Remember to set the clocks, that won’t reset themselves, ahead one hour before you go to bed on Saturday, March 12.

UPCOMING WORSHIP

ASH WEDNESDAY
March 2
“Embrace a Real Life”
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

March 6
“You Life Is Holy”

March 13
“You Can’t Control It”

March 20
“Lots of Things Can Be Medicine”

March 27
“The Problem Is Bigger Than You”

April 3
“We Are Fragile,”
John 12:1-8

To worship with us on Zoom, register once at bit.ly/reg4worship.

To worship with us in person (when the in-person option is available), register for each worship service at bit.ly/inpersonsignup.

Niles Discovery Church
36600 Niles Blvd., Fremont, CA 94536
(510) 797-0895  http://nilesdiscoverychurch.org

United in God’s love for everyone’s journey ... no exceptions.
Pastors Hold Inquirers Gathering, March 27

If you have been considering formally uniting with the church or if you just want more information about the church, please come to our next Inquirers Gathering. The next gathering will be held on Sunday, March 27, following worship, on Zoom (please plan to attend worship on Zoom that day, too). This is a great opportunity to ask questions, learn about the peculiarities of Niles Discovery Church, and connect with a few more people.

Liturgist Training Scheduled For April 24

Through all the changes and uncertainty caused by the pandemic, our core of liturgists have remained steadfast, helping lead our worship services on Zoom, and now our hybrid worship services. If you would like to become part of this group, please save Sunday, April 24, immediately following worship – hopefully in the sanctuary – for our next Liturgist Training workshop. It would also be helpful if you let Pastor Jeff know you’re planning to attend.

Contacting The Staff

As a precaution against Covid-19, please do not come into the office. You can call the office 510-797-0895 to leave a message for any staff member.

Mikele Kearney’s email is admin@nilesdiscoverychurch.org

Cecilia Le’s email is cecilia@nilesdiscoverychurch.org

You are encouraged to use the pastors’ Calendly apps to make an appointment for a phone call or a Zoom meeting or to meet in person as you would like; their contact information is below.

Pastor Brenda’s mobile
510-828-4107
Make an appointment: calendly.com/pastorbrenda
Email: brenda@nilesdiscoverychurch.org

Pastor Jeff’s mobile
510-579-8851
Make an appointment: calendly.com/revjss
Email: jeff@nilesdiscoverychurch.org

Senior Pastor
Rev. Jeff Spencer
Associate Pastor
Rev. Brenda Loreman

Admin
Mikele Kearny
Technology Director
Jim Thomas

Interim Music Director
Michael Morales
Bookkeeper
Cecilia Le
Accompanist and Organist
Jenny Lin
Lent begins with a special, Zoom-only worship service on Ash Wednesday, March 2, at 7:30 p.m. If you are registered for Sunday worship services, you’re registered for the Ash Wednesday service. If not, please go to bit.ly/reg4worship and register. See the February 22 “A Pastoral Word” email for details about setting up for this worship service at your home.

“I hope people will come to this special worship service because it will set up the theme for our worship series in Lent: Good Enough,” Pastor Jeff explained. “I believe that perfection is impossible. I also believe that transformation is possible. And that is more than good enough. That’s the theme we’ll explore throughout this season of reflection.”

We live in a culture bent on definitions of a ‘good life’ as continuous upward mobility – climbing ladders of prosperity with increasingly fabulous experiences that we can post to ever more likable social media accounts. We may comb the shelves of the self-help section in search of just the right formula to gain success. Perhaps we even gravitate towards spiritual leaders who promise great rewards if we only do “the right thing.” And despite these efforts, life happens.

More often we find ourselves trying to repair the rung we’ve just stepped onto than actually climbing the ladder. What if we stopped climbing and started fertilizing, watering, and blooming right where we find ourselves? We will spend this Lent remembering that we are blessed simply because God is here. We will spend this Lent remembering that God being here really is good enough.

“We’re using a stepladder as our anchoring image through the season,” Pastor Jeff explained. “We will have a stepladder in the sanctuary that gets transformed and used in different ways through the season.”

Lent concludes with Holy Week, April 10-17. In addition to the Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday worship services, there will be two Zoom-only worship services on Maundy Thursday, April 14, and Good Friday, April 15 – both at 7:30 p.m.

**Palm Sunday**
April 10
“Accept Support”

**Maundy Thursday**
April 14
“We Are Blessed, Regardless”
John 13:1-17, 31b-35

**Good Friday**
April 15
“God Is Here, Even in Our Deepest Sorrow”
John 18:1-19, 42

**Easter Sunday**
April 17
“A Good Enough Faith”
John 20:1-18

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**Announcement And Newsletter Submissions**

Please send announcements and articles as you write them to Mikele at admin@nilesdiscoverychurch.org. She will post them on our News blog as she receives them and will submit them for publication in the following issue of The Bell (if appropriate in terms of timing). The deadline for submissions for the April 2022 edition of The Bell is 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 17. In addition to typical newsletter news, we hope to fill each issue of The Bell with reflections, photographs, poems, and so forth by members and friends of the congregation.
My first and only smartphone dates back to 2015. A Samsung Galaxy J3 that I have kept for the past 7 years. When it suddenly froze for over 24 hours, I decided it was time to get a new phone. With most people replacing their phones every few years, I felt I did a good job in making it last that long. As part of my research into a new phone, I decided I wanted an eco-friendlier cell phone. But what does that mean? According to this article (bit.ly/EcoPhoneGuide), for a phone to be considered sustainable, the following are things to look for:

1. Parts that can be easily replaced and repaired
2. Low radiation emission
3. Made from recyclable materials
4. Designed to last longer than typical smartphones
5. Its manufacturing process has a low environmental impact

The most environmentally friendly cell phone is the one that you will keep for a long time. To that end, you need to preserve the life of your battery by not exposing your phone to extreme temperatures, close your apps when not using them, and avoid draining your battery completely before charging it. E-waste is a huge problem, so purchase a refurbished phone instead of buying a new one.

In the end, I decided on the Teracube 2e; with its biodegradable case and replaceable battery, it was rated the most sustainable cell phone in the U.S. according to this article (bit.ly/EcoFriendlyPhone). Plus, the company will also plant a tree for every phone sold.
On January 1, 2022, a new California bill concerning the training and background screening of individuals that work with children was passed. Our insurance carrier, Church West, conducted an “HR Bootcamp” in our area, followed up with webinars, explaining the impacts of this new bill aiming to help put an end to child abuse by making advances in the screening and training process and updating the reporting policies for those in close contact with children.

Niles Discovery Church has formed a group consisting of Beth Armstrong, Barbara P. King, bill Palleschi, and Mark Twist to begin the work necessary to modify our Safe Church Policies and set up the process to access LiveScan, FBI background checks, and online training for all employees, Sunday school teachers, and any others who may supervise or teach children more than 16 hours a month or 32 hours a year.

These are the same protocols schoolteachers and volunteers in the scouting programs are subject to. We have always had good processes to make our church a safe place for our children; this new bill gives us better guidelines and thus more assurance that we have a safe environment for these little lives.

Your donations of cans and bottles has kept the curriculum going for one more semester at St. James Orphanage Community School. It is now into the second semester and, I am told, doing well. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic I have not seen the school in person in over two years now.

The school teaches children kindergarten through fourth grade. The educational activities include a basic curriculum, sports, art, and even dancing. You can see from the photos that permaculture farming has become part of the learning system. Because the Island has growing population pressure and often lacks food for the students’ lunch, a farming education with activities is vital to the children’s learning. There is also a rotary fish farming project underway.

I will travel to Mfangano Island in early April to visit the school and determine how things are going. I look forward to having the opportunity to present at coffee hour what I learn about the school and its efforts in April or May.

Thank you everyone for your continued support of St. James Community Orphanage School.
Driveway Art for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - still visible a month later. — Picture by Joy Barnitz

A Little Free Library seen in the neighborhood has expanded to three houses. — Picture by Joy Barnitz

My Adventures in Local Parks — Pictures by Julie Ballard

Coyote Hills 1

Coyote Hills 2

Coyote Hills 3

Alameda Creek Path

Alameda Creek
“For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.” – 1 Corinthians 3:9

Our March special offering is split evenly between United Church of Christ’s One Great Hour of Sharing and Disciples of Christ’s Week of Compassion. We have the opportunity to build something miraculous, to plant seeds of new life. Where God’s people have suffered loss, we are invited to invest in their future.

When we give to Week of Compassion and One Great Hour of Sharing, our gift travels to places where disaster or poverty has caused great suffering. Through our generosity, we empower communities to grow new kinds of crops in a changing climate; we support youth education and vocational training; we rebuild homes and churches; we help provide needed supplies after disasters; and we empower women with skills to support their family and neighbors. In these and so many other places, we are the co-workers in the kingdom of God. Building, planting, watering... and trusting that God gives growth to all good gifts shared in faith.

Niles Discovery Church receives a special offering every month. With so many varied opportunities to give, you may need to choose which ones are most meaningful to you. To view the complete list of special offering opportunities for 2022 please visit [bit.ly/SpecialOffering2022](http://bit.ly/SpecialOffering2022). To give online at any time, visit [bit.ly/NDCDonations](http://bit.ly/NDCDonations) and select “One Great Hour of Sharing/Week of Compassion” from the Special Offering options.

Thanks to your generosity, our February special offering for Blankets+ had raised $385 at the time of press.

The Second Saturday Documentary Series Presents: **Beyond the Politics of Life and Choice: A New Conversation about Abortion**

Our March documentary, *Beyond the Politics of Life and Choice: A New Conversation about Abortion*, weaves together interviews with activists, legal experts, theologians, seminarians, college students, service providers, and women for whom the decision to terminate or not to terminate a pregnancy has been a formative event in their lives. The result is unique, and the speakers are wise, compassionate, and principled. They bring surprising insights to a subject fraught with tension, prejudice, shame, and fear.

As part of our Second Saturday Documentary Series, *Beyond the Politics of Life and Choice* will be shown via Zoom Saturday, March 12, at 1:30 p.m. There will be a discussion immediately following the film led by Susie Claxton. Her work experience includes environmental and occupational health research and occupational health & safety program management. She is a member of our church and the leader of the Green Team. Susie is married and has two adult sons whose wives are contemplating childbearing. At age 67, she has been an observer of the legal abortion debate in the U.S. for 4 decades. Susie suffered a “spontaneous abortion” herself, as a young woman, which is not uncommon (10-20% of pregnancies). She is also a member of the Second Saturday Documentary Series producers’ team, which arranges these thought-provoking films. You can register for this screening and other films in the series at [bit.ly/SSDSZoom](http://bit.ly/SSDSZoom).

*Beyond the Politics of Life and Choice* articulately presents both sides of the abortion debate, giving unbiased weight to the arguments of both, while modeling respectful dialogue and disagreement. It aims to inspire compassionate listening and open-hearted discussion on these, and other questions related to women’s and gender studies, psychology and sociology, ethics and political science, public health and social justice, and communication and conflict resolution.
REGISTRATION REQUIRED

To enhance the safety of your Zoom experience, we require advanced registration for Zoom meetings held on the church’s Zoom account. You only need to register once for a repeating event. Find the registration links in the descriptions of the scheduled events.

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY  Mondays

Monday Morning Bible study continues to Zoom from 11:00 a.m. to Noon. The scripture studied is typically the scripture for the coming Sunday’s worship service. Everyone is welcome. Register at bit.ly/mmbsreg.

DAYTIME FELLOWSHIP GROUP  March 21

The Daytime Fellowship meets on the third Monday of the month, which is March 21 this month. Bring your lunch to this monthly Zoom gathering. We share the same meeting link as the Monday Morning Bible Study, so join by registering for the Bible Study (bit.ly/mmbsreg).

CYBER GEEZERS  March 22

This is a gathering of retirees who are interested in learning more about computers, the Internet, etc. They meet from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday following the third Wednesday (I can’t make this up) which is March 22 this month. The group gathers on Zoom. Contact Jerry Sabo (jlsabo3@comcast.net) for the Zoom link and for more information.

LAP ROBE TYING GROUP  March 23

This group is back to meeting regularly in the fellowship hall, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of the month, with COVID protocols in mind. Please bring your own lunch. The March meeting will be Wednesday, March 23. Please contact Judy Molander (jumolander@aol.com) to be added to the group’s email list or if you have suggestions for organizations that might want donated lap robes.

GREEN TEAM MEETING  March 2 and 16

You’re welcome to join the Green Team, a group leading our congregation to address the climate crisis. They meet the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. This month they are meeting March 2 and 16. Please contact Susie Claxton (veroclax@sbcglobal.net) for information on joining the group and attending meetings.

RETIREMENT REINVENTION GROUP  March 17

This group meets on the third Thursday of the month which March 17 this month. Contact John Zlatnik (izlatnik49@mac.com) for information about joining this Zoom gathering of retirees who are supporting one another as they explore new ways of being retired people.
SPRING CELEBRATION  March 20

Spring is in the air, and it is time to celebrate being able to worship together in person. The Ministry of Hospitality and Fellowship Team is inviting you to join in the jubilation on the church patio on Sunday, March 20 immediately following worship. There will be special sweet treats and amazing company. The Team looks forward to seeing you in person at this fantastic fellowship gathering.

REGISTER NOW FOR THE 2022 WOMEN’S MINISTRIES SPRING RENEWAL
March 11 and March 12

Bring your testimony and an open heart to hear others’ to the 2022 Women’s Ministries Spring Renewal being held via Zoom from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Friday, March 11 and 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 12. This year’s theme is I’ve Got a Testimony and The Rev. Dr. Katrina Marsh is the keynote speaker. You can register at bit.ly/2022WMSR.

What is the power of testimony? The Latin root for testimony is testis, meaning “witness.” Compassionate witnessing of our personal stories helps us recover and help others do the same. The courage it takes to share your whole truth with your whole heart builds resilience and fosters connection with others.

God's grace gives us an opportunity to testify to what God has done in our lives. The joy is that our testimony can give hope and healing to the world. The power of testimony is real. Learn more and share your story by attending this year’s spring renewal.

LET POETRY MOVE YOUR SPIRIT  TBD Based on Participants’ Preferences

Move My Spirit Poetry is starting again on Zoom, and you are invited to join in the fun. No experience necessary – newbies and experienced writers are welcome. We will schedule our meeting times on the availability of those who join.

During each meeting we let the Spirit guide us in deciding our poetry prompts. Poems are written both at and between sessions. We share poems and then discuss what we appreciate about them and what might need clarification. We also explore different poetic techniques to expand our capabilities.

Is the Spirit nudging you to try writing and sharing poetry? To join or get more information, contact Cindy Sojourner at cindybsojourner@gmail.com or Veronica Riggs at vmr49@aol.com.

Here is a 10-minute poem by Cindy Sojourner written from the prompt, "Joining." If you are inspired – try writing your own 10-minute poem using this same prompt. (To be fair, Cindy did add a few extra minutes in the editing process.)

Joining
©Cindy Sojourner, February 9, 2022

Joining can be total relief
Or scary as a spider web
In the face when you are first
To walk the path today.
Joining is like a lemon
Growing from a blossom
On a thin stiff branch,
Warmed by the sun,
Then slipping away
To be with someone new,
Who splits them open
To drip sour lemon juice
Onto an awaiting tongue,
As soft, rough, and wet as them.
All Who Are Caring For Sick, Frail, And/Or Elderly Family Members.

All those who are suddenly caring for nieces and nephews and grandchildren because the children’s parents died in the pandemic.

Peace throughout the earth, offering thanks for all who through non-violent methods are bringing God’s compassion and justice to the world.

A reminder about this prayer list:
If you have a prayer request that you’d like added to this list (or removed) please let Pastor Jeff know.
# March 2022

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Niles Discovery Church

Rev. Jeffrey Spencer,
Senior Pastor
Rev. Brenda Loreman,
Associate Pastor
36600 Niles Blvd.,
Fremont 94536

Phone: 510-797-0895
nilesdiscoverychurch.org

THE BELL IS FIRST CLASS

This edition of The Bell was graciously edited by Priscilla Taylor. If you received this issue of The Bell through the US Mail, then you received it first class mail. You can help reduce our costs (roughly $1.50 per issue you receive in the mail) by receiving The Bell via email. Simply go to bit.ly/NDCEmailsignup and start filling out the forms. You can select what email lists you want to join – for the newsletter, the weekly prayer requests, the weekly announcements, and more. Then, please leave a phone message or email the church office (510-797-0895; admin@nilesdiscoverychurch.org) so we can note in our database that you don’t need via the US Mail anymore.