



March 2023  
**SEER**

FCCSR.org (707) 546-0998 firstucc.admin@sonic.net 2000 Humboldt Street Santa Rosa, CA 95404

## Pastor's Message

Hello Siblings in Christ,

This Lent we are Seeking and asking “honest questions for deeper faith.” We are embarking on a journey to ask some big questions this season and we have many tools to encourage our spiritual journey. I hope you’ve received a deck of daily devotional cards or are following along on our Facebook page. If you did not pick up a card deck, know that we ran out(!) and are printing a few more. These questions are sparking conversations and the Tuesday Centering Prayer group will be working with them as will each of our Re-Fill conversations.

On the sanctuary’s side wall, we will put up each week’s sub-theme (seeking question). We will also have pieces of paper for you to write your own questions in response to worship and/or life. We will hang our questions up on the wall. Hopefully these questions will guide us in conversations and prayer as we go through this season and beyond. During worship we are also singing some new lyrics to known hymn tunes. This may take a little more concentration, but I do hope you will appreciate hearing new words and themes with sing-able music.

If you are a parent with some kiddos, know that we are taking a new approach and trying to empower you with some tools for home. Please take a look at the Faith Formation note in this Seer. If we missed you, we’d be happy to deliver you a Lenten goodie bag and hope that the book resource will enrich your family’s spiritual practices for months and years to come.

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## Pastor's Message, *continued*

We also hope you'll consider joining us for a Nap! We are inviting parents to come into the sanctuary on a Saturday and take a nap together. Nap Ministry is napping on March 4th at 2pm and will decide the next few gatherings. If you or other parents you know might enjoy a community of other exhausted parents, please come and let us know you're ready to nap.

On that note, naps are fabulous ways of taking good care of ourselves. Listening to our bodies and our spirits are important spiritual practices. I hope that in the midst of so many fabulous Lenten opportunities, you will also remember that Lent is about listening deeply to God. Sometimes that means letting go of something and being still. So, just so you know I am also trying to nap with more regularity this Lent and I hope you will find your own practice to help you (re) connect with the fabulous Spirit. May you seek and find time for and with the Spirit this season, and may you be filled.

Peace,  
Pastor Diana



**seeking:**  
honest questions  
for deeper faith

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## WELCOME New Members Kathy, Shawna, and Manuel!

Three new members joined the church in February. **Kathleen (Kathy) Smith** and her daughter **Shawna Smith** joined by letter from *The Community Church of Sebastopol*. They were previously long-time members of the Guerneville Community Church.

**Manuel Martinez** joined by stating a desire to join. His previous church was the *United Church of Christ of San Carlos* which is no longer in operation. After moving to this region, he had not found a UCC church; his daughter found ours for him, and we are grateful.



# Safe Regathering

Hannah Wallstrum

## Good News!

Your Safe Regathering Committee continues to monitor Sonoma County COVID-19 numbers and, right now, the numbers are low! In light of the very encouraging data, the SRC is recommending a move from "masks required" in the sanctuary/when singing to "masks encouraged." As we have done all along, the committee will follow COVID-19's movements and will review this latest "encouraged" step if needed. If data change and we feel our church policy needs to be reworded, we will meet again to adjust to prevailing circumstances.

SRC Committee Members:

Judy Adams, Marcia Murray, Hannah Wallstrum, Pastor Diana Bell-Kerr



## Stewardship Corner

Virginia Greenwald

### *UCC Still Speaking Daily Devotional 02.11.23*

*If you are not already signed up to get these daily devotionals, go to [dailydevotional@ucc.org](mailto:dailydevotional@ucc.org)*

#### ***For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. – Matthew 6:21 (NRSV)***

The who, why, and what of your life need not be questions of torturous discernment. As Jesus followers, this can be relatively simple. Let me help:

*Who are you?* A child of God.

*Why are you here?* To love and serve God.

*What does this look like?* Share your gifts.

I know. Someone out there is thinking: But Pastor, that's not me. I don't have any gifts to share right now. I've given all I can. I'm running on empty. Don't ask me to give anything else up.

And if this is you: I hear you and I see you. And this brings us to an important point:

We're not discerning skill right now. You might be skillful at something that entirely drains you. But giving of your gifts as a spiritual discipline is different. Why? Because gifts you have to share are given to you by God. They don't come from you. And that frees you, because it means that sharing comes from a cup that runs over, an infinite well. In fact, if the very thought of sharing your gifts drains you? Then that's not your portion right now. Look into other gifts. God does not will your pain. Your gift is that thing you can't help but share. Where, at the end of sharing it, you feel full, not empty. Because your cup runneth over. Somewhere, within your reach, there is a gift that God has placed before you. That your heart leaps at the chance to share.

Trust your gifts. Trust God. And share to your heart's content. And then some.

Never forget: you are a treasure. Each child of God is God's heart.

**Prayer** Thank you for allowing me to treasure myself enough to share the love you give. Amen.  
*About the Author:* Kaji Dousa is the Senior Pastor of the Park Avenue Christian Church, a congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ in New York City.

# Council Highlights February 2023

Winnie Hogoboom

## The Council

- Approved the policy of having everyone, members included, complete a **Facility Use Application** and submit it to the office in advance of holding a meeting, event, or other gathering at the church.
- Approved Linda Balfour and Rachel Kau-Taylor for the **Internal Audit Team**.
- Approved **new members** Kathleen Smith, Shawna Smith, and Manuel Martinez.
- Approved the **Safe Church Policy**, knowing that work still needs to be done; and also knowing we need a policy into place for insurance purposes.
- Approved Sam Walker and Chuck Cadman as members of the **Endowment Committee**.
- Voted to accept the bequest **from Jack Farmer's trust** "with gratitude and love" following Chuck's recommendation on behalf of the committee. (Further information will be forthcoming.)
- Approved the Financial Secretary's motion to join the Church HR Network at \$60/monthly to give us ready access to expert advice and information on the Personnel Policy.
- Learned that the Worship Team has assembled packets of cards ready for congregants to use for devotions during Lent, beginning February 22.

## Pastor Diana

- Led the Council through a brief discussion of the next section from the book **Dare to Lead, Curiosity and Confidence**.
- Described some of the **Isaiah Project** work she and Rachel Kau-Taylor were engaged in during their weekend at Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey. They have begun to implement what they learned.
- Is completing a form allowing the Santa Rosa Police Department to access our property when unhoused people are camping on it. Also investigating our participation in a **Safe Parking** program for a few unhoused people.

Regular **Council meeting dates** are currently held on the third Thursday of the month, through February 2023. In March, the newly elected Council may meet on March 16, but may also change the date. Please notify the church office to request the Zoom link to attend. [firstucc.admin@sonic.net](mailto:firstucc.admin@sonic.net)

## Faith Formation

Judy Adams

Sunday School is happening most Sundays. Once a month, on Godly Play Worship Sundays, there will be no Sunday School. This month that will be on the 26th.

For any days without Sunday School, we also now will be preparing "Worship Bags" that will have several meaningful and interesting individual activities.

Just before Lent, each family was personally delivered a Lenten Bag with the book "Faithful Families" by Traci Smith. We also asked families if they would like to receive Ash Wednesday ashes in their bags.

New children's books are here! Children and parents can check them out for home or look at them during worship. Each month we'll feature a new book(s) in the SEER. For March we're featuring the Frolic Storybook Set, a set of 13 storybooks! Designed for young children, they teach about feelings, sharing, helping, etc.:

- *Ava and the Big Ouch: A Book about Feeling Better*
- *Ava and the Skimpy Picnic: A Book about Sharing*
- *Hal and the New Kid: A Book about Making Friends*
- *Hal and the Prickle Problem: A Book about Doing Your Part*
- *Hal and the Very Long Race: A Book about Self-Acceptance*
- *Happy Birthday, Ava!: A Book about Putting Others First*
- *Jo and the Not-So-Little Lie: A Book about Telling the Truth*
- *Jo and the Slow Soup: A Book about Patience*
- *Rufus and His Angry Tail: A Book about Anger*
- *Rufus and the Scary Storm: A Book about Being Brave*
- *Rufus and the Very Special Baby: A Frolic Christmas Story*
- *Rufus Loses His Cape: A Book about Asking for Help*
- *Uri and the Busy Day: A Book about Feeling Overwhelmed*



## March Birthdays

1 Nancy Turner  
4 Charlotte Tabor  
9 John Robinson

9 Paul Chaffee  
18 Christine Thompson  
21 Linda Balfour

23 Mark Adams  
25 Jim Duckett  
27 Margaret Rouse

If you don't see your name and birthday on our birthday list, and would like your special day known, please contact Paddy in the church office, 707-546-0998 or [firstucc.admin@sonic.net](mailto:firstucc.admin@sonic.net)

We want to celebrate you, too!

## Star Words

Have you joined the spiritual practice of Star Words? If not, and you would like to, let Pastor Diana, or Paddy in the church office, know and a Star Word will be mailed to you. If you are playing along, have you heard God speaking to you through your Word? What significance does it have in your life? How might God be inviting you to change in light of this word?

If you are engaged with the Star Word practice, may it lead you towards connecting with Christ's light as we journey through this year together.

More information on Star Words can be found in the January SEER.



## Upcoming Events — Mark Your Calendars

**March 4, 2pm**      **Embodying Divine Rest** — Bring a blanket & take a nap in the sanctuary

**March 5, 10am**      **Communion Sunday & FISH Sunday**



On First Sunday, please bring non-perishable food items to donate to FISH, our local food bank supported by people of faith. We are encouraging cans of tuna, because they can be eaten hot or cold, alone or added to other ingredients.



**Re-Fill Wednesdays**      Prayer & (Deep!?) Conversation Led by Pastor Diana  
**March 15, 9am**      A’Roma Roasters, 95 5th Street, Santa Rosa  
**March 29, 9am**      Oliver’s Tavern, Windsor

**March 12, 2am**      **SRING FORWARD!** Set your clocks forward one hour so you won’t be late for church.

**March 14, 11am**      Indigenous Book Study in the Sanctuary

**March 26, 10am**      Godly Play

**April 6, 6pm**      **Maundy Thursday Soup Dinner & Worship**

**April 9**      **EASTER SUNDAY!**

## Welcome New Church Officers for 2023

<b>Moderator</b>	<b>Debra Kelly</b>
<b>Vice Moderator</b>	<b>Rachel Kau Taylor</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Kathy Johnson</b>
<b>Financial Secretary</b>	<b>Linda Balfour</b>
<b>Clerk</b>	<b>Hannah Wallstrum</b>

Thank you to all who have served our congregation in leadership positions last year. They include Moderator, Rachel Kau Taylor; Virginia Greenwald, Vice Moderator; Mark Adams, Treasurer; Kathy Johnson, Financial Secretary; and Winnie Hogoboom, Clerk. We also thank Hannah Wallstrum who chaired our Stewardship and Worship Teams; and Evelyn Smith for chairing our Outreach Team. Thank you to everyone who served on a Team. We are grateful for your service. Your time and talents hold our church together and keep us moving forward in ministry.