



Monthly publication
United Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, New Mexico
September 2026

PRAYERS FOR THE TURNING OF THE SEASONS AND THE TURNING OF OUR HEARTS

Let us think of Mother Earth, her rich bounty that can result from springtime, the golden corn and the seeds of harvest, all grown strong from Mother Earth, the spring and summer rains, the abundance of autumn, and the energy of Father Sky. It is time to consider healing: healing of ourselves, healing of a loved one, healing of adversaries for peace among nations, and healing of the harms done to Mother Earth.

-Native American Tradition



Our Lord, give us mercy from Your presence and let a right wisdom order the situation in which we find ourselves.

-Quran, Surah 18.10



Let the rain come and wash away
the ancient grudges, the bitter hatreds
held and nurtured over generations.

Let the rain wash away the memory
of the hurt, the neglect.

Then let the sun come out and fill the sky with rainbows.

Let the warmth of the sun heal us
wherever we are broken.

Let it push away the fog so that
we can see each other clearly.

So that we can see beyond labels,
beyond accents, gender or skin color.

Let the warmth and brightness of the sun
melt our selfishness, so we can share the joys and
feel the sorrows of our neighbors.

And let the light of the sun be so strong,
that we will see all people as our neighbors.

Let the earth, nourished by rain,
bring forth flowers to surround us with beauty.

And let the mountains teach our hearts
to reach upward to heaven. Amen.

-Rabbi Harold Kushner



How much good can I do today? How much hope can I create? If I am a spiritual medic, where can I help the most? Show me the way, Spirit, point me in a direction. Then stay with me as I respond, supporting me when I am unsure, letting me run when I am confident. Make me useful, Spirit, let me make a difference, that I measure my life not by what I have acquired, but what I have given.

-Choctaw Elder and Episcopal Bishop Steven Charleston

**UNITED CHURCH
OF SANTA FE
A UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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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,

"Odd blessings." That's how a seminary professor described the Beatitudes with which Jesus began his "Sermon on the Mount."

When Jesus saw the crowds, ... he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Poor. Mourning. Hungry and thirsty. Persecuted. Meek. These are definitely odd blessings. What was Jesus thinking?

Perhaps it was about the people who came to hear him, people who knew about being poor—in spirit and body. Families acquainted with grief—and hunger and thirst. Faithful people trying to be gentle or merciful or peaceful under Rome's power and violence. Those who came to Jesus "knew their need of God", i.e., "the pure in heart."

Jesus' odd blessings weren't meant to sanction suffering, but instead to remind his listeners that even in hardship, God was still with them. The Beatitudes were also a reminder that Jesus' way wasn't easy. If we've only heard these blessings in a traditional English version, those reminders may have been lost in translation.

The First Nations Version (an Indigenous translation of the Bible) opens up the blessings in a new way. It uses new Biblical names: God is *Creator*; Jesus is *Creator Sets Free*. It also renames the Beatitudes as *Blessings of the Good Road*.

When Creator Sets Free (Jesus) saw this great crowd, he ... took a deep breath, opened his mouth, and began to share his wisdom and teach them how to see Creator's good road.

"Creator's blessing rests on the poor, the ones with broken spirits. The good road from above is theirs to walk.

"Creator's blessing rests on the ones who walk a trail of tears, for he will wipe the tears from their eyes and comfort them.

"Creator's blessing rests on the ones who walk softly and in a humble manner. The earth, land, and sky will welcome them and always be their home.

"Creator's blessing rests on the ones who hunger and thirst for wrongs to be made right again. They will eat and drink until they are full.

"Creator's blessing rests on the ones who are merciful and kind to others. Their kindness will find its way back to them—full circle.

"Creator's blessing rests on the pure of heart. They are the ones who will see the Great Spirit.

"Creator's blessing rests on the ones who make peace. It will be said of them, 'They are the children of the Great Spirit!'

"Creator's blessing rests on the ones who are hunted down and mistreated for doing what is right, for they are walking the good road from above."

As we begin a new year as the United Church of Santa Fe, may we seek to walk Creator's good road together. And no matter where it leads or how hard or uncertain that road might be, may we know we are walking with one another and with the One who blesses us every step of the way.

Blessings,



Worship in September

A GOD WHO SHOWS UP

8:30 Outdoor Communion
10:00 Sanctuary Service and *Kids United*



Knowing God at Work | September 6 - Labor Day Sunday

Moses was minding his own business, tending his uncle's sheep when God appeared to him as a burning bush. (Exodus 3:1-2) Mary was also minding her own business, tending house, when the angel Gabriel showed up with astounding news. (Luke 1:26-28) On this Sunday before Labor Day, how have we known God's presence in our everyday work? United members share their own experiences, with Rev. Jeff Hopson as worship leader. We also share Communion in both services.

Bendice al Señor, alma mía | Bless the Lord, O my soul | September 13 - Fiesta Sunday

Psalm 103 is filled with thanksgiving. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not God's benefits." Remember how God saved our ancestors in the wilderness. Remember how God has healed and restored you. "Bless the Lord, O my soul." A great text for the beginning of a new church year. We welcome Rev. Jeff Hopson as guest preacher, and the 10:00 Choir starts a new year of helping lead worship.



2026 FALL WORSHIP

Things to Remember:

Keeping the Faith When Caesar Plays God

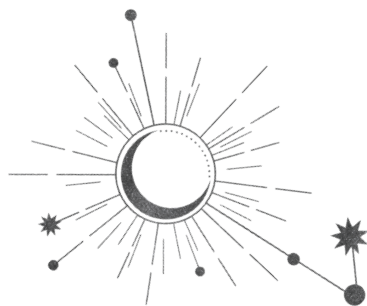


Worthy of the Gift | September 20

In one of his last letters to early Christian churches, the Apostle Paul wrestled with his own commitment to the faith, and especially to following Jesus' way of life while living under the Empire's ways of death. (Letter to the Philippians 1:21-30) Staying faithful wasn't easy—and it still isn't. What might the Apostle have to teach us in our time?

A Hymn of Humility | September 27

Early in his letter to the church in the wealthy Greek city of Philippi, Paul reminds the Philippians (and us) about who Jesus was and what he chose. (Philippians 2:1-13) That church, like United, was surrounded by the empire's signs of wealth and power. But Paul called them to focus on the One whose power surpassed the empire's. The One who chose a different way for the sake of this world. A good passage for the Sunday before St. Francis Day.



The Love that Moves the Sun and All Stars | October 4

"All praise be Yours through Brother Sun, Sister Moon," proclaimed Francis of Assisi. He echoed the long-ago Psalmist who praised the Creator for creating everything from rocks and mountains to the rock badgers who live there. (Psalm 104) We join that chorus of praise with all Creation as we gather outside for both the 8:30 and 10:00 services—and bless our animals, too.

Music Ministry

Michelle Schumann, Director of Music / Pianist

After a musically wonderful (and full!) summer, we're excited to begin the new year with United's Sanctuary Choir. The choir starts rehearsals Wednesday, Sept. 9 (7:00 to 9:00 pm) and sing in the Sept. 13 10:00 Sunday Service (rehearse at 9:00 am). A special shout out to any who might be considering singing with the choir: we would love to have you! For info: unitedchurch.michelle@gmail.com.

"Fiesta Sunday" (Sept. 13) includes a variety of Spanish and Indigenous music. The choir continues throughout September with sacred choral music of our faith. They also continue to help lead congregational singing, a central part of United's worship life.

Desert Chorale's Santa Fe Sings! Saturday, Sept. 19 (9:30 - 2:30)



Led by Artistic Director Josh Habermann (with Michelle Schumann at the piano), this community-wide, full-day singing workshop is open to the public! To join in, register at [Santa Fe Sings! – Santa Fe Desert Chorale](#). You're also welcome to simply come to the 2:00 pm free public concert and enjoy the 100+ voices. It's a terrific event for United to host and we'd love for you to be a part of it!



Save the Date! Youth Retreat at Ghost Ranch Friday, Oct. 23 to Saturday, Oct. 24!!

There's still time to take part in this!
See Dana Bender for details!

Children & Youth

Dana Bender, Director of Family Ministry

Children and Youth Ministry

The school year is well underway and, if you haven't been around lately, things have changed a bit with our offerings to children and youth.

Nurture Center Offers both Infant/Toddler Care and Pre-K & Kinder Ministry

Thanks to the volunteer leadership of Tracy and Ed Church, we offer a Sunday morning program of Bible stories, songs, and other activities for our Pre-K's and Kinders. Maria Navarette offers infant/toddler care in the nursery.

Pagers for Parents!

Our Nurture Center now has pagers! When parents drop off their kiddos, they'll receive a pager so they can (silently) be contacted if needed during worship. A little peace of mind goes a long way!

Kids United (1st – 5th graders)

Elementary children begin in 10:00 worship, then receive a blessing and head to *Kids United* in the Education Wing where they explore faith through music, art, activities, and stories. In September, we start "Blessing and Letting Go," a program created by the United Church of Christ. Using short scriptures, we consider the implications of blessing and letting go within our communities, churches, and the world. We may discover the freedom available to us when we are able to both embrace and release in a world of constant transition. Kids are encouraged to explore these themes in creative ways.



Youth Initiates

United's Youth Ministry starts anew this year for all 6th – 12th graders, regardless of whether they have been confirmed. The United Church of Christ often affirms: "We take the Bible way too seriously to take it literally." We'll explore what that means, following 10:00 worship, in September:

- 9/6 – Labor Day weekend: Youth join in worship
- 9/13– Fiesta Sunday **Youth Meeting**: Journeys, Dreams, and Visions (with Breakfast burritos!)
- 9/27 – **Youth Meeting**: Life Together and Covenant

Care and Concern

Prayer of Thanks for:

- **Firefighters, support crews, first responders, and all** who are working to control and end the fires throughout New Mexico, Spokane, the rest of the U.S. West, Canada, and Europe. And prayers for those continuing to work to mitigate climate change that results in such devastation.

Prayers of Healing and Hope for:

- **Connie Cody-Maldegen and Larry Maldegen**, following the death of Connie's mother in Kansas; the family and loved ones of **Haley Manges**, who died in a hiking accident earlier this summer.
- **Danna and Lee Armstrong**, as Danna continues to be hospitalized due to metastatic cancer and complications from treatments; **Vickie Sewing, Steve Hamilton, and Blanca Surgeon's mother** - all recovering from knee replacement surgery; **Evan and Joan Bauer**, as Evan starts a second month at Mayo Clinic; **Jim and Kris Dorris**, as Jim continues to recover from a stroke; **Rafaelita Bachicha's** sister, recovering from surgery; **Msgr. Jerome Martinez**, following an accident in June that resulted in 2 weeks in ICU in Albuquerque, followed by 5 weeks in rehab; and others as they recover from surgery and/or accidents: (**Janet Harris, Donna Johnson, Violet Augustine**, and others).
- Persons dealing with cancer and those who love and care for them: **Shauna Wilbanks, Greg Gaertner, Jim Ashby (Sarah Sawtell's brother)**; and persons with ongoing health issues: **Ken Latz and Kurt Burk**, as Ken deals with a severe autoimmune situation; **Jan McGough**, on 3-day/week dialysis; **Leonard Stovall, Mary Deane Lynn, Helen McCabe, Carol Ingells, Brooke Roberts**, and other family members and friends who care for them.
- Persons dealing with dementia or memory loss and those who love and care for them: **Natalie Wells**, who has moved from Montecito to Kingston Memory Care; **Sandra Johnson (Faye Granieri's mother)**; **Jim Mills (Jennifer Walters' husband)**; **Rev. Christine Vogel** and her husband **Paul**; **Linda Knapp, Rev. Roger Knapp** (Montecito); and others.
- Persons in assisted living: **Sylvia Ortega (Tammie Ortega's mother/John Fowler's mother-in law)**, **Ray & Nancy Lutz (Legacy)**, **Ann Noss (El Castillo)**, **JoAnn Bolleter's mother**.
- Persons living with Parkinson's or other neurological conditions (**Msgr. Jerome Martinez**, and others).
- Individuals and families dealing with mental health and/or addiction issues. (If you or someone you love is struggling emotionally, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988) provides 24/7, free, confidential support.)
- Persons and families going through divorce or other family challenges.
- Persons with families in other countries: **Blanca Surgeon** (Honduras), **Maria Navarette** and **Destiny Muñoz** (El Salvador), **Joohee Rand** (Korea), **John Walker** (Scotland), **Avril Ekstrand** (whose mother is under Hospice care in Ireland), **Kim Zeilik** (son in Spain), **Leslie Fagre** and **Eric Poppele** (Jasper and family in England), the **Darby Family** (Makayla in Prague), **Larry and Nyla Rasmussen** (daughter-in-law's family in Colombia), **Dana and David Cagle** (daughter in Italy), **Corrine Jones** (daughter Allie in London).
- The people—especially immigrants and persons of color—of **Santa Fe** and other cities and towns dealing with ICE occupations and raids, and the families and individuals held in ICE detention centers and dealing with physical and mental illness, substandard food, and multiple issues.
- Prayers for the people of **Colombia and Venezuela** in the wake of the devastating earthquakes; continued prayers for the people of **Iran, Gaza, and the rest of the Middle East, Nigeria, Sudan, Ukraine, Central America**, and other places impacted by war; refugees who have fled their homes in war zones; people seeking asylum from violence; policymakers who determine their fate; the **Congo** and other countries impacted by the Ebola virus.
- Military people and law enforcement officers, including those in our congregation.
- Prayers of care and commitment for those with major **increases in health care costs or reduction of support from SNAP, USAID, Medicaid or Medicare**, or who are unhoused or are persons of color, LGBTQI+ or female.

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)

Congregational Care for September

On Call: Dave Wilkison 505-637-8735

Clergy on Call (Thursday, Sept. 3 through Tuesday, Sept. 15): Rev. Ben Larzelere (505-699-1000)

Outreach

LOVE GOD, NEIGHBOR, CREATION

Outreach Opportunities – Thank you!

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

LOVE GOD, LOVE NEIGHBOR

United Church Supports Earthquake Relief

Just as Church World Service is on the ground in Venezuela to help in the aftermath of the devastating earthquakes, CWS is also working in Colombia. All donations for earthquake relief to United Church of Santa Fe go directly to CWS for this work. Donate with checks to “United Church” (memo: Earthquake Relief) or through United’s website: unitedchurchofsantafe.org.

United Also Supports Fire Relief

As this newsletter goes to print, the Frijoles Canyon fire is still raging through upper Santa Fe County. To help families (and their animals) who have lost their homes, United Church is collecting financial donations. Please memo checks or card credit donations “Fire Relief.”

Children’s Garden Vegetables for Food Depot!

Produce from the Children’s Garden goes to Food Depot to provide fresh vegetables for our neighbors in need. Adults can help with weeding or harvesting—just sign up at church. Also, if you have extra squash, etc. from your own garden, bring it to United and we’ll get it to the Food Depot!

Ways to Care for Our Immigrant Neighbors

- **Sunday, Sept. 6 Forum:** Join in writing letters of support for immigrants in detention centers and/or calling on Congress and others to develop just and compassionate immigration policies.
- **Friday, Sept. 11 Fundraiser Concert** with *Nosotros* at Tumbleroot Brewery (2791 Agua Fria Street, 7:00 - 9:30)
- Get involved with United’s **Immigration and Refugee Task Force**. (Melanie Lohman, Chair; 505-617-0700)

Supporting Our Diné/Navajo Brothers and Sisters

Your financial support for food and cleaning supplies, along with gardening needs, continue to make a difference. Donations are sent to United’s long-time partner, the Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, in Fort Defiance, Arizona.

United’s Shelter Supper Ministries Offer Food and Care

United provides monthly suppers (meat loaf, veggie casserole, salad, dessert) to St. Elizabeth and Casa Familia Shelters. Want to help? Come to “Chop and Grate” **Friday, September 18 (9:30 am)** or deliver food to shelters that afternoon (1:00 pm) or make meatloaf at home. Interested? Please contact Cathy Garret (cathygarretti@gmail.com). You can also support this ministry with check (memo: shelter meals) or online donations. Thank you!



LOVE GOD, LOVE CREATION

Many Thanks to All Who Joined Santa Fe River Cleanup

A dozen United members and friends cleaned up our section of the Santa Fe River in August. We collected 20 bags of trash along the river banks, plus discarded big items like carpet, a pet carrier, and old wood. All Creation thanks you!

Offset Your Carbon Use in Driving and Flying

Our church’s “Carbon Offset Program” helps plant trees & change policies to address climate change. It’s simple: track your car mileage and/or plane flight hours and donate \$8/100 miles driven or 3 hours flight time through United to support action and advocacy through Santa Fe Watershed Association and *New Mexico Interfaith Power & Light*. Info: unitedchurchofsantafe.org/creation-care.

Compost Collection—It’s a Miracle!

United contracts with Reunity Resources to turn compostable products (food waste, meat scraps, etc.) into rich, life-giving compost. Pick up compostable garbage bags at the church (**NO** standard plastic bags, please), fill them at home, and bring back to put in the green bin by the Children’s Garden. More things in compost bins means less in landfills. Thanks! Also **during Fellowship Time**, please put used cups and napkins in the compost bin in the Community Room.

Adult Faith Formation

ADULT FORUMS — Sundays at 11:15 am

September 6 —

Letters for Our Immigrant Neighbors

Join in writing letters of support for immigrants in detention centers and/or calling on Congress and others to develop just and compassionate immigration policies.

Sept. 13— *A Fiesta Breakfast Burrito Brunch!*

Sept. 20 — *TBR*

Sept. 27 — *How Does United Work?*

Our church is active in huge variety of fields, both inside and outside the church walls. It's all accomplished with the broad involvement of its members, friends, and staff. But how are these efforts coordinated and completed? This Sunday, you're invited to "lift the hood" on the United Church. What are the Ministry Teams and other essential groups that make up United's multiple ministries? How do things get funded? What's our volunteer strength—and what's needed? Explore and learn together "How United Works!"



All Church Stewardship Brunch Sunday, Nov. 15, after BOTH Services Save the Date!

Through our United community, God feeds us in a multitude of ways—care in times of need, programs for all generations, a beautiful worship space, songs of hope, courage and peace, opportunities to love our neighbors and God's creation.

On Sunday, November 15, after both services, you're invited to feast on food and fellowship, as we share our "Stewardship Brunch." More details later—but save the date Sunday, November 15—thank you!

GROUPS AND GATHERINGS

Wednesday Women's Study Group "The Lion Women of Tehran"

Starts Sept. 2 at 10:00 am

From September through May, the group reads lots of great books and on the first and third Wednesdays of each month (10:00 to 11:30 am), we meet to discuss them. You're invited to join in! We start Sept. 2 with *The Lion Women of Tehran* by Marjan Kamali. Info: Cheryl Morton (515-240-4523, MomMorton@gmail.com), Jenn Wynn (817-219-0707, home@wynnes.us).

Pretty Good Guys

Books That Didn't Make It into the Bible

Wednesdays, Sept. 9 & 23 (10:30 am – Noon)

Not all Gospels or other accounts of the early Christians made it into the Bible. What were those books? And why weren't they included? Join these lively discussions in the Men's Study Group the 2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month.

Zoom Study Group

What Does the Bible Really Say about Forgiveness?

Thursdays, 8:00 – 9:00 am (MDT)

Join others from around the country to explore this challenging and important topic. Info/register at unitedchurchsf@gmail.com. All welcome!



Pet Blessing on October 4

Mark your calendar — October 4th is our annual Pet Blessing! Bring your furry, feathered, or scaly companions to either the 8:30 or 10:00 outdoor service where we'll celebrate the animals who fill our lives with joy. Whether your pet is a seasoned church-goer or a first-timer, all creatures (and their humans) are welcome.

THE UNITED CHURCH OF SANTA FE
A UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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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 emphasizes freedom of thought and belief as well as a commitment to “Love God, Neighbor, and Creation.” 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!

IN-PERSON AND LIVESTREAM WORSHIP SERVICES OFFERED

United Church is also United (in-person and online) Church! We offer the **10:00 am Sunday service in-person** and **also livestreamed online** (access it on United’s website: unitedchurchofsantafe.org). **We also offer an 8:30 am Outdoor Contemplative Communion Service.** For more information about United’s programs, please call 505-988-3295, send an email to unitedchurchsf@gmail.com, or go to our website. Thank you!