

# CLARION

Bridging the Centuries through Faith  
1913 – 2020



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ALTADENA

Altadena, California 91001  
Wednesday, December 22, 2021  
Volume LXXIII, Number XLXI

## OUR CALENDAR

### MONDAY, DECEMBER 20

Clarion Mailing 8:00a

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24

Christmas Eve Service 4:00p

### SATURDAY DECEMBER 25

*Christmas Day*

*For unto us a child is born...*

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26

*In Person Worship Service*

Sunday Family Worship 10:30

### MONDAY, DECEMBER 27

Clarion Mailing 8:00a

### SATURDAY, JANUARY 1

*Happy New Year 2022*

### SUNDAY, JANUARY 2

Sunday Family Worship 10:30

## LEADERS IN WORSHIP

We are grateful to those persons who led us in worship on Sunday, December 19, 2021, with social distancing. Call to Worship JoAnne SooHoo; Advent Candle Lighting, The Ota Family, Call to Confession, Jacey Hokyo and Kaleo Tanasale; Scripture, Veronica Ota (Luke 1: 39-55); music, Kenny Elliott, Ann Kiriyaama, Greg Middleton, Veronica Ota, Bob and Mae Uchida, and Gus Zdanovich; Sound and Visuals, Sam Gin, Bob Hayashi, and Nick Tomoyasu; and the Rev. Ann Oglesby Edwards for her sermon "The Journey Fulfilled".

We are live streaming our 10:30 worship service via YouTube. The link is sent out by email the day before service, or search "First Presbyterian Church Altadena" on YouTube. Service is simultaneously recorded, and can be viewed at a later time.



*"But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord.'" Luke 2:10-11*

## The Gift of Presence –

Pastor Ann

We find ourselves at the end of our Advent journey moving closer to Christmas. The time of waiting is almost over. But is it really? While we will soon be celebrating the birth of our Lord, Jesus the Christ, our waiting extends into the future into a deeper walk of faith and a deeper meaning of waiting. In her book, *The Meaning is in the Waiting*, Paula Gooder shares that waiting has basically lost its importance in today's society and that waiting has become an increasingly strange notion as we have become accustomed to immediacy and swift action.

The importance of waiting comes in learning the importance of how to be present in the now. It is discovering that the in-between times, the traveling from one destination to the other is as important as the arriving. Paula Gooder explains that "sometimes the really profound moments of our lives occur 'in between' at that moment just before something happens; that truth lurks in the moment between the out breath and the in breath." When we understand the significance of waiting, it is a gift that we can use for all of our lives, not just in the season of Advent - a season designed to call us into a deeper relationship with God. As believers, we live in the hope of what God will do in the end, but has not quite yet taken place. This hope for the future of what God will do is an invitation that both calls us to recognize the current reality of our situation but at the same time a determination to change it. To live 'in-between' is to see the world as it is now and to grasp hold of God's future possibility for the world. God invites us to continue our journey by focusing on the now and the 'in-between' so that we can transform the present.

This season of Advent has beckoned us to recall God's love as we celebrate the birth of his Son, our Savior. But we will miss the deeper meaning of our time of waiting if we do not also embrace the glimmers of God's presence in the world all around us.

I pray this season of Advent has been one filled with learning for those 'in between moments' and with a new understanding of waiting - that deepens your awareness of being present in the now so that you can truly celebrate Christmas. May you know God's peace that passes understanding, the joy that comes from knowing a gracious Savior, a hope that is meant to transform us and a love that calls us to move forward into the future unafraid. May you have a Joyous and Blessed Christmas!

Pastor Ann



## Christmas Eve Service

*Please join us for our special Christmas Eve communion service.*

*December 24, 2021*

*4:00pm in the Sanctuary*

## ***OUR THANKS***

*Our church expresses our sincere appreciation to the following members and friends for their gifts from December 15, 2021 thru December 21, 2021*

### Christmas

Keiko Abe  
Michael and Karen Breul  
Massie Fujii  
Sam and Virginia Gin  
Wilbur and Patti Gin  
Mark and Donna Gonzales  
Alice Hamane  
Geri Hamane  
George Hayakawa  
Irene Hirashiki  
David and Kelly Hokyo  
Kenneth Inouye (Concord)  
Betty Kiriya  
Doug and Judy Kosobayashi  
Dorothy Kuroye  
Bill and LuAnn Lane  
Douglas Lee  
Brent and Peggy Lew  
Wing and Evelyn Lew  
Jon and Susan Maeda  
Sumi Maruyama  
Mary Matsumoto  
Reiko Nikaido  
Hiroko Nishiyama  
Tsutomu and Yoshiko Okuda  
Rick, Jean and Danny Osaka  
Frank and Marian Sata  
George Sugimoto  
Alan Takagaki  
Bryan and Jeri Takeda  
Glenn and Janice Takei  
Gene and Helen Tashima  
Larry and Carol Tomoyasu  
Janice Toriumi and Monty Matsukawa  
Brian and Donna Wakano  
Mitsie Yanari

### Clarion

Donna and Mark Gonzales

### Christmas Joy Offering

Sam and Virginia Gin

### Deacons (in appreciation)

Wing and Evelyn Lew  
George Sugimoto  
June Takata  
Agnes Uchida  
Mitsie Yanari

### In Memory

Alice Hamane, for husband Kimio, on behalf of friends  
Glenn Hiraoka and Deborah Yonemura, for Fred and Frances Hiraoka  
Curt Matsuhara for Frank and Grace Matsuhara and Karen Rodriguez Matsuhara  
Kikuko Matsumoto, for parents Kaichi and Masayo Matsumoto and sister Ayako Matsumoto  
Marie Tajima, for Calvin and Robert Tajima and Hidehachi and Kuniyo Ujiye

### Presbyterian Disaster Fund (for destruction by tornados)

Bob and Mae Uchida

### Presbyterian Women

Irene Hirashiki

### Special

Judy Matsuoka (San Jose)  
Kathy Onoye  
Carolyn Ota  
Roderick Shingu  
JoAnne SooHoo



## ***Christmas Joy Offering***

The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families. Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. This has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years.

During this Advent Season we are called to support the Christmas Joy Offering, to open doors for those we might not be able to meet face to face with but who need the support that our gifts provide.

We support the potential of students of color who will become our leaders and we seek to come alongside them, to encourage them, to open doors for them. And we support church workers and their families who have critical financial needs and we come alongside them, to assist them — we open doors for them. We thank God for being “with us” through the gift of Jesus and for joining us together as the Church and, through our gifts, with those who have need.

The story of God, as we tell it, is not about a barrier, but about a gift. It’s not about the separation, but about the gift of “being with.” Please give generously to the Christmas Joy Offering, in celebration of God’s perfect gift to us. Give because it brings us together, to open doors of relief and opportunity and to relationships that are part of God’s story, a part of God’s perfect gift to us.

Our gifts reflect our generous God. Our gifts support leaders in our Church and world — past, present and future. Our congregation will begin to collect the Joy Offering next Sunday, December 26, 2021

***Come to Bethlehem and be Nourished***

By Donna Frischknecht Jackson, Editor of Presbyterians Today

**Fourth Sunday of Advent, Dec. 19**

*Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival. — Zephaniah 3:14–18*

It just wouldn't be the holidays without watching the 1946 classic, "It's a Wonderful Life." It's the story of a banker, George Bailey, who after sacrificing his dreams to help those in his hometown of Bedford Falls, questions if it had been worth it. Perhaps he should never have been born, he wonders. Clarence, the loveable, bumbling angel — seeking to get his wings — sets out on his mission to show George how wrong he is. The life he has lived is blessed. But he just doesn't see it. The movie is timeless because of its haunting "What if?" question, which resonates in us all.

There's one scene particularly that strikes a chord with me. George and his wife, Mary, are standing on the steps of a home welcoming its new owners. They're surrounded by their community, which is happy that this family now has a place to call home. George and Mary present three housewarming gifts: bread, "that this house may never know hunger"; salt, "that life may always have flavor"; and wine, "that joy and prosperity may reign forever."

It's been 75 years since the film hit the big screen, and I wonder: What if there were more George Baileys among us? When was the last time I stood in the doorway of a home with bread, salt and wine, offering a true welcome to someone who was rejected or dejected?

Like the rest of the country, homelessness in my little state of Vermont is a growing problem, with the state legislature just signing an extension for housing the homeless in local motels till the end of the year. But what will happen in January when the temperatures really dip and the snow piles high? Who will welcome them into a home with bread, salt and wine?

And what about a loving community welcome for new refugee families?

A few years ago, a Vermont town made a big flak about not wanting to welcome refugees into their neighborhood. Today, that same town is reconsidering its anti-refugee stance. The town needs revitalization. Becoming a more welcoming and diverse community is what the town needs — at least that was the sentiment of the newspaper article I read the other day.

Homelessness and an influx of refugees coupled with all the vacant churches I see as I drive along my rural roads — five, by the way, five churches in my little area with "For Sale" signs on them — got me thinking. What if a nonprofit was started to turn those empty houses of worship into affordable housing? What if those churches that failed as "organized religion" showed people turned-off by church what God really had in mind when creating the body of Christ to provide a true refuge?

What if this Advent we do not let our hands grow weak, as the prophet Zephaniah tells us, and we become the George and Mary Baileys who welcome others into homes with gifts of bread, salt and wine? What if we really looked around and found a place for that down-on-their luck couple who is about to have a child? The world might insist that there is "no room in the inn" for them — or for the homeless or the refugee. But we know better, don't we?

Spend time exploring your community, driving through streets to see where there might be a need. Ask agencies that help others what trends are emerging. Reach out to local schools to inquire what families might need. As you light the fourth candle of Advent and break a piece of your bread, think of who needs a loaf this week. Homelessness is a nationwide crisis. Learn more at [endhomelessness.org](http://endhomelessness.org)

**WHO'S MAILING**

December 27	Volunteers
January 3, 2022	Volunteers
January 10	Volunteers
January 17	Volunteers

**STAFF DECEMBER 13**

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