



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

August 2026

Prayers for the Biniant'aats'ozí Season (Navajo/Diné Time of Early Crops)

To pray you open your whole self—
to sky,
to earth,
to sun,
to moon,
to one whole voice that is you.
And know there is more
That you cannot see, cannot hear.

Joy Harjo, Eagle Poem
(from Muscogee oral tradition)



A Much-needed Season of Peace and Healing

Let us think of Mother Earth, her rich bounty that will result from springtime,
the golden corn and the seeds of harvest, all grown strong from Mother Earth,
the spring 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



For Students and Teachers Going Back to School. . .

May God give you the grace never to sell yourself short;
grace to risk something big for something good;
grace to remember that the world is too dangerous for anything but truth
and too small for anything but love.
So, may God take your minds and think through them;
may God take your lips and speak through them;
may God take your hearts and set them on fire.
Go with our blessing. Amen

Rev. William Sloane Coffin, Yale University Chaplain (1958 – 1975)
Benediction for Annual Opening Assembly



For All God's Children

Dear Lord,
We pray for all the children entrusted to our care
and those throughout the world.
Be good to them.
The sea is so big,
and their boat is so small.
Hold them always in your love. Amen.

**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,

How is it with your soul these days?

I wish I could claim credit for that question, but that belongs to John Wesley, Christian reformer and founder of Methodism. To revive and strengthen the church of his day, Wesley started study meetings and other groups with this one question—what is the state of your soul?

If those of you reading this letter were to answer, I suspect that many might respond “not so good” or “fearful” or “depressed,” even “angry.” Given the state of the country and the world, such answers are certainly understandable. Living in fraught times can make for fraught souls, including our own.

Even a soul as strong as Bishop and Choctaw Elder Steven Charleston's can feel fraught these days. “Like you,” Charleston wrote recently, “I get tired from watching the daily news. The constant stream of chaos and corruption wears me down.” Sound familiar?

But Charleston also offered an antidote to that weariness. Because the ongoing news grinds him down, Charleston continued, “I make it a habit to pray my gratitude list each day. I intentionally give thanks for all the good things in my life, gifts from a source beyond my troubled world. I count my blessings and offer my gratitude.”

Such intentional gratitude feeds our souls, Charleston affirmed. “Even in the midst of struggle,” he wrote, “there is a calm center of deep appreciation.” Thus, to John Wesley's question about the state of his soul, Elder Charleston can affirm “it is well.”

As with most things in life, sharing our gratitude strengthens it. There's a website that invites people to “share the good news of the week,” by sending in articles—either local or global—that made them glad. So, what's some good local, national, or global news you've heard or read recently?

“Praying our gratitude,” to quote Bishop Charleston, strengthens the soul of a church, too. As you read this United Voice newsletter, what gladdens your soul about this upcoming month with United?

Then take a bit more time and think about what gladdens your soul about the United Church of Santa Fe overall:

- What are United's strengths for which you give thanks to God?
- What do you value most about this community of faith?
- What do you think the wider community values about the United Church of Santa Fe?

Taking time to engage such questions not only strengthens our own souls. It also strengthens the soul of our church—especially if we turn our answers into daily prayers of thanks for the life, community, and ministry God has given us through United. (So, if you want to share your prayers of thanks for United or for the good news of the week—send them in!)

When we intentionally pray our gratitude, we can answer with Elder Charleston, “it is well, it is well with our soul” (even after reading the daily news :-).

Blessings,

Worship in August

Crammed with Heaven

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God,
But only the ones who see take off their shoes;
The rest sit round and pluck blackberries.
Elizabeth Barrett Browning

We conclude our summer worship series on the Book of Creation with:

A Desert Feast | August 2

The crowd was hungry, the place a desert, and the disciples filled with fear. "Send them all away," they said to Jesus, "so they can go buy their own food." (Matthew 14:13-21) Deserts can be fearsome places, full of uncertainty, hunger, and thirst. Moreover, deserts aren't only geographic, deserts can also be spiritual and personal. Being afraid, feeling inadequate, lacking resources—all that can create a desert within. But ... deserts can also be full of life, as the disciples learned that day when five loaves and two fishes fed "5,000 men, plus women and children." A great text for Communion Sunday.

Whose Voice Do You Listen To? | August 9 – Blessing of Teachers and Educators

The story of Elijah the Prophet hearing the roar of a fire, the crash of an earthquake, and the howling wind may speak to students and educators as they start back to school. (I Kings 19:9-18) So many voices assault young people. So many ways the world tells them they're not smart enough, attractive enough, strong enough, popular enough, simply not enough. But as Elijah learned, God's voice isn't in all that crashing and roaring. God's voice comes to us in the sheer silence—and the powerful presence—that reminds us we're not alone, and we are enough. We bless students and educators in both services.

Home Is Where the Others Are | August 16 – Indian Market Sunday

Psalm 133 sings of the beauty of people dwelling together in peace. It is "like the dew of Mt. Hermon," the great mountain in Lebanon, where cedars grow and the snowpack fills the rivers and streams that flow through Israel and Jordan. Isaiah the Prophet promises that God will lead all people, even "foreigners" to the holy mountain, there to join in song, prayer, and celebration. (Isaiah 56:1, 6-8) Two wonderful teachings for Indian Market Sunday, when we welcome Lavonne Yazzie, Navajo/Diné, to help us remember whose prayers and songs have blessed this place for generations.

Drawn from the Waters | August 23

Rivers are lifelines in the desert, whether it's the Nile flowing up from the Sahara and Nubian Deserts though Egypt or the Colorado that winds through 7 states, all dependent on its water. Desert rivers show us how all life—including ours—depends on water. Baby Moses in the river also reminds us how dependent we are on others. (Exodus 1:8 - 2:10)

Holy Ground | August 30

When Moses the Shepherd sees a bush burning in the desert—that doesn't burn up—he also hears a voice telling him to take off his shoes for he is on holy ground. (Exodus 3:1-15) What would we do if we regarded all ground, all the Earth, as holy? Moses gave up his shoes. What would we give up to show our respect and awe for this holy planet? Good questions for the Sunday of our Church's Annual Meeting.

Cooking Lessons | September 6 – Labor Day Sunday



Music

Michelle Schumann, Director of Music / Pianist

It's hard to believe how quickly the summer is going by, but it has been gloriously filled with exceptional music making throughout June and July. We continue this August (last month before choir resumes) featuring wonderful talent in our community while creating uplifting worship moments.

The Drop-in Choir sings August 9th. Remember, this is an opportunity for anyone who would like to sing and be a part of the choral experience at United. Just show up at 9:00 am and learn an anthem and then sing for and help lead the congregational singing in the 10:00 service. It's always a joyous time!

On August 16, we welcome back **Lavonne Yazzie** to celebrate **Indian Market Sunday**. Lavonne joined us last year for a stirring service featuring an incredible variety of Navajo/Diné music and a dialogue sermon together with Pastor Talitha Arnold. We can't wait to have her back!

Choral Scholars Javier Ortiz and Heather Lacy lead congregational hymns on August 2nd (Javier) and 23rd (Heather) and also offer solos.

On **August 30**, I'll offer special music throughout the service featuring beloved sacred and secular piano solos. I'm looking forward to experiencing this all with you.

Finally, please consider singing with the **10:00 Choir** this fall! We sing all kinds of music and have a great time doing it. Rehearsals start Wednesday, Sept. 9 (7:00 to 9:00 pm) and sing for the September 13th **Fiesta Service** (rehearsal at 9:00, service at 10:00) For more information, please contact me or Choir Director André García-Nuthmann. Thank you!



Many Thanks for Your Ongoing Pledges and Financial Support!

A summer "Arts Camp" for children. Opera Apprentices in worship. Maintenance of the beautiful church grounds. Livestreaming. Ongoing pastoral care—and care for the wider community and world. Your pledges and other donations to United Church continue to make a difference in the lives of United's members and friends. Thank you!

Children & Youth

Dana Bender, Director of Family Ministry

Dedication of the Re-vitalized Nurture Center Sunday, August 2

Tracy and Ed Church have been helping Dana Bender spruce up the Nurture Center for our youngest congregants!

As you look at the two rooms, the one on the left is now set up for **Babies and Young Toddlers**, complete with resting places, tactile activities, and soft surfaces.

The room on the right is for children through **Pre-k/Kindergarten**, with craft supplies, pretend play, building materials and more.

Thank you so much to Tracy for her willingness to oversee our Nurture Center and provide a consistent caregiver to our children. Thanks also to Maria Navarette for her help in nurturing these little people!

Please come and check out our 'spruced' and improved Nurture Center after the service on Sunday, August 2. There will be a blessing for its use in the coming years!

Blessing of Students and Educators Sunday, August 9

On Sunday, August 9, we'll bless all students and educators (teachers, administrators, counselors, etc.) in both the 8:30 and 10:00 services! This is a wonderful time to wipe the slate clean (do kids know what a 'slate' is??) and set new goals for the new year! It's an exciting time and meaningful service. Come one and all!

From Dana...

As we approach a new school year, I'm looking for ways to further connect with the children and youth of this congregation! I have been invited to (and able to attend some) sports events, dance recitals, and band concerts! Keep those invites coming! I love to see what our kids are doing in their spare time!

YOUTH PARENT MEETING, SUNDAY AUGUST 23!

Calling all parents of 6th - 12th graders! Please come to an informational meeting about our ever-growing and changing youth program here at United. about Confirmation/Initiates, retreat, and schedule for the school year. Come with questions!

Save the Date! Youth Retreat at Ghost Ranch For all entering 6th grade – 12th grade

Friday October 23 – Saturday, October 24!

Interested? Contact Dana Bender: unitedchurch.dana@gmail.com.

Care and Concern

Congratulations and Blessings for:

- **Students and educators** starting a new school this month, including those heading to college (**Sasha Smucker**, Pomona College (CA); **Luke Rand**, Cornell (NY); **Derek Darby**, University of Utah; **Bailey Gordon**, St. Lawrence College (NY), **Weston Puglisi**, University of New Mexico).
- **José Lain-Straus**, starting as a brand-new 4th grade teacher at Santa Fe's Sweeny Elementary School.
- **Cheryl and Dirk Haskin** celebrating the arrival of new grandson Desmond Charles Haskin, born June 25.

Prayers of Healing and Hope for:

- **Bob Meinershagen**, following the death of his wife Helen in Kansas City; **Nyla and Larry Rasmussen**, following the death of their brother-in-law in June.
- **Jim and Kris Dorris**, following Jim's stroke and hospitalization; several people (and their families and friends) as they recover from surgery and/or accidents: (**Christy Jones**, **Janet Harris**, **Donna Johnson**, **Renate McLelland**, **Sarah Sawtell**, **Violet Augustine**, **Destiny Muñoz**, and others).
- Persons dealing with cancer and those who love and care for them: **Danna Armstrong**, **Shauna Wilbanks**, **Greg Gaertner**, **Diane Bethune's brother Jeffery**, and others. Persons with ongoing health issues: **Jan McGough**, (on 3-day/week dialysis); **Leonard Stovall**, **Mary Deane Lynn**, **Helen McCabe**, **Carol Ingells**, **Brooke Roberts**, and other family members and friends.
- Persons dealing with dementia or memory loss and those who love and care for them (**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**, **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); **Ken Latz** and his partner **Kurt Burk**, as Ken deals with a difficult auto-immune disease.
- 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).
- 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 **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 August:

On Call: Dave Wilkison: 505-637-8735

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.

LOVE GOD, LOVE NEIGHBOR

United Church Supports Earthquake Relief

Church World Service is on the ground in Venezuela to help in aftermath of the devastating earthquakes. Families and communities are in urgent need of lifesaving assistance to meet daily needs for food, clean water, shelter, and support to begin recovery. All donations for earthquake relief to United Church of Santa Fe go directly to CWS for this work. Please bring/send made out to United Church (memo: Earthquake Relief) or through United's website: unitedchurchofsantafe.org.

Summer Drive for the Food Depot

The Food Depot supplies Northern N.M. schools, shelters, and agencies with good food year-round. Needed items: jumbo packages/cans of vegetables/fruit, pasta, rice, high-protein foods (dried beans, canned meats, soups); baby foods (powdered formula, cereal, jars of baby food); diapers. Monetary donations also welcome. Checks to United Church (memo: Food Depot) or online: unitedchurchofsantafe.org. Thank you!



Children's Garden Vegetables for Food Depot, too!

Produce from the Children's Garden goes to Food Depot to provide fresh vegetables in the food bags. To help with weekly weeding or harvesting, please 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!

United's Shelter Supper Ministries Offer Food and Care

United provides supper (meat loaf, veggie casserole, salad, dessert) monthly to St. Elizabeth and Casa Familia Shelters. Want to help? Come to "Chop and Grate" on Friday, August 21 (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 or online donations (memo: shelter meals). Thank you!

LOVE GOD, LOVE CREATION

Santa Fe River Cleanup

Saturday, August 8 (8:30-10:00 am)

Join us to care for our corner of Creation. Meet at where Closson St. ends at the Santa Fe River. We provide donuts, coffee, and trash bags. You bring a hat, sunscreen, and gloves. Please sign up in the Community Room, call 505-988-3295 or email unitedchurchsf@gmail.com. All Creation thanks you!

Traveling This Summer?

Offset Your Carbon Use and Care for Creation

United'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.

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. In July, United sent a mid-year check for \$3,000.



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

August 2 — Two Opportunities

Dedication of the Revitalized Nurture Center

Thanks to the efforts of Family Ministry Director Dana Bender and volunteers Tracy and Ed Church, the Nurture Center is spruced up for our youngest congregants!

The left room is now set up for **Babies and Young Toddlers**, complete with resting places, tactile activities, and soft surfaces. The right room is for **Pre-k/Kindergarten**, with craft supplies, pretend play, building materials and more.

After the 10:00 service on Aug. 2, you're invited to check out our revitalized Nurture Center and join in a blessing for its use and for the children who will experience God's love within its walls!

Write Letters to Advocate for Immigrants

Also on August 2, the Immigration Task Force invites you to join in a letter-writing forum, focused on urging our Congressional Representatives and national administration to close immigrant detention centers in our state and elsewhere and to work for actual immigration reform.

August 9 — Opportunities and Challenges: New Mexico's Public Schools

United member Seana Flanagan is Managing Director of the New Mexico Public Education Department—i.e., the right-hand person to Secretary of Education Mariana Padilla. She knows first-hand the challenges—and opportunities—facing students, educators, and schools across the state. She'll offer a "behind-the-headlines" look.

August 16 — Informal Conversation with LaVonne Yazzie on Indian Market Sunday

Take time after the 10:00 service to meet LaVonne Yazzie, our guest in worship. A member of the Navajo/Diné Nation, LaVonne is the cantor for Albuquerque's Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church and sings with *Coro Lux*.

August 23 — Watershed Health Is Our Health, Too

We welcome Mori Hensley, Executive Director of the Santa Fe Watershed Association, to focus on the Santa Fe River, its watershed, and how we and the rest of creation depend on its health and vitality. She'll also share what we can do, individually and as a church, to contribute to that health and mitigate global warming.

August 30 — 46th Annual Meeting of the United Church of Santa Fe

We'll give thanks for our life and ministry, recognize outgoing Council members, elect the new Council, and look to the future. (Livestream: unitedchurchsf@gmail.com) Annual Reports will be emailed and copies also available at church.

GROUPS AND GATHERINGS

What Does the Bible Really Say about Forgiveness? - Zoom Study Group

Thursdays: 8:00 – 9:00 am (MDT)

Join people from around the country for an in-depth look at what the Bible says about the challenging (and often confusing) topic of "forgiveness." It's not too late to join in! Register at: unitedchurchsf@gmail.com.

Books That Didn't Make It into the Bible Pretty Good Guys

Wednesdays, August 12 & 26 – 10:30 – 12:00 pm

Not all Gospels made it into the Bible. What were they? What did they say? And why weren't they included? Join these lively discussions, starting in August.

Wednesday Women's Study Group Starts Again September (with quite a reading list!)

We meet the first and third Wednesdays of each month. All welcome! This fall, they start with *The Lion Women of Tehran* by Marjan Kamali and *Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi. Interested? Cheryl Morton (mommorton@gmail.com, 515-240-4523) or Jenn Wynn (home@wynnes.us, 817-219-0707)

Cybersecurity Tips for Emails and Texts

Churches and church members aren't immune to scams, hacks, and phishing. Some ways to reduce the risk:

- Church staff will never write to you directly for your credit card information or to ask you to purchase a gift card. If an email or text claims to be from a staff member and asks for a "favor" because they are praying, in a meeting, on retreat, or gives any other suspicious reason, report it as a scam and delete it. Check the sender's address: if it does not begin with "unitedchurch," it is a scam. For texts, check the phone number and report a phishing text by texting 7726. Also contact the person it claims to be from so they know their account may have been hacked or used for phishing.
- When sending an email to a church group, please send it to yourself and "blind copy" (bcc) rather than "cc" the group.

When in doubt, don't open the text or email—contact the person it claims to be from directly.

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!