CROSSROADS

BETHANY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER MARCH 2025

from the pastor...

On Wednesday, March 5th, we enter into the holy season of Lent. In the ancient church, this was a traditional time for people to prepare to become new members or to reconcile themselves back into membership relationships with the church. It is a time characterized by a heightened sense of strengthening one's connection to God through fasting, and adopting spiritual disciplines. One could view it as a time of dying to their old sinful ways so that they can find life in Christ. With that in mind, our main theme for the full season of Lent is *Memento Mori* (Remember your Death) We will be spending time talking about contemplating death so that we can live better lives.

While we do that, I think it is also important to recognize Women's History Month in March. So, each Sunday in March the liturgists will be women and I have invited each of them to choose the Centering Reflection that we use at the beginning of worship. March 16th will be ALL women's voices. In addition to Emily Itoku serving as our liturgist, Julie Freeman will share a reflection and invite the congregation to share about the important solemn in their lives and Rev Angela Brown (fresh into retirement!) will preside over communion.

And so, I wish you all a good and holy Lent. Here are some opportunities to help you:

Ash Wednesday, March 5th

- Sanctuary open from Noon to 2 pm for prayer and contemplation *(Pastor Rob will be present to give ashes)*. Enter through Clipper Street door.
- Ash Wednesday Service with imposition of ashes at 7 pm in the multi-purpose room. Enter via Clipper Street door.

During Lent

- Tuesday & Thursday Morning Prayer at 8:30 am in the sanctuary and via Zoom. Enter via Clipper Street door.
- Wednesday Evening Prayer, beginning March 12, at 5:30 pm in the sanctuary & via Zoom. Enter via Clipper St. door.

I also invite you to take a look at the chart on the next page, ***How to Have a Great Lent*** created by my colleague in Ashland, Ohio, Rev. Derek Kubilus.

Blessings, Pastor Rob

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- Pastoral Reflection
- Photo Gallery
- Budget Update
- Upcoming Events
- Community Celebration Board

COMING SOON

March 5 - Ash Wednesday Services
March 7 - Ring Out Danger
March 9 - Bagged Lunches
March 22 - Sound Bath
March 29 - WinterShelter Meal
April 4 - Labyrinth Walk Service
April 6 - Interfaith Shelter Walk
April 29 - Book Study Starts
"Warmth of Other Suns"

(cont'd from previous page)

Lent is a period of 40 days, lasting from Ash Wednesday until Easter (*not including Sundays*) when Christians have traditionally taken extra time to fast, pray, and give alms to the poor in preparation for Easter. Lent is considered the holiest season of the Christian year and a season devoted to spiritual health and sobriety.

HOW TO HAVE A GREAT LENT

1 GET READY

Make a plan! Take some time to think about what you want your Lent to look like and make any preparations you might need.

2 CHOOSE A FAST

Some people give up little things like chocolate or soda pop. Others give up bad habits like smoking or gambling. Some limit screen time or spending. Whatever you choose to give up for Lent, the point is to get rid of something that's not-so-helpful so you can make room for what IS helpful!

3 CHOOSE A DISCIPLINE

Some people try to set aside some time for prayer every day. Others may volunteer once a week or start journaling or read a spiritual book. It doesn't matter what you choose, as long as it's helpful to your spirit!

4 GET YOUR ASHES

The Ash Wednesday Service is a powerful part of Christian tradition, and it's designed specifically to help everyone who attends to get their Lent off to a great start!

5 GIVE ALMS

Sharing and taking care of vulnerable people has always been a major theme of Lent. Alms are any gift you have for someone less fortunate than yourself: food, money, time, attention...anything! Just make sure you give with a joyful spirit and an open heart!

6 GO EASY ON YOURSELF

Fasting and discipline are hard sometimes, and that's ok. Don't beat yourself up if you break your fast or mess up a discipline. Just take a pause, adjust your expectations, and jump back in! **Lent isn't a competition. It's a journey.**

7 DO HOLY WEEK

Holy Week services are some of the most important of the whole year! Easter morning is great but it's even better after all the drama and pageantry of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. The Light of the Resurrection is brighter after the darkness of Holy Week!

PHOTO GALLERY

A PEEK AT RECENT ACTIVITIES IN THE BETHANY COMMUNITY!

LABYRINTH WALK

On February 7th, Bethany hosted another Labyrinth Walk service. Many thanks to everyone who helped "refresh" the labyrinth and supported the service. Thanks especially to Lawsone & Lizzy for brining this ministry to Bethany. We will be having Labyrinth services on April 4, June 6, Aug 1, Oct 3 & Dec 5.

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PHOTO GALLERY

CAFÉ BETHANY

On March 2nd, we held another "Café Bethany," an alternative worship experience that is centered on brunch, sitting around small tables, and with conversations during the worship service. Many thanks for the volunteers who made this happen. The theme this time was ***God on Broadway: Annie***

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BUDGET UPDATE

by Steve Wereb, Treasurer

Through February, we received $24,369 in donations and $32,169 in rental income for a total of $56,538. Our expenses through February were $40,978. Our budget for the year is $307,067 in donations and rental income, and $313,538 in expenses along with an increase to our Reserves of $6,000 which would result in a deficit of -$12,471 and be funded from our cash balance.

Also included below is giving information. The distribution of pledges is shown below. Overall, our total average pledge amount is $5,932 per person. We have 13 people giving between $1 and $6,000, 3 people giving between $6,001 and $9,999, and we have 4 people giving over $10,000. Total donations through February have been $24,369 across 28 people (for both pledgers and non-pledging donors) which results in an average gift of $870 person. For perspective, to have a balanced budget and eliminate our budgeted deficit of -$12,471, we would need another 3 people giving $4,200. Our available cash on February 28th is $137,748

We are very thankful to all our financial donors who provide the means to sustain Bethany and fund our staff and programs and support our community. Bethany would not exist without your financial commitment and making Bethany a priority.

With Gratitude, Steve Wereb, Treasurer

Summary of Donations

Expected Giving for 2025 ==> $137,270

Actual Giving thru 2/28/25 ==> $24,369

Left to Go ==>$112,901

Actual vs. Budget	Actuals thru 2/28/25	Budget for 2025	Actual vs. Budget
Donations	$ 24,369	$ 137,270	$ (112,901)
Rent	32,169	169,797	(137,628)
Total Income	56,538	307,067	(250,529)
Staff & Programs	19,046	139,417	(120,371)
Tithe	3,000	30,707	(27,707)
Building Costs	18,932	117,774	(98,842)
Building Repairs	-	25,640	(25,640)
Total Operating Costs	40,978	313,538	(272,560)
			-
Increase to Reserves	(1,500)	(6,000)	4,500
Net Result	**$ 14,060**	**$ (12,471)**	**$ 26,531**

Cash Balances at 2/28/25	
Operating Cash	$ 137,748
Trustee Cash Reserves	$ 41,680
Memorials	$ 11,500

Distribution of Pledges			
Gift Amount	Number of Households	Pledge Amount	%
$1 to $2,500	9	$ 12,744	11%
$2,501 to $6,000	4	$ 18,400	16%
$6,001 to $9,999	3	$ 23,500	20%
$10,000 & Above	4	$ 64,000	54%
Total	20	$ 118,644	100%
Average/person		$ 5,932	

YTD Donations Received		%
YTD pledges received	$ 20,564	84%
YTD other donations	$ 3,805	16%
Total donations	$ 24,369	100%
Total number of givers	28	
Average gift/giver	$ 870	

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 7th @ 9:30 am, every 1st Friday of the month, we ring our bells in solidarity with ***Ring Out Danger: People of Faith Opposed to Gun Violence*** (**https://ringoutdanger.org**). Please join us, in front of Bethany, no ringing experience is required.

Bagged Lunches, Sunday, March 9th @Noon:
We will continue with our sack lunch ministry with SF Night Ministry. Six times a year we create 125 sack lunches for our unhoused neighbors in San Francisco.

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Urban Practitioner and
Bethany United Methodist Church present

A Sound Bath Healing

Saturday, March 22nd at 10 am

Kick back, relax and leave it all on your mat! Release that Stagnation!

What to Bring

YOGA MAT
EYE SLEEP MASK
FACE MASK (optional)
BLANKET
PILLOW
whatever makes you comfortable

Visit:
BethanySF.org
IG: @UrbanPractitioner

BETHANY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1270 SANCHEZ ST, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94127
bethanysf.org

San Francisco INTERFAITH COUNCIL

Interfaith Winter Shelter Meal, Saturday, March 29th, and Walk, Sunday April 6th

- **Saturday, March 29th, Bethany will be providing a meal for the SFIC Winter Shelter. If you would like to help with the cooking or delivering & serving, please contact Cathy Personius or Marilyn Herand (mherand@sbcglobal.net).**
- **Sunday, April 6th, at Noon, Bethany will have a team participating in the WinterFaith Shelter Walk, which is a 4-1/2 mile charity trek around Lake Merced, to raise funds for the Winter Shelter. Let Cathy or Marilyn know if you'd like to particiate.**

BETHANY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1270 SANCHEZ ST, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94127
bethanysf.org

During the days of constant rain last month, Bethany donated 100 pair of socks to the San Francisco Interfaith Council Winter Shelter. They were very grateful to get them. This month, on March 29th, we will also provide a meal for the SFIC Winter Shelter. If you would like to help with the cooking or delivering and serving, please contact Cathy Personius or Marilyn Herand (**mherand@sbcglobal.net).** Also, a Bethany team will participate in the Walk on April 6th.

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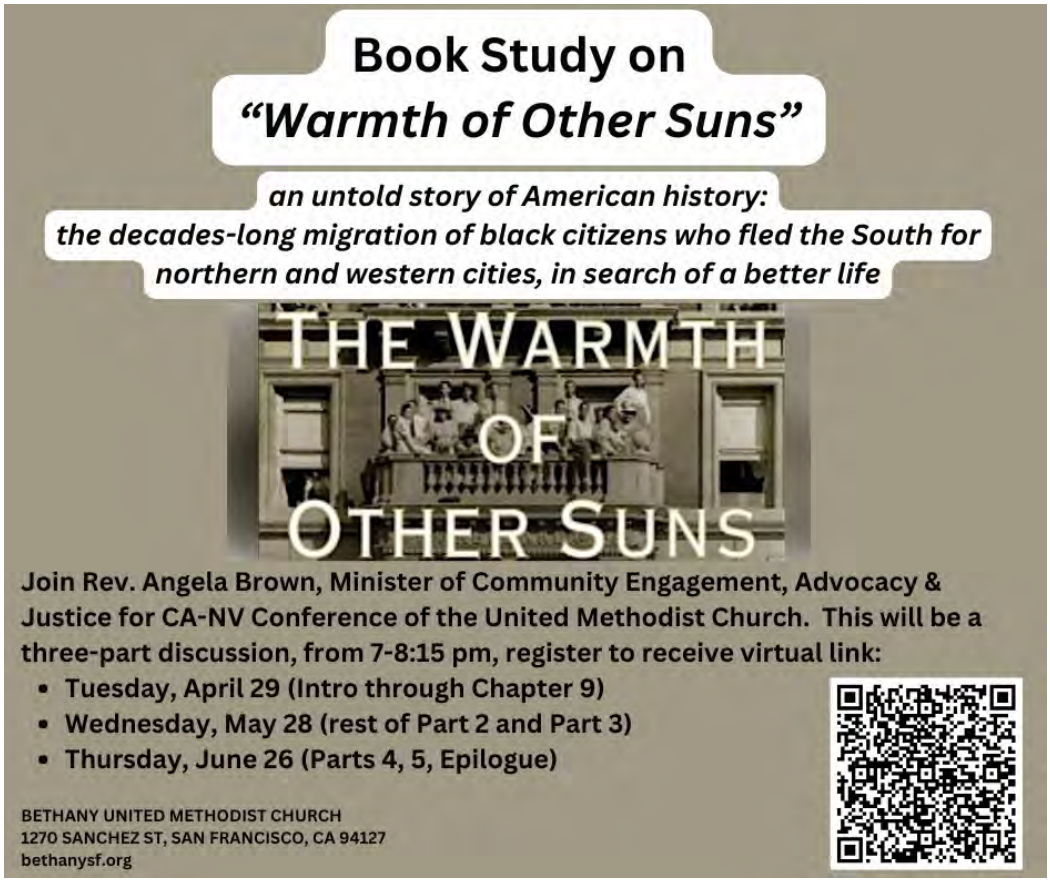
UPCOMING EVENTS

Join us for a service of music and movement, Friday, April 4th at 7 pm.

Each first Friday of the even numbered months will be an evening of chants and contemplative music inspired by the world's spiritual traditions. You are invited to explore the deeply centering tradition of walking the labyrinth, a journey inward and then back out. The service is very casual and is designed to be whatever you make of it. We will play music for about an hour.



Bible Study

Wednesdays 3-4pm on zoom. Join to discuss the scripture for the coming Sunday. All are welcome. Email Marilyn for more info mherand@sbcglobal.net

Small Groups – Sign-up at bethanysf.org

Group options:

-2nd Saturdays each month @ 8:30am

-2nd Wednesdays each month @ 7pm

community celebration board

Our Noe Valley neighbors make use of our Prayer Wall. The prayers may be from people of different faiths, those who've left their denominations for whatever reason, those who have never experienced a Christian community and yet they have prayers. Thanks to Cathy Personius, Bob Armstrong, and Thomas MacBurney for helping to maintain our Community Prayer Wall. Also, thanks to Carol Heard, a Noe Valley neighbor, who is a quilter and contributes prayer strips.

Thanks to our Worship Committee – Pastor Rob, Lawson & Lizzy Hull Barnes, Gloria Soliz and Evan Alparone – who plan and support our worship services and enable us to enjoy a variety of music and themes.

CONTACT US

If you have articles, photos or announcements that you would like to share, please contact us!

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Find us online at **www.bethanysf.org**
FB **@bethanyumcsf** and IG **@bethany_umc_sf**

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

22: Liam Horton O'Connor

26: Shirley Perkins

31: Carolyn Nash