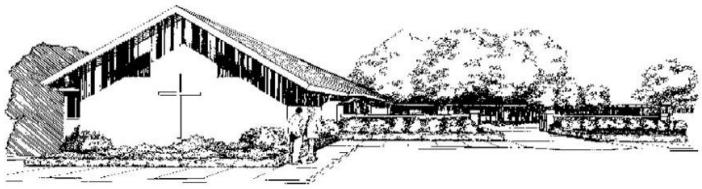
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SAN RAFAEL
August 16, 2026 10 am



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
"The present is not a time for desperation but for hopeful activity."
Thomas Berry, The Great Work

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

Choir of Unity in Marin

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 A Prayer**
One; Holy One,
We are frightened by how quickly the world is changing
and by the damage our fear can unleash.
All: Give us clear eyes for the dangers before us.
Help us recognize the hands and words that cause harm
without allowing hatred to govern our own.
One: Draw our attention to the wounds beneath the spectacle—
the abandoned community,
the family stretched past its limits,
the neighbor made into a target,
the Earth exhausted by our taking.
All: Give courage to those who stand between the vulnerable
and the powers that threaten them.
One: Make us healers of what can still be healed,
truth-tellers who remain tender,
and faithful companions to this wounded world.
All: Amen.

***Opening Song Open My Eyes, That I May See insert**

Opening Prayer
Gracious and Healing God, in your presence, we find the fullness of joy, love, and life. Expand our vision and write a new way forward upon our hearts. We seek your wisdom and guidance. We need your comfort and conviction. We trust your provision and power. As we come near to you, we affirm your goodness and the goodness within us. Receive our presence and our dreams of the world you help us make possible.
Amen

Words of Assurance
People of God,
Beware, of those too confident in their definitions of God.
There are many blessings in the teachings of our faith.
There are many dangers, too.
May we move humbly through our world
with love and righteousness as our guides.
May a cosmos beyond our control and comprehension draw our lives ever deeper into wonder and awe
Amen.

Song of Response

Give Me Love

George Harrison



First Reading: Excerpts from Matthew 15 and the story of the Canaanite Woman

Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!” Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?
Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.”

Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.”
Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.”
He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”
The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said.
6 He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.”
“Yes, it is, Lord,” she said. “Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.”
Then Jesus said to her, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed at that moment.

Second Reading - A Quote by *Pierre Teilhard De Chardin*

“In the final analysis, the questions of why bad things happen to good people transmutes itself into some very different questions, no longer asking why something happened, but asking how we will respond, what we intend to do now that it happened.”

***Hymn of Preparation There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy – NCH 23**

Sermon The voice of the Canaanite Woman in a distraught world

Quiet Reflection

Special Music Choir of Unity in Marin

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.
Amen.

Announcements/ Life of the Church

***Sending Song In the Midst of New Dimensions - NCH 391 vs 1-3and 5**

***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

August 23
Rev. Shine from the UCC Church in Tiburon will be preaching, Pastor Eisabeth will preside.

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

Be in the know! Sign up for our weekly email. Call Amy in the office 415-479-2747 or email office@fccsanrafael.org and leave your name and email.

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 16
Liturgist: Lucinda Ray
Altar: Clara Miller
Greeter: Clara Miller
Coffee: David Knopf

August 23
Liturgist: Caryl Hodges
Altar: Jackie Dema
Greeter: Jackie Dema
Coffee: Cathy Krise & Julie Dowling

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

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