



The Penny Post

March 2024

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER CELEBRATIONS

Calendar of Events and Celebrations



Palm Sunday Service

Sunday, March 24, 10:30 AM

Will include palm frond waving and dancing as you are able and willing.

Service of Memories for Ron Sebring

Sunday, March 24, at noon, after coffee hour in the parlor

Maundy Thursday

Thursday, March 28, 6:00 PM Soup Supper,

7:00 PM Maundy Thursday Ritual with Communion

If you can bring a pot of soup to this event, please notify Carolyn Rosin. From now until Maundy Thursday, there will be a box in the church entrance where you may place prayers to be used during the Maundy Thursday Service.

Egg Dye and Dinner

Friday, March 29, 6:00 PM

We will have an adult egg-dyeing event in the Northbrae kitchen. You can bring children to supervise. We will have 500 eggs to dye for the Egg Hunt Sunday morning. You can bring your own dozen BOILED eggs. We'll order pizza, dye eggs, and enjoy a dinner together. Bring salads to share.

Heifer Project

Northbrae will be helping the poor in different countries to be able to receive a cow, goat or chickens, etc. Please put your change into the Heifer jar during coffee hour for the next few weeks.

March 31, Easter Sunday

10:00 Egg Hunt on Front Lawn

10:30 Easter Service in Chapel



www.northbrae.com

A Note From Christy

Dear Friends,

Holy Week and Easter are fast approaching.

One long standing Northbrae tradition during Holy Week is burning prayers on Maundy Thursday. We will continue that tradition this year. Between now and Maundy Thursday, everyone is invited to write prayers on sticky notes and put them in a box in the narthex of the chapel. On Maundy Thursday, after we eat a simple meal, we will process to the chapel and be invited to write additional prayers....for the earth, for ourselves, for our families and friends, for the people of Gaza and Ukraine, for anyone who is suffering or hurting, for those who are ill. The list is infinite.

After the prayers are written, we step through the sliding glass window into the Japanese garden behind the chapel. We enter a threshold moment. As we gather outside, the air feels different. When we look up, we no longer see the chapel ceiling. We see stars overhead. We move from a closed space into an infinitely open space. Symbolically we move from the concerns of our own private worlds and expand our concerns to those of people around the globe. Once we have all gathered outside, we put our written prayers into the hibachi and light them on fire. As we watch, our prayers are transformed from paper into fire and then into ash and finally simply into air. We symbolically send our prayers out into the universe.

In the moment that we release our prayers to the universe, we share a ritual with religious traditions across time and geography who offer prayers for the benefit of others. For example, in some Buddhist traditions prayer flags and prayer wheels are used to symbolically send prayers out into the world. Think of Tibetan prayer flags fluttering from ropes strung from monastery walls or along pathways or above Berkeley gardens.

"Prayer flags...can be found strung along trails and peaks throughout the Himalayas. They are used to bless the surrounding countryside, promoting peace, compassion, strength, and wisdom. It is believed that as the wind passes over the flags the special prayers and mantras are spread all over the world on the wings of the wind bringing good will and compassion to all beings. Upon seeing prayer flags, one is reminded to pray for the welfare of all people."

(Quotation from Tara Mandala)

As we celebrate Easter, new life and renewal, may we focus our hearts on the possibility that we may become human prayer flags...able to spread compassion, offering it to all beings.

We hope you join us for our Holy Week events and celebrations.

On a special note, everyone is invited to a Service of Memories for Ron Sebring to be held on Palm Sunday, March 24 at noon in the parlor. The service will be an informal time to share memories of Ron. Ron served as pastor of Northbrae from 2000 to 2010. His obituary is included in this Penny Post.

Blessings, Christy

Obituary for Ron Sebring

Ron "Preacher" Sebring was born in Moberly, Missouri, on May 14, 1943, and departed this life with a smile at 6:20 pm on March 8, 2024. It's not that he was happy to leave; he very much wanted to stay, but after living with prostate cancer for the last 20 years and with no new bodies readily available, he knew it was time to go. He had lived the life he wanted, the way he wanted, and was grateful for each moment. Years of study, meditation, martial arts, and spiritual practice kept him present and peaceful until the very last moment. Surrounded by loved ones, he smiled, talked, and discussed everything from Tai Chi and art to spiritual contemplations and new writing ideas.

During his professional life, Preacher served as a minister (hence his wife Connie's nickname for him) in Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, and California. The last church he served in was Northbrae Community Church in Berkeley, Ca. from 2000 to 2011 before leading a congregation as interim minister in Vallejo, Ca. for two years. He retired in 2013, returning with his wife to Independence, Mo., in 2014.

His formal education includes a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Divinity (M.DIV.) from Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma, and a Doctor of Ministry (D.MIN.) from San Francisco Theology Seminary. During his life, he wrote extensively about many topics, filling notebooks with thoughts, ideas, and contemplations. Some of these ideas, along with stories about the people around him, made it into his Sunday morning sermons, while other ideas reached discussion groups or students or stayed on the page for his eyes only.

He authored one book, Inner Peace, about the Lord's Prayer. But he did more than seek the wisdom of the mind. Under that contemplative veneer and meditative calm, beat the heart of an avid martial artist. For many years, he ministered to the congregation during the day, but in the evening, he would strap on pads and don his Gi, trading words for punches and kicks. All that training led to a black belt in Judo, a black belt in Shotokan Karate, a brown belt in Aikido, and the masterful flow of Tai Chi movement, which he loved to practice and teach.

Through his humble manner and calming smile, it was hard to see the skill and wisdom Preacher carried. That is, until sitting down for a chat or spiritual guidance (as so many have). His light touched countless souls during his time on Earth. He was a teacher, a life-long learner, and a lover of knowledge with a great appreciation for all the sensei he studied under. A voracious reader, he curated an extensive, overflowing library reaching back half a century (literally flowing out of his office like a flood into the basement, storage spaces, and various nooks and crannies at home, in churches, and temples). Preacher studied psychology and the theology of consciousness. Beyond his love of learning, his greatest passion was teaching with a special emphasis on mysticism and world religions. To stay connected with his center, he enjoyed spending time in nature, meditating and communing with the trees, creatures, and Earth.

Ron's memory will be carried by friends across the country, and he is survived by Connie, his wife of 35 years; his brother Dave (Lynn); his children, Daniel (Melonie), Rhonda (Anthony), Christy (Kevin), and Shannon (Cassie); and his grandchildren, Madison, Ella, Wyatt, Meadow, Colin, and Brendan. In lieu of flowers, Preacher asked that donations be given to the Southwood United Church of Christ. And if you are so compelled, spend a few quiet moments observing one's own mind, settling into one's own peace, and smiling at the consciousness all around us.

"To open the heart, clear the mind, relax tension from the body—herein lies a subtle but profound secret. It's not the books one reads or the things one knows. It's not how many Bible verses one can quote or how articulate one is in explaining beliefs. Emptiness is the first step toward approaching God. Attend. Love quiet."
— Ron "Preacher" Sebring

Friends and family are invited to a celebration of life to be held at Southwood United Church of Christ at 7904 Raytown Rd, in Raytown, Mo., on March 23, 2024.

www.northbrae.com



Easter Memorial Gifts



Easter Memorial Gifts

The form below is for Easter Memorial gifts. Easter lilies/flowers will be purchased to decorate the Chapel for Easter. All Easter Memorial Gifts will be published in a future worship bulletin. Your gifts are appreciated!
QR Code links to printable form.

Enclosed is an Easter Memorial Gift of \$_____

In memory of _____

Name _____

Address_____



Please return this form along with your donation
either to the office or to the offering plate during Sunday service.

If you cannot print this form, you can
email the information requested to northbrae3@gmail.com,
or mail to
Northbrae Community Church
941 The Alameda,
Berkeley, CA, 94707



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