

DECEMBER NEWS

Volume 13, Issue 11

December 2011

Saturday, December 24 at 8 p.m.
Traditional Christmas Eve Service of
Carols and
Candlelighting



Please join us on this long and holy evening for a traditional and magical service of carols, special music, Luke's familiar story of Jesus' birth, and candlelight ceremony.

10 a.m. Sunday, 12/25 (Christmas Day)
Service of Carols and Christ-Mass (Communion)

The Word Made Flesh: Sing a New Song Unto Our God!

John 1:1-14 The Word became flesh

Psalm 98 Sing a new song

On Christmas Day, we will celebrate the "Word Made Flesh" in the baby Jesus and in the bread and wine of communion. While we will enter into the spirit of the Psalmist calling us to "sing a new song unto the Lord," we'll mostly sing traditional carols.



REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

The family of Kathy Steel-Sabo. Kathy's father Geoff Steel, died recently. The memorial gathering will be at our church Monday, December 12 at 2:00 pm.

Jim Junkin's sole surviving brother Bob also died recently. We pray for peace and comfort for Jim and Bob's widow Edna and their family.

Nancy McGihon will have hip surgery on Friday, December 2. May, your recovery be smooth and your life be free of pain.

MODERATOR'S MESSAGE

CHRISTMAS

We are now in the season of Advent and looking forward to Christmas. I'd like to thank Sharon Filippi and Carolyn Hedgecock for decorating the church in such a beautiful way. Members and friends can start bringing their poinsettias on Sundays during Advent to add to the decorations.

We are continuing our tradition of sending out Christmas greetings to other members and friends in our congregation. To save paper and postage, please fill out the blank sheet for the greetings that is enclosed with the newsletter. Put the sheet with a donation in the envelope on the bulletin board in the Social Hall. The donation will go to the Tri-City Breakfast program. The Christmas greetings form should be turned in by Sunday, December 11, and they will be sent out to members before Christmas.

We are planning a Christmas party on Saturday, December 10, at 3:00 in the Social Hall. You can sign up in the Social Hall to bring finger food to share, or help set up or clean up the room. Plan to wear your holiday togs and join us in celebrating Christmas.

Annual Meeting and Reports

Our Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 22, after church. Annual Reports from boards, the pastor, the moderator, the clerk, and the budget committee are due to Kathy in the office by Sunday, December 18, so she will have time to type them before the end of the year. Our Annual Meeting will be followed by the "Souper Supper" sponsored by Church Council. Look for a sign-up in the Social Hall in January.

New Members

We would like to welcome our new members, Peg Tait and Mike Pinto, who joined the church on Sunday, November 27. We are happy to have them as part of our congregation. Be sure to greet them at Social Hour and get to know them as they join our church family.

POINSETTIAS

Our church always looks beautiful during Advent and Christmas with all the Poinsettia plants that you bring in. The more the merrier! You may bring your plants any Sunday before church or drop them off in the church office any time the office is open during the week. We will need a volunteer to watch over our plants and



make sure they are watered. Please let Kathy in the church office know if you are willing to do this.

A list on the Social Hall bulletin board is available if you would like to donate your poinsettia in honor or memory of a dear one. Please label your plant with your name if you intend to take it home later. Unlabeled plants will be discarded after the season.

SER-REL-LO

Our Ser-Rel-Lo meeting in November was a very interesting visit to the Lindsay Wildlife Museum in Walnut Creek. The museum has been remodeled and updated. It was fascinating to see actual live birds and animals that have been brought back to good health, but cannot be released into the wild because of their physical conditions. Thanks to Dorothy Page and Lois Hill for planning this meeting.

For our December meeting on Thursday, December 15, we are planning to visit David and Robbie's home in Alameda and then eat lunch in that city. We will meet at church in the narthex at 10:30 a.m. to carpool to Alameda. There will be a sign-up list in the Social Hall. All are welcome to join us.

Thanks to Marie Brown and Gayle Howell for finishing up the Christmas placemats that we worked on in October. The placemats will be handed out by Judy Johnson, Barbara Babcock, and Gayle Howell as they deliver the Meals on Wheels dinners in December.

Carolyn Zeljak

WORSHIP CELEBRATIONS AT FREMONT CONGREGATIONAL

Advent's mood is one of waiting, hoping, expecting, and repenting; each week we light another candle of our Advent wreath.

On Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and throughout the 12 days of Christmas, we greet one another with the news of Jesus' birth through worship, music, hospitality, and gift-giving. We honor all stirrings of new life in our hearts and in our troubled world.

In the Season of Epiphany, we open to signs of God's light shining upon Jesus and upon God's world.

Dec. 4 (Advent 2—Candle of Peace): A Visit from John the Baptist

Mark 1:1-8 and John 1:19-28 (ministry of John the Baptist)

Communion

Dec. 11 (Advent 3): Lighting the Candle of Joy

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 (comforting those who mourned)

Psalms 126 (celebrating the harvest after being in exile)

Dec. 18 (Advent 4 – Candle of Love): Greetings, Favored One! (The World Turned Upside Down)

Luke 1:28-31 (the Annunciation)

1:47-55 (the revolutionary Magnificat—"My soul magnifies the Lord...")

Saturday, Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve) at 8 p.m.: Traditional Christmas Eve Service of Carols and Candlelighting.

Luke 2:1-20 Christmas story

Sunday, 12/25 (Christmas Day): The Word Made Flesh: Sing a New Song Unto Our God!

Service of Carols and Christ-Mass (Communion)

John 1:1-14 The Word became flesh

Psalms 98 Sing a new song

Sunday, 1/1 (First Sunday After Christmas / New Year's Day)

Jeanette Guinan is organizing this special service of poetry and readings of Christmas and New Year.

No Communion this day.

Sunday, 1/8 (First Sunday After Epiphany / Baptism of Christ) Holy Water

Communion

Genesis 1:1-5 "spirit of God moving over the waters"

Psalms 29 God's voice in a thunderstorm

Mark 1:4-11 Baptism of Jesus by John

Sunday, 1/15 God Is Still Speaking

1 Samuel 3:1-10 : Samuel recognizes God's voice, and says "Speak, for your servant is listening."

John 1:43-51 "Come and see" if anything good can come out of Nazareth

Sunday, 1/22 Blessed Are Those Who Laugh at Themselves

Through the story of Jonah, Jews (and we) laugh at their (our) prejudices and foibles

Our **Annual Meeting** is after church

Sunday, 1/29 Being a Welcoming Congregation

Rev. Roland Stringfellow, Director of Ministerial Outreach of the Coalition of Welcoming Congregations (which is an outreach program of the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies at Pacific School of Religion), will be our guest, 5th Sunday speaker. Roland is an ordained UCC Minister, a gay African-American, and a wonderful speaker.

CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERINGS DECEMBER 18: HOW THE FUNDS ARE USED

The generous gifts of UCC congregations and individuals to the Christmas Fund enabled the Pension Boards' Ministerial Assistance program to provide the following gifts since last year:

Some form of Ministerial Assistance to approximately 1,600 persons

- Christmas Gift checks to approximately 900 persons. 20 of those are over 100 years of age. The oldest person is 107. One person has received Christmas checks continuously since 1976. The 900 gifts total \$270,000.
- Monthly pension supplementation to 440 persons. These gifts total \$106,934 per month. A significant part of the annual total of \$1,283,208 comes from the Christmas Fund.
- Quarterly health premium supplementation is being provided to 261 families, totaling \$155,883 per quarter. All of the funding for health premium supplementation is derived from the Christmas Fund.
- Emergency Grants totaling \$44,973.81 were provided to 33 individuals and families from January 1 through October 31, 2011.



HEIFER PROJECT COMES TO FCC

On Sundays December 11 and 18, animals will “take over” the Social Hall. You will have an opportunity to “purchase” animals like pigs, chickens and goats as an alternative to commercial holiday gifts. Heifer International sends your sponsored animals to hungry families around the world and in return you, the sponsor, receive an attractive gift card.

KEEP AN EYE ON THE GREEN BINS

Melissa Ponchard, Executive Director of Tri-City Volunteers, reports heavy demand at their food bank which is located at 37350 Joseph Street in Fremont. This is the food bank that our church supports when we place donated items in the green bins at the entrance to the social hall. Each month we are asked to donate a featured item such as rice or canned soup. Learn about the featured item of the month by reading the FCC newsletter or by checking the announcement posted near the green bins. It’s easy to pick up featured items when we shop for ourselves, and it’s especially great to find needed items on sale.

Just to let you know, we will be working in the next few months with Melissa Ponchard to revise our list of featured items. We want to be sure that our church is responding to the current needs of food bank clients. Melissa wants us to know that while all clients struggle economically, many have a home and are able to prepare meals. With this in mind, it is important that donated food items be those most likely to help clients prepare healthful, nutritious meals.

At FCC we give to many different causes and in many different ways. Placing a donated item in the green bins may be a simple act but it is important. Many of our neighbors in Fremont depend on the Tri-City food bank. And, as Melissa Ponchard says: “Remember, hunger is year round.”

OUT OF THE OFFICE

Pastor David will be out of town for nine days after Christmas (Monday, December 26 through Wednesday, January 4), attending a Meditation Retreat at Spirit Rock Meditation Center. He will be back in the office on Thursday, January 5.

Kathy Yamaguchi will be out of the office beginning December 26, returning on January 3.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

5 Elizabeth Watson
7 Barry Walter
10 Chuck Martinek
18 Drisanna Watson
20 Judy Johnson

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

12 Jack & Lisa Webb



Christmas Greeting Order Form

NAME: _____

1. Circle Graphic of your choice:



2. Circle a Greeting:

Peace on Earth, Happy Holidays, Happy New Year, Best Wishes, Ho! Ho! Ho!, Season's Greetings, Merry Christmas, From our Family to Yours, Other _____

3. Write a Message:

4. Put this form with your donation in the envelope provided in the Social Hall. Make checks out to FCC. "Give Generously"

All proceeds donated to Tri-City Breakfast Program.