



December @ Bethany
Bethany Presbyterian Church

Welcome to our monthly newsletter! Each month, the newsletter will feature more articles about the goings-on at Bethany, committee reports, and other items of interest. Ongoing announcements can be seen on the website



Dear friends,

Hope, Peace, Joy, Love. Or is it Hope, Peace, Love, Joy? Or is it Hope, Faith, Joy and Peace? Do we light the Christ candle on Christmas Eve, or Christmas Day? Is it the candle of Light? Or the Christ candle? Blue or purple candles? Pink for just one candle?

Yes!

However our particular tradition marks the season of Advent, we all are using this particular season for the same reason. We are marking the time before we celebrate the first coming of God as a human, the birth of Jesus. We are also using this time to consider the time in the future when Christ will come again. The early church used the time before Easter to prepare new converts for their baptism which would occur on Easter Sunday. During that time the color purple was used to mark suffering, prayer and repentance to represent the ultimate gift Christ gave to us. Once the birth of Christ was assigned to the day in December, a similar amount of time before Christmas was also given to prepare new converts for their baptism on Christmas Day. In the same way we use purple, and use the time to remind us of the gifts that Christ brought to us, like light, hope, peace, joy, love, and faith. All of the symbols we use are human made symbols to represent this ancient story that we are all a part of in real time.

What other words might we use if we could each choose our own four words to celebrate this time of readiness, preparedness, and waiting? What about candle colors? In some traditions there are 24 red candles. Or one red candle with 24 marks and the candle is lit every day for 24 days, and allowed to melt down to the next mark each day.

No matter the outward symbols and colors, all who have ever marked this season of Advent have one thing in common. Advent is always celebrated in community.

I hope you join in partaking in any of our Advent community events this year. We will decorate the sanctuary on December 3rd during our Harvest Festival. We will celebrate communion on Sunday, December 4th. We will have an adult education opportunity weekly. And of course we will have our Christmas Eve service, as well as a short worship service on Sunday, December 25th. Mark your calendars for these experiences of joy together!

Blessings,
Pastor Deb

*May the God of
hope fill you with all
joy and **peace** in
believing so that you
may abound in hope
by the power of the
Holy Spirit.
(Rom 15:13)*

☞ **BETHANY IS HIRING!** ☞

As you may know, we are looking for a church secretary to work about 15 hours each week in the office to support the pastor and other committees and help with the administrative work involved in running this fabulous church! If you know of anyone, or are interested, please contact Pastor Deb for more information. Thank you!

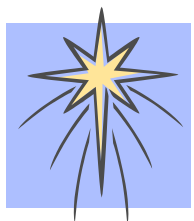


Advent Education – Make Peace

Our first study was Tuesday, November 29. We are using the PC(USA) Follow Me curriculum studying their series called Make Peace. *Make Peace* focuses on Jesus' words in the Beatitudes, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9), which have been the centerpiece of Christian social ethics for centuries. People, throughout history and still today, have chosen different paths to peace, but certain skills of peacemaking have emerged from their journeys: cultivating inner peace, seeking to understand where others are coming from, and having the courage to overcome fear. By practicing these skills, peacemakers work to embody Jesus' teachings in the midst of conflict. Explore God's vision for peace, true shalom, in this unit from *Follow Me: Biblical Practices for Faithful Living*. Our next meetings via Zoom are at **7pm Tuesdays, December 6 and December 13. The final meeting is on a Monday, December 19.** Contact the church office or speak to Pastor Deb to sign up for the class and get your workbook! We're really looking forward to seeing you!

Advent Celebration – Saturday, DECEMBER 3 – 10:00 a.m.

★ ★ ★ *THE STARS ARE UP!* ★ ★ ★



Come to Bethany at 10:00 a.m THIS SATURDAY to help decorate the tree and deck the halls to bring the glow and warmth of the season into our beloved Sanctuary. Good-morning coffee, tea and goodies will be here to welcome you, among other fun activities!

Christmas Card Signing – Sunday, December 4

The Bethany Deacons will be hosting a Christmas card writing opportunity this **Sunday, December 4**, after worship in the sanctuary. We will be writing cards to some of our members and friends who have not been able to attend worship for a while, and we will include cards to veterans and/or active military personnel via a nonprofit agency. Christmas cards, pens, and postage will be provided. Please plan to join us for a time of sending holiday greetings and joy.

**The
Giving
Tree**

Helping Those
in Need



Giving Tree Opportunity DECEMBER 4-18

The “Giving Tree” will actually be a part of our large Christmas tree in the Sanctuary. Gift tags with specific gift requests will be placed on the tree for people living and/or dining at the St. Bruno’s Catholic Worker shelter and/or boarding houses. Peter Stiehler will provide a list of 15-25 people who could use gifts, with ideas of what might be an appropriate gift for them by gender and size. Please take a look at the requests, take a tag or two home with you, and purchase said items. Once you have the gifts, please wrap them, attach the Giving Tree tag to the gift, and place them under the tree by Sunday, December 18. The Bethany Deacons will deliver the gifts to Peter at the shelter for distribution before Christmas. Thank you in advance for your generosity, and thanks for helping make Christmas a special time for everyone in our community. God bless us, everyone!!

Advent Notes

Advent began last Sunday on November 27, 2022 with Lyn and George sharing a message of **Hope**. We will be celebrating each Sunday with the Advent Candle Lighting at the start of worship, and we have plans for the next three Sundays of Peace, Joy and Love. The Worship Committee is looking for congregants who are willing to share their reflections on Light for Christmas Eve.

If you are interested in providing a reflection for Christmas Eve, please contact Rev. Deb McGuire. She will provide assistance as needed. Thanks in advance for sharing during this sacred time through Advent toward our last Sunday, December 25, as we celebrate the Light of Christ.



FINANCIAL TRUSTEES

October 2022

\$ 12,599.08 Income

\$(13,261.22) Expense

\$(662.14} Difference

*Note: one 3Q22 pledge was not received until the first week of 4Q22 resulting in a timing difference

YTD

\$ 141,196.53 Income 94.400%

\$(155,237.25) Expense (102.187)%

\$(14,040.72) Difference (7.786)%

*Note: one 3Q22 pledge was not received until the first week of 4Q22 resulting in a timing difference

We are thankful for your ongoing support!

Updates on the following issues:

1. Renewal of Pastor Deb McGuire's 2023 Annual Contract/Mission Study:

Our Mission Study information sent to the Presbytery of San Francisco was approved. We are now awaiting next steps on completing the Pastor Information Form/Church Information Form in order to finalize our Called Pastor requirements. We plan to have all information requested from PofSF ready by their December 2022 meeting.

2. Renewal of the Sikh Association Multi-Year Lease (2023 – 2027):

Michael Glass, legal counsel for the Presbytery of San Francisco, is still working on the updates to our lease with the Sikh Association. Mr. Glass plans to have a draft ready for review the week of November 28. We will still need to review the lease as will the Sikh Association. Once we have both agreed to the updated terms and conditions, both parties will sign the lease.

3. Cleanup of the Bethany Church Grounds:

The Trustees brought a recommendation to Session on 10/18/22 for a one-time cleanup of the entire Bethany grounds. This was approved. The Trustees will start requesting bids from for this project in January 2023 from appropriate landscape renewal contractors.

4. Bids Received:

Replacement or Repair of the Patio Outside the Church Building:

This project is currently on hold until January 2023. Bids will be reviewed and/or updated.

Replacement of Kitchen Stove/Removal of Non-working Stoves:

A stove was selected for our kitchen. The stove has now been purchased from TriMark/R.W. Smith Company and a check sent to the vendor. The stove will soon be delivered and installed. The two older stoves will be removed from our kitchen. Many thanks to Jorie Abbott for her assistance in locating and purchasing our new stove.

5. Annual Stewardship Campaign for 2023:

Our 2023 Stewardship Campaign has begun and Stewardship letters, including pledge cards, have been mailed. We ask that you prayerfully consider your commitment to Bethany for 2023. **Please plan to return your pledge card by December 18.** A dedication will occur that same day. Note that Bethany is now able to accept stock to fulfill donation commitments. For more information, please contact Lyn Hughes at 650-867-0667.

6. Annual Church Budget preparation for 2023:

A preliminary budget is now in place after a review at the October 18 Session meeting and updates presented at the November Session meeting. A modest Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) is planned for our staff.

The budget will be completed once the Annual Stewardship Campaign is finalized, which is planned for December 18. Session approval is anticipated at their December meeting.

7. Church Secretary Position: Our Church Secretary position has been posted with the Presbytery of San Francisco as well as other employment sites. For questions, please contact Pastor Deb McGuire.

Questions about the BPC budget or general Trustees questions? Contact Lyn Hughes – Chair - Financial Trustees, Dave Wales - Secretary, or Bonnie Morgan and Roxane Wales - Members at Large.

Questions about our tenant, the Sikh Association? Contact either the Financial Trustees (Lyn Hughes, Dave Wales, Bonnie Morgan, and Roxane Wales) or Buildings and Grounds (Dave Wales)



November 15, 2022 Session Meeting at Bethany 7:00-8:15pm

Pastor Deb opened the meeting in prayer followed by a group sing of Amazing Grace.

- The October 18th meeting minutes were approved by consensus.
- Roxane reported an update from the Nominating Committee:
 - Kathryn Quickert will be going off of Session at the end of December 2022 (Thank you KQ), George Lynch and Lyn Hughes have begun serving on Session beginning October 2022. Lyn is leading the Financial Trustees and Chair of Community Action/Life Committee. George is the Chair of Personnel.
 - Bonnie Morgan will be leaving the Board of Deacons at the end of December 2022. (Thank you Bonnie!) Kathy Fogle, Tamra Hollenbeck and Roxane Wales will continue serving as Deacons. They will reach out for assistance when needed. (If you are interested in giving the Deacons a hand please contact Kathy F., Tamra or Roxane.)
- Pastor Deb reported on Pastoral Care and upcoming Advent Adult Study.
- Pastor Deb will be away 12/26/22-01/2/23. Jessica will be away 12/25/22 with fill-in TBD.
- A Narrative Mission Study is in the works! The initial questions/answers have been approved by the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry. The next set of questions have been answered and will be addressed by COM at the December meeting. Thank you to Tamra, Pam & Lyn.
- Financial Trustees - Lyn reported that the 2023 Stewardship Campaign has been prepared and will be sent shortly.
- Building and Grounds - Dave reported that the parking lot metal storage shed will be disassembled and sent to the dump.
 - B&G is working on clearing BPC defensible space for fire safety. PG&E has been taking down dead trees in the easement east of our building.
 - Dave will call for annual furnace maintenance.
 - After a discussion about using BPC as an election center, it was agreed that it worked well and we will consider doing it again if asked.
- Personnel - The BPC secretary position has been posted on the Presbytery website, Kathy Q. will post it on the BPC website and is approved to be added to Next Door and Craig's List.

- Next Session Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 20, 2022 at 7 PM in person at BPC. If you have any questions before then, please contact Roxane Wales at 650-303-2070 or roxanewales@gmail.com.
- R.Wales, Clerk of Session



Ruth Covenant Group

The Ruth Covenant Group canceled its November meeting due to many members who were unavailable to meet. The monthly meeting will resume on **Monday, December 12 at 6:30 pm** at the church. It will be a hybrid meeting with some participants meeting in person in the sanctuary, and some meeting via zoom. If you would like to join by zoom, please let Tamra Hollenbeck know so we can send you the link. We will continue with the book study of *A More Perfect Union: A New Vision for Building the Beloved Community* by Adam Russell Taylor. The chapters we are reading for this month are in Part Three - "Beatitudes of the Beloved Community," chapters 11 - "Ubuntu Interdependence," and 12 - "Prioritizing Nonviolence." In addition to our discussion, there will be an opportunity for check-in, fellowship, and prayer. All are welcome to attend!



Community Action/Life Committee

Bethany Church Thanksgiving Dinner and Talent Revue

Bethany's Annual Thanksgiving dinner was again held this year and was a wonderful event. It was so gratifying to gather with our church family and friends to celebrate and count our blessings with good food and fellowship. Under the direction of our master chef, Tamra Hollenbeck, two large turkeys were prepared, stuffed, and popped in the oven to be carved that evening by Frank and Donna Goodwin. Just over 40 people attended. After dinner, there was also a Talent Revue with singing, guitar playing, jokes, and stories. So many people contributed tasty dishes and there was an entire table full of wonderfully appealing desserts.

Thanks to everyone for bringing food to share for the dinner. Thanks to the group of dedicated helpers who shopped, cooked, set up tables, set the tables, washed and/or dried dishes, took down tables, etc. Many thanks go to the overseeing committee: Lyn Hughes, Tamra Hollenbeck, Jorie Abbott, and Roxane Wales.

In addition to sending food home with several people, leftover stuffing, rolls, butter, and cranberry sauce was donated to the Catholic Worker Hospitality House Thanksgiving dinner as well as \$320 donated by those attending the dinner.

We couldn't have had this event without you so a big THANK YOU to all!

News about our Partnership with Iglesias Brasiliana – San Mateo:

At this time, we are **not** collecting **food items for IPB**. We will notify the congregation of further requests from our partner congregation.

News about our Partnership with Catholic Worker Hospitality House (CWHH) – San Bruno:

We continue to collect various food items and other supplies for CWHH. A complete list of food and other needs is on the Catholic Worker Hospitality House website at www.catholicworkerhospitalityhouse.org If you have donations, please place them in the CWHH basket in the Narthex, and we will ensure the items are delivered as soon as possible. The weather has cooled down significantly. Blankets, throws, quilts, coats, jackets, and sweatshirts are needed, whether new or in good, used condition.

A large collection of blankets, towels, washcloths, food, coffee, paper products, and some clothes was collected by November 27. Since Peter Stiehler preached at Bethany that day, he took everything collected at that point back to the San Bruno Shelter with him. **We will continue to collect items for the Shelter until Christmas so if you have items to donate, please bring them to the church in December.**

Any donations can be brought to the church or can be picked up by calling the church or Lyn Hughes at (650) 867-0667.

Advent Festival

We will hold our Advent Festival on **Saturday, December 3, at 10am**. We will trim a tree, put up garlands, wreaths, candles, and other décor, as well as bake some Christmas cookies. The Deacons may also have ready some gift ideas for the Shelter to add to the tree, if you would like to select something to buy. Please mark your calendars to come to the church for a very fun day.

Rise Against Hunger Meal Packing Event

We are looking into a meal-packing event at Bethany for early in 2023. More information will be included in a future Bethany newsletter.

Pizza and Puzzles Night

Watch your Banner for information about a Pizza and Puzzles Night early next year. Some wonderful ideas are being discussed, and it is great way for us all to get together and stay connected.



Holiday Cookie Exchange!

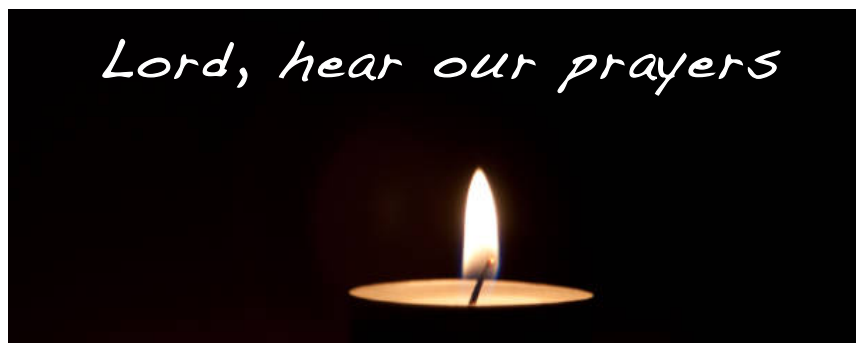
During our after-worship coffee hour **December 18** the Deacons will be hosting a cookie exchange. If you would like to bring some goodies (maybe 2 or 4 dozen??) to share that would be great. But if you'd like to be consumers only, that's perfectly fine, too! After all, all good cooks appreciate satisfied customers! We'll provide some plates for your selections and something to cover them. Need more info? Feel free to contact any of the deacons, Roxane, Bonnie, Tamra or Kathy F if you have any questions. Gingerbread? Sugar? Meringues? Sandies? Shortbread? Chocolate chip? What a tasty day this will be!



Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Bethany will celebrate Christmas Eve on Saturday, December 24 at 7:00 pm. There will be special music, Christmas hymn singing, and a time to share the light of Christ. The congregation is welcomed to stay afterwards for a cookie and hot cider reception. Christmas Day will be celebrated on Sunday, December 25, during 10:00 am worship. More details to follow in December@Bethany. Please mark your calendars and plan to join in these joyous times of worship.

Prayer Time: 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays: A time to meet as the body of Christ, and pray together using Zoom. Shared readings, poetry, guided meditation, and, of course, the prayers of the people. Please contact us to be invited to the Zoom meeting:
bethanypres@bethanypcusa.org



Bethany Story Time

We have a collection of children's books on our Facebook page! Over the past year (and a bit more!), Pastor Deb and various members of the congregation have recorded readings of children's books, and then Pastor Deb added video of the illustrations. The videos are available any time for you to enjoy! Share them with your family, friends, and neighbors! Find them here: <http://bethanypcusa.org/welcome/storytime.html>



Donations for San Bruno Hospitality House: Please continue to bring your donations for Hospitality House and put them in the marked basket in the Narthex. Any questions about this please contact Rina Ranahan: (650) 291-6979.

A current list of shelter needs is on their website:

[Catholic Worker Hospitality House](#)

Happy Birthday to these wonderful folks born in the month of December!

- 3 Jean Edge
- 8 Tom Jessee
- 8 Molly Lyons
- 11 Abigail Huseth
- 12 North Hollenbeck
- 15 Nancy Landauer
- 26 Patty Hughes
- 31 Judy Nelson



December Anniversaries

- 4 Sharon & Larry Gruner
- 17 Kelsy & Kenny Parker
- 29 Nelson Schlater & Alicia McHale

We remember these Saints of Bethany who were born in December:

- 1 Be Harlan
- 25 Mary Caley
- 27 Merriam Wycoff

Due Dates

For W@B: Tuesday morning.

For the January newsletter: Tuesday, December 27

Bethany's Purpose Statement:

Bethany's purpose is to provide a nurturing and energizing environment to feed the soul so we can go out into the world and reflect the glory of God, the love of Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Bethany's Welcoming Statement:

We don't yet know who you are, but we do know that you are a dearly beloved child of God, and you're already welcome here.

We invite you, on your unique spiritual journey, to join us in the life and ministry at Bethany.

Bethany Presbyterian Church is a member of More Light Presbyterians
<https://mlp.org>



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