

# Highlights

First Presbyterian Church San Leandro

DECEMBER 2023  
volume 24 number 12

## Advent and Christmas: From Generation to Generation

The Christmas story is about the stories of different people coming together to enact a big thing: the coming of a savior to the world. As we read through and study the scriptures in this season, we come to a line from Mary's song of protest and praise:

Surely, from now on all generations  
will call me blessed; for the Mighty  
One has done great things for me,  
and Holy is His name.  
His mercy is for those who fear Him  
from generation to generation.

Luke 1:48b-50



Despite the challenges and vulnerability she faced, Mary could glimpse the scale and scope of the good news she was part of bringing forth. This good news transcends time and space—it was and is bigger than just her. Christ is coming for collective liberation: God's redemption is at work for years to come. Therefore, the promise is meant to be lived out and passed on from generation to generation.

This season we will invite you on a journey. We invite you to look at the characters in our scriptures and wonder: What did each character pass on or contribute? How did each character participate in God's liberation and love? Which characters try to thwart God's justice and what can we learn from them? What is our role now? What is our generation's task? What will we carry forth, and what should we leave behind? The root word of "generation" is "gen" meaning "origin" or "birth." Our theme is also a call to action: What are we being called to generate or bring forth? What have your ancestors and those who have come before you passed on for you to continue? Who are the spiritual elders in our community who planted the seeds for the things that are now blooming? What seeds are you planting for the future?

From Generation to Generation... reminds us of the ways our lives, histories, actions, and stories are interconnected and woven together. In the midst of narratives, policies, and rhetoric designed to divide us, what does it look like to practice belonging to one another? The work of God is always unfolding—in and through us. This Advent season, how will we carry it forth?

### Sunday December

#### *"There's Room for Every Story"*

Through the lens of the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1, we'll take a look at how our individual and corporate stories intertwine with the God story of the Bible.

### Sunday December 10

#### *"God Meets Us in Our Fear"*

We'll reflect on Mary's encounter with the angel Gabriel in Luke 1 and how we, like Mary, are called to trust God as we face times of uncertainty and fear today.

### Sunday December 17

#### *"We See God in Each Other"*

Further along in Luke 1, we will read of the encounter between Mary and her cousin Elizabeth. In this moment of profound solidarity, Mary and Elizabeth see the divine in one another. From generation to generation, we can see how God is at work in our relationships.

### Sunday December 24 (morning)

#### *"We Can Choose a Better Way"*

We'll look at the story of Christmas in Matthew 1 and reflect on how Joseph chose the better way of grace and inclusion. We will reflect on how God calls us to choose the better way today.

### Christmas Eve Service

a Sunday Evening Event! 7:00 pm  
Yes, this year Christmas Eve is on Sunday! Our morning service will be a blend of Advent and Christmas, while our 7:00 pm evening service will be fully Christmas Eve, with scripture, reflections, poems, Christmas carols and plenty of candlelight for all.

## Advent Devotional Booklet

You're invited to pick up an Advent Devotional in the Fellowship Hall. The Devotional begins on the first Sunday in Advent – December 3 and is called “A Little Child Shall Lead Them” and contains daily reflections based on the writings of 20th century Christian writer Henri J. Nouwen.



## It's a Wonderful Night - Friday December 1; Downtown San Leandro

Come join the church Children, Youth and Families in attending the 26th annual, family friendly, “It's a Wonderful Night” put on by the city of San Leandro on Friday, **December 1**. We will meet in the church parking lot at 5 p.m. Together we will walk down to Estudillo Plaza for the annual tree lighting at 5:30 p.m. followed by holiday performances, photos with Santa, holiday train rides, crafts for kids, a holiday market and more all in downtown San Leandro from 6 to 9 p.m.

## White Elephant Party



Get ready for some holiday cheer at Don & Linda Pollard's White Elephant Party on Saturday, **December 9**, from 2-5 pm at their beautiful home. Be sure to bring a white elephant gift and your favorite hors d'oeuvres to share. Adult beverages and desserts will be provided. Save the date and sign up in Fellowship Hall!

## Weekly Advent & Christmas Celebrations: Crafts, Cookies, Carols and Cake

*Come share in a variety of Advent and Christmas traditions each Sunday during Coffee Fellowship.*

All generations of the church family are invited and encouraged to celebrate together during Coffee Fellowship. Each week there will be a different intergenerational activity based on an Advent or Christmas Tradition taking place in Fellowship Hall following the worship service.

### Sunday, Dec. 3 – Crafts & Casseroles

Come and create a variety of Advent and Christmas crafts. Make your own ornament to add to our church Faith Family Tree as well as a variety of other crafts to take home or give away. Janine Kline will be making Breakfast Casseroles for all to enjoy and Advent Devotional booklets and calendars will be available to take home and use throughout Advent. Please sign up so that we can be sure to provide enough food and supplies.

### Sunday, Dec. 10 – Cookies & Cider

Bring a batch of homemade Christmas cookies or treats for an All-Church Cookie Exchange. To-go containers will be provided for participants to fill with a variety of cookies to take home and enjoy or better yet to give to a neighbor, friend or co-worker along with an invitation to join us for Christmas Eve Worship at First Presbyterian. Spiced mulled cider will be served along with coffee and tea.

### Sunday, Dec. 17 – Carols & Cocoa

Come experience the joy of Christmas! Enjoy a donut and cup of cocoa, coffee or tea and join with those seated around your table in with a few fun, friendly competitions and a traditional Christmas Carol sing along.

### Sunday, Dec. 24 – Cake & Candles

Come eat cake in celebration of Jesus' Birthday!

### Sunday, Dec. 31 – Donuts & Sparkling Cider

Come toast the New Year with a glass of sparkling cider and a donut.

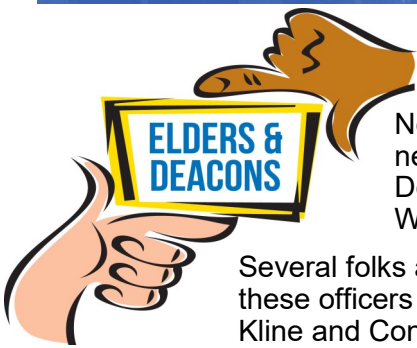
## Faith in Our Future – Pledge Dedication Sunday, December 3

2024 planning depends on our stewardship giving. Stewardship packets have been mail to those who did not pick them up or were not able to attend in-person worship on November 11. By now everyone should have a packet.

Pledges will be dedicated during worship on Sunday, **December 3**. If you can not attend worship in person that day, please mail your pledge card ahead of time so that it can be included in our time of dedication during the worship service.

We are blessed by a generous church family, and our church continues to thrive and minister in meaningful ways, even in these difficult times. We thank you in advance, for your continued support of our church's ministry!





## Church Officers – Welcome and Thank You

New officers were elected on October 8, 2023 following worship. We want to welcome newly elected Elders Anne Milner, Ekaete Udofia and Faye Wilson and newly elected Deacons Sue Robertson and Michele Owyang (each serving three-year terms) and Jim Wakeman and Suzanne Yee (each serving one-year terms).

Several folks are rotating off as Elders and Deacons after years of faithful service. We want to thank these officers for their service. The outgoing Elders are Sue Goodnow, Michele Johnson, Janine Kline and Conrad Milner. The outgoing Deacons are Gigi MacLeod, Leland Morine, Linda Morine, Lynne Ondo, Jeanette Rauscher, and Mollie Wakeman.

Newly elected officers will be installed and begin serving in January, 2024. At that time, the Session and Deaconate will consist of the following individuals:

### SESSION

Class of 2024	Class of 2025	Class of 2026
Linda Gizzi	Helen Fortner	Anne Milner
Bob Kraut	Tunde Olagbaju	Ekaete Udofia
Bill Nelson	Melissa Seaton	Faye Wilson

### BOARD OF DEACONS

Class of 2024	Class of 2025	Class of 2026
Maria Carter	Jeanette Driscoll	Michele Owyang
Scott Crosbie	Laura Gile	Sue Robertson
Shari Plunkett	Dennis Hollenbeck	
Tom Plunkett	Jane Kraut	
Lynn Roman	Susan Sprague	
Silvia Smith	Jim Watts	
Will Stengel	Val Watts	
Jim Wakeman		
Suzanne Yee		

## CAT Survey Completed, More Work to Be Done

We, your Mission Study Team, asked you to be “cool cats” by completing the Congregation Assessment Tool and 114 of you responded! We can not thank you enough.



Your overwhelming participation demonstrates the strength and unity of our church family. We soon will be meeting with a representative from “Holy Cow,” the consulting organization that runs the survey, to help us interpret the findings. The results, reflecting the collective wisdom and diversity of our congregation, will provide us with valuable information as we plan our future, including the selection of our new pastor.

In the meantime, the Mission Study Team, with the help of Lou Pennebaker and Pastor Renée, has been interviewing many leaders in the San Leandro community, getting a feel for the needs and concerns of the neighborhoods surrounding us and how we might be of assistance. We have interviewed civic leaders, educators, church leaders, service club officers and more. The findings from these interviews should help us get an idea of how we as Christians can be Good Samaritans to our community.

Thank you all for your love and support as we move forward together.

Blessings and Happy Holidays,  
from your Mission Study Team: Lowell Hickey (chair), Sue Goodnow, Linda Pollard, Leland Morine, Chad Pennebaker, and Pastor Renée Rico (Ex-officio)

## Thank You to the Chancel Guild



The members of the Chancel Guild decorate our Sanctuary each week and they are now also providing decorations in our Fellowship Hall. Their quiet, behind the scenes work enhances our weekly worship and connecting with each other.

The Chancel Guild members include Betty Brown, Anne Duey, Georgie Hickey, Cheryl Perenon, Sue Robertson, Lynn Roman, Jennifer Spadoni, Susan Sprague, Mollie Wakeman, and Suzanne Yee. Cora Canites and Lee Holm also joined the Chancel Guild this fall.

*New members are welcome. If you have an interest in visually enhancing our holy spaces please contact any member listed above.*

# DECEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>26</b> <b>9:30 am Worship Service- Thanksgiving</b> 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship	<b>27</b> 6:17 pm Chancel Bells Rehearsal	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> <b>7:30 am</b> Men's Bible Study & Breakfast/Women's Fellowship Breakfast @ Manor Grill <b>9:30 am</b> Chancel Bells Rehearsal
<b>3</b> <b>9:30 am</b> Worship Service/ Stewardship Dedication <b>10:30 am</b> Coffee Fellowship; Advent Celebration: Crafts & Casseroles 	<b>4</b> <b>6:17 pm</b> Chancel Bells Rehearsal  <u>Chancel Bells</u>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> <b>7:00 pm</b> Choir Rehearsal 	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> <b>2:00 pm – 5:00 pm</b> White Elephant Party @ Don & Linda Pollard's Home 
<b>10</b> <b>9:30 am</b> Worship Service <b>10:30 am</b> Coffee Fellowship; Advent Celebration: Cookies & Cider <b>11:00 am</b> Session/Deacons Meeting & Lunch <b>LAST DAY TO ORDER POINSETTIAS</b> 	<b>11</b> <b>6:17 pm</b> Chancel Bells Rehearsal	<b>12</b> <b>6:00 pm</b> Mission Study Team 	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> <b>11:30 am</b> Young at Heart Luncheon/Program <b>7:00 pm</b> Chancel Choir Rehearsal 	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> <b>9:00 am</b> Chancel Bells AND Chancel Choir 
<b>17</b> <b>9:30 am</b> Worship Service <b>10:30 am</b> Coffee Fellowship/Donuts; Advent Celebration: Carols & Cocoa 	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <b>10:00 am</b> P.R.A.Y. Package Packing	<b>21</b> <b>7:00 pm</b> Chancel Choir Rehearsal 	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> <b>9:30 am</b> Worship Service <b>10:30 am</b> Coffee Fellowship; Advent Celebration: Cake & Candles <b>7:00 pm</b> Christmas Eve Service 	<b>25</b> <b>CHRISTMAS DAY!</b> <b>Happy Birthday Jesus!</b> 	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> <b>9:30 am</b> Worship Service <b>10:30 am</b> Coffee Fellowship/Donuts & Sparkling Cider 	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 7:30 am Men's Bible Study and Breakfast/Women's Fellowship Breakfast @ Manor Grill



## ORDER FORM—Must be turned in by **Sunday, December 10.**

The church will be working with Lyal Nickals again this year to provide poinsettias for our enjoyment. The cost is **\$25** for each Red Poinsettia in a florist-quality gold wrapped pot with red bow.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I would like my poinsettia(s) given to Friends-at-Home and delivered by the Deacons.

\_\_\_\_ I will pick up my poinsettia(s) after worship on Sunday, December 19.

Total Number of Poinsettia(s) you are purchasing @ \$25 each \_\_\_\_\_

**Check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to First Presbyterian Church of San Leandro must be received in the church office by December 10 or drop off form in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, December 3 or 10.**

**Please PRINT the name below and CIRCLE Memory or Honor.**

Given in Memory or Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Given in Memory or Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

If you have questions, please contact Mollie Wakeman.



## Alternative Gift Fair

The church will not be holding an Alternative Gift Fair this year. However, individuals may purchase "Gifts" directly from the following organizations:

Habitat for Humanity "Gifts" may be purchased at <https://www.habitatbsv.org/give>

"Gifts" from Heifer Project may be purchased at <https://www.heifer.org/gift-catalog/index.html>

For SERRV products from the Holy Land, please ask Bob Kraut to see the catalogue.

If you have any questions or need assistance with your Alternative Gift shopping, please contact Bob Kraut.

## Young at Heart

The Young at Heart luncheon and program will be on Thursday, **December 14** at 11:30 am. Note this is the 2nd Thursday - a week earlier than the usual date! We are excited to have the Notables from San Leandro High School. Please come and support this outstanding group of young choral students. Please also, be sure to sign up ahead of time on Sunday morning or call the church office, so we have an accurate count for the delicious meal prepared by Bob Kraut and team. Donations to cover the meal cost are appreciated the day of the event.



## Come help pack Christmas P.R.A.Y. packages for our church Children, Youth & Families

As we continue to P.R.A.Y. about the future of ministry to children and youth we want to nurture the relationships with our current church children, youth and families. So this month we will be packing, praying over and delivering special "Jesus Birthday Party packages" to our 13 church families. There are two ways you can participate in this project:

1. Sign a Christmas Card to be included with the packages on Sundays Dec. 10 & 17 in Fellowship Hall.
2. Come help pack, pray over and/or deliver packages on Wednesday, Dec. 20, in the Fireside Room beginning at 10 a.m.



## Men's Bible Study & Breakfast

Saturday, December 2; 7:30 am; Manor Grill, 526 Manor Blvd. Our theme for this meeting is Christmas.

## Women's Fellowship Breakfast

Saturday, December 2; 7:30 am; Manor Grill, 526 Manor Blvd. All women are welcome!





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

180 Estudillo Avenue  
San Leandro, CA 94577

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## Highlights

December 2023

# Volunteer Opportunities to Serve on Sunday Mornings

### Ushers

Do you love greeting people on Sunday mornings? We are looking for two individuals to join an usher team. Each team serves for one month three times a year. Duties include greeting, handing out headphones, seating latecomers, and counting the attendance. Substitutes are also needed for occasional absences. Please call Sue Robertson if you are interested in serving as an usher.



### Scripture Readers



Each Sunday we have someone from the congregation read one of the scripture lessons. At this time, we are looking for more people in the congregation who would be willing to read scripture. If you are interested, Pastor Renée is willing to train you to serve in this way. Please

email [renee@firstpresbyterianchurchsl.org](mailto:renee@firstpresbyterianchurchsl.org).



### Coffee Fellowship Hosts

Another great opportunity to serve on Sunday Mornings is on a Coffee Fellowship team. We are currently looking for people willing to serve with others a couple of Sundays a year. Duties include setting up the table for coffee fellowship, making coffee and hot water for tea, setting up trays of cookies, washing cups, and general clean up of the kitchen. Please sign-up in the Fellowship Hall or talk to a Coffee Fellowship team member if you are interested in being a Host.