

The Living Word

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ADVENT HAPPENINGS- CHRISTY NEWTON

Join Us For Advent!

We celebrate the Advent season for the four Sundays before Christmas. Beginning on Sunday, Nov. 27, and continuing on Dec. 4, Dec. 11, and Dec. 18, we will anticipate and carry the hope of Advent in our hearts. This year's theme for Advent is "*Pilgrimage to the Light.*" Each Sunday of Advent, we will walk the path of pilgrimage: first, stepping out in COURAGE; second, continuing through FAITH; third, welcoming TRANSFORMATION; and fourth, responding with GRATITUDE. Each week will tell a story and invite each of us to go deeper into our own spiritual journey. The season will be full of music, poetry, and prayer. I hope you will make plans to join us and participate throughout the Advent season!

Blue Christmas Service

On the evening of Wednesday, Dec. 21, at 6:00 p.m., we will again hold our contemplative candlelight Blue Christmas Service in the sanctuary to make space for the complexity of emotions that arise during this time of year. At this service, we create a quiet, peaceful, and supportive place where you are invited to slow down and recognize whatever emotions you may hold.



LIVING STONES

*We wait in the silence of a new season / moving from spring to summer
from Pentecost to Advent / from busyness to quiet.*

We crouch with Mary on the straw of our messy lives / letting go of everything but this moment.

*We breathe in organic and homely smells / we breathe out the impulse to push, to rush
to stock up, to plan, to get things done / —and we wait. We wait.
We listen. / It is not yet time for labour.*

*This is the hour of rest. / This is the time for silence, breathing,
Gestation / of a nascent, quickening Christ.*

— “Advent Prayer” by Bronwyn Angela White

This poem by Bronwyn Angela White reminds us that the weeks leading up to Christmas are not meant to be hectic and busy. They are meant to be quiet and deeply centering—focused on the sacredness of this very moment—messiness and all. We might want to push and rush, struggle, stock up, and plan. But here—in the midst of all the lights and glitter, advertisements and pressure to do more—we are invited to simply wait. And be. To open our eyes. To lean in with an ear. To rest. While many around us hurry around carrying bags and bags of urgency, let’s just breathe. And wait. And hope. And listen to our hearts. ***What is your heart’s deepest longing right now?***

See you in church,
Christy

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FINAL FAIRE REMINDER - Jon Mezzera

As of the publication of this newsletter, we are exactly one week away from the 25th Global Holiday Faire! It is an exciting and busy time for those of us on the organizing committee. Merchandise continues to come in for the fair trade organizations. Volunteers have stepped up and are being assigned a table. Ads have been placed. Fliers have been posted and handed out. Purchases have already been made. Everything is on course for a great event next Saturday, December 3rd from 9-1.

In this last week, there are still things you can do to help. We are still taking donations of crafts, gift baskets and re-gifted items. We will continue to take them through Friday evening as we gather at 6 to set up. And continue to help spread the word by reminding everyone you know to come and shop at the Faire! You can also shop our virtual marketplace or make a donation on our website: globalholidayfaire.org. Thank you in advance for all you have done and will do to make the 25th Faire as great as possible!

The Holiday Season always brings joy, love, and family, but it also brings stress and heartache. What better way to help with these then walking a Labyrinth and leaving your it all behind. Please see the flyer below. Please feel free to share.

“A Morning Walk” with us at First Christian Church of Vallejo on Dec 17th. We are located at 1035 Indiana St (the corner of Colusa and Indiana).



We invite anyone to walk the labyrinth, to have a time to reflect, a time to be still, a time to meditate, especially at the Holiday Season. Our doors will be open from 10 to 11 am on Saturday Dec. 17th. There is no cost, no pressure, just walking and thinking. Rain or shine we will be here. Please check us out at www.vallejochristian.org.

THE AVOCADO - AN ORGANIZING STORY - Allison Mezzera

I am growing an avocado plant - a fools errand, as I tend to kill every plant I grow. I started it from seed in May, keeping it in a dark cool spot wrapped in a damp paper towel until I saw a root form. I planted it in September, and 2 weeks ago it started to sprout. Now, it is 12" tall. As it is a slow process, I may not see an actual avocado for many years, but the roots have started, and they need frequent care.

This story is also a metaphor for the work of Common Ground. It started 10 years ago with a seed, a bunch of concerned citizens talking to each other, in hope of gaining power in a county that needed to hear from its people. They didn't know it would work, but they had faith that it would. Did they know that 10 years later they would be just a few steps away from City Council passing their civilian police oversight ordinance? Not likely. But they kept talking, and kept acting, until they sprouted! One leaf for vacant lots, one leaf for rental assistance, one leaf for organizing Spanish speaking leaders, and one for oversight of the police department. It took a long time, and a lot of slow hard work, but we are getting it done.

Common Ground can grow and flourish if we help it. We need to keep relating, keep talking, and keep acting together. In order to do that we need to hire more organizers to train new leaders and recruit new institutions, and that takes money. Yes each institution pays dues, but that is not enough. [Donate Here](#)

Jon and I made an investment in Common Ground because we believe in the work and would like to take some ownership in that work. Every year we pick a few non-profits to donate to, as I assume many of you do too. Why not pick an organization where the money it used to strengthen your own community?

I would love to see Common Ground get larger and grow unstoppable as the years continue. Who knows? If we continue on this path, maybe in another 10 years we will have our avocado!

As I have mentioned, our current Investment Campaign has a \$20,000 goal and will continue through the end of the year. Please prayerfully consider watering the Common Ground avocado plant by donating here. <http://www.commongroundiaf.org/donate>

Thank you!

SOCKS AND UNDERWEAR! - Dave Mezzera

How's your Spanish?

Try this phrase: ¡Eso, sí que es! A simple translation is: “Yes, that’s what it is!” So how does that apply to First Christian Church?

When Allison announced in church that from now until December 18th, FCC-V will be collecting new socks to distribute to Lighthouse Covenant Fellowship for distribution to shelters and the homeless, a Spanish-speaking member of the congregation might have said: ¡Eso, sí que es! (S-O-C-K-S) Meaning: Yes, that’s what it is - that’s what we’re collecting for the next couple of weeks. So take your S-O-C-K-S to church. There will be a basket in the rear for collecting them. Thanks for your generosity year after year with our sock drive.

**How's your Latin?**

Now try this Latin phrase: Semper ubi, sub ubi. Literally, this means: “Always where, under where.” A tongue-in cheek alternative might be “Always wear under wear,” and that too applies to FCC-V. The other part of the drive is an underwear (sub ubi) drive for Lighthouse Covenant Fellowship (the ministry that brought the portable showers to FCC-V a few weeks ago). So also bring some new tee shirts or undies to deposit in the basket at church. And double thanks for your generosity year after year with our underwear and sock drive.

Note: for both the socks and underwear, the need is for all genders, ages, and sizes. We will continued the drive through Sunday, December 18th. Let’s fill the basket.

JOKE OF THE MONTH

What do you call a kid who doesn't believe in Santa?

A rebel without a Claus.

WHAT ARE WE THANKFUL FOR? - Carl Cordes

For those of you who missed our Thanksgiving luncheon on Sunday, we missed you! For those of you who were on zoom and could not make it because of distance to the church or for some other reason, we missed you, also! We played a game called “Thankful”. We wrote down what we are thankful for using the letters THANKFUL. And these are some of the answers:

T - Thanksgiving, Tahoe, thriving plants, time, travel, tolerance, transformation, turkey, tea, thermostats

H - Happy, hugs, healthcare, hot food, having a meal together, home, hope, ham, Holy Spirit, hospitals, heat

A - Alleluia, all creation, apartment, all God’s creatures, awareness, affirmations, activism

N - New things to see and do, naps, nature, nieces and nephews, napkins

K - Kindness, kisses from puppies and kitties, knowledge, kids, kool-aid

F - Fulfilled, friends, family, fossils, freedom, FCCV, food, fathers

U - Ugly Christmas sweaters, unselfishness, unity, unusual music, unlimited gardening, universe, underwater life, ukulele, umbrella

L - Life, laughter, love, learning, lunches like this, lavender, laughter, light, labyrinth

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MISSION ACTION GIFT - Allison Mezzera, Mission Action Coordinator

This month, Ministry Council decided to support the Solano County program of the Marine's Toy's for Tot's.

If you are unfamiliar, the objectives of the Marine’s Toys for Tots Foundation are to help less fortunate children throughout the United States experience the joy of Christmas; to play an active role in the development of one of our nation’s most valuable resources – our children; to unite all members of local communities in a common cause for three months each year during the annual toy collection and distribution campaign; and to contribute to improving communities in the future.

If you would like to donate a toy directly to Toys for Tots, there are many boxes around town, and here is a map for your convenience. [Google Map of toy drop off sites](#)

Thank you!

HYBRID WORSHIP CONTINUES

We continue to develop and improve our hybrid worship abilities. Every Sunday morning, we have some members of our worshipping community onsite in our sanctuary and some members of our worshipping community online on Zoom. We continue to work to make both formats engaging and accessible. Please share comments and suggestions that might make both formats better for everyone.

Our worship services begin at 10:30. To join us for worship on Zoom, click the link below and joining us through video. Or dial in by calling the number below according to your time zone. The instructions to connect are fairly easy, but if you need help, please reach out.

In preparation for Zoom worship, please have communion elements of some form with you so that we can all partake together. This can be bread and juice—or any other elements that evoke the Last Supper for you. You may also want to light a candle near you as we worship together.

Worship on Sundays, 10:30 a.m.

<https://zoom.us/j/94763862611>

Meeting ID: 947 6386 2611

Dial by your location

- +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
- +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
- +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
- +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Mark Your Calendar

December 2 - Set up for the Global Holiday Faire, 6 pm.

December 3 - Global Holiday Faire! 9-1 in the Fellowship Hall.

December 11 - Congregational meeting after worship to vote on the 2023 budget.

December 14 - Admin Council meeting, 5:30 pm on Zoom.

December 17 - A Morning Walk, 10-11 am in the Fellowship Hall.

December 18 - Church Christmas Party, at Tiffany Crain's house (details to follow).

December 21 - Blue Christmas Service, 6 pm.

December 25 - Christmas! Join us for worship on Christmas morning.

The deadline for the next Living Word is December 28
