



February 2023

SEER

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## Pastor's Message

Seeking: Honest Questions for Deeper Faith

Honestly, the last thing I want to do this month is seek after anything that is not restful and fulfilling. And, I guess that means I'm on the right track as we begin Lent. Lent is a time of intentional seeking God and making an extra effort or intention. It is a period of six weeks when we invite ourselves to take on a special prayer practice or let go of something that might be distracting us from seeking God with our whole being.

This Lent we will be working with creative resources from *A Sanctified Art*. These resources are intended to invite us all to deepen our experience of God during this season of Lent and into Easter morning. Our theme is, Seeking: Honest Questions for Deeper Faith. The questions they ask are truly deep and I am personally energized by the ideas they are generating. I look forward to discussing them with you on Sundays, at Re-Fill events (coffee and prayer/discussion at a local coffee shop), and throughout this season.

Lent kicks off on Ash Wednesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>. There is a beautiful tradition of offering ashes (on your forehead) and prayers on that day. We will offer a brief time together on that day to gather and mark the opening of the season as we literally mark ourselves as Christ's own – from ashes to ashes or stardust to stardust we are God's. You are also welcome to attend a full service of prayer, singing, and ashes at Christ Church that same evening.

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## Pastor's Message, *continued*

We will have a number of resources for you to encourage your prayer life during Lent. Most will be available in the week leading up to Ash Wednesday. We will have printed devotional cards (and pdf's) for anyone interested in creating a daily rhythm of prayer. Re-Fill will be coming back with weekly gatherings to pray and discuss together. We will have worship bulletins made for children in the sanctuary (and we can send them to you for use at home). The Faith Formation Team is sending home books and ideas to each family – grandparents let us know if you want “in” on the resources! During worship we will sing new lyrics set to familiar hymn tunes. Rev. Rebecca is leading a book study on Christian practices. And Denise is leading a series on California Indigenous writers (while perhaps not explicitly about Lent, is surely a way to deepen our understanding and appreciation for what the Spirit is doing in the world around us!).

There is a lot going on within our community this month! I'm excited to be heading to Princeton Seminary in New Jersey with our Moderator Rachel the first week of February as part of our Isaiah Partnership program. We will meet Christians from across the country as we engage in a curriculum designed to help us invite new expressions of worship and faith here in our midst. And between important congregational meetings I will be taking a little vacation to host my brother who is coming in from Germany. I look forward to a little down time before we start our Lenten journey together. I am excited by all that we are working on and towards and hope you feel a sense of God's presence each time we gather.

Peace,  
Pastor Diana

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## Church Directory 2023

A new **Church Directory** is on the way! Woo-hoo!!  
But first we need to update the church database.

Forms will be available in the church Narthex and in a special email message. Now, you might say: “You have all my information, why do I have to fill out this form?” Well...

1. Many of our members have changed addresses, email addresses, and/or phone numbers and rather than hope we have current info for everyone, the form will help us double check.
2. The form also includes contact information In Case of Emergency (ICE) — medical and disaster emergencies. In such cases, we want to make sure you are safe. This information will not be in the directory; it will be kept in the church database.



# seeking:

## honest questions for deeper faith

About the theme from A Sanctified Art:

The scriptures for Lent this season offer us many stories of Jesus encountering people who are seeking: Nicodemus comes to him in the veil of night, he approaches a Samaritan woman at a well, he heals a man born without sight. In these stories, each person is seeking a new beginning, a different life, a deeper faith. What unfolds is an exchange filled with questions and exploration. Often, an unveiling occurs—assumptions are disrupted, a new perspective is revealed, mystery grows.

And so, we've crafted a Lenten series founded on questions. Many of our weekly questions feel restorative ("Can these bones live?"). Some feel like a charge or challenge ("Who will you listen to?"). Some questions are hopeful and curious ("How do we begin again?"). Our questions won't necessarily lead to answers, but they can help us find clarity and a new perspective. Ultimately, we pray they lead to a new beginning, a restoration, a wider grace.

Like the characters in our Lenten scriptures, we are also seeking many things: clarity, connection, wonder, justice, balance. We are seeking our calling, the sacred, and how to live as a disciple. Throughout the turbulence of the past few years, many of us are asking big questions about our lives and our faith. If you are returning to church, you are probably returning with more questions and a critical lens. We hope this series will help us unpack some of those big questions in ways that are honest and faithful. Throughout this season, we hope you will continually ask yourself: what am I seeking? What is God seeking?

This Lent, we invite you to engage in the spiritual practice of seeking. We encourage you to stay curious, open and nimble. We hope you will soften your assumptions and expand your perspectives. We pray that these questions will create a safe space to explore—to be drawn more deeply into the fullness of life, into the heart of God.

## CALIFORNIA INDIGENOUS WRITERS OF TODAY!

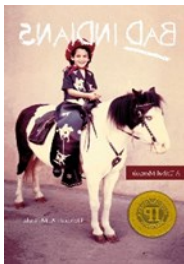
Join a discussion group that meets in person to engage with writings by Indigenous tribal peoples who live in California. As part of the church's land acknowledgement, this series deepens understanding of the Indigenous peoples of California, original inhabitants of the land. It also includes works by immigrant Indigenous peoples who have become part of the California story, often through tragic circumstances.

Facilitated by Denise Low, Ph.D. at First Congregational Church, 2000 Humboldt Street.

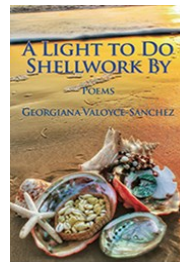
**Alternate Tuesdays, 11am—12:15pm on Feb. 14, Feb. 28, Mar. 14, Mar. 28.**

RSVP to [kansaspoetry@gmail.com](mailto:kansaspoetry@gmail.com).

Books to purchase are available online. They can also be found in libraries.

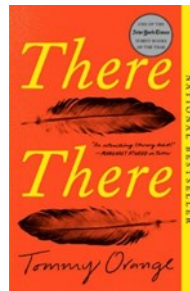


Feb. 14:  
*Bad Indians:  
A Tribal Memoir*  
Deborah Miranda  
(Ohlone Chumash,  
and Esselen)  
Heyday Books

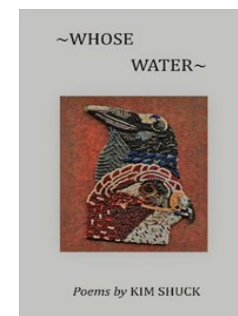


Feb. 28:  
*A Light to Do shellwork  
Poems*  
Georgiana Valoyce-Sanchez  
(Chumash and O'odham)  
Scarlet Tanager Press

Mar. 14:  
*There There*  
Tommy Orange  
(Southern Cheyenne and  
Arapaho)  
Penguin Random House



Mar. 28:  
*Whose Water - Poems*  
Kim Shuck  
(Enrolled Cherokee)  
Mammoth Publications



**Combined Fiscal & Annual Meeting  
Mark Your Calendars!**

**Sunday, February 26, 2023**

# COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS January 2023

Winnie Hogoboom

## The Council

**Building Use:** Determined that everyone, members included, must complete a Facility Use Application and submit it to the office in order to hold a meeting, event, or other gathering at the church.

Reviewed a list of Human Resources policy concerns from our bookkeeper and assigned people to investigate each one. In addition, Kathy Johnson and Winnie Hogoboom will attend an all-day workshop from Church West, called HR Boot Camp.

## Moderator Rachel Kau-Taylor

Is appointing a committee for an internal audit, as required by our bylaws. She will serve on it and needs one-two additional people.

## Pastor Diana

Led the Council through an activity based on a section from the book **Dare to Lead** where *Armored Leadership* and *Daring Leadership* for 16 areas were rated from 1-5, both for ourselves personally, and for the church. For example, *Being and knower, and being right vs. Being a learner and getting it right.*

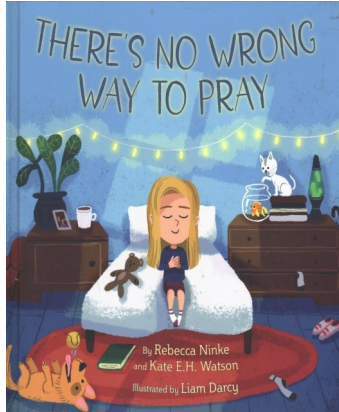
Set February 12 as the date to accept new members, so they will be able to vote at the combined February 26 Congregational Fiscal and Annual Meeting.

Expressed concern both on her own behalf and on that of our Office Administrator for their safety and for the messes on the grounds when unhoused people camp in our doorways. They are working on posting more signs and on coming to know the beat cop.

Regular **Council meeting dates** are currently held on the third Thursday of the month, through February 2023. The next one is February 16, at 6:30pm. (Beginning with March, the newly elected Council may change the date.) Please notify the church office if you would like to receive the Zoom link to attend. [firstucc.admin@sonic.net](mailto:firstucc.admin@sonic.net)

## Faith Formation

Judy Adams



Our team has been checking in with parents of children attending Sunday School to help us evaluate what's working and how we can better meet the needs of children/youth/families in Faith Formation.

We've bought copies of the book "Faithful Families" by Traci Smith for our team and for our families with children and youth (to be distributed soon).

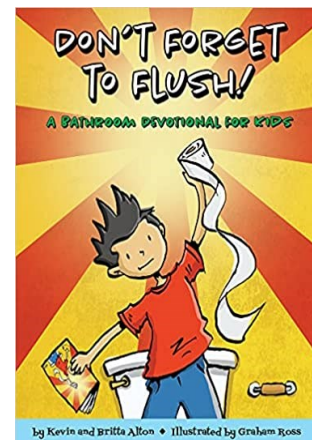
Also, purchased are books for a lending library including:

- Grit and Grace: Heroic Women of the Bible (preteen girls)
- There's no Wrong Way to Pray (preteen)
- Don't Forget to Flush (9 - 12 yrs.)
- How to Train Your Pet Brain (5 - 8 yrs.)
- The Girl with Big Big questions (5 - 8 yrs.)
- Old Testament Adventures (early readers)
- Frolic Storybook Collection with 13 storybooks about kids' childhood challenges (preschool)

We're looking at Lenten activities especially for families.

Check out our BRAND NEW Children's Faith Book Library on the table at the rear of the church. Children, parents and grandparents may check out the books.

This month's book we're highlighting the book "DON'T FORGET TO FLUSH" by Kevin and Britta Alton. Don't Forget to Flush is geared toward beginning the habit of a devotional routine in kids ages 9 to 12 years old. Written from the perspective of a snarky preteen boy, this devotional will make you think, laugh, and connect with God all while sitting on the toilet. Don't Forget to Flush contains 99 devotions that connect ordinary bathroom items to faith-filled practices and character building ideas to take beyond the bathroom into everyday life



Your CFF Team: Judy Adams, Judy Gibson, Erin Moore, Marcia Murray, Sue Green

## Financial Report

Kathy Johnson

In mid-January, those with emails in our records should have received statements of the donations they made to the church throughout 2022. If you did not receive your statement, if you need to have one mailed to you, or if you need a replacement email, please contact me by email at [fkathj@sonic.net](mailto:fkathj@sonic.net).

Those who do not have emails in our records should receive a statement by mail or in person by mid-February.

We are off to a good start for 2023!

Our community giving to support our church through January 16 includes:

General Operations	\$9,813.00
Plate	\$106.35
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$9,919.35</b>

For Missions, through January 16: \$399.33  
Some preliminary total receipts for 2022:

General Operations	\$137,100
Plate	\$4,297
Memorial Gifts	\$2,670
Missions	\$5,519
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$485
Neighbors in Need	\$595
Christmas	\$527
FISH	\$600
Holocaust Memorial	\$410
UCC Ukraine Relief Fund	\$200

If you haven't had a chance, yet, to turn in your 2023 pledge, it's not too late! It would be very helpful for budget planning if you could turn it in soon. Your contributions help pay salaries for our wonderful minister and gifted staff, as well as keeping our aging building serving us and our neighborhood. Thank you for Being the Church!

## February Birthdays

3	Sam Walker
7	Dorothy Hinze
25	Linda Duckett
25	Rose Williams

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 [fristucc.admin@sonic.net](mailto:fristucc.admin@sonic.net)

We want to celebrate  
YOU, too!!

## Safe Regathering

We continue to require masking in the sanctuary during worship as singing continues to be of top concern in terms of viral spread. Everywhere else in the church (and in the sanctuary when singing is not present) masking is not required. Per California health regulations, masking is still encouraged. The committee plans to review the plan again toward the end of February.

The SRC:  
Judy Adams, Marcia Murray, Hannah Wallstrum, Diana Bell-Kerr ex-officio

## Upcoming Events — Mark Your Calendars

- February 2                    2022 **Annual Reports** due to the office
- February 4, 1-4pm        ***Solidarity in Community***  
***The History of Housing Segregation in Santa Rosa***  
First Presbyterian Church, 1550 Pacific Ave.  
RSVP: [emily@fpcsantarosa.org](mailto:emily@fpcsantarosa.org)
- February 5                    **Communion Sunday**  
It's also **FISH Sunday**.  
Cans of tuna are suggested as  
they can be opened and eaten hot or cold.
- February 6-10              Pastor Diana & Moderator Rachel travel for  
and attend Isaiah Partnership
- February 12                **Presentation of the Budget** following Worship
- February 14                **CA Indigenous Writers' Discussion** (See SEER page 4)
- February 20                **SEER** articles due to the office
- February 22, 10am        **Ash Wednesday**  
Sanctuary  
15 minutes of scripture, prayers and ashes  
Led by Pastor Diana
- February 25, 2pm         **Celebration of Life for Ed Thompson**
- February 26                **Combined Fiscal and Annual Meeting** following Worship
- February 28                **CA Indigenous Writers' Discussion** (See SEER page 4)
- Re-Fill Wednesdays**    Prayer & (Deep!?) Conversation Led by Pastor Diana
- March 1, 9:30am          Oliver's Market Tavern (coffee/tea)  
9230 Old Redwood Hwy, Windsor
- March 8, 9:30am          A'Roma Roasters  
95 5th Street, Santa Rosa

