

Happy New Church Year!

By Pastor Cyndi

Yes, we have begun our new church year!

And yes, we are busy through the Advent season, right up through Christmas.

But in our rush to get to Christmas, we want to leapfrog right over Advent, ignoring our need to slow down and wait.

Advent is an important season, a time of waiting and watching -- a time of preparation.

In our culture we have been taught instant gratification -- we want it now! Keurig will make you a personal cup of coffee --right now!

Amazon will deliver tomorrow, or today if you order by 10 am.

It's almost like we expect God to deliver on demand, too!

When are you gonna get here, huh?

Don't you know I'm in a hurry?

How long until we can finally start singing Christmas carols?

Is it time for the Posada?

Advent is a time, when as the days get shorter and the temperature begins to drop, our bodies want to slow down.

But this is exactly the time when society says you must speed up -- you know -- all those cookies to bake, gifts to wrap,



Schedule of events set for Advent and Christmas

Dec. 2 -- 9:00 am Tree Decorating followed by

-- 1-4 pm Children's Advent Adventure—parents & grandparents welcome. RSVP to Tanya by Nov 24.

Dec. 9 -- 1 -3:30 pm Reading the Gospel of Mark in its entirety.

Dec. 10 -- 3:00 pm The Christmas Concert followed by reception.

Dec. 17 -- 9:30 am Lessons and Carols.

-- 11:30 am Lecturas y villancicos

-- 5:30 pm The Posada, food and fellowship under Clairemont's front portico.

Dec. 21 -- 3:00 pm Blue Christmas, a service of hope in a world of turmoil.

Dec. 24 -- 9:30 am Advent 4, Sunday Service.

-- 11:30 am Celebración de Noche Buena.

-- 6:30 pm Celebration of the Nativity of our Lord -- Choir, Harp, Candle lighting.

-- 10:00 pm Silent Night around the manger in the Chapel, with guitar.

Dec. 25 -- No service, the Office is closed.

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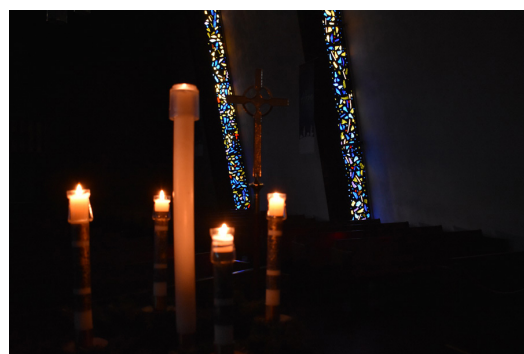
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Advent. Christmas.

Excitement and anticipation abounds as the tree goes up in the Sanctuary and Christmas decorations are carefully put into place. And afterward children and parents, grandparents and friends gather for an afternoon Advent Adventure.



President's message 2023

By Gary Jaus

2023 has likely been a challenging year for most of us. Both Deacon Margy and Pastor Cyndi have expressed that we are a congregation in transition. Their words are accurate but not surprising.

We know we are undergoing challenging and significant changes in this amazing journey that will shape the future of our church for years to come. The road we've been on, like a cross country trip, hasn't always been smooth.



At times we have felt lost or anxious. But while we were feeling lost or anxious, we weren't alone. God has always been with us, and we have been there for each other.

In June, I accepted Clyde Prem's request to serve as the interim President until December 31st. In November you elected me to continue as President for an additional year. I'm honored by your vote. With that decision I feel an obligation as your President to focus and act on issues affecting the welfare of the congregation. In my long career in law enforcement, I was trained to think about how to solve problems, not just accept the status quo. I've continued to carry that mindset with me. I've learned, sometimes the hard way, that the best long-term solutions were developed when working as part of a collaborative team. Seldom did I or any one person always have the best ideas. Before I joined the collaborative team that is your council, you had already put in place a solid and engaged council.

Their collective wisdom and dedication to the business of the church has served you well and made my job easier. This year the Council and the Executive Committee (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) along with the congregation voted for and facilitated the sale of both duplexes. You voted to have Elena Enriquez be called as an Associate Pastor.

The Organist Selection Committee, headed by Katy Lundeen, identified Charles F. von Gunten as our organist. The Council approved hiring Charles and hopefully, we get to experience his musical skills for years to come. The Council also hired Francisco Plascencia as the new custodian for the church. I hope you've noticed the excellent attention to detail that Francisco and his wife Teresa have in keeping our facilities clean.

We are all aware of the changes to our facilities with the demolition of the old Fellowship Hall. The normal wear and tear to our facilities is something we should all pay attention to while anticipating the routine but major repairs. Your Council is paying attention to the use of our facilities and while there is always more work to be done some changes have already taken place. The German School which closed earlier this year is close to vacating rooms 7&8 of Luther Hall. Those rooms will soon become available for future use. Regular communication with the Head Start program has also been reestablished. They have been good partners with the church for years and with our reinvigorated communication we

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Thanksgiving!

On Wednesday evenings, we usually have Soup and Sanctuary -- but not on November 22. Pastora Elena and Pastor Cyndi decided to try something new -- host a Thanksgiving Dinner for whoever came. Our thought was that some people might not have anywhere to go for Thanksgiving, and Clairemont is their Family -- the Family of God.

So on Thanksgiving Eve, we started with a Thanksgiving Service of Gratitude providing everyone an opportunity to thank God for all our blessings. We then served a traditional turkey dinner for over 60 people in a relaxing, joyful atmosphere. Pastora Elena assembled a crew to decorate the Narthex for the evening and cook the turkeys. People brought side dishes. It truly was a wonderful evening. Plan to join us next year! (Maybe in the new Fellowship Hall?)

Interfaith Shelter 2024

Save the date! Clairemont will be hosting Interfaith Shelter guests at Our Mother of Confidence Feb. 10 through Feb. 24, 2024.

**December 2023 Advent
devotional: “Topsy-Turvy” by the
Rev. Hannah Hawkinson**

In her song, Mary, the mother of Jesus, praises God for turning the world upside down—or perhaps, turning the world right-side-up! Gather’s annual Advent devotional focuses on the Magnificat song of Mary (see Luke 1:46b-55), as well as parallel topsy-turvy stories of Mary’s ancestors, including Shiphrah and Puah (Exodus 1), Hannah (1 Samuel 1-2), the daughters of Zelophehad (Numbers 27), Hagar at the well (Genesis 16 and/or 21) and Ruth and Hagar.

ALL are invited to attend either of the Gather Bible study meetings:
Patience Bible Study: Monday, December 11, at 12:30 p.m. in Room 4.
Ruth Bible Study: Thursday, December 14 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 1.
COMING UP – Winter/Spring 2024:

**Gather Bible study leader
continues work in Jerusalem**

Following the October 7 Hamas attack on southern Israel and the Israeli siege of Gaza, many Gather readers contacted Women of the ELCA churchwide staff to ask about the safety of Gather Bible study author the Rev. Dr. Meghan Johnston Aelabouni and her family. Many of the inquiries came after the ELCA’s difficult decision to evacuate the ELCA Young Adult in Global Mission (YAGM) volunteers serving in the West Bank and country coordinators ELCA pastors Adam



**“Scripture and nature: Teachers of faith”
by the Rev. Sara Olson-Smith**

Pacifica Women of the ELCA Annual Convention and Gathering was held November 3-4, 2023, at Messiah Lutheran Church, Yorba Linda. Bev Covey as our Voting Member took part in electing a Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and board members to serve. The theme “Embracing Grace” was carried throughout in the Bible study, workshops and worship service.

and Jordan Miller-Stubbendick, with their young children.

Johnston Aelabouni reported: “We are safe in Jerusalem and continue our work [accompanying the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) and other partners], which is now more important than ever.” Johnston Aelabouni serves as ELCA Theologian in Residence for the Middle East and North Africa desk. She and her spouse, the Rev. Gabi Aelabouni, Area Desk Director for the Middle East and North Africa, have

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three children.

“We remain incredibly thankful for the outpourings of prayer and love for our family and for all the people of the Holy Land,” Meghan and Gabi shared in an Oct. 21 special update. “We have felt the power of your prayer; it has sustained us. We truly do feel safe where we are; and we also feel deeply called to be where we are ... to offer whatever help we can as we accompany our local partners on behalf of the ELCA.”

“These are such heavy, terrible days in Jerusalem,” Johnston Aelabouni said in her sermon that day. “Such unthinkable violence against children, parents, grandparents, young people. So many lives ended—and every one of them a human being with a name, a story, a place in this world. They are Jewish, Muslim, Christian; Palestinian and Israeli. Dancers in the desert, families huddling together, moving from house to house only to find that no place is safe. And now in Gaza, there is a war—a war not against Hamas only, but a war against 2.3 million people who have nowhere else to go and whose water, food, electricity and medicine are running out. Half of them are children.”

Yet death and violence will not have the last word, Johnston Aelabouni said. “The last word belongs to the God who will swallow up death forever. To that hope may we cling, even as we mourn, and pray, and wait. May it come soon, O God. May it come now.”

Women of the ELCA

On October 1st, we celebrated Thankoffering Sunday, blessing of the Mission Quilts and held a fundraiser for both the Piece and Sew and Mission Quilts groups. We collected \$2,000.25 for the Thankoffering; \$450 for Piece & Sew; and \$865 for Mission Quilts. How are these funds spent?

The Thankoffering is sent to church wide WELCA (in Chicago) to help their ongoing life-changing ministries. (WELCA is not an auxiliary of the church, so is financially independent and responsible for its own financial affairs and that is why our offering from CLC/IL is so important.)

The Piece and Sew group offers financial support to a variety of groups. In the past, they have made donations to: Interfaith Shelter, Birthline, Kenya Orphanage, Raise the Roof campaign, CCSA, Sandwich Ministry, the Pastor’s Discretionary Fund, etc. The Mission Quilt group is very resourceful about collecting necessary supplies, however, their biggest expense is probably the batting which costs \$331.54 for two large rolls/shipping expense.

Most importantly, thank you to everyone who continues to support us both financially and prayerfully so we can continue our ongoing mission to “mobilize women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.”

Eyeglasses for Lions Optometric Vision Clinic (LOVC)

The women continue to collect eyeglasses (prescription, readers and sunglasses) for LOVC. Recently, 107 pairs were delivered to them. A huge thank you and hug to everyone who supports this effort to bring low cost vision help to San Diegans.

NEW YEAR, NEW VISION!

By Deacon Margy

So, in the midst of this time of congregational transition, we mark ongoing transitions within the church at large, and the world at large.

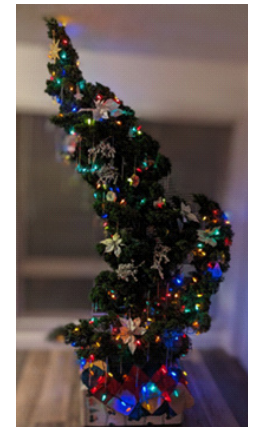
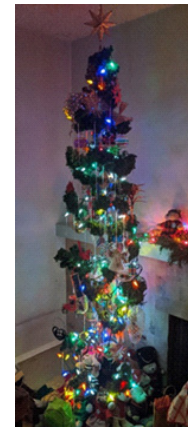
We are entering the season of Advent, which is the beginning of the church year, marking a time of preparing to mark once more Jesus coming into your world.

And soon we will be celebrating the New Year, full of promise and thoughts of new beginnings.

It's time for new things in this congregation as well, as we work on living out a new vision and mission for this community of faith and the community around us. We've spent time discerning the areas of ministry we want to focus on: **Worship, Community Outreach, Intentional Bi-Lingual/ Bi-Cultural Ministry, Community and Communication.**

We will be starting off the new year with a day to focus on each of these four areas, and opportunity to do some planning, and organize some teams, building on conversations that have already happened. There will be more details coming, but for now mark your calendars for **SATURDAY, JANUARY 13**. Be watching for an email that will talk about the timeline for the day, and how you can prepare, but plan now to be a part.

In the meantime, let's celebrate this time of preparation and new beginnings!



Our Tree in Celebration of Jesus' Birth

By Bill Fredericks

More than twenty years ago I decided that I would harvest our Christmas tree from our own resources. No longer would I travel to a seller to fill that need. Oh, I could have bought an artificial tree. Many do. But that did not fit my need. What was my need? First, it had to be available. And it had to fit in our home. It had to accept our decorations. Although I didn't know it at the start, each one had to be different. Over the years the harvesting process transformed from one that I was able to do on my own to one that I now entrust to others.

Here are three trees that have graced our home over these years. In 2011 the harvest yielded a tree befitting the social theme of the time. I call it the "dementor" tree from the Harry Potter movies. Then in 2020 no one was visiting from outside the home. COVID kept us in and others out, so a simple, one branch tree graced our hearth. It was perfect for just Pat and me. Now in 2023 we have a tree, free in form but with minimal décor. We wish you a Joyous Christmas.

Reminders:

-- Offering and Raise the Roof envelopes, plus blue Prayer request/visitor slips are located in every pew in the church.

-- We have a sign-up sheet for those of you who can pick up Emilie and take her home on Sunday. The sheet is located on a table in the Narthex. Emilie appreciates your help.



Church Business

July, August, September



Financial Report 2023								
Income					Expenses			
	Actual	Budget	Actual Year to Date	YTD Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual Year to Date	YTD Budget
July	\$37,985	\$38,450	\$267,900	\$288,150	\$42,588	\$43,393	\$272,640	\$294,752
August	\$24,305	\$53,450	\$293,837	\$341,600	\$28,897	\$43,043	\$301,537	\$337,796
September	\$35,109	\$38,450	\$329,217	\$380,050	\$35,945	\$43,493	\$337,483	\$381,289
September net income		-\$836			YTD Net income		-\$8,265	

President's message 2023

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are looking for new opportunities that benefit both parties. The Council has addressed lighting issues in the parking lot, around Luther Hall and the walkway to our current entrance to the sanctuary. Sometimes we miss the blessings the Lord puts along our paths. Tanya, our church secretary, is one of those blessings. She recently began emailing a weekly calendar in both English and Spanish so we can stay current on events taking place at church. More work for her but timely and relevant information for all. In January, Bill Fredericks will join the Council as the Vice President and Tomy Oregon and Bill Huston will join as Members at Large. Sarah Groesbeck, the current Vice President and Holly Boyle, Member at Large are coming off Council. Share a word of thanks with all of them for their service to our church. God's subtle beauties and abundant blessings are meant to lift our deflated spirits and sagging hopes. It's we who get too busy to see the beauties and blessings that are right in front of us. Slow down, look around and see who's

here for you. Each of us are placed here for God's purposes and each other. While people and life may stream past us without a kind word or a wave, and we may do the same to others, we aren't hidden to God's eyes. HE always knows exactly where we are. Merry Christmas.

Pastor Cyndi *Continued from Page 1*

cards to mail, fudge to eat, trees to decorate – and on and on.

As I have mentioned before, a few years ago, Bill and I started a new way to celebrate Christmas. We realized we were giving gifts to everyone except Jesus. So we started doing less shopping, less spending, and more giving to places that feed, clothe, house and care for others -- places like CCSA, Interfaith Shelter and other places and people who could use a little help.

This change in our holiday rituals resulted in more good being done and less stress. The hours of our lives are our most valuable possession. They are irreplaceable and non-refundable. Instead of spending them on Amazon or the mall, let's shorten our to-do lists this Advent and make space for the Christ Child.

CLC Volunteer Schedule - December 2023

Lay Readers

12/3	Carol Nichols
12/10	Arelen Riordon
12/17	Bonita Martinez
12/24	Lorri Carlsen
12/31	Rob Constantine



Communion Assistants

12/3 Peggy Ritchie, Lewis TenHulzen, Rita Leatherman

12/10 Bev Covey, Pam Allen, Harriet Morris

12/17 Carol Nichols, Lewis TenHulzen, Gary Lange

12/24 9:30am and 6:30pm service please call office if you are available.

12/31 Pam Allen, Lewis TenHulzen, Harriet Carmona

Welcome Team

12/3 Janet Wood, Emilie Lauchmen, Kevin Collins

12/10 Sandra Logan, Gary Lange, Kevin Collins

12/17 Harriet Carmona, Bev Covey, Kevin Collins

12/24 9:30am and 6:30pm service please call office if available

12/31 Pam Allen, Gary Lange, Kevin Collins

Kathy Higgins	12/1
Gary Lange	12/1
Holly Doolittle	12/3
Susan Brennecke	12/4
Carol Fish	12/7
Jack Shirley	12/8
Anna Herfindahl	12/8
Hanah Thomas	12/8
Janine Coshaw	12/8
Phillip Allen	12/10
Elena Enriquez	12/11
Kiley Briggs	12/11
Ray Skoglund	12/13
Damian Diaz	12/14
Josefina Cruz	12/15
Melissa Balderrama	12/15
Stella Penyak	12/18
Pam Allen	12/19
Gabriela Oregon	12/20
Leona Edblom	12/21
Vicki Reece	12/21
Tomy Magana	12/21
Dorethea Brewer	12/24
Jason Engel	12/27
Jean Shirley	12/29
Keelie Flax	12/29
Gregory Buchanan	12/30
Sydney Buchanan	12/31

12/3 Le Roy Bannach

12/10 Pam Allen

12/17 Kathy Reed

12/24 Gary Lange

12/31 Purba family

Flower
Dedication



*Peggy Ritchie,
Rita Leatherman,
Ruth Andersen,
& Bev Covey*

*If you are not on this list and
celebrate a birthday in*


*December please contact the
office to update our info.*

12/3	Lewis John TenHulzen, Mitchell Little
12/10	Lewis John TenHulzen, Mitchell Little
12/17	Lewis John TenHulzen, Mitchell Little
12/24	Lewis John TenHulzen, Mitchell Little
12/31	Lewis John TenHulzen, Mitchell Little



December



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	Monday's Choir Cherubs 4:15pm 5:00pm Glee choir 6:00pm Esperanza Youth Choir 7:30pm Sanctuary Choir				1 12:00pm Food Distribution 1:00pm AA 6:00pm Al-Anon	2 7:00am SA 9:00am Tree decorating 9:30am Bells Rehearsal 1-4 Advent adventure
3 9:30am Worship Service 11:30am Servicio de Adoración en Español, celebraciones de cumpleaños / Birthday celebration 1:30-6pm All are welcome / Todos son bienvenidos 1:30pm Rise & Shine	4 1:00pm AA 4:00pm Gospel Study 6:30pm Scouts 8:00pm AA Meeting	5 1:00pm AA 6:30pm Cub Scouts 7:00pm Al-Anon	6 4:00pm Stephen Ministry 6pm Soup & Sanctuary	7 8:00am Sandwich Min. 10:00am MorningStar 1:00pm AA Meeting	8 12:00pm Food Distribution 1:00pm Bunco 1:00pm AA 6:00pm Al-Anon	9 7:00am SA 9:30am Bells Rehearsal 9:30am WELCA meeting 10-12pm sanctuary choir practice 1-4pm Reading the gospel of Mark in its entirety
10 9:30am Worship Service 11:30am Servicio de Adoración en Español, 12:30 - 6pm Iglesia Luterana fellowship 3:00pm Christmas Concert	11 12:30pm Patience bible study 1:00pm AA 4:00pm Gospel Study 6:30pm Scouts 8:00pm AA Meeting	12 1:00pm AA 6:30pm Cub Scouts 6:30pm Executive Team 7:00pm Al-Anon 7:15pm Council Meeting	13 12-2:30 Southern Care group 6pm Soup & Sanctuary	14 8:00am Sandwich Min. 10am Ruth's Bible study 1:00pm AA Meeting	15 12:00pm Food Distribution 1:00pm AA 6:00pm Al-Anon	16 7:00am SA 9:30am Handbell Rehearsal
17 Lessons and Carols 9:30am Worship Service 11:30am Servicio de Adoración en Español, 12:30 - 6pm Iglesia Luterana fellowship 1:30 rise & shine 5:30pm Posada	18 1:00pm AA 4:00pm Gospel Study 6:00pm Evangelism team 6:30pm Scouts 8:00pm AA Meeting	19 1:00pm AA 6:30pm Cub Scouts 7:00pm Al-Anon	20 4:00pm Stephen Ministry 6pm Soup & Sanctuary	21 8:00am Sandwich Min. 10:00am MorningStar 1:00pm AA Meeting 3:00pm Blue Christmas service	22 12:00pm Food Distribution 1:00pm AA 6:00pm Al-Anon	23 7:00am SA 9:30am Handbell Rehearsal
24 Christmas Eve 9:30am Worship Service 11:30am Celebración de Noche Buena, 6:30pm Celebration of the Nativity of our Lord, 10:00pm Silent Night around the manger.	25  <i>Christmas</i> Have a Blessed day Office Closed	26 1:00pm AA 6:30pm Cub Scouts 7:00pm Al-Anon	27 12-2:30 Southern Care group	28 8:00am Sandwich Min. 1:00pm AA Meeting	29 12:00pm Food Distribution 1:00pm AA 6:00pm Al-Anon	30 7:00am SA 9:30am Handbell Rehearsal