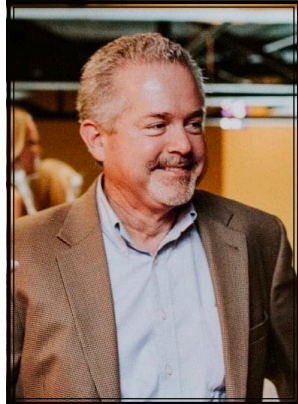


**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**
San Luis Obispo

The Kirk
December 2022



Welcome to the Advent season!

During this time of year we relearn what it means to watch and wait for the coming of the Messiah—it's our annual lesson in patience. Advent connects us to the Jewish origins of our faith, to the people who longed for God to send a Deliverer to them. But it also reminds us that our faith is rooted in hope—the hope of Christ's return to make all things new again.

Advent is important.

Many of us move past Advent and right into the joy and celebration of Christmas. That's understandable! Who wouldn't want to avoid the gloom of waiting and get straight to the main event? But there's a value in remembering what it means to wait, to experience those feelings of longing and expectation. They make the joy of the holiday that much sweeter.

The Rev. Fleming Rutledge is a wonderful thinker and preacher—I have several of her books. She wrote this about Advent:

“Advent is only secondarily about the baby Jesus. It is primarily about the rending of the heavens and the coming of the Lord in power and glory to take the creation back for himself. Until he comes, then, we are the people who put on the armor of light ‘now in this present time’ and by our works point to the One who is to come.”

There is so much in that brief quote. We don't often think about the Christmas miracle as “the rending of the heavens and the coming of the Lord in power and glory” to take us back for himself. She's reminding us that on this side of Easter, Advent is a season of looking forward to Christ finishing what he started 2000 years ago. It's not about destruction, it's about taking our place at a party made possible by the love and grace of Jesus.

But the best line of the quote is that “until he comes, then” part, because it teaches us what we're supposed to be doing in the meantime. We're meant to reflect the light of Christ in such a way that it points to the “One who is to come”. How wonderful!

During this month or so of Advent, let me invite you to make sure that your actions and interactions point to Christ in some recognizable way. I don't know what that looks like for you—maybe with people who serve you at the coffee shop or ring you up at the store—wouldn't it be great if they saw something about Jesus in the way you treated them? However you can, make your life a reflection of the Christ who made you and loves you, who died for you and who promises to take you home. That's the way to celebrate the Advent season.

Blessings to you as we move through these weeks together.

Pastor John

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

All of us from Christian Education want to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

We continue to be thankful and blessed by your support and generosity. We cannot wait to see what 2023 brings our way. In the meantime, let us hopefully, peacefully, joyfully, and with so much love anticipate the birth of our Savior.

God bless you all from Christian Education.



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

DATE FOR EIGHT

A social activity for all--singles, couples,
newcomers, long time members

Sign up now for a good way to get to know each other. Congregational Life is once again organizing “Date For Eight.” Whether you are a couple or single, you can sign up. The committee will create groups of eight assigning you to one with the purpose of providing an opportunity for you to better know others in the church. “Date For Eight” will start off with an organizing event on Saturday afternoon, January 14 (childcare available) where you will be teamed with others, and your group of eight will collectively plan activities for the rest of the year.

Your group of eight can dine together, take walks, go to plays, BBQ, etc. Later in 2023, we will have an all-group event to celebrate new friendships and share stories. Sign up by calling or e-mailing Pam Rodewald, 805-215-2396, psrmony@mac.com, before January 10. You will be notified about the details for the kick-off event. Questions? Contact organizer, Virginia Walter at 805-543-8260 or vwalter@calpoly.edu.

Save these dates for fellowship fun from Congregational Life!

Thursday, December 15:

We will meet on the corner of Marsh and Morro in front of the church for the singing of carols. Caroling on the Corner will begin at 6 p.m. with refreshments afterwards in the courtyard. Please join us for singing and fellowship.

Friday, January 6:

Zoom Bingo at 7 p.m. Please watch the Peak for the Zoom link! Call Pam Rodewald at (805) 215-2396 or Ray McKelvey at (805) 704-9352 for more information.

ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

This year there are two ways to shop at the Alternative Gift Fair. In addition to the virtual fair as it has been the last two years, there will also be an in-person “mini-fair” in Wilson Hall after the service on Sunday, December 4.

You should have received your packet of materials in the mail with the list of non-profits and directions for shopping online or by returning the order form to church by US mail. If you have not received the packet, please call the church office to have one mailed to you, or go to the FPC website, www.fpcsl.org, and follow the AGF instructions. You may shop anytime from December 1 through December 15.

The Alternative Gift Fair (AGF) is a wonderful way to give and to model the joy of giving to friends and family members young and old. When we buy intangible gifts of donations to local, national, and international charities in honor of family and friends, we experience a “Bethlehem Christmas,” a metaphor for God’s greatest gift to us.

So please join us in person at the “mini AGF fair” on December 4 after the service in Wilson Hall, or shop virtually anytime from December 1 through December 15.

Thank you,
Peacemaking and Social Justice Committee

DESIGNATED PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Designated Pastor Nominating Committee (DPNC) wishes to let you know that they are continuing to work diligently and continuing to ask for the congregation’s prayers.

Danielle Elzik – Chair
Dale Wolff, Peggy Estes, Amy Stapp,
Judi Davies, and Kathy Danes.

FRONT PORCH **FUNDRAISING DINNER**

Front Porch held a successful fundraiser last month raising over \$107,000—far surpassing the matching funds of \$80,000 that had been put up by an anonymous donor. Four tables full of First Presbyterian congregation members were nestled among the over 200 people who attended. Thank you all for your participation and support. It was a wonderful opportunity to hear from Joel and several current students, and to see a slide show highlighting some of Front Porch's activities. More importantly, it allowed everyone to spend time with old friends and perhaps to make some new ones.

Front Porch is like many non-profits that raise the bulk of their funds in the last few months of the year. You may have noticed that your mailbox is overflowing with donation requests! Front Porch has no congregation like First Pres who pledge and make regular contributions throughout the year. Consider making a contribution to this ministry. Thanks again all for your continued support of the Front Porch ministry to college students.

Susan Updegrove

ENDOWMENT FUND **CREATE A LASTING LEGACY**

THE MUSIC OF FAITH

Thank you for your loyalty and generous gifts to our church.

There is no doubt that certain music can stir unforgettable memories and create a special, secure feeling. Scripture reminds us that our awareness of God's blessing can be the same kind of experience. Faith, like music, we can't see but can feel its powerful strength when it touches our emotions. And faith, like music which we hear over and over in our minds, can be very real with examples occurring to us in our daily lives.

As we sing praises to God to give thanks and celebrate, we can hear the music of God's creation and we are invited to sing along.

Planning for the future can be a means of keeping the song of God's praise flowing. Perhaps estate planning is an "uncomfortable" subject to be put off until "later." On the other hand, proper estate planning brings peace of mind akin to kicking back and listening to a soothing symphony after a time of stress. You can orchestrate your plans to provide for your loved ones and support the charitable mission causes that have been, or can be, a part of your own personal song to God.

Christian estate planning involves your faith and desires, giving you the opportunity to include a bequest for First Presbyterian Church, San Luis Obispo—ensuring your good intentions will continue in perpetuity. Or you may identify an asset you could turn into a generous gift.

We extend a special thank you to all the present and past members and friends of First Pres who have included the church in their wills or trusts and those who have contributed to the creation of our endowment.

The generous donors of the gifts that have built this church's endowment want their legacy to be used to benefit FPCSLO. All the committee chairs at First Presbyterian Church will honor the intentions of those blessed stewards by considering every expense as an opportunity to use the sacred endowment allocations.

If you are currently doing tax or estate planning and/or feel led to include a gift to the First Presbyterian Church of San Luis Obispo in your financial or estate planning, please contact any member of Endowment Committee: Peggy Estes, Don Green, Jerry Kaml, Ray McKelvey, Diane Shervem, Bert Townsend, or Virginia Walter (Chair). We can help guide you through this important process or steer you to the right people and resources.

Even a modest gift will make a difference.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Happy Birthday to the following seniors (over 85) who will celebrate birthdays in December:

Don Luenser – December 1
Richard Wiens – December 5
Nancy McKelvey – December 15
Kathy Coull – December 20
Dorothy Truesdale – December 30

Happy Birthday to all others with December birthdays.

Our church records may be incomplete. If we have overlooked someone, please contact the church office.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE CORNER

Please pray for our church family, especially:

For **Pastor John D'Elia** as he leads our congregation;

For our **Elders** as they guide our congregation in making decisions about the life of our church;

For the **Deacons** as they care for our church family;

For **Jen Rabenaldt** and those who work with our children and youth;

For **Scott Glysson** and the many wonderful musicians in our church;

For our church members, friends, and family who are undergoing treatments for various health issues;

For our church's seniors, for their families and care givers;

For those who support our worship services with their technical help to make it possible for live streaming and recording of the services;

For members, family, and support personnel serving in the military;

For all of us as we serve God wherever He calls us.

If you have a prayer concern, please call the Church Office at (805) 543-5451 or write me at gdekley@calpoly.edu.

God bless us all,
Gloria DeKleine

BOOK BROWSERS

Book Browsers will be meeting the first Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. via zoom. Please join us for discussions of the following books.

Dec. 6 Florence Adler Swims Forever by R. Beanland
Jan. 3 The Twelve Tribes of Hattie by A. Mathis
Feb. 7 The Last Year of the War by S. Meissner
Mar. 7 The Lincoln Highway by A. Towles
Apr. 4 The Madness of Crowds by L. Penny
May 2 Tied to the Tracks by S. Donati

If you have any questions, please contact Diane Shervem at 805-459-9844 or dshervem@charter.net.

GREEN PASTURES SOMETIMES YOU FIND OUT

Green Pastures was a mission of our church for many years, offering a listening ear, support, prayer, and some kind of tangible support to those in need. Every Wednesday, folks lined up to meet with two congregational members who listened and provided the support needed. With Covid, the in-person meetings stopped. Funds designated for Green Pastures were diverted to the Food Bank, Salvation Army, and People's Kitchen to continue offering support to the marginalized in our community. During this time, some of the long-time Green Pasture members moved away, reducing the number of people available to provide the in-person contact.

Recently, this note was received at the church. It is not often that you learn about the effect of your outreach, but sometimes you find out.

"Dear Green Pastures Program Folks -
Hello! I came to you for help for my rent when I had nowhere else to turn - You wrote me a check for \$186.53 on 5/13/13. I had tucked away a copy of that check for two reasons - 1) to remember how grateful I am & 2) to one day want to repay you so you can pass it onto someone else in need. Enclosed is my check for \$200 - please accept it as my thank you for being there to help others. I don't know if your program still exists or not...?
Sincerely, Karen "

If you are interested in joining this important mission of First Pres, please contact the church office or Ben Parker. We would like to resume this vital mission outreach."

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

SANCTUARY CHRISTMAS FLOWERS AND DEDICATIONS

Honor Loved Ones, Bring Joy To Our Homebound,
And (New In 2022) Help Support Transitions
Mental Health Association!

Each Christmas season for many years, members of our church family have generously supported the Deacons' Flower Ministry by dedicating Christmas plants in honor or in memory of loved ones. These plants beautify our sanctuary during Christmas services and then are delivered to the homebound, ill, bereaved, and others to let them know that we hold them in our hearts. Each loving dedication can be made for a suggested \$15 donation to the Deacons' Christmas Flower Fund. Your donations to this fund will help beautify our sanctuary for in-person and taped services.

In addition, Christmas this year will mark the first time we have partnered with an important mental health program in our community to provide these beautiful blessings to our members. Our Christmas flowers are being purchased through Growing Grounds Downtown, a store that provides work and training opportunities for clients of Transitions Mental Health Association (TMHA), a nonprofit organization.

Deacons will be happy to accept in-person donations and dedications after Sunday services December 4, 11, and 18. Please bring a check or cash (\$15 per dedication) to church and a Deacon will accept your donation and print the names of those you wish to honor or memorialize.

To send by check: Mail to First Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 591, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406. Notation on check: Deacons' Christmas Flower Fund. Please include a note about your dedication: "in honor of" (name or organization) or "in memory of" (name).

To donate on-line: To donate via church website, go to www.fpcslo.org and click on "Donate." Then under Donations, select Easter and Christmas Flowers and enter amount. After you enter payment information, in the NOTES section type "Deacon Christmas Flower Fund: in honor of" (name) or "in memory of" (name).

If you prefer you can contact Kathy Wolff directly with any questions and dedication information.
Phone: 805 782-9790 or email dkwolff@charter.net.

**DEADLINE FOR DEDICATIONS IS MONDAY,
DECEMBER 19, by noon.**

All dedications are printed in the Church bulletin on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Whichever donation method you use, please make sure to note that your donation is for "Christmas Flowers" and indicates to whom you are honoring or memorializing. You might even want to consider honoring an organization or others you feel deserve a special thank you.

Please note: Due to the rising costs of flowers throughout the county, the Deacons suggest a donation of \$15 for each dedication. This will help the Deacons pay for the cost of the plants and reinforce their efforts to raise funds for the Deacons' flower ministry.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LOVE AND
SUPPORT OF THIS IMPORTANT DEACON
OUTREACH PROGRAM.

JAZZ VESPERS

The Jazz Vespers Series at the First Presbyterian Church of San Luis Obispo is pleased to present their 6th annual evening of Christmas Jazz music on Sunday, December 11 at 7:00 pm. This concert will feature the Marshall Otwell Quartet, with a very special guest appearance by Inga Swearingen on vocals.

The jazz quartet features Marshall Otwell on piano, Dave Becker on sax and flute, Dylan Johnson on bass and Daryl Vandruff on drums and will showcase original arrangements of classic Christmas carols and reinterpreted seasonal music which celebrates the beauty and diversity of the holiday season.

Joining the quartet will be internationally-acclaimed performer and recording artist Inga Swearingen, bringing her unique vocal skills and energy to the stage.

With a generous sponsorship by the Patrick family, 100% of the proceeds from the concert will benefit SLO4Home, a local non-profit organization whose mission is to re-house Afghan refugees in our area. Doors will open at 6:30pm for the 7 pm event. Advance tickets are available at:

<https://www.my805tix.com/e/christmas-jazz-vespers-2>

Merry Christmas

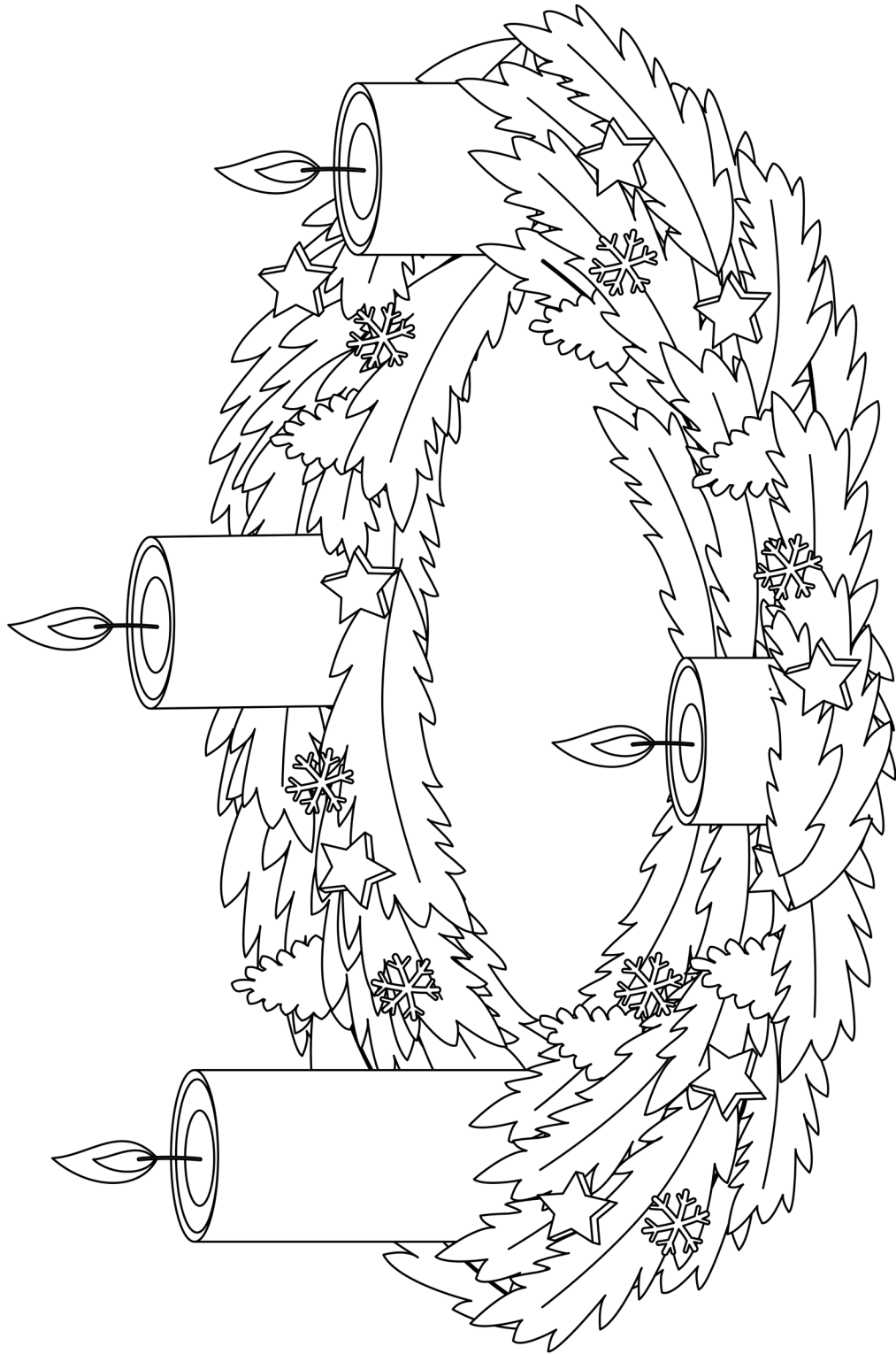
from the staff at
First Pres. SLO

In place of a staff picture for the December Kirk, how about a guessing game? Can you name the baby pictures?



HAPPY
NEW
YEAR





*Congratulations to John and Shelly
on their December 3rd wedding!*





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

San Luis Obispo

PO Box 591
981 Marsh Street
San Luis Obispo, CA
93406
tel: 805.543.5451
email: churchoffice@fpcslo.org
web: fpcslo.org

IMPORTANT DATES:

ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR- Mini AGF fair on Dec. 4 after the service in Wilson Hall, or shop virtually anytime from Dec.1 – 15

CHRISTMAS JAZZ VESPERS- Sunday, December 11 at 7:00 pm

CHRISTMAS FLOWER DEADLINE - MONDAY, DECEMBER 19, by noon.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES - December 24 at 5:30 pm and 7 pm

****Please Note: The next KIRK will cover January and February. The deadline for KIRK articles is the 15th of the December**