



HOPE, JOY AND LOVE RISING

Cast~A~Net

First United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande DECEMBER 2023

Merry Christmas 2023

ADVENT AGENDA:

Advent I
December 3,
“Awaken to Hope”
Isaiah 64:1-4, 6-8
Mark 13:24-37

Advent II
December 10
“Prepare for
Peace”
Isaiah 40:1-5
Mark 1:1-8

Advent III
December 17
“Imagine Joy”
Isaiah 61:1-4
Luke 1:46b-55

Advent IV
December 24
“Welcome Love”
Isaiah 9:2, 6-7
Luke 1:26-38



Christmas Eve
December 24
at 7:30 p.m.
Lessons & Carols
with traditional
candle lighting

December 31
First Sunday
after Christmas
Epiphany &
the Year End

January 7, 2024
Baptism of the Lord
Holy Communion
at Both Services

*Christmas Eve 7:30 PM
Lessons and Carols with Candle Lighting*



Trustees Report for November 2023

You are invited to drive by our church some evening and go through the parking lot to see the Trustees' latest effort to make our church safer during the winter hours. Thirteen LED light fixtures were installed by Drube Electric at a cost of \$4,749. The cost was covered by three donors and the Trustees Special Projects fund. Hopefully this will make the Preschool teachers, and those who come to evening meetings, choir practice and bell choir practice feel safer.

Additionally, the full-sized Nativity Scene has been erected on the Halcyon Street side of the church for all to see. Thanks to Mike Clark and his crew for putting the whole thing up again for us all to enjoy!

Dick Melsheimer, Trustees Chair



TREASURER'S REPORT

We have a wonderful and generous congregation. Thanksgiving came in at \$3,385, which is \$885 over plan. Yay!

Regular tithes and offerings are also ahead of plan. Some of our supporters who give once a year turned in their annual donation. This put us well over plan for November. But we all need to remember that the funds have to last us through the end of our Fiscal Year which ends June 30, so please keep up your generous support.

For our Advent offering we are bringing back the Advent animals. We had a lot of success with last year's Bring the Advent Animals to Baby Jesus. The theme is loosely based on the traditional Christmas carol "The Friendly Beasts". This year we have a range of animals from a dove for \$10, cats or dogs for \$25, going up to a camel for \$500. We are also looking for some angels to donate \$1000. Our goal for the Advent Offering is \$7800. The Advent offering is an important part of the operating budget of our church. Please give generously and have fun! Mark your check or offering envelope "Advent" and, if you wish, list animals you would like to "bring to the manger to see baby Jesus". You can even give them names if you want.

Joel Anderson
Acting Treasurer



DECEMBER 3

8:30 a.m.-----Sharon Roemer
10:30 a.m.-----BG Perriguey

DECEMBER 10

8:30 a.m.-----John Emery
10:30 a.m.-----Priscilla Alquist

DECEMBER 17

8:30 a.m.-----David Beard
10:30 a.m.----- Nancy St. Laurent

DECEMBER 24

8:30 a.m.----Mary Thronson
10:30 a.m.----Patti Melsheimer

DECEMBER 31

8:30 a.m.-----Sharon Roemer
10:30 a.m. -----Judy Leonard

~ submitted by Jan Treat

**WORSHIP
LITURGISTS**



The Angel Tree

Thank you to all who are bringing the gifts for the children from the Department of Social Services list. All the tags with the children's first names and ages on our Angel Tree were taken immediately! The gifts are to be delivered to the church NO LATER THAN THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7TH AT NOON! The gifts will be picked up at that time by Social Services.



~submitted by Jan Treat

NORTH DISTRICT WEEKLY COVENANT PRAYER LIST FOR DECEMBER 2023

*Pray for the continued vision of the UMC in the California-Pacific Conference--
"Ending spiritual and physical hunger."*

--District Superintendent Reverend Melissa Roux MacKinnon

Prayer week begins on:	Church/Ministry	Clergy Leader(s)
12/03/23	Knollwood UMC	Pastor Kalesita Tu'ifua
12/03/23	Woodland Hills I UMC	Pastor Seung-il Whang
12/10/23	Glendale First UMC	Pastor Angela Galanis-Price
12/10/23	Glendale First UMC	Pastor Stephanie Rice
12/17/03	First UMC of North Hollywood	Pastor Chamie Delkeskamp
12/17/03	First UMC of Paso Robles	Pastor Joshua Zulueta
12/24/03	Estero Bay UMC	Pastor Steven Poteete-Marshall
12/24/03	First German UMC	Pastor Kurt Poland



United Methodist Men will be hosting a pancake breakfast this coming Sunday, the 3rd of December. It will feature pancakes, fruit, eggs, sausage and juice, coffee & tea. All this for \$15 a ticket. \$5 for kids under 12.



The UMM will start serving at 9:30 AM, so come hungry!

~submitted by Paul Holden,
President

WHAT'S UP?

The communications team put up an annual calendar of upcoming events in the hallway leading into Criswell Hall. This will allow everyone to see what events are coming up and to help teams avoid conflicts. Please notify the office and the communications committee of upcoming activities so it can be put on the calendar and publicized in the Cast-A-Net, bulletin and to the general public.

--Communications Committee

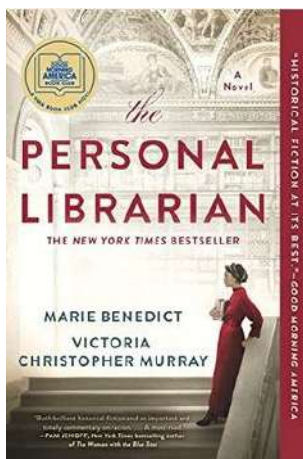
HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE YOUR CAST-A-NET?

The Cast-A-Net highlights all the goings on at the First United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande. Your copy can be delivered by postal mail, e-mail or both. Please notify the office if you would like to change or add to how you receive your copy. You can also subscribe for e-mail delivery by e-mailing "SUBSCRIBE" to umcag+subscribe@googlegroups.com or by going to our website WorshipWeekly.com and click on the Subscribe link at the lower left corner. Copies are also available in the Narthex and entrance to Criswell Hall.

--Communications Committee



UWF December Book Selection: The Personal Librarian



Imagine being hired as the personal librarian for a famous man like J.P. Morgan in the early 20th century. This meant establishing his library with rare books and artwork. Besides being a young female, Belle da Costa Greene was also passing as white to hide her true identity as a black woman which would have been unacceptable in society and the business world. In the historical fiction, The Personal Librarian by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray, we experience her struggle to be the woman she would like to be in society while maintaining her secret identity.

The UMW Book Club will meet on a special date this month: Monday, December 18th at 10:30 in the church library. If you would like to read The Personal Librarian, see Judy Leonard for a library copy of the book. We welcome you to join in the book discussion.

~submitted by Judy Leonard



United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith seeks to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so that they can inspire, influence and impact local and global communities.

Castanet UWF December 2023

The **2023 Holiday Boutique** has come and gone. Thanks to all who helped, all who provided donations, made craft items or baked. And of course, all those who shopped and left with many treasured items and gifts. We surpassed last years total, with over \$5,033, and are still counting as it's still coming in.



One of the items still bringing in money is the opportunity quilt. It was hand quilted by the Sew and Sews of our church, including stitches by Peg Gallop, Helen Gugeler, Leona Beerup, Crystal Weitkamp, Mary Thronson, and Gerry McGuire. You can still get raffle tickets. The quilt will be

given away at our United Women in Faith High Tea on December 9.

Speaking of tea, don't miss getting your tickets for the **High Tea, Dec 9**, to be held from 3-4:30. We will have a talk on



High Tea by Judie Neufeld. In addition to a selection of teas there will be tea sandwiches and delicious little desserts. It's expected to be a lovely time for all. Look for tickets at the UWF table this coming Sunday, for just \$10.

If you would like to participate in the Advent Christmas Collections Display: Sign up to bring collections to display during services with Gerry McGuire or at the UWF table.

We continue to collect much needed items for Five Cities Homeless Coalition. Needed items are new sweatshirts, underwear, and socks. Your donations are very much appreciated. Donated items can be dropped off at the UWF table in Criswell Hall, or brought to your circle meeting.

Come join us. We'd love to have you!

~submitted by Gerry McGuire, President

Dates to Remember

√ December 3, Deadline for Nome Layette Items

√ December 9, Saturday, 3 pm, UWF Quarterly Meeting, High Tea.

√ December 17, Sunday Deadline for clothes for the homeless.

Thank you Joe Brown!



Cross and Flame Symbol

Adopted shortly after the merger of The United Methodist church and the Evangelical United Methodist Church, the symbol relates the United Methodist Church to God through Christ (cross) and the Holy Spirit (flame). The flame is a reminder of Pentecost when the witnesses were unified by the power of the Holy Spirit and saw "tongues, as of fire" (Acts 2:3). The two tongues of a single flame may also be understood to represent the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church coming together to form the United Methodist Church.

We appreciate the many gifts of our own Joe Brown as a wordsmith, speaker and carpenter too. His latest creation on our behalf is this very nice wall plaque on which is a beautiful replica of the United Methodist symbol, the cross and flame, complete with a written explanation of its meaning.

Bailey Underwood Achieves Therapy Dog Certification

Alliance for Therapy Dogs (ATD) is an international registry of therapy dogs. ATD provides testing, certification, registration, support, and insurance for members who volunteer with their dogs in animal-assisted activities. ATD dogs are well-mannered, well-behaved dogs that enjoy meeting people. All dogs tested for ATD's certification must be up-to-date on vaccines. ATD teams, such as Bailey, provide therapy in many settings, including but not limited to airports, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, rehab facilities, mental health institutions, schools, hospitals, cancer centers, hospice facilities, college campuses and can also provide therapy in patients' homes. ATD doesn't restrict where its teams visit. Bailey and Sandy Underwood are considered a 'therapy team'. They go where needed. Bailey attended more than 5 classes through Gentle Touch to finally participate in the Therapy Dog Certification. Most visits in the hospital are about a minute.

"If our visit is to someone we know, we stay a bit longer. If you're sad, had a recent loss of your pet, if you are a shut-in or living in assisted living or the in the hospital, give us a call. We will come visit. Bailey says woof!!!"



HARVEST LUNCH

A fun and delicious potluck was enjoyed by all. Membership Secretary Priscilla Alquist introduced our newest members.



Frank & Patti Williams
Scott Trees hiding in the back



Rob and Robin Isakson (and there is Scott again)



Michelle Richardson

WELCOME!



Scott Trees
and Rev. Mary

Not Pictured:
Katheryn
Terry
Ramsey



Mark & Sofia McHugh



Bob & Mary Jorstad

FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY

December 2nd is the **Big Christmas Variety Show**. You won't want to miss it. Think Dessert Musical Variety Show. The time is 3pm -5pm, before dinner, actually "tea time". Come have a cup of tea or coffee and pick from an amazing selection of desserts. Pull up your chair, sit back, and be entertained by some very talented people in our congregation. We have two playlets, a magician, a skit, some amazing acting, wonderful singers and a sing-a-long. Start the Christmas season with a fun afternoon!



Fellowship Ministry is putting on this annual Christmas program. We are also busy getting some great field trips together, but need more input. Come join our group. Let the Nominating Committee know you want to come on board. We have fun and get to know a lot of our members in the congregation. Help us plan interesting activities. Talk to Mary Hawkins, Gerry McGuire or Cyndi Rohla.

~submitted by Gerry McGuire

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| *December 2 | Christmas Variety Show 3 pm-5pm |
| *January 20 | Visit the San Luis Obispo Train Museum |
| *February 10 | Paulding Museum Tour with Jim Gregory |
| *February 24 | Branch Street Tour |
| *April | SLO Botanical Gardens |



HAND BELL CHOIR RINGERS NEEDED

All ages are welcome

Ability to read music is a plus but not required

Come join the fun and help make beautiful music

Contact Leonard Lutz or drop in at rehearsal;
Tuesdays and Thursdays
5-6 pm in the Hand Bell Room (Rm 115)

Performances are the 3rd Sunday of each month
(except during summer)
and at special events

***ALL CHURCH SUNDAY
HOSPITALITY TIME***
NOTICE: THE LAST TWO
SUNDAYS OF DECEMBER
THIS YEAR (**DEC 24 AND 31**)
ARE DESIGNATED AS

ALL CHURCH SUNDAYS

Hospitality Time is the time after each of the Sunday Worship Services (both 8:30 and 10:30) for folks to gather and enjoy hospitality with snacks and visiting together.

This year All Church Sunday is for both services on these two special dates.

**Please bring
snacks to share!**

News from the Mission Team

I believe it was in September that I wrote a newsletter article about UMCOR and it's worldwide work. It just so happened that it was about the same time as the fires in Hawaii. The First UMC of Arroyo Grande sent a generous donation to the Lahaina Relief Fund.

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank sent a thank you letter to FUMCAG and Pastor Mary sharing that our gift provided immediate physical and spiritual support to the church and the community of Lahaina. She stated that every dollar will go toward the rebuilding of the historic part of Maui from these devastating fires. Her heart was warmed by our gift and our giving hearts. She signed with a handwritten "Thank you, First UMC!"



We lost our Mission Team Chair, Judy Atwood, in February, a difficult loss not only for the Mission Team but for Arroyo Grande First United Methodist Church.

It's so hard to believe that it's December! It makes me think back to January and the start of the New Year. After months of passing out boxed lunches at the People's Kitchen, the dining area was opened again on January 31st. In February, Rob and I purchased a townhome in my hometown of North Branch, Minnesota. We went to Minnesota to sign papers the end of February, experienced winter once again, and returned to California in March.

We provided casseroles for the People's Kitchen again the 30th of May and then Rob and I left for four months in Minnesota to be with family and friends. Mission Team members made casseroles and served at the People's Kitchen on August 29. Rob and I started the drive back to California on October 1 and made casseroles for 60 to be served on Halloween.

Mission Team new member, Priscilla Alquist, invited Missionary Katherine Parker to speak to members in the McMillan room on November 8. Katherine serves in Nepal and gave an informative presentation on the work of the UMN in Nepal.

The Angel Tree was decorated on November 11 and a Harvest Meal potluck was held on November 12. All were invited. Here we are at Advent once again.

Rob and I have submitted a letter of resignation to Pastor Mary as we feel our absence prevented the Mission Team's progress this year and we will be in Minnesota for more than four months in 2024. The Team needs and deserves a Chair who is available for twelve months. We thank past and present Mission Team members for their support during this year.










~ submitted by Robin Isakson

December

1
1:00 PM Rehearsal. Christmas Variety Show-CH

2

3:00 PM Christmas Variety Show-CH

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>3 First Sunday of Advent 8:30 AM Contemporary Service 10:30 AM Traditional Service UMM Pancake Breakfast starting at 9:30 AM</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5 9:00 AM Senior Exercise--CH 10:00 AM Sew and Sews--MM 11:00 AM Chair Yoga - CH 1 PM Bible Study-CH 5:00 PM Hand Bell Practice-HR</p>	<p>6 9:00 AM Senior Exercise -CH 9:00 AM Church Work Day--CH 10:00 Fellowship Ministry--L</p>	<p>7 9:00 AM Senior Exercise-CH 10:30 AM SPRC-PS 5:00 PM Hand Bell Practice-HR 6:30 PM Choir Rehearsal-S</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9 3:00 PM UWF High Tea--CH </p>
<p>10 Second Sunday of Advent 8:30 AM Contemporary Service 10:30 AM Traditional Service</p>	<p>11 9:00 AM CC Christmas Rehearsal-S 4:30 PM Communications -L</p>	<p>12 9:00 AM Senior Exercise--CH 9:00 AM CC Christmas Rehearsal-S 10:00 AM Sew & Sews--MMR 11:00 AM Chair Yoga - CH 1 PM Bible Study-CH 5:00 PM Hand Bell Practice-HR</p>	<p>13 9:00 AM Senior Exercise-CH 9:00 AM CC Christmas Rehearsal-S 9:00 AM Church Work Day--CH</p>	<p>14 9 AM Sr Exercise-CH 9:00 AM CC Christmas Rehearsal-S 5:00 PM Hand Bell Practice-HR 10:30 AM SPRC-PS 5:00 PM Hand Bell Practice-HR 6:00 PM Children's Center Christmas Program-S 6:30 PM Choir Rehearsal-S</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16 </p>
<p>17 Third Sunday of Advent 8:30 AM Contemporary Service 10:30 AM Traditional Service</p>	<p>18 10:30 AM UWF Book Club--L </p>	<p>19 No Senior Exercise 10:00 AM Sew and Sews--MMR 11 AM Chair Yoga-CH 1 PM-Bible Study-CH 6:30 PM JOY Circle-MMR 7:00 PM Board of Trustees--CH</p>	<p>20 No Senior Exercise 9:00 AM Church Work Day--CH 10:00 AM UWF Steering Comm-L 2:00 PM Church Council--MMR 6:30 PM JOY Circle-MMR</p>	<p>21 9:00 AM Senior Exercise-CH 6:30 PM Choir Rehearsal-S</p>	<p>22 4:30 PM CC Board Meeting--MMR</p>	<p>23 </p>
<p>24 Fourth Sunday of Advent Christmas Eve 8:30 AM Contemporary Service 10:30 AM Traditional Service 7:00 PM Candle-light Service</p>	<p>25 Christmas Day </p>	<p>26 No Senior Exercise 10:00 AM Sew and Sews--MMR 11:00 AM Chair Yoga-CH</p>	<p>27 No Senior 9:00 AM Church Work Day--CH</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30 </p>
<p>31 First Sunday after Christmas Day 8:30 AM Contemporary Service 10:30 AM Traditional Service </p>	<p>2024 happy new year </p>		<p></p>		<p>Abbreviation Legend CH—Criswell Hall S—Sanctuary K—Kitchen L—Library Room #123 MMR—McMillen Room #113 PL— Parking Lot PS— Pastor's Study HR—Handbell Room #115</p>	

Meet Our CHURCH STAFF

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TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY

Facilitated by Nancy St. Laurent

Tuesdays 1:00 p.m. Criswell Hall

We will meet on December 5 and 12.

A new Bible Study will start in the new year, around January 2.

We are currently reading
Experiencing Christmas
 by Matt Rawle



WOULD YOU LIKE TO ORDER FLOWERS FOR WORSHIP?

Do you enjoy the beautiful flower arrangements placed on the altar on Sundays? Dates are available for Sunday morning flower dedications in upcoming months. Your floral tributes are welcomed and will be placed on the altar for both services on Sunday. You can pick up your arrangement after the second service. Just let us know.

The cost for altar flowers is \$30.

Orders can be made from the Grand Bouquet on your request. Orders can also be placed to have Brad Bettencourt create an arrangement using Trader Joe flowers. Please contact Frances in the Church Office. She is the liaison with both Grand Bouquet and Brad.



Judy Heiney	02/01
David Beaman	12/03
Stephen Wise	12/05
Michael Balster	12/07
Adeline Bottorff	12/08
Jamie Foster	12/09
Eva McClure	12/09
Michael Clark	12/10
Nancy Sperling	12/10
Deborah Lewis	02/13
Susan Thronson	12/13
Karen Brown	12/16
Julie Burns	12/16
Kent Unsworth	12/20
Cyndee Rohla	12/24
Scott Trees	12/27
Harry Egan	12/30



Hope, Joy & Love Rising



First United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande

275 North Halcyon Road
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www.facebook.com/fumcag

December



2023



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Children's Center Chronicle

SPECIAL EVENTS ON THE FIRST WEEKEND IN DECEMBER

Saturday, December 2

**Christmas Variety Show with Desserts
3 PM to 5 PM**

Sunday, December 3

**United Methodist Men's
Famous Pancake Breakfast
Starting at 9:30 AM**

See inside for details on both events!