



Creative Tension

BY REV. DANIEL C. GREEN

As I've been pondering the possibility that I'll receive a call to be Rector of St. John's, I've been thinking about the period, almost twenty years ago, when I was first discerning a call to ordained ministry. At that time I struggled with the tension between two different aspects of my personality, life history, and hopes for the future. On the one hand, there was my disillusionment with contemporary civilization and its institutions, which began in childhood and deepened in adolescence, and my orientation toward countercultural spiritual values and visions. On the other hand, I'd had spent enough time immersed in "alternative" ideas and subcultures to have an acute sense of their limita-

tions as well. I felt a need to ground my spiritual practice in a community with a continuous historic tradition, one more integrated into, and conversant with, mainstream society. I wanted to reconnect with my own authentic, cultural and religious roots.

I was a relative newcomer, even an outsider, to the church, but I sensed that here was a suitable vehicle for me to deepen my faith, develop and mature as a person, and use my gifts wisely and well. I began to worship and to study as a Christian, encountering the radical critiques and alternative wisdom of Jesus and Paul, and the Hebrew prophets before them. I found spiritual friendship in the diverse and welcoming parish of which

I'd become a part, and became a leader in the congregation, as a vestry member, lay liturgical leader, and preacher. But in my fears, especially as I began to consider ordination, the life-giving power of Word and Sacrament and the healing warmth of my local community were hostage to an institution tottering under the weight of its past. Its history of authoritarian power, cultural conformism, and doctrinal rigidity felt like it was crushing the life out of the church, and would do the same to me.

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UPDATE ON THE

**Discernment
Process** from Clif Hill

See page 3



Last year's Homecoming Luncheon was such a success that we'll do it again this year. Save the date!

St. John's Second Annual Homecoming Luncheon

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7 | 11:30 AM

Labor Day Weekend is approaching quickly. The September holiday traditionally marks the end of summer – and the time when the parish activities ramp up for a new year. On Sunday, September 7, all members

of the congregation (and guests) are invited to a homecoming gathering – to re-connect after summer activities and travel, and to share our favorite luncheon foods.

Look for sign up sheets in Cram Hall during August, or see **Tony De Sousa** to help with the event. Circle September 7 on your calendar – we look forward to seeing you there!

Creative Tension

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 As I went forward, I found these fears to be exaggerated. More importantly, I came to appreciate that it is impossible to separate out the beautiful religion of Jesus from the institutional vehicles that have transmitted it to us. The pulsing heart and the durable bones of Christianity depend on each other, and the tension between the ever-renewing spiritual essence and the rock-ribbed historic foundation is necessary for the living body of Christ to remain in healthy balance.

Fast-forwarding to four years ago, one of the things that drew me to St. John's was the golden opportunity that the near-death of the parish presented. The flames of the 2006 schism consumed "the way things have always been done," and as I was considering the risks and rewards of coming to Petaluma, it impressed me that St. John's had wasted no time getting to work, picking through the ashes for what was left, but also finding new ways to do things. New people were coming, responding to this challenge of carrying forward a deep-rooted tradition, but doing so in a new spirit. Long-time parishioners and new ones were working together to rebuild a strong institution, but with an openness to, and hunger for, authentic community, personal commitment, and transforming religious experience. The paradox, or tension, here at St. John's between institutional continuity and reinvention, between preserving tradition and recasting it in new forms, between strengthening governance and stewardship and allowing obsolete habits and structures to die, so that new missionary impulses can flourish, is a microcosm of the existential crisis facing the church as a whole. This is what a religious reformation looks like from the inside.

We've had our inevitable conflicts as a result of this tension. Some of our members identify more strongly with one side of the polarity or the other. But one thing is certain—it will continue to be at the heart of our life together for the foreseeable future, because it is not a problem to solve—it is a polarity to live and to manage, a creative tension in which no one is right and no one is wrong, but all are helping to maintain the dynamism of the process. ■

New Doxologies Coming at 8:00 AM

A doxology is a song of praise (from the Greek *doxa*, which means glory.) Our hymnal contains many beautiful songs of praise, and beginning in August, we will be singing some of these in lieu hymn 380.

In the same way that the psalm tone and creed settings change periodically, the doxologies will rotate, in an effort to keep the liturgy fresh and also to draw more fully from the musical treasure trove of our hymnal.

For the next several weeks at the presentation, we will be singing hymn 397 (v 1), a familiar German melody from the 16th century. These are the words:

*Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices,
who wondrous things hath done, in whom this world rejoices,
who from our mother's arms hath blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.*

On the Sundays when the offertory hymn or anthem is a quiet piece, we will sing a plainsong hymn instead, # 519 (v 5.) These are the words, from a 7th century Latin text:

*Laud and honor to the Father, laud and honor to the Son,
laud and honor to the Spirit, ever Three and ever One,
consubstantial, co-eternal, while unending ages run.*

Thanks to organist **James Harrod** for gathering a number of doxology options from the hymnal, to the Laudate choir for suggesting the most singer-friendly ones, and, as always, to our priest Daniel+ for his wise and collaborative spirit. — **Susan Stewart**



8:00 AM LAUDATE CHOIR

Petaluma Children's Chorus

AUDITIONS FOR 2014/15 TAKE PLACE IN AUGUST
See the flyer on page 10 for details

FROM THE DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR



St. John's World Café

BY CLIF HILL

On a Sunday last June our congregation gathered near the front double doors of the Parish Hall a little before noon. We sat in groups of four or five at small tables covered with brightly colored table cloths. Members of the Vestry provided plates of delicious finger food treats and someone made a pot of coffee. Each table had colored pencils and a large sheet of paper to doodle on. And each table came with a question for the people to talk about, but we weren't there to answer the question. We hadn't come to the Parish Hall that afternoon to solve any problems or lay out future plans or even to make any decisions. We were there to hear what the Holy Spirit had to say about our life at St. John's. And we did.

The sessions at each table began with a prayer and a moment of silence. Then the question would be read. There were three questions:

- In what ways can St. John's provide support and strength when you desire to achieve lasting, life-giving change or face a serious life challenge?
- Based on what you know of life in Petaluma, what are the most pressing needs in our community and is there one of those needs that you feel a heart's desire and sacrificial commitment to do something about?
- In the future when people tell the story of St. John's Parish from 2014 to 2030, what do you want them to be able to say?

In addressing the questions we followed the rules of Christian Discernment. We tried to take time to become settled in God's presence and listen to one another with our entire self (our senses, our feelings, our intuition, and our imaginations). We attempted not to interrupt and to pause between speakers to absorb what had been said. People were asked not to formulate what they were going to say while someone else was speaking. Participants were challenged to speak only for themselves, expressing their own thoughts and feelings, and referring to their own experiences. We asked that the discussions avoid the hypothetical and steer away from broad generalizations. We tried not to challenge what others had to say and to listen to the whole group (to those who had not spoken as well as to those who had). We asked the people at the tables

to leave space for someone to speak a first time before speaking a second time. And, hardest of all, we asked that people hold their desires and opinions (even their convictions) lightly.

At the end of each discussion session the participants were asked to write down one or two thoughts or impressions or ideas that came to them during the time they talked about the question. We received 109 responses. And they are marvelous. In the aggregate they paint a picture of a small, loving congregation that cares deeply for one another and for the community we live in. We believe strongly that God has got us to where we are today and will faithfully lead us rightly into the future. Ideas and energy abound. We are in a good place.

What's next? The Discernment Committee will continue to report out to the congregation; first during the sermon on Sunday August 24, then at special "Discernment Teas" following each service on August 24 & 31 and September 7. If you were unable to attend the congregational meeting last June and feel the need to provide your thoughts on the discernment questions, the "Teas" can be the forum to do that. Or contact a member of the Discernment Committee anytime. We love talking about this stuff.

And we will continue to listen to the Holy Spirit. In September the Vestry and Discernment Committee will meet with Father Daniel to compare the discoveries we each have made on our parallel paths of discernment. In October the Vestry and Discernment Committee will hold a special retreat at Bishop's Ranch facilitated by **Dean Jeanne Forte** from St. Paul's in Benicia. In December the Bishop will travel to Petaluma to hear about our journey as well.

What is God's plan for His church at the corner of 5th and C? We are still listening and learning. We do know that the plan is a good one abounding in His loving kindness. And, if we heard anything in the Parish Hall last June, the plan likely includes a Celebration of New Ministry next February.

DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Clif Hill, Chair
Alison Adams
Marti Shortridge

Tom Rotella, Chaplain
Nancy Bosch
Victoria Temple

All About Getting the Word Out

Getting the word out about activities and events at St. John's should get a little easier with the effort to create a one-stop communications hub being implemented at the church offices. Here are a few suggestions for making the best use of the evolving organization.

SUNDAY BULLETIN & FRIDAY eNEWS

To list events, announcements and activities in the Sunday service bulletin or in the Friday newsletter submit an e-mail or written request to **Marsha Trent** at marshat.sjecz@gmail.com or leave a note with Marsha's name on it in the box at the church office.

- Marsha is usually at the church office on Wednesday afternoons from about 1 to 4 p.m. and on Thursday from about 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., but **submissions need to be received no later than Tuesday at 5 p.m.**
- When submitting an announcement be sure to include the name, a brief description, and date(s) of the event, the time(s), the place (including a specific address and directions if it is complicated). Also be sure to list the phone number, e-mail or website contact information to be published. List your own name and phone number for Marsha in case there are questions.
- Remember space in these publications is limited to some extent. Keep it short and to the point.

THE BELOVED DISCIPLE NEWSLETTER

Items for the September and beyond issues of the monthly newsletter can also be sent to Marsha at the above listed E-mail. Please be sure to include contact information for questions.

OFFICE & SUNDAY SCHEDULES

Communications related to office volunteer schedules and Sunday duties including coffee hour hosting, ushering, and other like activities should be directed to the **volunteer receptionists in the office**. A friendly reminder is in order that if you are unable to perform an assignment as scheduled, it is your responsibility to find a replacement and to report the change to the office.

- E-mail the receptionists at office.sjecz@gmail.com or call **707-762-8872**.
- Inquiries about scheduling use of space at the church can be directed to **Susan Hadenfeldt**, Facility Manager, at saintjohns.episcopalchurch@gmail.com

FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE



Welcome, Marsha Trent!

We are very pleased to welcome Marsha Trent to the staff of St. John's. She started work here on June 4, and has rapidly been mastering the finer points of service bulletins, parish directories, and other mainstays of church life. Self described as semi-retired, Marsha acknowledges she isn't shy and she likes word play. In fact, she'd say that word play is what she's been doing for most of her professional life. She came to California from Colorado more than 20 years ago after a long career in newspaper journalism. Before finding a home in Petaluma about 15 years ago, she worked for a newsletter publisher and at various North Bay newspapers. She worked at the Petaluma Visitor's program for nearly a decade as visitor services coordinator and media relations director.

As a long time nomad, Marsha says one of the things she loves about Petaluma is the community. She says she felt the same welcoming spirit at St. John's that permeates the city and it is appealing to someone who spent most of her life moving around. Along the way, she did manage to build a family. She has two grown daughters and four grandchildren and they all live elsewhere which means she can still indulge her wanderlust by visiting loved ones.

Marsha is working part-time on communications and administration at St. John's. She's usually at the church on Wednesday from about 1 to 4 p.m. and on Thursday from about 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. She can be contacted via e-mail at marshat.sjecz@gmail.com.



WISDOM of the Ancients

From the August, 1900 edition of *The Instructor*, the monthly newsletter of St. John's Episcopal Church, Petaluma, adjacent to an advertisement for American Stables, Collins & Loftus, Proprietors. "Best of Turnouts at most Reasonable Rates." Kentucky St., rear of American Hotel.

The first and only true way of quieting conscience, is to obey it. Conscience, instead of being the persecutor and accuser of a man [sic], thus becomes his best friend and most loving, welcome counselor. The peace of conscience, to one who obeys it, is not apathy or deadness; it is a quietude ever alert and watchful, but full of restful confidence, courage and self-reliance, like that of a couchant lion in the wilderness, over which he rules by royal prerogative.

Curious about what else lives in in the St. John's archives? Our historian **Jeanne Nelson** is the one to who knows! She can be reached at 707-795-8002 or by emailing her at libertygarage@comcast.

Sign Up for 2014-15 Foyer Groups!

It's time to start planning for the always-popular St. John's Episcopal Church Foyer Groups. The sign-up sheet will be in the parish kitchen for the next few weeks and we urge you to consider joining with others to meet socially during the year outside of church. Potluck suppers in people's homes seem to be the most popular, but some folks choose to goup out to dinner, have a picnic lunch, or whatever seems like fun. It really is a wonderful opportunity to get to know your fellow church members better, share stories, and build closer ties. We mix parishioners from different services and change the groups every year. Please join the party!

For more information, contact **Marian Nelson** at mc-nelson@comcast.net or 326-4923.

A CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS!

New St. John's U Season in the Planning Phase

St. John's U is an educational outreach branch of our church providing a place where individuals share their gifts and passions with the community

for a couple of hours, usually in a workshop format. On monthly Saturday mornings, people gather in the Parish Hall to learn something new or to reacquaint themselves with an area of interest already dear to their hearts.

It began back in 2010, when we imported the idea from All Saints Episcopal Church up in Redding; priest **Jeff Frost** was working with the vestry to develop with ways of building and strengthening our spiritual community through utilizing the talents and gifts of our parishioners in a teaching format. We saw it as a means to learn about one another and to empower our parishioners to inspire the community, to take that risk of "going public".

It truly was a delight to see who stepped up to the offerings plate: **Rebecca Smith** with her flaming swords, **C.J. Newton** and his Nathaniel Hawthorne tales, **Joanne Woodland** and her martial arts expertise, **Meg Tinsley** with Authentic Movement, to name just a few. As we grew, this program gradually expanded to inviting people from outside the St. John's congregation to participate in our teaching cycle.

At St. John's U we schedule four Fall sessions in the newly renovated Parish Hall in the months of September through December. A Spring series runs from February through May. For more information or to propose a presentation for 2014/15, please contact **Frances Frazier** at 707-484-8229.



Bringing Christ to Life

ST. JOHN'S
U

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Who's Having All the Fun at Church This Summer?

Our kids at St. John's Sunday School! Our Summer Sunday School runs June through August and we decided to change things up a bit this year and ask for help from our fellow parishioners. It has turned out to be fabulous! The kids have been doing art, running relays, juggling and weaving, to name a few activities. Thanks to many of you, this great group of kids got to see new faces and try new things together. The kids range from age 3-15 years old and it has been fun to see them all bonding and working together.

St. John's regular Sunday School runs from September through May. We teach the children using a teaching program called Godly Play. We use this program with the belief that children have an innate sense of the presence of God. Godly Play helps the children explore their faith through story, to learn religious language and to support their experience through wonder and play. You can look at Godly Play as a Montessori way to teach stories of the Bible. It is designed to serve very young children, school aged children and beyond.

We are always looking for more people to join the teaching team. If you think you may want to learn more about Godly Play or join us as a teacher, please don't hesitate to attend our meeting. If you do decide to teach, we will offer training, support and "baby steps" to learning this way of teaching.

PLANNING MEETING ON AUGUST 24

Everyone is invited to attend our planning meeting for the upcoming year 2014/2015 which will be on **Sunday, August 24 at 12:00 p.m.** after Coffee Hour. It truly takes a village – our village – to raise our children! Please contact **Heather Oehm** with any questions at 769-4778 or heather@oehm.com



John Cinnamon, Frances Frazier and Larry Temple attended the prayer vigil for immigrant children.



Immigration Vigil

On the white steps of St. Vincent Church were piled bags and containers filled with food, household supplies and toiletries, toys and clothing, and on the top step was a banner that read "Love Your Neighbor as Yourself". It was a hot Saturday afternoon on July 26 when people gathered for the Immigration Vigil, an hour spent in conversation, stories, pleas for action and prayer for the children on our southern borders trying to escape from the violence and acute poverty in their own countries. This coalition of concerned citizens and local churches was organized by the **North Bay Organizing Project** as part of a larger movement to heighten public awareness of failed immigration policies at a time of escalating violence and terror in Central American countries, and to hold our public officials accountable to basic principles of social justice.

At the closing ceremony, people made a circle, took hands, and blessed the supplies going down to the border to the following prayer by **Blythe Osner** of UCC Petaluma: " God, as we prepare to return to the cool of our homes, we ask you to hold in love's light those young people who have left home and country seeking safe refuge. In a comfortless place, may these gifts offer some small measure of comfort. In lives where hope and possibility have been hard won, may these signs of love bring the promise of a new hope. And may we be sent, loving God, with spirits that are neither self-congratulatory nor despairing, but filled with fiery love that moves us to continue the work, until all can live the promise of safety and provision." Amen.

For more information, you can contact **Frances Frazier** at 707-484 8229.

LITURGICAL ARTS

Festival Seeds Are Sprouting

We are half way between the Summer Solstice extreme of daylight and the balancing time of the Autumn Equinox. Soon after the Equinox, on September 29, comes the feast day of the Archangel Michael who reminds us that we are not alone in our earthly struggles with darkness and danger. His light shines over the whole month of October making it a season for commemoration of our heavenly helpers and "all the choirs of heaven."

This year, after the 10 a.m. service on October 12, those of us who support St. John's Sunday School are planning a children's **Michaelmas Pageant!** It will celebrate Michael's defeat of the Dragon in Heaven and St. George's continuation of that battle on earth. The story from the Revelations of St. John will be spoken as the children act it out in classic pageant fashion, with angels and heavenly warriors, lances made from shooting stars and a great red dragon. No "lines" will need to be learned, only one full rehearsal before that special day to don costumes and hear the story as we get the staging and movement into our bodies. We're hoping all parents will join in the creation the first Michaelmas Pageant in unison with the children.

The Shepherds' Play Returns

The St. John's Community Players production of **The Shepherds' Play** will return for its fourth season on Saturday, December 20 at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Also returning this year, the Petalluma Children's Chorus will open the performance with Christmas Carols.

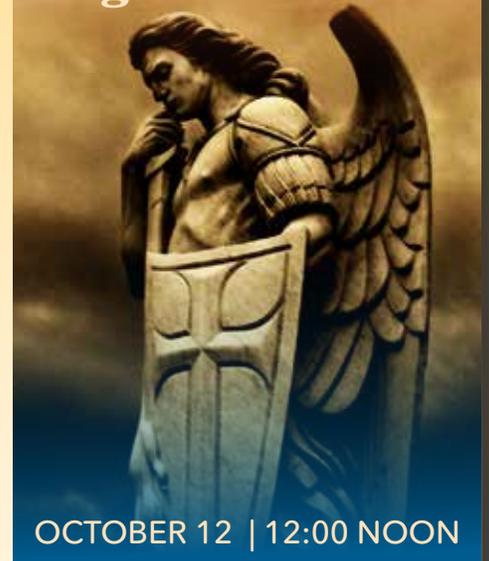


The Shepherds' Play as a yearly event for the whole family is becoming a special way to enter into the blessed Christmas season. So mark your calendars now! **if you think you might like to join the production** contact **Larry Temple** at 707-628-9870 or email onezef2@gmail.com.

A BIT ABOUT LITURGICAL ARTS

Bringing Christ to Life takes place in time and in the cycles of the year. Liturgical Arts can support the sacramental life of prayer and ritual by bringing music, poetry, drama and the visual arts into the mix. They give expression to a church community's history, to our rich Episcopal tradition and to local cultural approaches, enriching parish life and helping a community deepen it's bonds. At St. John's we are lucky to have so many people who bring their passions and talents to our festival life. Everyone is welcome to join in!

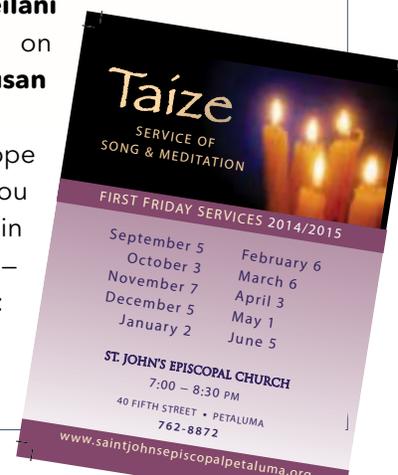
Michaelmas Pageant



Taize Season 2014/15

With the end of August, our Taize summer break will come to an end. On **September 5 at 7:00 pm**, we at St. John's will be hosting for the fifth year our **First Friday Taize** service of contemplative song and meditation by candlelight in our heritage 1890 sanctuary. The Taize ministry at St. John's provides a soulful worship alternative – consider bringing along a friend or family member who might not be drawn to regular Sunday church services.

We will again be blessed by having **Suzanne Gray** lead the singing, backed by **Leilani Wicklund** on piano and **Susan Stewart** on cello. Hope to see you for Taize in September! – **Bruce Elliott**



FROM HELEN MOSSMAN

Sharing Our Stories

GETTING TO KNOW MORE ABOUT YOU

He is a serious musician. She was a dancer with the Nashville (Tennessee) Ballet. He had a long-term career with the San Francisco Chronicle as chief information officer in charge of all of the company's computer systems. She is an expert in the restoration of priceless oriental rugs.

Jonathan and Pam Hiller are among St. John's newest parishioners but they have come to feel at home and involved in the church community.

Now working as a marketer of email services, Jonathan calls himself a wanna-be musician. He plays the guitar and an unusual wind instrument from Australia called a "digeridoo". He learned to play the instrument after hearing about it from a friend. He now has eight "digeridoos". Jonathan also sings in the 10 o'clock service choir.

Pam plays guitar as well as mandolin, but her most important artistic talent came about when she learned to restore damaged oriental rugs. While working as an apprentice in a San Francisco interior rug store she became an expert not only on restoration but also on traditional dyes and the various weaves and designs of the hand-woven works of art.

These days, Pam has her own company as an appraiser as well as a restorer. One of the interesting facets of her work was spending two and a half weeks in Turkey at a symposium for a women's cooperative, where she helped the women workers organize the entire process of rug making, from selecting wool from the appropriate sheep to the actual weaving.

The Hillers have two adult children – Josh, who works in Novato, and Rebecca, who is starting a new job teaching in Saratoga.

Neither Pam nor Jonathan had been Episcopalian before they came to Petaluma.

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE... whose story you'd like to see in the pages of this newsletter please speak to **Helen Mossman** after a church service or call her at 707-981-8136.



PAM AND JONATHAN HILLER

"Pam saw the Taize sign at the church door," Jonathan said. "We came to the service and became interested in the church's sacraments and wanted to know more."

The couple felt welcome and part of the St. John's family soon after.

51st Annual 51st

Benicia Peddlers' Fair

*Saturday, August 9th
8am to 5pm*

On scenic First Street in Historic Downtown Benicia

Over 300 booths!
Antiques, Collectibles
Hand Crafted Items
Kids Art Corner & Food Vendors
Unique First Street Stores
Great Restaurants

ADMISSION IS FREE!

Sponsored by the Historic Trust of St. Paul's Episcopal Church
All proceeds are for the Preservation of the Historic St. Paul's Buildings.
(707) 745-8680 • www.BeniciaPeddlersFair.org

Petaluma **Children's** Chorus

Choral Director: **Sadie Sonntag**



**Auditions on August 4 & 11. Please call to attend.
New season begins August 18!**

**WELCOME TO A WONDERFUL
SINGING EXPERIENCE!**

The **PETALUMA CHILDREN'S CHORUS** offers an outstanding choral experience for children ages 7 to 16 years of age. The choir rehearses during the school year on Monday afternoons from 4:30 to 6:00 pm at St. John's Episcopal Church Parish Hall, located at 530 "C" Street in downtown Petaluma, between 5th and 6th Streets.

The chorus has upper and lower choruses depending on a chorister's age and ability. Two concerts per year are performed, one in December and one in May. Students are welcome to schedule a simple placement audition by contacting Sadie Sonntag.

**WELCOME TO A WONDERFUL
SINGING EXPERIENCE!**



ABOUT SADIE

A graduate of Sonoma State University with a Bachelor's in Music Education, Sadie is the singing teacher and choir director at Live Oak Charter School in Petaluma. Ms. Sonntag has won numerous awards and scholarships for her singing throughout her education and with the National Association of the Teachers of Singing. She has directed high school, community and church choirs, and currently is the front person and co-creator of all things with the Vespertine Orchestra. Sadie also is the choral director for the Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Santa Rosa.



For more information, please contact **Sadie Sonntag** at sadiesonntag@gmail.com or call 707-794-9720