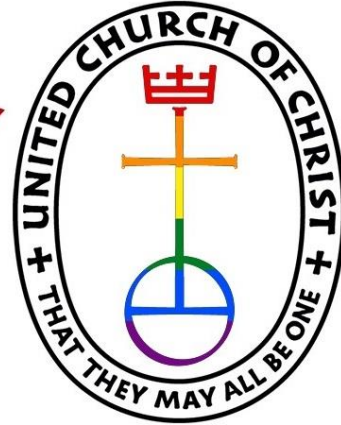


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THE Weekly

for Thursday, March 16, 2023

Pastor's Page

Hello Pioneers!



There is this great scene in the book *Pilgrims Progress*, a book written in 1678 and has remained in print ever since. The book is based on a dream from John Bunyon while in prison. In the story, there is a man named Christian who lays down his burdens when the straps carrying the burdens fall away as explained in the text as a huge backpack full of all the concerns, worries, and anxieties of life. Christian lays down his backpack at the foot of the cross where Jesus tells him to take it off, he no longer needs to carry it. This happens fairly early on in the story and there is much more to what happens to Christian on his way to Heaven.

I think of that burden because sometimes the Church, with a capital “C”, often places unfair burdens on its converts. Sometimes those burdens are so big that they cause a church member pain and duress. Some of you longtime church members of the Pioneer Congregational Church may attest to the burdens of serving on a number of leadership boards or committees and how the stress of it all wears you down. It isn’t fair to expect any one person to carry such burdens in church and it is very nearly always a good idea to take a break from volunteering long before going to church is no longer fun and spiritually helpful.

In our Scripture lesson for Sunday, we will read about a man born blind who, upon being healed by Jesus, is unfairly confronted by super duper religious people who question his loyalty, align him with the rabble-rouser Jesus, and who eventually kick him out of church for allowing himself to be healed on the Sabbath. This lesson is found in the ninth Chapter of the Gospel of John. I invite you to read the story. What I struggle with in thinking about this story was the assault from the religious leaders, who forced the man’s parents to not defend him, and who ultimately chose their legalism as the justification for his excommunication. When religion cares more about its beliefs and practices than it does for the needs and betterment of its parishioners, it becomes abusive and intolerable.

Sad to say, sometimes church leaders do this. I want us to make a commitment to ourselves and to how we do church NOT to do this or put the needs of what we believe over the needs and hopes of our faith community. Jesus makes this point too. But while it may be easy to side with Jesus, sometimes in stories like these, we need to turn and look in a mirror to see if we’re behaving like abusive religious leaders. Looking in the mirror forces us not only to ask if we have unfair expectations from our church, but do we harbor unfair expectations with our children or grandchildren, or in the care of our aging parents. Do we have unfair expectations from our friends or

coworkers? Are our expectations from our elected leaders fair? Are we compassionate and kind when we're out living our lives away from church?

These are all questions I want to explore on Sunday. It is another hope that when we read Scripture that we don't just look at how the lessons apply to others but how they apply to ourselves. When we consider these kinds of questions, we are following Jesus' hope that we regularly examine ourselves and consider how we might improve how we love God, each other, our churches, and ourselves.

I hope to see you on Sunday. We have a wonderful day full of church activities. I am looking forward to our Council meeting following our all-church Potluck luncheon after worship. It'll be a great Sunday and I hope you can attend. Also, consider inviting a family member or friend to join you. If you're reading this and haven't been to church in person for a while, I invite you to join us in person for a great meal.

I hope you are having a great week and I will look forward to seeing you on Sunday!

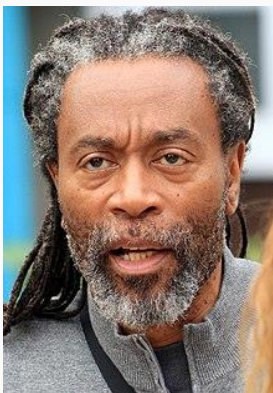
Blessings to you,

Pastor Bo

Music Musings by Dr. Elliot Jones

The psalm appointed for today is represented by a prelude by John Carter and the choral anthem *The 23rd Psalm (dedicated to my mother)* by Bobby McFerrin (famous for *Don't Worry, Be Happy*). He was inspired to write in this style after hearing the Anglican chant, in which the choir sings the syllables according to the natural

emphasis/de-emphasis of poetic speech. It is somewhat like a Gregorian chant but in four-part harmony.



If You but Trust in God to Guide You, like many Lutheran chorales, is in “bar form”: AAB. Heinrich Rinck’s first variation on it is straightforward, like a hymn. In the second variation, the melody is accompanied only by a “walking bass” line. (I won’t explain because you’ll hear what it means!) The third is much like the first, except for added chromatic (outside of the Do-Re-Mi ... scale) passing tones in the accompanying voices.

Birthdays at Pioneer

Mar 15 - Ellen Arden-Ogle
Mar 18 - Karen Shipmen-Jackman
Mar 21 - Lauryn Taylor-Piazza
Mar 25 - Cody Uzan



If we’ve missed your birthday, please call the church office and we’ll add your birthday to our birthday list.

Congregational Confidential

Periodically we highlight a member or friend of the Pioneer Congregational Church.



Liam Murdock, pictured left

Liam is the son of Fay and Steve. He was raised in our church and continues to attend our services and programs.

Q. What faith tradition were you born and raised in?

A. United Church of Christ

Q. How did you find the Pioneer Church?

A. I was born and raised in this church.

Q. Where were you raised?

A. Sacramento, CA

Q. What is your favorite memory of the Pioneer Congregational Church?

A. Being able to go to summer camp that the church provided for me to attend. Church isn't what happens on Sunday but what we did and do together.

Q. What do you hope for our church?

A. I hope we can re-establish a sense of community and unity that I feel has been lost over the past couple of years.

Our Pastor's favorite Podcasts



1. **The Bible for Normal People.** This podcast does a great job of bringing biblical scholarship to everyday people. Hosted by my favorite public theologian Pete Enns and Jared Byas, this is always a fun time with good-natured humor and insightful conversations with leading social thinkers, seminary professors, Christian authors, and a whole bunch of rabble-rousers. To listen to the latest episode, search for The Bible for Normal People on your favorite podcast service or go to their website at <https://thebiblefornormalpeople.com/>
 2. **Homebrewed Christianity.** This podcast is hosted by famed Christian process theologian Tripp Fuller. Like Pete Enns, he brings thoughtful conversations with ethicists and a variety of religious speakers to engage a modern interpretation of what it means to be a follower of Jesus in a post-Christian America. You can find his podcast on your favorite podcast service or by going to his website at <https://trippfuller.com/podcasts/>.
 3. **TED Talks Daily.** Every weekday, TED Talks Daily brings you the latest talks in audio. Join host and journalist Elise Hu for thought-provoking ideas on every subject imaginable -- from Artificial Intelligence to Zoology, and everything in between -- given by the world's leading thinkers and creators. With TED Talks Daily, find some space in your day to change your perspectives, ignite your curiosity, and learn something new. They don't actually have a website (or I can't find it) but you can find this podcast on your favorite podcast service.
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What's Happening in Sacramento

1. **Sacramento Comic-Con** THIS weekend, Saturday and Sunday, March 18-19 at the Sacramento Convention Center, Hall D, 1400 J Street, Sacramento. Tickets are \$15 for Saturday, \$10 for Sunday, \$20 for both days. Children under 11 are free. <https://www.sac-con.com/>
2. **St. Patrick's Day Parade**, Saturday, March 18 from 1:00 PM – 8:00 PM in Old Sacramento. A parade, live musical entertainment, outdoor beer gardens, and a chance to find Leprechauns hiding throughout the charming historic district.
3. **Paranormal Cirque II**. Every evening between now and Sunday, March 20 from 8:30 PM – 10:30 PM at Cal-Expo, Sacramento. Under this Clown Castle, the black and red big top tent, Acrobats of the Air, Illusionists, freaks, mysterious creatures and all the elements that make one think of a “normal” Circus but that of normal has very little! A new show with breathtaking implications always poised between fun and the most uninhibited fear that will transport you to a dark world inhabited by creatures with incredible circus art abilities. Tickets range between \$20 - \$60. The show is rated “R” for adults only.

Word Find Puzzle

John 9:1-41

B D S A C D E C H I P L
 L J H E A L N H H M M O
 I W O R L D D W U J S O
 N C T E L A Y S P E A K
 D V H P A B U S B S W N
 I B E L I E V E E U O O
 S O R I D C O M E S R W
 C R Y E P A R E N T S A
 I N S D S U A Y L H H S
 P H A R I S E E S E I H
 L S I N N E R S K N P V
 E S D B S Y K Y J V D U
 W O R K Y T O L D J E E

BECAUSE	BEEN	BELIEVE
BLIND	BORN	CALL
COMES	DISCIPLE	EYES
HEAL	JESUS	KNOW
LOOK	OTHER	PARENTS
PHARISEES	REPLIED	SAID
SINNER	SINS	SPEAK
THEN	TOLD	WASH
WORK	WORLD	WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE CHURCH

We will be collecting your **food donations** for the South Sacramento Interfaith Partnership's Food Closet. Please bring your non-perishable food items to church with you and we'll dedicate them during the service. The food donations will be delivered during the week.



+ There is a meeting of our **Church Council** this Sunday, March 19 at

11:30 AM in the Parlor. All board and committee chairpersons are expected to attend. Any church member is welcome to attend.



+ Join us for a **Potluck Luncheon** following Sunday worship in the Fellowship Hall. If you would like to bring something, bring anything food you like. It'll fit in with whatever everyone else brings.

+ Our church has a grief book program called ***Journeying through Grief***. It is a set of four short books to give or send to grieving people at four crucial times during the first year after a loved one has died. If you know of anyone who might benefit from this program, please contact Pastor Bo or Marietta Jackman.

+ **Tellers Needed!** We are in need of tellers to step in when one of our regular tellers is unavailable. Tellers count the Sunday offering after it is collected and secure it to be deposited on Monday. Training will be provided. If you are interested, please contact Bernadette Wallace or Marietta Jackman.

+ **One Great Hour of Sharing Offering.** It's time to share – On March 19 and 26, 2023 we will be taking a special collection for One Great Hour of Sharing, The world in which all of us live needs your help.

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering of the United Church of Christ involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or

extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.



Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, your

contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put you in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable. You meet immediate needs and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place.

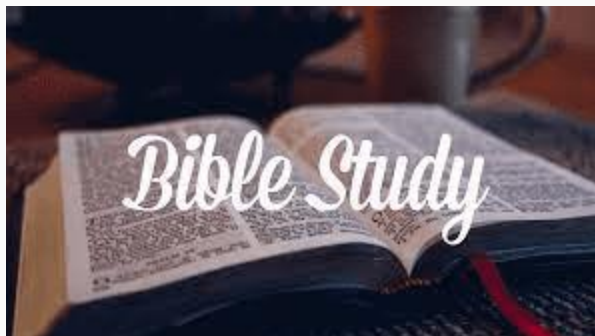
+ What Is This?!

This picture was taken in the sanctuary. Do you know, or can you guess what it is and what it is for? See Vi McNally for the answer.



+ Join us next Wednesday, March 29 at 6:00 PM for a special **Lenten discipline of Meditation** led by our own Jeremy Haakenson. The meeting lasts about 30 minutes. This will be our last class offered on meditation for the Lenten season.

+ **Weekly Bible Study.** We invite you to our evening Bible study every Monday night at 7:00 PM. Choir member Jake Hodge is leading the study. Jake is pursuing his PhD in English Literature at UC Davis. His dissertation is on the American Theology of Song. Please invite your family and friends.

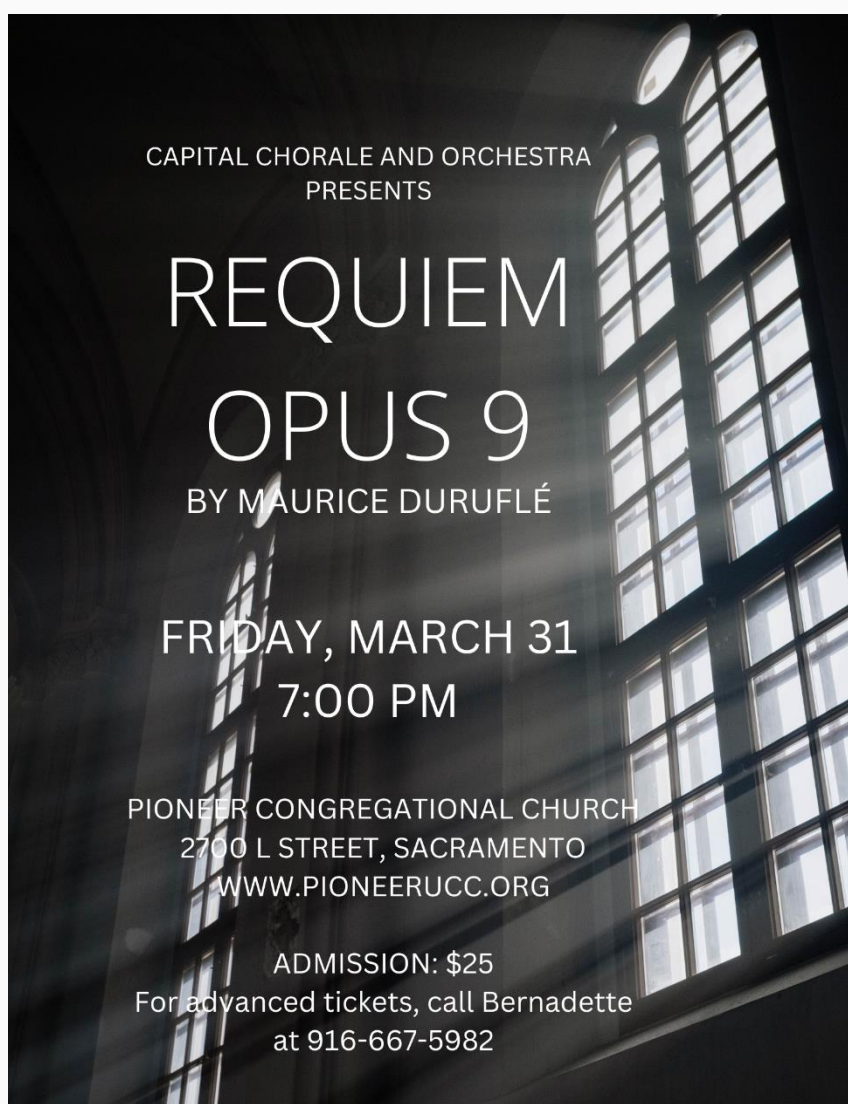


+ Join us for our new **Brown Bag Bible Study** to be offered every Tuesday afternoon at 12:00 Noon beginning on Tuesday, March 28, to complement the evening Bible study that will focus specifically on where the upcoming Scripture lesson on Sunday may go in the sermon. If you are interested in attending, please contact Pastor Bo.



+ A **special thank you** goes to Nancy Alex and Vi for providing tasty meals for our retreat last Saturday and for Fellowship Hour following church this past Sunday. We also thank Terrance Corcoran, a rose lover, who trims all of our roses. He is a dedicated volunteer for Clara's House. We also thank Manuel Nuno for keeping our landscape under control.

+ The Capital Chorale, the community choir organized by our own Dr. Elliot Jones, will be performing ***Durufles' Requiem, Opus 9***, on Friday, March 31 at 7:00 PM. This choral concert will feature the choral performance plus other musical opportunities for audience participation. Admission is \$25 and tickets can be purchased in advance by calling Bernadette at 916-667-5982 or buying them directly from her during our Fellowship Hour after church on Sundays.



CAPITAL CHORALE AND ORCHESTRA
PRESENTS

REQUIEM

OPUS 9

BY MAURICE DURUFLÉ

FRIDAY, MARCH 31
7:00 PM

PIONEER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
2700 L STREET, SACRAMENTO
WWW.PIONEERUCC.ORG

ADMISSION: \$25
For advanced tickets, call Bernadette
at 916-667-5982

+ **Pack the Pew on April 2.** It's time to start thinking about who you'll invite to church on Sunday, April 2 for our Pack the Pew Sunday. The person or family who invites the most guests will receive a prize, and the person who attends will be blessed by the experience. It's a win-win for everyone!



+ We have a vibrant **prayer ministry** in our church. Heidi Munoz collects prayer requests, emails them out to our prayer champions,

and we pray over all prayer requests each and every Sunday. If you have a prayer request, please send an email to Heidi at happyheidi@prodigy.net.

+ Spread the Word! We have nine **undercover parking spaces available** to lease in the Teichert Motor Court between our church and Sutter Hospital off Capitol Avenue. Monthly rates are \$120. For more information or to purchase a parking spot, please call the church office.

+ To stay up to date with all the happenings and life within our congregation, be sure to visit our website's [Happenings](#) page.



+ If you would like to add something to this e-newsletter, ***The Weekly***, please contact Pastor Bo at pastorbo@pioneerucc.org.

Submissions need to be on Wednesdays.

+ Parking. Parking is available each Sunday in a variety of places and during the weekday in specific places. First, there are parking spaces out front and around the church. No meter fees are collected on Sunday. Second, there is free parking underground next door/behind the church in the underground car park at the Teichert underground parking garage. Enter Capitol Street between the garage and the hospital. The parking gate is open at 9:00 AM on Sundays. You may park in any space even if it says reserved.

During the weekdays, we have the entire basement level (B2) for our parking needs, but you will need to get a parking card to access the closed gate unless we have prearranged an event for the gates to be open.



ON SUNDAY

+ Join us for worship this Sunday, March 19 at 10:00 AM. The Scripture lesson is John 9:1-7. The title of the sermon is, "The Unfairness of Blame." The Lay Reader is Balt Von Huene. Vi McNally and Nancy Alex are the Ushers.

+ You are invited to join us for Coffee Hour and Refreshments for our monthly Potluck luncheon. You are invited to bring anything you like.

+ If you would prefer to meet online, you are invited to watch our live-stream service on the church's [YouTube channel](#). The service begins promptly at 10:00 AM. The service will be posted later in the afternoon if you are unable to watch it live.

