

THOUGHTS FROM THE PASTOR... REV. BARBARA PERONTEAU



In my last session with my Spiritual Director, not that it was my last session, but more like the last time I talked to him last session, the conversation somehow drifted to Advent. Actually, my Spiritual Director asked me point blank what Advent means to me. How we arrived at the point of him asking me what Advent means to me, I don't remember. I remember the question though.

So, I'll ask you. What does Advent mean to you?

I admit to having some spiritual envy of other world religions. I envy the meditative practices of the Buddhists. I envy the many holy days and festivals the Jewish tradition has, such as Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Hanukkah, Purim, and Passover. I am envious of how Muslims know their faith are able to, not only quote, but to theologize the meaning of, say Mary and the birth of Jesus.

That's when I remember I am a Christian who loves the wonder of the Christian Faith and the beauty of the Church, when, in its best moments, it remembers it is the Body of Christ sharing her most precious gift that is Grace itself. I am reminded the Church has its own contemplative practices inspired by Saint Ignatius for example, and the meditative discipline of the Lectio Divina of Benedict of Nursia from the sixth century. I am reminded the Church has her own holy days throughout the Church year pointing to the Church, to God and Jesus, and the ways in which Jesus wants us to walk as though we are truly inspired and empowered by a Spirit that is Sacred and Other. In this new year of the Church, we call Advent, we are reminded of the many ways in which we understand Mary and the Birth of Jesus.

Advent is not Christmas-light. Advent is not mini-Christmas. While the rest of our culture goes nutty for Christmas songs and shopping, we are given the gift of four weeks ahead of the day we celebrate the Divine Light of the World born into this time and place as one of us.

And so, Advent, when done right, reminds us what the world so desperately longs for and so desperately needs. Advent is a season of Hope as we Hope for Peace, Joy, and Love.

Who knew that God would be born among us in the tears and cries of the very epitome of vulnerability itself - a helpless baby reaching out to be held. Fully God and Fully Human.



(continued on the next page)

My hope for this Advent is that we become aware of our own desire for Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love not only in our own lives, but also in the lives of others, and for the life of the world. Advent is when we reach out and touch the One who is reaching out for us, Jesus Christ who is born this day and every day in the City of David and within our human hearts.



Happy Advent and Merry Christmas!!

Pastor Barbara



MEMORIAL POINSETTIAS

Fill the sanctuary during Christmas with color in honor or memory of a loved one. You may purchase a poinsettia by filling out the order form and a check for \$10.00 (made out to FCCSR).

Order forms will be available in the December Sunday bulletins. Please write “for poinsettia” in the memo area of your check.

THE CHRISTMAS STORY: AN ADVENT SCRIPTURE STUDY

Pastor Barbara will lead sessions on Wednesdays from 7-8 pm on Zoom, December 7th and 14th. We will study the Christmas story as told by Luke and Matthew and explore why they are different and what they were trying to tell us. Yes, God is still speaking to us.



PRAYER PARTNERS

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



November 27 - December 3

Ann Jolly

December 4 - 10

Amy Kaufman, Sean and
Alison

December 11 - 17

David Knopf and Cathi Fuller,
Rachael and Rebecca

December 18 - 24

Jill Krippendorf

December 25 - January 1

Charles Little and Lucinda Ray

CHRISTMAS DRAMA - YOUR CHANCE TO BE A STAR

It wouldn't be Christmas at First Congregational Church of San Rafael without our beloved Christmas pageant/drama. This year it will be presented on multiple Sundays during Advent and Epiphany.



The play readings will be part of the regular service and will include related Christmas carols. The Christmas story in Matthew and Luke unfolded differently in several scenes. Our dramatizations will, too.

Want a part? Talk to David. We have speaking and non speaking parts. Add a little drama in your life—join the festivities!

Dec. 11: Luke's account of the annunciation and Mary's response will be Dec. 11. Her response was seen as so dangerous that 2000 years later dictators in Guatemala tried to prohibit its reading in churches.

Dec. 18: The events in Bethlehem will be Dec. 18.

Jan. 1 and Jan. 8: Since Matthew's account is the foundation of Epiphany, we will experience his interpretation Jan 1 and Jan. 8.



TWO CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

The 7 PM Christmas Eve service will be a traditional family service of lessons and carols. We will end in candle-light, with the singing of "Silent Night."



The 11 PM Christmas Eve service will be a meditative service with fresh renditions of Christmas classics from a wide range of musical styles. We will hear musicians such as Yo Yo Ma, Ella Fitzgerald, Pentatonic, Whitney Houston, Thelonius Monk, Chris Botti, the Roches, and more. A Cozy, candle-lit time with great music!

COME and Worship with us!



**We will be worshipping at 10 AM inside the sanctuary.
The service will also be available streaming on YouTube (see next page).**

Below are the scripture readings from the Revised Common Lectionary for September. The first set of readings from the Old Testament and Psalms is called semi-continuous. These readings loosely follow each other for several weeks. The second set of Old Testament and Psalm readings is called complimentary (paired). In this set of readings, the connection to the Epistle and Gospel is a more obvious.

December 4

Isaiah 11:1-10 and
Romans 15:4-14 and

or

Second Sunday of Advent

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Matthew 3:1-12

December 11

Isaiah 35:1-10 and
James 5: 7-10 and

or

Third Sunday of Advent

Psalm 146:1-10 or Luke 1:46b-55
Matthew 11:2-11

December 18

Isaiah 7:10-16 and
Romans 1:1-7 and

or

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Matthew 1:18-25

December 24 7PM and 11 PM

Isaiah 9:2-7 and
Titus 2:11-14 and

or

Christmas Eve

Psalm 96
Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)



December 25

Isaiah 52:7-10 and
Hebrews 1:1-4,(5-12) and

or

Christmas Day

Psalm 98
John 1:1-14

ZOOM MEETINGS LET US GATHER TOGETHER SAFELY

We are also providing our Sunday worship service streaming on YouTube at 10 a.m. You can use either your computer, your cell phone, or your tablet. See below.

Link to join all church Zoom meetings

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2011092691?pwd=c2V0RXEvWXF4STNNSTlxbWFFTENuZz09>

Meeting ID: ID: 201 109 2691

Password: FCCSR!

Call in number **1-669-900-6833**

SUNDAY WORSHIP IS NOW LIVE ON YOU TUBE

We broadcast live Sunday mornings on YouTube. Our channel address is:

- <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbqlXLjsBEmjdGuoOKnOykA>
- Then click on videos->live
- Subscribe and each week you will get a direct link.

We will also post a direct link each week in the What's Happening? email.

The whole service unedited will be available for a few days; then an edited version to include just the sermon will be posted.

If you are having trouble getting connected, email Knopf.david@gmail.com

MEETINGS, MEETINGS, MEETINGS -- VIA ZOOM

Dec. 6: The Board of Ministry will meet on **Tuesday**, December 6, at 12 noon.

Dec. 7 and 14: Advent Study: Birth stories of Jesus from Matthew and Luke, **Wednesdays**, Dec. 7 and 14 at 7 PM on Zoom.

Dec. 20: The Board of Trustees meeting will be on **Tuesday**, Dec. 20, at 7 PM.



BOARD OF TRUSTEE'S REPORT

PLEDGING

Be sure to turn in both your green and blue pledge sheets by Dec. 12. The Trustees are preparing the budget for 2023 and need to make as accurate a prediction of income as possible. In addition to your financial contribution we also need to know how else you can help us BE the CHURCH.

SPECIAL THANKS TO REAL LIFE CHURCH

Our main renter, the Real Life Church, surprised us on Spiff-up-the-Church Day in November with a large, hard-working crew of volunteers. They scraped gum off the cement, pruned bushes, cleared drains, cleaned windows, scrubbed walls, and even cut the iron grating that was impinging on the cork tree in the courtyard. Many thanks are due!

Next Trustees meeting: Tuesday, Dec. 20, 7 PM



BOARD OF MISSION MISSION MATTERS



DEC. 11 - RITTER CENTER FAMILY-TO-FAMILY GIFT CARDS



The Board of Mission will be collecting gift cards to help local families in need for Christmas, through Ritter Center. In years past, we have purchased actual gifts for families and children, but Ritter Center has substituted a gift card collection instead during COVID.

Please bring gift cards (either \$25 or \$50) for Safeway or Target to worship on Sunday, Dec. 11. Thank you for your generous gift!



ORDERING BEAUTIFUL, SUSTAINABLE GIFTS FROM SERRV BENEFITS THE CHURCH

Looking for a unique, hand-made gift for someone? If you order a gift from SERRV, **your purchase helps support a craftsperson from a developing country AND it also benefits our Board of Mission.** The Mission Board will receive 20% of the purchase price of whatever you order.



Here's how to order from SERRV: Use this link: <https://www.serrv.org/?a=FCCserrvsale> It will take you to the SERRV online catalog, and your purchase will be credited to our church.



REMEMBER THE MARIN FOOD BANK



Please keep helping us stock the pantry at the Marin Food Bank. Please continue to bring in non-perishable food items - peanut butter, canned goods, rice, cereal, canned meat. Please deposit them in our Food Bank barrel.

Thank you for your generous support!

BOARD OF MINISTRY REPORT

Advent and Christmas A Season for Scripture storytelling and Carols

In November

“...HOPE to all the earth impart...”

Nov. 27th: An inspiring service of Thanksgiving and remembering those with AIDS. We are especially grateful to Julie Dowling for sharing her story of Hope. Thank you to Mary, Oak, and Julie for lighting the first of the Advent Candles with the message of Hope.



In December

“...Peace on earth, Goodwill to all...”

Dec. 4 Second Sunday of Advent: Peace

“Joy to the World...”

Dec. 11 Third Sunday of Advent: Joy

“Love Came down at Christmas...”

Dec. 18 Fourth Sunday of Advent: Love.

“O Holy Night!...”

7 PM Dec. 24th Christmas Eve: A service of Carols and Scripture.

“...Silent Night, Holy Night...”

11 PM Dec. 24th Christmas Eve Midnight Service:

A service by “firelight” with congregants reading the “Christmas Story” and with recorded music.



“...Christ is born today! Christ is born today!”

10AM Sunday, December 25th: Christmas Day! We will celebrate the birth of the Christ Child together in a scripture and carol hymns.

“This is a day of new beginnings....”

New Year’s Day, Sunday Jan. 1st: Rev. Kristi Denham will lead us in worship.

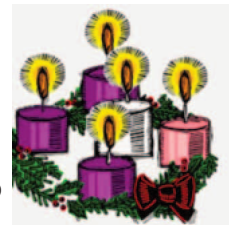


“Deck the Halls...”

We will continue to decorate the Sanctuary. Let Cathi know if you would to help.

“Light the Advent Candle...”

If you would like to participate in Advent service by reading and lighting candles of the Advent wreath during Advent Sunday worship or Christmas Eve, please inform Cathi Fuller as soon as possible.



"I said the donkey shaggy and brown, I carried his Mother to Bethlehem town..."

Would you like to participate in an **FCC Advent Posada Tradition?**

Would you like to "make room in the inn" of your home to Mary, Joseph and Joshua (the donkey) for a stay? They have started their journey and will need homes through the Advent season.

They don't take up much room and are very quiet and undemanding guests. The fami-



ly reminds us of the journey of HOPE celebrated in the Advent season. They come with a journal from previous hosts and would like you to add your meditations or a brief description of their visit to the book. Please let Cathi know if you want to schedule a visit to your home. (The paper mache sculptured family and their handwoven and sewn clothing were created by Millie Bransford and Rev. Julianne Stokstad, have been visiting in FCC homes for 2 decades.)



"Tell me the Stories of Jesus..."

The Christmas Story: A Scripture Study: Wednesdays at 7-8:00 PM on Zoom.

Pastor Barbara will lead 3 sessions on Wednesdays at 7-8 pm on Zoom, November 30th, December 7th and 14th. We will study the Christmas story as told by Luke and Matthew and explore why they are different and what they were trying to tell us. Yes, God is still speaking to us.

Memorial Poinsettias

Fill the sanctuary during Christmas with color in honor or memory of a loved one. You may purchase a poinsettia by filling out the order form and a check for \$10.00 (made out to FCCSR). Order forms will be available in the December Sunday bulletins. Please write "for poinsettia" in the memo area of your check.



The Board of Ministry Team members want to acknowledge that this holiday season when the darkening days, challenging world news, recent personal losses, health difficulties and being alone can be especially painful, sad and lonely; we may be especially *needful of Light in the Darkness*. We will welcome Advent together, the coming of the Christ

From On the Death of a Beloved by John O Donahue

"...Let us not look for you only in memory,
Where we would grow lonely without you.
You would want us to find you in presence,
Beside us when beauty brightens,
When kindness glows
And music echoes eternal tones.
When orchids brighten the earth,
Darkest winter has turned to spring;
May this dark grief flower with hope
In every heart that loves you...."

HOLIDAY CONCERTS CONCERTS CONCERTS

This advent season once again offers musical opportunities that include several of our church family as performers. And in addition, the music itself is excellent!



Candlelight Choral Concert Marin Symphony Chamber Chorus

Saturday Dec. 3 at 7:30 PM

Sunday Dec. 4 at 4 PM

Mission San Rafael

\$34

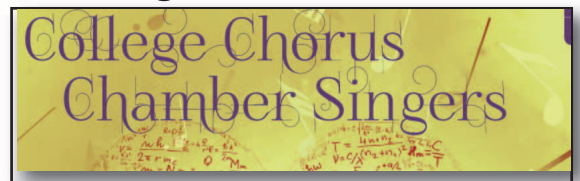
Concert includes: Lucinda Ray and Charles Little

College of Marin College Chorus and Chamber Singers

Tuesday, December 13 at 7:30 PM

James Dunn Theatre: College of Marin

Kentfield Campus

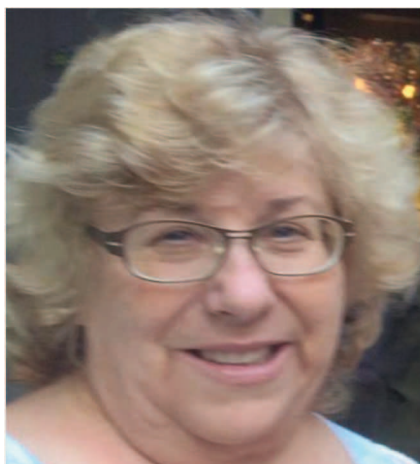


Donation

concert includes: Jeff Paul, Lucinda Ray, and Charles Little

REMEMBERING HILARY SPAULDING

Hilary Spaulding, long time member of FCCSR who served as Chair of the Board of Ministry for many years, passed away on November 27th. She was instrumental in establishing the Agape group following the suspension of regular in-person worship services due to the protocols on public gatherings at the beginning of the Covid pandemic. This was a way for volunteers to reach out to members and write cards and make phone calls so members would not feel isolated. She was married in our church and went to divinity school. She was an accomplished attorney as well as a hospital chaplain. Hilary was a devoted mother and grandmother and wonderful friend to many of us at FCCSR. We mourn her passing but are grateful that she is in the loving embrace of our Creator.





DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 — Mim Faraci
- 3 — Denise Walker
- 3 — Jon Girard
- 30 — Sam Faraci
- 30 — Ben Faraci
- 30 — Elizabeth Godbey



TIE DEADLINE for JANUARY 2023 issue - Mon., Dec 26

The deadline for articles and news for the January 2023 issue of The TIE is Monday, December 26th. Please email your articles to lucindaray@aol.com by Monday, December 26th.



Rev. Barbara Peronteau – Pastor

Tues., Wed., Thurs., 10 AM - 2 PM

Office Phone: 415-479-2747

Cell Phone: 510-646-2372

Email: barbareau433@yahoo.com

Amy Powers – Office Manager

Monday 11 AM- 2 PM














Wednesday and Thursday 10 AM - 2 PM

You can contact Amy by phone or email any time.

Office Phone: 415-479-2747

Email: office@fccsanrafael.org

FCC Calendar DECEMBER 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27  10 am - 11 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	28  5 pm TIE Deadline for DECEMBER 2022 issue	29	30	December 1	2	3
4  10 am - 11 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	5	6  12 pm Board of Ministry Meeting 12 noon via ZOOM	7  Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day 7 pm - 8 pm ADVENT STUDY	8	9	10
11  10 am - 11 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM 10 am BITTER CENTER GIFT CARD COLLECTION	12	13	14  7 pm - 8 pm ADVENT STUDY	15	16	17
18  10 am - 11 am Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	19	20  7 pm - 8 pm BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING via ZOOM	21	22	23	24  7 pm Christmas Eve Services 7 PM and 11 PM
25  Christmas Day 10 am  Worship, Church School & Child Care 10 am - 11 am Our service is on YOUTUBE at 10 AM	26  5 pm TIE Deadline for DECEMBER 2022 issue	27	28	29	30	31

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.