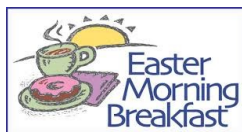


Thursday, April 17

We will gather at 6 pm for a simple soup supper, taken in silence. Participants are then invited into the sanctuary for a time of "prayer station worship." Worshippers will be invited to a number of stations to commemorate the last night of Jesus' life. We will wash one another's hands and/or feet, strip the altar, as we prepare ourselves for the celebration of Jesus' last supper with his disciples. This will be a very special service as we enter into the heart of Jesus' passion.

Easter Sunrise Service, 7:00 am

All are invited to this year's Easter Sunrise Service. The service will be held on the south lawn of the church on Silva Avenue. We will sing Easter songs, and hear a short Easter message from our Pastor, David Parks-Ramage. and after this service, we have...



Easter Breakfast

Come to church for Breakfast! Eggs and pancakes will begin coming out of the kitchen at **7:45ish**, perhaps earlier. We will be serving until 9:45. You have to eat, right? Come enjoy this time with your church friends!

Easter Festival Service

At 10:30 am our annual Easter Festival begins with song, special music, scripture and a reflection on the resurrection by David Parks-Ramage. This is the church at its worshipping best -- in celebration -- Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen, Indeed!



Community News

Pick-a-Party Time!



Next on the Pick-a-Party agenda: sign up for a party! You'll want to be at the Pick-a-Party sign-up party after 10:30 worship on April 6. There are a lot of super-fun parties planned this year; it's a good thing there's no limit to how many you can attend!

Thank You!

THANK YOU! for all the prayers, cards, meals, cookies, calls, visits, gentle hugs! My recuperation has come a long way, because of you! Slowly getting better.

Love, Linda Duckett. Jim sends his appreciation, too!

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).

Congregational Meeting and Nomination

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held April 27 after 10:30 worship. We will review our annual reports, and thank all those who have been serving our church on Teams, Committees, and Council. We will also elect those who have stepped forward to serve in the coming year. We need help in the coming year. If you are interested and able to serve on Council as Moderator or Vice Moderator, we need you! If you are interested and willing to help with Liturgical Art,

making coffee, reaching out in service to our local and global communities, or serving on any of our Ministry Teams—we need you! If you have prayerfully considered your role and service to your Faith Community, and are willing to help administer its programs, we need you! Please contact a member of the Nominating Committee: Stacey Hamilton, Chris Alexander, Hannah Wallstrum, or Kathy Johnson.

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.

In Harmony - Our Church Music Ministry

FAMILY CHOIR- Save the Date!

- Sunday April 6 at 9:30am
- Sunday May 4 at 9:30am
- Sunday June 1 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.



How's Our Attendance?



DATE	8:30	10:30	Total
Feb. 2		81	81
Feb. 9		66	66
Feb. 16		71	71
Feb. 23		72	72

No Count for Blank Boxes

Easter Flowers

Beautiful white Azalea plants will decorate our sanctuary on Easter Sunday, April 20th.

I/We would like to give an azalea

In honor of

In memory of

Given by _____ Telephone: _____

_____ I will pick up my azalea.

_____ Please give my azalea to a shut-in or



Cost of each azalea plant is \$12.

Please order by April 15th.

Please write check to FCUCC and put "Easter flowers" in the memo section.

Ruth's Good News!

March 2, 2014 Transfiguration Sunday: David interpreted Mark 9:2-9 when Peter, James and John see Jesus in the light of pure love. He was dazzling white. David quoted Julian of Norwich, an English mystic who understood that the meaning of Jesus is love, one love acting for love. "Jesus teaches us to love. After experiencing love, we must come off the mountaintop to go into the city, figuratively. We need to enter the *nitty gritty* to show our love for others. Our encounter with love means nothing unless we act on it, giving our self for love.

Bob Cramer, also a minister, spoke about the traditions of our Congregational United Church of Christ, and as his loyalty to American Baptist churches. "Our form of worship gives us the freedom to explore the mystery," he said.

Charlotte Asher showed the children many emblems of Jesus from different faiths, and a felt calendar to help them understand Christmas, Lent, Easter as parts of the church year. She was flat on her stomach as she explained the calendar.

Judy Cramer made the beautiful flower arrangement on the altar, using plants from their yard. The Family Choir sang a jazzy, informal anthem.

March 9, 2014

First Sunday in Lent, the Bible passage chosen by Andrew Conley-Holcom was Matthew 4:1-11 when the devil taunted Jesus. Carrie MacFarlane read the demonic ideas that could represent some wishes that we have when depressed.

Andrew shouted "No! Say no to thoughts about fear, or being abandoned, caught in meaningless habits, and oppressed by the world." He said, "You are known by God and loved. We are not alone. There is no room in your heart except for love. Claim your right. Claim the resurrection!"

Kathy Johnson dramatically interpreted the Scripture, as a suave Devil in black top hat.

Jona Matevish spoke about how much she will miss this church and its people. Ever since she arrived from Ohio, she has found our church to be so welcoming, including especially the choir. She is moving to Sacramento to be with her husband. Jona served as chair of the stewardship committee for several years.

The organ accompanied our chancel choir in "The Apple Tree" about Jesus Christ the Apple Tree... "The tree of life my soul hath seen... Laden with fruit and always green."

Bill Shelley has created big-as-life images of four members of our church for Lent. Daily work devices are cluttered on the altar for Lent, ranging from nail polish to a radiator, a gas can, laptop. Bill is a local artist who is fascinated by the mys-

tery of the human figure. The figures he drew represent how we are all saints of God, like the hymn says, "You can meet them in. . .

Linda Duckett, who has prepared the sanctuary and for coffee hour for months, returned today after open-heart surgery.

March 16, 2014

The Bible passage was John 3:1-17 and David interpreted this memorable passage. Our liturgical art consists of black garbage bags, weird and twisted, a cross bound with ropes, an altar covered with all sorts of modern gadgets. The altar is also bound in ropes and wires. David introduced to us the four figures drawn by Bill Shelley in life size: Maggie Robinson, Roger Allington, Margaret Rouse, and Hannah Wallstrum. They represent all the members of the church, the humanity of First Congregational, worshipping here during Lent. "We bring who we are to our faith," he said. The imperfectness of our lives, the shortcomings, the struggles, show our humanity. God so loved the world. He loves us as we are, unvarnished. We are all Saints of God.

Andrew gave a dramatic phone call with Nicodemus, the perfect righteous one in the Bible text. Nicodemus recognizes the Life in Jesus and so he came to the gathering at night to listen to him.

Gretchen Van Tassel spoke of her love for our church since she came in 1992. We understand all the differences of our members. She is grateful that we welcome her and her friends. She feels the warmth of our church.

The chancel choir sang "Pachelbel Canon of Praise," with Leann at the piano.

Judy Cramer led the children's story. There were many more little children today.

When the door opened to the kitchen, about 40 members enjoyed corned beef and cabbage for our lunch. Martha Stefanoni has been preparing meals for some of our very sick members. She prepared this Irish lunch to give us the opportunity to make a free will offering to raise money for the food. "**Food for Friends**" is a new fund, now established, that will be part of our pastoral care program. Some cooks meet at the church's kitchen to prepare the meal of the week for distribution.

Good News! We are reporting with the goal of helping our members know each other and understand what happens here.

Good News Please: Send interesting items to let First Congregational UCC members feel closer to each other.

ruthwebber@comcast.net or 415-939-0696.

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.

Contacting the Church

The church has two phone lines that you can call. These phones will be answered on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays during church office hours. You can leave a mes-

Church Office Phone Lines
707-546-0998
707-546-0990

sage on the voice mail at the church at times when the phone is not being answered.

Phone Lines for David Parks-Ramage, Minister
Routine Calls: 707-546-1596
In Emergencies: 707-836-3118

Church Office Hours

The Church Office is open three days a week – Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday – from 9 am to 2 pm. These are the hours that Rebecca will be in the office. You can call the

church on those days, at those times and she will answer the phone. On Mondays David will be in and out of the office.

Making Connections

Sunday Book Study:

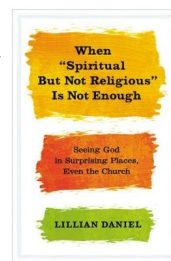
When “Spiritual but Not religious” Is Not Enough: Seeing God in Surprising Places, Even the Church

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 meets at 9:30 on Sunday mornings. Books are available in the church office.



Women's Fellowship

The Women's Fellowship will be hosting a Spring Sing-Along Luncheon on April 28th as part of our Pick-a-Party fundraiser. This will replace the usual monthly luncheon. For more information and to purchase your tickets, be sure to attend the Pick-a-Party Party on April 6th!



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 Rebecca know. Otherwise, last names will not be announced.

We Pray For ... Adrien Avis, Gwen Birkedal, D. Jayhne Edwards, Rebecca Schroeder, Brian Robinson, Brian McFadden, Dylan Gifford, Meg Scherfee, Ruth Gibson, Jack Lawrence, Linda Duckett, Grace Mueller, Teri McClanahan, Ruth Hucklebridge, Betty Franco, Dana Alexander, Kris T., Kevin Stewart.



April Birthdays



2nd Sean Andersen
 3rd Ruth Webber
 5th Stacey Hamilton
 7th Sheri Wenzel
 10th Landon Gray
 12th Minnie Coates
 13th Cat Cvengros

14th Cory Allington
 18th Bob Davis
 19th Elizabeth Smith-Tyko,
 Amanda Anderson
 22nd Carrie MacFarlane
 24th Chris Alexander
 26th Katie Watson

27th Jack Lawrence
 28th Allyssa Correia
 30th Sena Kugbega

April Volunteers

	<i>Worship Assistants</i>	<i>Coffee Hosts</i>	<i>Sunday Flowers</i>
April 6	Dale Webb	Hannah Wallstrum	Lent
April 13	Bob Orr	Gretchen Van Tassel and Stacey Hamilton	Lent
April 20	Rebecca Allington	Open	Easter
April 27	Drew Fagent	Martha Stefenoni	Dan & Virginia Greenwald

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

Coffee Hour News:

My thanks to the following people who hosted coffee hour in the month of March:

March 2 Betty Scherfee
 March 16 we had corn beef and cabbage lunch organized by Martha Stefenoni
 March 23 Evelyn Smith
 March 30 Rebecca & Roger Allington

We still need someone to make coffee on Sunday mornings before 10:30 service. Please volunteer - making coffee is not difficult, probably easier than making coffee at home - push 2 buttons (no measuring) and you have a steaming carafe of coffee, either decaf or regular. Please contact me anytime for a demonstration and see how simple it is. Thank you Jeanne Thomas (707)-544-0751 or (707) 322-1979.

Great job everyone!!! The month of April still has one openings available - the 20th (Easter Sunday).

—Submitted by Jeanne Thomas

April Calendar

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Santa Rosa, CA Apr 2014 (Pacific Time)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
		9am - Toddler Playgroup @	10am - Bible Study 12pm - Wedding 5:45pm - Nominating 6:30pm - Meditation	9am - Toddler Playgroup 5:30pm - Alpha Omega 6:45pm - Choir Practice		9am - UCC Men's Group @ 6:30pm - AA Set Up 8pm - AA Meeting
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
8:30am - The Gathering - 9:15am - Adult Education 10:30am - Worship Service	10am - Caring Hands	9am - Toddler Playgroup @ 7pm - The Light Inside the	10am - Bible Study 6:30pm - Meditation	9am - Toddler Playgroup 5:30pm - Alpha Omega 6:45pm - Choir Practice 6:45pm - Fires of		6:30pm - AA Set Up 8pm - AA Meeting
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
8:30am - The Gathering - 9:15am - Adult Education 10:30am - Worship Service	10am - Caring Hands	9am - Toddler Playgroup @	10am - Bible Study 6:30pm - Meditation	9am - Toddler Playgroup 5:30pm - Alpha Omega 6:45pm - Choir Practice		9am - UCC Men's Group @ 1pm - Death Cafe 6:30pm - AA Set Up 8pm - AA Meeting
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
8:30am - The Gathering - 9:15am - Adult Education 10:30am - Worship Service	10am - Caring Hands	9am - Toddler Playgroup @ 7pm - The Light Inside the	10am - Bible Study 6:30pm - Meditation	9am - Toddler Playgroup 5:30pm - Alpha Omega 6:45pm - Choir Practice		6:30pm - AA Set Up 8pm - AA Meeting
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
8:30am - The Gathering - 9:15am - Adult Education 10:30am - Worship Service	10am - Caring Hands 11am - Sing-Along and	9am - Toddler Playgroup @	10am - Bible Study 6:30pm - Meditation			

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

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

