



THE CHIMES

The United Church of Los Alamos

United in our Faith Journeys

www.unitedchurchla.org

January 2021 - Vol. 58 No. 1



Happy New Year from the
United Church!

Spring Sunday School Classes

For all ages begin on
January 10th, 2021.

Look on pages 10-11 to see a description of the adult
Sunday School classes being offered this semester.

Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Our annual meeting will be held
Sunday, January 24th at 10:45 a.m. via Zoom.



Weekly Word

Weekly Word email: If you would like to receive the email David sends out each week about the upcoming Sunday, please email or call the church office and tell us to add you to the "Weekly Word" list.

Contacting the Church

If you have any questions or concerns, you may call the Church Office at 662-2971, email us at ucoffice@unitedchurchla.org, or send us a message on Facebook.

The Church Office is currently operating with reduced hours in response to COVID-19.

We are in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9am to Noon.

However, we are checking our messages daily.

You may also reach the pastors at the office number, email, or phone numbers below:

David Elton
979-219-8640 cell
david@unitedchurchla.org

Keith Lewis
505-412-9954 cell
gohorns_99@yahoo.com

Kara Windler
719-930-6563 cell
DCE@unitedchurchla.org



- 1st New Year's Day
- 3rd Epiphany Sunday
- 4th National Spaghetti Day
- 10th Spring Semester Begins
Houseplant Appreciation Day
- 12th National Hot Tea Day
- 14th Dress Up Your Pet Day
- 18th MLK Jr. Day
- 19th National Popcorn Day
- 20th Penguin Awareness Day
- 23rd National Pie Day
- 24th Annual Meeting
- 25th Opposite Day
- 28th National Kazoo Day
- 30th National Seed Swap Day

From the Ministerial Staff

I keep a list of quotes from films or books that have to do with “hope”. As far as films, *Shawshank Redemption* (which is way overplayed) and *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (and book) offer poignant scenes and lines about *hope*. When it comes to books, you can’t go wrong with most writings by C. S. Lewis, Martin Marty, or Frederick Buechner. As we enter 2021, *hope* is a theme on most of our hearts and minds. I was asked to write about my hopes for The United Church for this new year. While there’s overlap with my personal hopes, I have three overall hopes for this congregation over the next twelve months.

It’s impossible to clearly see or fully enjoy our experiences of realized hope without memory and memorial. I hope that during the months ahead of us, we can take the time to remember the terrible loss of life throughout 2020 in our country and around the world because of this ongoing pandemic. I mention that acknowledging the incomprehensible number of people who have and will continue to die each day in the weeks ahead. As we remember this great loss may we also honor them through the ways we live out our lives as a church, as followers of the great Teacher and Healer. May the Spirit of Comfort be with the many, many surviving loved ones throughout this time of collective grief.

Another *hope* I have for The United Church is that we’ll be able to gather together in person later this year. I learned during our building projects to not try and predict when something will be “complete” or “open” to the public. I have even less foresight about vaccine procedures, protocols, distribution schedules and effectiveness. But we can be hopeful, can’t we? We can look forward to that day when we *begin* to gather together once again. It won’t happen at once, but it seems likely that 2021 will offer us the opportunity for more and more togetherness. May we bring our newfound understanding of community and connection apart from each other, into our coming together later this year!

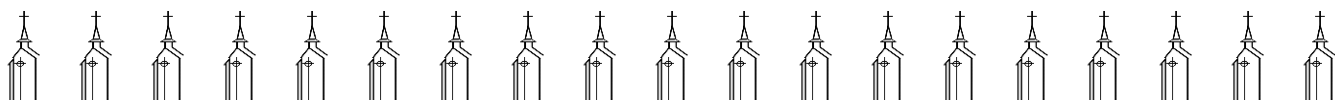
A final *hope* I offer is for us to have a clearer understanding as to where our priorities and efforts should be focused in our ministries and mission—that we will live more fully into God’s ongoing vision. That’s right! Although the buildings were locked, prohibitive signs were posted everywhere, in-person gatherings ceased (in large measure), and ministry budgets were cut—God’s vision for this community of faith didn’t close its doors or fade in any way! And while individual churches do have a lifespan, it’s hard to believe that a congregation who gives such a significant portion of its annual budget, financial gifts, and effort to mission, has a declining vision. It seems more likely that we have the opportunity

and invitation to pivot (a popular word these days) in order to see more clearly and follow more fully into God's continued vision for us.

There are other hopes that we all have, I'm sure. But these stand out to me as we cross this calendar threshold with so much heaviness upon us and so much brightness before us. May each day of 2021 be lived with constant trust in the God who was, is, and will always be *"our help in ages past, our hope for years to come"*.

May the Hope of Christ be with you this year!

David



The old proverb, "may you live in interesting times" needs to be placed on a shelf for a bit. The year that has ended can be described in many ways... "interesting" is probably the kindest. We, as a Church, community/state and country, have endured a trying twelve months. When you see "Did anyone have _____ on their Bingo Card" you know that weariness has set in and folks are doing their best to make it through difficult circumstances. And yet, here we are moving into a New Year with opportunities for continue and new ministries. The work at 2525 Canyon Road never stopped because of the Corona virus.

Personally, I am trying to look at 2021 as a God given gift...a gift of time. How will I use it? Will I simply plod along as usual or will I make use of the one thing none of us can purchase? No one can determine how I use this gift but me. The responsibility falls to me. The same is true of the work here at The United Church. Where will we as Church allow 2021 to take us? With God's guidance and our persistent efforts, I believe the potential is limitless.

As we anticipate a time after Covid-19, may our efforts bolster the work of The United Church and the positive impact we strive to have on Los Alamos and the world outside of our window. My prayer is that we look back on this new gift of 2021 next December and say to each other, "we worked hard ... what a great year for The United Church."

May it be so!

Keith

Hello all,

2020 turned out to be far from what we expected at this time last year. That being said, I've been so encouraged by the people of the United Church. We've found ways to stay connected, to keep in touch with one another, and to keep learning about and exploring the contours of God, creation, and our interconnected relationships. Thank you to all who have participated in our CE programs--I love the chance to learn from you! Thank you to all who helped facilitate our move to virtual church--the tech gurus making sure our systems are up to date, our amazing A/V crew (KUDOS to Milan especially!!!) who took us from recording for PAC-8 to multiple streaming options with hardly any notice, and Tjett for keeping all the moving pieces coordinated and for coming in at odd times on normal days off to facilitate our ability to meet digitally!

I look forward to more chances to learn and share with one another as we move into 2021. Thank you for caring enough for one another that we have been able to remain a community in the midst of pandemic-induced isolation protocols. Thank you for your understanding, and know that we are here for you--via email, text, or phone.

Blessings to you all and may your 2021 be filled with new joys and wonders!

--Kara



Wow! What a wild ride we've been on, as we made our way through the ups and downs of 2020! As I look back, it seems about every 10 years there comes along something that turns our lives upside down. 2020 has done that "in spades".

On a more positive note, I'm thankful that so many of us have managed to stay well. I'm glad that we have been able to achieve (kudos to Milan Gad and his helpers) a way to worship online and in a very meaningful way. We even go to have a "glimpse" of our choirs, as they sang for our Advent Candle Lighting this season. Praising God through singing has probably been my biggest loss this year and I look forward to brighter tomorrows with the sound of "Hallelujahs" and "Amens".

Soli Deo Gloria!

Suzanne



A time for Resolutions? or *learning the Art of Letting Go?*

The 2020 stairs of life have been steep, leading us in new unexpected paths. "I can't wait for 2020 to be over" was often the theme of last year. Yet, *how will 2021 be?*"

Most of the problems are still with us. **What kind of attitude do we approach a year that begins with so much pain?**

For most of us, 2020 was a year of forced steps into the unknown, reminding us that we cannot control our lives. 2021 is a new door, another uncharted path. *We will never exactly go back to pre-2020, although hopefully many things will begin to feel more normal.* It is hard to make plans, hard to see very far ahead.

We can move on with what we have *gained from 2020.* What can we be grateful for during that hard time? What have we learned that can strengthen us? Are there any special memories that might not have happened without 2020's restrictions? Were some people especially kind? When life becomes more like it was, can we remember these good times and make similar connection with others?

I *hope* the Pandemic changes us for the best, especially in how we relate to others. Roger and I spent a lot of time drinking coffee and laughing at the different bird personalities at the feeder. I would like to continue that. We had a surprisingly good Zoom Thanksgiving with most of our scattered relatives. That is something I don't want to lose as it is hard to see the whole family at once. I really see Essential workers now, appreciate them more and sincerely greet them. Doctors, Nurses and First Responders are true heroes. I hope I will never take shop owners for granted. And then there are smiles. Oh how I miss those and will enjoy them so much more in the future. Even our loneliness will hopefully spawn compassion later for others who are isolated....What are some of the things you wish to carry into the future?

I *used* to make **resolutions** to try to improve myself in some way. With maturity and a topsy-turvy world, now, I instead ask God to help me **Let Go of my desire for control in life, and trust God to help me with my path.** We don't know what the future holds for us, yet **we have choice in our ways of handling it.** In High School I learned that if I worked very hard I could get good grades. When I began my art career I was forced to realize that hard work does not always control outcome. Art became quite a roller coaster ride. I seemed to get into galleries just before or at sudden downturns (like my first gallery on Canyon Road the day before 9/11). I finally learned to paint **for joy** and **trust GOD's good** for the **outcome.**

Author, Frank Ostaseki, wisely said *"Attaching our hope to a specific outcome causes us all sorts of suffering... It only generates anxiety and interferes with our ability to be present to our experience of life as it is unfolding in this very moment."*

The Vaccine brings hope, but so much work is still needed to restore lives and our economy. The exiled Jews in Babylon were promised that they would **"return from the land of the enemy. So there is hope for your future."** Jeremiah 31:16b-17, yet their journey would be difficult, as will be our deliverance from Covid-19.

"When we live with hope we do not get tangled up with concerns for how our wishes will be fulfilled. So, too, our prayers are not directed toward the gift but toward the One who gives it. Ultimately, it is not a question of having a wish come true but of expressing an unlimited faith in the giver of all good things. . . . Hope is based on the premise that the other gives only what is good. Hope includes an openness by which you wait for the promise to come through, even though you never know when, where, or how this might happen." Henri Nouwen

Jesus is our example: *"By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgement is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me."*



"Although God wants you to learn from the past and plan for the future, He wants you to live in the present. Right now, this moment is what counts. Be still and receive the gift of God's comfort. Trust your future is in His hands."

(Quote [60 Days of Prayer](#) 2018)

Calligraphy by Rod Torrez and glass by Chris Judson, former Park Rangers at Bandelier

PRAYER: Dearest Lord help us to *flow with YOU* in all that 2021 hands to or throws at us. Please help us to remember the good in 2020 and now in 2021 to be part of *Your light*, showing *Your Love* to Your world.

On behalf of all good imperfect relationships, Betty Smith

Mission & Service Board

Dignity Mission

Update

Members of the congregation completed 600 adult dignity kits last year and in December assembled 200 children's kits, containing a few hygiene products and many small toys and a candy cane, see pictures below. These Christmas packets were delivered to the children living in five facilities in Ciudad Juarez that house immigrants seeking asylum in the US.

Delivery of the children's kits and many other donations from around the state took place in the last half of December. A \$3000 grant from the Missions and Service Board supported the purchase of supplies. Toys were donated by the Thrift Shop and individual members.

The Memorials and Endowment Committee met in December and granted up to \$5000 to continue this mission in 2021. As soon as it is safe, we will welcome all members to help in the continuation of this wonderful project.

Nina Thayer
Dignity Mission Representative



The United Church of Los Alamos



For now, we are planning for all classes to be via Zoom for the foreseeable future. Thus, to accommodate families with many age groups there will be some staggering of classes. Here is the fall schedule:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Children's Sunday School | 10:45am to 11:15am |
| Youth & Adult Sunday School | 11:15am to 12:15pm |

The children's Sunday School will be *Growing in Grace & Gratitude*. *Growing in Grace & Gratitude* is a quarterly curriculum that helps transform the lives of children and those who love them, shaped by grace and gratitude. Through fun, age-appropriate activities, prayer, and singing, children and their leaders will celebrate the presence of God's grace in their lives.

The youth Sunday School will be hosted by Pastor Keith.

Zoom information will be sent via email. Please contact the church office for class information.



Grab your favorite coffee or tea mug and join us for
Coffee & Social Zoom gatherings each **Sunday at 10:30am!**

This is a great time to catch up on how members and friends are doing
and to discuss church and life matters.

SPRING SEMESTER

Spring Sunday School begins on Sunday, January 10th for all ages. Here are the Adult Education classes this semester:

FIRST SAMUEL

Facilitated by David Elton



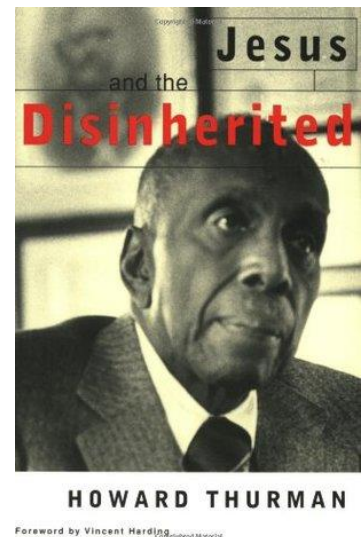
Standing between the erratic times of Israel being ruled by judges and Israel's emergence as a strong and united kingdom is the rise of the prophet Samuel and Israel's first king. This book of the Old Testament can be divided by the three main characters: Samuel, the one who represents God's presence and word throughout Israel; Saul, the first king of Israel who struggles to follow Samuel's advice at crucial times; and David, who is anointed Saul's successor years before he

actually becomes Israel's second king in Second Samuel. The political and military escapades abound throughout this book and remain within the rule and power of God's covenantal and delivering hand. Join Rev. David Elton each Sunday as we read and discuss First Samuel.

Jesus and the Disinherited

Facilitated by Kara Windler

To kick off the new year, you're invited to join Pastor Kara and discover one of the key texts that helped undergird the Civil Rights movement: Howard Thurman's Jesus and the Disinherited. In this classic theological treatise, the acclaimed theologian and religious leader Howard Thurman (1900–81) demonstrates how the gospel may be read as a manual of resistance for the poor and disenfranchised. Jesus is a partner in the pain of the oppressed and the example of His life offers a solution to ending the descent into moral nihilism. Hatred does not empower—it decays. Only through self-love and love of one another can God's justice prevail.

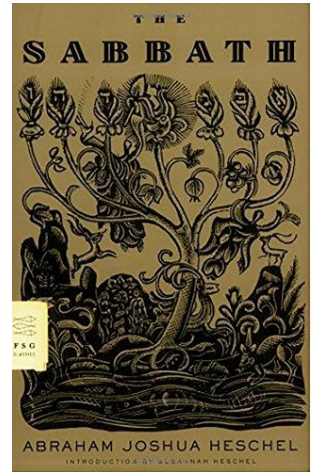


The Sabbath

Facilitated by Kara Windler

Once Lent begins, Kara's class will switch gears to another classic of the mid-20th century,

The Sabbath, by Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. Elegant, passionate, and filled with the love of God's creation, Abraham Hoshua Heschel's *The Sabbath* has been hailed as a classic of Jewish spirituality ever since its original publication in 1951—and has been read by thousands of people of many faiths seeking meaning in modern life. In this brief yet profound meditation on the meaning of the Seventh Day, Heschel introduced the enormously influential idea of an "architecture of holiness" that appears not in space but in time. Judaism, he argues, is the religion of time: it finds meaning not in space and the material things that fill it but in time and the eternity that imbues it, so that "the Sabbaths are our great cathedrals."



This class begins on February 21 with the Prologue and Chapter 1: A Palace in Time.



Youth Sunday School Begins January 10th!

Hey Gang, Youth Sunday School begins on Sunday, January 10th at 11:15am. What are going to do? Well, you will need to be on Zoom to find out! We are going to mix it up a little bit this Spring so you will need to be ready for something completely different. You will be receiving emails over the course of the next two weeks.... watch for the Zoom link and tune in for some fun!

MEXICO 2020

Update

... When last we saw our intrepid Mexico Campers, they were packing tools and gear to head off and build houses in Mexico.

The donations had been sent to Amor Ministries, and the building materials had been purchased and delivered to three families in Puerto Peñasco.

THEN - the border was closed! The houses would have to be built by Amor staff and other workers in Puerto Peñasco. Work permits were obtained this fall, and all three families now have their new homes!

To see photos and video of the new homeowners, go to
https://www.flickr.com/photos/amor_ministries/albums/72157716815877776



Many, many THANKS to everyone who
has supported the Mexico Mission since 1986.
We have provided 155 houses!

Monday Morning Women's Book Study

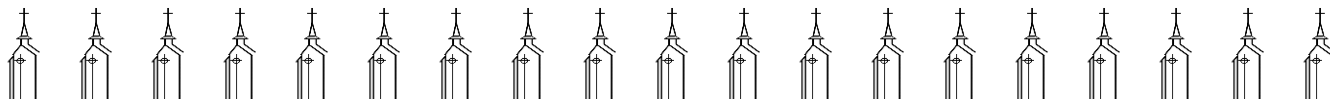
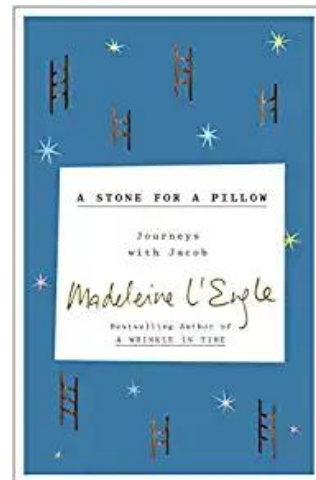
Online via Zoom, Monday 11:00am – 12:30pm

The books for discussion are selected by the group. The group is currently reading Madeline L'Engle's second book in her Genesis trilogy "A Stone for a Pillow: Journeys with Jacob."

In this book for the curious, spiritual seeker, Madeleine L'Engle offers relevant lessons drawn from the life of Jacob from the Old Testament. Here, the son of Isaac becomes a spiritual companion to L'Engle, equipping her to deal with earthly and psychological struggles.

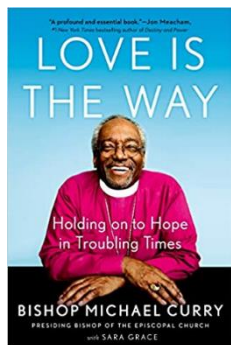
Throughout her journey, L'Engle offers contemporary answers to questions that burden modern day readers and believers.

With her customary fearlessness and candor, she broaches such topics as the significance of angels, redemption, sexual identity, forgiveness, and the seemingly constant conflict between good and evil.



Friday Morning Women's Bible Study

Online via Zoom, Fridays 10am – Noon



All women are welcome to come try out our Friday morning group! We are largely comprised of women of The United Church, although not exclusively, and you are certainly welcome to bring a friend with you! We spend time each week in study and, equally as important, in fellowship and prayer.

On January 8, the Friday group will begin our exploration of Bishop Michael Curry's Love Is the Way. As the descendant of slaves and the son of a civil rights activist, Bishop Michael Curry's life illustrates massive changes in our times.

Much of the world met Bishop Curry when he delivered his sermon on the redemptive power of love at the royal wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle at Windsor Castle. Here, he expands on his message of hope in an inspirational road map for living the way of love, illuminated with moving lessons from his own life. Through the prism of his faith, ancestry, and personal journey, *Love Is the Way* shows us how America came this far and, more important, how to go a whole lot further.

Please contact Pastor Kara or the office if you would like more information or links to join on or both of these discussion groups.



ALTAR FLOWERS NEEDED

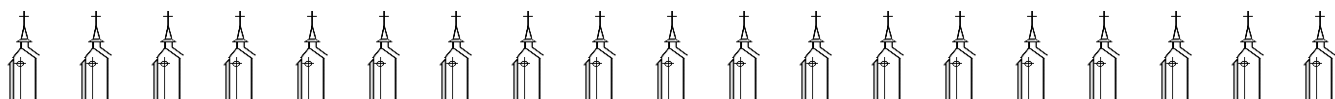
If you would like to celebrate an event or remember someone, do it with flowers! Call Irene Powell (662-5877) to arrange a date and get the details on how easy it is to do.



Don't forget when you shop on Amazon you can support The United Church through AmazonSmile! The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to us.

You can either search for The United Church of Los Alamos as your preferred charity or use this address: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/85-0119358>. Just remember, you must shop through AmazonSmile (if you accidentally visit regular old Amazon, they will usually remind you to use their "Smile" site).

This year, you raised \$823.92 for the United Church! Thank you very much to all of you who have signed up so far!



Lunch Bunch Announcement:

Given COVID-19 and the current restrictions, Lunch Bunch is "staying home" until the town is able to open up again. At that time, we will return to the 2020 booklet schedule and give you a phone call inviting you to meet us for lunch.

Until then, "Be well."

--Cheryl Warren, Janet Tallman, Janet Hall



PRAYERS



Please continue to hold these persons in your prayers during the month of January.

John Rebstock ~ Frontline Workers

Richard Swenson ~ Dale Breshears

Don Childers ~ John Seeger

Bob Erickson ~ Betty Oliphant ~ John Graham ~



| | | | | | |
|-----------------|----|----------------|----|------------------|----|
| Janet Clayton | 02 | Jim Cobble | 13 | Craig Girrens | 19 |
| Clark de Nevers | 02 | Ross Lemons | 14 | Jillian Puckett | 21 |
| Bob Hilko | 05 | Harry Clifford | 15 | Tony Cecil | 21 |
| Monica Johnson | 07 | Jim Goforth | 15 | Jas Mercer-Smith | 22 |
| Hanna Little | 09 | Heather Jones | 16 | Murlin Nutter | 23 |
| Quinn Girrens | 10 | Maria Jones | 17 | Jacqueline Cooke | 29 |
| Linda Lambert | 11 | Sierra Foley | 19 | John Dermer | 31 |
| Pat Slentz | 11 | Madison Foley | 19 | | |



THE JANUARY 2021 CHIMES Newsletter

The United Church of Los Alamos

2525 Canyon Road

Los Alamos, NM 87544

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POSTMASTER PLEASE
DELIVER BETWEEN

December 30 –
January 2

Join us for Online Worship!

9:30am

Live stream of Service on **YouTube**

Search “The United Church of Los Alamos” and subscribe to our YouTube page
(You can also find a link on our website and our Facebook Page)

Any time after 11am

www.unitedchurchla.org

<https://www.facebook.com/TheUnitedChurchofLosAlamos>

Sunday at 7pm or Tuesday at 12 Noon

PAC 8

Watch Us on

