CROSSROADS

BETHANY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER APRIL 2025

from the pastor...

I am writing on Monday, April 7 and thinking ahead. Sunday is Palm / Passion Sunday and then Holy Week … we re-engage with Jesus during his last week. He will arrive in Jerusalem to the cheers of the crowd and within a few days they will turn on him crying out to Pilate to "Crucify him!" Jesus knew this was coming. The gospels tell us that he turned his face toward Jerusalem. He accepted that Jerusalem would bring confrontation, humiliation and death. With full knowledge of his impending death, Jesus continued his ministry of healing humanity, reminding us that God loves us and yearns to be in relationship with us.

I invite you to look back over the course of this Lenten season. Our theme was *memento mori* - remember your death. We reflected on how we need to overcome our innate fear of death. Once we overcome that fear and face its inevitability we can respond by, to paraphrase Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong "loving wastefully, living fully and being all that we are created to be."

Recall in the parable of the Prodigal Son when the wayward son returns home to his father's estate. Many of us felt a tug of recognition, remembering our own journeys from home (Isn't it beautiful how these ancient stories speak to each of us in so many different ways?!). I've been reflecting on the father's reaction to the wayward son's return. He clumsily and with no regard for his dignity hikes up his robe and runs to meet his son. He has no concern for how foolish he looks to his neighbors, his only focus on his love for his returning son. That's how much God loves us, if only we recognize and return to that love.

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COMING SOON

Holy Week:

April 17 - Maundy Thursday, 7pm

April 18 - Good Friday, Noon

April 20 - Easter Sunday, 10:45 am

April 29 - Book Study Starts
"Warmth of Other Suns"

May 2 - Ring Out Danger

May 11 - Bagged Lunches

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Yesterday, my friend, Rev. Alex Rush, talked about grief. It was another topic that spurred a lot of recognition (haven't we all grieved?) and questions about how to grieve well. I heard Alex advise over and over to be present and tender to those who are grieving - for themselves or others. It hit home for me to realize that's the core of the gospel message. God incarnate in the person of Jesus - being present with us in our grief over the perceived death of our relationship with God-self.

Next week, we will have opportunities (see the schedule of services below) to reflect on God's never ending, ever abundant, reason defying love during Jesus' last week as he journeys toward the cross.

Blessings, Pastor Rob

PHOTO GALLERY

A PEEK AT RECENT ACTIVITIES IN THE BETHANY COMMUNITY!

BAGGED LUNCHES

On March 9th, we once again assembled 100 bagged lunches for the unhoused in our community, in collaboration with San Francisco Night Ministry.

SOUND BATH

On March 22nd, Bethany hosted a Sound Bath for the community. Our practitioner was Laneka Leatutufu (pictured below) who led the service.

INTERFAITH WINTER SHELTER WALK

Bethany has been a long-time supporter of the Interfaith Winter Shelter Program. On April 6th, 11 people representing Bethany participated in the Interfaith Winter Shelter Walk and raised $625.

BUDGET UPDATE

by Steve Wereb, Treasurer

Through March, we received $33,152 in donations and $45,212 in rental income for a total of $78,364. Our expenses through March were $68,798 and we increased our Reserves by $1,500. 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 March have been $33,152 across 35 people (for both pledgers and non-pledging donors) which results in an average gift of $947 person to-date. For perspective, to have a balanced budget and eliminate our budget deficit of -$12,471, we would need another 3 people giving $4,200. Our available cash on March 31st is $125,734

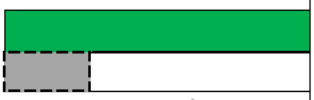
We are very thankful to all our financial donors who provide the means to sustain Bethany and fund our staff and programs and support our community. Bethany would not exist without your financial commitment and making Bethany a priority.

With Gratitude, Steve Wereb, Treasurer

Summary of Donations

Expected Giving for 2025 ==> $137,270

Actual Giving thru 3/31/25 ==> $33,152



Left to Go ==>$104,118

Actual vs. Budget	Actuals thru 3/31/25	Budget for 2025	Actual vs. Budget
Donations	$ 33,152	$ 137,270	$ (104,118)
Rent	45,212	169,797	(124,585)
Total Income	78,364	307,067	(228,703)
Staff & Programs	31,032	139,417	(108,385)
Tithe	4,500	30,707	(26,207)
Building Costs	32,726	117,774	(85,048)
Building Repairs	540	25,640	(25,100)
Total Operating Costs	68,798	313,538	(244,740)
			-
Increase to Reserves	(1,500)	(6,000)	4,500
Net Result	**$ 8,066**	**$ (12,471)**	**$ 20,537**

Cash Balances at 3/31/25	
Operating Cash	$ 125,734
Trustee Cash Reserves	$ 41,688
Memorials	$ 11,708

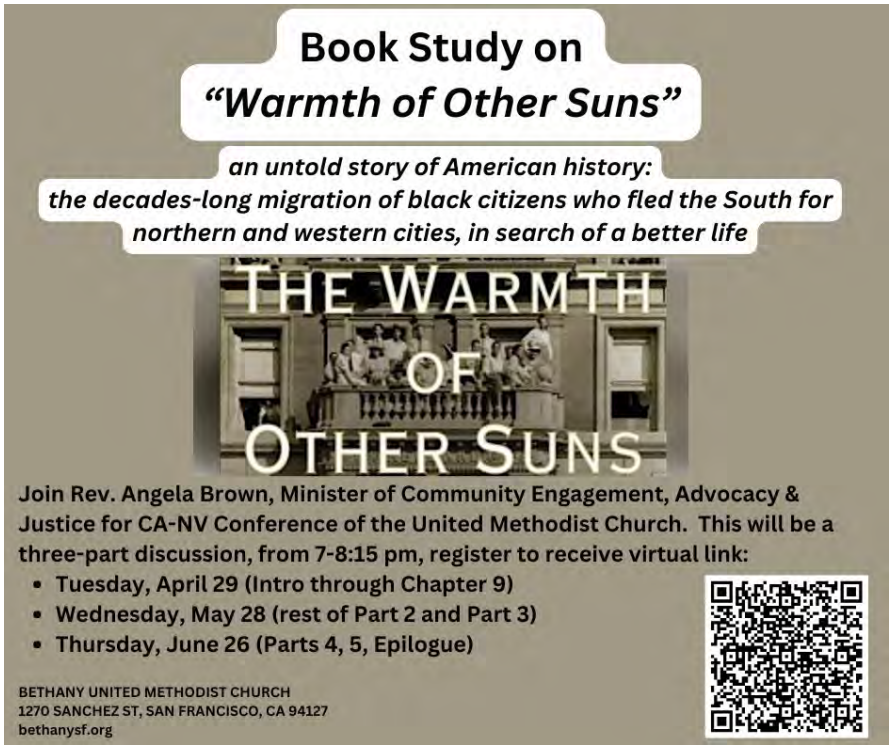
Distribution of Pledges

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	$ 27,276	82%
YTD other donations	$ 5,876	18%
Total donations	$ 33,152	100%
Total number of givers	35	
Average gift/giver	$ 947	

UPCOMING EVENTS

From Bob Armstrong – Bob Armstrong will be having his spring Open Studio art exhibit at the Hunters Point shipyard on **Saturday and Sunday, April 26 and 27th** in Building 101, Studio 1211 from 11 AM to 6 PM both days. Bob and over 140 other artists will be opening the studio doors to visitors. There will be free parking, free admission, and food trucks. Please stop by if you have a chance! Bob's website is **www.bobarmstrongart.com** The Hunters Point Shipyard Artists website is **www.shipyardartists.com**



Book Study: *"Warmth of Other Suns"* – Join our recently retired Cal-Nevada Minister of Community Engagement, Advocacy & Justice, San Francisco, Rev. Angela Brown, JD, for a three-part virtual book study / discussion group of Isabel Wilkerson's award-winning *"The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration."*

- April 29th
- May 28th
- June 26th

from 7-8:15 pm

Scan the QR Code to register

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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May 2nd @ 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, May 11th @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.

Join us for a service of music and movement, Friday, June 6th 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

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**

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

2: Evan Alparone
5: Cathy Personius
10: Raquel Redondiez
17: Bailey Higgins-Eaton
26: Kelsey Laird
28: Robin Ann Palmer