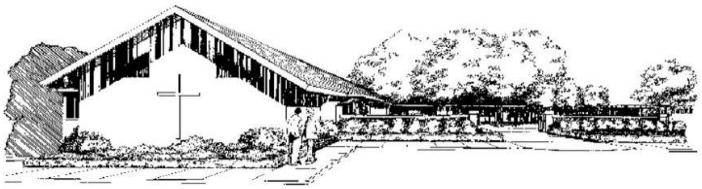
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SAN RAFAEL
October 25, 2026 10 am



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 care of the earth is our most ancient and most worthy and, after all, our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it, and to foster its renewal, is our only legitimate hope." *Wendell Berry*

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."

Land Acknowledgment
We, the Congregational Church of San Rafael, acknowledge that our Sanctuary sits on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Coast Miwok people, who are the original peoples of the San Rafael Area. We recognize that we benefit from living and working on their traditional homeland, and we affirm their sovereign rights as First Peoples.

Opening Litany - "*The Ground Remembers*" - *A Prayer by Rev. Cameron Trimble
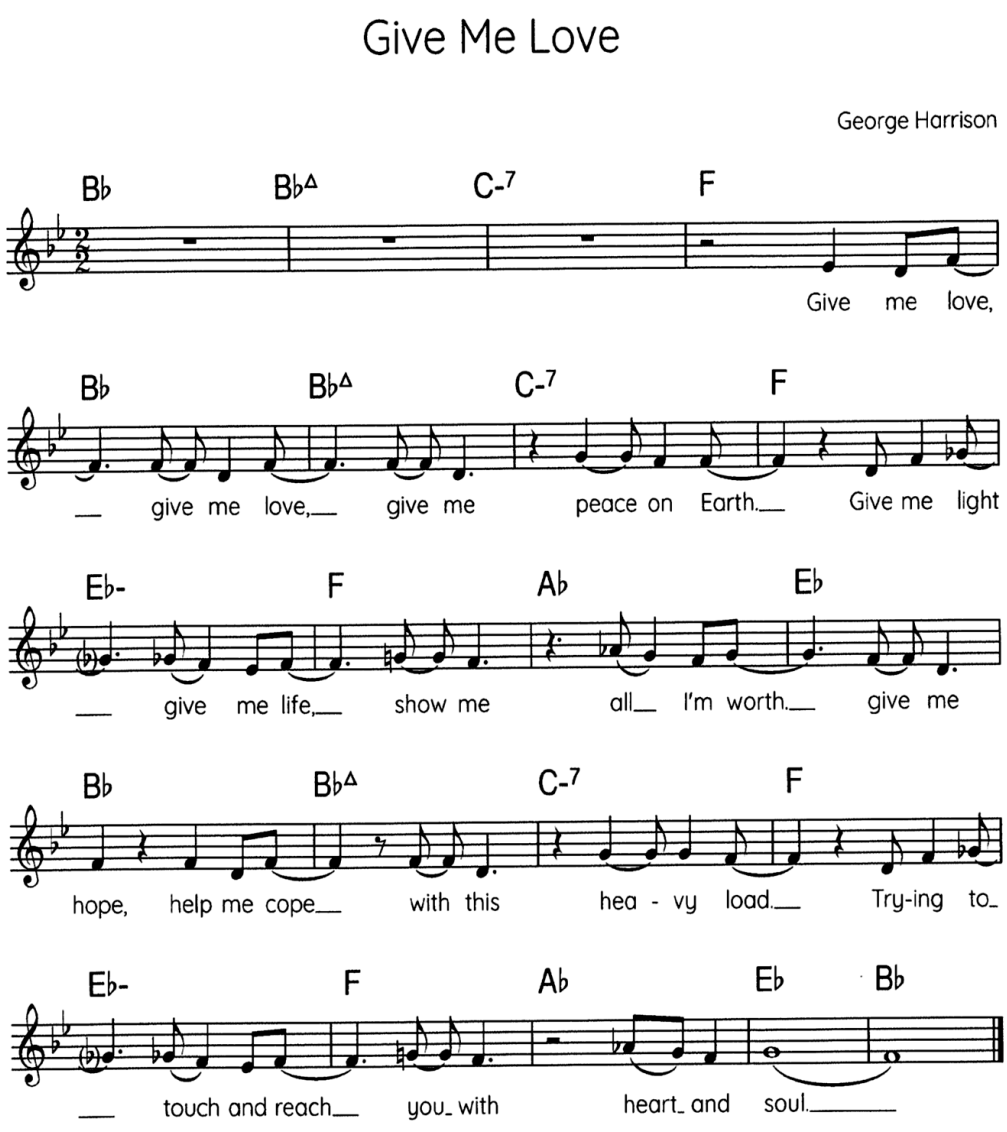
One: Holy One, You hear the blood that cries out from the earth,
the grief that lingers where a life was taken.
All: Receive all whose lives were ended by violence.
One: Hold their families, in the tenderness of your love,
and comfort the communities, who carry their absence.
Give courage to those who stand beside the vulnerable,
and protection to those who risk themselves for others.
All: Do not let our weariness become indifference,
or our grief harden into despair.
Teach us to cherish the living with the same devotion
we bring to remembering the dead.
One: May the streets of our cities
become places of belonging again,
where children can play without fear
and neighbors can live in peace.
All: **Amen**

***Opening Song Creative God, You Spread the Earth – Insert**

Opening Prayer
God of Love
When we are unkind to people,
and forget they are God's children,
When we are careless with the beasts,
and forget they are God's creation,
When we ill-treat the land,
and forget the splendor of God,
Forgive us, O God of love,
and reconcile us to yourself,
to one another and to the Creation.
Teach us that the earth and all its fullness is yours,
the world and all who dwell in it.
Call us again to safeguard the gift of life, now and forever.

Assurance of Grace
People of God**,**
How beautiful our love for each amidst sorrow
How strong our solidarity amidst systems of harm
How soulful our compassion blessed by the Holy Spirit Go with God who weeps and rages with us. We are not alone.
Amen

Song of Response: Give Me Love



First Reading: ***A creation story from the Mossi people, who live in West Africa***

In the beginning there was only the Kingdom of Everlasting Truth, ruled by the Naba Zid-Wendé. They made the earth, then the sun for the busy day and the moon for the restful night, and in doing so created time itself. The earth was covered in fire, so they blew on it to cool it and ordered the fire to live inside the earth. The fire went resentfully.

To test the earth, they made a chameleon, then snakes, then the elephant, rhinoceros, and buffalo. When the crust held them all, they made humans, very black because black is a strong color, and blew a soul into them. Their smile became the sky, hung low enough for humans to eat. But the humans grew arrogant and suspicious, claiming something valuable was hidden under the mountains. They dug and found only a leper in a prison, and freed him. He was really the fire, and he burst into flames and burned the sky, which withdrew beyond the stars. The Naba Zid-Wendé then made clouds, rivers, plants, fruit trees, and flowers to sustain and beautify the earth.

As humans multiplied, so did their arrogance. The Naba Zid-Wendé made a great blue lake for them to bathe in and wash it away, but the humans were too busy to come, and the fire poisoned the water with hatred and division. Only when the sun dried the lake did they finally bathe. The first group came out white, the second yellow, and the third copper-red. By the time the last group arrived, only a little water remained, so they could wash only their hands and feet, and the rest of them stayed black.

Later the Naba Zid-Wendé came to earth, shaping one last animal from a lump of clay as they walked. The plants and animals celebrated, but the human races were too busy dividing the land and enslaving one another to notice. The Naba Zid-Wendé were so saddened that they forgot their last creation, until it cried out for a head, legs, and a tail. They sadly finished their lump of clay, which is why the turtle has the shape it has.

Second Reading: An Excerpt from Psalm 104

Praise God, oh my soul.
God, you are so very great;
you are clothed with splendor and majesty.
You wrap yourself in light as with a garment;
you stretch out the heavens like a tent.
You make the winds your messengers,
flames of fire your servants.
You make springs pour water into the ravines;
it flows between the mountains.
They give water to all the beasts of the field;
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.
The birds of the sky nest by the waters;
they sing among the branches.
You make grass grow for the cattle,
and plants for people to cultivate,
bringing forth food from the earth.
How many are your works, O God!
In wisdom you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.
When you send your Spirit, they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.
I will sing to God all my life;
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.
May my meditation be pleasing to God,
as I rejoice in God.
Praise God. **Amen**

***Hymn of Preparation Touch the Earth Lightly – NCH 569**

Sermon Sacred Earth, Sacred Work, Part 2

Moment for Silent Reflection

Special Music **Love Can Build a Bridge** (Paul Overstreet, John Jarvis, Naomi Judd; arr. G. Grosz)
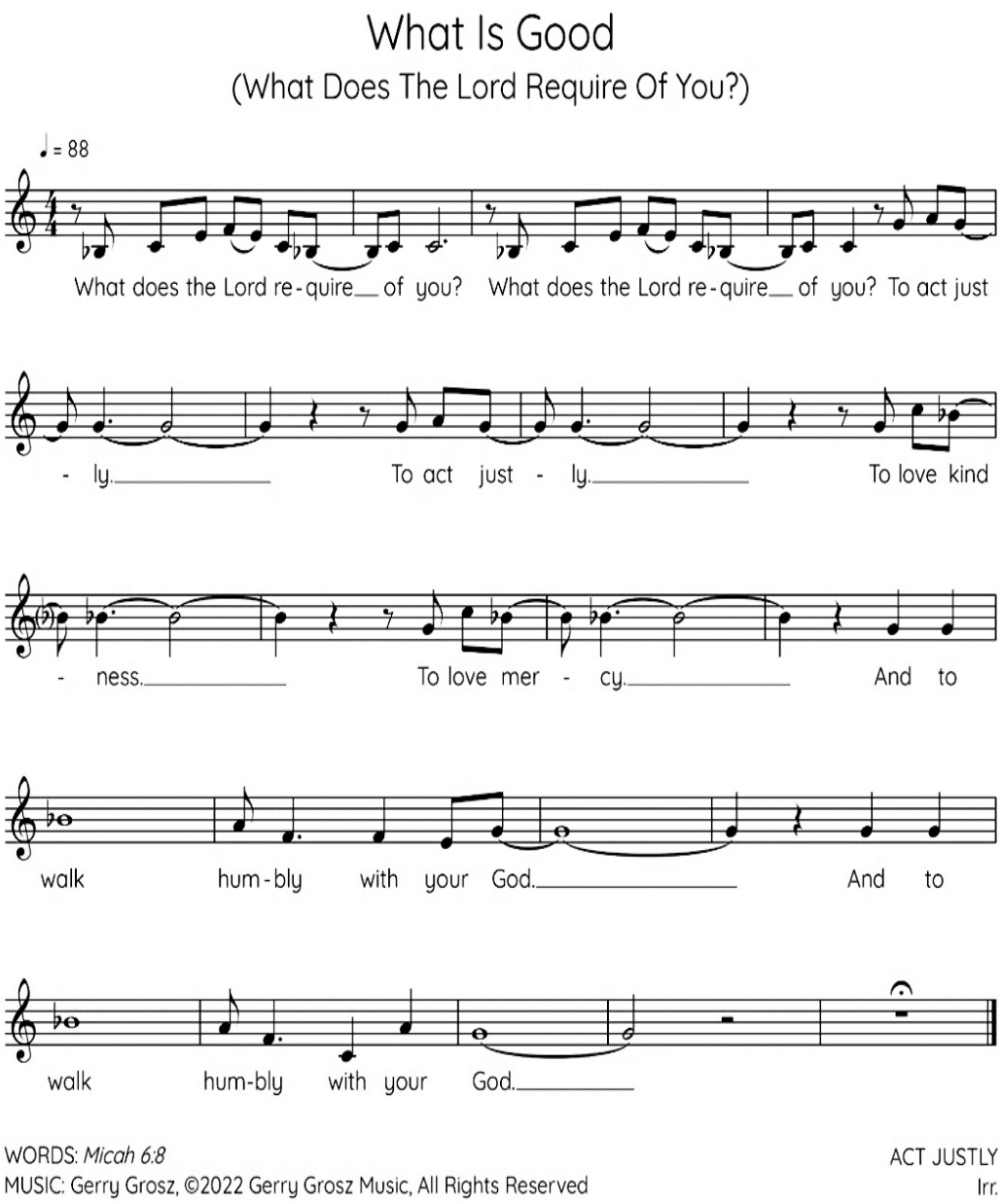
Sharing Our Joys & Concerns *After each joy or concern, Pastor leads the congregation to respond "Lord, hear our prayer."*

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's prayer - New Zealand Book of Common Prayer
Eternal Spirit,
Earth-maker, Pain bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe;
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world; Your heavenly will be done by all created beings;
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and test, strengthen us. From trial too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen
Offering

Invitation to Generosity
The elite seed the lie that, in the wake of disaster, we are each other's enemies—that we must depend on crumbs offered by the power-hoarders to survive. But we have witnessed the truth: in the wake of loss, the hearts of ordinary people reach out and out and out. We become to each other sustenance and strength. Come, beloveds, it is a holy and rebellious thing to share our resources with one another.

Offering Song What is Good



Offering Prayer

"I will not turn away from all the harrowing and beautiful ways our lives are interconnected" writes artist, Sarah Cap. In the wake of climate disaster, amidst the systems of death-dealing— we bless our offerings to the radical, beautiful practices of solidarity and hope. **Amen**

Announcements/Life of the Church

***Sending Song O How Glorious, Full of Wonder – NCH 558, vs 1-3**

***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

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.

Meetings
Ministry October 27@11:45 am

Pledge Sunday
Sunday, November 1

Food Bank Barrel
Most needed items include: Coffee, tea bags, cooking oil, boxed milk, peanut butter, canned goods, rice, cereal, mac and cheese mix and canned meat. Sugar and flour are also greatly appreciated. The barrel is located in the church narthex.

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

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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

Sunday Servers

October 25
Liturgist: Caran Cuneo
Altar: Jackie Dema
Greeter: Jackie Dema
Coffee: Megan Fuller

November 1
Liturgist: Lorene Jackson
Altar: Megan Fuller
Servers: Lucinda Ray, Caran Cuneo
Greeter: Ed Briggs
Coffee: Cathi Fuller

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