# Sierra Christian Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

# Be it Renew, Restore, or Revive; or be it Reclaim, Restock, Revamp, Reaffirm; or be it Reinvent, or even Resurrect—it's Easter!

Whether, as the story is told, Jesus literally rose from his tomb and told Mary not to worry, and later stood before his skeptical disciples and showed them his recent wounds to allay their doubts, is not the point, though it

is what has given Christianity its legs over the eons and inspired so much. We understand that the New Testament is full of metaphor and allegory, and I am guessing the same is likely true of the depiction of Jesus's death and day three miracle. But instead of dissecting His death and the remarkable events that followed, I want to announce straight up that Easter can be about the Ressurection if you so choose. And it can also be about renewal and change, restoration and birth, revival and reclamation, restocking, reaffirmation, and reinvention—about stepping out of the cave's darkness and into the world's shared light.



Rev. Christine Pobanz-Hartmire

Jesus walked out of that tomb, literally or metaphorically, to remind us that in this world we can stand straight and walk free, free not of all human trouble but free of imposed misery, free to develop as the men and women God intended, free to conduct and shape our affairs. This was not the world Jesus was born into, but it was one He let us glimpse through the manner of His life, one for which He was willing to die.

You don't have to walk out of a tomb into the light to experience this personal renaissance. We end our Sunday morning's together with the benediction, "Our worship may be over, but our service has just begun. Go

WHOA! WHOA!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
HE WASN'T LOST, WE
KICKED HIM OUT!

out and love and serve each other." I love this because it is so true to me as a woman and a Christian.

I read recently about a small, prestigious liberal arts college on the East coast that has adopted a fascinating modality for treating the nearly 25% of their students who reach out in need of emotional support. (Those with acute symptoms are of course triaged to mental health professionals). But those who are mildly anxious, or depressed, or just having a hard time of it, are told (before being prescribed drugs or encouraged to take the rest of the semester off) to try something first. They are handed a list of volunteer opportunities in town: animal shelters, elderly care centers, food banks, homeless shelters. In other words, they are encouraged to do what every sponsor worth their salt in AA tells a new sponsee to do after compassionately listening to their litany of grievances about bad bosses

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#### **EASTER**

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and being broke and not being able to see their kids or having to take the bus everywhere to get anywhere, because the world is against them.

"Sounds like you could use a break from yourself—go find someone to be of service to. It is the absolute best way to get out of your head."

It reminds me of Frank. Frank died of cancer 9 or 10 years ago, but he loved to tell the story how he for the longest time he was grumbling and griping about the horror of his cancer; it had already claimed a leg and he knew it was bound to kill him one day, and where in the hell was God in that bleak scenario. One day his friends, agreeing that he was given a bad break, but bone weary of hearing him moan on and on in self-misery, told him to get off the pity pot. They suggested he get involved with something worthwhile to take his mind of his woe or leave them alone. He was casting a pall over everyone he interacted with. He was in a dark place.

Frank eventually called Loaves & Fishes, explained his situation, and became a weekly volunteer. Some days he was in the kitchen. Other days he worked in the library or bought dozens of donuts and made coffee for Friendship Park. No matter what he did, he found himself shaking off the shackles of his self-pity, which was, he recognized nothing but fear in disguise.

Then came a day when his car broke down. He was without transportation, and it was raining and he was due at Loaves & Fishes to work the library at 10 am. He was distraught at the notion of not showing up, and so he picked up the telephone, which anyone knows can sometimes way 10 tons, and called asking for help.

As he told it, he was nearly hyperventilating by the time the fourth person he called answered and agreed to help. His name was Glenn, and Frank knew Glenn had a lot going on in his life, most of it chaotic and hard, but Glenn agreed to help, and for the 20 minutes it took to drive Frank to L&F, and for the next four hours that he stayed to lend a hand, Glenn was of service to a friend who needed help, and to men and women he didn't know but were grateful for his help. He, too, got to be free. He, too, stepped out of a dark cave into a vibrant life-affirming light.

Frank was able to shake off the hard inevitability of his cancer in favor of the graceful satisfaction of reaching out to someone else. And so, he died as he lived his last years, peacefully.

I suppose it is not too farfetched to

# A Letter Worth Reading

During a phone conversation, Ryan Short's father insisted he was remaining a Republican despite the party's rhetoric and increasing mountain of legislation attacking the LGBTQ community. When the call ended, Ryan realized that he didn't"want to waste any more time on things that did not bring light" to his life.

Forty-two years-old and gay, he wrote the following letter to every member of his family, near and far:

Hi Family:

Last night, in a phone call with Dad, he commented that was still Republican.

I asked, "Even after the Republicans are trying to decriminalize homosexuality across the USA?"

"Yes," he said.

As such, it is now necessary for a Family E-mail so that expectations are set to everyone, regardless of voting affiliation.

Hear me clearly—you cannot vote GOP and continue to have a relationship with me. No exceptions. I am inviting no dialogue, and I have no interest in nuance.

Attacks in the USA by conservatives and literal Nazis against LGBTQ+ communities are growing in legislative bodies, online, and in public spaces. Texas leads the charge, heartbreakingly.

You may be thinking, but Ryan, why are you disrupting the family over political disagreements? Why the division?

Politics is arguing over the tax bracket margin, solving farmer subsidy shortages, addressing corporately supported poisoning of people, or debating the value of urban bike lanes. The safety and peace of me, my busband, and my community, is baseline, non-negotiable, and untreated to politics.

But most importantly, this is our family. To vote GOP is to divide the family.

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#### **LETTER**

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I've been out the longest, but Jessica is one-half of an amazing lesbian parenting duo, and Jo is a badass bisexual and figurehead in the neighborhood. That's half the siblings, just there. And statistical probabilities are high that at leastonf to the grandkids are queer like us. And in our two deceased gay uncles, an ab-fab sequined grandpa, Cecil; Ce's bestie, Melissa; ma's hairdresser, Michael; and more. It becomes clear that defending queer and trans rights is necessary to defend our very family first.

Did you know that Sam and I have an escape planning the event of genocide in the USA? Truly. We watch Florida and Tennessee and Texas, and we know our 1930's history. We have selected a Canadian city to flee to, discussed employment strategies, and other administrative topics. Parents, have y'all ever discussed fleeing your homeland with your spouse? I am guessing not. How fortunate for you.

Richard and Bonnie, I speak to you directly now. You can be stubborn on this issue, or you can choose to support your family. The choice is yours. If your gay brothers were alive today, they'd agree 100% with my point of view. So, the questions posed to you is a yes/no one. Will you commit to not voting for the GOP ever again?

All across the country my trans and queer friends are holding these same awful conversations with their families. No longer will we allow poisons to flow unopposed. Our love is massive, but it's not without conditions.

Your unwavering support of LGBTQ+ peace is required.

Love you,

Ryan

Richard Short prides himself on being a thoughtful man. He read his son's letter repeatedly and told Ryan he would never vote Republican again. Then he resigned from the Republican Club he belongs to in Collin County, Texas.



This is Beth Murphy. We are grateful to know Beth. We are privileged to call her a friend, and her wardrobe can leave us speechless at times. Sutter Roseville Hospital is still spinning from her visit back on March 4. See Page 7 for an explanation...

So many folks talk about how they're being "forced to accept" things that go against their beliefs.

You're not being forced to accept them.

If you have a problem with people of color, with gay marriage, with trans people, with immigrants, with women of any race, etc. then you're still welcome to feel however you want to feel about those people. You're just not allowed to make their lives harder because of your feelings. You're not allowed to turn their daily lives into a battle ground.

No one is forcing you to "accept" a single thing. You're just not being allowed to terrorize people. PAGE 4 APRIL 2023

#### **Prayers & Celebrations**

- Cliff Cole has a birthday on April 24!
- April 12 is Gabby Hines' birthday!
- Prayers for the continued recovery of Janet Peck, home now and regaining strength.
- Prayers for Jean Foster, home and recuperating from her broken hip.
- Continued prayers for Sandy Barry, awaiting surgery on April 14.
- Prayers for Cliff Cole, recovering and gaining strength.
- Prayers for Diane Wilson's vision. Her eye surgery was postponed and she awaits a new date.
- Prayers for Beth Murphy's family.

#### The Joke's Not On Us!

Some "Humor" Courtesy of Beth Murphy

- What kind of stories does the Easter Bunny like?
  - · Ones that have a hoppy ending.
- What do you get when you cross a rabbit and a bumble bee?
  - A honey bunny.
- Why'd the Easter Bunny cross the road?
  - He was following the chicken.
- · What do you call a wisecracking rabbit?
  - A funny bunny.
- How does the Easter Bunny leave your house?
  - · Through an eggs-it.
- What does the Easter Bunny say before dinner?
- "Lettuce pray."

#### Notes Worth Noting

- 1. Board of Directors next meets Wednesday.

  April 19, 6:30 via Zoom.
- 2. Books that Bind meets Thursday, April 20 at 6:30 pm on Zoom.
- 3. The Men's Fellowship Breakfast will be Saturday April 1, at 9 am, on Zoom.
- 4. Christian Church of Northern California-Reno are holding Anti-Racism Training on Saturday, April 11 via Zoom. It is required of all clergy and encouraged for all of us. Register here.
- 5. The 169th Annual Gathering will be held at First Christian Church in Concord, April 28 & 29, with Clergy Day set for April 27. Keynote speakers will be Drs. Sharon Watkins and Rick Lowery. Blocks of room at the Holiday Inn in Walnut Creek (about 5 miles from the church) are available until April 27 at a discounted rate. https://ccncn.regfox.com/169th-ccnc-n-annual-gathering
- 6. In a connected world, the quality of our connection becomes essential. Hosted by Arden Christian Church and Jared Finkelstein, a workshop comprising of 4 sessions beginning Friday evening April 10, and ending on Sunday afternoon, will be held at Arden Christian Church. Except for Saturday dinner, meals are provided. Participants will learn the practical skills for building, maintaining trusting Internet relationships. Register at CCNCN.org or use this link: <a href="https://ccncn.regfox.com/quality-of-connection-workshop">https://ccncn.regfox.com/quality-of-connection-workshop</a>.
- 7. Family Camping is being offered at the Community of the Great Commission. Those interested are encouraged to reach out to Leanne Stump at <a href="mailto:leannestump925@gmail.com">leannestump925@gmail.com</a> for details and dates and rates. Bobbit cabins sleep 5 and are available for \$80/night. Clear House, which sleeps 20, is \$500/night. And summer cabins are available at \$55/night, sleeping 8 each. Tent camping is available at \$40/night.

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#### Sunday April 2 and 9, 2023

On Easter, we rejoice in the good news that God's love is more powerful even than death itself. Gifts to the Easter Special Offering support ministries that help Disciples witness to that good news.

 Relationships with global mission partners serving in communities impacted by climate change.

Health and social sen/ice ministries that

meet basic needs for neighbors.

 Mental health resources for pastors and congregations.

 New congregations worshiping in a variety of languages and worship styles.

 Leadership development programs that nurture new leaders in the church and the world.

Stewardship education for congregations

to grow in their practice of generosity.

Opportunities like the General Assembly,

where the church can gather for worshipful work.

Support for hospital and military chaplains serving around the world. And so much more...

We are witnesses to the power of God's love, from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth. Please give generously in your congregation on April 2 and 9, or make a gift at disciple missionfundora/give.

#### One Does What One Can

A large, powerful horse was trotting down a road when he came upon a small sparrow lying on its back with its legs pointed straight up in the air. The horse asked the sparrow what it was doing.

The sparrow replied, "I heard the sky was falling and I wanted to help."

The horse snorted and laughed and derisively asked if the sparrow thought she could prevent the sky from falling with her spindly little legs.

The sparrow replied, "One does what one can."



# Sign this Petition for Student Housing Change.org/StudentHousingPCCD

The Peralta Community College District has the opportunity to take advantage of California Senate Bill No. 169. The Bill specifically provides \$250 million in one-time grants for California Community Colleges to help with the construction of student housing or for the acquisition and renovation of commercial properties into student housing for the purpose of providing affordable, low-cost housing options for students enrolled in public postsecondary education in the state.





By signing this petition, you are supporting the rights of Peralta Students to have access to low or no-cost student housing and request that the Peralta Community College District takes immediate action to obtain money from SB No. 169 for student housing.







"Know that you are given the same things that have sustained the world through complicated days. Use all of them—wonder, courage, awe, interdependence, the need to rest and the need to move. Compromise on the inflection but not the substance. Consider your role, and the role of the grass, and the tree swallow that comes, singing. Today, just do the part that you cannot leave undone."

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#### Sierra Christian Church Monthly Calendar

# **April 2023**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30						1
						9 am Men's Fellow- ship Breakfast
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10:30 am Worship			7 pm Prayer Fellowship			
9 EASTER SUNDAY 10:30 am Worship	10	11	7 pm Prayer Fellowship	13	14	15
16 10:30 am Worship	17	18	6:30 pm Board of Directors	20 6:30 pm Books That Bind	21	22
23 10:30 am Worship	24	25	7 pm Prayer Fellowship	27	28	29

# Disciples' General Assembly Slated for Louisville

Registration has opened for the Disciples of Christ's Men's Luncheon at the General Assembly July 29 - August 1, 2023 in Louisville. The Men's Luncheon (not to be confused with Sierra Christian Church's monthly men's breakfast), is scheduled for July 30<sup>th</sup> at 11:45 am.

Both the Assembly and luncheon can be registered for using this link: are registration system <a href="https://ga.disciples.org/">https://ga.disciples.org/</a>

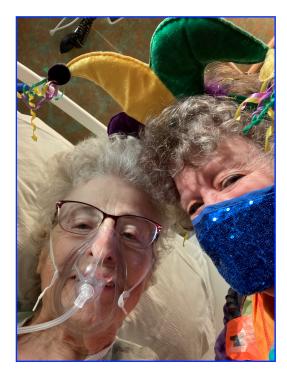
The General Conference of Disciple Men has reorganized, and the details will be outlined and presented at the luncheon. More information will be sent out in later in the year.

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# Sutter Roseville is Still Reeling and Rockin' from....







... a visit from Beth Murphy. When Sutter Roseville Hospital recently found itself with three Sierra Christian Church congregants occupying beds at the same time, the indomitable, Murphy, a congregation onto herself, came a'visiting to remind Sandy Barry, Janet Peck, and Jean Foster, how they are loved, missed, and so tenderly appreciated.

#### **EASTER**

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view the story of Jesus's death and rising as a moment that helped illuminate the world, suggesting that good news —perhaps the best news there is—can sometimes be hidden in darkness and grief. The light that Jesus stepped into and shared with us belongs to the whole world, to people everywhere. Life is change. The world feels at times that it is shrinking into itself, the shadows stretch long and are dark. But Easter reminds me that the most authentic thing about us is, as the poet says, is "our capacity to create, to overcome, to endure, to transform, to love and to be greater than our suffering."

I hope we all can experience the kind of renewal Frank did, or revival, or spiritual restoration, and seize the opportunity to get out of our own heads and selflessly be of service to someone else. And that others get to escape their own self-obsessions for a few minutes by being of service to you. It is the gift of Easter. This Pastor's Pitch may be over, but our service is just beginning.

Blessings. And Happy Easter!

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# April Was A Busy Month in History

April 1, 1946—A major undersea earthquake measuring 7.4 magnitude in the north Pacific Ocean caused a Tsunami that by the time it reached Hawaii some 2,400 miles away and travelling at 500 miles per hour, only 4 1/2 hours after the quake waves reaching 60ft in height hit coastal areas of Hawaii causing the deaths of more than 150.

April 1, 1991 — Iowa becomes one of the first states to allow riverboat gambling

April 2,1917—President Woodrow Wilson tells Congress "The world must be made safe for democracy." asking Congress for a declaration of war and to send U.S. troops into battle against Germany in World War I.

April 3, 1968—Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his "mountaintop" speech to a rally of striking sanitation workers in Memphis, Tenn., less than 24 hours before he was assassinated.

April 4, 1973—New York's World Trade Center, the twin towers, rising 1,350 feet above Manhattan officially became the world's tallest buildings.

April 5, 1951 — Found guilty of providing secrets of the Atomic Bomb to the Soviet Union, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were sentenced to death. They were executed on June 19, 1953.

April 8, 1974—Hank Aaron of the Atlanta Braves hits his 715th career home run, breaking Babe Ruth's legendary record of 714 homers.

April 10, 1925—F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" is published. It regarded as an example of the Great American Novel and become a standard text in high school and university courses on American literature in countries around the world.

April 11, 1936--Barbershop quartets across the country breathe a sigh of relief when the SPEB-SQSA (Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America) is created.

April 15, 1947—Jackie Robinson took the field for the Brooklyn Dodgers on opening day, when the Dodgers defeat the Boston Braves, 5-3. It was HISTORY, folks! The first African American to play major league baseball.

April 17, 1969—The assassin of Robert Kennedy, Sirhan B. Sirhan, was found guilty of first-degree murder for assassinating Senator Robert F. Kennedy 10 months earlier.

April 19, 1989 — About 30 teenagers went on a rampage in New York City's Central park, committing several attacks, assaults, and robberies. Around the same time, an attack on Trisha Meili occurred; she was jogging on her own when she was raped and beaten almost to death. She was found naked, gagged, and tied up, covered in mud and blood. Five juveniles (called the "Central Park 5") were interviewed for hours about the crime and intimidated

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### **International Women's Day Webinar Set for April 8**

Just as lessons are learned from the stories recorded in scripture, so is learning available from stories of how God is moving in our lives today. On International Women's Day, a webinar from New Church Ministry will feature two fascinating female ministers, change-makers, and leaders in the denomination.

Rev. Christy Jo Harber of Woodland Christian Church in Lexington, KY, and Pastor Erin Edwards of Live on Purpose Community Church in Vacaville, CA and Christian Church of Woodland in Woodland. CA. Throughout their journeys, these women have been faced with adversity and defeat, but have led



with empowerment and liberation. Come listen to these two amazing stories of how God ordained both women into hard and holy calls. <u>Sign up here</u> PAGE 9 APRIL 2023

# Right Wing Group Targets Local UCC Pastor, Church

The right wing, Breitbart-funded organization, Project Veritas, claims to practice "illuminating journalism," but truth be told, they are to legitimate news reporting as video porn is to the felt reality of human love. That doesn't stop them from going about their business, however. Using heavily edited videos of clandestine recordings, they have gone after Planned Parenthood, ACORN, NPR, CNN, the Washington Post, a teacher's union, and even the United States Post Office, and for their troubles have paid out nearly \$300,000 in libel suit judgements. Their efforts to hide behind the First Amendment in these lawsuits have largely failed, having been determined by metrics that determine such things not to meet the standards established for authentic news media outlets.

Project Veritas has now turned its beady, agenda-laced, eyes on a friend, Pastor Casey Martinez-Tinnin of the Loomis Basin Congregational United Church of Christ. In a secretly videotaped and heavily edited interview conducted by a pair of Project Veritas employees posing as parents concerned about their transgender teen, Pastor Tinnin is portrayed as a groomer of young gay boys and girls, and the church's secular Landing Spot the sinister site where it all takes place. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

As is Project Veritas's practice, truth takes a back seat to deception. While they claim to only be interested in shedding light on institutions and practices, what they do is designed to cause harm. If you buy Veritas's assertion that it practices journalism, then the reasoned response has to be, journalism that seeks to destroy institutions is not journalism at all. And that's pretty much what their mean-spirited, deceptive videos aim to do.

What The Landing Spot does, however, which the video conveniently fails to disclose, is pro-

vide a safe place for teenage members of the LGBTQ+community to gather in a welcoming environment without fear. That a 2022 study found that half of trans and non-binary people in the U.S. have considered suicide over the past year, citing an onslaught of anti-trans legislation and rhetoric spearheaded by right-wing politicians, makes the availability of the Landing Spot even more profoundly necessary in our community. In any community.

One day after the video was posted on the Internet, the Roseville Unified School District severed all ties with Pastor Casey and booted The Landing Spot off its high school campuses. Board President Peter Constants insisted the decision was made prior to the video being released, claiming in a Sacramento Bee article, that it "was a little bit of everything," referring to the much ballyhooed cancellation of a drag show fundraiser, lack of an MOU, and, yes, the video,

# The Landing Spot's is to help support and empower the vulnerable and at risk student.

with its 15 cuts and edits that effectively distort Pastor Casey's message of acceptance and inclusivity.

Quoted in the same article, Pastor Casey said he was disappointed in the district choosing to believe "fake news" rather than the testimonies of students and parents who had utilized the Landing Spot and had a positive experience.

The essential difference between The Landing Spot and Project Veritas is in their core resolves. The Landing Spot's is to help support and empower the vulnerable and at risk student, while Project Veritas seeks to manipulate and coerce with false and half-truths to tear down anyone or anything that doesn't fit in their narrow ultra-conservative view of things.

We lament that the Roseville School District has chosen to align itself with the bottom feeder.

What Sierra Christian can do to support Pastor Casey, who has received death threats and has been stalked by a Proud Boy in recent weeks, will be discussed by the Board in the coming days.

--John Hartmire

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#### **APRIL**

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into confessions. Since no DNA evidence tied the suspects to the crime, the prosecution's case rested almost entirely on

the confessions. They were all found guilty. The convictions were overturned in 2002 after Matias Reyes, a convicted rapist and murderer, confessed to the crime and was linked to it with DNA evidence. The city was forced to pay out \$41 million in damages.

April 20, 1999—Two students (Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold) open fire in Columbine High School in Denver, Colorado, with automatic weapons and throwing homemade bombs, killing 13 people and wounding 24 others before the two students committed suicide. Since Columbine, there have been 373 school shootings. In other words 344,000 students—children—have experienced that trauma.

April 21, 1918—Snoopy's dog house nemesis, the Red Baron, also known as Baron Manfred von Richthofen, the German ace credited with 80 confirmed air combat victories, was killed in action during World War I.

April 22, 1970 — Earth Day was observed yesterday for the first time. 20 million Americans took to the streets, parks, and auditoriums to demonstrate for a healthy, sustainable environment.

April 23, 1898—Spain declares war on the United States after rejecting America's ultimatum to withdraw from Cuba. Following the declaration, The American Asiatic Squadron under Commodore George Dewey engaged the Spanish Pacific Squadron under Admiral Patricio Montojo y Pasarón in Manila Bay, the Philippines, and decimated the Spanish squadron.

April 25, 1953—Two Cambridge University scientists, James D Watson and Francis Crick, publish an article in Nature Magazine explaining the structure of DNA, explaining that DNA is the material that makes up genes which pass hereditary characteristics in all life from one parent to another. They conclude that it consists of a double helix of two strands coiled around each other and could even be considered the "secret of life".

April 30, 1952--The diary of Anne Frank, a Jewish victim of the Holocaust, is published in English titled "The Diary of a Young Girl". Her diary, later entitled "The Diary of Anne Frank", becomes one of the most popular books in the world and is included in most schools as recommended reading. The diary provides a disturbing account of a teenager living in hiding with seven others in fear of their lives in occupied Holland, Anne Frank died of typhus just before her 16th birthday in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in 1945.

This is the monthly newsletter of Sierra Christian Church. Representing the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Loomis, Rocklin, Roseville and surrounding areas, we are a member of the Christian Churches of Northern California-Nevada. Please call 916-624-8733, or visit our webpage at <a href="www.sierrachrist-ian.com">www.sierrachrist-ian.com</a>, or email <a href="mailto:PastorChristine@yahoo.com">PastorChristine@yahoo.com</a>.

- Our book club Books That Bind, meets the 3td Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm on Zoom. We are currently reading, "The Sentence," by Louise Edrich
- Our Wednesday Evening Prayer Fellowship meets on Zoom Wednesday evenings at 7 pm
- All our meetings and services are available on Zoom:

Meeting ID: 421 201 7769. Passcode: 543838