



Little Brown Church of Sunol

United Church of Christ – Congregational
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September 2020

We are closely following the evolving shelter-in-place rules. Our state and county disallow indoor religious services and strongly recommend all houses of worship continue providing online services. LBC, like UCC churches around the country, will continue to worship together in spirit while waiting for a safer time to gather in person.

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- September-October Calendar
- Faith-based Stress Relief
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September-October Calendar

Monday, Sept. 7 ... Labor Day
Tuesday, Sept. 22 ... First Day of Autumn
Saturday, Oct. 31 ... Halloween

Fire Season Tips

Fire season isn't over yet! September and October are often the most dangerous months for wildfires. Sunol led the way in customizing a community-based system for preparing for wildfire evacuations. Two LBC members – Robin Spindler and Barbara Egbert – are members of the leadership team for Good to Go Sunol! For valuable information applicable to all of California, visit the website: <https://www.goodtogowildfire.com/>.

Faith-based Methods for Dealing with Stress

Paul offered some good advice to the Christians in Philippi (Philippians 4:6-7): *In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.*

But as we all know – after living through six months of the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown and economic effects, plus wildfires, evacuations, and air pollution (not to mention urban unrest and heat waves) – attaining the peace which passes understanding is easier said than done!

Religious people of many traditions have found ways to strive for that peace. Each of us can choose those that work for us and create our own practices and rituals. Following are some of those ways:

- Catholics may pray the rosary as a way to achieve calmness (when they're not competing to see who can say it the fastest!). The traditional monastic practice called Lectio Divina follows four steps: read, meditate, pray, and contemplate. Protestants may recite the Lord's Prayer and Orthodox Christians use the Jesus breathing prayer, in which they match the phrases to inhaling and exhaling.
- Walking for its own sake has long been recognized as a spiritual practice. For those on a pilgrimage, the point was always the journey, not the destination.
- Many Christians find it helpful to adapt practices from very different religions: yoga from the Hindu tradition, various forms of meditation from Buddhism.
- The sheer number of hymns celebrating nature tells us that observing and enjoying God's creation is an important route to prayer and praise. We can't sing together for now, but we can listen or sing along with spiritual music on YouTube. And while we can't observe the changing weather through the windows of Little Brown Church, we can look for aspects of nature that deserve contemplation, from the birds soaring overhead down to the ants carrying grass seeds into their underground homes.
- Simply reading can be a spiritual act. As my commute to Stanford got longer and longer, I devoted my hours on the bus to reading the newspaper, magazines, and paperbacks. Now that I'm working from home, I can tackle more substantial hardcover books that were too large and heavy to tote around campus.
- Finally, humor helps. A line that brings a laugh is worth savoring and sharing, especially this year.

—Barbara Egbert

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