

Pastor's Update 2025 – April

Pastor Brandon's E-Mail: RevBOffice@gmail.com / call or text 530-760-8858

Dear Church,

News from my home state of Tennessee is filled with stories of tempestuous weather events, tornados and a deluge of rain from a constant flow of storms beyond what is typically expected there as the season of winter transitions to spring. Most years of my childhood, there was at least one or two major thunderstorms that brought rain in amounts sufficient to produce a runoff of water in the backyard of my uncle's property to create a temporary creek. Once the water subsided, puddles remained in the muddy ruts formed by the water's flow. Then, a neighbor buddy or two and I would gather there with our Tonka toy bulldozers, trucks, and cranes to undertake some major civil engineering and fashion a series of dams along the route where the water could pool into reservoirs – a miniature version of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), which was engineered to provide hydroelectric power to homes and manufacturing plants. It was a productive use of our playful imagination with the earth and strengthened the bonds of childhood neighbors and friends. Predictably, we expected another deluge that would wipeout our engineering feat, but the bonds of friendship could be reconvened for another summer summit for communal construction.

In our day, the forces in play are menacing and seem intentionally designed to break down the carefully crafted political engineering of generations, not simply in the United States but around the world. And if we listen carefully, the sound of the chanting at the core of these efforts is a stark contrast between the laughter of children at play and the heinous and blasphemous cackle of hyenas chanting "Deus Vult" (i.e. "God wills it!") – the battle cry of European Christian crusaders of the 11th thru 13th centuries as they attacked Muslim forces in and around Jerusalem. You may want to watch Ridley Scott's movie called "Kingdom of Heaven" for a cinematic expression of that era. Our challenge is to be on Team Jesus when so many of our Christian brand are pitting "Deus Vult" against the common good.

On Sunday, April 13th, we begin to gather for a series of worship services known collectively as "Holy Week": Palm/Passion Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. We enter the narrative of Jesus' life and of his day. Our scripture readings, songs, and ritual traditions for those days allow us to enter the narrative of Jesus' life and of his day. Paying attention to the way he navigates the personalities and political forces of his day can be formational and instructive for the way we will want to live in our day so that the narratives we weave together now can support whatever communal reconstruction will be required after our fractus political deluge of duress, the resurrection of love that survives all forms of crucifixion.

May our time together be a blessing! – *Pastor Brandon*

DUMC's March 23rd Assessment Materials Are Now Available!

Our DUMC Paragraph 213 Assessment report and a link to the video presentation from March 23's meeting can be found on the church's website. Just visit the homepage at www.davisumc.org and scroll down- you'll find the links there! Hardcopies of the report are also available in the church office and on the lobby counter to our worship space."

IF you see I.C.E. behavior, please dial 916-382-0256 and report the place and time. - Thank you



everything [in] between

Meeting God in the midst of extremes

Our Sermon Series for the Lent/Easter Season

This series is an invitation to navigate the polarities in our lives with more faith, intention, and openness to be transformed. Each weekly sub-theme explores two supposed binaries, like “faith & works” or “rest & growth,” or “grief & hope.” Often, we consider these ideas to be opposing. However, as we explore these concepts within the scriptures, we find nuance and complexity; dichotomies are false. Might we begin to see a full spectrum instead of black and white? How is God present in between? How does this address our times?

Lent V	April 6th	Luke 19. 1 - 10	Righteousness & Mercy
Palm Sunday	April 13th	Luke 19. 29 - 40	Shouting & Silence
Holy Thursday	April 17th	Luke 22. 1 – 27	Power & Humility
Good Friday	April 18th	St. Martin’s Episcopal	Stations of the Cross & Labyrinth
Easter Sunday	April 20th	Luke 24. 1 – 12	Grief & Hope

In this Lenten season, I invite you to look beyond black and white binaries and easy answers to notice the dichotomies that define our lives, and then, to imagine where God might be meeting us beyond the categories we create (or that propaganda creates for us!). This theme of “everything in between” may resonate with anyone who is in discernment or trying to find their way through an undefined space. I pray it speaks to anyone who feels as if they are living in a divided world. It is for those who seek a spiritual life that engages with complexity instead of avoiding it. This Lent, we’re trusting that God shows up in shades of gray, rainbow hues, and everywhere in between. Let’s travel this path with God together.

Our times, and all times, call us to walk a path with Jesus eerily parallel to the path he walked, when his gospel message and compassionate life challenged every power aligned with values compromised by an allegiance to lesser leaders and idols. Which is to say, Jesus offered a way to embrace the power of love for God and God’s love for all creation in the face of any force or energy aligned with the love of power which treats others, including humans and the earth, as a transactional “it” - a product or object to be exploited, subdued, dominated, used, sold, and consumed for one’s own profit and purposes.

How can Luke’s gospel in the time of Jesus guide us to hear the gospel for our times? Let’s find out together!

With you in “Everything In Between” - *Pastor Brandon*

LENT & HOLY WEEK 2025

Dear Sojourner,

With this update, I encourage you to gather as siblings of Christ and be nurtured by the sacraments, liturgy, and stories of our faith tradition embodied in the 40-day church season we call “Lent,” which begins on Ash Wednesday and continues through the days we call Holy Week. Below you will find a calendar of services designed to enhance our faith journey so we may examine our lives in relation to the life of Jesus who, like us, faithfully pursued the way of God for his life and for the sake of the world.

With the gracious assistance of our worship team: musicians, readers, greeters, ushers, audio/visual technicians, office and childcare personnel and others, we are able to offer these worship experiences that give expression to our needs and hopes and that challenge us to integrate the way of Jesus into our lives as we seek God’s loving Way for our future.

Plan now for these holy days as we seek to grow in faith and solidarity with our siblings most in need for, we need them, too! This is the way of Jesus in God’s kin-dom.

May we come to know and to follow the way of Jesus always! -- *Pastor Brandon*



April 13th PALM SUNDAY 9:45 AM *Procession of the Palms

We gather in the fellowship hall to retrieve our palm branches in preparation for our “procession” with Jesus into the sanctuary. Please arrive early to take part.

April 17th MAUNDY THURSDAY 6:30 PM *Communion & Foot/Hand Washing

We gather in the sanctuary for communion and the washing of feet/hands as we remember the model of Jesus’ servant leadership for us. According to the gospels, Jesus’ cabinet of disciples were exposed to his model of leadership, which challenged their mindset of what it means to wield power in the context of the Roman Empire and their religious institutions. Jesus’ way of love is counterintuitive, powerful at the level of love, and shapes the world for good and for all. This worship service provides a reminder for how to practice the Way of Jesus.

April 18th GOOD FRIDAY 12:00 PM – *Stations of the Cross & 1:00 PM - Labyrinth Walk
St. Martin’s Episcopal Church
640 Hawthorn Lane, Davis, CA (530) 756-0444

Join Revs. Drs. Pamela Dolan and Brandon Austin for a meaningful and reflective worship experience as we encounter Jesus’ solidarity with our humanity in all of our suffering in the faith that death does not offer the final word; love does! We will visit and reflect on the Stations of the Cross and walk the labyrinth as a prayer.

April 20th EASTER SUNDAY CELEBRATING RESURRECTION

8:00 AM *Early Easter Worship (communion - sanctuary)*

In the sacrament of communion, we greet the new day inaugurated by God in the resurrection of Jesus with the words: “HE IS RISEN!”

10:00 AM *Traditional Easter Worship*

11:15 AM *Our children hunt for Easter eggs – signs of new life among us!*

Congregational Care

If you believe the information below to be incorrect or needs updating, please contact Pastor Brandon or our Davis UMC office with the correct/updated information. Let us continually pray, send cards and notes, emails, make calls, and remain in connection with one another.

Prayer Chain – (send your prayer requests to this email address: (prayerchain@davisumc.org))

Home Care – Out of Area

Ron Hoppes

Chuck and Blanche Shannon

Home Care - see church directory for contact information.

Jerry Beaman

Dick Dowell

Julie & Rich Kuhlman

Evelyn Raski

Atria Covell Gardens - 1111 Alvarado Avenue, Davis California 95616

Betsy Marchand – *Memory Care*

Melody Moore

Jan Tackett

Carlton Senior Living - 2726 5th St, Davis, CA 95618

Ted Dills

Carol Holmes

The Farmstead at Dixon - 350 Gateway Dr., Dixon, CA 95620

Philip Kurien

University Retirement Community - 1515 Shasta Dr, Davis, CA 95616

Dotty Dixon

Joe Harper – *Memory Care* (Dotty's friend)

Brian and Louanne Horsfield

Jan Smyth

Ken and Diane Wagstaff – *Memory Care* (Diane)