

# Prayers for the New Year and The Epiphany Season of Light

## *At the Turn of the Year*

Consult not your fears, but your hopes and your dreams.  
Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential.  
Concern not yourself with what you tried and failed in,  
but what it is still possible for you to do.

Pope John XXIII

## *For Our Own New Life*

Renovate our hearts, minds, and spirits, Creative One,  
so that we may transform into the people you would have us be. Amen.

Rev. Phiwa Langeni, United Church of Christ

## *Guidance for the New Year*

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me.  
God has sent me to preach good news to the poor,  
to proclaim release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to liberate the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

The Gospel of Luke 4:18-19

## *An Old New Year's Resolution*

God of all Mercies, guide our feet into the way of peace.

Zechariah, c. 1 C.E.

Jewish Priest and Father of John the Baptizer

## *A Prayer for an Inauguration*

God of all nations,  
give our leaders your justice,  
your compassion for the poor,  
and your passion for peace.  
Give us the same. Amen.

Talitha Arnold – from Psalm 72

## *A Prayer for Children*

Help our children to carry the spirit of Christmas into the new year.  
Help us to carry them and all your children in our prayers and love. Amen.

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### **Inside this issue:**

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

**UNITED CHURCH  
OF SANTA FE**

**A UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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**The Rev. Talitha Arnold**  
*Senior Pastor*

**Sarah Sawtell**  
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**Bradley Ellingboe**  
*Director of Music*

**Michelle Schumann**  
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**Elijah Marquez**  
*Videographer/  
Media Coordinator*

**Lin Raymond**  
*Office Administrator*

**Maria Navarette**  
*Children's Assistant*

**Destiny Muñoz**  
*Children's Ministry Assistant*

**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,

“O Come, All Ye Faithful.” “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing!” “Away in a Manger.” “The First Noël.”

Right now, my head is filled with the songs of Christmas. Perhaps yours is, too. Whether at church, the mall, or the grocery store, Christmas music surrounds us. Even when we've heard “Noël, Noël” one too many times, the music's message of hope and light can still lift a heavy heart.

But soon—perhaps too soon—it will all be behind us. Christmas carols will give way to the “Auld Lang Syne.” 2025 could drown out Christmas' promise of heavenly peace and goodwill toward all.

So here are two post-Christmas prayers to keep that hope alive. Save them, read them as you put the ornaments away, share them with friends and family. We'll all need them in the coming days.

The first is by Stephen Charleston, retired Episcopal bishop and Choctaw Elder.

*Fill me again, Great Spirit,  
with all I need to make it through this life of mine.  
Give me the vision I need to see clearly.  
Give me the strength I need to keep going.  
Give me the love I need to share with others.  
Let me have a little courage and a lot of wisdom,  
as much hope as you can spare.  
Please give me your blessings again, dear Spirit,  
for I use them up so quickly in these dark times.*

Charleston's prayer affirms that we're not alone in the hard work of hope and love. So too does a poem by Jan Richardson that I learned this Christmas through a beautiful choral setting, offered by *Coro Lux*, the choir that United's Director of Music Bradley Ellingboe founded and conducts. It's titled “Where the Light Begins.”

<i>Perhaps it does not begin. Perhaps it is always.</i>	<i>in testimony and praise.</i>
<i>Perhaps it takes a lifetime to open our eyes, to learn to see what has forever shimmered in front of us—</i>	<i>Perhaps this day will be the mountain over which the dawn breaks.</i>
<i>the luminous line of the map in the dark the vigil flame in the house of the heart the love so searing we cannot keep from singing, from crying out</i>	<i>Perhaps we will turn our face toward it, toward what has been always. Perhaps our eyes will finally open in ancient recognition, willingly dazzled, illuminated at last. Perhaps this day the light begins in us.</i>

Elder and Bishop Charleston prays for vision, strength, love, “a little courage, a lot of wisdom, as much hope as God can spare.” Faces that turn toward the Light, eyes that are finally opened, lives that let the Light begin in us. That is poet Richardson's prayer.

May their prayers be ours as a new year begins.

And, in the words of a Greek blessing—may the new year bring all the blessings the old year forgot.

Blessings,

# Worship in January

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## SEARCHING FOR THE LIGHT

### Worship in Epiphany

For Christians, the Light was born in Bethlehem's stable at Christmas. Throughout the season that follows, we meet people who sought that light in all times and places. In their journeys, may we find the hope and courage we need for ours.

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**8:30 Contemplative Communion — 10:00 Sanctuary Service with Choir and special music**  
**Online services continue, too!**

### *Follow the Star (and the Donkey, the Cat, the Dove, etc.)*

#### Jan. 5 – Epiphany Sunday

Lots of travelers had a hard time that first Christmas. Joseph and Mary ended up in Bethlehem with no place to stay. The shepherds needed a whole angel chorus to help them find their way. And the Wise Ones got off-track and ended up in King Herod's court, because that's where conventional wisdom told them to find a new king. (Matthew 2:1-11) This Sunday, a Readers' Theater of children, youth, and adults offer the Epiphany story in a whole new way!



#### Jan. 12 – *Get to the Waters of Life*

Before he started down a new path of his life, Jesus first went to the life-giving waters of the Jordan River where his cousin John was baptizing people of all backgrounds and beliefs. When he baptized Jesus, Luke says that the “heaven was opened, the Holy Spirit descended like a dove, and a voice said, ‘You are my Child, the beloved.’” (Luke 3:15-17, 23-22) This Sunday, we'll share the “Reaffirmation of our Baptismal Vows”—and listen for the same voice in our lives.

#### Jan. 19 – *The Bible's Light, King's Life*

On the day before the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Day (and the Presidential Inauguration), our worship centers on the Biblical texts that were “a light unto [King's] path.” His witness and work were grounded in passages from the Prophet Amos – “Let justice roll down like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream.” (Amos 5:24) and from Jesus' teachings – “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.’” (Matthew 5:42). May those same words be a light for our lives and work, too. (We also welcome Jazz Pianist Andy Kingston for this special Sunday.)



#### Jan. 26 – *Opening Our Eyes*

When Jesus started his ministry, he turned to the Prophet Isaiah for guidance. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,” he proclaimed in his hometown synagogue, “because God has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind.” He then spent the rest of his life trying to open the eyes of others to God's love and care for all people. (Luke 4:16-18) Perhaps that's the first step in following Jesus' ways—just open our eyes, too. Rev. Ben Larzelere is guest preacher.

# Music

Bradley Ellingboe, Director of Music

# Children & Youth

Karen Wilbanks, Chair

As we head into a new year, we're looking forward to several musical highlights. For instance, on Sunday, January 19, we'll observe the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday with the rousing piano playing of United member Andy Kingston. And the new year is a good time to think about joining the Sanctuary Choir. If you'd like to know more about it, send me an email. ([unitedchurch.brad@gmail.com](mailto:unitedchurch.brad@gmail.com))

Also, it's not too soon to plan to attend our annual FebFest celebration, jointly sponsored by the United Church of Santa Fe and Coro Lux. This year the event is one day only, with an all-day workshop on Saturday, Feb. 8, culminating in an informal concert at United at 4:30 pm. This year's guest conductor is Dr. Brandon A. Boyd of the University of Missouri. Brandon visited our church one summer Sunday before the pandemic, when he was in town for the Desert Chorale. He's excited to return! Also participating that day are Cecelia Webb from KUNM Radio and Amy Owens with the Santa Fe Opera. Please pass the word to all interested singers. For more information and to register, go to [abqcorolux.org/tickets/](http://abqcorolux.org/tickets/) for what's sure to be an inspiring event!

See you in church,

Brad



## COUNTDOWN TO UNITED'S 45<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY!

Forty-five years ago this spring, the United Church of Santa Fe was officially welcomed into the wider United Church of Christ as a new UCC congregation in Santa Fe (and the only one in 60 miles). Five years ago, we planned a great 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration, but the pandemic upended everything, including United's birthday—so we're celebrating our "40+5" anniversary this spring. More details later but save the dates now!

We have a lot to celebrate at United! We invite each of you to begin to think what United means to you, how it's helped you grow in faith, given you hope, deepen your connection to God, understand Jesus better, be open to the Spirit, care for the wider community, or all of the above. Maybe United just helped you laugh every so often. Whatever you've gained from being part of the United Church, let's take time to celebrate and give thanks this spring!

## Welcome to Destiny Muñoz Children's Ministry Assistant

As the new year begins, we welcome Destiny Muñoz (Maria Navarette's daughter) to the United staff as Children's Ministry Assistant. Destiny has assisted her mother over the last two years and will now be an "official" member of the staff. An Honors graduate of Capitol High and fluent in both Spanish and English, Destiny enjoys working with kids, has lots of great ideas, and is studying nursing at Santa Fe Community College. Take time to welcome her!



## Lights, Camels, Action! Epiphany Readers' Theater for All Ages Sunday, Jan. 5

If your child or youth – or you yourself—can *baa* like a sheep, *bray* like a donkey, or act like an angel (okay, 2 out of 3 is fine :-), then plan to be a part of United's Epiphany Reader's Theater on Sunday, Jan. 5. Come at 9:00 for a brief rehearsal and then help share the story with the rest of the congregation in the 10:00 worship service. All welcome! Let Karen Wilbanks or Talitha Arnold know you can join in.

## Sharing God's Light through Our Lives Children's Ministry in Epiphany

Throughout his life, Jesus showed God's light and love through his love for other people and for God's creation. United's children learn Jesus' story and how they can share God's love and light, too! All welcome!

## Youth Events in the Works

As this newsletter goes to print, we're trying to coordinate the very full schedules of United's Youth to find dates and times for a retreat to Ghost Ranch, a day trip up Sandia, and/or other possibilities around town. Stay tuned!

## FebFest Choral Workshop and Concert Saturday, Feb. 8, 2025 – United Church Concert at 4:30 pm

United's Festival Choir and *Coro Lux* present FebFest 2025 with special guest, Dr. Brandon Boyd, in a Saturday workshop (Feb. 8) followed by a free concert that afternoon here at United. A free-will offering for the concert benefits the new Santa Fe Symphony Children's and Youth Choirs and also the UNM Gospel Choir, "Fervent Praise."





# CARE AND CONCERN

## PRAYERS FOR OUR CHURCH AND OUR WORLD



### Prayers of Thanks to:

- All the people who are helping make **Advent, Christmas Eve, and the Christmas Sunday services** so welcoming, inspirational and beautiful, including the Sacred Space Team, all Musicians, Liturgists and Readers, volunteer Greeters and Ushers (recruited by Diane Darby), Las Posadas (organized by Louise Cavatta); Outdoor Tree Light Hangers (organized by Bob Ansheles), Office Administrator Lin Raymond; Videographer Elijah Marquez and his V-Crew.
- **Nyla Rasmussen**, who is stepping down from the Sacred Space Team after many years of helping create beautiful Sanctuary space.
- **Children's and Youth volunteers and staff** (especially Karen Wilbanks, Gail Ansheles, Maria Navarette, Destiny Muñoz) for great ministry this past month with United's young members.
- **Outreach volunteers** Who've chopped, grated, and delivered food for SF Shelters, and advocated for immigrants, and United's kids who've assembled "College Kids Care Packages," Christmas bags for St. E's, Church World Service Hygiene kits, and other projects to help United "love neighbor and love creation."
- United's Accountant **Joyce Pohl** who is retiring after 10 years of wonderful service for United, and for the financial acumen of volunteers Sarah Sawtell, Finance Chair Trudy Swint, Personnel Chair Larry Maldegen, and Endowment Chair Frank Wilbanks.
- Pianist **Jacqueline Helin**, for subbing almost every week since mid-August.

### Blessings and New Life:

- For **Lucas Bromfield** and his parents Courtney and Eva and grandparents **Jan and Kitty Jansen**, all celebrating Lucas' baptism on the First Sunday of Christmastide (Dec. 29).
- **Cynde and Bob Christe**, who have moved to Mexico and plan to move to California.

### Prayers of Healing and Hope for:

- **Diane Johnston**, grieving the death of her sister Pat; **Doug and Maria Patinka**, following the death of Doug's mother **Dorothy**; the family and friends of **Rev. Mary Kuhns**, following her unexpected death in November.
- **Dana Hollifield**, awaiting test results and surgery; **Betsy Ross**, recovering from a hip fracture; **George Duncan** (and **Sherry Kelsey**) recovering from a corneal transplant; **Joe Neidhardt** (and **Mary Hasbah Roessel**) recovering from hip replacement; **Roger Summers** (and his daughter **LeAnne**) as he recovers from hematoma surgery); and others also dealing with difficult health issues (**Blanca Surgeon's mother, Ray and Nancy Lutz, Rev. Kathleen Jimenez, Maria Navarette, Rhae Burden**, and others).
- Others living with cancer and those who love and care for them (**Greg and Linda Gaertner, Anna Spalding, Diane Bethune's brother Jeffery**, and others).
- Those with **memory loss** and all who care for them (including **Royce and Carolyn Stewart, Rev. Christine and Paul Vogel, Rev. Roger and Linda Knapp, Al and Merry Converse**, and others); persons living with Parkinson's or other neurological conditions, (**Sandy Vermillion, Monsignor Jerome Martinez, Dr. Karl Ray**, and others); those with chronic illness (**Brooke Roberts, Jan McGough**, and others).
- Persons in long-term care or assisted living (**Rhae Burden, Helen Wagner**, and others).
- Individuals and families dealing with mental health, suicidal issues, 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 and crisis resources for people in distress.)
- Persons who are imprisoned and those who love them.
- Persons with families in other countries **Blanca Surgeon and Zulema Zambrano** (Honduras), **Maria Navarette** (El Salvador), **Jan and Kitty Jansen** (Holland), **Joohee Rand** (Korea), **John Walker** (Scotland), **Avril Ekstrand** (Ireland), **Kim Zeilik** (Spain).
- The people of Israel and Palestine, and Jews, Palestinians, and other Muslims living in the U.S. as war and violence continue; government and military leaders in Israel/Palestine/Lebanon, as well as the U.S. and other countries who need God's wisdom, guidance, and commitment to a just peace.
- Continued prayers also for Nigeria, Sudan, Ukraine, Central America, and other places impacted by war; people seeking asylum from violence; **policymakers** who determine their fate.
- Military people and law enforcement officers, including those in our congregation.
- Finally prayers of healing for our nation—and this world—in the coming days. Prayers also for all leaders in government—and business—that they might be committed to the common good. And prayers of care and commitment for those persons likely to be most affected by the new administration, including many members and friends of United who are immigrants or rely on food stamps, Medicaid or Medicare, or are unhoused or are persons of color or LGBTQI+ persons, or who happen to be female or who have women family members or friends, or who have family in other countries.

#### 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](mailto:unitedchurchsf@gmail.com))



#### Congregational Care for January



**On Call:** Margy Maira (252) 414-3311  
**Food:** Cheryl Haskin (503) 351-6561

# Outreach

## LOVE GOD, NEIGHBOR, CREATION

### *Outreach Opportunities – Thank you!*

Go online to [unitedchurchofsantafe.org](http://unitedchurchofsantafe.org) or send a check to 1804 Arroyo Chamiso, Santa Fe NM 87505.

### November Socks-Giving

Thank you to all who donated over 140 pairs of winter socks to keep the feet of Santa Fe's homeless warm.



### *Compassionate Christmas Gifts Great Success!*

Thanks to the generosity of the United congregation and others in the wider community, as of Dec. 16, we had raised \$9,045 to provide blankets for Ukrainian and other refugees, scholarships for youth immersion trips, support for NM Immigration Law Center, gift cards for families in need, school trips to the Watershed, and other needs. More donations continue to come in and we'll have a complete report in the February newsletter.

### United's Shelter Supper Ministries

Help provide supper for guests of St. Elizabeth, Casa Familia Family, and Interfaith Shelters by volunteering or financially with an online donation or check (memo: shelter meals). Thank you!

- **Fri., Jan. 24 – Chop & Grate (9:30 am)** at United.
- **Mon., Jan. 27** – Deliver food to shelters.
- Make meatloaf at home (14 loaves needed).

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NEW YEAR

Let one of your New Year resolutions be to lend a hand for your favorite local church! Here are some possibilities. For more info, please contact Lin Raymond or Talitha Arnold. Thank you!

- **Church Historian:** Our upcoming 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary is a great time to help organize United's "history"—pictures, articles, etc. You don't have to be an official "scrapbooker" to help.
- **Sacred Space Team:** Long-time member Nyla Rasmussen is stepping down, so if you'd like to help arrange the Sanctuary for Sunday worship or special services and work with a great group of people, let us know!
- **A Wee Bit of Laundry:** Once a month, launder the kitchen towels and also wash and iron communion cloths.

## LOVE GOD, LOVE CREATION!

### Offset Your Carbon Use

Traveling this Christmas and New Year's season? Help offset your carbon use by tracking your mileage and donating to **United's Carbon Offset Program** (\$4 for every hour in flight; \$4 for every 100 miles driving). Donations go to *NM Interfaith Power and Light* and *Tree New Mexico*, both addressing climate change.

### Compost Collection for Creation!

What do you do after the holiday feasting is over? Bring any the veggie peelings, meat bones, and any other compostable leftovers to United at any time and put in the green compost collection bin (easy access from the church parking lot). You can get compostable garbage bags at church. (Please do **NOT** deposit standard plastic bags.) It's a great way to care for God's creation. More info at [reunityresources.com](http://reunityresources.com). Thanks!

### Coming Up in February [Maybe]



### United Goes to the Movies

#### *"A Day without a Mexican"*

**Sunday, Feb. 2 – 11:15**

The Immigration and Refugee Task Force invites you to join them for a special Sunday matinee of the award-winning movie, "A Day without a Mexican," a 2004 fantasy film and satirical look at the consequences if all the Mexican immigrants in California suddenly disappeared. It's a great conversation starter for how much our daily lives depend on the work of immigrants. The church will provide a light lunch, and the movie will be followed by a discussion time. All are welcome.

# Adult Faith Formation

## ADULT FORUMS — Sundays at 11:15 am



### Epiphany Get-Acquainted Sunday – Jan. 5

After our “Epiphany Readers’ Theater” in worship, stick around for an extended coffee and conversation time. Bring your leftover Christmas goodies, we’ll have extra coffee and set up tables to sit a spell and get to know your United neighbors!

### Reading Bonhoeffer in America 2025 – Jan 12

Professor Emeritus of Social Ethics, Larry Rasmussen is also a leading scholar in the witness and work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian and pastor who was part of the Resistance movement against the Nazis and who paid for his actions with his life. Larry has offered to lead a course this winter on an essay Bonhoeffer wrote as a Christmas gift to his co-conspirators and his family, four months before his arrest by the Gestapo. He focused on what the resisters and their supporters had learned in fighting fascism for ten years and what the experience has told them about their people and themselves.

The Forum series starts this Sunday with an hour-long documentary about Bonhoeffer’s life and work, followed by a light lunch and discussion. Subsequent forums will focus on the essay. To help us plan, please sign up in the Community Room.

### Somos Un Pueblo Unido

#### Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday – Jan. 19

United’s Immigration and Refugee Task Force has arranged for a speaker from *Somos Un Pueblo Unido*, a Santa Fe-based immigrant rights organization, to bring us up to date information on the situation immigrants and refugees in our community face in the new administration—and how we can respond, individually and as a church.

Jan. 26 – TBR

### Year-End Giving

To claim a charitable deduction for 2024, donations must be received or postmarked by Dec. 31, 2024. Checks received after Dec. 31 cannot qualify for a charitable deduction for 2024, even if predated 2024. (Sorry!) To contribute online, go to [unitedchurchof santafe.org](http://unitedchurchof santafe.org) and click “Donate Now.” Many thanks!

### Don’t File Your Taxes Yet!

Please wait to file your income tax returns until you receive your contributions receipt from the church that we plan to mail by the end of January. Questions? Please call the church (505-988-3295).

## Groups and Gatherings

### Wednesday Women’s Study Group

Jan. 15 – 10:00 am

We continue our study of *The Collected Works of Eudora Welty*. All women welcome! (Cheryl Morton: 515-240-4523, [MomMorton@gmail.com](mailto:MomMorton@gmail.com); Jenn Wynn: 817-219-0707, [home@wynnes.us](http://home@wynnes.us))



### Pretty Good Guys Explore “The Greatest Prayer:

#### Rediscovering the Revolutionary Message of the Lord’s Prayer”

Wednesdays, Jan. 8 and 22 (10:30 am)

Join with other United men to engage a challenging book by John Dominic Crossan about the central prayer of the Christian faith. All welcome! (Talitha Arnold, 505-988-3295)

### Resiliency and Hope:

#### Good News from The Gospel of Mark Thursdays 8:00 am (MT) on Zoom

As we start a new year, what does a Gospel that’s 2000+ years old have to offer us in our time? Quite a lot actually! Join this weekly Zoom study to deepen your faith and share the journey. People tune in from all around the country.

Coming Up Sunday, Feb. 23  
Congregational Budget Meeting  
11:15 am

### Thank You for Knowing

#### We are “Blessed. . . to be a Blessing!” We’re Almost to the Stewardship Goal

Our 2025 Stewardship Campaign comes to a close January 15. As of December 16, 141 people had generously pledged for a total of \$483,240 (almost to the \$560,000 goal). Heartfelt thanks to all who’ve pledged thus far! You’re making a difference.

If you’ve not yet taken the opportunity to pledge, please consider how God has blessed you, and give from those blessings. Every gift, great or small, makes a difference! You can pick up a pledge card at the church or email your pledge to [unitedchurchsf@gmail.com](mailto:unitedchurchsf@gmail.com). Thank you!

### Consider

#### ELECTRONIC CONTRIBUTIONS for Your 2025 Pledge

It’s simple and easy to set up your pledge as an electronic contribution from your credit card, checking account, or savings account. Call the church (505-988-3295) for the authorization form.

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

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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 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](http://unitedchurchofsantafe.org)). We also offer an **8:30 am Contemplative Communion Service**. For indoor events, N95 masks are recommended. For more information about United’s programs, please call 505-988-3295, send an email to [unitedchurchsf@gmail.com](mailto:unitedchurchsf@gmail.com), go to our website. Thank you!