

Monthly publication
United Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico

September 2021

A Hopi Prayer and Reflection for the Start of a New Church Year

You have been telling the people,
that this is the eleventh hour.
Now, you must go and tell the people,
that this is the hour,
And there are things to be considered.

Where are you living? What are you doing?
What are your relationships?
Are you in the right relationship?
Where is your water?
Know your garden.

It is time to speak your truth . . .

There is a river flowing now very fast,
It is so great and swift.
That there are those who will be afraid,
They will try to hold onto the shore.
They will feel they are being pulled apart,
And will suffer greatly.

Understand that the river knows its destination,
The elders say we must let go of the shore.
Push off into the middle of the river,
Keep our eyes open and our heads above water.

And I say: see who is in there with you.

Hold fast to them and celebrate!
At this time in history,
We are to take nothing personally. Least of all, ourselves!
For the moment we do,
Our spiritual growth and journey come to an end.
The time of the lone wolf is over!

Gather yourselves!
Banish the word 'struggle' from your attitude and vocabulary.
All that we do now must be done,
In a sacred manner and in celebration.

We are all about to go on a journey,
We are the ones we have been waiting for!

Thomas Banyacya, Sr. (American, elder of the Hopi Nation, 1909-1999)

Inside this issue:

Pastor's Message	2	Care and Concern	5
Worship	3	Outreach	6
Music Notes / Children's & Youth Ministry	4	Adult Faith Formation	7

**UNITED CHURCH
OF SANTA FE**

A UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Bradley Ellingboe
Director of Choirs

Elijah Marquez
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Lin Raymond
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**Covenant of
The United Church of Santa Fe**

In the Lord's name we gather together
here in Santa Fe

to worship and grow in the Christian
tradition,

to minister in love to all persons,
to strive for justice and peace,
to respond to God's word.

We celebrate the heritage of Santa Fe
and give ourselves to its challenges
and opportunities.

We endeavor to live in harmony with
all creation as stewards of the earth.

We share in the life and mission of
the United Church of Christ and of
Christians everywhere.

To these purposes we unite and
covenant with God and one another,
watchful for the guidance of the Holy
Spirit.

Pastor's Message

Dear Friends,

United's Children's Garden is overflowing with tomatoes, beans, squash, and peppers! Come by to see the fruits of the kids' "praying in the dirt" :-). Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped them plant, water, and harvest this little corner of God's creation, with a special shout-out to Donna Clark, who oversaw it all, and Gabby Dietrich, Summer Coordinator. Each week, the abundant harvest provides fresh vegetables for the guests of the Interfaith Shelter.



Late summer is a "gathering-in" time all around Northern New Mexico. Here at United, along with harvesting squash, peppers and tomatoes, we're also gathering in ideas and experiences, as we gather in small groups to reflect on the past year and a half of "corona-time" and also look ahead to God's call for the future. This harvest of ideas has already taught us a good deal about the impact of the pandemic on our individual lives and our life as a church.

One important insight gleaned from the gatherings is that while we may have all been under the same shelter-in-place and social distance restrictions, we haven't had the same experience. For some, it's been an opportunity to reflect and go deeper in faith and life. For others, especially parents, it's been to-the-bone exhausting. For all in the workplace, the constant pivots from virtual to hybrid and back again have been confusing and demanding. For United's healthcare workers, the new surge in cases and hospitalizations is both disheartening and beyond belief, now that there's a vaccine.

Some of us in this time could reconnect more deeply with family or long-distance friends. For others, the isolation and justifiable fear of the virus has led to searing loneliness and even despair.

Another gleaning is that our spiritual experiences have varied as well. Some have wondered where is God in the midst of the pandemic, racial injustice, or the climate-related disasters of the last two years. Others have found strength and resolve in a new appreciation for "Thy will be done" and a deeper trust in God's presence. But a shared understanding is that we're not in charge ("as if we ever were," as one person said), and also that we have an even deeper responsibility to "love our neighbor."

Not surprisingly, our experiences of United have also been different. For some, the virtual worship services are a life-line. For others, they've only increased the sense of loneliness, as one person shared. "I'm not a tech person," someone offered, "and this time has been really hard." At the same time, people expressed deep appreciation for all the connections the church volunteers and staff have made in this time, from the monthly Communion deliveries to Zoom classes and choir presentations to "Drop-by Blessings" of students, teachers, pets, and even pledges.

To a person, members and friends are also grateful for United's continued care for the wider community and world. "I'm sorry not to be able to cook for the Shelters or to serve in person," one person said, "but I'm glad that from the beginning United figured out a way to keep caring for our neighbors near and far."

Just as the Children's Garden has yielded an abundant harvest, so have these gatherings offered an abundance of insights, connections, and hope as we look to the future. Thanks be to God, they've fed our souls, that we might feed the souls and bodies of others. Stay tuned for the next round!

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Talitha".

P.S. There's still time to sign up!

Worship in September

"In Such a Time"

The scripture lessons for September jump all around the Bible, from the Gospel of Mark back to the Psalms, then back to the Book of Esther and then leapfrogging to the Christian Letter of James. But throughout these disparate texts runs the theme of God's presence "in such a time" and our call to trust God and love neighbor in all times.

Jesus Needs a Time-Out **Labor Day Sunday** **September 5**

In the 7th chapter of Mark's Gospel, a foreign woman with a gravely ill daughter finds Jesus when he's trying to get some downtime. He snarls at her, but she persists and he heals her daughter. The woman is to be commended for her advocacy on behalf of her daughter, but this Sunday, let's focus on Jesus. If even he needed a break—aka Sabbath rest—then perhaps it is okay for us to acknowledge that need, too. Recognizing the basic needs of workers was the motivation for the first Labor Day. Whatever our work, it's still a need.



Songs from All Times, for All Time **Fiesta Sunday** **September 12**

"The heavens are telling the glory of God," sings Psalm 19. "Their voice goes out through all the earth!" This Sunday will be a "Fiesta of Song," as we share God's music from around the world and across the ages. We'll also share Communion—both virtually with the recorded one and in-person in the outdoor service.



Story of Esther—Dura-Europos Synagogue (3rd cent.)

For Such a Time as This **September 19**

What are we willing to risk for the sake of others? For the sake of the truth? Queen Esther faced those questions when her people, the Jews, faced annihilation at the hand of her husband the king. He had already banished his first wife for disobeying him. What would Esther do "in such a time as this?" What are we willing to do in our time, for the sake of the truth and the sake of others?

Not on Our Timeline **September 26**

Whoever wrote the "Letter of James" had to be a patient person. He had no first-hand experience of Jesus or the Resurrection. He was writing to third-generation Christians who had grown impatient when the Second Coming didn't come. His job wasn't simply to help them keep the faith, but to be faithful. Faithful to the call to love God and love neighbor (even the ones they didn't like). Faithful to the church community (even when it didn't meet their expectations or fill their wants). Faithful to Jesus' ways of justice and compassion. No wonder "James" wrote about the farmer who waits for the early and late rain, steadfastly trusting in the God of earth and sky. May we have such patience and trust, too.

Updated Pandemic Protocols – adopted by the Church Council

Our faith calls us to love our neighbor. In this time of global pandemic, we show that love for neighbor through following health and safety protocols and encouraging others to do the same.

- The United Church expects all members and friends to be vaccinated, unless a person's medical condition and/or age precludes vaccination.
- Because scientists are still learning how much of a viral load a vaccinated person can carry and because the United Church community includes children who are too young to be vaccinated and adults who cannot be vaccinated due to medical conditions, masks and social distancing are required for all indoor gatherings (which are limited to 20 people) and for outdoor worship (at this time). For the complete list of protocols, please go to the church's website (unitedchurchofsantafe.org) or call the church office (505-988-3295).

We continue to adapt to the changing conditions of the pandemic. It seems the only thing we can be sure about is continued change. Since the Church Council has affirmed outdoor worship (until it's too cold), outdoor musical offerings continue, too—and hope the weather cooperates! Fall is often the most beautiful season in Santa Fe, so hopefully that holds true especially for Sunday mornings.

The music-making from West Africa on August 15 was a gift, and we look forward to hearing more from Soriba Fofana, Fred Simpson, and Jesse Glass in the future! We also look forward to having our Outdoor Choir start regular Wednesday night rehearsals on September 8 and sing at the outdoor services the last two weeks of September. Director of Choirs Bradley Ellingboe will send information regarding the rehearsals soon. To maintain social distancing, we'll still need to limit the number of singers each Sunday, but the good news is that the choir will be singing more frequently!

On Sunday, Sept. 26, we welcome a guest pianist when I am away.

Looking forward to seeing you all at outdoor worship!

Jacquelyn Helin
Music Director



Although I regret to say that our bass Choral Scholar, Gerald Bennett, has resigned, I also write to introduce our newest Scholar, Steve Kerchoff, who comes with an extensive background in choral singing.

Steve was trained in Library Science and his career with the U.S. State Department took him to embassy libraries around the world. In his travels, he usually joined a local church choir, finding that singing helped him integrate into the church community. That's what he's looking for with us. Here are a few highlights, from Steve's letter of application.

"While living in DC, I sang in the choir of Saint John's Lafayette Square and the choir of All Souls Memorial Episcopal Church.... [I also] performed and recorded with several professional ensembles, including the Washington Bach Consort, American Repertory Singers, Palestrina Choir, Woodley Ensemble, and Washington Chamber Symphony Chorus. While living in Pretoria, South Africa, I sang in the choir of Christ Church Arcadia. While living in New Delhi, I sang with the Delhi Chamber Choir and Choraliers.... I've also sung with Coro Melodia in Mexico City and the Sri Lanka Symphony Chorus in Colombo, Sri Lanka."

Wow! Welcome, Steve!

Bradley Ellingboe
Director of Choirs



Special Events for Children and Young Adventurers (8th/9th)

Blessing of Students and Educators Sunday, August 29

Several families were out of town when we offered the earlier blessing, so we're offering it again the last Sunday of August, when our kids also help lead the whole service. Help our young ones and all who work in our schools know they are held in prayer this school year!

Family Fun Night – Games, Supper and More! Friday, Sept. 17, 5:30 pm

All families invited to September Family Fun Night—starting with a simple supper (suggested donation \$5/person) and followed by games and more for kids and a chance for the parents to reconnect after the summer (or perhaps this past year and a half). It's a great way to unwind after a full week of school and work! Let us know you're coming by Wednesday, Sept. 15. Thanks!

Kids' Creation Corner in Outdoor Service All Welcome!

Youth and children begin worship with the adults; then go to the "Kids' Creation Corner" for ways to care for God's Great Earth. All welcome!

Youth Initiates (10th/11th graders)

After the summer break, the Youth Initiates are gearing up for their final months leading up to their **Rite of Initiation to Adulthood**. Because of the rise in Covid cases and the new variants, plans are still in the works, so stay tuned! We also intend to gather the parents and mentors as we begin the year.

Friday Night Live!

The summer Thursday Night Live(s) were such fun, we're thinking about offering something similar on Friday evenings (simple supper, kids' activities, breathing time for parents). We especially want to engage the Young Adventurers (8th/9th graders). Let us know if you and your family are interested! And stay tuned!

Kids' Garden Feeds Lots of People!

With many thanks to some great kids, along with Master Gardener Donna Clark, Summer Coordinator Gabby Dietrich, garden bed builders Cindy and Miles Buechler, and other volunteers, the Children's Garden is bountiful this year! Most of the squash, beans, peppers, and tomatoes have gone to Interfaith Shelter—and the staff says thanks!





CARE AND CONCERN

PRAYERS FOR OUR CHURCH AND OUR WORLD



Prayers of Thanks for:

- **Melanie Lohman**, who devotes a day a week to picking up trash from the church grounds; **Maggie Popp**, who volunteers Tuesday afternoons in the office; to the Sacred Space Team (**Nyla Rasmussen**, **Debbie Maloney**, **Dana Hollifield**, **Donna Clark**) for reminding us each week of God's beauty and God's time; **Counters Joe and Christy Jones**, **Kim Zeilek**, **Dana Hollifield**, **Pam Hyde**, **Phil Laughlin**; and for all who help us stay connected, sane, faithful, healthy, and hopeful!

Prayers of New Life for:

- **Maddie Philpot**, a new freshman at New Mexico Institute of Mining and Engineering;
- Architect **Craig Hoopes** whose firm was recently named "Best of Santa Fe" in the SF Reporter (United member **Linda Pak** is also a member of the firm);
- **Augustus Vaughn Stone**, new son of Ben and Meredith Stone.

Prayers of Healing and Hope for:

- The people of **Afghanistan**, facing violence and dire uncertainty;
- The people and natural world of **Greece, California, Montana**, and other places devastated by climate-change related fires;
- The people of **Haiti**, recovering from the earthquake and tropical storms;
- All persons impacted by Covid19, including health care workers facing the new surge;
- **Vickie Sewing and Janis Rutschman**, following the death of Vickie's sister Nancy; the family and friends of Bob Weil (his wife **BJ Weil** and their adult children and grandchildren), as they prepare for his memorial service on September 22 at St. Francis Auditorium (Bob died earlier this year in Mexico.); **Anne Hillerman** and her family as they prepare for a private service for husband Don Strehl on September 24 (Don passed away last September.);
- **Roger and Linda Knapp** as Roger begins a regime of chemotherapy and radiation treatments for cancer; **Shirley Clark and Rafaelita Bachicha**, as Shirley undergoes cancer treatments and Rafaelita awaits a decision about heart surgery; **Anna Spalding (Jody and Peter's daughter in California)** and **Jody's brother**, both dealing with cancer; all other persons anticipating surgery or other treatments;
- Those with memory loss and all who care for them;
- **Cliff Beck, Sandy Vermillion, Hugo Steensma, Monsignor Jerome Martinez, Lin Raymond's brother**, and others living with neurological conditions; **Ed Barker** and others living with chronic pain;
- Individuals and families dealing with mental health issues, including severe depression (If you or a loved one is struggling emotionally, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones.);
- Persons who are imprisoned and those who love them;
- Persons at senior facilities (**Yvonne Fairchild, Bobbie Smith, Margo Clark, Linda Dillman, Helen Wagner, Natalie Wells, Carol Ingells and Robert Spitz, Tracye Ebling-Cooney**, and others);
- Persons caring for family members, near and far: **Rebecca Griego, DiAna Gutierrez, Sam and Molly Elkind, Lauren Smith, Pam Homer, Sherry Kelsey, Gloria and Terry Griffin, Sam Gerberding, Kim Zeilek**; and others;
- Families with extended families in other countries **Blanca Surgeon and Zulema Zambrano** (Honduras), **Jan and Kitty Jansen** (Netherlands), **Joohee and Lee Rand** (Korea), **Eva and Lenz Neuhauser** (Austria), **John Walker** (Scotland), **Avril and Jim Ekstrand** (Ireland), and others;
- Immigrant children, teenagers, and adults fleeing violence and poverty, seeking refuge in our country; **policy-makers** who determine their fate;
- Families and communities who lost loved ones to gun-violence;
- Military people and law enforcement officers, including those in our congregation;
- Prayers for an end to the pandemic, especially in India, Brazil, and other hard-hit countries;
- **Prayers for rain in this thirsty land and prayers for ourselves to make wise use of God's gift of water.**

Congregational Care for September



On Call: John Shaffer (505) 466-4372
Food: Dave Wilkison (505) 400-0504

Prayer Chain Keeps Others in Prayer

United has an email prayer chain of people who have offered to hold others in prayer, particularly in difficult times. If you would like to be part of it, please let us know. (unitedchurchsf@gmail.com)



Outreach

Outreach Opportunities – Thank you!

Go online to unitedchurchofsantafe.org or send a check to: 1804 Arroyo Chamiso, Santa Fe, NM 87505.

LOVE OUR GLOBAL NEIGHBORS

Afghan and Haiti Response and Relief

Church World Service, the international and interfaith relief and development organization, has worked in both Afghanistan and Haiti for decades—with agricultural and health development, elevating the status of women, and educating children. CWS also advocates for refugees and immigrants around the world. With low overhead and administrative costs and a track record of partnerships with local communities, CWS continues to be United’s “go-to” organization for disaster relief. We invite your donations! (memo: “CWS–Afghanistan,” “CWS–Haiti,” or “CWS–both”).



CWS is also **advocating with Congress** to insure a fast and safe exit and expedited visa process for our Afghani allies now fleeing their homeland. Go to cwsglobal.org, click “Act Now”, click “Tell Congress...”



LOVE OUR LOCAL NEIGHBORS

Communities in Schools—School Supply Fund Drive

Many Santa Fe children lack basic supplies for school (backpacks, pencils, notebooks, etc.). Communities in Schools knows the need and makes our dollars stretch! United Church started Santa Fe’s first church/school partnership 30+ years ago. That morphed into “Communities in Schools,” serving students from low-income households. Memo: “School supplies.”

The Food Depot

Summer Food and Fund Drive

The Depots provides nutritious food for families and individuals facing food insecurity. The need has grown exponentially with the pandemic. Your financial commitment helps make sure children and adults don’t go to bed (or work or school) hungry. Memo: “Food Drive.”

Shelter Dinners

For Persons Who Are Homeless

We contract with “Felipe’s Tacos” and Mucho Gourmet to provide 150 meals for the Interfaith Shelter (and 35 monthly suppers for Casa Familia and St. Elizabeth). Memo: “Shelter Dinner.”

NAVAJO (DINÉ) NATION

United Church has a long-standing relationship with the Navajo/Diné Nation. Your financial support for relief work (food and cleaning supplies) and masks makes a difference! Memo: “Diné.”



LOVE CREATION!

United’s Carbon Offset Program

Track your mileage and donate to United’s Carbon Offset Program. Donations go to *NM Interfaith Power and Light* and *Tree New Mexico*, both addressing climate change. More info at unitedchurchofsantafe.org/uniteds-carbon-offset-program/.



Compost Collection for Creation!

United offers a compost collection service. Bring your compostable products to deposit anytime (easy access from the church parking lot) in the green bin. Questions about what goes in the bin? www.reunityresources.com. Thanks!

Adult Faith Formation

What is (and isn't) "Critical Race Theory?" **Presentation and Discussion**

In-person at church – Tuesday, Sept. 14 (12:00 noon)
or Sunday, Sept. 19 (11:30 am)

Via Zoom – Tuesday, Sept. 14 (5:15 pm)

Critical race theory is in the news as state legislatures and school districts determine what can and can't be taught about America's complex and difficult history of race. The United Methodist Church has developed an excellent resource to address the issue (<https://www.r2hub.org/library/what-is-critical-race-theory>). United offers two in-person opportunities and one via Zoom to engage this crucial conversation (see above for schedule). Interested? Please sign up at unitedchurchsf@gmail.com.



"Who Speaks for the Trees?"

A Resolution on the Rights of Nature

In-person at church – Sunday, Sept. 26 (11:30 am)
or Tuesday, Sept. 28 (12:00 noon)

Via Zoom – Tuesday, Sept. 28 (5:15 pm)

At the recent national United Church of Christ (virtual) General Synod, delegates considered a resolution on "the rights of nature." Given United's long commitment to caring for creation, Talitha Arnold was asked to develop a presentation on the Christian faith and environmental issues. Much of it came from our work as a "Whole Earth" and "Desert Faith" church, with input also from Larry Rasmussen's writings. We offer three opportunities to engage this crucial part of United's identity and ministry. Sign up at unitedchurchsf@gmail.com.



Race Reckoning

Six Thursdays, Oct. 14 – Nov. 18
(in-person at church)

Join Larry Rasmussen, Lib O'Brien, and Pat Roach, in exploring two books on race in America: James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* (1964) and Don Lemon's *This Is the Fire* (2021). Class size limited; participants must commit to full course. Interested? Please contact the church (505-988-3295, unitedchurchsf@gmail.com) with time preference (Thursday noon and/or Thursday at 5:30 pm).

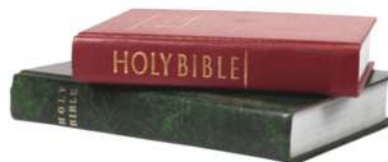
STUDY AND FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

Wednesday Women's Study Group **Sept. 1 and 15 – 10:00 am**

We meet the first and third Wednesday of each month and begin the year with Ezra Klein's *Why We're Polarized* (in the new education wing with all windows open, masked, and socially distanced). All women welcome! (Marcia Gardner: 505-670-5186, marcia.chavez3@gmail.com)

Resiliency and Hope: Strengthening Our Souls **Thursday Mornings at 8:00 (MDT) on Zoom**

Exercise your mind and your soul every Thursday morning by exploring the scripture stories for the upcoming Sunday. Join in to deepen your faith and share the journey. All welcome!



Pretty Good Guys

Wednesdays, Sept. 8 and 22 (10:30 – noon)

We meet 2nd and 4th Wednesdays outside (weather permitting) or indoors with masks. All men welcome! We get know one another by talking about our lives and spiritual journeys. Newcomers have no trouble participating right away! (Ken Bordner: 585-734-4548, ken.bordner2@gmail.com)

THE UNITED CHURCH OF SANTA FE
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

WELCOME TO THE UNITED CHURCH OF SANTA FE

The United Church of Santa Fe invites you to join us as we grow in faith and hope. We are a part of the United Church of Christ, a progressive and inclusive Christian tradition that historically emphasized freedom of thought and belief as well as a commitment to the community.

As Christians, we are many individual members, each with different gifts to offer and contributions to make. We are also one body in Christ, members of one another.

As an expression of the practice and conviction of this congregation, we declare ourselves to be an “open and affirming church,” welcoming people who share a faith journey with Christ and who share with us the covenant that binds us together regardless of age, gender, race and ethnic background, mental or physical disability, or sexual orientation. We welcome you!

BOTH RECORDED AND OUTDOOR WORSHIP SERVICES OFFERED

United (even apart) Church is also United (outdoors) Church! We'll continue to offer the **recorded worship services** and also a **10:00 am Sunday service outdoors**. The two services are similar in content but with different music. For the outdoor service, please register by noon each Friday. (You can register for several Sundays at one time.) All safety protocols are mandatory.