

December 2014
First Congregational Church of
San Rafael

The TIE



Everything Under the Sun....



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This past weekend I had the pleasure of attending a performance of Puppet Up! with a close friend of mine of twenty-five years. It was an unscripted improvisational puppet show consisting of Brian Henson and six other nationally-acclaimed puppeteers, voice artists and musicians.

At one point during the show the MC came into the audience looking for volunteers, and I motioned wildly toward my friend sitting next to me. The MC came over, but then asked me to join Mr. Henson on stage. I was nervous, wildly excited, very starstruck, and terribly confused. Why had I been chosen when I was desperately trying to volunteer someone else?

The improv routine was thrilling and fun, and every single second brought something new and unexpected. With a beak-nosed puppet on one arm held high over my head, two hand-control sticks in my left hand, and wireless mic wrapped around my ear, I was suddenly a scuba instructor that had to run around the stage and save Mr. Henson's char-

acter (a whimsical crab) from drowning. Talk about sink or swim!

One thing that absolutely transformed my experience was what the MC told me right before I went on. Just as I was coming out of the darkness into the blinding lights of the stage, he pulled me aside and whispered into my ear: "Just pay attention, have fun, and they will take care of you." What apt words for life and especially for the Advent season: Stay present. Be filled with joy. Trust that all will be well.

As we enter Advent, we will hear the story of Christ's birth told through many people: shepherds, angels, magi, kings, prophets, innkeepers, pregnant women, a newly betrothed man, and people in the neighborhood. If they had had any idea what was about to happen, they might have motioned wildly to the person sitting next to them.



Tracy Barnowe, Brian Henson, and Yasmin Wofford

And yet they were chosen. They were asked to jump into a situation that was quite unexpected, where something new happened almost every second. They were likely nervous, a little starstruck, terribly confused, and wildly excited. Yet all they had to do was pay attention, allow themselves to be filled with joy, and trust that God would take care of the rest.

Advent is the season of anticipation, of holding our breath. We are invited to stay present and enjoy every second as we tell the story and wait with wild excitement for Christ's birth. We are invited to trust God, and trust that Jesus will be born and Christmas will happen no matter what twists and turns happen along the way.

As we move through the next several weeks together amid the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season, I invite you to heed the message that was whispered to me in the darkness just before I was dazzled by light and joy: Pay attention. Have fun. Trust in God that all will be well. This is anticipation. This is Advent.

Blessings,

Pastor Tracy



PRAYER PARTNERS

Please remember the following members of our church family in prayer. Pray for their welfare and growth in faith and discipleship.



November 30 - December 6
Michael Gordon

December 7-13
Sonya Gordon, Christian and
Amanda Rose

December 14-20
Lynn Grant

December 21-27
Margaret (Peggy) Hartman

December 28 - January 3
Caryl Hodges, Sean and
Allison Kaufman

A Season of Celebrating the Light **Worship** **with us!**



November 30 — 1st Sunday of Advent

Sunday school will decorate advent wreaths.

Join the candy-making tradition and light lunch after service at Lucinda Ray's home in Petaluma.

December 7th — 2nd Sunday of Advent

Holy Communion will be celebrated. All are welcome "at the table." Children join our communion circle to be a part of the communion celebration.

Sunday school will practice the pageant. Our lessons and art throughout the season will also focus on bringing the Light into our world.



December 14th — 3rd Sunday of Advent

The annual youth Christmas Pageant (this year "CSI JERUSALEM") will include carols and a lively interpretation of the Christmas story.



December 21st — 4th Sunday of Advent

Memorial poinsettia will fill the sanctuary. See page 4 of this newsletter to order a poinsettia to honor or remember a loved one.



December 24th — Christmas Eve Services

7 PM — A family service of the Christmas story through scripture readings and carols, closing with carrying the Light into the darkness as we process to "Silent Night" with our candles to form a circle in the patio.

11 PM — A contemplative service with candle lighting, Communion and Taize music.

News About Kids



CHRISTMAS PAGEANT PLANNED for KIDS - DECEMBER 14



Our world famous Christmas Pageant will be on December 14 this year. It's always an original drama. This year's theme is:

CSI: JERUSALEM Investigates Mysterious Events in Christmas Pageant

The CSI: Jerusalem team will investigate the meaning of a mysterious birth and associated reports of unusual light-events in this year's Christmas pageant during Sunday morning worship on Dec 14.

The detectives will interrogate key witnesses and CSI technology using a retro-specti-scope will enable a visual review of several key events. The congregation will provide music interludes. The original mystery play stars young people of the church, visitors from the East, and a few other members of the congregation.

If you know of children (or adults) who would like to be part of the play, contact David Knopf (call or text 415-246-6570 or email knopf.david@gmail.com) before Dec.7. No memorization is necessary, and rehearsals are few.

LAS POSADAS

Las Posadas are a Latin American Christmas tradition that dramatizes the search of Mary and Joseph for lodgings.

We have our own FCC Posada tradition of offering hospitality for a night or two to special dolls representing Mary, Joseph, and their donkey (designed and made by Millie Bransford and Julianne Stokstad). You can make reservations during Advent for the Holy Family in your "inn" by signing-up on the Posada sign-up sheet available after worship during community time or call Cathi Fuller to arrange a time.



POINSETTIAS: TO HONOR AND REMEMBER

You are invited to order Christmas Poinsettias in honor or memory of a loved one. The poinsettias will be placed in the altar area of the Sanctuary on the 4th Sunday of Advent, December 21, 2014.



The poinsettias are \$12.00 each. Order forms are available inside the bulletin and in the church entry. Please make checks to FCCSR, putting "Christmas Poinsettias" in the memo section, and turn your check and the order form in to the church office as soon as possible.



BOARD OF MISSION MISSION MATTERS



FOOD BANK DONATIONS IN NOVEMBER

Many thanks to our church school children, who encouraged all of us to bring non-perishable food donations for the Food Bank Barrel. The barrel was filled to overflowing!

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING PARTY FOR PILGRIM PARK CHILDREN



The Board of Mission is pleased to announce that Our annual Christmas Shopping Party will be held on Thursday, December 11th. The fun begins at 3:30 PM in the De Haan Center.

If you are interested in helping with the event, please donate one or two small gifts that would be appropriate for children to give to their parents or grandparents.

The children will be given two quarters each to “purchase” these donated gifts to take home for their holiday celebrations. After their choices have been made, volunteers from our church will wrap and tag the purchased items.

Collection boxes will be in the Community Room on November 30 and December 7. Santa is expected to be there, too !!! If you would like to help, please call Colleen Trudeau at 479-0163.

R.E.S.T. DINNERS CONTINUE — DECEMBER 22

The Mission Board will once again offering you an opportunity to provide meals for homeless women in Marin County at the Women's Winter Shelter Program in San Rafael. Officially called Marin REST, which stands for Rotating Emergency Shelter Team, this is a program of the St. Vincent dePaul Society,



As often as you did it for one of my least brothers, You did it for me.

Our congregation has been a faithful and important participant in this program for five or six winters. We have agreed again this year to provide the evening meal for a group of about 20 homeless women who are sheltered at the Wellness Center in San Rafael for one Monday night each month during the winter season. Our next dinner will be December 22. Contact Sher Ripley or Sue Spofford to participate.



PILGRIM PARK NEWS

Holiday Activities

After Thanksgiving -- Christmas decorations go up. Stop by during December for coffee and to view transformation of the De Haan Community Center into a Christmas wonderland.

December 4th - Staff and Director's dinner and board meeting

December 11th - Children's Christmas party (see page 5 of this newsletter)

December 12th - Residents' Christmas dinner

December 28th - Church after service coffee hour --

Sponsored by Bob and Nancy Sangster-De Haan -- Come join us after church at Pilgrim Park to celebrate the Christmas season and to welcome "The New Year" with cake, other goodies and New Years decorations.



Pilgrim Park Staff and Contractors Set New Record -- In just under two weeks Pilgrim Park staff and contractors moved out a tenant/all furniture, stripped the apartment of cabinets, appliances, sinks, etc. (literally everything), replaced worn-out sewers under the concrete floors in the kitchen and bath (yes, this involved jack hammering out the concrete and pouring new concrete), replaced wall board, installed new cabinets, countertops, etc., painted everything, new floor tile and carpeting, moved in the tenant's furniture and lastly moved the tenant from a nearby hotel. Further, the project came in under the plumbing estimate. The tenant moved into a like new studio apartment. We plan to replace the sewers in another apartment this coming Spring.

Tenant Turnover -- Attesting to the desirability of living at Pilgrim Park, it has been over a year since we've had any tenant turnover.

Solar Power? -- Pilgrim Park spends about \$14,000 annually for electricity for outside lighting, the two common buildings, the laundry, etc. A few years ago a consultant helped us greatly reduce the cost of electricity Pilgrim Park pays for. The tenants pay for the electricity they use, some of which is subsidized under Section 8 provisions.

We are investigating the possibility of using solar generated electricity to greatly reduce the cost of electricity Pilgrim Park itself uses. This is a particularly challenging project because there are 8 meters with minimum circuit capacities for the power we use, because of the orientation of the buildings and because we already enjoy very low average electricity costs. So, stay tuned as we work through the proposal we've received.

Merry Christmas -- Nancy Smith (Manager), Margie Rollman (Manager's assistant) and Francisco Galindo (Maintenance supervisor) take this opportunity to wish the church congregation a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and to thank church members for their help in making Pilgrim Park a great place in which to live.



Church Work Day — Saturday December 13



Help us get ready for the Christmas season. We need your help in cleaning and working on the church from 9 AM to 3 PM, on Saturday, December 13th. There will be plenty of jobs for every one, ages 6 to 80. Jobs include:

- Cleaning the Sanctuary, including under the pew pads
- Cleaning the community room
- Landscaping work, both in the courtyard and outside
- Cleaning the concrete in the courtyard
- Cleaning the exterior walls of the church and school wing
- Oiling (WD40) the panic bar on the single door to the Oak room
- Cleaning the older chairs in the Oak and Plum Rooms.
- And more...

For further information on what work needs doing, contact Louis Frost for building items or Sue Spofford for landscape items.

MOVIE NIGHT TAKES A HOLIDAY BREAK

There will not be a Movie Night in December, due to the many other activities during the holiday season. The next Movie Night will be on January 23.



ANNUAL MEETING — February 8

The annual meeting of the congregation will be February 8 after church. In the meeting the congregation will elect new officers and vote on the budget for 2015. More details will be available in the January Tie.

HOLIDAY CONCERTS CONCERTS CONCERTS

This advent season is filled with musical opportunities that include several of our church family as performers. And in addition, the music itself is excellent! See those involved in the concerts (below) for more information.



Candlelight Choral Concert Marin Symphony Chamber Chorus and Brass Ensemble

Saturday Dec. 6 at 7:30 PM

Sunday Dec. 7 at 4 PM

Mission San Rafael

\$25 - \$30

Concert includes:

Lucinda Ray

Winter Concert

College of Marin College Chorus and Chamber Singers

Tuesday, December 9 at 7:30 PM

James Dunn Theatre

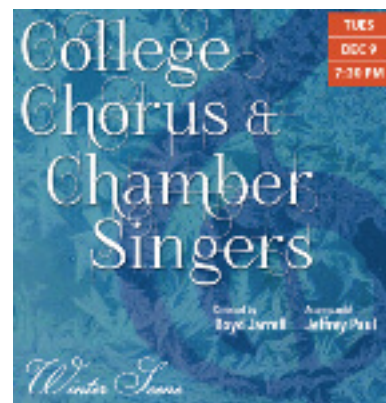
College of Marin

Kentfield Campus

Donation

concert includes:

Jeff Paul, Charles Little, and Lucinda Ray



Handel's *Messiah* Marin Oratorio

Sat. Dec. 13 at 8 PM

Sun. Dec. 14 at 3 PM

James Dunn Theatre

College of Marin

Kentfield Campus

\$15 - \$20

concert includes:

Jeff Paul, Charles Little, and Tom Truchan



Holiday Pops Concert Marin Symphony and Marin Symphony Chorus

Tuesday Dec. 17 at 7:30 PM

Marin Civic Center

\$10 - \$70

concert includes:

Bob De Haan and Lucinda Ray





DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

3 — Denise Walker
3 — Jon Girard
8 — David Smith
13 — Nancy Mahl
22 — Andrea Farwell
28 — Faune Towrey
30 — Elizabeth Godbey
30 — Gloria Wilcox

GOLDEN GALS — December 9

The Golden Gals will meet on Tuesday, November 11, at 10 AM, at the home of Jean Nadell. Bring a bag lunch.



MEN'S GROUP — December (date to come)



Join us for an hour or so of fellowship and wide-ranging conversation. Our next meeting will be **8:30 AM on Saturday to be announced**, in the De Haan Community Center in Pilgrim Park. Please bring a breakfast pastry for yourself and one other person. We'll take care of the coffee.

TIE DEADLINE for the January Issue - Mon., DEC. 29

The deadline for articles and news for the January 2015 issue of The TIE is Monday, December 29. Please have all articles for the September issue at the church office by Sunday, December 28th. Or, email your articles to lucindaray@aol.com.



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS


Rev. Tracy Barnowe – *Pastor*

Monday 9 AM - 1 PM
Wednesday 9 AM - 1 PM
Cell Phone (510) 703-0108
revtracybarnow@gmail.com

Eric Rowe – *Office Manager*

Tuesday 12:00 – 4:00 PM
Friday 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Office Phone: 415-479-2747

FCC Calendar December 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30  10 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 11:15 am Family to Family Gift Collection 12:30 pm Candy Making Party 12-30-2014	December 1	2	3	4 7:30 pm  Choir Rehearsal	5	6
7 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care	8 10 am  "Soldier Gals" monthly meeting	9 10 am	10	11 1:30 pm  Christmas Shopping Party for Pilgrim Park Children 7:30 pm  Choir Rehearsal	12	13 9 am - 3 pm  Clean-up Crew Pre-Christmas Clean-up Day
14 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care	15	16	17	18 7:30 pm  Choir Rehearsal	19	20
21 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care	22 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm  R.E.S.T. Dinner	23	24 7 pm - 8 pm  Christmas Eve Family Service 11 pm - 12 am  Christmas Eve Meditative Service	25  Christmas 7:30 pm  Choir Rehearsal	26	27
28 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care 11:30 pm  Pilgrim Park De Usan Center Coffee Hour	29 5 am  TLE Deadline for December Issue	30	31	1 New Year's Day 7:30 pm  Choir Rehearsal	2	3

This calendar is also available on the church's website in interactive form. There you can click on any event to see more details. Check it out at www.FccSanRafael.org.