


December @ Bethany Bethany Presbyterian Church

From the Pastor

Dear friends,

Am I the only one who feels like going to bed at around 4:30 each night, as darkness comes? That's not too early, is it?

I really prefer light to darkness!

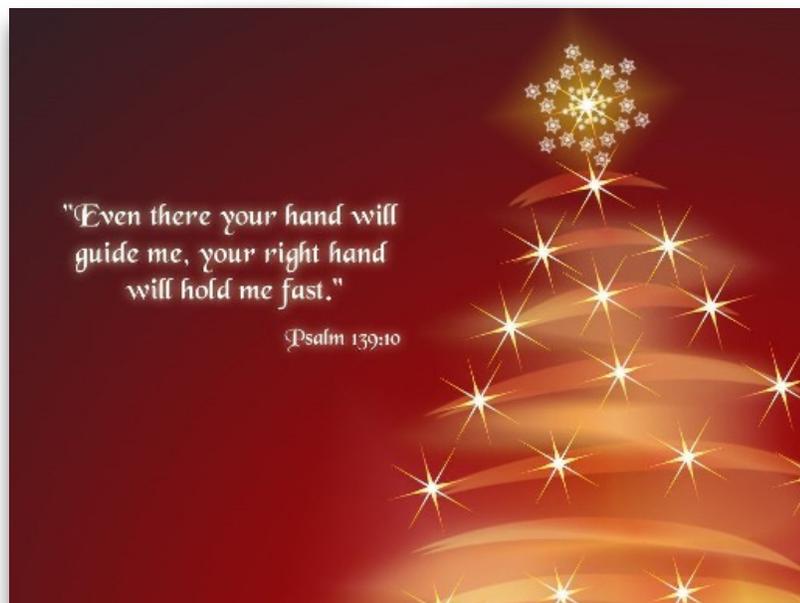
December is the month that Christians move through the Advent season toward the day when we celebrate the birth of the Light of the World, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Light is a commodity that often seems in short supply. In those dark times, Psalm 139 reminds us that "even there God's hand will guide me, God's right hand will hold me fast." The darkness that our world, our country, and our communities have been through in times past and in more recent times has been hard, and real, and exhausting.

This time of year is not a time to ignore any of that, or how it makes us feel. But this time of year also grants light to that darkness and is the time when we remember that the love of God and the light of the world was born a babe in a manger. We celebrate the birth of the One who came to bring us the Light that will never dim, will always seek us out, and will always show us the way.

"They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night."

Christmas blessings,
Pastor Deb



Community Life

Game Night was held on Saturday evening,



October 28. A wonderful group of 16 people came and enjoyed a Soup and "Building Your Own" sandwich or salad dinner with dessert. Some people dressed in their Halloween costumes which made the evening very festive.

Bethany's Annual Thanksgiving Dinner and Talent Revue was held on Friday evening,

November 17. A large group of 37 people attended and enjoyed a wonderful dinner of roast turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, cranberry sauce (many were homemade) as well as many side dishes brought by those attending. There were many pies for dessert and a wonderful cranberry cheesecake

provided by Chris Angeles and Steve Cady. Heartfelt thanks go out to the following people: Setup and table settings on Thursday afternoon: Paul Delander and Jorie Abbott; to all those who provided side dishes and desserts for the wonderful meal; turkey carving: Frank and Donna Goodwin; to those who cleared tables and put everything from the dining room away; Cleanup in the kitchen: Head dishwasher - George Lynch, those drying dishes and putting dishes and other items away: Frank and Donna Goodwin, Roxane Wales, and many others and for anyone else who helped with the cleanup, thank you for your efforts!



Upcoming Events at Bethany



Here's a happy invitation to **attend our annual "Advent Festival"!** Come to Bethany on Saturday, Dec. 2, at 10 a.m. and we'll enjoy getting Bethany's tree up and decorated, creating crafty things to liven up our celebration and, you betcha, decorating cookies. We will conclude around 1 p.m. but come for however long you can. Christmas music, laughter, love!

The Deacons will host a **Christmas Card Writing event after worship on Sunday, December 3.**



Christmas cards, addresses, and postage will be provided, and the congregation is invited to help write cards to Bethany friends and family who are not able to worship with us regularly. Please plan to join us for this festive event.

This month, **Ruth Group** will meet on our usual second **Monday: Dec. 11. at 6:30 pm.** We'll socialize, consider the needs of people around us, and brainstorm how to begin the new year. Please bring ideas! See you at 6:30 p.m. and bring cookies (or not) says the cookie monster!



Please plan to come to our **Christmas Eve service!** Of course we'll see you at church that morning (the 24th falls on a Sunday this year) and we'll meet for a **special, musically-focused, service at 7:00 p.m.** to await the birth of Christ.



Ways to Help Others During the Christmas Season

HelpOneChild



This San Mateo County/Silicon Valley nonprofit organizes a gift drive for foster and newly adopted children each year. Bethany agreed to provide 15 gifts to children from 0 to 3 mms up to 18-21 years old, both male and female. The gift tags were available at the back of church near the back door from November 19 through December 3. Please consider taking a gift tag or two and provide the gift noted on the tag (there are several ideas on the tag). The final day to bring your gifts is **DECEMBER 3** as the gifts must be delivered by Monday, December 4 to HelpOneChild.

Catholic Worker Hospitality House Gift List

Peter Stiehler, Director of CWHH, provided the following list of items for Christmas gifts for his guests and residents this December:

Men's sweatshirts (M, L, XL, XXL), beanies, gloves, socks, men's underwear (sizes 32-38), t-shirts (M, L, XL), thermal shirts, gift cards (Target, grocery stores, fast food, Starbucks).



You will find gift requests on Bethany's Christmas tree at the front of the church beginning December 3. Once purchased, please place your items under the tree. Please bring your gifts to the church no later than Sunday, December 17.

Second Harvest Food Drive

Schedule @ Belle Air Elementary School in San Bruno - be at the school at 1:45pm to volunteer; The drive runs from 2:00pm to 4:15pm the last Wednesday of each month as follows: December 27, 2023 | January 24, 2024



December

BIRTHDAYS and ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

- 3 - Jean Edge
- 8 - Tom Jessee
- 8 - Molly Lyons
- 31 - Judy Nelson

Anniversaries

- 29 - Nelson Schalter and Alicia McHale

Session Highlights - November 21, 2023

Pastor's Report by Rev. Deb McGuire

- Meeting was opened in prayer, lighting of the Christ candle, and devotion on shared affirmations.
- Printer/Copier – Jamal is working on getting us a color copier/printer to replace our current copier, and our new printer just arrived today. Still in the box! Craig will see about getting his guys to set it up.
- We have 2024 PCUSA Planning calendars.
- Advent prep is heavy, liturgies and class planning especially. Candle lighting liturgies are slightly different than previous years. They're nice.
- Sermons, newsletter info, liturgies mean that I will never tire of the written word.
- Pastoral care primarily from Wednesday evening prayer time.
- Roberta Franchini is doing well after her hip repair.
- General check-ins.
- By consensus it is agreed that Marilyn Sicutus' great granddaughter, Georgia Leah Mcallister, will be baptized at Bethany on 01/21/2024.

Financial Trustees Report by Lyn Hughes

- Discussion regarding accepting Online Offerings. No decision at this time.

Buildings and Grounds Report by Dave Wales

- Roofing issues will have to be addressed before the solar panel project.
- More keys for RatProof Room will be made.
- Electrical Panel needs and will be upgraded.

Community Action/Life & Outreach Report by Lyn Hughes

- Christmas gift tags are on Wall Tree (to the left when you first enter the sanctuary). Gift tags for Shelter residents and regulars will be hung on the Christmas Tree once it is set up on 12/2.

Personnel Report by George Lynch

- Rev. Penny Nixon will fill in for Rev. De McGuire on 12/4.

Worship Report by Pam Matthews

- Advent Banners will be hung beginning 12/12 and in this order - Hope, Peace, Joy, Love.
- Discussion regarding having pets in church. No decisions at this time.

Next Session meeting - December 19, 2023 @ 5:30 pm



Monthly events at Bethany

Sundays: Worship at 10:00 am
Coffee Hour 11:00 am
(rehearsals start 8:30 am)

Wednesdays: Prayz 5:00 pm
Chancel Choir 6:30 pm
Prayer Group 6:30 pm

Submissions for W@B: Tuesday mornings.

Submissions for the January newsletter:
Thursday, December 21

1st Sunday: Communion at Worship Service
1st Sunday: Worship Committee 11:00 am
2nd Monday: Ruth Covenant Group 6:30 pm
3rd Sunday: Deacons Meeting 11:30 am
3rd Monday: Financial Trustees 5:30 pm
3rd Tuesday: Session 4:30 pm
Buildings & Grounds,
Community Action committees
– as scheduled

Financial Trustees

1. At the October Session meeting, it was discussed and agreed that ongoing, we will only provide Bethany's financial information quarterly.
2. The Sikh Association was very understanding and helpful during our recent plumbing and sump pump repair issues and the resulting work. We also noted their generosity during their recent Diwali celebration.

Building and Grounds Issues

- Additional vegetation was removed on the west side of the Bethany property, known as Phase 2. We received an additional bill for the Phase 2 project and it has been paid.
 - Major plumbing repairs (new pipes) were installed as well as replacing the sump pump (these were two different jobs) due to the age of the equipment and inability to support the new pump. Some interim electrical work was done, but we have been advised that we need to replace our antiquated electrical panel for maximum efficiency. We are still looking into solar energy, and it would also be beneficial to install a heat pump. (this process will be done over time due to the cost involved).
 - Cameras were installed both inside and outside of our building to better secure our property. Any further work done will be decided upon as there has definitely been a reduction in "activity" at the church when no one is on the property.
 - Room 9 Clean-up: Paul Delander has expressed his desire to take possession of the oak desk downstairs in Rm 9. The 2 pianos and some items in the downstairs storage room still need to be taken to the dump and/or recycled.
 - The Kitchen Update Committee met and made a wish list of work needed and desired items for our outdated kitchen. Next steps include calling a consultant for a walkthrough about what might be done and at what cost. The kitchen island and the cabinets are of great concern and are at the top of the committee's list.
 - Patio Repair: on hold until 2024.
 - Upper Church Roof Repair: on hold until 2024.
- A photograph showing a hammer with a wooden handle and a metal head, positioned on a wooden beam. The text "BUILDING and GROUNDS" is written in white, with "and" in a smaller, cursive font, over the image.
- The Sanctuary is being painted with project oversight by Craig Bray. We expect this project to be finished before Christmas.
 - On-line Giving Opportunities: Information was provided from Wells Fargo Bank. Further discussion has occurred with our Webmaster about how to implement per WFB's instructions.
 - The Global Witness and Peacemaking offering has been wrapped up for 2023. The total offering was \$821.00. \$205.25 will remain at Bethany and \$615.75 was sent to Presbyterian Church USA.
 - The annual Stewardship Drive continues. If you have not already done so, please provide your 2024 pledge as soon as possible. Dedication of the pledges will occur, and then the 2024 Budget will be reviewed by the Financial Trustees and presented to Session for approval.
 - A new color copier has been leased through Copy Tech. This replaces our current old, black and white copier.
 - Any updates to staff salaries, benefits, etc. will be discussed before the end of 2023.

Our 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.

Our 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 are already welcome here. We invite you, on your unique spiritual journey, to join us in the life and ministry of Bethany Presbyterian Church.

Bethany Presbyterian Church

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Bethany is a member of More Light Presbyterians
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