

# Sierra Christian Church

*An Open and Affirming Congregation*

## Olympics Remind Us We Are One World With Many Stories To Tell

Easily, it is the most stunning, beautiful, powerful, humbling and important photograph ever taken, the 1968 Christmas Eve photo of planet Earth as it rose over the moon's horizon. Taken by Bill Anders from his seat in Apollo 8, he said of it later, "We came all this way to explore the moon, and the most important thing is that we discovered the Earth"



Important, because perhaps for the first time, we saw ourselves from afar, not as a collection of divided nations, but as a single delicate world, creating what astronauts have described as the "overview effect"—something like an involuntary cognitive shift as national boundaries vanish and what our "pale blue dot" truly is hits home.

In his short three-year ministry, Jesus did not walk the far corners of planet earth, and for all I know he may have believed the earth was flat if he even bothered to think about such things. But he did speak of a world without borders designed to separate us

from one another. For Jesus, all that mattered was that we lived under a single sky, loved by God who commands us to love one another.

But this month I am not writing about Jesus, or Christianity, or how best to speak up and out at a time that calls for our voices to be heard. Maybe next month. For now, in case you were sleeping under an Aspen Tree in 10 feet of snow you couldn't have missed the Winter Olympics. The Games have always been great spectacle. Men and women from all points of this "pale blue dot" gathering for two weeks to compete in a variety of sporting events, risking numbing heartbreak for athletic glory. There are politics involved sadly, as if the country medal count has some significance beyond the simple measure of the performance. I believe Norway's 41 medals means nothing more significant than Kazakhstan's 1 other than it would take a larger glass case to display them. No empires were toppled, no great truths were unearthed; hunger and poverty weren't eliminated, and love did not suddenly supplant hate and greed in every corner and hamlet and capital. But for this fortnight, national boundaries were less important than human accomplishment.

I mean, at the end of the day, it doesn't mean a whole lot—in the grand scheme of things, this is all pretty inconsequential—yet there is something noble and uplifting, gratifying and joyful, plain ole satisfying about sporting events, and none more than the Olympic Games.

### Pastor's Pitch



*Sierra Christian Church's pastor is the Rev. Christine Pobanz-Hartmire. Her challenge to us is to embrace, the beautiful truth that everyone is always welcomed at Jesus' table.*

*Please see Pitch, next page*

## PITCH

*(Continued page 1)*

With every horrible thing happening here at home and elsewhere, what a group of strangers does on a slab of ice or a frozen hillside thousands of miles and several time zones away doesn't move the needle on the quality and soundness of our lives in the slightest. It doesn't grant justice to the oppressed, freedom to the enslaved, or honor to the shamed. I understand that.

So, help me understand the lump growing in my throat and the smile threatening to break my face when the US women's hockey team won the gold medal in overtime on a simply spectacular, instinctive move by Megan Keller, and the glee I felt the moment the men's hockey team's scored their golden goal also in overtime.

And while you're at it, explain to me the leap in my heart and the tears in my eyes as I watched Alysia Liu, the child of a Chinese dissident, radiant and beaming as she made positively superhuman physical feats on thin blades of steel look simply effortless — knowing the perilous and nearly impossible journey she'd taken to that moment: the expectations she'd obliterated, the rigid system she'd transcended, and the elation and grace she'd reclaimed along the way. Look, for four minutes the world stopped, and I was transfixed.

With each graceful flourish, with every blinding cyclone spin, and every explosive, shimmering smile, I found myself involuntarily feeling something sadly in short supply as of late, something that has taken great effort to summon. Despite our flaws and division, there is room for grace to rise against the odds, for champions to emerge when forces are pushing back, and that leaves me feeling proud of my country.

*To me, this was a pride in the people who call this place home and who choose to call it home despite its flaws and for, most assuredly, the disparate and varied humanity that all live under the same sun and when they look up see the same stars, and who all have stories.*

live under the same sun and when they look up see the same stars, and who all have stories.

Not that I should ever need reminding, but these Olympics, succeeded in reminding me that we are a world of stories.

Stories like Liu's: a skating prodigy who grew so disheartened by an unforgiving, often dehumanizing system that she "retired" 16, having had her joy extinguished, her identity swallowed up. She did the work necessary to recapture her joy on her wondrous terms and win Gold. Her comment coming off the ice after her gold medal performance: "That was f----ng fun!"

Stories like Texas-born Amber Glenn, the oldest competing U.S. women's singles skater in nearly a century and the team's first openly LGBTQ member, who has battled crippling depression and an eating disorder on her way to Olympic fame. She was devastated when in her short program her triple loop came up short and wound up being only a double loop, costing her nearly 8 points and all but ending her chances to medal. Still, she came back a day later and skated to a redemptive roar in her long program with a precision and flow and grace that had her in contention for a medal until the very end.

Even Ilia Malinin, who spectacularly failed to win the Gold Medal in



*Please see Pitch, next page*

## PITCH

*(Continued page 2)*

men's figure skating after a nightmarish long program won something greater when after he received his disappointing scores he walked over to Mikhail Shaidorov of Kazakhstan, the unlikely Gold Medal winner, and congratulated him with a hug so genuine and strong I felt it in my living room.

Stories like Laila Edwards, whose brave, trailblazing journey led from Cleveland Heights, Ohio, to becoming the first Black American woman to win a gold medal in women's hockey.

Stories like American freestyle skier Hunter Hess, who experienced at the very pinnacle of his career an unfair and puerile personal attack by the President and his acolytes simply for expressing a love for his country that does not turn a blind eye to our continued ugliness and brutality.

These aren't just skaters and skiers; they are symbols. They do more than just represent us in a global athletic competition once every four years; they help us remember that we are a nation still becoming, still unfinished, still with chapters left to write, and we are among their 342 million co-authors. Add to that, it reminds us, the Olympics do, that we are a nation among many, and together we inhabit what is becoming an increasingly fragile, if forever beautiful, planet. We compete against each other because we are of each other.

It's easy to dismiss sports as trivial; a frivolous diversion providing temporary escape from the sprawling troubles of the day (though that in itself is no small achievement). But these Olympic athletes remind us who we are as a people, irrelevant to borders and nationalities: diverse, resilient, fearless, imperfect, and defiantly joyful in the face of our demons and detractors.

We relentlessly battle the monsters both around and within us.

We lift one another when our bodies fail, our spirits falter, and our dreams come undone.

We ardently defy those who would keep us trapped in the stunted smallness of prejudice and stereotype.

We give what we have in the moment, even if it is less than we wish it were, even if the possibility of victory seems remote.

We love our homeland fiercely but not blindly, so much so that we demand its better angels and will not abide its lesser devils.

We cherish the gold medals, the silver and bronze medals, too, because they represent so many nameless and wonderful things.

We get up when we've fallen down. Or have been knocked down.

So, yes, it's just a bunch of strangers on a slab of ice and a frozen hillside thousands of miles and several time zones away, but they matter. It matters.

More than once, while watching on television I was reminded beyond the prowess of the athletes, the mountains, cold and unathletic, higher than the nations, colder than defeat, sane as anything, a single world in the great immensity of everything.

"As Christians, we cannot assume a position of non-involvement or neutrality in the presence of social injustice which reduces the dignity and well-being of any of God's children."

--Chris Hartmire during the 1966 hearings of the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor. It was here that his friendship with Robert Kennedy began.

## Some Notes Worth Noting

1. Books That Bind meets Thursday, April 16, at 6:30 pm on Zoom. We are reading "You Were There Too," by Colleen Oakley. Mia is happily married to Harrison. After the couple relocates to a small town in Pennsylvania she meets a man named Oliver. Oliver is no stranger to Mia, because he has been making an appearance in her dreams for years. When Oliver reveals to Mia that he has been dreaming of her as well she is convinced there is a profound reason for this. What follows is an intense story full of what ifs and hard choices
2. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Northern California-Nevada will gather in person April 24-26 at the First Christian Church of Concord to reflect on what it means to be a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.
3. Save the Date—The Women's Tri-Regional Retreat will be held May 15-17 at Christ the King Passionist Retreat Center in Citrus Heights. Registration information to come.
4. Men's Fellowship meets Saturday, March 7 at 9 am on Zoom.
5. Work on updating the Sierra Christian Church directory has begun. Don't think you have to wait for an invitation—feel free to send any changes you may have to your listing to [jhartmire1@mac.com](mailto:jhartmire1@mac.com). Here is the link to the most recent version: [Sierra Christian Church Directory](#)
6. March 22, following our worship service, Diane Wilson will be leading a Spring Solstice labyrinth walk.
7. The soon-to-be married Lisa Coe has a birthday on March 28.
8. March 29 is Ms. Joy Reed's birthday.
9. This is the link to register for the: [Women's Tri-Regional Gathering, May 15-17](#)

## Time to Spring Forward: Daylight Saving Time Has Arrived

Before going to bed Saturday, March 7, be sure to turn any clock that won't do so automatically ahead one hour for Daylight Saving Time. 'Tis the season for more sunlight and daylight hours.

With it a week away, here's everything to know about the clock change this year daylight saving time

Daylight saving time, set by federal law, is meant to save energy and capitalize on more sunlight during the day. It has been in place for more than 100 years, after Standard Time Act was passed in 1918.

Since 2007, daylight saving time has been observed in the United States on the second Sunday in March, though Arizona and Hawaii don't recognize it, nor does Puerto Rico, American Samoa, or Guam

Daylight saving time will officially start this year on March 8 at 2 a.m. our time and run until Nov. 1.

It was first implemented by Germany in 1916, and adopted two years later by the United States to extend daylight hours and reduce the need for artificial lighting and save fuel.

Sierra Christian Church Monthly Calendar

# March 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10:30 am Worship	2	3	4	5	6	7 9 am Men's Fellowship Breakfast
8 Daylight Savings Time Begins (Turn you clocks ahead 1 hour) 10:30 am Worship	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 10:30 am Worship	16	17	18 Board of Directors meets 6:30 pm on Zoom	19	20	21
22 Labyrinth Walk following Worship 10:30 am Worship	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 10:30 am Worship	30	31	1	2	3	4

## List & Links of Regional Events

**March 22, 2026: Spring Labyrinth Walk at Sierra Christian Church**

**May 15-17, 2026: Women's Tri-Regional Gathering (Save the Date)**

**April 23, 2026: Clergy Gathering**

**April 24-25, 2026: Annual Gathering at FCC Concord**

# Anne Lamott Offers a Crash Course on Love

Valentine's day is a holiday that makes a lot people feel isolated and sad. We don't celebrate, although I almost bought my personal husband a card that said, "Darling, I love you from the very bottom of my butt." This piece is just about regular old love from the my last book, *Somehow*:

I asked a six-year-old colleague of mine what love is.

"Oh, it's just this stuff," he said, rolling his eyes.

I think that's right.

Love is caring, affection, and friendliness, of course, compassion and a generous heart. It is also some kind of energy or vibration, because Mr. Einstein showed that everything is— the same stuff moving at different speeds, from glaciers to six-year-old boys.

I wish the movement of love in our lives more closely resembled the grace of a ballerina, but no, love mainly tromps and pllops, falls over, burps and tip-toes through our lives.

Love looks like us, and that can be a little daunting. Love is why we are here at all, on the couch and in the world with a heart for the common good, why we have hope, and a lifeline when we don't.

There is sweet family love, entangled by history, need, frustration, and annoyance. There is community love, a love of music, Zorba's reckless love of life. It can be vital or serene. There's the ecstatic love—for the natural world, or in bed— there's the love of justice or the transforming love of what we might call Goodness, Gus (the Great Universal Spirit), God, Grace Over Drama, or like the cavemen in Mel Brooks' 2000 Year Old Man, Phil.

Love is often hard, ignored, or hilarious. But one thing is certain: Love is our only hope.

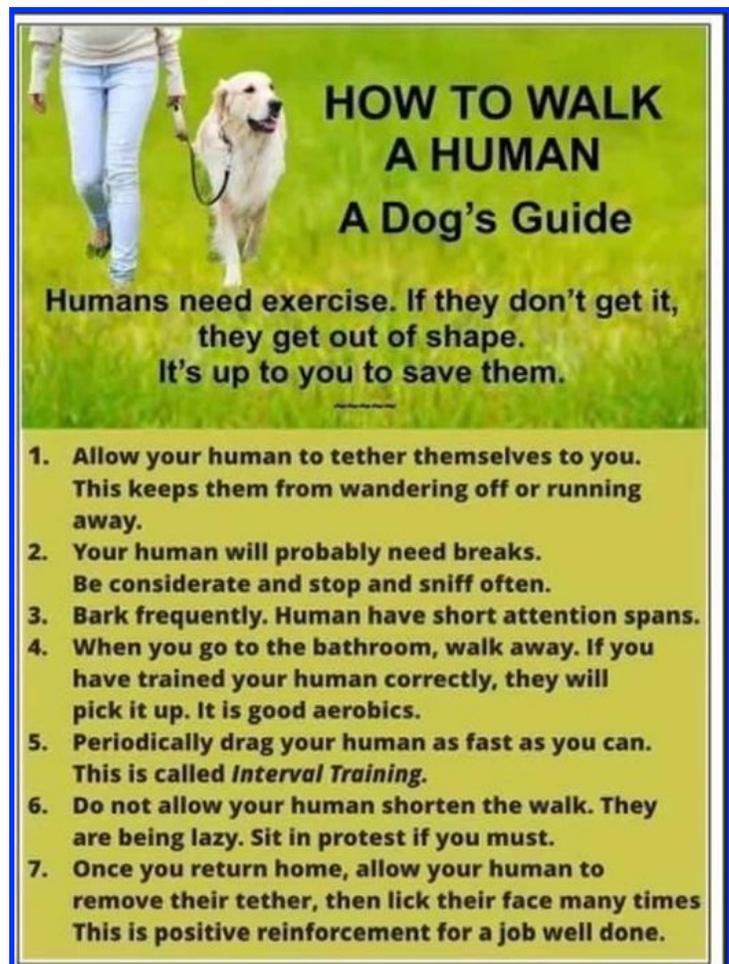
Love springs from new life, love springs from death. Love acts like Gandhi and our pets and Jesus and Mr. Bean and Mr. Rogers and Bette Midler. Love won't be pinned down.

Love abounds and abides, flirts and weeps with us. It is there for the asking, which is the easy part. Our lives' toughest work is in the receiving.

Love presents most obviously in babies and kids being cuddled, yet also as patience with annoying humans we live or work with—or are. We feel love upon seeing our favorite auntie and neighbors and first responders, we see it in radical self-love—cups of tea, warm baths—fundraising efforts for the hungry and oppressed, in unexpected acts of patience, in peace marches and non-violent resistance, in the kindness of a waitress, and in the warmth of the hand that pulls us back to our feet when the loss of love has all but destroyed us.

Love is this stuff. I am splashing it all over you as I type.

--Anne Lamott



# Regional Mission Trip 2026 Returning to Santa Cruz

The CCNC-N Regional Hands-On Mission Trip will be from March 29 to April 4. We will be returning to the Santa Cruz Mountains where we were able to do a lot of much needed work last year.



The caused many in the Santa Cruz Mountains to lose their homes. The recovery has been very slow because there were multiple wildfires in California in 2020, and the Camp Fire received much of the attention and money for recovery. There are still people working towards returning to their land and building homes even this many years later. We helped two families get into homes last year. Come be a part of that recovery with us. Holy Week-Holy Work!

2026 Spring Renewal

## ROOTED & RISING

Growing Together in Love

**Keynote Speaker:**  
Rev. LaDonna Harris

**Workshops**

- Holding What We Carry Together by Rev. Sophia Jackson
- Embodied Practices for Self, Community, and Creation by Rev. Jeanelyse Doran

**March 14, 2026**  
Christian Church of Woodland  
509 College St., Woodland, CA 95695

Registration starts at 8:00AM  
Program starts at 9:00AM

Sign-Up at [ccncn.org](http://ccncn.org)  
Register by March 1st!  
\$50 for the day, lunch included!

**Spring Solstice Labyrinth Walk**  
Sunday, Mar 22, following Worship

# First Friday Lunch & Learn

Mar 6, 2026  
12:00pm PT  
Zoom

**Rev. Dr. Laura Jean Torgerson & Rev. Clarence L. Johnson**  
*"We've Been Here Before": Resonances with the Civil Rights Movement*

## Lunch & Learn - Berkeley School of Theology

Join Berkeley School of Theology by Zoom on the first Friday of the month at 12p Pacific

BST community! The speakers and topics will vary each month. Please see our "Upcoming" section at the bottom of the page.

Time to learn about a fun and interesting topic from a member of the

[Register Here](#)

## Some “Different” March Dates in History

March is named after Mars, the Roman god of war. Originally called Martius in the early 10-month Roman calendar, it was the first month of the year and signaled the start of both spring and the season for resuming military campaigns. “Beware the ides of March,” Shakespeare’s line in *Julius Caesar*, which hints at his eventual assassination. “Ides” refers to the full moon, often falling on the 15th.

**March 1, 1815**—Napoleon escapes from his first exile on the island of Elba, a move considered one of the most surprising, albeit temporary, comebacks in European history.

**March 1, 1954**—Yellowstone becomes the nation’s first national park. More than 3 million people visit Yellowstone each year.

**March 1, 1955**—A University of California survey reported that Americans spent more money on comic books than all U.S. elementary and high schools spent on textbooks.

**March 1, 1969**—1969 – New York Yankees legend Mickey Mantle announces his retirement from baseball due to persistent knee injuries. He finished his 18-season career with 536 home runs and a .298 batting average. He played in 12 World Series, winning 8, and hit a record 18 World Series home runs. He died in 1995 at the age of 63 from liver cancer, a result of years of alcoholism, a disease that also claimed the lives of 2 of his 3 sons..

**March 2, 1872**—California’s first public library opened its doors in San Francisco. The library was founded by the San Francisco Mercantile Library Association, which had been in operation since 1850. The public library movement gained momentum in California in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and today there are over 1,100 public libraries in the state.

**March 2, 1998**—[Read Across America Day](#) began, celebrating literacy and Dr. Seuss's birthday.

**March 2, 1987**—The Macintosh II computer was introduced. The first color Mac had a CPU speed of 16 MHz and sold for \$3,898.

**March 3, 1855**—The U.S. Congress appropriated \$30,000 for an experiment using camels as pack ani-

mals to cross the desert to California. The experiment ended but the camel barns are still standing in Benicia, in Solano County.

**March 3, 1913**—Women marched for the right to vote in Washington D.C., the unofficial launch of the Women’s Suffrage Movement.

**March 3, 1933**—Thousands of women marched in Washington D.C., demanding the right to vote one day before President Woodrow Wilson's inauguration.

**March 3, 2007**—Roughly 170 Swiss soldiers accidentally invaded Liechtenstein during a training exercise because they got lost in the rain.

**March 4, 1918**—The first case of the Spanish Flu is reported. By 1920, 50 million people worldwide were dead as a result.

**March 4, 1940**—Kings Canyon National Park, called General Grant National Park when it opened on October 1, 1890. Its name was changed when it grew to 461,901 acres and included the protection of giant sequoias.

**March 5, 1770**—The Boston Massacre: British soldiers [fired into a crowd](#) of colonists, killing five. This event became a pivotal moment in the lead-up to the American Revolution.

**March 6, 1836**—Texas rebels, joined by Davey Crockett and Sam Bowie, took their last stand against the Mexican Army at the Alamo.

**March 6, 1912**—The very first Oreo cookie was created.

**March 7, 1876**—Alexander Graham Bell received his patent for the telephone; three days later on March 10, he made the [first-ever phone call](#) to his assistant, Thomas Watson.

**March 7, 1976**—The California Supreme Court ruled that California's community property law applied to same-sex couples, making California the first state to grant rights to same-sex couples in property division.

**March 8**—International Women’s Day!

**March 8, 2017**—The “Day Without a Woman” strike took place, with women around the country walking

*Please see HISTORY, Next Page*

## HISTORY

*(Continued from previous page)*

and discrimination.

**March 9, 1953**— The "Principality of Outer Baldonia," a 4-acre island, declared war on the USSR after a Russian newspaper took their satirical declaration of independence seriously.

**March 9, 1959**— Barbie, made by Mattel in El Segundo, debuted at the American International Toy Fair in New York. Today she is one of the most famous dolls in history—she's even a movie star!

**March 10, 1968**— Pro boxing legend Muhammad Ali was stripped of his heavyweight title after refusing to be drafted into the military for the Vietnam War. The decision sparked controversy and outrage, and Ali was ultimately vindicated years later when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that his objection to the war was a legitimate expression of his religious beliefs.

**March 11, 1893**— Riverside County was established between San Bernardino, San Diego and Madera Counties. Today it is the fourth most populous county in the state.

**March 11, 1974**— Rhino Record Store, in Claremont, gave people \$.05 to take home Danny Bonaduce's solo album. It was the only album by the former Partridge Family TV actor.

**March 11, 2011**— A tsunami from the earthquake off Japan caused some \$17.1 million in damage to the Santa Cruz harbor and \$4 million to private boats. Governor Jerry Brown issued an emergency declaration for the harbor.

**March 13 1781**— Using a telescope of his own design, astronomer William Herschel observed the planet later named Uranus from the back garden of his house in New King Street, Bath England. He originally thought it was a comet.

**March 14, 1942**— Anne Miller, a nurse from Connecticut, becomes the first known person to have her life saved by penicillin after developing a streptococcal infection after a miscarriage

**March 15, 44 BC**— The "Ides of March", Roman dictator [Julius Caesar was stabbed to death](#) by a group of senators, an event that eventually led to the rise of the Roman Empire.

off their jobs and refraining from making purchases, in protest of gender inequality

**March 16, 1968**— As many as 500 Vietnamese civilians were murdered by US troops at My Lai, South Vietnam. Lieutenant William Calley was the only participant to be convicted for the crime

**March 17, 1737**— Boston held the first [St. Patrick's Day parade](#).

**March 19, 1991**— Sacramento Kings set a NBA record of 29 consecutive road losses.

**March 20, 1852**— Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin was published. When President Abraham Lincoln met Stowe, he bowed and reportedly said, "So, you're the little lady who wrote the book that started this great war." While this is most likely apocryphal, it's fun to ponder nevertheless.

**March 20**— Extraterrestrial Abduction Day!

**March 21, 1970**— San Francisco mayor Joseph Alioto proclaimed the first Earth Day. It was celebrated on April 22, 1970.

**March 21, 1993**— Cesar Chavez died in his sleep while in San Luis, Arizona. He was 66.

**March 23, 1965**— Astronaut John Young smuggled a corned beef sandwich onto the Gemini 3 spacecraft, which he shared with Gus Grissom.

**March 23**— National Puppy Day. Isn't it every day!

**March 24, 1944**— As night fell on the 24th, the POWs chosen for the escape attempt assembled in Hut 104. By the time the Germans realized the prisoners were getting out, 76 men had crawled to freedom. The snow was so deep that they were forced to use main roads rather than forest paths, as they had planned, and all but three were soon recaptured. Hitler wanted them all shot; in the end, 50 were executed.

**March 28, 1964**— Much of Crescent City was demolished by a tsunami generated from the 8.6 earthquake that hit Valdez, Alaska, killing 11 people.

**March 31, 1889**— The Eiffel Tower was inaugurated by [Gustave Eiffel](#), when he raised the French flag at the top. It was constructed as the entrance arch and centerpiece for the 1889 [Exposition Universelle](#) (World's Fair) in Paris, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the French Revolution.

**March 31, 1975**— The UCLA Bruins beat the Kentucky Wildcats for the NCAA Championship, 92-55. It was coach John Wooden's final game and UCLA's 10th NCAA championship in 12 years.