



# The Grapevine

*"You Are Our Branches"*

*Woodside Village Church celebrates God's love in both worship and music,  
proclaims the Gospel in words and deeds, and reaches out to meet  
the needs of our members, our community and our world."*

## **Where Shall We Find Him?**

It's not always easy to find him, especially at Christmas.

Even if we had angels and stars to remind us of the birth of Christ, we might not notice them amidst the hubbub of shoppers, blinking lights, and blaring carols.

## **Is Christmas What We Want It To Be?**

Increasingly, the answer is a resounding NO! In trying to find Him, we look in all the wrong places:

—We want it to be a holy day but are **FRUSTRATED** to find that it is the advent of Santa Claus, rather than Jesus, that claims most of our attention and energy.

—We want it to be a time of remembering the birth of Christ and its significance, but are **DISAPPOINTED** when we are so hurried and harried that we can only wish it to be over soon.

—We are **EMBARASSED** to find ourselves pressured into **BUYING THINGS** for family and friends who don't really need them, while giving little attention to those whose needs are great.

## **Where Shall We Find Him?**

Like the wise men and the shepherds, we must turn our backs on the crowds and risk appearing foolish to find Him. They went to look for a king in a stable. By shifting our focus during Advent away from the frenzied rounds of gift-buying, partying, and food feasts that seem so important, we may be able to experience the inner quiet we need, to remember that during his life Christ was most often found among the insignificant, the poor, the sick, the disabled, the homeless, the prostitutes, and the oppressed.

How can we celebrate Christmas so that we help to fulfill the promise of Christ's birth, instead of hindering it with pointless spending and indulgence?



## How can we celebrate Christmas so that we help to fulfill the promise of Christ's birth, instead of hindering it with pointless spending and indulgence?

- Set aside a time in the weeks prior to Christmas when you decide not to buy anything. Use this time to reflect on the meaning of Christ's birth. Enlist the support and encouragement of your family, friends, and church.
- Adopt more human, meaningful, and personal gift-giving practices.
- Celebrate in ways that are kind to the earth and considerate of the needs of all the earth's people.
- Divert time, talents, and money usually spent on holiday extravagance to genuine human needs.



## Who Will Point The Way?

Although individuals and families can and must make their own decisions about changing the ways they celebrate, the church has a critical role in encouraging them. *If churches cannot point the way toward more meaningful, responsible celebrations of Christmas, who can?*

### WHAT CAN THE LOCAL CHURCH DO?

1. CHALLENGE commercialized celebrations and present ways to observe Christmas that focus on the needs of others.
2. ENCOURAGE members who want to change by providing supportive programs and resources.
3. SHAPE the worship life of the congregation so that it reflects concern about Christmas and how it is observed.

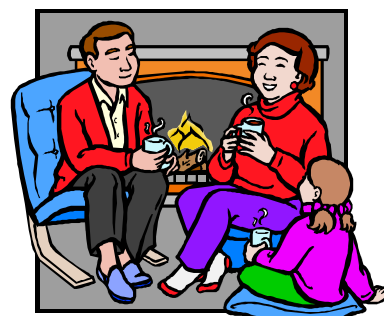
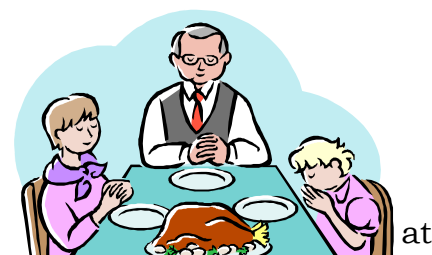
## Remember What Christmas Is All About...

- ◆ Worship every Sunday during Advent at 9:30 a.m.
  - ◆ Christmas Pageant "The King's Birthday" is Sunday December 18 at 9:30 a.m.
  - ◆ Christmas Eve candlelight service is Saturday December 24 10:00 p.m.
  - ◆ Christmas Day musical service is Sunday December 25 at 9:30 a.m.
- Please invite family, friends, and neighbors -*

You Can Point the Way!

See you in church,

Pastor Mike



## ***A special Q & A from Rev. Dorothy...***

### ***Can we sing Christmas carols in Advent?***

Many people ask that question. In answering that question, I think we need to have some sense of the purpose of the cycle of seasons within a larger context of worship and theology. It is only in commercial advertising that the Christmas season begins the first of December (or the first of August!). In the Christian calendar, the **Christmas** Season does not begin until December 25th and lasts until January 6 (**Epiphany**).

**Advent** is the season of preparation for Christmas, not the celebration of it. It is included with Christmas the same way that Lent is included with Easter. However, Advent is just as different from Christmas as is Lent from Easter.

It is important, in terms of the purpose of Christian Holy Days as teaching tools of the Faith, that Advent and Christmas be different, with different emphases, especially on the first two Sundays of Advent. These need to emphasize expectation and longing, a preparation for celebration much as Lent is a preparation for Easter. Without that, the season becomes one long celebration without any context for that celebration and with little contact with the reality of life that gave birth to the season in the first place. Of course there is a progression to the services of Advent. By the third Sunday, which is usually the Sunday of Proclamation with the Magi or the Shepherds, or the Sunday of Joy, we can begin celebrating, not because it is all finished but because the promise is moving to reality, because we have heard from God and have the promise in concrete terms. It is in that movement from distant longing and crying out on the first Sunday, to hope and immediate expectation on the Second, to Joy and proclamation on the Third Sunday, that prepares us for praise and celebration on the Fourth Sunday as the year moves into the Christmas Season. If done well, that liturgical movement takes people along in the journey of their lives, as they enact their own experiences in worship. It gives people a structure in which to take the vagueness of their own distant longings as they identify with Israel's longings, and brings them to an expressed hope and faith that God is, indeed, "with us." It is this journey that gives people a context for celebration. After such preparation, Christmas then becomes the truly wondrous event that it is, not the warm fuzzy that is portrayed on too many Christmas cards and in the media. Rather, it is the realization that, truly, there is reason to hope and faith in God, that what he has once done in real human history, in real human lives, he can do, and is doing, in the lives of people today! It brings people, not just to an existential moment where they feel good about the world, but to a deeply felt faith in the "long Advent," a faith that God will not leave the world the way it is forever but will come once again to "ransom captive Israel."

**What the world needs now is, not love, but hope.** Without hope, without some sense that this is not all there is, that there truly is a God who will come and restore all things, there will never be much love, at least not the kind of love that is truly Christian. And it is this hope, this expectation moving toward faith, that Advent properly observed as a preparation for Christmas can express so well. It is with that hope that we sing *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*. **That** is what Advent is about. So, we sing Advent songs during Advent. Fortunately, there are new as well as ancient Advent texts being set to what we traditionally consider Christmas carol tunes. So, we can sing texts that prepare us with tunes that bring us the reminder of that season of joy and celebration to come.

**HAPPY ADVENT CAROLING!**  
Dorothy Straks, Minister of Music



## PRAYERS OF CONCERN AND COMFORT...

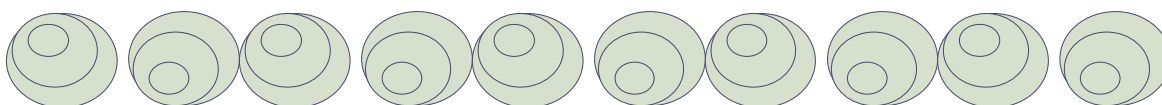
### Church members:

**Kristy Rice**, seizures, **Peggy Moore-Kane**, recovery from hip surgery, **Veva Wheaton**, health issues, **Natalie Friend**, severe back pain, and **Eric Pedersen**, pain management

### Friends and Family members:

**Phil O'Hara and family** - brother of Barbara Tagg, **Kathy Bassett** - tumor, family friend of the Pedersens, **Scott Michelson** - Colon Cancer, **Rob Buelteman** - health issues, son of Bob Buelteman, **Cheryl Story** - surgery, aunt of Cindy Murphy, **Ed Decker** - cancer, uncle of Eric Pedersen, **David Amschler**, grandson of Glen Hise, and **Margie Gibson** - cancer, friend of Sandie Pugh, **Shelly Thornwaldson**, cancer, friend of Kristy Rice, **John and family**, serious football injury, friend of Sue Brock, **Nelly Straks**, mother of Jerry Straks, **Biff Bafigo**, health issues, friend of Peggy Moore-Kane, and the family of **Opal Henney**, for the loss of Opal, long-time community member.

*~ It is requested that church members **please** advise the church office of any illness, injury, or hospitalization, so that they may be added to the prayer list, and congregational and pastoral care may be arranged.~*



### The coming weeks' church schedule:

Wednesday - 30	12n	Set up for Rummage
Thursday - 1		Set up for Rummage 7:00 p. m. Choir
Friday - 2	9 a.m. - 4 p.m.	<b>Rummage Sale</b> 9 a.m. Altar Guild
Saturday - 3	9 a.m. - 12n	<b>Rummage Sale</b>
Sunday - 4	9:30 a.m.	Worship Service + Sunday School
Wednesday - 7	7:30 p.m.	Church Council
Thursday - 8	7 p.m.	Choir
Friday - 9	6:00 p.m.	Men's Dinner
Saturday - 10	3:00 p.m.	Woodside Band Concert & Reception SAN & GH

### More dates to remember...

December 11 - Annual Plum Pudding Party

December 18 - 9:30 a.m. Children's Christmas  
Pageant

December 24 - 10:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service

and

Sunday, January 8 - Congregational Meeting



## RUMMAGE!

It's not just for May and October anymore!  
A special boutique and furniture rummage sale will be held  
Friday December 2, 9-4 and Saturday December 3, 9-12

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### Special notice:

A *Memorial* service for *Opal Henney*, long-time Woodside resident and rummage sale lady, will be held on *Saturday December 2* at 11:00a.m. at *Skylawn Memorial Chapel* (Hwy 92 at Skyline).

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### Masterworks Chorale's Holiday Concert



Masterworks Chorale invites you to join us in welcoming the holiday season with a joyous choral concert featuring *Bach's Cantata # 140, Wachet Auf (Sleepers, Wake)*.

We will also be performing Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* and Bob Chilcott's arrangement of "Mi zeh hidlik" – one of the *Three Israeli Songs*.

#### When:

Saturday, December 10, 8:00 PM

Sunday, December 11, 4:00 PM

#### Where:

Grace Lutheran Church

3149 Waverley St., Palo Alto

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## Plum Pudding & Carols



*and a Visit from Santa!!*

*December 11, 2011*

*6:30 p.m.*



## *SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS from REV. DOROTHY*

**HANDCHIMES** – Were you inspired by the SFSU Handbell Ringers who led us in worship on September 11? Have you always wanted to do something musical but just didn't feel you could sing in choir? Are you looking for a new and different way to serve WVC? Do you like the sound of the handchimes playing with us on the hymns or sharing a special musical piece? Then you should consider joining a group of people who meet once a week to ring handchimes!

You don't read music? I can teach you how if you can count at least to six. We need eleven people to ring our three-octave set of handchimes so that each person only has to be responsible for two primary chimes. We'll determine a mutually agreeable rehearsal schedule when I have eleven individuals who want to give it a try! Even if you're not sure, come and try it—you may surprise yourself! Contact me (Dorothy) so we can get started soon and be ready to ring during our Christmas season: 510-713-2942; [dorothy@svchurch.org](mailto:dorothy@svchurch.org)

**Meanwhile, watch for the children and youth to present  
*The King's Birthday*  
on  
December 18 at the 9:30 worship service.**



### *NEW MEMBERS*



*Kate Adams-Canessa, Lindsey Canessa, John Canessa, Ed Moore, Pastor Mike,  
Kate Simeonova and Marcela Del Alcazar (not pictured, new members Andrea Schramm, Jill Ramleth)*

*Photo Erika Crowley*

## *Who Will Point the Way?*

*'Tis the season...to think of others in need...*



Donations of canned or otherwise nonperishable food are needed for Mother Branch's church in East Palo Alto. Her son Nate is carrying on her work in the community, and it is at this time of year, Thanksgiving through Christmas, and especially in these times of economic stress, that hunger is most keenly felt.



*And...*

*TOYS are needed for the Samaritan House*



Samaritan House distributes new toys to thousands of underprivileged children every Christmas. You can help by donating to the special Samaritan House barrel placed in the narthex for this season.

*Bring your donations any/every Sunday!*

*Share your blessings at this season!*

*If you send out Holiday Greeting cards...*

*Please remember to include our friend*

Lionel Levy  
1575 Grant Road  
Los Altos, CA 94024

*It will be appreciated!*

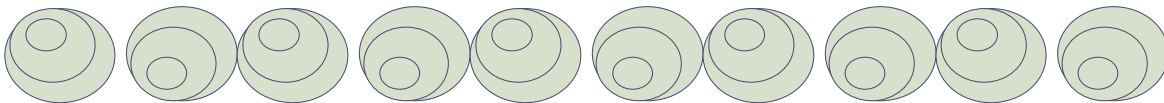


Pledge Report as of November 30, 2011

Budgeted to Date: \$135,568

Received to Date: \$107,935

Are YOU up to date? If you don't know, call Linda to find out.  
Our spending budget is \$3500 per week to carry out our vision.



**STABILIZING THE FEDERAL DEBT LEVEL  
WORKSHOP/SOUP SUPPER  
SUNDAY, DEC 4TH 5:30PM TO 8:00PM  
LADERA COMMUNITY CHURCH**

Join your friends and neighbors in a workshop focused on how to stabilize the federal government debt level. This workshop is timed to be after the Congressional Super Committee reports on November 23rd and the up or down vote in Congress scheduled for December 23rd.

*Sign up at Ladera Church or call the church at 650-854-5481.  
Participants are asked to bring a soup or finger dessert.*

## Serving Our Lord

Date	Deacons
December 4	Chet Yee, Ross Soubirous, Mary Soubirous
December 11	Mark Dickey, Chet Yee, Nancy Riewerts
December 18	Jack Riewerts, Nancy Riewerts, Chet Yee
December 24 Christmas Eve	Chet Yee, Mary Soubirous, Ross Roubirous
December 25 Christmas Day	TBA
	Readers
December 4	Charlyne Gaytan
December 11	Sue Brock
December 18	Barry Willbanks
December 24 Christmas Eve	Spencer Riewerts
	Greeters
December 4	Charlyne Gaytan + Maynard Nonnemacher
December 11	John Burkman + Marie Delucchi
December 18	Jim Degnan + Kristy Rice
December 24 Christmas Eve	Eric Pedersen + Jennifer Lindberg
	Sunday Breakfast
December 4	Vic and Karl Frederick
	Communion Assistants
December 4	Ellen Schillig + Karlene Harvey
December 11	Carolyn Van Cise + Barry Willbanks
December 18	Karlene Harvey + Cindy Murphy
December 24 Christmas Eve	Jennifer Lindberg + Carolyn Van Cise
	Coffee Hour Volunteers
	Carolyn Van Cise, overseeing
December 4	Service Board
December 11	Carolyn Van Cise
December 18	Growth Board
December 24 Christmas Eve	Karlene Harvey
December 25	Karlene Harvey