

Monthly publication United Church of Santa Fe Santa Fe, New Mexico May 2025

Prayers for a Season of . . .

May Day/Workers' Day May 1

Merciful Provider, you sustain and nourish all who are in your realm, from the birds of the air to the beasts of the earth, to your human children. You seek out the needful and the suffering and raise them up. You provide for the hungry, the thirsty, and those in need of shelter and of healing.

Lord, we lift up our prayers to you for all who have lost their life's work due to the decisions of others. We pray for those whose incomes have been reduced, for those whose jobs have been suspended, and for the thousands who are facing unemployment across government agencies and in organizations reliant on government grants. We pray, too, for all whom they served and supported.

Holy One, you sustain all who fall and raise up all who are bowed down. Provide for the families and individuals who are enduring economic hardship and uncertain futures. Restore our nation and our neighbors to the fullness of life and hope once again. Amen.

Graduations and Other New Beginnings

May our ears be open to hear the voice of God, May our eyes be open to see the light of Christ, May our lips speak words of truth.

May our shoulders bear the yoke of Christ, May our hearts be filled with faith, And may our feet follow in the way God has prepared for us.

A Prayer for Our Church (Because it's our 45th Birthday May 25!)

On that first Pentecost, you poured out your Spirit and your people dreamed dreams and saw visions.

Pour out that same Spirit upon us, O Lord, and give us the courage to let it transform our lives and the life of your church. Give us your vision of justice and mercy.

Give us your vision of peace and hope.

Give us your vision of a new creation—of ourselves and this world.

Amen.

For All God's Children—in Any Season

Thank you for the lives of the children in our care and in our prayers. Thank you for their hope and joy. Thank you for your guidance in their lives. Protect their minds, watch over their hearts, and lead them to great adventures.

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UNITED CHURCH OF SANTA FE

A United Church of Christ

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The Rev. Talitha Arnold

Senior Pastor

Sarah Sawtell

Moderator of the Congregation

Bradley Ellingboe

Director of Music

Michelle Schumann

Pianist

Dana Bender

Director of Family, Youth, and Children's Ministry

Elijah Marquez

Videographer/ Media Director

Lin Raymond

Office Administrator

Maria Navarette

Children's Ministry 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.

What a host of new beginnings at United these past four months! In January, we welcomed Michelle Schumann as Pianist, and on Palm Sunday we welcomed Dana Bender as Family Ministry Director. Larry Rasmussen led a new Forum series on the work and witness of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Thanks to Bradley Ellingboe, our Sanctuary Choir, and a whole lot of people behind the scenes, we co-hosted our first-ever concert at the Lensic Theater.

Half a dozen United members and friends have been featured on KSFR's Forum. We're developing a new outdoor education space for children and youth. We've upgraded our video system, installed new computers, and explored ways to meet our accounting needs. Definitely lots of new beginnings!

Yet not all new happenings of the last four months have been blessings, especially on a national level. The current Administration's dismantling of federal programs and canceling of federal grants has meant more people going hungry or sliding into poverty, less lifesaving medical research, and fewer protections for the environment.

Over the past four months, our country has shifted from supporting long-time allies to bolstering autocrats and dictators. We've also changed from being a nation of laws to one where legal immigrants and citizens are rounded up and deported to foreign prisons without trials or due process—sometimes simply for the "crime" of having tattoos.

"New occasions teach new duties," wrote Protestant abolitionist James Russell Lowell in 1845 to protest the Mexican American war. A century and a half later, the new state of our nation also demands new duties of those of us who call ourselves Christian.

On **Saturday, May 10**, the United Church Council invites all members and friends to engage the question "What Does It Mean to be a Christian Community in America 2025?" and join in a half-day morning retreat (8:30 to 12:00 noon). (On Sunday, May 4, Rev. Peter Marty starts the inquiry as our guest preacher and Forum leader.)

The May 10 retreat is a chance to center ourselves and our church community in our commitment to follow Jesus' ways. We'll focus on the resources and guidance our faith provides and also on living out our faith in this new reality.

I hope you'll come Saturday, May 10. To help plan, please register by Tuesday, May 6 at <u>unitedchurchsf@gmail.com</u> or at church. (Childcare, coffee, and midmorning snacks provided J).

Dr. Emilie Townes, Ethicist and former Dean of Vanderbilt Divinity School—and a colleague of Larry Rasmussen at Union Seminary—has written of the challenges we face:

Naming the hot mess [of our time] is both admitting the realities — and possibilities — and confessing that we cannot right things without leaning strong and hard into our faith for the sustenance to stand up, dig in, and do the work our souls must have. . . . We face the tough times of our day with fresh energy and urgency that remind us that we stand on the frontlines of hope.

I hope you'll join with your United Church community on Saturday, May 10, as we "lean strong and hard into our faith for the sustenance to stand up, dig in, and do the work our souls must have."

Blessings,

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Worship in May

What Does It Mean to Be a Christian Community? United Worship in Eastertide

After the Resurrection, the first Christians had to figure out what it meant to be followers of Jesus Christ when he was no longer with them, at least in his earthly life. They also had to determine their relationships with one another and with the wider world. 2,000+ years later, we still need to engage those questions. Through the 50 days of Eastertide, we explore what and who we're called to be in our individual lives and in our life and ministry together.

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

Which Direction? — Rev. Peter Marty, Guest Preacher 3rd Easter (May 4)

When Jesus called Peter and the other fishermen to be his first disciples, he told them they would be "fishing for people." But only a few days after his Resurrection, Peter went back to fishing for fish – and got the others to do the same. (John 21:1-19) Given all that happened to Jesus under the Roman Empire, it seemed like a logical decision. What would we have done? What are we called to do in our time? We welcome Rev. Peter Marty, editor and publisher of *The Christian Century* and Lutheran Pastor, as our guest preacher to explore what this story says to us in America 2025.



Saints, Widows, Angels, Shepherds 4th Easter & Mother's Day (May 11)

The 4th Sunday of Easter readings include diverse snapshots of early Christian congregations, from "saints and widows" (Acts 9:36-43) to shepherds and sheep (Psalm 23; John 10:22-30) to angels and people of "all tribe and languages" (Revelation 7:9-17). Great texts for the secular holiday of Mother's Day, too!



Love One Another and Don't Hinder God 5th Easter & Graduation Sunday (May 18)

Two visions of what it means to be a Christian community. In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells his disciples on the last night of his life to "love one another." (John 13:31-35) In the Acts of the Apostles, Peter thinks it's wrong and downright sinful to eat with people who aren't of his religion. But then God gives him a weird dream to remind him (and us) of the breadth and depth of God's love and welcome. (Acts 11:1-18) What do we envision our United community to be? Who's included? Who's invited?

Its Light Is the Lamb 6th Easter and United's 45th Birthday! (May 25)

The book of Revelation gets a lot of bad press—much of it justified :-). It also has some of the most beautiful imagery in all the Bible. When John envisioned the "New Jerusalem"—God's community on earth—he saw it had "no need of sun or moon to shine, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb." John continued, "The nations will walk by its light, and the rulers of the earth will bring their glory into it. Its gates will never be shut by day – and there will be no night there." (Revelation 21:23-26) What a powerful vision for United's 45th Anniversary as a Christian community and for the Sunday before Memorial Day as we pray for all nations to walk by the light of God's peace.

Who's in Your Circle? 7th Easter (June 1)

A wealthy widow, an enslaved girl, and a guard at the NM Penitentiary. All of them were part of the first Christian community in Philippi (okay, so the guard was at the Macedonian pen). (Acts 6:16-34) Their story challenges us to consider not only who's welcome at United but whom do we actually reach out to and invite?



Page 3 United Voice

Bradley Ellingboe: Director of Music

Dana Bender: Family Ministries Director

What a month April was! Our performance of *A Place Called Home* was immediately followed by Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter. My deepest thanks to Talitha and the Church Council for sponsoring our concert at the Lensic Theater. It was deeply meaningful to me to be able to do it here at home and was, I think, a high-water mark for our choir. Thanks to all you who attended, to Michelle Schumann for her artful playing, and to the choir for singing so beautifully all through this very busy season.

As we turn our attention to Eastertide, the choir will be singing some of my favorite anthems in May. They center largely on love and light, including "The Great Commandment" by Ralph Johnson, "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light" by Kathleen Thomerson, and "As the Dark Awaits the Dawn" by my old friend John Helgen.

And before you know it, it will be summer! Our plans once again include Summer Drop-In Choirs on Pentecost Sunday (June 8) and also July 20 and August 10. Please think about joining us on those Sundays at 9:00 am to quickly learn a piece to sing in the 10:00 am service. No audition required!

Brad

UNITED'S NEW "FAMILY MINISTRY DIRECTOR" HITS THE GROUND RUNNING!

Thanks to Dana Bender, United's new Family Minister, and Children/Youth Chair Karen Wilbanks (along with husband Frank:-), United's youth helped lead the Tenebrae for Maundy Thursday, younger ones helped with the Good Friday "Creation Care," we had our first "Kids Choir" in decades in Easter worship, and everyone got a whack at the biggest Easter Piñata ever.

Through May, Dana will continue to get to know United families and the wider Santa Fe community. Along with Children's Ministry Aides Maria Navarette and Destiny Muñoz, she'll also share God's Good News of New Life during 10:00 Sunday worship with our youngest members through story, outdoor exploration, music, and friendship every Sunday morning.

Help your kids experience the joy of God's presence and love by making time to join in United's Family Ministry on Sunday mornings! (And bring friends!)

Sunday, May 18 Is Graduation Sunday!

We'll recognize, honor, and bless all United graduates (middle school, high school, college) during the 10:00 service. If you have a graduate in your family, let Dana or Talitha know asap!



FOOD, FUN AND GAMES SUNDAY, MAY 18

Plan to stay after the 10:00 service for an All Church, All Ages Lunch and Outdoor Games! Signup in the Community Room.

More information to come—but save the date now!



Founded in Love, Building in Faith United Church's Endowment Initiative

A quick quiz: which of the following have you experienced through the United Church of Santa Fe? (Please check all that apply.)

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- ☐ Seeing our children and youth plant flowers, lead worship, assemble Church World Service Kits for refugees—as they learn about God's love by "Loving Neighbor, Loving Creation."
- ☐ Been blessed by our annual FebFest choral festival with nationally known African American conductors or by our Choral Scholars who enhance our choir or the recent Lensic concert of "A Place Called Home."
- ☐ Had your spirits lifted by the beauty of United's outdoor spaces through every season.

If you checked any of the above, you've experienced the gift of United's Endowment. Thanks to the commitment of previous United generations, our church has offered all this and more over the last 45 years, even through "coronatime."

Through United's ongoing Founded in Love, Building in Faith Endowment Initiative, we can build on that foundation of financial commitment. Including United in your will or other estate planning helps United's future generations weather life's storms and uncertainties. Gifts and bequests to United's Endowment ensure that those who come after us are strengthened and fed by United's ministries, so in turn they can strengthen and feed a world hungry for love, beauty, and hope. We hope you'll join in this effort.

and feed a world hungry for love, beauty, and hope. We hope you'll join in this effort.

To learn more about including the United Church of Santa Fe in your will or other estate planning, please speak with Endowment Frank Wilbanks, United Moderator Sarah Sawtell, or Rev. Talitha Arnold. We thank you! And so do future generations of United!

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CARE AND CONCERN





Prayers of Thanks to:

- All who made the journey of **Holy Week and Easter Sunday** so powerful, beautiful, honest and hopeful—including the Sacred Space Team, the Parish Life Team, the Discipleship Development Team, the Sanctuary Choir, the Children's and Youth Team, Congregational Care Team, Flower Deliverers, Audio-Visual volunteers, the Church staff, volunteer ad creator Russ Rountree; and all of you who joined in or tuned in.
- Everyone who sang, played, conducted, recorded, came, spread the word, or brought friends and in so doing made the New Mexico Premiere of "A Place Called Home" such a great event. And kudos and thanks to composer Bradley Ellingboe and lyricist Charles Anthony Silvestri for their wonderful creation.

Prayers of Blessings for:

- > Joan and Mike Sickler, as they prepare to move to Massachusetts to be closer to family.
- > United's Graduates (Aleisha Natonabah, Capitol High; Jack Smucker and Jaden Lane, Santa Fe Prep Middle School; Barbara McPhee's 52-year-old son, graduating with his B. S. from University of New Orleans).
- Author Anne Hillerman as her new book, *Shadow of the Solstice*, is launched (the 10th in her Manuelito/Chee/Leaphorn series).

Healing and Hope for:

- The family and friends of Steve Kerchoff, Dorothy Patinka, Sandy Vermillion, mourning the loss of loved ones; for Jane Carson and Karen Kleeman, following the death of Jane's brother Carroll; the family and colleagues of Rev. Francis Rath, long-time pastor of Albuquerque's First Congregational Church (UCC) and chair of the Steering Committee that formed United Church of Santa Fe. Francis and his wife Marge were United members following his retirement from First Congregational; our Catholic kindred and neighbors, along with people of all faiths who grieve the death of Pope Francis. Also, prayers for the loved ones of former *New Mexican* journalist Denise Kusel, whose memorial service is Tuesday, May 13 (10:00 am), and Ricco Tapia, whose memorial is Friday, May 16 (10:00 am).
- Maggie Popp, John Christiano, and Bob Christie, recovering from surgery; Dana Hollifield, going through radiation therapy; George Duncan, recovering from eye surgery; and others also dealing with difficult health issues (Sally Strong, Ken Bordner, Sophia Zulema and Larry Thorpe's daughter, Helen Natonabah McCabe, Ray and Nancy Lutz, Rev. Kathleen Jimenez, Maria Navarette, Diane Johnston's brother; Ann Noss, Marty Wilder's mother, 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 **Tony Sawtell**, who recently moved to The Retreat; **Royce and Carolyn Stewart**, **Rev. Christine and Paul Vogel**, **Rev. Roger Knapp** (at Montecito) and **Linda Knapp** (at Spanish Trails); and others); persons living with Parkinson's or other neurological conditions, (**Monsignor Jerome Martinez**, **Dr. Karl Ray**, and others); or with chronic illness (**Brooke Roberts**, **Jan McGough**, and others); those in assisted living.
- 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.)
- Continued prayers for our nation and those making decisions that impact the lives and well-being of others. And prayers for all those from immigrants to college students to persons who are disabled to scientists and federal workers whose lives are turned upside down by those decisions.
- > Persons who are imprisoned in this country and elsewhere, and for those who love them.
- The people and all creation dealing with fires and tornadoes throughout the Midwest and South.
- > Immigrants and asylum seekers at the U.S. border and those in our country, all facing uncertain futures.
- The people of Gaza, 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, 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 May

On Call: John Shaffer Food: June Yoder

(505) 466-4372 (505) 503-0555

Page 5 United Voice

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!



BE THE LIGHT—SÉ LA LUZ One Great Hour of Sharing

This spring (through Memorial Day Sunday – May 25—which is also United's 45th birthday), 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 food or medical relief, emergency needs for fire/tornado victims or refugees on the U.S./Mexico border). To donate online, go to <u>unitedchurchofsantafe.org</u>, memo: OGHS. Thank you!

Immigration & Refugee Update

In an April Forum, Santa Fe Mayor Alan Webber spoke on the city's stance on immigration, sponsored by the Immigration Task Force and invited by Talitha. He gave a brief introduction on the city's charter that affirms all persons are welcome. He also spoke about the City's actions concerning ICE and discussed the newly re-constituted Immigration Committee (est. 1999). Its nine members represent a diversity of organizations (e.g., Human Rights, Social Services, Business, Health Care, Labor, Faith Communities, Youth Services, etc.). Its mission is to strengthen the City's policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of a person's national origin and address the human rights of non-citizens in Santa Fe. Info: santafenm.gov/community-services/ immigration-committee or United's Immigration Task Force (Chair Avril Ekstrand, 505-490-8164). Also, join in the May 11 Sunday Forum with Santa Fe Dreamers.

LOVE GOD, LOVE CREATION!

Santa Fe River Cleanup Saturday, May 17 (8:30-10:00 am)

Join us to care for our corner of Creation. Meet at Closson St. Pedestrian Bridge. 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!

Compost Collection It's a Miracle!

United contracts with Reunity Resources to transform 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!

Planning Your Summer Travels? Offset Your Carbon Use & Care for Creation

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 support *Tree New Mexico's* hands-on tree planting and *NM Interfaith Power and Light*'s advocacy. Info: united churchofsantafe.org/creation-care.



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Adult Faith Formation

ADULT FORUMS — Sundays at 11:15 am

Joan Snider, Adult Faith Formation Chair

Being Christian: What Does It Mean, What Does It Matter? Rev. Peter Marty, Publisher of The Christian Century Sunday, May 4

In addition to welcoming renowned preacher and journalist Rev. Peter Marty as our guest in worship, Peter will also lead the Sunday Forum. As publisher of *The Christian Century*, the flagship journal of American progressive Christianity and ecumenical reporting—and as a Pastor who's served local churches—Peter knows the "big picture" of religious trends and has the "on-the-ground" experience of the opportunities and challenges facing local congregations. Plan to join in!

Santa Fe Dreamers: Their Futures, Our Responsibilities Sunday, May 11

Given the current administration's actions toward immigrants and refugees, children who were brought to the U.S. by their parents seeking asylum, refuge, and safety for their families now face great difficulties and uncertainty. Since 2012, the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program has ensured safety from deportation and the opportunity to work in the U.S. legally—but the future of the program is in jeopardy. This Sunday we hear learn from leaders of Santa Fe Dreamers and young adult impacted by the uncertainty.

FOOD, FUN AND GAMES – SUNDAY, MAY 18

Plan to stay after the 10:00 service on Sunday, May 18 for an All Church, All Ages Lunch and Outdoor Games!

Signup in the Community Room. More information to come—but save the date now!

Sunday, May 25 Is United's 45th Birthday!

We've moved the full celebration to September 14 to give time for planning a really big bash—but on our official 45th Birthday, we'll have cake, conversation, and all kinds of good things! Plan to join in!

Groups and Gatherings

Wednesday Women's Study Group May 7 & 21 – 10:00 am

We finish reading *The Women* by Kristin Hannah and select books for next year's reading. All women welcome! For more info, contact Cheryl Morton (mommorton@gmail.com, 515-240-4523) or Jenn Wynn (home@wynnes.us, 817-219-0707).

Pretty Good Guys Explore "The Greatest Prayer" Jesus' Revolutionary Message in the Lord's Prayer Wednesdays, May 14 & 28 (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)

"Faith and Resilience" Bible Study Group Thursdays at 8:00 am via Zoom (starting again May 8)

Join this weekly Zoom study to deepen your faith and share the journey. People tune in from all around the country.

What Does It Mean to Be a Christian Community in America 2025?

All Church Retreat – Saturday, May 10 (8:30 am to 12:00 noon)

As United looks to the future (and deals with the present), what does our faith call us to do and be as a community seeking to walk in the ways of Jesus the Christ? Join with United Church council and other leaders to explore this question and look with faith to God's future for United. Please sign up today.

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS SUNDAY, MAY 18

On the 5th Sunday of Eastertide, we welcome new members into the United Church of Santa Fe. If you are interested in "officially" joining United, please speak with Rev. Talitha Arnold, Moderator Sarah Sawtell, or Discipleship Chair Diane Darby. Thank you!

THE UNITED CHURCH OF SANTA FE A UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Mailing Date — April 29, 2025

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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: <u>unitedchurchofsantafe.org</u>). 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 <u>unitedchurchsf@gmail.com</u>, go to our website. Thank you!