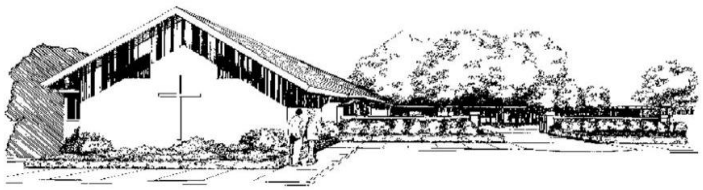
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SAN RAFAEL
August 30, 2026 10 am



Welcome to worship!
We are delighted that you chose to worship with us this morning. We hope you find a warm spirit of hospitality and a worship experience that strengthens your faith and discipleship. You are invited to stand, as you are able, when you see an * in the bulletin.

Centering Thought

"I don't deny the power of my father's most well-known speech, 'I Have a Dream.' However, its power and popularity (with focus on its conclusion) have been misused to weaken its clear messaging about ending racism, stopping police brutality, ensuring voting rights, and eradicating economic injustice."
Bernice A. King, daughter of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King

Centering Bell *On hearing the bell, settle into a time of centering silence and listening to the Prelude with an open heart.*

Prelude

Welcome/Opening Words (A special welcome if you are joining us online)
Liturgist: "No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey..."
Congregation: "You are welcome here."

***Opening Litany -** "*Who Do People Say I Am?"*
One: Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say I am?" They answered with the names of the past, prophets, reformers, voices crying in the wilderness. Then he asked, "But who do *you* say I am?"
All: We look around us, and we answer still.
One: Some say Jesus, that you are a cosmic ruler, distant and demanding, sitting on a throne of judgment.
All: But we see you in the dirt, washing dusty feet and eating with outcasts.
One: Some say you are a hero, a liberator, championing the powerful and blessing the borders of empires.
All: But we hear you blessing the poor, the peacemakers, and the undocumented.
We feel your touch breaking the rules of exclusion, healing on the Sabbath, and throwing the doors wide open.

Opening Song "Gather Us In"** *(Marty Haugen)* ***insert

Opening Prayer
Sovereign God, we delight in your presence. Your words bring joy, peace, and strength. You fill us with your Spirit and shape us in truth. Take us beyond the wilderness of our current condition. Remind us of who you are and who we are in you. Receive our praise, our curiosity, our doubts, our fears. With thanksgiving, we come to you just as we are. In hope, we bring our dreams for a better world and better lives. In awe, we recount what you have already done. In faith, we invite you to equip us as your partners in your kindom. Set a fire for your way and your will within us as we minister in your name.
Amen.

Words of Assurance
People of God, let us hold with care the tensions of our traditions. Help us to honor the best of what we have inherited. And to release what conforms to harm and destruction. So few of us have felt the freedom to question what we are taught. So few of us have been encouraged to respect our own thoughts, intuition, or experiences. May God bless our searching and our seeking that we may exercise our own muscles of faith.
Amen.

Song of Response: Give Me Love



First Reading: Matthew 16:13-18
When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"
They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."
"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"
Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."
Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by the Almighty in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.

Second Reading
On Friday, August 28, 2026, people will gather on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. for the March on Washington. The march is called "Defend the Vote". Hosted by Rev. Al Sharpton, the National Action Network, and the Drum Major Institute on the 63rd anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington. This is why people still march.

- **We march** because the work is not finished**.**
- **We march to defend the vote,** because voting rights are under attack and the protections generations fought, bled, and died for are being weakened.
- **We march to defend civil rights,** because attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion are attempts to roll back access, opportunity, and representation.
- **We march for economic justice,** because too many families are still fighting for fair wages, affordable housing, equal opportunity, and a fair chance to build wealth.

This is not only about one election. This is about whether our democracy will protect all of us. This is about whether the promises of 1963 will finally be made real. This is about standing together, across generations, to say we will not go backward.
On August 28, we return to Washington not to remember history, but to make history. We march for the vote. We march for justice. We march for the future.

***Hymn of Preparation "Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love" NCH 498, vs 1-**3

Sermon "When you have something, share it" – Dolly Parton Rev. Elisabeth Middelberg

Quiet Reflection

Special Music Gospel Ship (Jay Althouse**) FCC choir**

Sharing Our Joys & Concerns *After each joy or concern, Pastor leads the congregation to respond "Lord, hear our prayer."*

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer
Our Creator *(Father, Mother, God)* **who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your Kindom come; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the Kindom, and the Power, and the Glory, forever. Amen.**

Offering

Invitation to Generosity
The Greek word in the new testament for 'church' is ecclesia. It means 'the assembly of the people.' We come together to influence one another and to be influenced. To dream. To support. To hold. To advocate. May we, assembled in the company of God, bring our resources together for the co-creation of the world we hope to build.

Offering Song What is Good



Offering Prayer

Holy One, for the many sources of wisdom you have surrounded us with, we give you thanks. May we embrace the whole collage of teachers through which you speak. Open us to the guidance of the land and its creatures. Teach us through our neighbors with stories unlike our own. Nurture our trust of our bodies as carriers of knowledge. That we may discover hidden aspects of you, each other, and our own intimate lives.

Announcements/Life of the Church

***Sending Song "Guide My Feet"- NCH 497**

***Benediction**

***Response**

And God will raise us up on eagles' wings,
bear us on the breath of dawn
make us to shine like the son,
and hold us in the palm of God's hand.

Postlude

Announcements

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SAN RAFAEL

8 North San Pedro Road
San Rafael, California 94903
Phone: 415-479-2747

Website: www.fccsanrafael.org
e-mail: office@fccsanrafael.org

Pastor: Rev. Elisabeth Middelberg
Music Director: Gerry Grosz
Office Manager: Amy Powers

Office hours: Monday and Thursday
10:30 -2 pm

Diaper Donations
We've been asked by Marin Interfaith Council to collect donations of disposable diapers needed by our community. There is a need for sizes 3, 4 and 5. Donation box will be in the narthex under the name badge table!

Have You Taken Control of Your Health Today?
Life Line Screening will be at Aldersgate United Methodist Church on Tuesday, September 1, offering safe, painless, non-invasive preventive health screenings to provide peace of mind or early detection for risk of stroke and cardiovascular disease. The combination of these tests helps detect problems-before you have symptoms and while you and your doctor can still take action. Please visit **https://www.llsa.social/habc for more information** or call toll-free **800-324-9458, text** the word **circle** to 216-279-1607.There is no time like the present to take action!

Donations
Thank you to everyone who supports the church financially. Your generosity allows us to maintain the building, pay our staff, and sustain the ministries that make this community possible. About 20% of every dollar donated goes right back out to support organizations in the wider community.

If you give through the offering plate on Sundays, consider using the envelopes available at the welcome table. This lets us track your contributions and send you a year-end giving statement for tax purposes.

SEPTEMBER BOOK CLUB
On Thursday, September 3 at 7:30 PM on Zoom, we will be reading ***The Place of Tides***, by James Rebanks***.*** It is available from both the Marin and Sonoma County libraries as a book, an e-book, and an audiobook.

Pastoral Visit
Do you want a visit with Pastor Elisabeth? Call the church office 415-479-2747 or email: elismid@yahoo.com

Prayer Chain
E-mail Julie Dowling: isabella1472@comcast.net if you have a prayer request you would like included in the prayer chain.

Remember your offering: Ways to give
*Paypal- You can make a one-time donation or set up regular monthly payments using a credit card or debit card. Just click the "Donate Now" button on our website or in each weekly email.
*set up automatic donations through your banking institution
*send your check to: FCC San Rafael: 8 North San Pedro Road, San Rafael, CA 94903

We are in need of liturgists, greeters, communion servers. If you are interested contact Amy in the office: office@fccsanrafael.org or call 415-479-2747

Sunday Servers

August 30
Liturgist: Caran Cuneo
Altar: Caran Cuneo
Greeter:
Coffee: Kelly Anderson

September 6
Liturgist: Lucinda Ray
Altar: Cathi Fuller
Servers: Caryl Hodges, Caran Cuneo
Greeter: Ed Briggs
Coffee: Brian Johnson & Frank Lindh

September 13:
Liturgist: David Knopf
Altar: Lucinda Ray
Greeter: Cathi Fuller
Coffee: Jim Turner