



**FIRST  
CONGREGATIONAL**  
*United Church of Christ - Portland*

# The Pilgrim

Early Spring 2016

Vol. XVI, Issue 1

*"In the beginning was the word..." - Genesis 1*

Dear Friends:

Last year we did something remarkable together. To some it might have seemed mundane, or even boring, but by changing our bylaws (and our entire governance structure) we took a bold step into new territory. This mysterious realm is the domain of the spirit, where conventional maps, traditions, and protocols give way to inspiration, epiphany, and dead reckoning. The next few generations of First Congregational Pilgrims owes a huge debt of gratitude to our Governance Taskforce, who - under the leadership of Ellen Bradley - went through the laborious work of getting the right vision set down with the right words on paper.

But beginnings can be tricky, and though the Book of Genesis reminds us that all beginnings start with the word, the birth pains of incarnation can be scary. We've started "living into" a new vision together. Familiar faces have taken on new roles, and all of us are making the road while walking it. Under the leadership of Al Horn, our new streamlined council is already working hard to develop a fresh culture. At our first meeting we broke bread together and discussed what it means to be a people called by God to demonstrate the Gospel. Likewise, in worship, all of you have been re-introduced to our new "core ministry" facilitators: Julie Blanchard (coordinating those ministries that facilitate our cultivation of spiritual community), Tim Pollard (coordinating those ministries that extend our radical hospitality to the wider world), and Rita Delamatre (coordinating those ministries that publicly advance God's peace out in our extended community). But the real magic about this new vision for our church is not about what someone else is doing, it's about what *you* are doing.

So here's the big question: what is it God is calling *you* to do? Where and how is the Holy Spirit speaking to you, and what is the best way for you to respond? To my mind there is no more important question in this life, but finding clarity can be difficult. So for this edition of the Pilgrim, I'd like to offer something a little different. It's an exercise in discernment that I shared with the Council and our Wayfarer group, and now I'd like to share it with all of you as well. What follows are 16 "marks of a call," developed through a mixture of biblical scholarship and practical trial and error (by the good folks at the Church of the Savior in Washington D.C.). They aren't meant to be a definitive guide, but these templates are helpful touchstones when considering whether or not something is a true call from God. The idea is, a true call will conform to most of the following:

1. A call can be clearly stated.
2. It will have a sense of transcendence, mystery, and awe.
3. It will feel right.
4. It will persist.
5. It will bring joy.

*Continued on next page*

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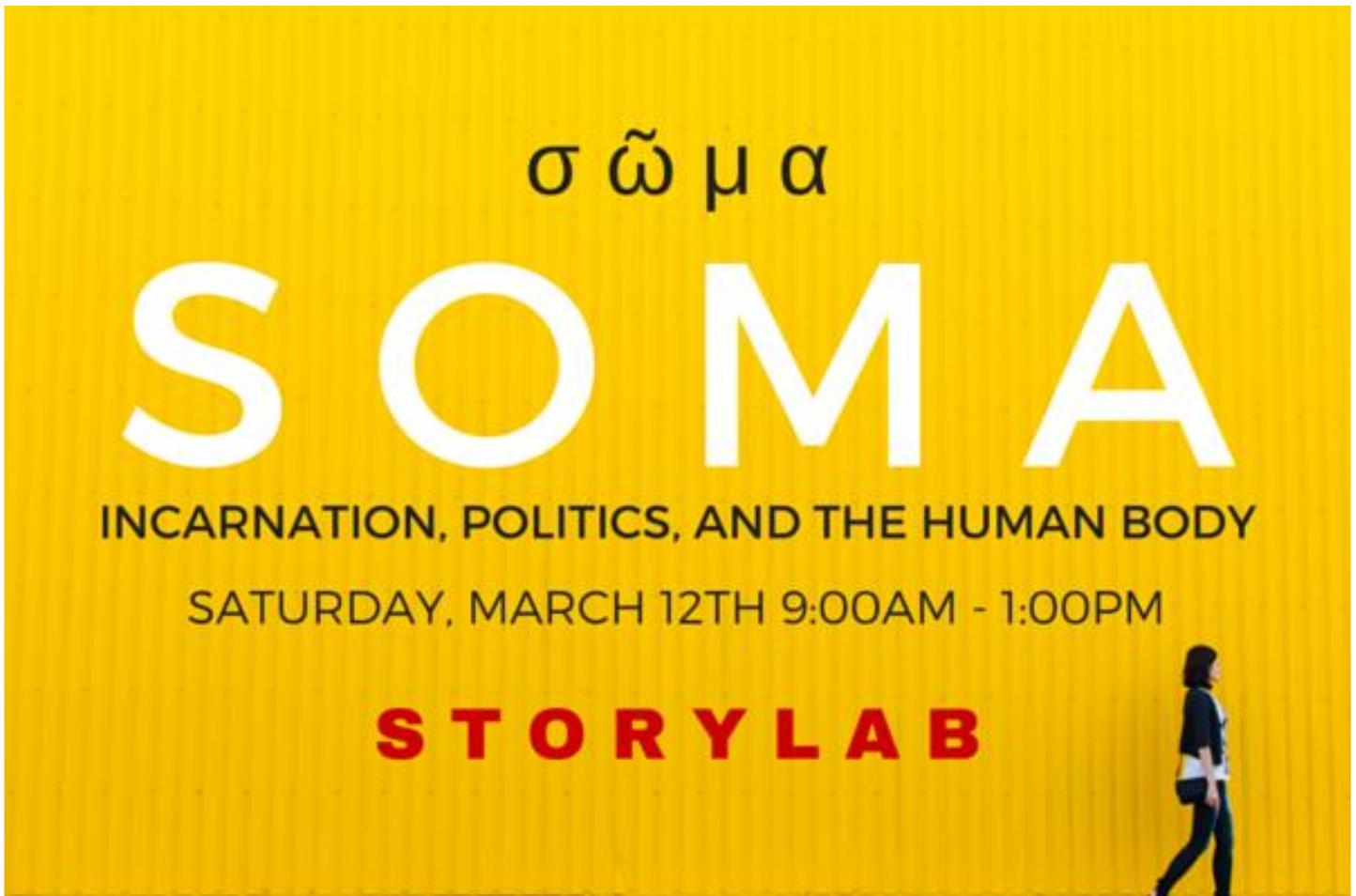
6. It will be costly.
7. It will involve risk.
8. It will call you to do something that seems impossible in human terms.
9. It will evolve and change over time.
10. It may come out of your woundedness, brokenness, and sorrow.
11. It will engage your deepest feelings.
12. It will stretch you and enable you to grow spiritually.
13. It will be counter cultural.
14. It will contain an element of prophesy.
15. It will be affirmed by at least one other person.
16. It will involve some sort of service to others and specifically to the poor.

Ultimately, our church will not be shaped by the council, the clergy, or any of the other people who work here. It will be shaped by you, each of you, and this is part of the core spirituality of our UCC tradition. So what new thing is the living God calling you to do? Maybe you know. Maybe you have a hunch but aren't sure, or maybe you don't even know where to start. Regardless, I encourage all of you to reach out to one of our core ministry facilitators (look for a note from Julie, Tim, and Rita in this month's pilgrim) or to Sara or myself. If there's a better conversation for us to have as a faith community, I don't know what it is.

Peace,

Rev. Michael Ellick

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## Moderator's Moment

Since this is my first Moderator's Moment for 2016, even though the year will be over a month old by the time you read this: Happy New Year!

**Church Council:** Your Church Council is looking forward to a productive and spirit-led year in 3 broad areas during 2016:

1. **Creating Structure:** Over the next few months the Council will continue developing policies to flesh out the new bylaws. We will also be appointing members to several committees created by our new bylaws.
2. **Ongoing Management:** Ongoing oversight and decision making on issues and opportunities that arise in the life of the church.
3. **Focusing on the Big Picture:** Being open to guidance from the Spirit so that the decisions we make enhance the spiritual growth and community involvement of all members.

Church members are invited to attend the Council meetings. We meet the third Tuesday of each month at 5:00 PM in the office conference room.

**Financial Oversight Committee:** The Church Council has appointed the following members to the Financial Oversight Committee: Clark Binkley, Ted Heid, Belinda Moos, and Alicia Rossini. This energetic group, chaired by Secretary-Treasurer Bill Sweeney, has already begun monitoring the church's finances. They will also be revising and expanding the church's financial policies and procedures.

**Committees:** Over the next few months the Council will be appointing members to the following committees: Pastoral Relations Committee, Budget Development Committee, Stewardship Team, Selection Committee [recommends Nominating Committee members], and Personnel Committee. If you feel called to serve in one of these areas or know someone who would be a good candidate, please contact me.

**Our Church's Wider Mission [OCWM] Education:** There was lively discussion at the Annual Meeting in December about the appropriate level to budget for OCWM, our church's voluntary contribution to support the operations of the UCC Central Pacific Conference and the national UCC. One conclusion from that discussion is that we, as church members, need to learn more about what OCWM actually covers. To that end, we are planning an OCWM Education Forum after church on March 13, which will be led by our Conference Minister Walter John Boris. Further educational reports will occur in the following months.

**Do Good Veterans Shelter:** The shelter is operating very smoothly. In fact, things are going so smoothly that many of us may have forgotten that every night we have up to 13 homeless vets, a few well-behaved dogs, and a couple of volunteers sleeping in our chapel. Based on Do Good Multnomah's grant, the shelter will continue to operate through June. The shelter grant is also paying for a washer and dryer which is being installed in the church kitchen. The W/D will be used for shelter laundry, church table linens, and kitchen towels. Do Good is donating the W/D to the church, so even if the shelter doesn't continue beyond June, we will own the W/D. Another aspect of this minor kitchen reconfiguration is that we are replacing our old, too-large freezer with a new, appropriately sized, energy efficient unit.

See you in church,

Al Horn, Moderator  
[ach.3@comcast.net](mailto:ach.3@comcast.net)

# Core Ministries

## Community Core Ministry

*Community* is the Core Ministry with opportunities for all ages of people in the congregation to explore and deepen our faith journeys through sharing and connecting with each other. More specifically, the Community Core includes worship, learning, and spiritual nurture of our community.

Some of the ways the Community Core Ministry is active: Sunday worship, Way of the Rose, Locus Iste, Practicing the Presence, Children's Story Hour, Project Genesis study group, Youth Mission Trips, First Men, and Eve's Circle, to name a few.

New opportunities are "bubbling up" in this creative Community, such as the Spiritual Growth group and Locus Iste Choir, and we have space, interest, and energy for more possibilities to learn and grow spiritually. Do you have an idea? Looking for suggestions that might fit for you? Or if you want to know who to contact to find out more, talk to or email ([community@uccportland.org](mailto:community@uccportland.org)), Julie Blanchard

## Hospitality Core Ministry

Hospitality is the Core Ministry for activities and projects that welcome the world into our community and our facility. We take the first steps to welcome visitors, prospective members, and new members to First Congregational UCC and join them with the life of the church. This ministry does upkeep for our downtown sacred space to make it open and inviting as a church and as a special downtown venue and resource.

You could get involved with this ministry by welcoming visitors. Perhaps you have some ideas about how to get new members connected with us. Please help us distribute nametags and host the after-church fellowship on Sundays. Our ministry includes such established groups as the Oliver Lecture Committee, the ArtReach Gallery, and the Friends of the Kitchen group. We are also excited about the opportunities we don't even know exist! Help this ministry identify and execute on those opportunities to represent First Congregational UCC to the people of the Portland metro area and beyond as we seek to share the joy of our community.

Want to get involved? Have an idea? Contact us at [hospitality@uccportland.org](mailto:hospitality@uccportland.org).

## Peace Keeping Core Ministry

Peace Keeping is the Core Ministry for projects and work that we take outside our church, rooted in our sense of call to action in the gospel and our prophetic vision of a better world. Feeding the hungry, supporting shelters for the houseless, advocating for equity with the local or state government, organizing for immigration reform, and supporting the most vulnerable members of our communities are all part of Peace Keeping.

Does this sound daunting? Well, the good news is that *we are already doing this work*. Existing projects which fall under this ministerial category are Transitions Project, Potluck in the Park, the Immigration Taskforce, Goose Hollow Family Shelter, Village Support Network, and our membership and participation in the Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice (IMIRJ) and Metropolitan Alliance for Common Good (MACG). Our church has supported fair housing actions, prepared meals for men, women, and children in shelter, prepared thousands of gallons of beverages for Potluck in the Park, attended rallies to call for immigration reform, taken a trip to learn about and bear witness to the broken systems which control our border with Mexico, prepared and served thousands of gallons of beverages for Potluck in the Park, attended rallies to call for immigration reform, and mentored family moving into permanent housing after a time in shelter, among many other things.

And there is time, resources, and passion for even more! Want to get involved? Have an idea? Please contact [peacemaking@uccportland.org](mailto:peacemaking@uccportland.org).

# Life in Our Chuch

## Support Camions of Care with Eve's Circle

Throughout the month of March, Eve's Circle will be collecting donations of all varieties of feminine hygiene products to benefit the women served by a local nonprofit, **Camions of Care**.

**Camions of Care** was founded by Nadya Okamoto, a Portland teenager who had experienced homelessness. When her family was back in stable housing Nadya began volunteering with organizations that serve homeless people. Through her conversations with homeless women she learned that access to feminine hygiene products was one of their greatest challenges. Women were embarrassed to ask for these items, and shelters and centers were uncomfortable placing products in plain view (if they had them at all) out of respect for a woman's privacy. Women resorted to using whatever they could find, which has implications for infection.

Nadya and several classmates, both male and female, launched **Camions of Care** in late 2013. It is volunteered by teens, including guys, who collect and sort donations and distribute them to centers, shelters, and directly to homeless women. They also work with partnering organizations to encourage education and dialogue on the issue, and to empower women to speak up for their needs. The organization's website provides more information: [camionsofcare.org](http://camionsofcare.org).

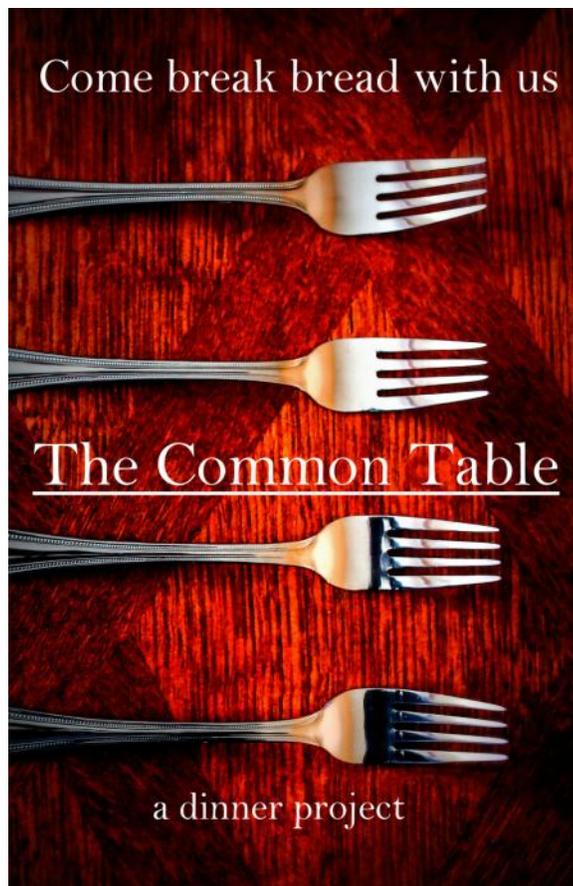
Eve's Circle invites everyone to participate as you are able. Look for the tall collection box marked **Camions of Care** in the Fellowship Hall. Please bring factory-sealed packages only (no opened or partially-used packages). A cash donation of \$2 ensures hygiene products for one menstrual cycle. Contact Julie Young at [juliesy@me.com](mailto:juliesy@me.com) with any questions or if you would like to make a cash donation.

## The Common Table--A New Dinner Project

The last year or so has been a time of exciting growth in our church. We have welcomed many new people in to our church, and it has been truly wonderful to see all the new faces. However, with all this growth, it's also becoming more challenging to get to know each other!

With this in mind, we are launching a new dinner series in 2016 called The Common Table. These will be potluck gatherings specifically designed to help newer people, long-time church members, and everyone in-between have a chance to get to know each other a little more deeply. In true congregational spirit, we believe that something magical happens when people come together over a friendly meal and good food in a fellowship hall.

Be on the lookout for an invitation! By the end of the year, our goal is to have everyone who wants to be part of The Common Table attend a dinner. Dinners will be held at least monthly, and will be scheduled for different days of the week in order to best work with the differences in our lives and routines. And if you can't attend the first one you are invited to, we will follow up and make sure you are invited to one which better fits your schedule. And children are always welcome at the Table.



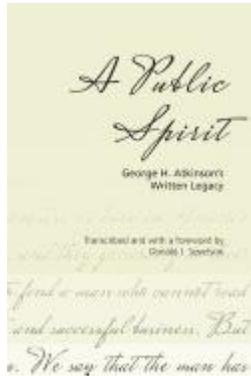
# Life in Our Church

## Don Sevetson Book Release Party

Come help us celebrate on March 6 after church! Don Sevetson has published his second book, *A Public Spirit, George H. Atkinson's Written Legacy*.

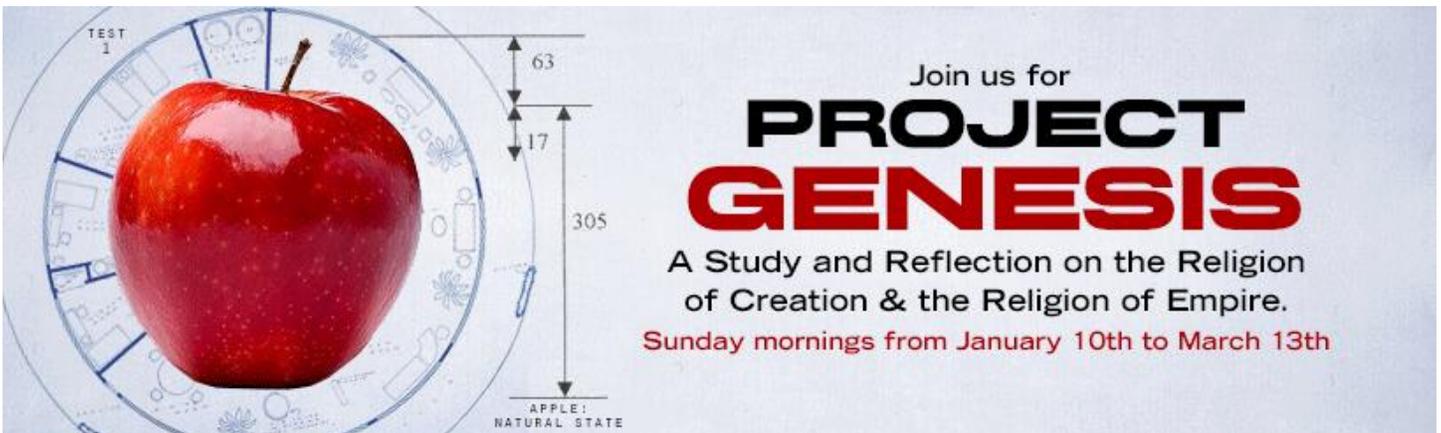
The book collects for the first time the longer writings of George H. Atkinson (1819-89), a pioneering figure in Oregon history, especially the formation of the public schools in the state. Atkinson was the third minister of our church.

Mimosas and Frittatas will be served in the Library. Please join us for this special celebration. Books will be available for buying and signing. The book price is \$15 and \$5 of any purchase will go to the Church Library.



## Goose Hollow Family Shelter

Would you enjoy sharing your domestic skills like cooking, serving dinner or assisting families with laundry or kids time? Like many of Portland's churches, synagogues, and other faith groups, we commit to providing dinner and helpers for one evening month at Goose Hollow Family Shelter. Goose Hollow provides shelter for several homeless families with children each night. It is one of the few secure places where homeless families can have dinner and stay together overnight. We volunteer at the shelter on the second Saturday of each month. You're welcome to join us one time first to see if it fits for you. Ongoing adult volunteers will need go through a routine background check. If curious, just ask Jim Sikkel or one of the "regulars" listed on the posted sign up sheets.



## Diving Deeper with Torah Study with Batya

As part of our Project Genesis, Batya Podos will lead us on an in depth study of the Torah from through March 13. Join us on March 6 before church at 9:15 a.m. in the library for "Joseph: Dreams and Prophecy." The last class is "Joseph: Reconciliation" on March 13.

## Spiritual Path Group

Spiritual Path group meets every Tuesday from noon to 1 p.m. in the chapel. A talking circle format to share, explore, and deepen your personal spiritual practice. Time is given for each person to speak from the heart with no interruption or crosstalk from others. All sharing is respected as sacred and confidential. There is no other instruction, comment, discussion, debate, advice, etc.

All are welcome, whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey. Come every week, or drop in as you are able.

# Life in Our Church

Dear Members and Friends of First Congregational UCC,

It's with mixed emotion that I write to let you know that I have accepted the position of Designated Pastor at Waverly United Church of Christ in SE Portland. I'm excited about this new direction for my ministry, but, of course, I'm sad to leave the wonderful community at First Portland.

I truly love this congregation, and I'm so proud of the work we have done together over the past three years. You welcomed me, even in your grief over Trudy's passing, and we grew a lot together through Anton's departure and during the search for a new Senior Minister. I have been blessed this past year to welcome Michael Ellick here. We have formed a strong relationship, and I look forward to continuing as Michael's ministerial colleague in this good city of Portland.

It will not be easy for me to leave, but my departure is for happy reasons. I've carefully discerned and prayed about this decision, and it is clear that Waverly is the right next step. Waverly is a small church that is looking to grow, and they have a wonderful community base to build from. Many of the skills I've sharpened here at First Congregational (in family ministry, creative worship, and membership growth) are the perfect fit for Waverly at this time.

My last Sunday here will be Palm Sunday, March 20th so we will have many opportunities to gather and celebrate as well as grieve. I have formed deep relationships here, so I invite you to please call to talk on the phone, set-up a meeting time, or drop-in during my open office hours. Specifically I will have drop-in office hours every Wednesday: March 2nd, March 9th, & March 16th 9:30-12:00

I also invite everyone to join me for a family-friendly Seder (co-led with Batya Podos) on Saturday March 19th at 11:00am in the Fellowship Hall. And of course, we'll have a big send-off party on Palm Sunday after church (more information to come on this). I'll also be having small gatherings with different groups throughout the month.

Last, I have some additional good news to share. I'm expecting a baby who will join our family sometime at the end of July. This is a very happy occasion for Kat, Ingrid, Severin and I -- we invite you to celebrate with us in the coming weeks.

Again, I have deep gratitude for the ministry we have shared together. My whole family will miss this place, your heart, your faith, and your courage. Although after March 20th I will no longer be your pastor, I will not be far off. We still share this wonderful city, the wider UCC church, and the progressive ecumenical and social service community here in Portland. This is indeed a time in our collective identity when we need each other to follow God's bigger call. So I expect I'll be seeing you.

Many Blessings,

Rev. Sara Rosenau

## Practicing the Presence

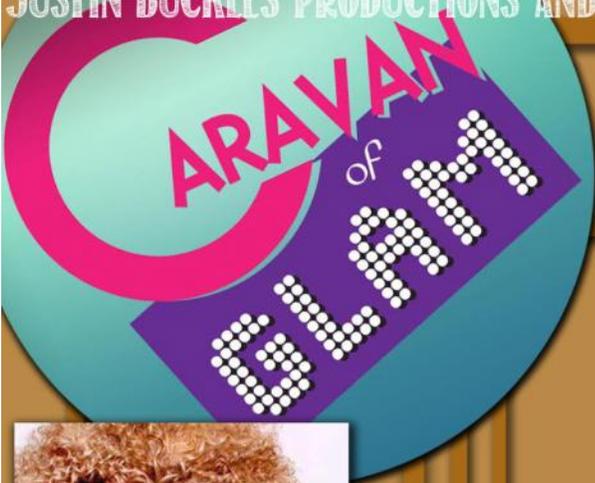
Join us on Wednesday evenings for a time of prayer and meditation chosen from a wide spectrum of traditional and new forms practiced by many peoples throughout the world.

Beginning at 5:30 p.m. we gather in the Kiva for a time of Silence. Quietly enter during the first 30 minutes as your schedule, traffic, and parking allow.

At 6 p.m. we will introduce and practice a particular form of prayer or meditation. These forms may be different each week, but they will be explained in ways that will enable participants to practice the presence on their own during the week.

The evening will always end by 7 p.m. when choir practice begins.

JUSTIN BUCKLES PRODUCTIONS AND ECSTASY INFERNO PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS



# DRAG ME TO CHURCH

## SATURDAY APRIL 2ND

## DOORS AT 6PM SHOW AT 7PM

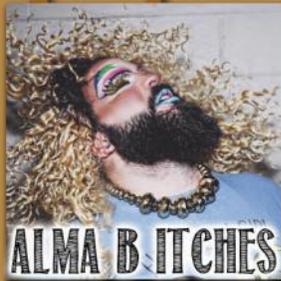


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