

# Highlights

First Presbyterian Church San Leandro

December 2024  
Volume 25 Issue 11

## Advent and Christmas Worship: “Those Who Dream...”

Our Advent and Christmas worship series beginning December 1 takes its theme from Psalm 126:

*“When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.”*



What does it look like to live as those who dream? The prophets, the psalmists, John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, the shepherds and the Magi—they were all dreamers. They received, discovered, and responded to God’s dreams for the world. In Advent, we step into the mystery and awe of God’s dreams and pray they shape our reality.

This theme is for the dreamers in all of us—those who dream of a deeper connection with God and those who dream of a better world. It’s for those who dream of comfort and for those who have given up on their dreams. It’s for those whose dreams have been crushed and for those who show us that dreams take time.

There are those who dream, curating their own world, protected from news cycles, sirens, echoing cries, and responsibility. Dreaming helps people survive. There are those who dream, holding tight to the hopes of ancestors while imagining a better future for generations to come. Dreaming helps people transform reality. There are those who dream, resisting the status quo while fighting for a just and equitable world. Sometimes our dreams are small because to dream big feels frivolous. Sometimes our dreams are small because to dream big might threaten our reality. Sometimes your dreams are big because our lives depend on it. This Advent, how can we harness the power of dreaming? What can we learn from dreamers who came before us? How can we narrow the space between reality and God’s dream—a dream imaged in the flesh of the Christ child?”

Join us this Advent as we dream alongside prophets and angels, Mary and the Magi. Join us as we seek and sow God’s dreams for our world.

Blessings and light, Renée



## Christmas Eve Service- Carols and Candlelight

Tuesday, December 24 at 7:00 pm

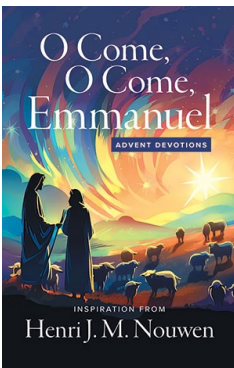
Our traditional Christmas Eve service will be December 24 at 7:00 pm. It will include scripture of the Christmas story, reflections, poems, Christmas carols and plenty of candlelight for all.

Invite your friends and neighbors to join us for this special service.



## Advent Daily 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 1 and is titled “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”. It provides inspiration for adults seeking quiet moments amid the busy weeks before Christmas. You will enjoy the encouragement of Scripture paired with insights from the late 20th-century Christian writer Henri J.M. Nouwen.



## HEART TO HEART WOMEN'S MINISTRY

### A Special Christmas Heart to Heart

Thursday, December 19 at 12:30 pm

This past Fall, First Presbyterian began offering an all new women's ministry called Heart to Heart. It is a Christian community where women connect with one another and seek the heart of God through studying God's story and sharing our own stories of life and faith. We began with 24 women and have had new women participating every month. There are now 30 women that are a part of this ministry.

The monthly gatherings include a light lunch, a study comparing and contrasting the character and faith stories of two different Biblical women, and one woman sharing a part of her own personal life and faith story. Additionally, between monthly gatherings, women have the opportunity to intentionally connect with another woman to grow deeper in our relationships.

Heart to Heart normally takes place on the second Thursday of the month from 12:30 – 2:30 p.m. in the Fireside room.

**But this month Heart to Heart will meet on the third Thursday and will be a bit different than the typical monthly gathering.** This month we will celebrate the Heart of Christmas and share personal Christmas experiences. **Participants who are able are asked to bring a finger-food appetizer to share and come ready to share about a significant personal Christmas tradition, story or memory. If appropriate, you might even bring an object as an illustration.** Please indicate your attendance on the check in sheet in Fellowship Hall or call the church office. If you have not already registered and would like to participate in Heart to Heart, simply fill out a registration card and/or speak with Lou Pennebaker.

## Church Officers

### Welcome & Thank you

We elected new officers for next year on November 10, 2024, following worship. We welcome to the Session as elders: **Donald Pollard, Bill Gile** and **Shari Plunkett** (3-year terms). At the same meeting we elected as Deacons the following: for three-year terms, **Gigi MacLeod, Maria Carter, Sheila Warbasse**; (for a two-year term), **Lynn Roman**; and (for a one-year term), **Suzanne Yee**.



We have several officers who are rotating off after years of faithful service. We thank: **Bill Nelson, Bob Kraut** and **Linda Gizzi** for their services as Elders. We also appreciate : **Shari & Tom Plunkett, Jim Wakeman, Scott Crosbie, Sylvia Smith, and Will Stengel** who are rotating off as Deacons.

The congregation also elected at-large members of the Nominating Committee for 2025: **Dolores McLeod, Linda Pollard, Kathy Pearson, and Marie Busk**.



(photo of new elders: Don Pollard, Shari Plunkett and Bill Gile)



## Pastor Nominating Committee

Good news! The committee has worked diligently to complete the Ministry Discernment Profile, a key step in having our pastor position listed by the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry (COM). Session recently reviewed and approved the profile, and it is now ready to be submitted to the COM for their approval. Once approved, we'll begin reviewing candidate resumes after the holidays. Thank you all for your continued prayers and support during this process!

# ADVENT CELEBRATIONS

DECEMBER

1

## Crafts & Casseroles

Come enjoy breakfast casseroles prepared by Janine Kline and her kitchen team and create up to six different Advent crafts to take home or give away. Crafts will include two different ornaments, a nativity scene, Story telling Simmering Potpourri, Orange & Clove Pomanders and an Advent Candle with daily scripture readings.



DECEMBER

8

## Carols & Cocoa

Come enjoy a cup of cocoa, coffee or tea and a traditional Christmas Carol sing-along. There will also be a few fun, friendly Christmas competitions around the table.



DECEMBER

15

## Cookies & Cider

Bring a batch of homemade cookies or treats to be repackaged in to-go containers that you may take home to enjoy or give to a neighbor, friend or co-workers as an invitation to worship with us on Christmas Eve. Spiced mulled cider, coffee, tea and of course cookies of eating and/or dipping will be served.



DECEMBER

22

## Cake & Candles

Come eat cake in celebration of Jesus' Birthday! Join us for this joyful gathering as we share in fellowship and reflect on the reason for the season. All are welcome to this sweet and meaningful tradition.



DECEMBER

29

## Sparkling Cider & Appetizers

Come toast the New Year with a glass of sparkling cider and enjoy a variety of appetizers as we look toward 2025!



# December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1 Decorate Christmas Tree</b> <b>8:30 am</b> Chancel Choir Rehearsal <b>9:30 am</b> Worship Service <b>10:30 am</b> Coffee Fellowship/Advent Celebration: Crafts & Casseroles	<b>2</b> <b>6:17 pm</b> Chancel Bells Rehearsal	<b>3</b> <b>6:00 pm</b> Officer Training	<b>4</b> <b>10:30</b> 100 year Building Anniv. Team Meeting <b>2:00 pm</b> Stewardship Meeting	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> <b>7:30 am</b> Men's Bible Study & Breakfast / Women's Fellowship Breakfast <b>11:00 am</b> Christmas Decorating <b>2:00 pm</b> White Elephant Party
<b>8</b> <b>8:30 am</b> Chancel Choir Rehearsal <b>9:30 am</b> Worship Service <b>10:30 am</b> Manna Bags & Equal Exchange <b>10:30 am</b> Coffee Fellowship/Advent Celebration: Carols & Cocoa <b>12:00 pm</b> Joint Session/Deacons Meeting & Lunch	<b>9</b> <b>6:17 pm</b> Chancel Bells Rehearsal 	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> <b>1:00 pm</b> Christian Education Team Meeting	<b>12</b> <b>11:30 am</b> Young at Heart Luncheon 	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 
<b>15</b> <b>8:30 am</b> Chancel Choir Rehearsal <b>9:30 am</b> Worship Service <b>10:30 am</b> Coffee Fellowship/Donuts/Advent Celebration: Cookies & Cider	<b>16</b> <b>6:17 pm</b> Chancel Bells Rehearsal	<b>17</b> <b>6:00 pm</b> Session Meeting	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> <b>12:30 pm</b> Heart to Heart: Women's Ministry <b>7:00 pm</b> Chancel Choir Rehearsal	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> <b>9:00 am</b> Chancel Bells Rehearsal <b>10:00 am</b> Chancel Choir Rehearsal
<b>22</b> <b>8:30 am</b> Chancel Choir Rehearsal <b>9:30 am</b> Worship Service <b>10:30 am</b> Coffee Fellowship/Advent Celebration: Cake & Candles	<b>23</b> <b>6:17 pm</b> Chancel Bells Rehearsal	<b>24</b> <b>7:00 pm</b> Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 	<b>28</b> 
<b>29 Pre-New Year's Celebration</b> <b>8:30 am</b> Chancel Choir Rehearsal <b>9:30 am</b> Worship Service <b>10:30 am</b> Coffee Fellowship / Appetizers & Sparkling Cider	<b>30</b> <b>6:17 pm</b> Chancel Bells Rehearsal	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	

# DECEMBER

01

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## Decorate Our Christmas Tree

The Chancel Guilds invites you to help decorate our church Christmas tree. Please bring an ornament throughout the month of December and place it on the tree in the Fellowship Hall to add to the festive atmosphere.



07

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## Men's Bible Study Breakfast & Women's Fellowship Breakfast

All men and women are welcome to join us for fellowship and a no-host breakfast at 7:30 am at Manor Grill, 526 Manor Blvd. Men will gather for Bible Study led by Conrad Milner, discussing Moses, the fourth topic in Max Lucado's series "Ten Men of the Bible." Women will enjoy fellowship at an adjacent table.



07

DEC

## White Elephant Party

*Don & Linda Pollard's Home*

Get ready for a festive afternoon at Don & Linda Pollard's White Elephant Party on Saturday, December 7, from 2-5 pm at their cozy home!

Bring a fun white elephant gift and your favorite hors d'oeuvres to share. Adult beverages and tasty desserts will be provided. Save the date, and don't forget to sign up in Fellowship Hall.



12

DEC

## Young at Heart

*Note: this is the 2nd Thurs, not the 3rd.*

The Young at Heart luncheon and program is excited to have the San Leandro High School Notables choir perform for us again. It is a joy to experience the talents of these young performers. To ensure an accurate count for the delicious meal prepared by Bob Kraut and his team, please sign up in advance. Sign-ups are available on Sunday mornings or by calling the church office. Donations to help cover the cost of the meal are appreciated on the day of the event.



## Thank You, Toni DiCapua!

After 8 wonderful years, we bid a heartfelt "see you soon" to our beloved organist and pianist, Toni DiCapua who has brought such warm energy and love to our church family.

She has moved to Roseville, and while she will be deeply missed, we are planning a special "Thank You" on an upcoming Sunday to honor her incredible contributions to our music ministry and our lives. Stay tuned for the date and time!



## Stewardship Team Says Thanks!

*We still need your pledge...*

Over the past couple of months, we have continued to receive one-time gifts to reduce our deficit as well as advance fulfillment of pledges. Our finances look much better at this point in the year. Thank you to all who have contributed, whether in large or small amounts. Each one counts!

We of course would like to enter 2025 in a strong position, so if you haven't yet sent in your pledge for 2025, we hope you will do so soon, which will help our Session plan for the upcoming year.

Gratefully,  
Faye Wilson, Jim Watts and Chad Pennebaker

## Church Office Closed

Our office will be closed from Tuesday, December 24 through Tuesday, December 31.





**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

180 Estudillo Avenue  
San Leandro, CA 94577

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# Poinsettia Orders

Poinsettias are available for \$25 each to brighten our sanctuary and symbolize the love and hope of Christ this Christmas. **Order form due Sunday, December 8.**

**Your Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Delivery Options:**

- Deliver to Friends-at-Home via the Deacons
- I will pick up after worship on Sunday, December 22

**Order Details:**

Total Poinsettias @ \$25 each: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Payment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*(Check payable to First Presbyterian Church)*



**Memory/Honor Dedications:**

Please PRINT the name and CIRCLE whether it is in Memory or Honor of:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Memory/Honor)

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Memory/Honor)