

UPCOMING WORSHIP

September 7 "Grounded:

Earth" Genesis 2:4b-9, 15 September 14

"Grounded: Water" John 4:5-30

September 21 (Sun Day)

"Grounded: Fire" Exodus 3:1-7

September 28

"Grounded: Air"

Ezekiel 37:1-10 Luke 12:22-34

October 5 "Grounded: Flora and Fauna"

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

United in God's love for everyone's journey... no exceptions.

# ANNOUNCEMENT AND NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Please send announcements and articles as you write them to the office administrator at admin@nilesdiscoverychurch.org. Your submissions will be posted on our News Blog as they are received, and will be used to create announcements (as appropriate), as well as submitted for the next edition of *The Bell* (if appropriate in terms of timing). The deadline for submissions for the October 2025 edition of *The Bell* is 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 11. 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.



#### LET THE PPRC HELP

The Pastor Parish Relations Committee (the PPRC) is a group appointed by the Cabinet to help keep relationships within the congregation, especially your relationship with the pastor, healthy. If you have a concern or issue that you would like help to iron out, contact a member of the PPRC. They're here to hear and help. The membership of the Committee is: Denise Church, Leonard Lloyd, Mary VonAh-Gregory, Judy Hollowell, and Ken Rasler.



Senior Pastor Rev. Jeff Spencer



Admin Laurel Wallace



Bookkeeper Cecilia Le



**Technology Director**Jim Thomas



Music Director Andrew Kessler



Accompanist and Organist Jenny Lin

#### **CONTACTING THE STAFF**

You can call the office 510-797-0895 to leave a message for office staff members. Our Office Administrator, Laurel Wallace can be emailed at <a href="mailto:admin@nilesdiscoverychurch.org">admin@nilesdiscoverychurch.org</a>. She is typically in the office on Mondays and Thursdays, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Our bookkeeper, Cecilia Le, can be emailed at <a href="mailto:cecilia@nilesdiscoverychurch.org">cecilia@nilesdiscoverychurch.org</a>. She is typically in the office on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Please use the pastor's Calendly app to make an appointment for a phone call or a Zoom meeting or to meet in person as you would like; Pastor Jeff's contact information is below.

**Absences**: Pastor Jeff will be attending the Region's clergy retreat September 15 through 17. Cecilia Le will on vacation September 25 to October 2.

Pastor Jeff's contact info:
Office: 510-797-0895 x2
Mobile: 510-579-8851
Make an appointment:
calendly.com/revjss
Email:
jeff@nilesdiscoverychurch.org

# GET GROUNDED IN CREATION DURING THE SEASON OF CREATION

By Pastor Jeff

In this time of disorientation in our world, in our communities, and our families, we pause to reconnect

with creation. The created world has much to teach us about cycles, systems, ebbs and flows, and how to remain grounded despite the external circumstances that surround us. Thus, the theme for our Season of Creation worship series: *Grounded in Creation*.

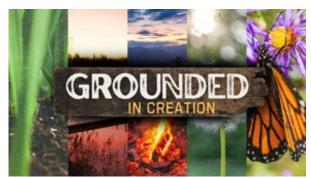
The Season of Creation

(September 1 to October 4) will be stretched by a day to give us the typical five Sundays. During the season, we

will be Grounded in Creation. We will reconnect to this great web of life by focusing on five elements: earth,

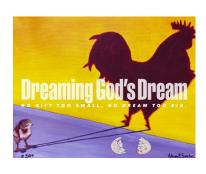
water, fire, air, and flora and fauna. Using the elements from above, below, and around us, we will explore Biblical stories of creation, connectedness, and care.

Root down, look up, and learn what it might mean for you and our community of faith to be grounded in creation.



#### STEWARDSHIP FOR 2026

By Mark Twist



It is not difficult to realize that the seasons are changing this month. The daylight becomes a little bit shorter, and the nights a little cooler. The schools are back in session. Already, the stores are putting up displays for Halloween. Time seems to pass by quickly, especially when we reflect on the summer events or gatherings that just recently happened. What do we look forward to now?

In less than three months, we will be celebrating Thanksgiving. This can be a very special time of the year when we are keenly aware of our blessings, as we gather around tables with friends or family. This observance may also help us to ponder on what we intend to pledge next year to support the mission and ministries of the

Niles Discovery Church. The theme for this year's campaign, "Dream God's Dream", will be used in letters, testimonials, and sermons during the month of October. We will be dedicating our pledges on Sunday, November 2. There is plenty of time between now and then, so enjoy the beginning of autumn.

### COMMUNITY GATHERS TO CELEBRATE PEACE WITH CREATION

United Church of Christ Fremont and the Tri-City Interfaith Council will hold a celebration of Peace with Creation on Sun Day, September 21, starting at 11:30 a.m., at UCC Fremont, 38255 Blacow Road, Fremont. Come explore creation and the regenerative powers of the earth. Learn about renewable energy, regenerative agriculture, native plant gardens.

Animals that are leashed or caged will be blessed. There will be activities for children. Community groups will be sharing their programs. There will be a native garden to explore. The event will end with the Tri-City Interfaith Council's International Day for Peace prayer.

# LGBTQIA+ FOLK, COLLAGE YOUR PRIDE AND FIND SUPPORT WITH PRIDE PLACE OF BELONGING

By Cindy Sojourner



The next Pride Place of Belong-

ing Support Group for local LGBTQIA+ folk and Social Activity for Queer folk and allies, is on Sunday, September 21, 2025. Our Social Activity will be a "Mixed-Media Collage Your Pride" class, led by artists Cindy Sojourner and Sandy Thomas. The Support Group meets every third Sunday, from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in Room 3 at the church. The Social Activities occur afterwards from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Please extend an invitation to LGBTQIA+ friends and family who might be interested. These secular activities are free.

The LGBTQIA+ Support Group is led by Jeff Spencer with Cindy Sojourner as a substitute in his absence. People have an opportunity to check-in and indicate any joy or concern that they desire to discuss deeper. The confidential discussions vary to reflect the group's indicated needs and interests. Nine people attended our first Support Group meeting, and all indicated that they are looking forward to returning. Any LGBTQIA+ person is welcome to attend.

Our "Mixed-Media Collage Your Pride" social activity for the LGBTQIA+ community and allies will begin with examples of collages and guidelines for collaging unique "Collage Your Pride" masterpieces. No previous art experience or pride in art skills are required. People are welcome, not required, to bring their own special photos, art supplies, and a canvas or background material. There will be enough art materials provided for everyone to create a glorious abundance of Pride. A few canvases will be pro-

vided for purchase. People are also welcome to bring a colorful snack to share. Children and youth need to be accompanied by an adult guardian.

Our Potluck Picnic on the Patio social activity in July, for the LGBTQIA+ community and allies was greatly appreciated and enjoyed on July 20, 2025. Seventeen people attended. There was plenty of yummy food and interesting conversation. It was a beautiful day to eat out on our patio. Next month, we'll tell you how our August karaoke night went.

Our upcoming third Sunday Social Activities include an LGBTQIA+ Costume Gala on October 19 and a Thanksgiving Pie Potluck on November 16. We will be hosting a Flamy Grant concert on October 24, see the article on page 7 for more information, or contact Cindy Sojourner at cindybsojourner@gmail.com.



#### **COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD**

Members and friends of Niles Discovery Church are invited to submit short notices that may be of interest to the rest of the congregation. Note, no commercial notices or partisan political announcements are allowed. Niles Discovery Church makes no representations or endorsements about the events or services listed.

All You Need Is Love: The Golden Gate

Men's Chorus, the community chorus Pastor Jeff sings with, will present a concert of powerful and fun music, including tight arrangements of popular songs (The Beetles, Cindy Lauper, Ed Sheeran, and more) and a few pieces that are in a style you're more accustomed to GGMC singing, on September 6 and 7, at 3:00 p.m., at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, 3281 16th Street (at Dolores), San Francisco. Though Pastor Jeff isn't singing in this concert, he says it's a set you'll love. Get tickets at ggmc.org.

Focus on Income Inequality: "Communities Thrive When All Members Thrive" The League of Women Voters of Fremont, Newark and Union City invites all members of the community to our Speaker Series. On September 6, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., in the Niles Discovery Church Sanctuary. Dr. Anji Buckner-Capone, Assistant Professor of Public Health and Recreation at San Jose State University, will present her research on the extreme wealth disparities in our communities, which resulted in the recently published, 6th Annual Silicon Valley Pain Index. This publication details both personal and community distress and suffering that results in negative impacts on a person's quality of life. It is designed to inspire ACTION. Please join us for this FREE program.

## CHURCH MEMBERS TO SHOW OFF THEIR EV CARS IN CHURCH PARKING LOT

By Pastor Jeff

Spurred on by people who remember the first Earth Day in 1970, scores of environmental, climate, and faith groups are working together to create a new nation-wide festival called Sun Day. It will be held on Sunday, September 21, all across the nation. Right here at Niles Discovery Church, we'll be holding an EV Car Show, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., in our big parking lot.

In the decades since that first Earth Day, scientists and engineers have done their job. They have given us all the technology we need to power our lives and our economy with clean renewable energy.



Now it's up to us, to our generation – whatever generation you may be part of – to celebrate the fact that "we can do this," and to embrace the opportunity to make the transition to clean, God-given, renewable energy a reality, not only for those who can afford it, but for the least of these among us.

Come learn more about electric vehicles. Ask owners what they like and dislike about their cars. Find out how they overcame range anxiety. There will be arts activities for all ages. And (of course) we'll be serving sun tea!

Let's make Sun Day a day filled with the light of truth and the promise of hope, a day that reveals a just and secure future, not only for us, but for all of God's creation.

The Bay Association of the Northern California
Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ
invites you to



Service of Ordination for Dr. Joy Barnitz September 13 10:00am

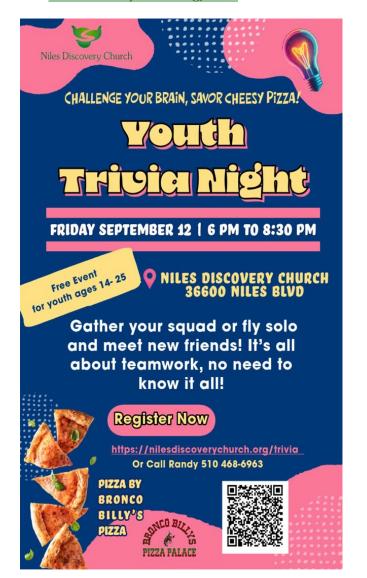
UNITED Church of Christ, Fremont 38255 Blacow Rd. Fremont



Clergy are invited to wear red stoles, robes and collars optional. Everyone is invited to wear red. RSVP to freucc@gmail.com



Free event on Friday, September 12, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Youth 14 to 25 are invited to join us for a Youth Trivia Contest and Pizza Night. Bring your friends and challenge your brain to see if your team can win a prize. Enjoy Bronco Billy's pizza while you contemplate your answers. You may be back in school, but the fun keeps on going at Niles Discovery Church. Sign up at: nilesdiscoverychurch.org/trivia.



#### HELP WANTED: GOOD NEIGHBORS

By Cindy Sojourner©, August 20, 2025

Who is our neighbor? Every person and all creation. Who? Every person and all creation are neighbors. Who? You, me, everyone. Each and every person, near or far. Who? All animals, plants, lands, air, water, stars.

Who is our neighbor? All the seeds, each new waving fading leaf. Every crimson indigo sepia petal. Every stand of trees, lone tree. Each smooth sharp rock, sandy pathway. Every mountainous range, morphing cloud. Each meadow, backyard, insect and bird song.

Who is our neighbor? Each quiet stream, crashing ocean wave. Each stray kitten, old dog, baby penguin, goat. Each nearing extinction rhinoceros, newt. Whoever is in trouble. Whoever needs a little or lot of loving, praise. Whosoever needs our protection, playfulness. Whoever needs us to create a safe resting place.

Who is our neighbor? Anyone, everyone, in need of a good neighbor. In need of being reminded, We are all made of the same stardust, Meant to shine bright together forever.

#### YOUR CANS SUPPORT **EDUCATION**

Ministry of Social Concerns Team is supporting a boy, Jose, in El Salvador and a girl, Alexia, in Jamaica, helping make sure they get an education.

If you have cans or bottles, call or text Rick Gallegos (510-861-4847) or Judy (510-509-Zlatnik 8165) to arrange pick -up or for more information.



#### HELP PROMOTE THE FLAMY GRANT CONCERT

By Pastor Jeff

As you know, the award-winning and Billboard-charting artist Flamy Grant will present a concert at our church in October. She will bring her shame-slaying, hip-swaying, singing-songwriting drag queen-ness from Asheville, North Carolina, right here to Fremont, California, on October 24. You can help promote this concert.

By the time you read this, we will have flyers for you to pick up and share with friends or post on community bullet boards. There is a Facebook "event" you can share on your Facebook wall. You can talk it up. You can email people to encourage them to attend. We should be able to sell out the show.

Flamy's 2022 debut record, *Bible Belt Baby*, reached the #1 spot on the iTunes Christian Chart (the first drag performer to achieve this feat), was nominated for Best Pop Album at the San Diego Music Awards, and was named one of the Top Ten Queer Country Albums of 2023 by Rainbow Rodeo Magazine. Her single "Good Day" debuted at #20 on the Billboard Christian digital sales chart.

\$200 donation to the groups that we will be visiting

AIRFARE Not included



For more iformation email: Rev. Rhina Ramos

ercedesramos@amail.co

This is a great opportunity to invite people to a church function that's not in the mainstream, an event that shows what type of Christian community Niles Discovery Church is. Save the date and pass the word.

Tickets are now on sale at <u>nilesdiscoverychurch.ticketspice.com/flamy-grant-in-concert</u> or scan the QR code to the left.





#### POTLUCK LUNCH

By Katy Wharton

You are invited to a church potluck on October 26. It will be after worship in the Fellowship Hall. All are invited to attend. Please bring a main dish, a salad, a dessert, or drinks to share.

The special event at the potluck will be choosing our Heifer animals. Our September offering is collecting

money for the Heifer project. Traditionally we have let the Sunday School children choose the animals. This year, the animals are going to be an inter-generational decision. We will all debate and choose together.



#### SEPTEMBER SPECIAL OFFERING: HEIFER INTERNATIONAL



The September Special Offering is for <u>Heifer International</u>. For over 75 years Heifer International's program has empowered families to change their lives – by turning hunger and poverty

into hope and prosperity. Their approach offers more than just the giving of a handout; Heifer links communities and helps bring sustainable agriculture and commerce to areas with a long history of poverty. You can learn more at heifer.org.

As with all our special offerings, you are welcome to time. any To donate. nilesdiscoverychurch.org/give and choose "Heifer International." in the "Select Option" frame; or mail a check to the church. With so many possibilities for special giving, you may need to choose which ones are most important to you. To see the complete schedule of special offerings, please visit bit.ly/ NDCSpecialOfferings.

Thanks to your generosity, August's special offering for the Pastor's Discretionary Fund raised over \$861.30 as of the press deadline. Your faithful support is greatly

#### SECURITY UPDATE

The safety committee has decided for the safety of the congregation to lock the front door at 10:15 a.m. on Sundays. If you are a member that knows you may run late on Sundays, please contact Laurel the church administrator, at

<u>admin@nilesdiscoverychurch.org</u>, for an entry card. When the card is available you will need to have orientation on entry and lock up procedures for the use of the card.



#### FELLOWSHIP NEWS



#### **REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

To enhance the safety of your Zoom experience, we typically require advance 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.



#### MONDAY AFTERNOON BIBLE STUDY

Monday Afternoon Bible Study continues to Zoom from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The scripture studied is typically the scripture for the coming Sunday's worship service. Everyone is welcome. You can register to join the Zoom meeting at <a href="https://bit.ly/massreg">bit.ly/massreg</a>.



#### **SUNDAY LUNCH BUNCH Only September 14 and 28 this month**

Join a small group that is in the habit of going to a restaurant for lunch with Pastor Jeff after coffee hour on most Sundays. This "Lunch Bunch" has a rotation of restaurants to eat at and head off to that Sunday's restaurant at 12:30 p.m. If you would like to join the Lunch Bunch on a particular Sunday, let Val Parker know by 12:10 p.m. that day, so she has a headcount to bring to the restaurant. Look at the church calendar (the second to last page of *The Bell*) to see which restaurant the Lunch Bunch is going to.



#### **LAP ROBE TYING GROUP September 24**

Come tie lap robes in person on the fourth Wednesday of the month, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This month's meeting is on Wednesday, September 24 . There will be a planned "potluck" lunch. Contact Judy Molander, 925-201-7335 or <a href="mailto:jumolander@aol.com">jumolander@aol.com</a>, for what you plan to bring to share, to be added to the group's email list, or if you have suggestions for organizations that might want some donated lap robes.



#### **GREEN TEAM MEETING September 3**

You're welcome to join the Green Team, a group leading our congregation to address the climate crisis. They typically meet the first Wednesday of the month, from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., on Zoom. For questions, contact Susie Claxton (<a href="weelcolor:weroclax@sbcglobal.net">weroclax@sbcglobal.net</a>) or Bee Newell (beenewell2@gmail.com). Here is the link to the Zoom meeting bit.ly/greenteam25.



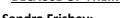
#### PUZZLE EXCHANGE AND SCRIP SALES Resumes on September 5

You're welcome to drop by the fellowship hall each Friday, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., to exchange a jigsaw puzzle and/or buy some scrip. Some people stick around to work on a puzzle, just for the fun of it.

George Roeding;

Diana Roeding;

#### PRAYERS FOR THESE PEOPLE (AND THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS) **BECAUSE OF THEIR HEALTH CONCERNS:**



Sandra Frisbey; Priscilla Taylor's friend, Cecilia Le's spouse, **Linda Carpenter**; Paul Folkestad;

**Bruce Roeding;** Ann Finlinson's husband, John Cant; Priscilla Taylor's friend,

Liz Musgrave; Sharon Yool's daughter: Javne Gallagher:

Riki and Mark Twist's daughter, **Shelly**; Priscilla Taylor's cousin-in-law, Michele Jim Roletto;

Randy Fewel; Liz Musgrave's friend, Stephanie Arcelo:

Wayne Fralin; Roden; Priscilla Taylor's friend, Michelle

**Marty Williams**; Liz Musgrave's friend, Mary Campbell;

**Barbara Swint;** Richardson; Priscilla Taylor's father-in-law and

Maria Sicalbo; Barbara P. King's great-niece, Gwennie mother-in-law, Steve and Angie Taylor;

John Zlatnik; Rich Gallegos' mother, **Esther**; Phelps;

Helen Boyer's sister-in-law, Marjorie Judy Zlatnik; Barbara J. King's great-great-niece,

**Ginny August;** Kayleigh; Bover:

Helen Boyer; Peter Wilson's dad; Joy Barnitz's friend, Rachel;

Jasmine Zartman's mother, Karen Becky Moreno's brother-in-law, Vince; **Charlie Smith**;

Hermann Attinger; Trepte; Michael Thomson's sister, Mary **Becky Moreno**; Shaun Moeller's brother, **Dave Nyman**; Thomson;

Isabel Moreno; Ron Adamson's sister, **Joanne Orput**; Katy Wharton's mother;

Luke Boyer; Diane Harvey's sister, **Linda**; Katy Wharton's sister-in-law, **Hedi**.

Diane Kindle;

THE SPOUSES, PARTNERS, CHILDREN, PARENTS, AND EXTENDED FAMILY MEMBERS WHO ARE CARING FOR AND/OR JOUR-NEYING WITH SICK, FRAIL, AND/OR ELDERLY LOVED ONES (ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE NAMED ABOVE).

THE PARENTS, CHILDREN, AND EXTENDED FAMILY MEMBERS WHO WISH THEY COULD BE DOING MORE TO SUPPORT THEIR SICK, FRAIL, AND/OR ELDERLY LOVED ONES, BUT FOR WHOM DISTANCE AND/OR OTHER FACTORS MAKES THAT DIFFICULT.

THOSE WHO ARE SEEKING RENEWAL, REBIRTH, OR A NEW START.

THANKSGIVING FOR ALL THE WAYS GOD BRINGS HEALING.

#### PRAYERS FOR ALL WHO ARE GRIEVING, ESPECIALLY:

Maolin Li and the friends of Larry Herb, who died on August

3;

the family of Charlotte O'Donnell who died on July 4;

the McMeen family as they grieve the death of Bert's

mother, Mary Kelley, in mid-May;

**Sharon Yool and her extended family** as they grieve the

death of Sharon's niece, Laura Lewis in late-April;

The family of Veronica Riggs who died on April 16;

Debbie Keesis, Denise Church, and their families as they grieve the death of Debbie and Denise's mother, Sandi

Reeder, on April 3;

**Priscilla Taylor** as she grieves the death of her Aunt

Shirley on March 28;

**Susie Claxton** as she grieves the death of her sister,

Argyle, on March 19.

EVERYONE IMPACTED BY GUN VIOLENCE, INCLUDING LISA RASLER'S COLLEAGUE GUILLE WHO SON JACOB WAS KILLED BY **GUN VIOLENCE IN AUGUST.** 

PEOPLE (AND ALL OF CREATION) AROUND THE GLOBE SUFFERING FROM HUMAN-MADE DISASTERS AND FROM NATURAL DISASTERS (OFTEN MADE WORSE BY HUMAN ACTION AND INACTION ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS).

PEOPLE WHO ARE UNEMPLOYED AND UNDER-EMPLOYED, ESPECIALLY MEMBERS OF OUR CHURCH, THAT THEY FIND EM-PLOYMENT THAT FULFILLS THEIR HEARTS AND SOULS.

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.



# September 2025

Saturday	of and Scrip Sales  = 2:00PM Facilities Cleaning	11  = 9:30AM MCE Team Meeting = 1:00PM Puzzle Exchange and Scrip Sales = 2:00PM Facilities Cleaning = 5:00PM Trivia Night	18 = 1:00PM Puzzle Exchange = 9:00AM Ministry of Properand Scrip Sales ty Work Parties = 2:00PM Facilities Cleaning = 3:30PM Our Solar Story	25 27 27 200PM Puzzle Exchange and Scrip Sales = 2:00PM Facilities Cleaning	= 1:00PM Puzzle Exchange and Scrip Sales = 2:00PM Facilities Cleaning
Thursday	4 = 4:30PM Pride Place of Be- longing organizing meeting = 7:30PM Choir Rehearsal	8:00AM Bell Deadline 7:30PM Choir Rehearsal	7:30PM Choir Rehearsal	Cecilia on Vacation 7:30PM Choir Rehearsal	= 7:30PM Choir Rehearsal
Wednesday	= 1:30PM Green Team meet- ing	10	71	24  10:00AM Lap Robe Tying Group  7:30PM Care Team meeting	= 1:30PM Green Team meet- ing
Tuesday	2  — 7:00PM BSA Troop 112  Committee Meeting	9 = 9:30AM Bridge Interest Group = 7:00PM BSA Troop 112 Meeting	itreat 16	23  - 7:00PM BSA Troop 112  Meeting  - 7:30PM Book Group	30
Monday	Labor Day – Office Closed  = 3:00PM Facilities Cleaning  = 4:00PM Bible Study  = 7:30PM Ministry Team Meetings	1:00PM Cabinet Leaders meeting 4:00PM Bible Study 7:00PM Finance Committee	Pastor Jeff at CCNCN Clergy Retreat 7:15PM Cabinet	22 4:00PM Bible Study	29 4:00PM Bible Study
Sunday	Flea Market Weekend 7:30PM Worship – Holden Evening Prayer	9:15AM Choir Warm-up 10:00AM Worship 5:00PM BSA Troop 112 PLC Meeting	9:15AM Choir Warm-up 10:00AM Worship 11:00AM Town Hall Meet- ing 12:15PM Lunch Bunch - Rose Garden Restaurant	21  9:15AM Choir Warm-up  10:00AM Worship  2:00PM Sun Day EV Car Show  4:00PM Pride Place of Be- longing	Cecilia on Vacation  = 9:15AM Choir Warm-up = 10:00AM Worship = 1:00AM Town Hall Meet- ing = 12:15PM Lunch Bunch - Carmelita's



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

Phone: 510-797-0895 nilesdiscoverychurch.org



Niles Discovery Church



#### **THE BELL IS FIRST CLASS**