



I AM NOT ASKING YOU TO TAKE THIS WILDERNESS FROM ME, TO REMOVE THIS PLACE OF STARKNESS WHERE I COME TO KNOW THE WILDNESS WITHIN ME,... BUT SEND ME TOUGH ANGELS, SWEET WINE, STRONG BREAD: JUST ENOUGH.

JAN RICHARDSON, *DESERT PRAYER*

THE CLARION

MARCH
APRIL
2020

First Presbyterian Church of San Rafael • 1869 – 2019 • Serving our Community for 150 Years



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH *of* SAN RAFAEL



The season of Lent begins and we as a church are going into the wilderness. That is our theme and metaphor this year as we travel these 40 days from Ash Wednesday to Easter morning.

The season of Lent derives its structure from Jesus' forty days in the wilderness where he fasted, prayed and faced temptations crafted by the evil one as he prepared for his life and ministry of radical love. This wilderness time was not punishment; in fact, Jesus had just experienced God's public affirmation of his true identity at his baptism when he hears the voice saying this is "my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Indeed, he was led (some translations say "driven") into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit as a time of purification and preparation for the ministry that was ahead of him.

What do you think of when you think of wilderness?

Oftentimes we think of the

wilderness as being a harsh and punishing place; however, it can also be a place where we find clarity, discover inner strength, and discern deeper truths about ourselves and the Holy One. It can be a place where we experience God's steadfast love. As Henri Nouwen says, "We have to fashion our own desert where we can withdraw every day, shake off our compulsions and dwell in the gentle healing presence of God. Without such a desert we will lose our own soul while sharing the gospel to others."

Lent is a reminder that we are human beings, creatures, that we come from earth, soil, dust, and we will return to it. We are creatures made from dust, to have the breath of life breathed into us.

The Hebrew name for the divine is composite of the words *Hayah, Heveh, Yehiyeh* (was, is, will be). It conveys the mystery of timelessness, of infinite being-ness. This is our source. This is who holds our life. The name of God is made entirely of vowels and can't really be pronounced. It is said that if you say

the name of God as it is written it would sound like an exhaled breath.

Lent is a whole season to return to the truth of our belonging to God and each other –which isn't found in strength or invincibility, but in weakness and openness. Not in anything we do or accomplish or say or become or fail at. Just in our breath. Just by being.

The journey into the wilderness this year is an invitation into the courage to be honest, your real, vulnerable self. The part that comes with breath and body and sadness and longing.

Take time to be in worship. Take time to read the scripture passages. Take time to reflect on what it means to be in and move through the wilderness.

Cynthia

Cynthia Cochran-Carney



Lent Worship Services

First Presbyterian Church of San Rafael

Sundays at 8:30 am and 10:00 am (unless otherwise noted)



Wilderness © A Sanctified Art

Ash Wednesday Service

Feb. 26 7 – 7:30 pm in the chapel

A quiet service of prayer, music and poetry
A time to release what is heavy on our hearts
as we begin the season of Lent and reflect on
our journeys in the wilderness

March 1 – First Sunday in Lent

Temptation in the Wilderness
Matthew 4:1-11

March 8 – Second Sunday in Lent

Seeking Answers at Night –
Finding Mystery and New Life
John 3:1-17

March 15 – Third Sunday in Lent

Divine Encounters in the Wilderness
Exodus 17:1-7

March 22 – Fourth Sunday in Lent

Healing on the Wilderness Journey
John 9:1-41

March 29 – Fifth Sunday in Lent

God's Breath and New Life in the Wilderness
John 11:1-45

April 5 – Palm Sunday

ONE SERVICE – 10:00 am
Wilderness–Lost in the Crowd Or Standing Up
Brunch following worship in Canoles Hall

April 10 – Good Friday Service

7:00 pm in the Chapel
A Service of Shadows
A quiet service of prayer, music and readings
Joint Service with First Congregational Church
of San Rafael

April 12 – Easter Sunday

8:30 am and 10:00 am
Glimpses of Resurrection
Guest musicians



SOULSONG

A Taizé Meditation Service
First Sunday of the month

at 5:00 -5:45 pm
in the chapel.

March 1

April 5

Come for quiet, for hope,
for healing, for renewal.

Palm Sunday, April 5

Combined service at 10:00 am

Parade of palms
Special Drama – The Wilderness Journey
from Palms to Passion
Music – Chancel Choir
One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

Annual Palm Sunday Potluck Brunch after worship

Enjoy our annual brunch after worship.

Please bring something to share –

Main dish, baked goods, fruit, salad, etc.

Come and enjoy good food and friendship
around the tables!



Good Friday Service April 10

7:00 pm in the Chapel

A Service of Shadows

Music, prayers, and readings
as we reflect on Jesus' final hours

Music by John Steiner



Easter Sunday April 12

8:30 am and 10:00 am Services

Rejoice as we celebrate the good news
of new life and resurrection!

10:00 am

Chancel Choir, Handbell Choir
Trumpets
Alan Choy, piano



The Contemplative Path: The Way of the Heart Retreat

Saturday, April 4, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Ruah Bull and Kay Collette



The Contemplative Path Retreat

Saturday, April 4, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm



"The contemplative way is not that of striving for some far-off goal that we may or may not attain, but rather is a way of discovering a secret hidden deep within our hearts."

— James Finley, *The Contemplative Heart*

- Are you curious about Contemplative Christianity?
 - Maybe you hear about contemplation from Buddhists, Hindus, Sufis.
 - Do you wonder if this is God's invitation to you?
 - Then come walk the path with us.
- All are welcome.

Unlike most paths, there are no maps for this one, no distance markers, and no arrivals! It's the way of the heart—experiential, rooted and grounded in Divine Love, and dependent on trusting what is ultimately impossible to articulate. This path must be walked, not just talked—a bit like learning to be an athlete, a dancer, or a painter. We learn the terrain, but the experience on the way is what transforms and gradually leads to the joy of intimacy with God, self, and neighbor.

We invite you to spend a few hours exploring the contemplative path within our Christian context by reflecting upon the way Jesus' Parable of the Sower reveals the psychological and cultural roadblocks we all face. We'll look at the history of contemplation in our faith tradition and its vibrant revival in the twenty-first century, as well as the life-giving fruits of making the journey. Finally, we will discuss the variety of practices that nurture a contemplative life. There will be time for teaching, talking together, personal reflection, and silence—and, of course lunch.

Ruah Bull is a retreat leader, spiritual director, and teacher on staff at the Mercy Center, Burlingame.
Kay Collette is a parish associate at First Presbyterian Church of San Rafael, a spiritual director, and Centering Prayer facilitator.

Please RSVP by March 30 to the church office at 415-456-6760 or to Lorna Wuertz at lornawuertz@sbcglobal.net or 415-332-8603. A good will offering of \$20 will be appreciated.



"What do You Believe Now?"

The spiritual journeys of six American millennials.
Saturday, March 21, 3:00 pm in the sanctuary



This film was featured as part of the recent Mill Valley Film Festival, and contains stories to which we can all relate in terms of what happens to our spiritual and religious beliefs over time.

Seventeen years after the 2002 documentary *What Do You Believe?* in which six diverse American teenagers shared their spiritual struggles and aspirations, we revisit

them to reveal how their beliefs have changed. In this new "before and after" film *What Do You Believe Now? — The Spiritual Journeys of American Millennials* (2019), a Catholic, Pagan, Jew, Muslim, Lakota, and Buddhist offer their deeply personal faith journeys, life challenges, and evolving ideas about higher powers, life purpose, the nature of suffering, religious intolerance, and death. They do so against the backdrop of a society in flux and amidst growing religious polarization and disengagement. Designed to be a standalone film, *What Do You Believe Now?* is an invaluable addition to any discussion on religious diversity and millennial spirituality in America. Come, bring your friends, and enjoy this timely film.



"Backs Against the Wall: The Howard Thurman Story

Saturday, April 18, 3:00 pm in the sanctuary

The third movie in our documentary series presents the story of Howard Thurman, an extraordinary minister, a mentor to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and a "spiritual foundation" for the American Civil Rights Movement. This film explores the extraordinary life of a man who, in his heart, was a poet and "mystic." Yet through his religious expression, Thurman helped ignite sweeping social change. From his meeting with Gandhi in 1935, Thurman brought back a vision that helped create a framework for imagining nonviolent resistance not just as political strategy but as a lifestyle. That vision provided a direction for the movement that changed world order. Though he was born the grandson of slaves, Howard Thurman went on to become one of the great spiritual and religious pioneers of the twentieth century whose words and influence continue to echo today.

Outing to See Broadway Show "Come from Away"

Combined Event with First Congregational Church of San Rafael

Saturday, June 20, 2:00 pm | San Jose Performing Arts Center



The hit musical "Come from Away" is based on the true story of the amazing ways the people in Gander, Newfoundland, Canada helped stranded airline passengers on 9/11. It is a powerful story of loving the stranger and how people embodied this important human quality of compassion at a time of fear and confusion. Last summer, Cynthia highlighted this show in her "God on Broadway" sermon series.

Cost of Bus Trip and Show Ticket \$110 (Partial scholarships available)

Details:

12:00 pm Leave San Rafael on chartered Marin Airporter bus

2:00 pm Matinee Performance

6:00 pm Arrive back in San Rafael

To make reservations, email Dinah McClure at EventFPCSR@gmail.com. Dinah will also be available after worship services. Payment is due by April 1. Checks made out to FPCSR - note ticket.



Celtic Christian Practices

March 1, 11:15 am

Cynthia Cochran-Carney

Pastor Cynthia recently attended a retreat at Bishop's Ranch in Healdsburg with John Phillip Newell, Scottish writer and teacher of Celtic Christianity and Spirituality. Along with others from FPCSR and First Congregational Church in San Rafael, they listened to Newell's insights and reflected on the meaning of Celtic spirituality for today.

She will share some of her experiences and present insights from *Sounds of the Eternal: A Celtic Psalter* by Newell. His teachings come from the belief that Celtic wisdom is needed at this moment in time, urgently. It is a spiritual tradition in the broader Christian practices that can nurture vision of mind, strength of soul, and compassion of action.



A Children's Sunday Morning for Adults

March 8, 11:15

Barbara Tjernell

We have invited our much-beloved Children's Worship teacher, Barbara Tjernell, to offer us a window into their worship on Sunday mornings for the March 8 Adult Ed hour in the chapel. Barbara says, "I began teaching Sunday School when I was a high school student, and after college continued to teach wherever I lived. But not until I joined FPCSR did I experience Sundays with children as something more powerful than Sunday 'School.'"

"Here at FPCSR we adult leaders are learning how to enable children's spiritual formation in a *worship* context instead of a school environment. When we use simple wooden figures and felt underlays to tell biblical stories, children enter the stories with wonder, awe, and amazement, much as Jesus' disciples responded when they listened to his teachings."



Hands-on History

March 22, 11:15 am

Sandra Fisk



Sandra Fisk has been searching, photographing, scanning, cataloging, and scrapbooking to preserve our history. Come for a close view of the scrapbooks, journals, and photo albums from our 150th Anniversary.

It's your opportunity to flip through the pages of the history of FPCSR. See the clothes, the wonderful printed literature, invitations, and stationary of famous folks in our history. After a short presentation of the archives you will be able to get your hands on it! It's fascinating stuff!

The Fresco Panels in the Narthex

March 29, 11:15 am

Sandra Fisk

Sandra Fisk will take a close look at the symbolism, history, and construction of the fresco panels that Lucienne Bloch Dimitroff created for our narthex in 1973 and 1974:

"The Creation"

"Tree of Life"

"Moses"

"The Prophets"

This art is painted with ground pigment onto wet plaster, which hardens in twenty minutes, a technically very difficult process. Lucienne was a student of Diego Rivera. She and her husband worked with and for Frank Lloyd Wright on several projects.



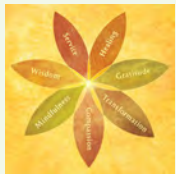


Weekly Centering Prayer Group Every Wednesday 9:30 am to 10:30 am in the chapel

Come taste the Silence with other companions who seek a conscious connection with the Loving Inner Presence. Each meeting will include teaching on the theory and method of Centering Prayer, a reading, silence, and time for conversation. All are welcome. There are no experts in prayer. Only seekers. Led by Rev. Kay Collette, M.Div., D.Min., teacher of spiritual formation, spiritual director, seeker.

Spiritual Practices Group — In the Presence

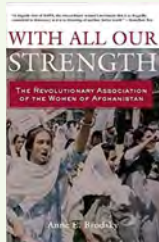
First Wednesday of the month from
7 pm to 8:30 pm in the chapel
(Next gathering will be on March 4)



There are many entryways to the experience of deep presence. Meditation and prayer practices bring us into a sense of presence with ourselves, the world, and Spirit. Spiritual practices are the ways we “wake up and come alive to the spiritual reality all around us.”

Contact Lorna Wuertz – lornawuertz@sbcglobal.net with questions.

Women’s Book Group — The Women’s Book Group
meets the last Wednesday of the month from 7:00 pm
in the chapel. All women are welcome to join the conversation
circle even if you were not able to read the suggested book for the
month. Contact, susan.isler.sport@gmail.com, 415-272-2526 if
you have any questions.

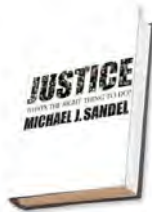


The March 25 book discussion choice
is *With All Our Strength:*
The Revolutionary Association of
the Women of Afghanistan by Anne
Brodsky.

The current very popular *The Dutch*
House by Ann Patchett will be the focus
of our conversation on April 29.

Men’s Book Group

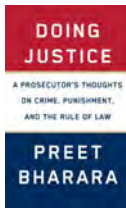
The Men’s Book Group meets at 8:30 am in the library
on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month



Our current book is *Justice: What’s the Right Thing*
to Do by Michael J. Sandel
March 12: Chapters 6 – 10



Upcoming books:
The Triumph of Christianity: How a Forbidden
Religion Swept the World by Bart D. Ehrman
March 26, Introduction - Chapter 5
April 9, Chapter 6 - Afterword



Doing Justice: A Prosecutor’s Thoughts on Crime,
Punishment, and the Rule of Law by Preet Bharara
April 23, Part 1 & 2
May 14, Parts 3 & 4

All men are welcome for coffee and discussion.
For more questions, please contact Alan Pabst –
ajpabst@aol.com.



Bible Study with Rev. Bob Hirni

Wednesdays at 10:45 am. *Journeys Through Revelation*

The group is studying the last book of the Bible – Revelation – using the resource *Journeys Through Revelation* by Barbara Rossing (A Presbyterian Women Bible Study from 2010). Although brimming with mysterious symbolism, Revelation is a book of hope that has sustained the oppressed through the ages. Whether you are a seasoned student of the Bible or new to its study, gain a deeper understanding of this often misunderstood but ultimately hopeful text.



FPCSR Is Becoming an "Earth Care Congregation"

Earth Day Worship service, May 3



The Social Justice and Peacemaking Unit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has committed to mobilizing congregations to respond to the 2010 General Assembly's *"Call to Restore the Creation."* The Earth Care Congregations program was established toward that goal. At the urging of the FPCSR Green Team, the session has now taken the Earth Care Pledge. It includes our commitment to be "careful, humble stewards of this Earth, and to protect and restore it for its own sake and for the future use and enjoyment of the human family."

Becoming an Earth Care Congregation also requires us to audit our church's practices in four areas: worship, education, facilities, and outreach.

In education, we have had numerous documentaries and adult education classes on the environment. One of the biggest impacts for our facilities was to change our lighting throughout the church to LEDs and other highly efficient forms of lighting. We also purchase electricity from 100-percent renewable sources through MCE Clean Energy. Regarding outreach beyond our own church, we are active in a number of local environmental organizations such as the Environmental Forum of Marin, 350 Marin, and Marin Interfaith Climate Action. We look forward to announcing the certification of FPCSR as an Earth Care Congregation soon.

Workshop on Gun Violence Prevention and Disaster Preparedness

Thursday, April 30, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

First Presbyterian Church of San Rafael - classroom

Men Against Gun Violence (MAGV) is a new organization based in Northern California. Its mission is to help make our communities safer from the dangers of gun violence by facilitating customized gun violence prevention solutions in our schools, workplaces, and houses of worship. Dan Crawford and Ralph Purdy are members representing FPCSR.

MAGV is offering a workshop on gun violence prevention and disaster preparedness at FPCSR on April 30. This workshop is co-hosted by FPCSR and Westminster Presbyterian Church; we are inviting leaders from Presbyterian churches throughout the Redwoods Presbytery.



The first two hours of the workshop will focus on steps churches can take to prevent gun violence. We will hear, for example, about data on the increasing numbers of attacks on faith communities, how ushers or other church leaders can be trained to look for troubled signs from someone coming into the church, how church members and clergy communicate with each other in the event of potential violence, and the basic choices of run, hide, and fight.

We will also address general disaster preparedness. For example, what are the immediate steps people in the church should take in the case of earthquake, fire, or electrical outage? What emergency equipment should be available, such as first aid kits, battery and crank-powered radios, and flashlights? What are the evacuation protocols?

For more information, contact either Dan, dcraw100@gmail.com, Ralph, rlpurdy869@gmail.com, or L.B. Upshaw, the executive director of MAGV, at: upshawlb@gmail.com or 415-847-6300.

See also www.menagainstgunviolence.org.

Volunteers Needed Tuesday Night Street Chaplaincy Dinner Tuesday, April 21



Many of you have helped with the Tuesday night Street Chaplaincy dinners by donating food or serving the 80 or so homeless people who come to our church. Our next turn is April 21. Most of the Mission Committee will be in Omaha, Nebraska

that day on our Presbyterian Disaster Assistance trip to rebuild homes. Therefore, we need someone to help coordinate this meal. We co-host meals with Sleepy Hollow Presbyterian Church. If anyone is interested in taking a larger role on April 21, please let Leslie Purdy, rlpurdy869@gmail.com, or me, adams_8627@msn.com, know. There is plenty of time to plan and coordinate; you will get a lot of help from Leslie and me.

— Mission Committee Chair, Linda Adams

Youth on the Move

After School Enrichment

The activities of the Youth on the Move program have been continuing through the 2019–2020 school year, overseen by the YOTM Advisory Committee. We anticipate changes for next year in the afterschool enrichment program offered at Short Elementary School in San Rafael. The San Rafael School district is planning to close Short School, and the students will be moved to other elementary schools in the district, primarily Laurel Dell School. We have started meeting with the principal at Laurel Dell and feel that our program will be welcomed. The school has recently undergone major renovation and offers better facilities for the cooking class and classrooms for our science, art, and movement classes. The biggest challenge will be building a garden at the school. While there is a secure area designated for a garden, we will need materials for raised beds, soil, and other equipment in order to offer a gardening program. During the next few months, we will be meeting with a teacher at the school, the PTA, and other interested people to see if we can work together to build a garden by summer. We will also be exploring options for securing grant funds for the effort.



If you are interested in being part of this project or have any suggestions for sources of funding or donated materials, please contact Leslie Purdy, rlpurdy869@gmail.com, or other members of the YOTM advisory committee. More information will be available soon.



**Crabfeed and Concert by Mary Lou's Apartment, February 22.
Fundraiser for PDA Trip to Omaha, Nebraska. Thank you to the Mission Committee & Kitchen Team!**





MARCH – APRIL CALENDER

March Calendar

March 1

5:00 pm – SoulSong service in chapel

March 4

7:00 pm – Spiritual Practices group in chapel

March 7

10:00 am – Getting Acquainted & New Member Class

March 9

7:00 pm – Session meeting

March 12

8:30 am – Men's Book Group

March 15

11:15 am – Canoles Café – refreshments and conversation

11:30 am – Worship Committee meeting

March 16

7:00 pm – Deacons meeting

March 17

7:15 pm – Mission Committee meeting

March 21

3:00 pm – Movie – What Do You Believe Now? In sanctuary

March 25

7:00 pm – Women's Book Group

March 26

8:30 am – Men's Book Group

April Calendar

April 1

7:00 pm – Spiritual Practices group in the chapel

April 4

10:00 am – Retreat with Kay Collette and Ruah Bull

Holy Week

April 5 Palm Sunday – One Service at 10:00 am

11:15 am – Palm Sunday brunch

5:00 pm – SoulSong Service

April 10 Good Friday

7:00 pm – Good Friday Service in the chapel

April 12 Easter Sunday

8:30 am and 10:00 am Services

April 18

3:00 pm – Movie – The Howard Thurman Story

April 19

11:15 pm in Canoles Café

April 19 – 25

PDA Team goes to Omaha, Nebraska to repair homes damaged by flooding

April 21

4:30 pm – Serve dinner at Street Chaplaincy gathering

April 26

11:00 am – Congregational meeting

3:00 pm Wedding of Janette Meza Chuc and Ryan O'Toole



Each year, the church is required to pay a "per capita" charge. Per capita is a set amount per

member that congregations pay to the larger Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to share in the cost of their ongoing and essential work. In other words, it is a Presbyterian Covenant Community Fund—part of the glue that holds Presbyterians together.

This year, the charge is \$31.43 per member, which amounts to \$4,903 for our church in total. It is common for church members to make a special donation to the church to cover their per capita. This individual donation by each church member will help to offset the expense and is greatly appreciated. Please make a check payable to FPCSR and write "2020 per capita" in the memo line.

Getting Acquainted & New Member Exploration Gathering

The Outreach/Welcome Team is hosting a gathering to help newer people get better acquainted with each other, learn about the current ministries, ask any questions, and explore becoming a church member.

Saturday, March 7, 10:00 am - 11:30 am

Please let Pastor Cynthia know if you are coming. She can be reached at ccochran-carney@fpcsr.org

Save the Date –

Wedding of Janette Meza-Chuc and Ryan O'Toole
Sunday, April 26, 3:00 pm

The congregation of FPCSR is invited to the wedding of Jannette and Ryan. A reception of cookies and punch will be held following the service on the patio.

First Presbyterian Church of San Rafael – 1510 Fifth Avenue, San Rafael, California 94901

Office Hours: Monday through Thursday, 10 am – 3 pm | 415.456.6760

office@fpcsr.org | www.fpcsr.org

Pastor: Rev. Cynthia Cochran-Carney

Sunday Worship Services – 8:30 am and 10:00 am