

Highlights

First Presbyterian Church San Leandro

December 2025
Volume 26 Issue 12

Advent and Christmas:

Angels Among Us



The angels that appear in the story of Jesus' birth would have been very comfortable in our world of tweets and hashtags. Their messages were often short and to the point—their favorite line being *Do Not Be Afraid*. As we look at the stories of these winged messengers to Zechariah, Mary, Joseph and the Shepherds and their reactions to them, we will contemplate what messages we can offer that will counteract a culture of fear and bring more hope, more peace, more joy, and more love to the world.

Have you ever had a moment in your life after which you knew nothing would ever be the same? In the midst of great change, hope is always a welcome thing. Advent can remind us that God makes us ready for whatever unknown may come our way and calls us to be messengers of **more hope** in an ever-changing world. Or have you ever struggled with finding your purpose and being at peace with it? Or are you yearning for more peace in your life and relationships? **More peace** in the world happens when all of us feel *more peace* within ourselves and live out that message each day. At the same time, keeping up “appearances” can rob us of our **more joy**. Let us be messengers of encouragement and steadfast support, as Joseph was for Mary and Jesus, for that which the Spirit is birthing in the world.



On December 21, don't miss the service where we will have a special presentation of a Christmas pageant that encompasses the angel stories of this season with some imagination about what might have gone on behind the scenes.

On Christmas Eve, we will look at our angel messengers and focus on the great news of the angels to the shepherds, the least of their society. We will enjoy music of the season and light candles as our sign of being God's messengers bringing hope, peace, joy, and love into a hurting world.

Join us when you can – together we can be fed to have more hope, more peace, more joy and more love!

Blessings and light, Renée

Worship at a Glance

1st Sunday of Advent Nov. 30

Make Ready a People –

More Hope

2nd Sunday of Advent Dec. 7

Nothing is Impossible –

More Peace

3rd Sunday of Advent Dec. 14

Do Not Be Afraid –

More Joy

4th Sunday of Advent Dec. 14

An Angels Christmas
Pageant!

More Love

Christmas Eve,

Wednesday, December 24

Candlelight Service 7:00 pm –
I Bring You Great Tidings

December 28

First Sunday of Christmas

Get up and Go



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Growing & deepening your faith

Heart to Heart

Returning January 9, 2026

All women are invited and encouraged to be a part of Heart to Heart women's ministry when it begins again next month. Heart to Heart is a Christian community where women connect with one another and seek the heart of God together as we study God's word and share both life and faith.



Heart to Heart will take place on the second Thursday of the month beginning in January and continuing through June, 2026. Each monthly gathering begins at 12:30 p.m. in the Fireside room and includes a light lunch followed by an all new study that will explore the least understood part of The Trinity: God the Holy Spirit. Women are asked to sign up each month to ensure that there will be a seat and enough food for everyone attending. The January sign-up is available throughout the month of December in Fellowship Hall.

Advent Daily Devotional: A Season of Peace



A large-print Advent Daily Devotional Booklet written specifically for older adults with messages of peace in the Lord, even in later years is available in Fellowship Hall for you to pick up and use at home throughout the Advent season. The readings reflect on the uplifting themes of Advent and

encourage active responses that express Jesus as the reason for our peace. This rich and enlightening collection of Advent devotions reveals the wisdom and life experience of its various authors with a fresh perspective each day. The Devotional begins on November 30, the first Sunday of Advent, and continues through Saturday, December 27.

Blessing of the Christmas Crèches

Setting up a Christmas crèche or manger scene during Advent is a cherished tradition for many. Whether it is a simple tabletop display, a large outdoor scene; fancy or humble, store-bought or handmade, each one invites us to pause and reflect on the first Christmas in Bethlehem.



As part of our Advent Celebration on Sunday, December 14, the Christian Education Team will create a display of manger scenes and offer a Blessing of the Christmas Crèches in Fellowship Hall following worship. If you would like yours included, please bring it to the church on Sunday, November 30, or during the week of December 1 to 5, anytime between 8:30 am and 2:30 pm.

All items will be kept secured in the church Library until they are displayed in Fellowship Hall to be blessed and enjoyed by all on December 7. Please complete a "My Manger" form telling something special about your crèche for each scene you bring. Forms will be available at church starting Sunday, November 23.

Please plan to take your display home after the Advent Celebration on December 7. A prayer resource to use as you place your own manger scene at home, will also be available for everyone, whether or not you bring a crèche.



CHANCEL GUILD

Beautifying our worship and sanctuary

Christmas Poinsettias

The Chancel Guild invites you to take part in our annual Christmas Poinsettia tradition. This year's locally grown poinsettias have been grown locally in Gilroy and will be purchased from the Castro Valley Women's Club and support their scholarship fund for graduating seniors. **Each plant is \$20, with order forms on the back of this newsletter and in the Sunday bulletin.**



STEWARDSHIP DRIVE

Investing in God's hope for our future

Stewardship and Finance Team Say Thanks!

Thank you to all who have contributed to our 2025 finances, our gifts, no matter the size, show our thankfulness for all God has given us.

Additionally, thanks to all of you who have made your pledges for 2026. We would like to enter next year in a strong position, so if you haven't yet sent in your pledge, we hope you will do so as soon as possible. It will help our Session plan for the upcoming year.

Gratefully, Shari Plunkett, Chair of Stewardship & Finance








Rise
AGAINST HUNGER

Our congregation joined the Rise Against Hunger mission to end world hunger, packing 10,000 nutritious meals that will be distributed to communities in need around the globe. Thank you to everyone whose hands and hearts made this day possible!



December

2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 8:30 am Chancel Choir Rehearsal 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship/Advent Celebration: Crafts & Casseroles	1 6:17 pm Chancel Bells Rehearsal	2	3	4 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	5	6 7:30 am Men's Bible Study & Breakfast / Women's Fellowship 11:00 am White Elephant Party @ Pollard's Home
Crèche drop off between 8:30 am – 2:30 pm						
7 8:30 am Chancel Choir Rehearsal 9:30 am Worship Service & Officer Installatin/Ordination 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship/Advent Celebration: Crèches & Cider 11:30 am Joint Session/Deacons Meeting and Lunch	8 6:17 pm Chancel Bells Rehearsal 	9	10 1:00 pm Christian Education Team Meeting	11 11:30 am Young at Heart Luncheon/Program 	12	13 9:00 am A Marvelous Magical Morning-Festive Family Event 12:00 pm Rehearsal for piano recital
14 8:30 am Chancel Choir Rehearsal 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship/Advent Celebration: Cookies & Cocoa 10:30 am Manna Bags/Equal Exchange & Alternative Gifts 3:00 pm Piano Recital	15 6:17 pm Chancel Bells Rehearsal	16	17	18 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	19	20 8:30 am Christmas Music Rehearsal
21 8:30 am Chancel Choir Rehearsal 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship/Advent Celebration: Cake & Candles	22	23	24 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 	25 	26 Office Closed	27
28 8:30 am Chancel Choir Rehearsal 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship/New Year Celebration	29 Office Closed	30 Office Closed	31 Office Closed	1 	2	3 7:30 am Men's Bible Study & Breakfast / Women's Fellowship Breakfast

DECEMBER

06

DEC

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

Saturday, December 6 at 7:30 am; Manor Grill

Men will continue their study of Fruits of the Spirit over breakfast at the Manor Grill at 7:30 am. Bob Kraut will lead a discussion on "Patience" -- the fourth Fruit listed in Galatians 5:22-23. Women will enjoy fellowship at a nearby table. All are welcome to the no-host breakfasts.



06

DEC

White Elephant Party

Saturday, December 6 from 11 am -3 pm; Pollard's Home

Get ready for a festive afternoon at Don & Linda Pollard's White Elephant Party! Bring a fun white elephant gift and your favorite appetizer to share. Adult beverages and tasty desserts will be provided. Save the date, and don't forget to sign up in Fellowship Hall.



11

DEC

Young at Heart

Thursday, December 11 at 11:30 am; Fellowship Hall

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



The Hillside Wind Quintet will present a musical program featuring traditional holiday tunes and classical selections. The group includes flute, oboe, clarinet, French horn, and bassoon, with Jane Kraut on clarinet. Please sign up in Fellowship Hall or call the church office so we can plan accordingly. Bob Kraut and his team will prepare a traditional ham meal, and donations to help cover costs are appreciated.

13

DEC

A Marvelous Magical Morning

Saturday, December 13 at 9:00 am; PEAK Room & Courtyard

Join us for a festive community event filled with Christmas cheer! Enjoy classic Christmas movies, a visit from Mrs. Claus (guess who?) and her "reindog," a magic performance, home baked treats, and a cozy hot cocoa bar. Sign ups will be available for those wishing to contribute treats. We also encourage you to invite family and friends to attend!

24

DEC

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Wednesday, December 24 at 7:00 pm; Sanctuary

Join us for a beautiful candlelight service celebrating the angels' message of hope, peace, joy, and love. Invite your friends and family to share in the light!

28

DEC

Celebrating the New Year Together

Saturday, December 28 after Worship; Fellowship Hall

The Deacons invite you to help us ring in the New Year during Fellowship Hour on Sunday, December 28! Enjoy sparkling juice, snacks, and sweet treats as we celebrate together.

Thank You for Supporting our Food Drive!

Thanks to your incredible generosity, we collected over 600 pounds of food for our local food bank! Together, we've helped feed families in need and shared the spirit of compassion that defines our church community. Every can, box, and bag made a difference! Thank you for being the hands and heart of Christ in action.



Warm Coats Drive

The Deacons are collecting coats, vests, hats, and gloves for April Showers, which supports those in need in our community. Donations can be brought to the church through the month of December. New or gently used items for all ages are welcome. Help us share the warmth this winter, your gift can make a big difference!



Church Office Closed

Our office will be closed from Wednesday, December 24 through Thursday, January 1.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

180 Estudillo Avenue
San Leandro, CA 94577

Return Service Requested

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ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
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«Mailing Name»

«Address»

«City», «State» «Zip Code»

Poinsettia Orders

Poinsettias are available for \$20 each to brighten our sanctuary and symbolize the love and hope of Christ this Christmas. **Order form due Sunday, December 7.**

Your Name: _____

Delivery Options:

- Deliver to Friends-at-Home via the Deacons
- I will pick up after worship on Sunday, December 21

Order Details:

Total Poinsettias @ \$20 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)