



Niles Discovery
Church

FEBRUARY
Volume 26 Number 02

THE

BELL



Precious Pink Roses — Picture By Priscilla Taylor



UPCOMING WORSHIP

February 1
“Service Serves”
Matthew 5:1-12

February 8
“There Are Altars
Everywhere”
Psalm 84

February 15
“Truth Matters”
John 18:28-38
Dr. Richard Godfrey, guest preacher

February 18
Ash Wednesday
worship service at United Church of
Christ, Fremont; see article on page 3.

February 22
“It Catches Us by Surprise”
John 2:1-11

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.

36600 Niles Blvd. ♦ Fremont, CA 94536 ♦ (510) 797-0895 ♦ <http://nilesdiscoverychurch.org>



CALL TO CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Financial Meeting of Niles Discovery Church will be held on Sunday, February 1, 2026, immediately following worship in the sanctuary and the worship Zoom "meeting." The agenda for this meeting includes receiving the 2025 year-end financial report, adopting a budget for 2026, and voting on whether or not to adopt a declaration "Raising Our Voices in Protest and Witness." Your attendance is prayerfully and urgently requested.



The Annual Financial Report was made available to church members in mid January and a Town Hall Meeting was held on January 25 after worship to review the proposed budget and answer questions about it, as well as answer questions about the proposed declaration.

ANNOUNCEMENT AND NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS



Please send announcements and articles as you write them to the office administrator at admin@nilesdiscoverychurch.org. Your submission 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 March 2026 edition of *The Bell* is 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 12. 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.

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

admin@nilesdiscoverychurch.org. She is typically in the office on Mondays and Thursdays, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Our bookkeeper, Cecilia Le, can be emailed at cecilia@nilesdiscoverychurch.org. She is typically in the office on Tuesdays, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and also does some work from home. Please use the pastor's Calendly app to make an appointment for a phone call, a Zoom meeting, or to meet on site (you get to pick); Pastor Jeff's contact information is to the right.

Absences: Pastor Jeff will be on Study Leave February 10-17.

Pastor Jeff's contact info:

Office: 510-797-0895 x2

Mobile: 510-579-8851

Make an appointment:

calendly.com/revjss

Email:

jeff@nilesdiscoverychurch.org



Senior Pastor
Rev. Jeff
Spencer



Admin
Laurel
Wallace



Technology
Director
Jim Thomas



Bookkeeper
Cecilia
Le



Music
Director
Andrew Kessler



Accompanist and
Organist
Jenny Lin

DR. GODFREY To PREACH On FEBRUARY 15



By Pastor Jeff

In the early 2000s, an effort started to get clergy (particularly Christian clergy) to sign onto a letter supporting the teaching of evolution in Wisconsin public schools. It saddens me that there is a need for Christians to defend science in this century, but here we are.

The organization, the “Clergy Letter Project,” continues its efforts and picks a February weekend and a theme to continue to spread the word that faithfulness to God



does not require a rejection of science. The weekend they picked for 2026 is February 13 through 15. The theme they picked is “Truth Matters.”

I asked Dr. Richard Godfrey to preach that day because he is both a Christian and (as a medical doctor) a scientist. I am curious about what he will say as a Christian and a scientist, and about how in both science and Christianity truth matters.

TELL ME SOMETHING GOOD LENT WORSHIP SERIES FOCUSES ON JESUS' CORE MESSAGE

By Pastor Jeff



When the church first started celebrating the season of Lent, it was used as a time for new converts to learn about the faith and to prepare for their baptisms on Easter. During this time of preparation, they would study what was central to Christianity.

This Lent, we will do something similar. We will look at what was central to Jesus and his ministry: radical welcome, love for neighbor, care for the vulnerable, nourishment for the hungry, nonviolence in the face of injustice. In doing so, I think we will find liberation, love, mercy, and grace – all of which are very good news for us.

I believe that following Jesus leads to a richer, more expansive life. At the same time, following Jesus can often earn one the label of “radical.” While that label may make some people uncomfortable, I embrace it. The word *radical* comes from the Latin *radicalis*, which means “root” or “ground.” Looking at the core message of Jesus will, I hope, bringing us back to our spiritual roots. Emulating Jesus and embodying his teachings should ground us in who God created us to be. I hope we will find what it means to be “good news” people in the world too often burdened by bad news.

I’m calling this series “Tell Me Something Good” because I believe that all that was core to Jesus’ message is good news. So come to these worship services with this invitation on your lips and your heart: “Tell me something good, Jesus. Tell me something that will help my roots grow deeper in you.”

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE INCLUDES SOUP SUPPER

By Pastor Jeff

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which is February 18 this year. Once again, we will worship with our siblings at United Church of Christ, Fremont. In fact, they are hosting us (at 38255 Blacow Rd, Fremont).

The service will begin at 6:00 p.m. in their sanctuary and then move into their fellowship



hall, where we will share a soup supper. If you’re wondering why we will include a soup supper, read Luke 14:15-24, our scripture for the evening. The service will include a time to receive ashes as a blessing, time for reflection, and time for fellowship.



THE SOUPER BOWL COMES TO NILES DISCOVERY CHURCH

By Bee Newell

Let's make Sunday, February 8, a "souper-bowl Sunday."

As NFL football fans know, February 8 is Super Bowl Sunday. We can also make it souper by bringing one or more cans of soup that day to be blessed during the worship service and then placed into our free pantry. Please put it on your calendar and make it a super souper day.



... Lauren D'Ambrosio who won the 2025 Broadway World's "Best Performer in a Musical" award in December.

... Susie Claxton and Michael Veronin on the birth of their grandchild Violet Kathleen on December 26.

... Ginny August on the birth of her great-nephew on December 24.

2025 BroadwayWorld San Francisco / Bay Area AWARDS

South Bay Musical Theatre received TEN nominations!



BEST DIRECTION, PLAY OR MUSICAL
David Mister
Uninetown



BEST DIRECTION, PLAY OR MUSICAL
Doug Brook
Brigadoon



BEST DIRECTION, PLAY OR MUSICAL
Walter M. Mayes
The Sound of Music



BEST ENSEMBLE *and* BEST MUSICAL
The Sound of Music
South Bay Musical Theatre



BEST COSTUME DESIGN, PLAY OR MUSICAL
Y. Sharon Peng
Brigadoon



BEST PERFORMER IN A MUSICAL
Karna Belloni
(as Mother Abbess)
The Sound of Music
(also: Best Supporting Performer in a Musical)



BEST PERFORMER IN A MUSICAL
Lauren D'Ambrosio
(as Maria Rainer)
The Sound of Music



FAVORITE LOCAL THEATRE COMPANY
South Bay Musical Theatre

SCOUT SUNDAY LIFTS UP OUR SCOUTING PROGRAM

By Bee Newell



Once a year (typically in February), our church celebrates the youth in our Scout Troop 112. This year, we will mark Scout Sunday on February 8.

Scout Sunday offers all of us a chance to meet some of the scouts affiliated with the church, show off our own past relationships with scouting (both current and former Girl and Boy Scouts are invited to wear your old uniforms, sashes, and/or pins), and learn more about the Scout Law and Scout Oath. The Scout Law includes a scout's 'Duty To God,' and being helpful to all. Additionally, it is a chance for Troop 112 to thank Niles Discovery Church for all the support over the years. This year it coincides with Souper Bowl Sunday.



NEW MEMBERS TO BE RECEIVED ON FEBRUARY 8



If you haven't formally become a member of Niles Discovery Church, and now is the time to do so, please contact Pastor Jeff by February 4. We will be receiving new members of the church during the worship service on February 8.

FAITH IN ACTION: RESPONDING TO HOMELESSNESS *TEMPLE BETH TORAH HOST PANEL ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 4:00 P.M.*

You are invited to attend an interfaith gathering to learn about the crisis of homelessness across the country and here in Fremont, and about the unique responsibility and tools faith communities have to respond to the crisis. The program will be held at Temple Beth Torah, 42000 Paseo Padre Pkwy, Fremont, starting at 4:00 p.m. It will run about an hour-and-a-half.



Presenters include David Bonacorsi, a Fremont-raised attorney who has served on the

Fremont City Council and the Abode Services Board of Directors and is a co-founder of Fremont For Everyone; Reverend Jeff Spencer, pastor of Niles Discovery Church; and Rabbi Sarah Weissman, rabbi of Temple Beth Torah. Jeff and Sarah will speak about how their respective faith traditions understand our obligation to care for the unhoused.

Advance registration is requested at bit.ly/faithhousing.

UNITED
IN PEACE
WORLD INTERFAITH
HARMONY DAY
FEBRUARY 8
3PM
38255 BLACOW RD

devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, within and among all nations and peoples

Sponsors
Tri-City Interfaith Council
UNITED Church of Christ Fremont





LOOKING FOR MARDI GRAS PANCAKE DINNER COOKS, PHOTO BOOTH DESIGNERS & JOY

By Cindy Sojourner

Who wants to help celebrate Mardi Gras with Pride Place of Belonging on Sunday, February 15, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. with a pancake dinner and photo booth? We are looking for people to help with set-up, grilling pancakes, explaining prop options for the photo booth, and clean-up. Anyone is welcome to contribute pancake toppings or rainbow photo props. All LGBTQIA+ folk, their families, and allies are welcome to join us for our monthly social activities. We will begin set-up at 3:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Anyone interested in helping, please contact Cindy Sojourner at cindybsojourner@gmail.com.

Our Queer Support Group will be meeting from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in Room 3. This group is specifically for LGBTQIA+ folk. People are invited to share a recent high, low, and inspiration. If there is time, we dive deeper into whatever surfaces as most pressing. This Queer Support Group is led by Jeff Spencer and Cindy Sojourner.

The Pride Place of Belonging third Sunday activities are secular and free. They are a gift from Niles Discovery Church to the Queer Community, which has had no designated location of their own in Fremont to meet. Newcomers are welcome. Have you noticed that our activities

have drawn several people to attend Worship Services here?

On January 10, 2026, Pride Place of Belonging was proud to host the “Ask a Trans Townhall,” with Jenna Daughtery. About 40 supportive and curious people attended. Jenna's initial presentation and her Q&A provided a powerful, vulnerable, informative, and affirming look into her life experiences as a transwoman. A video of the event can be found at youtu.be/zhuChpMlaBI. Jenna's speech starts at 11:45. News about our January Ice Cream Social & White Elephant Gift Exchange will appear in next month's *Bell*.

Pride Place of Belonging's upcoming third Sunday events will include our monthly Queer Support Group from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.—plus a Queer Trivia Contest on March 15; an Earthday Nature Treasure Hunt at the California Nursery Historic Park on April 19 and A You Decide in May. We plan to participate in Fremont Pride Fair in June.



CLIMATE CHANGERS

GREEN TEAM UPDATE: URBAN FOREST FRIENDS

By David Gregory

There are numerous ways in which members of Niles Discovery Church's Green Team work to advance the group's mission to "promote a healthy world environment for future generations." One way is by participating in the activities of Urban Forest Friends (UFF), a local non-profit founded in 2019. UFF itself is a branch of the Tri-City Ecology Center, a non-profit that has served the cities of Fremont, Newark and Union City for over 40 years. UFF's goal is to increase the tree canopy in the Tri-Cities through tree planting and tree care, community outreach, advocacy, and education.

Several members of Niles Discovery Church's Green Team, along with others in our church family, regularly participate in the tree-planting "events" sponsored by UFF. These events are typically scheduled on selected Saturday mornings, from September through May. Last year, UFF sponsored nine tree-planting events in Fremont and Newark, in which a total of 173 trees were planted in a variety of parks and schoolgrounds. Collectively, this involved 491 volunteers working over 1,700 hours!

If you're interested in Urban Forest Friends and would like to get involved (no experience necessary!), chat with Susie Claxton or any other member of Niles Discovery Church's Green Team. You might also like to look at UFF's website (urbanforestfriends.org). Browse through photos from last year's tree-planting events, and you'll see how fun and rejuvenating this activity can be. You may also see some familiar faces from Niles Discovery Church!





FEBRUARY SPECIAL OFFERING: ST. JAMES SCHOOL

An Orphanage Project In Need Of Support

Our February special offering will be for St. James School, an elementary school in Kenya on Lake Victoria. Niles Discovery Church has had an informal connection with the school since 2014. To provide schooling for around 100 children, we have helped cover the costs of teachers' salaries, school supplies, uniforms, and lunches. Without this support the school would likely be closed now. Most of these children are orphans due to the impact of the AIDS epidemic which



hit the island particularly hard. HIV/AIDS is now much better controlled throughout Kenya.

As with all our special offerings, you are welcome to give at any time. To donate, go to nilesdiscoverychurch.org/give and choose "St. James School" 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.

Many thanks to all that participated in our January Special Offering for the Tri City Volunteers. By the press deadline we had collected \$340.

WHAT To Do WHEN You DON'T GET A ZOOM REMINDER

One of the reasons we generally require registration for our Zoom meetings is that it adds a small layer of protection from "Zoom bombers." When a meeting repeats, registration also allows us to send out reminders of upcoming meetings, typically sent the evening before a meeting.

Here are some things that you can do in case a meeting reminder fails to get to you.

- 👉 When you register, you should almost immediately get an e-mail response from Zoom confirming your registration. It will contain a link to the meeting. You can set up a folder for these emails, and go back to them at any time to click the link to get into a scheduled meeting. Your link to a particular repeating meeting does not change over time.
- 👉 If you expect to get an e-mail reminder and it doesn't show up, check your spam folder. Also, if you have a Gmail account, you should also go online through a web browser to your Gmail inbox and check the "Promotions" and "Social" tabs. Gmail is notorious for hiding emails like this, but you can teach it to stop hiding them on you.
- 👉 If you lose a meeting link or fail to get a reminder, you can always go back and reregister for the meeting. Registration links are typically in the "This Week at Niles Discovery Church" email.



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 MORNING BIBLE STUDY No Bible Study on February 16

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 bit.ly/MABSreg.



SUNDAY LUNCH BUNCH No Lunch Brunch on February 15

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 February 25

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, February 25. There will be a planned "potluck" lunch. Contact Judy Molander, 925-201-7335 or jumolander@aol.com, 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 February 4

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 (veroclax@sbcglobal.net) or Bee Newell (beenewell2@gmail.com). Here is the link to the Zoom meeting bit.ly/greenteam25.



PUZZLE EXCHANGE AND SCRIP SALES

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.



PRAYERS FOR THESE PEOPLE (AND THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS)

George Roeding;
Diana Roeding;
Bruce Roeding;
Carl Nording;
Liz Musgrave;
Jim Roletto;
Wayne Fralin;
Marty Williams;
Karen Haughey;
Barbara Swint;
Maria Sicalbo;
John Zlatnik;
Judy Zlatnik;
Ginny August;
Helen Boyer;
Charlie Smith;
Hermann Attinger;
Keith Moody;
Luke Boyer;

Diane Kindle;
Sandra Frisbey;
Chris Keesis' mother, Suzanne;
Cecilia Le's spouse, Linda Carpenter;
Ann Finlinson's husband, John Cant;
Sharon Yool's daughter;
Riki and Mark Twist's daughter, Shelly;
Liz Musgrave's friend, Stephanie
Roden;
Liz Musgrave's friend, Mary Richardson
and her husband Jon Richardson;
Peter Wilson's dad;
Jasmine Zartman's mother, Karen
Trepte;
Shaun Moeller's brother, Dave Nyman;
Ron Adamson's sister, Joanne Orput;
Diane Harvey's sister, Linda;
Priscilla Taylor's friend, Paul Folkestad;
Priscilla Taylor's friend, Jayne

Gallagher;
Priscilla
Taylor's cousin
-in-law,
Michele
Arcelo;
Priscilla Taylor's friend, Michelle
Campbell;
Priscilla Taylor's father-in-law and
mother-in-law, Steve and Angie Taylor;
Rich Gallegos' mother, Esther;
Helen Boyer's sister-in-law, Marjorie
Boyer;
Joy Barnitz's friend, Rachel;
Michael Thomson's sister, Mary
Thomson;
Katy Wharton's mother;
Katy Wharton's sister-in-law, Hedi.



THE SPOUSES, PARTNERS, CHILDREN, PARENTS, AND EXTENDED FAMILY MEMBERS WHO ARE CARING FOR AND/OR JOURNEYING 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:

Sharon Gach and her family as they grieve the death of her husband Bruce on November 29;

Maolin Li and the friends of Larry Herb, who died on August 3;

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

EVERYONE IMPACTED BY GUN VIOLENCE.

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 EMPLOYMENT 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.

February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:15AM Choir Warm-up 10:00AM Worship 11:00AM Annual Congregational Budget Meeting 12:15PM Lunch Bunch – Classic Diner 5:00PM BSA Troop 112 PLC Meeting	2 4:00PM Bible Study 7:30PM Ministry Team Meetings	3 9:30AM Ministry of Christian Education Team meeting 7:00PM BSA Troop 112 Committee Meeting	4 1:30PM Green Team meeting 7:30PM PPRC meeting	5 7:30PM Choir Re-hearsal 7:30PM Pride Team organizing meeting	6 1:00PM Puzzle Exchange and Script Sales 2:00PM Facilities Cleaning	7
8 9:15AM Choir Warm-up 10:00AM Worship 12:15PM Lunch Bunch – Black Bear Diner 3:00PM United In Peace gathering	9 1:00PM Cabinet Leaders meeting 4:00PM Bible Study 7:00PM Finance Committee	10 Pastor Jeff on Study Leave 9:30AM Bridge Interest Group 7:00PM BSA Troop 112 Meeting	11 8:00AM Bell Deadline 7:30PM Choir Re-hearsal	12 8:00AM Bell Deadline 7:30PM Choir Re-hearsal	13 1:00PM Puzzle Exchange and Script Sales 2:00PM Facilities Cleaning	14
15 Pastor Jeff on Study Leave 9:15AM Choir Warm-up 10:00AM Worship 4:00PM Pride Place of Belonging	16 Presidents'...ce closed 7:15PM Cabinet	17 Ash Wednesday 6:00PM Ash Wednesday Service	18 7:30PM Choir Re-hearsal	19 7:30PM Choir Re-hearsal	20 1:00PM Puzzle Exchange and Script Sales 2:00PM Facilities Cleaning	21 10:00AM Clear Creek Service's Board Meeting
22 9:15AM Choir Warm-up 10:00AM Worship 12:15PM Lunch Bunch – Carmelita's 4:00PM Faith in Action: Responding to Homelessness	23 4:00PM Bible Study	24 7:00PM BSA Troop 112 Meeting 7:30PM Book Group	25 10:00AM Lap Robe Tying Group 6:30PM Indivisible Fremont 7:30PM Care Team meeting	26 7:30PM Choir Re-hearsal	27 1:00PM Puzzle Exchange and Script Sales 2:00PM Facilities Cleaning	28



Niles Discovery Church

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**Niles Discovery
Church**



a just
world
for all
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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 \$2.00 per issue you receive in the mail) by receiving *The Bell* via email. Simply go to bit.ly/NDCeemailsignup 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 *The Bell* via the US Mail any more.

