

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

March 2025

PRAYERS FOR A SEASON OF . . .

MARDI GRAS

March 4

(Isaiah 25:6-10)

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear.
And God will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;
God will swallow up death for ever,
(and) wipe away the tears from all faces . . .
This is the Lord for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in God's salvation.
For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain.

THE START OF LENT

Praise God, who gives life even in the desert.
Alabamos a Dios, quien da vida.
Praise God, who calls us by name and calls us "Beloved;"
who sends us angels in the wilderness
and gives us bread for our journey.
Whose realm is near
and who proclaims good news to all.
Alabamos a Dios, quien da vida.
Praise God and trust that God goes with us
in this journey to new life.

FOLLOWING JESUS' JOURNEY

Sr. Joan Chittister, O.S.B.

Loving God,
Lead us beyond ourselves
to care and protect,
to nourish and shape,
to challenge and energize
both the life and the world
you have given us.

PRAYING FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE JOURNEY

As Jesus found angels even in the wilderness of his life,
so too may (child's name) know your presence even in hard times.
May their journey of Lent lead them and all of us to your new life of Easter.
Amen.

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**UNITED CHURCH
OF SANTA FE**

A UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1804 Arroyo Chamiso
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Phone: 505-988-3295

Fax: 505-988-2353

E-mail: unitedchurchsf@gmail.com

www.unitedchurchofsantafe.org

The Rev. Talitha Arnold

Senior Pastor

Sarah Sawtell

Moderator of the Congregation

Bradley Ellingboe

Director of Music

Michelle Schumann

Pianist

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

You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Jesus Christ in the Gospel of John (8:32)

(As Jesus stood before the Imperial Governor) Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

Pilate asked him, "What is truth?"

The Gospel of John 18:37-38

Dear Friends,

Truth is having a hard time these days. Whether we call them "misstatements," "falsehoods," "misinformation," or just plain "nonsense," the fact of the matter is that lies abound. Lies like "the U.S. spends 25% of our budget on foreign aid." (Truth: It's 1%.) Or that foreign aid was to include "\$100 million for condoms for Hamas." (Truth: Not a penny.) Or "childhood vaccines cause autism." (Truth: Debunked years ago. What is true is that not being vaccinated leads to the spread of childhood—and adult—life-threatening and crippling diseases like measles, whooping cough, and polio.) Or "Ukraine started the war with Russia" (Fact check: Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022 and has continued the invasion ever since.)

When it comes to discerning what it means to be Christian, separating truth from falsehood is equally challenging. Just google "Jesus and guns" or "Jesus and women preachers," and you'll get the picture.

So, what can we say is true about the life, ministry and message of Jesus Christ? For me, these are some basic truths I hold fast about the Christian faith and that I find in the Gospels:

- Jesus knew what it was like to be human, with all its joys and all its sorrows.
- Jesus fed the hungry.
- Jesus healed the sick.
- Jesus welcomed the outsider and the stranger.
- Jesus had compassion on others, whether it was the rich young man or the outcast woman.
- Jesus could have a good time.
- Jesus loved deeply—and he let his heart be broken more than once.
- Jesus held leaders—religious, political, business—accountable.
- Jesus knew God was present throughout creation—from the birds of the air and the grass of the field to the bread and the cup.
- Jesus spoke the truth, even when it cost him life.
- Jesus showed us God's ways of life over our ways of death.
- Jesus gave his life for others.
- Jesus called—and calls—us to do the same.

What do you know to be true about Jesus Christ? What difference does it make in your life? In this time when truth-telling is so vital, what would it take for you to tell the truth—out loud—about your faith?

Blessings for the journey –



Worship in March

FROM MOUNTAINTOPS AND MARDI GRAS TO ASHES AND LENT

Let the Light Shine! — Mardi Gras Sunday (March 2)

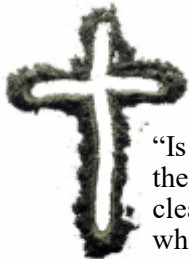
Grab your beads, find your feathers and toe-tapping shoes, and bring a friend as Jazz Pianist Andy Kingston blesses us once again in the 10:00 Mardi Gras Service. The scriptures tell of Moses' and Jesus' mountaintop experiences (Exodus 34:29-35; Luke 9:28-43) and how they brought God's Light to others. Good reminders for our often-shadowed time. (Also, 8:30 Contemplative Communion)



Where's Home? — Lent at United

Lent starts in the wilderness across the Jordan and leads to the wilderness of Golgotha. It also challenges us to find our home all along the way—whether within our own souls, our nation, or our Earth home. Lent worship also leads to the April 12 Lensic concert (sponsored by the United Church) of Brad Ellingboe's cantata "A Place Called Home," the night before Palm Sunday.

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



Cleaning House

Ash Wednesday – March 5

12:00 Noon and 7:00 pm

"Is this not the fast I choose," God asked through the Prophet Isaiah, "to feed the hungry and clothe the naked?" (Isaiah 58) To do that, we need to clean house, so the Psalmist calls, "Create in me a clean heart and renew a right Spirit within me." We do that on Ash Wednesday, turning to ashes that which keeps us from God's new life. Dr. Jacquelyn Helin is the guest pianist.

Home in the Wilderness

First Lent – March 9

"As a deer thirsts for streams," the Psalmist (Ps. 42) confessed, "so my soul longs for God." Jesus knew such thirst in his 40 days in the desert. (Luke 4:1-13) "When you share Passover," Moses told the people, "include the aliens and strangers." Like those outsiders, Jesus seldom had a safe place to call home. Perhaps he learned, as we must, that the wilderness itself *is* our home. **Daylight Saving Time begins, please set your clocks forward.**

Home in the Here, Now, and Hereafter

Second Lent – March 16

What is God's house like? "It's a stronghold," wrote the Psalmists. "A shelter." "A place of beauty and peace." Jesus added, "It's like a mother hen gathering her brood." (Luke 13:31-35) What's our vision of "the house of the Lord"—both in the hereafter and the here and now? Rev. Ben Larzelere is guest preacher.

Home in the Steadfast Love

Third Lent – March 23

"Come to the waters, all who thirst," proclaimed Isaiah. "Come, you who have no bread, and eat." (Isaiah 55:1-9) "You have been my help," cried the Psalmist (Ps. 63), "and in the shadow of your wings, I sing for joy." Both prophet and psalmist found their home in the steadfast love of God – and both call us to create home for others.

A New Home, A New Creation

Joyous Lent – March 30

When the religious leaders chastised Jesus for eating with tax collectors and other "bad people," Jesus told them about a child who left home and got lost. When he finally returned, he learned the depth and breadth of his father's love. (Luke 15:1-3, 11-32) When discord threatened the young church in Corinth, the apostle Paul called his community into that love to be "a new creation" in Christ, to let Christ's new life transform their lives. (2 Corinthians 5:16-21) He called it "the ministry of reconciliation" – finding a home in one another's hearts because we have found a home in God's heart.



Midweek Communion in Lent

Wednesdays (12:15 to 12:45 pm)

Do you yearn for silence or an opportunity to breathe, pray, and replenish? Starting Wednesday, March 12, United offers a **Lenten Noontime Communion**. All welcome to recharge and renew midweek. (Through Wednesday of Holy Week: April 16).

Music

Bradley Ellingboe, Director of Music

As we move from Epiphany into Lent, March is another very musical month at United. Our annual Mardi Gras service begins the month (March 2) with jazz pianist Andy Kingston at the keyboard. This year Ash Wednesday is March 5, and we welcome guest pianist Jacquelyn Helin at both the 12:00 noon and 7:00 pm services (Sanctuary Choir sings at 7:00). Throughout the Sundays of Lent, our music reflects the solemnity of the season and the diversity of Christian traditions. And on March 30 we'll welcome Mr. Wyclif Gitonga (a friend of Jenn Wynne) who will bless us with music from his Kenyan homeland.



A Place Called Home
by Bradley Ellingboe and Tony Silvestri
New Mexico Premiere
Saturday, April 12, 4:00 pm

Save the Date!

A Place Called Home is a dramatic cantata I wrote in 2022. It was premiered in Carnegie Hall in April of 2023 and the combined choruses of our Sanctuary Choir and Coro Lux will give the New Mexican premiere at the Lensic Theater on Saturday, April 12 of this year, thanks largely to the sponsorship of our church, for renting the hall, and the NM State Arts Council, for underwriting the cost of the soloists and instrumentalists.

The libretto is by the American poet Tony Silvestri, who will be our guest (via Zoom) in the adult forum on Sunday, March 9. The topic of the cantata is care for the earth. Tony will also be our guest (in person) in church on Sunday, April 13.

By the time you read this newsletter, both choirs will have begun preparations for the concert, which is not only the New Mexican premiere, but also the premiere of the newly-revised score. The concert will be preceded by a panel discussion led by Talitha, Tony, and me, as well as Prof. Larry Rasmussen and Dr. Mary Roessel. Tickets are now on sale at the Lensic, and more information about this will be forthcoming next month!

Brad Ellingboe



Children & Youth

Karen Wilbanks, Chair

UNITED WELCOMES NEW "DIRECTOR OF FAMILY, YOUTH, AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY" IN APRIL!

After a multi-year search, United is delighted to welcome Dana Bender as our new fulltime "Director of Family, Youth, and Children's Ministry." She comes with considerable experience in working with families and kids in two different church settings in Arizona, along with background as a music teacher across ages and directing the Phoenix Children's Choir. Dana starts Palm Sunday (April 13) and there will be many opportunities to meet her!



United Kids "Catch the Faith" in Many Ways

United Church offers multiple ways for our families, children, and youth to connect with the whole community and also learn to "Love God, Neighbor, and Creation."

- **Soup's On!** We begin Lent with an **"All Church Family Supper" Friday, March 7 (5:30 pm)—and a chance to meet United's new "Family, Youth and Children's Director"** (via Zoom). Parents, kids, youth—plus other adults—break bread together and then meet Dana Bender (who starts Palm Sunday). Please sign up at unitedchurchsf@gmail.com.
- Youth and older children help lead us through **Lent Sundays, Holy Week (leading us into the shadows of Maundy Thursday), caring for creation on Good Friday, and then leading us into Easter's new light and life!**
- Throughout March, they'll also help us care for our neighbors and all creation—and we'll also have a special Lent activity the whole family can join in, even during Spring Break!
- **Good Friday morning (April 18)**, youth and children are invited to join Dana with our annual Creation Care morning at the church.
- **And Easter Sunday**, we have an Easter Piñata Party after the 10:00 Easter Celebration!



CARE AND CONCERN

PRAYERS FOR OUR CHURCH AND OUR WORLD



Prayers of Thanks to:

- **Moderator Sarah Sawtell, Stewardship/Finance Chair Trudy Swint, Endowment Chair Frank Wilbanks,** and all who are helping wrap up the 2025 Stewardship campaign and develop the 2025 operating budget.
- **Parish Life Chair Louise Cavatta** and her wonderful team, who organized and offered back-to-back events in February (the memorial service reception for Helen Wagner and the FebFest luncheon and snacks for almost 80 people).
- **Karen Wilbanks, Gail Ansheles, and the Children’s/Youth Team,** for moving ahead with hiring a fulltime Family, Youth, and Children’s Ministry Director—and to **all of you** for helping finance this opportunity!
- **Immigration and Refugee Task Force Chair Avril Ekstrand** and all who marched at the state Capitol Feb. 3 for immigrants and refugees.
- **Landscaping Chair Linda Churchill** and others working on developing the outdoor Youth and Children’s exploration and education spaces.

Congratulations and Blessings for:

- **Russell Stowers,** recently recognized nationally for his visionary leadership in the Physical Therapy Program at Christus St. Vincent Hospital.
- **Director of Music Brad Ellingboe, Dr. Brandon Boyd, Rev. Talitha Arnold** the Sanctuary Choir, *Coro Lux*, and all who made FebFest25’s weekend celebration of African American sacred music and Sunday worship such a great experience!

Healing and Hope for:

- **The family of Helen Wagner (Scott, Donnette, Patti, Russell, Kent)** following Helen’s death in late January.
- **Dana Hollifield, Char Cebell, Abel Rubio, Gail Flanagan, Marcia Gardner, George Duncan, and John Christiano,** all recovering from major surgery; **Sam Jackson,** recently hospitalized with sepsis; **Amanda Darby,** as she awaits tests results; and others also dealing with difficult health issues (**Sally Strong, Blanca Surgeon’s mother, Ray and Nancy Lutz, Rev. Kathleen Jimenez, Maria Navarette,** and others).
- Others living with cancer and those who love and care for them (**Greg and Linda Gaertner, Ed Barker, Jen Wilkison (Dave and Nancy’s daughter), 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,** and others); persons living with Parkinson’s or other neurological conditions, (**Sandy Vermillion, Monsignor Jerome Martinez, Dr. Karl Ray,** and others); or with chronic illness (**Brooke Roberts, Jan McGough,** and others); those in assisted living (**Rhae Burden, Carol Ingells and Robert Spitz, Merry Converse,** 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.)
- **Government workers, medical and university staffs, non-profits** dependent on government grants and all impacted by the actions of the current Administration.
- Persons who are imprisoned and those who love them.
- The people and all creation dealing with the aftermath of the California fires and Kentucky floods.
- Immigrants and asylum seekers at the U.S. border and those in our country, all facing uncertain futures.
- 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, as well as the U.S. and other countries who need God’s wisdom, guidance, and commitment to a just peace.
- **The people and leaders of Ukraine,** as they continue into the fourth year of the war started by the 2022 Russia invasion.
- Continued prayers also for Nigeria, Sudan, Central America, and other places also impacted by war; immigrants seeking asylum from violence; **policymakers** who determine their fate.
- Military people and law enforcement officers, including those in our congregation.

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 March



On Call: John Shaffer (505) 466-4372
Food: Cheryl Haskin (503) 351-6561

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.



Be the Light

One Great Hour of Sharing

This spring (through April 13), United invites your support of *One Great Hour of Sharing*, the national United Church of Christ offering to support refugee resettlement, disaster relief, food and small farmer programs around the world and in the U.S. Gifts can also be designated specifically for particular emergencies (e.g., Global Covid19 relief or emergency needs for tornado victims or refugees on the U.S./Mexico border). To donate online, go to unitedchurchofsantafe.org, memo: OGHS. Thank you!

2024 Financial Support for United's Outreach Partners

In 2024, thanks to the generosity of the United Church community, near and far, United gave \$99,618 to partner with organizations that offer hope and tangible support to thousands of people. Thank you!

Regional National and Global Relief & Development:
One Great Hour of Sharing; Church World Service (hygiene kits, blankets, direct donations for Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan); Diné/Navajo Emergency Relief; Honduran orphanage; U.S. Flood and Fire Relief

Housing and Hunger:
Interfaith Shelter; St. Elizabeth Shelter; Casa Familia

Immigration and Refugees:
NM Immigrant Law Center; Casa de la Vida, Nogales, AZ; Border Immersion Trip (Youth/Adults); Support for individual immigrant families

Education:
Communities in Schools; Bookkids

Health and Welfare:
Individuals facing severe health issues

Environment:
SF Watershed Association; Tree New Mexico; NM Interfaith Power and Light; Reunity Resources

United Church of Christ:
Southwest Conference; Christmas Fund; Immigrant and Refugee support for Good Shepherd UCC (Sahuarita, AZ)

Other:
Roots Palestinian/Israeli Peace Initiative; Santa Fe's Temple Beth Shalom, Chabad Community, Beit Tikva; ABQ Grief Center; Support for individuals/families in need

LOVE GOD, LOVE NEIGHBOR!

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., Mar. 21 – Chop & Grate (9:30 am)** at United.
- **Mon., Mar. 24** – Deliver food to shelters.
- Make meatloaf at home (12 loaves needed).

Supporting Our Diné/Navajo Brothers and Sisters

Your financial support for United's long-time partner, Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, in Fort Defiance, AZ. It underwrites basic supplies for families as well as the Youth Traditional Garden and Food Bank.

Help Assemble Hygiene Kits for Ukraine, Gaza, and Sudan

Church World Service now offers all the supplies needed to assemble hygiene kits (and even the shipping box) for distribution to refugees in Ukraine, Gaza, and Sudan. United purchased multiple "Party Packs" – and we invite you to gather a group (or family) to assemble the kits (36 kits in a box—takes less than an hour to assemble.) Let Talitha Arnold or Lin Raymond know if you'd like to help.

LOVE GOD, LOVE CREATION!

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!

Care for Creation and Offset Your Carbon Use

United's "Carbon Offset Program" helps plant trees and change policies to address climate change. It's simple to do: track your car mileage and/or plane flight hours and donate through United to our partners *Tree New Mexico* and *NM Interfaith Power and Light*. Info: unitedchurchofsantafe.org/creation-care. (In 2024, United donated \$3,300, part of which came from individuals and the other part from the church's operating budget to offset carbon use of staff mileage.)

Adult Faith Formation

ADULT FORUMS — Sundays at 11:15 am

Joan Snider, Adult Faith Formation Chair

Reading Bonhoeffer in America 2025 Concludes March 2

Larry Rasmussen's powerful class on the work and witness of German Lutheran Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer concludes this Sunday. Handouts in Community Room. Many thanks to Larry for this profound and all-too-relevant series.

A Place Called Home March 9

In preparation for the New Mexico premier of Bradley Ellingboe's environmental cantata "A Place Called Home" (Saturday, April 12, 4:00 pm at Lensic), Brad and the lyricist Tony Silvestri share the background of both its poetry and music.

Changed for Good! *Reunity Resources Composting Program* March 16

Juliana Ciano, Program Director of Reunity Resources (one of United's environmental partners) is our guest to share Reunity's wide-ranging programs (gardening with kids, musical events, support for public schools, etc.) that go far beyond composting.

Living in One's Sacred Land — March 23

Two Events March 30 *All Church Pancake Breakfast* (hosted by Pretty Good Guys)

Also a forum on

"Changing Lenses, Changing Lives" in Kenya

United's "Pretty Good Guys" rustle up some very good pancakes and invite you to join them for an All Church Breakfast this Sunday. Also, for those who are interested, Wyclif Gitonga—a colleague of Jennifer Wynne—and Director of the Kenyan non-profit, "Changing Lenses, Changing Lives" shares his work.

New Members Welcomed First Sunday of Lent – March 9

We'll receive new members into the United Church community on the First Sunday of Lent (March 9). If you're interested in joining, please speak with Talitha Arnold (505-988-3295). Thanks! (If the date doesn't work for you, please let her know that, too. Thanks.)

Into the Deep – 2025 Lenten Daily Devotional Booklets Available

To deepen your own journey of Lent, please pick up a copy of the Lenten Daily Devotional Booklet, published by the national United Church of Christ that includes reflections from UCC leaders around the country (including ones by Talitha Arnold). Then join with others in Lent's daily walk to Easter's new life.

Groups and Gatherings

Wednesday Women's Study Group March 5 & 19 – 10:00 am

We finish reading *James* by Percival Everett and read *House Made of Dawn* by N. Scott Momaday. All women welcome! For more info, contact Jenn Wynn (home@wynnes.us, 817-219-0707) or Cheryl Morton (mommorton@gmail.com, 515-240-4523).

Pretty Good Guys Explore "The Greatest Prayer" Jesus' Revolutionary Message in the Lord's Prayer

Wednesdays, March 12 & 26 (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

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.

Sacred Nature: Restoring Our Ancient Bond *with the Natural World* by Karen Armstrong Lenten Book Study: 5:30 pm

Wednesdays (Mar. 12, 19, 26, Apr. 2, 9)

Historian of religion Karen Armstrong shows how recognizing our connection to—not separation from—nature is essential to taking effective action to care for creation. We'll read and discuss the importance of finding ways to experience nature imaginatively and aesthetically, rather than only scientifically and rationally, to help us meet modern challenges by changing our hearts and minds. Sign up in Community Room (Joan Snider, 505-424-3732)



Day of Centering Prayer and Shared Silence Saturday, March 1 (9:30-3:00) at United

Contemplative Outreach of New Mexico hosts a day of centering prayer and silence in the Education Wing. Silence, solitude, solidarity and service are the cherished depositions that Centering Prayer practitioners aim to embrace. Contemplative Outreach of New Mexico is part of a world-wide network striving to bring this ancient Christian prayer practice out of the monastic milieu to those in our contemporary society. Register and info at centeringnm.com.

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

1804 Arroyo Chamiso - Santa Fe NM 87505

Phone: 505-988-3295 Fax: 505-988-2353

E-mail: unitedchurchsf@gmail.com

www.unitedchurchofsantafe.org

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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). 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, go to our website. Thank you!