



# Chapel Tidings

## Community Presbyterian Church

December 2011  
Volume XXXVI  
Issue XI

*"Sharing Ministry with First Congregational Church of Antioch."*

### From the Pastor

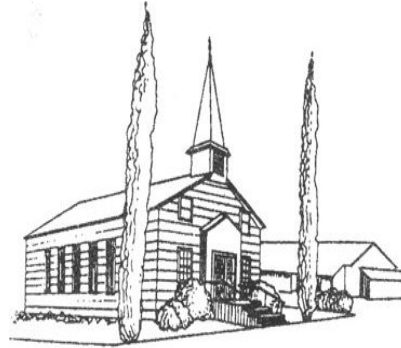
Dear Friends,

We are currently two-thirds through our 90 Days of Revisioning. As we read these devotions together, we are invited to consider what it is God may be calling us to do and be as East County Shared Ministry. What should our vision be to best serve East County? What can we do that no one else can do? What must we change about ourselves to be ready to live out this new vision?

The sermon series Christy and I have been sharing have been planned to help us think more deeply about the life cycles of our congregations, including explorations about the markers of fruitful, growing congregations.

While we have been reading and praying together, we haven't had too many opportunities for us to start to listen to one another's responses. This Advent, as we prepare our hearts for the coming of the "one who comes in the name of the Lord," we will be given some opportunities to begin to respond. During these times together, I hope that we get a clearer sense of who it is CPC and FCCA are called to be separately so that in the next year we may plainly hear what it may be that we have to offer to one another as we explore what it will mean to work together.

So we will be intentional about



## December Shared Ministry Events

- **Men's Fellowship**

*Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 8:00 am  
at Country Waffles in Pittsburg.*

- **Joint CPC/FCCA Women's Fellowship Luncheon**

*Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 am at Bev Peterson's home (5460 Southwood Way, Antioch)*

- **Advent Party**

*Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>! Crafts at 4:00 pm, singing at 5:30 and dinner at 6:00 pm! Decorate your table and sign-up to bring a traditional part of the meal with the Deacons.*

- **Longest Night Service**

*Acknowledging grief, Wednesday, Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 pm in CSR.*

- **Two Candlelight Christmas Services**

*Saturday, Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm and 10:00 pm  
in the Camp Stoneman Chapel.*

# The Church Family

**Midweek Evening Study for Adults:** Will take a break until February 26<sup>th</sup>, as we begin a Lenten study Wednesday evenings at 7:30 pm in the CSR.

**Youth Group:** We will meet regularly on the 2nd Sunday of the month at 12:30 in the Camp Stoneman Room. That means our next meeting is Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>. Because of Thanksgiving and Christmas, we won't be having activities late in the month until the new year.

**College Group for Young Adults:** Wednesday, December 21st at 2:00 pm. Once a month, our Young Adults will meet on a Wednesday evening for an informal conversation about the 10<sup>th</sup> Chapter of "A People's History of Christianity" by Diana Butler Bass.

**LGBTQ Film Series:** We will next meet at 7:00 pm on Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup> in the CSR to watch some of the best Shorts and videos on LGBTQ inclusion and civil rights from the internet.

*Both CPC and FCCA have committed to being a safe space for all those affected by bullying or in need of counseling. Please call us rather than consider any acts that would be self-destructive.*

**Biblical Self-Defense Course:** By appointment with Pastor Will.

**Tuesday Morning Bible Study:** Our study will begin a new book in December. Please talk to Pastor Will about joining the group. We meet at 10:00 am on Tuesday mornings in the Stoneman Room.

**Classic Movie Series:** Will be taking a break for a few months. Let Pastor Will if you are interested in getting it going again.

**Theology Pub:** Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 to 9:00 pm, this time at Humphrey's by the Delta. Come on down, taste a brew (or not), and let's talk about God.

**Please continue to save and bring in redeemable plastic bottles and cans!** You can leave them in the church kitchen and they will be picked up. The money we receive from the recycling goes directly to the children's Westminster Woods Camp Fund. Thank you for your generosity!!

*Happy Birthday!  
December & January*



DECEMBER		JANUARY	
3	Laura Ferguson	4	Sarah Shipe Gus Broers
5	Betty Brown	6	Sue Ferguson
10	Bonnie Bertelson	10	Karen Hastings Flegel
12	Blake Hamilton	11	Alison Pauline
13	Sherri Borick	17	Jenny Sears
15	Mary Lieser	19	Nora Lynn Buluran
16	Chris Sears	20	Nate Sears Bob Flegel
18	Logan Kenney	24	Jeremy Flegel
21	Tom Deans-Flegal Jason Hansen	26	Chidi Umozurike
22	Donald Clark Travis Parker	27	Sophia Hansen
30	Ethan Sullivan	28	Barry Winkler

## SHARED MINISTRY

**Weekly Worship Services CPC-FCCA**

- December 18<sup>th</sup> will be our monthly

## Sparkle Sunday

Wear something that shines to share the light of Christ.

**Bring a can of food or a donation for the food banks.**

**Christmas Trees:** Thank you all who supported the pre-sale of the Christmas trees to help our kids go to camp next summer. Your support is greatly appreciated. The delivery/pick-up date is December 3rd. If you thought you missed out on ordering a Christmas tree, it's your lucky day! There has been an extension. You can order by calling me personally up until November 30th. Again the sizes and prices are: 5-6 ft tree \$55, 6-7 ft tree \$65, 7-8 ft tree \$75. The trees will be available for pick-up December 3 at 9 AM. Delivery can be arranged. Just give me a call. Mary Burks (925) 427-7225.

### **Pastor's Letter continued...**

creating opportunities for us to Listen – first to God, and then to one another. We will be invited to Discerning God's will together, asking us to be receptive to the Spirit's leading. We will also be encouraged to Trust our past, so we can move into the future with new vigor and energy.

We are people on a journey, invited to follow the ways of God, as we seek to serve our neighbors and neighborhoods. As I mentioned in a message not too long ago, there are significant changes happening all around us – culturally, politically, and socially. And as we see the things that the church used to do not be as successful as they once were, we are invited to change along with the world and to try new ministries and outreach ideas to minister to a changing world.

As we make our way into the future, we may experience the holy in new and unexpected ways. The familiar milestones may not be recognizable, and we may even be surprised by the new thing that God is doing in our midst. Like coming to us in the child of Nazareth, perhaps God will surprise us again.

Together we serve,

Pastor Will

**Christian Education:** This year's Christmas Pageant will be presented Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup> during worship. Rehearsal will be Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Orphans Christmas:** For those of you that don't have much family around, come celebrate Christmas with your Church family. Richard James & Jerry Castleberry would like to invite you all to a Christmas gathering, December 25<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm in the Social Hall. Turkey and all other traditional dishes will be provided but you are welcome to bring your favorite dish. Any help is greatly appreciated. RSVP list will be posted in the Narthex and in the kitchen in the Social Hall.

**Angel Tree Gifts** for foster children need to be at Church by Sunday, November 27<sup>th</sup> or at the Church office by December 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Social Hall Rentals:** Please contact our new Events Coordinator, Lisa Hansen for information. Private Rental rates for your friends are based on the number in attendance. CPC & FCCA members get the Church Member rates. Lisa can be contacted at 925.356.1918 or [lisamichele01@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lisamichele01@sbcglobal.net)

### **Beautiful Weddings in the Camp Stoneman Chapel:**

*If you or someone you know is getting married, I would love to meet with them and help to plan their big day.*  
Lisa Hansen ~ CPC Wedding Coordinator.



*Happy Anniversary!*  
*December*

22 Chris and Cherie Persing  
29 Forrest and Betty Brown

### **Upcoming Small Group Meetings:**

- **Men's Breakfast Group** will meet again December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 8:00 am at Country Waffles in Pittsburg.
- **The Joint FCCA-CPC Luncheon** will meet Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at Bev Peterson's home (5460 Southwood Way, Antioch 94531) at 11:30 am. Remember to bring items for Christmas gift baskets.

**Shared Ministry Update:** The next joint Session-Cabinet meeting will be a Day Retreat with our Consultant on Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm in the Stoneman Room.

**Women's Weekends** at Westminster Woods are scheduled! Take a minute to go to [www.westminsterwoods.org](http://www.westminsterwoods.org) and check it out. Week-end 1 is January 27-29 with Rev Debbie Whaley and the theme is Faith. Rev Judith Stone will be the leader on the February 3-5 week-end with the theme of Blessing. I am sort of leaning towards the February date just because Rev Whaley was the leader last year. Keep this in mind and plan to join us. We had a lot of fun last year when we went. Talk to me if you have any questions. Mary Burks

# Prayer Page

**Prayers of Concern:** Those affected by the earthquake in Turkey. Continuing relief efforts in Haiti, Japan and Pakistan. Safety for all in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, and Sudan. California Public Schools and teachers. The economy, and those laid off or in need of employment. The rise of democratic protesters around the globe. Friends and families of those who have taken their lives. Birdsell family after Polly's death. Shirley Murphy, husband passed in March and is severely depressed. Ingrid Broer's aunt Torry, who is close to death, and Pete her husband. The family of Virginia Fleming, at her death. The family of Molly Clark.

**Prayers For Sisters and Brothers Around the World:** The Gulf Coast; Conflict in the Middle East; Darfur, Sudan; East Congo, Bolivia; Columbia; Venezuela; Lebanon, Israel-Palestine, North Korea, and Mumbai, India. Long term aid to Tsunami victims; children in Tsunami areas and the victims of Hurricanes, those affected by earthquakes, and the unrest in Pakistan. For those who serve in the Armed Forces. For those who suffer from hunger and thirst; loneliness; illness; malnutrition; ageism. For those who are excluded; homeless; friendless; the underemployed and the jobless.

## Prayers For Our Mission Partners

*Prayers for the ministry of Habitat for Humanity and the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County, Loaves and Fishes, P.I.C.E.S., the Antioch Ministerial Food Bank, the Literacy Project in Pittsburg, the Presbytery of San Francisco, the Bay Association of the Northern California-Nevada Conference, UCC, Westminster Woods, Rev. Charles Tinsley at Juvenile Detention Center, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Winter Nights Rotating Shelter, Shelter Inc., Heifer International, and the Al-Basma School and Program in Beit Sahour, Palestine, Joining Hands – Bolivia, Hesperian International, and the Keep Hope Alive Program.*



**Prayers of Healing:** Roy Hanson, Renée Moore. Virginia Devens. Helen Woodall (Myrdell's mother), Lucille Corzine, Jeanette Pickering, Reggie Washington, Alice Gibbons. Craig Comontofski (husband of Linda Thomas – Helen Thomas' daughter.) Susanna Pieters (Evert's aunt, with cancer). Lois Zollars. Corey Pettus-McCoy (related to Letha Arms, has a brain tumor.) Valerie Galarza. Sig and Edie Lanstrom. Starr Lieber & Kathy Anderson.



## December Prayer Families and Churches

*December 4*

Betty LaMar  
**St. James Presbyterian Church – SF**  
Hazel Coward  
**United Church of Hayward UCC**

*December 11*

Nina Javier  
**St. John's Presbyterian Church – SF**  
Carol Czarnowski & Jan Schrock  
**Arlington Community UCC – Kensington**

*December 18*

The Kenney Family  
**St. Paul's Presbyterian Church – SF**  
Marge Deal  
**United Christian Church, Disciples of Christ – Livermore**

*December 25*

Kal & Carol Krishnan  
**Bethel Presbyterian Church – San Leandro**  
Paul & Jane Fish  
**First Congregational UCC – Martinez**

**Prayer cards are located in the Narthex by the Guest Book**

# December Celebrations

## December 4<sup>th</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent

Isa. 40:1-11; Ps. 85:1-2, 8-13; Peter 3:8-15a  
Mark 1:1-8

Rev. Christy Parks-Ramage

## December 11<sup>th</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

Isa. 61:1-4, 8-11; Ps. 126 or Luke 1:47-55;  
1 Thess. 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

Rev. Will McGarvey

## December 18<sup>th</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

2 Sam. 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:47-55 or  
Ps. 89:1-4, 19-26; Rom. 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

Children's Christmas Pageant

## December 24<sup>th</sup> Christmas Eve

Isa. 9:2-7; Ps. 96; Titus 2:11-14  
Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

5:00 pm Service - Rev. Christy Parks-Ramage

10:00 pm Service – Rev. Will McGarvey

## December 25<sup>th</sup> Nativity of Jesus Christ / Christmas Day

*Dawn:* Isa. 62:6-12; Ps. 97; Titus 3:4-7

Luke 2:(1-7) 8-20

*Day:* Isa. 52:7-10; Ps. 98; Heb. 1:1-4 (5-12)

John 1:1-14

Rev. Christy Parks-Ramage



## Worship Leaders

### December 4

Liturgist	Debi Johnson
Ushers	Richard Pankey
Greeters	Matt Taum & Tristan Mendoza
Acolyte	Madeline Hansen

### December 11

Liturgist	Myrdell Dybdal
Ushers	Chris Persing
Greeters	The Arms Family
Acolyte	Joshua Peterson

### December 18

Liturgist	Mike Sullivan
Ushers	George Stephens
Greeters	Evert & Margaret Diest Lorgion
Acolyte	Michael Conant

### December 21 Longest Night Service



### December 25

Liturgist	New Way Service
Ushers	Matt Taum & Tristan Mendoza
Greeters	Richard & Betty Pankey
Acolyte	Jacob Conant

Dear Church Family,

To say that I was surprised would be an understatement – I was stunned!! Thank you for the lovely observance of my 50 years of church music ministry.

If you want to have a secret kept, give the job to Myrdell, Lois Z., Betsy, Elaine G., Jan and Carol C. I can't believe that I didn't have a clue about what was going on.

A part of the generous monetary gift will go towards the music fund for something special. The remainder will be used for something for my family, who has always been supportive of my efforts, to enjoy.

I have been truly blessed to serve God and this community of believers who mean so much to me and my family. Thank you all for your thoughtful words and gifts.

With God's love,  
Ann



### **“Pacem” – Christmas with the Oakland East Bay Gay Men's Chorus**

Mark your calendars and join the men of Oakland East Bay Gay Men's Chorus for a concert of Christmas and other music. This year there are four performances scheduled, the first of which will be at Clayton Valley Presbyterian Church. Performances are scheduled as follows:

Friday	December 2 <sup>nd</sup> 8:00pm Clayton Valley Presbyterian Church
Saturday	December 3 <sup>rd</sup> 2:00pm Lake Merritt United Methodist Church December 3 <sup>rd</sup> 7:30pm Lake Merritt United Methodist Church
Sunday	December 4 <sup>th</sup> 7:00pm Lake Merritt United Methodist Church

Note: a portion of the proceeds from the concert at CVPC will benefit Rainbow Community Center in Concord.

Tickets are \$20 premium, \$15 general admission, and \$12 for students and seniors. Tickets can be purchased on-line at [www.oebgmc.org](http://www.oebgmc.org) You can also buy tickets directly from Lyle Swallow (and Lyle will be making a donation to CVPC for each ticket that is bought from him for the CVPC concert).

### **Minutes for Regular Stated Meeting of Session November 22, 2011**

**Call to order** at Tristan Mendoza's home at 6:35 pm with introduction of prospective new members Brenda and Jim Atchison, and checking in by all present.

**Elders present:** Dave Arms, Jim Campbell, Tristan Mendoza, Betty Brown, Myrdell Dybdal, and Moderator Will McGarvey. A quorum was present.

**Elders excused:** Allan Grissette, Carol Krishnan

**Elder absent:** Jerry Castleberry

#### **Examination and reception of new members:**

Brenda and Jim Atchison wish to transfer their membership from First Presbyterian Church, San Rafael. They recently moved to Pittsburg and live in the house Jim grew up in. They were very active in their former church and bring many gifts to CPC. We shared stories about the CPC community, and what Brenda and Jim hope for with their membership.

**Opening prayer and reading of the mission statement** was led by Pastor Will

**Discussion of chapter 3 “Open Source Church”.**

We are to read chapter 4 for the December session meeting. **Docket was read and approved**

**MSC to approve minutes** of Regular Session Meeting October 25, 2011, Joint CPC Session/FCCA Cabinet meeting November 20.

**SPECIAL REPORTS: Clerk of Session:** 92

members. The membership number was adjusted from 95 to 93 to reconcile to what the clerk believes is the actual number (Mary Coburn and Louise Meyer were not removed from the rolls in 2009). Molly Clark died November 2, 2011. Membership roll was reviewed, and the following noted: Brian and Patricia Mickelwait requested removal from the rolls; Gleam Green asked to be moved to inactive, clerk will write letters to Tish Brown (moved to Santa Rosa in 2010), Lynn Lessely, and Laurie Pease inquiring about their desire to remain as active members. Deacons will be asked for current information about Jeanne Daigne. **Correspondence:**

More Light Presbyterians thanking us for our contribution. **Pastor's Report:** Normal meetings and Bible Studies. Helped lead Youth Group field trip to a corn maze in Livermore. Attended 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Iglesia Presbiteriana de la Mision, in SF. Met with Rev. Mark Koenig from the PC(USA) UN office. Led two panels at the Transgender Religious Leaders Summit. Led the Memorial celebration for Molly Clark. I have to commend the Deacons for a wonderful hospitality luncheon. I participated and helped lead the CCISCO action at St. Ignatius Church on November 7<sup>th</sup>. I attended the PICO National Clergy Conference in New Orleans, LA, helping kick off the national “Lifelines to Healing” effort to promote education and decrease violence in our communities.

*Continues on page 7*

Session Meeting notes continued...

**Presbytery Meeting report:** Presbytery met November 8. Present and preaching at the meeting was the Moderator of GA, ruling elder Cindy Bolbach. Lois Zollars was nominated to be a commissioner to the 2012 General Assembly in Pittsburgh, PA. The 2012 presbytery budget and per capita apportionment of \$32 per member were approved. Next Presbytery meeting will be January 31 at Grace PC, Walnut Creek. CPC is entitled to send 2 elder commissioners to presbytery meetings (reduced from 3 in 2011). **Treasurer Report:** Submitted by Carol Hosmer 11/20, reviewed.

**Deacons:** Met on November 13<sup>th</sup>, no report. **Event Coordinator:** No report. **Nominating Committee:** Meetings will be scheduled. Betty noted how much better we would be with more diversity, and how difficult it is to find people willing to serve as deacons and ruling elders. **Personnel Committee:** Reports and personnel reviews have been emailed to session members. It is noted that personnel reviews are confidential information. **Shared Ministry Update:** We held a joint Session-Cabinet meeting on Sunday, Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>, where Pastor Christy shared some of her thoughts about FCCA needing more time to do some of their identity work that they have not been able to do over the last year, asking us to consider extending our time of discernment. She also asked that her and Pastor Will's Sabbatical be included in this extended time for the pastors to do some study about the Emergent Church to include in our conversations. Next meeting will be the Session-Cabinet Day Retreat on Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup> with our Consultant, Rev. Glenna Shepherd.

**MSC to receive special reports. Session approval by email:** none **Consent Calendar:** none

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:** **Alternative Worship:** none **Building & Grounds:** none **Christian Education:** Met 11/9. Tristan passed around the script for the Christmas pageant to be presented 12/18. MSC to approve the script. **Church World Issues:** There will be a Christmas Joy Offering in December. **Fellowship:** none **Stewardship:** Pledge drive wrapped up November 20 with presentation and blessing of the pledges. **Welcoming and Publicity:** Report was emailed, but session members did not receive it. **Worship:** none

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- MSC to approve and send on to the Presbytery of San Francisco an Overture to Concur, with amended rationale, the Overture sent to the 220<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) by the Presbytery of Boston.
- MSC to approve and send on to the Presbytery of San Francisco an Overture to Concur, with amended rationale, the Overture sent to the 220<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) by the Presbytery of Hudson River.
- MSC to approve the following 2012 Regular Stated Meeting schedule: January 24<sup>th</sup>, February 28<sup>th</sup>, April 24<sup>th</sup>, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, June 26<sup>th</sup>, August 19<sup>th</sup>, September 25<sup>th</sup>, November 27<sup>th</sup>, December 11<sup>th</sup>.
- 2011 rummage sale organizers do not plan to do it next year, and if there is a rummage sale would like to see new leadership or a new way of doing it. A suggestion is to have items brought to the church, organized and priced on a Friday and the rummage sale on Saturday. Another suggestion is to ask FCCA if they would like to do a joint rummage sale, with proceeds used for a project to benefit both congregations.
- Rainbow Community Center lease and building usage concerns: The agreement is for the RCC to use the Camp Stoneman Room from 2-6 pm on Thursdays, but it appears they are there other times during the week. Will agreed to work with them to formalize when they are there, and adjust the lease rate if necessary.
- Oversight of leases/rentals (collecting lease and rent fees, building usage, etc.): Discussed the need for tracking monies due and received from groups using the facilities outside of the Event Coordinator's responsibilities. Will volunteered to work with Jessica to set up a tracking system.
- Consider setting aside money from each Social Hall rental for building maintenance: Jim requested that we continue this discussion at the December meeting. He will talk with Lisa about the feasibility, and should have a better idea of what some of the maintenance projects will cost.
- Reviewed Personnel Reviews submitted to date by the Personnel Committee.

#### **CONTINUING BUSINESS:**

- IAC lease update: Lease has been received by the IAC and is about ready to be signed. The group will be meeting on Thursday evenings beginning in January, so they won't be in the space at the same time as Youth Champions.
- The proposed Christmas tree lot will not happen, due to not enough pre-sales.
- Budget process and recommendation: Work has not yet started on the 2012 budget.
- Adding an Alternative Gift Page to the website – allowing people to give to the church and gift cards for our mission partners that we choose to highlight. This is on hold until the website is updated.
- Talk about our 5 FOR 5 feedback forms.

**Meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm** with closing prayer led by Will. Next Session Meeting: December 27 at 6:30 pm hosted by Dave. Congregational Meeting scheduled for January 22, 2012. Joint CPC/FCCA leadership retreat scheduled for February 4, 2012 in the Camp Stoneman Room. Session/Deacon Retreat scheduled for March 10, 2012. Next Joint Session/Cabinet meeting: Scheduled for April 1, 2012 at 11:30 am in the Stoneman Room.

Respectfully submitted, Myrdell Dybdal, Clerk of Session

## FCCA CORNER

### Shadow of the Cross

By: Edie Lanstrom

I love the Christmas Season!

During these Advent days, words of Christmas hymns float through my head as I go about daily living. I listen to Christmas music while on the computer. I find myself dawdling over an item in a store as I listen to a favorite Christmas carol. Each Christmas Sig and I delight in listening to Handel's *Messiah* on a CD. However, to me, the best Christmas music is the music I hear sung by church choirs and congregations. The vividness of human voices singing well-known carols wraps me in the unconditional love of the Christ child.

Every Christmas I find myself reflecting on a Christmas sermon I heard about 25 years ago in which the minister preached on the "babe in Bethlehem." While this minister marveled at the miracle of the Savior's birth in a stable, he cautioned the congregation to acknowledge the shadow of the cross hanging over the babe in the manger. A cross on which the beautiful baby would die a brutal death to give humankind eternal life.

Then the minister went on to say, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). This scripture is the part of the sermon over which I have most meditated. As I have mulled over cross situations in my life—two bouts with cancer, a son with a chronic illness, months of coping with Valley Fever, a husband who now faces multiple health problems—, my first reaction to each difficulty was less than positive. *No way can I handle this. I'm not a super woman. Enough is enough.* After I have finished my tantrum, I would pray to God for emotional and spiritual strength to deal with whatever I faced. As I prayed, calmness would flow through me. I knew the Christ of the Cross would uphold me as I dealt with formidable circumstances.

While I will continue to revel in the glorious beauty of these Christmas days, I also will remember the shadow of the cross hanging over the babe in Bethlehem.

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**Notes from the Fellowship Committee:** On behalf of the Fellowship Committee I'd like to Thank everyone that participated in the Thanksgiving Dinner. Dinner was wonderful and a huge success, a succulent Thanksgiving feast. There were representatives from different Congregations who came to share this special day with us. We would like to Thank everyone who brought food and to all the members of the fellowship committee that worked very hard to make sure all Dietary needs were met. We look forward to having a bigger and better Thanksgiving Dinner next year, the Sunday before Thanksgiving. Also, if you haven't submitted your reservations for the Advent Dinner, please do so as soon as possible. Contact the Church Office or a member of the Fellowship Committee. Thanks again to you all! *-Janis Bellinger-Harris*

**Outreach Committee:** There will be an Outreach Committee meeting on Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm in the Camp Stoneman Room.

We will be collecting Christmas gifts for the children at Turner School again this year. Gifts are to be labeled boy, girl, or baby. Please bring your gifts to church by December 11<sup>th</sup> so they can be given to the children before Christmas vacation.

Many thanks for your response to the request from Shepherd's Gate. In time for the Thanksgiving holiday, the Outreach Committee delivered a beautiful assortment of food to the women living at Shepherd's Gate. Shepherd's Gate, a Christian based organization in Brentwood, provides shelter and resources for women and children displaced by abuse, financial hardships and addictions.

The **Joint CPC/FCCA Women's Fellowship Luncheon** will be Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at Bev Peterson's home (5460 Southwood Way, Antioch 94531) at 11:30 am. Remember to bring items for Christmas gift baskets.

## FCCA December Birthdays



## Happy Birthday!

Dec. 1	Barbara Sellers
Dec. 3	Audry Lamb
Dec. 8	Hazel Coward
Dec. 11	Richard Peck
Dec. 14	Ezekiel E. Ronald-Bellinger
Dec. 19	Judy Hartz
Dec. 24	Jim Becker

# Church and Society: LGBTQ Film Series

East County Shared Ministry: Community Presbyterian Church

First Congregational Church of Antioch (UCC)

Stoneman Room, 200 E. Leland Rd., Pittsburg, CA

Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm



Join us in the Stoneman Room for a special screening of the film:

## Internet Shorts

*Free. With coffee house refreshments and informal conversation.*

Matt and Tristan are gathering some of their favorite LGBTQ videos and shorts from the internet. You can let them know your favorites as well for our next gathering on Tuesday, Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>. Come on by for some good fun and conversation.

If you haven't yet seen the East County Shared Ministry "Let's Make It Better Now" video, you can go to [www.cpcpittsburg.org](http://www.cpcpittsburg.org) and find it on our homepage.



*Don't forget to share your support by wearing a rainbow bracelet or sharing your support vocally. Let's make a difference in the lives of young LGBTQ people.*

# Youth Page

## Fall 2011 Calendar:

### Save the dates –

Sun. Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> – Youth Group @ Noon in the CSR.

Sun. Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> – Youth Group @ Noon in the CSR.

Saturday Jan. 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> – Winter Camp! Registration Forms coming soon.

Sun. Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> – Youth Group @ Noon in the CSR.

Friday Feb. 24<sup>th</sup> – 30 Hour Famine Fast Lock-in @ 6:00 pm to 8:00 am at the church.

Sun. March 11<sup>th</sup> – Youth Group @ Noon in the CSR.

Sun. April 15<sup>th</sup> – Youth Group @ Noon in the CSR.

**teens and parents please print out this page and post it on the fridge!**

### Youth Leaders:

Kylie McLaughlin	206-6931
Carol Hosmer	207-1485
Larry Bishop	437-1191
Libby Brownrigg	628-9706
Will McGarvey	597-9797

## Wanted!

*East County Teenagers interested in exploring life's issues, serving the community, and having fun together.*



Dear Friends at FCCA and CPC,

Greetings on this first Sunday of Advent.

I have been talking with your pastors for a number of weeks now, getting to know your congregations and your work together as East County Shared Ministry. In coming together in worship and mission, you are forging the way for the church of the future. I am moved by your courage and commitment, by the faith that calls you to take the bold steps to weave the traditions of your two congregations together in a new, yet-to-be-discovered way.



Just a bit of introduction: I'm working with CPC and FCCA in my capacity as a church renewal consultant for The Center for Progressive Renewal. I am also a local church pastor, currently serving Decatur United Church of Christ in Decatur, Georgia ([www.decaturucc.org](http://www.decaturucc.org)). Prior to coming to the UCC, I was a pastor and elder (similar to a conference minister in the UCC or Presbytery Exec in the PC(USA)) in Metropolitan Community Churches. I have Bachelor's and Master's degrees in music, a Master of Divinity (Emory University), and did D.Min. work at PSR in Berkeley. My primary ministry interests are new church starts, church renewal, ecumenical/interfaith ministries, and worship.

As I anticipate being with you in early February, I have enjoyed reading the devotionals along with you as you have shared that practice over the past couple of months. When we meet in person, I look forward to hearing your stories about your connection to your church, your thoughts about the identity and place of the church in today's world, and your hopes and dreams for the future of your congregations. You have exciting opportunities ahead: opportunities to shape a new mission, to cast a vision for your church in what many consider a post-church world. As you make decisions together, I would love to hear what areas of ministry are rewarding to you, what worries you, and what you find exciting about your future.

Sometimes we think of Advent as preparation for Christmas, but Advent is truly a contemplative season. Like Lent, Advent invites us to reflect, to watch and wait with open hearts and anticipate God's new work in us and through us. Your Advent worship themes: Listening, Discerning, Trusting, and Celebrating offer a creative lens through which to experience the birth of Jesus, both in history and in the fertile time of change in your churches' life. May these days of Advent be a time of hope for each of you.

In Prayer and Service with you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glenna Shepherd". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Glenna Shepherd



# Chapel Tidings

December 2011  
Volume XXXVI  
Issue XI



A monthly newsletter of the Community Presbyterian Church  
200 East Leland Rd, Pittsburg, CA 94565 Phone (925) 439-9361



TIME DATED MATERIAL

Return Service Requested

**Ann Custer's 50<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary of  
Music Ministry  
at CPC was celebrated  
Sunday, November 27<sup>th</sup>.**



## December Events at ECSM

- **Annual Advent Dinner in the Social Hall**

*Come and Decorate your table with our friends and family from First Congregational Church of Antioch on Sunday, December 4th! Sign-ups for providing portions for this traditional dinner will be available soon.*

- **Longest Night Service**

*Acknowledging grief, Wednesday, Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 pm in CSR.*

- **Two Candlelight Christmas Services**

*Saturday, Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm & 10:00 pm in the Camp Stoneman Chapel. Invite a friend.*

# JOINT CALENDAR OF EVENTS DECEMBER 2011

<p><b>November 27</b>  <b>10:00 AM New Way Service in the Chapel</b>  <b>11:30 Chancel Choir Practice</b>  <b>12:45 pm New Way Practice</b></p> <p>4-7 MC sanctuary &amp; classrooms</p>	<p><b>November 28</b>  <b>10:00 am Bible Study in Antioch</b>    <b>3:00 – 6:00pm – Rainbow Community Center – CSR</b>  <b>6:30 PM Adventure Scouts</b>  <b>7:30 PM Boy Scouts</b></p>	<p><b>November 29</b>  <b>10:00 am Bible Study</b>    <b>6:00 PM Cub Scouts</b></p>	<p><b>November 30</b>  <b>2:00 PM College Group-Will's Study</b>    <b>5:00 PM – Youth Champions-SH</b></p>	<p><b>DECEMBER 1</b>  <b>1:00 – 5:00 pm – Rainbow Community Center – CSR</b></p>	<p><b>2</b>  <b>7:30 – 9 PM Ministerio Cristiano Sanctuary &amp; 2 class rooms</b></p>	<p><b>3</b>  <b>8am Men's Breakfast Group @ Country Waffles</b>    <b>10:30am East Bay Festival Chorus Rehearsal - Sanctuary</b>  <b>5 – 10 PM – Crossroads – Sanctuary, CSR &amp; Classrooms</b></p>
<p><b>4</b>    <b>10:00 AM Communion Worship Service Chapel</b>  <b>11:30 AM Cabinet Meeting</b>  <b>12:45 pm Handbell Practice</b></p> <p><b>Advent Dinner - SH</b>  <b>4 PM – Crafts</b>  <b>6 PM – Dinner</b></p> <p>4-7 MC sanctuary &amp; classrooms</p>	<p><b>5</b>  <b>10:00 am Bible Study in Antioch</b>  <b>3:00 – 6:00pm – Rainbow Community Center – CSR</b>  <b>6:30 PM Adventure Scouts</b>  <b>7:30 PM Boy Scouts</b></p>	<p><b>6</b>  <b>10:00 am Bible Study</b>    <b>6:00 PM Cub Scouts</b></p>	<p><b>7</b>  <b>11:30 am Joint Women's Fellowship at Bev Peterson's Home</b>    <b>5:00 PM – Youth Champions-SH</b>    <b>6:30 PM- HOA – JR. High Room</b></p>	<p><b>8</b>  <b>1:00 – 5:00 pm – Rainbow Community Center – CSR</b>    <b>7:00 PM LGBTQ Film Series – Shorts in the CSR</b></p>	<p><b>9</b>  <b>7:30 – 9 PM Ministerio Cristiano Sanctuary &amp; 2 class rooms</b></p>	<p><b>10</b>  <b>10:30am East Bay Festival Chorus Rehearsal - Sanctuary</b>    <b>7:30 – 9:30 PM Ministerio Cristiano - SH</b>    <b>5 – 10 PM – Crossroads – Sanctuary, CSR &amp; Classrooms</b></p>
<p><b>11</b>  <b>10:00 AM Joint Worship Service Chapel</b>  <b>11:30 Chancel Choir Practice</b></p> <p><b>Noon to 2:00 Youth Group meeting in the CSR</b></p> <p>4-7 MC Sanctuary &amp; classrooms</p>	<p><b>12</b>  <b>10:00 am Bible Study in Antioch</b>    <b>1:00 PM Outreach Meeting - CSR</b>  <b>3:00 – 6:00pm – Rainbow Community Center – CSR</b>    <b>6:30 PM Adventure Scouts</b>  <b>7:30 PM Boy Scouts</b></p>	<p><b>13</b>  <b>10:00 am Bible Study</b>    <b>6:00 PM Cub Scouts</b>    <b>7:00 PM Theology Pub @ Humphrey's</b></p>	<p><b>14</b>  <b>5:00 PM – Youth Champions-SH</b></p>	<p><b>15</b>  <b>1:00 – 5:00 pm Rainbow Community Center – CSR</b></p>	<p><b>16</b>  <b>7:30 – 9 PM Ministerio Cristiano Sanctuary &amp; 2 class rooms</b></p>	<p><b>17</b>    <b>8:00 AM Private Event – SH</b>    <b>2:00 pm Rainbow Community Center – CSR</b>    <b>5 – 10 PM – Crossroads – Sanctuary, CSR &amp; Classrooms</b></p>
<p><b>18</b>  <b>10:00 AM Sparkle Sunday Service – Chapel</b>  <b>12:45 pm New Way Practice</b>  <b>12:45 pm Handbell Practice</b></p> <p>4-7 MC sanctuary &amp; classrooms</p>	<p><b>19</b>  <b>10:00 am Bible Study in Antioch</b>    <b>3:00 – 6:00pm – Rainbow Community Center – CSR</b>  <b>6:30 PM Adventure Scouts</b>  <b>7:30 PM Boy Scouts</b></p>	<p><b>20</b>  <b>10:00 am Bible Study</b>    <b>6:00 PM Cub Scouts</b></p>	<p><b>21</b>  <b>2:00 PM College Group-Will's Study</b>    <b>7:00 PM Longest Night Service – CSR</b></p>	<p><b>22</b>  <b>1:00 – 5:00 pm Rainbow Community Center – CSR</b></p>	<p><b>23</b>  <b>7:30 – 9 PM Ministerio Cristiano Sanctuary &amp; 2 class rooms</b></p>	<p><b>24 Christmas Eve!</b>    <b>5:00 pm Candlelight Christmas Service</b>    <b>10:00 pm Candlelight Christmas Service</b></p>
<p><b>25</b>      <b>10:00 AM Christmas Day Service in the Chapel</b>  <b>1:00 PM Orphans Christmas - SH</b>  4-7 MC sanctuary &amp; classrooms</p>	<p><b>26</b>  <b>3:00 – 6:00pm – Rainbow Community Center – CSR</b>    <b>6:30 PM Adventure Scouts</b>  <b>7:30 PM Boy Scouts</b></p>	<p><b>27</b>  <b>10:00 am Bible Study</b>    <b>6:00 PM Cub Scouts</b>    <b>6:30 pm Session Meeting</b></p>	<p><b>28</b>    <b>11:00 am to 11:00 pm Safe Place Youth Group Lock-in! (whole church)</b>    <b>5:00 PM – Youth Champions-SH</b></p>	<p><b>29</b>  <b>1:00 – 5:00 pm – Rainbow Community Center – CSR</b></p>	<p><b>30</b>  <b>7:30 – 9 PM Ministerio Cristiano Sanctuary &amp; 2 class rooms</b></p>	<p><b>31</b>  <b>4:00 pm – Private Event – SH</b></p>

# The Safe Place Youth Group - Lock-in!

## A Place to Learn to Lead. A Place for All!

The **Safe Place Youth Group** is like no other. The SPYG is an Interfaith youth group created with in collaboration with the Center for Human Development's Empowerment Program for the development of leadership skills for 14-17 year old teens who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and their Allies in East County. Our progressive pastors and trained volunteers are skilled in supporting and training teens of every diverse background, and have committed not to evangelize the teens. We have a leadership team of adults and 7 Empowerment teens who plan our activities, including some lock-ins at the church this winter with cooking classes, dancing, and fun and games!



**Our next activity: A Safe Place lock-in at the church!**  
**Wednesday, December. 28<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 am to 11:00 pm!**  
 Community Presbyterian Church – 200 E. Leland Rd. Pittsburg, CA

**(For 14-17 year olds unless approved)**

This is both a learning and playing event, where participants will be trained in baking and cooking skills. There will be group learning and game times and free times where teens can watch a movie, play a video game, or gather for conversation. *We have received a grant to help pay for these activities, but we will do some fundraisers at future events to continue the group activities.*

Please bring good sturdy shoes for our time in the kitchen and game time. Please don't bring your iPods, weapons of any kind, or any sibling rivalries. This is a drug free event, and any alcohol or substances possessed or used by the teens will result in an immediate call to parents for them to come pick them up, no matter what time the infraction occurs. We are going to have a great time! Feel free to invite a friend by giving them a copy of this form.

*If your parents need to get a hold of the group, they can call Pastor Will at 925-597-9797 or Empowerment Program Coordinator Dominique Burgess at 510-377-4612. Have your parents sign the permission form below. Permission slips need to be turned into the church or Empowerment for the teen to participate. No one will be allowed to come and go during our event without permission.*

---

### Permission Slip

Permission is granted for \_\_\_\_\_ to attend the Community Presbyterian Church "Safe Place Youth Group" for a Lock-in at the church Wednesday, Dec. 28<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 am to 11:00 pm. In the event of emergency or injury and I cannot be reached, permission is given for the youth leaders to obtain any necessary medical help, including anesthesia.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian

Telephone numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact and phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance carrier, telephone number and policy number: \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies, health conditions, medications, and activity or diet restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# PARISH NOTES



DECEMBER 2011

## Christy's Corner



Dear Friends,

Christmas is coming. We have begun counting down the days until December 25. We can feel the pace of life picking up as we begin decorating trees, putting up lights, singing Christmas carols, buying gifts, planning parties, baking goodies. In the midst of this whirlwind of holiday preparation, Advent unfolds.

Advent calls us to a journey of the heart. As we move through the Sundays of Advent, we simply light one more candle in the circle of light that is the Advent wreath. Simply one more candle. So one candle becomes two and two becomes three until four are lit. Then on Christmas Eve we light the Christ candle in the center of the wreath. So simple. And in its simplicity the heart of our Advent journey is revealed. We are called into a circle of wonder and love that grows brighter and brighter with the light of the Christ child.

A counterpoint to the frantic pace of the season, the Advent candles invite us to slow down and open our hearts to the mystery of this light. A baby born in the midst of winter is God's love in human form. Can we pause long enough to welcome the wonder of this truth? Can we pause long enough to hear the voices of the angels singing, "Peace on Earth."

Can we experience "a thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices." These words from *O Holy Night* speak to the gift of our faith and the power of Christ's light in the world.

*Continues on page 16...*

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## December Shared Ministry Events

- **Men's Fellowship**  
Saturday, December 3rd at 8:00 am  
at Country Waffles in Pittsburg.
- **Joint CPC/FCCA Women's Fellowship Luncheon**  
Wednesday, December 7th at 11:30 am at Bev Peterson's home (5460 Southwood Way, Antioch)
- **Advent Party**  
Sunday, December 4th! Crafts at 4:00 pm, singing at 5:30 and dinner at 6:00 pm! Decorate your table and sign-up to bring a traditional part of the meal with the Deacons.
- **Longest Night Service**  
Acknowledging grief, Wednesday, Dec. 21st at 7:00 pm in CSR.
- **Two Candlelight Christmas Services**  
Saturday, Dec. 24th at 5:00 pm and 10:00 pm  
in the Camp Stoneman Chapel.

Pastor's Letter Continued...

In the final verse of *O Holy Night*, the promise of the birth of Jesus Christ is revealed in the words that speak of the hope, the promise, the trust that "in his name all oppression shall cease."

*Truly He taught us to love one another,  
His law is love and His gospel is peace.  
Chains he shall break, for the slave is our brother.  
And in his name all oppression shall cease.*  
(Words from *O Holy Night*)

The Advent circle of light draws us ever more fully into the light of Christ. As we open to this light, we will experience the lived reality of love. We will understand more fully that Christ's love works to end oppression.

"Truly He taught us to love one another." As this love flows into the world...peace, hope, and joy are born.

May you experience the light of Christ in new and wondrous ways this Advent season.

Merry Christmas!

Blessings,

*Christy*

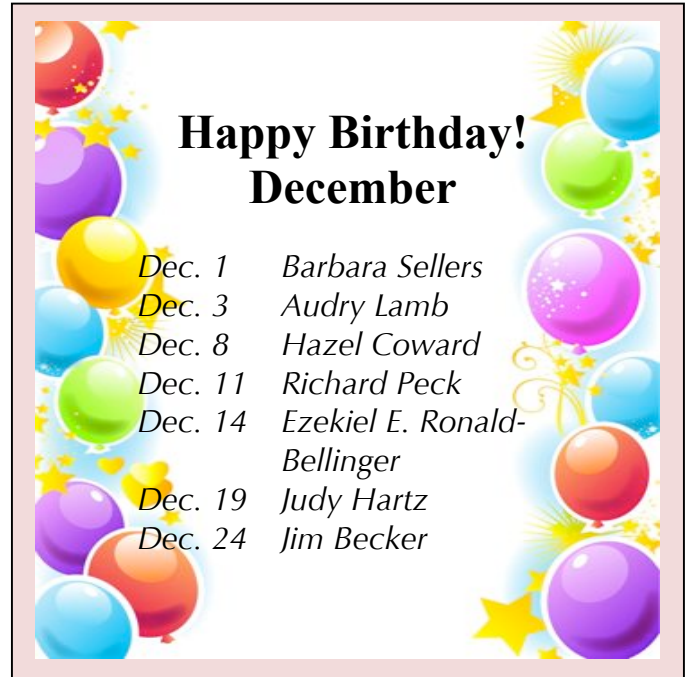
### Mondays in Antioch

Mondays in Antioch is a devotional, Bible study time. The group meets at 10 a.m. at St. George's Episcopal Church, 301 E. 13th Street, for an informal time of conversation, prayer and study. We will not meet on Monday, December 26<sup>th</sup>. Merry Christmas!

### LGBTQ Film Series

We will next meet at 7:00 pm on Thursday, December 8th in the CSR to watch some of the best Shorts and videos on LGBTQ inclusion and civil rights from the internet.

*Both CPC and FCCA have committed to being a safe space for all those affected by bullying or in need of counseling. Please call us rather than consider any acts that would be self-destructive.*



**Happy Birthday!**  
**December**

Dec. 1	Barbara Sellers
Dec. 3	Audry Lamb
Dec. 8	Hazel Coward
Dec. 11	Richard Peck
Dec. 14	Ezekiel E. Ronald-Bellinger
Dec. 19	Judy Hartz
Dec. 24	Jim Becker

### Food Barrel



On the first Sunday of each month, as we feast at the Lord's table, remember all those in our community who are suffering physical hunger and bring your food donations.

### Shared Ministry Update

The next joint Session-Cabinet meeting will be a Day Retreat with our Consultant on Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm in the Stoneman Room.

### Women's Weekend

Women's Weekends at Westminster Woods are scheduled! Take a minute to go to [www.westminsterwoods.org](http://www.westminsterwoods.org) and check it out. Weekend 1 is January 27-29 with Rev Debbie Whaley and the theme is Faith. Rev Judith Stone will be the leader on the February 3-5 week-end with the theme of Blessing. I am sort of leaning towards the February date just because Rev Whaley was the leader last year. Keep this in mind and plan to join us. We had a lot of fun last year when we went. Talk to me if you have any questions. Mary Burks

## December Celebrations

**December 4<sup>th</sup>**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent**  
Rev. Christy Parks-Ramage

**December 11<sup>th</sup>**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent**  
Rev. Will McGarvey

**December 18<sup>th</sup>**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent**  
Children's Christmas Pageant

**December 24<sup>th</sup>**  
**Christmas Eve**  
5:00 pm Service - Rev. Christy Parks-Ramage  
10:00 pm Service – Rev. Will McGarvey

**December 25<sup>th</sup>**  
**Nativity of Jesus Christ / Christmas Day**  
Christmas Day Service  
Rev. Christy Parks-Ramage

**January 1<sup>st</sup>**  
New Year's Day Service  
Rev. Will McGarvey

## Christmas Trees

Thank you all who supported the pre-sale of the Christmas trees to help our kids go to camp next summer. Your support is greatly appreciated. The delivery/pick-up date is December 3rd. If you thought you missed out on ordering a Christmas tree, it's your lucky day! There has been an extension. You can order by calling me personally up until November 30th. Again the sizes and prices are: 5-6 ft tree \$55, 6-7 ft tree \$65, 7-8 ft tree \$75. The trees will be available for pick-up December 3 at 9 AM. Delivery can be arranged. Just give me a call.  
Mary Burks (925) 427-7225.

## Christmas Day Service

Sunday, December 25th at 10:00am. We will gather for an informal service to sing Christmas carols and bask in the wonder of Christmas.

## In Memory

Bill Moore died at home on Saturday, November 19th. Bill was an ordained UCC minister who was deeply committed to Christian Education. Many were blessed by his life and ministry. Please hold his family and friends in pray.

Cards may be sent to:  
Judie Moore  
127 Shady Lane  
Antioch, CA 94509

## Prayer List



Please hold the following people in prayer:  
The family of Bill Moore, Sig and Edie Lanstrom, Cherrie McNeilly and Eleanor Russell.

*If you would like to add people to the prayer list, please call the church office or contact Christy.*

## Notes from the Fellowship Committee

On behalf of the Fellowship Committee I'd like to Thank everyone that participated in the Thanksgiving Dinner. Dinner was wonderful and a huge success, a succulent Thanksgiving feast. There were representatives from different Congregations who came to share this special day with us. We would like to Thank everyone who brought food and to all the members of the fellowship committee that worked very hard to make sure all Dietary needs were met. We look forward to having a bigger and better Thanksgiving Dinner next year, the Sunday before Thanksgiving. Also, if you haven't submitted your reservations for the Advent Dinner, please do so as soon as possible. Contact the Church Office or a member of the Fellowship Committee.  
Thanks again to you all!

*- Janis Bellinger-Harris*

## Cabinet Meeting

Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 am in the Camp Stoneman Room.

## The East Bay Festival Chorus

Special music will be provided by the East Bay Festival Chorus, under the direction of Clayton J. Foor, at the worship service of the East County Shared Ministry on Sunday, December 11.

Foor is a 1994 Stanford University Graduate in Music Composition, and considers his music traditional at heart while modern in spirit. He is a prolific composer with dozens of works to his credit. He also has a private piano teaching practice of 35 students. The East Bay Festival Chorus has performed many of his original works, including an All Foor Concert. He is the director and founder of the East Bay Festival Chorus, an independent singing ensemble established in 2001. Foor is committed to the creation of beautiful, uplifting classical music which is accessible and inviting. He believes in the possibility of the transcendence of our daily lives through the unique and powerful energies of inspired music.

The Chorus is comprised of several outstanding musicians cross Contra Costa County, yet the group's composition changes each time we perform depending on availability. This holiday gathering includes some first-timers - including Rev. Will McGarvey - as well as veterans - Jane Fish, Anne Greeff and Elaine Palmer. They will be singing two of Clay's original works: Exultate Deo and My Christmas Prayer.

If you have heard them before, you know what a treat this will be. If you have not, you're in for a blessing.

Peace and harmony,  
Elaine

## Christmas Poinsettias



Poinsettias will be available for purchase as Memorial Gifts through Nora Buluran for \$8.00 ea.

## Christmas Pageant

This year's Christmas Pageant will be presented Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup> during worship. Rehearsal will be Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>.

## Advent Party

Sunday December 4<sup>th</sup>. Please sign-up as soon as possible. Crafts will be at 4:00 pm, Table set up at 5:00 pm and Dinner at 6:00 pm. Green Beans, Baked Potatoes and drinks will be provided by the Fellowship Committee.

## Joint Women's Fellowship Luncheon

The Joint CPC/FCCA Women's Fellowship Luncheon will be Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at Bev Peterson's home (5460 Southwood Way, Antioch 94531) at 11:30 am. Remember to bring items for Christmas gift baskets.

## Orphans Christmas

For those of you that don't have much family around, come celebrate Christmas with your Church family. Richard James & Jerry Castleberry would like to invite you all to a Christmas gathering, December 25<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm in the Social Hall. Turkey and all other traditional dishes will be provided but you are welcome to bring your favorite dish. Any help is greatly appreciated. RSVP list will be posted in the Narthex and in the kitchen in the Social Hall.

## Outreach Committee

There will be an Outreach Committee meeting on Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm in the Camp Stoneman Room.

We will be collecting Christmas gifts for the children at Turner School again this year. Gifts are to be labeled boy, girl, or baby. Please bring your gifts to church by December 11th so they can be given to the children before Christmas vacation.

Many thanks for your response to the request from Shepherd's Gate. In time for the Thanksgiving holiday, the Outreach Committee delivered a beautiful assortment of food to the women living at Shepherd's Gate. Shepherd's Gate, a Christian based organization in Brentwood, provides shelter and resources for women and children displaced by abuse, financial hardships and addictions.

# Shadow of the Cross

By  
Edie Lanstrom

I love the Christmas Season!

During these Advent days, words of Christmas hymns float through my head as I go about daily living. I listen to Christmas music while on the computer. I find myself dawdling over an item in a store as I listen to a favorite Christmas carol. Each Christmas Sig and I delight in listening to Handel's *Messiah* on a CD. However, to me, the best Christmas music is the music I hear sung by church choirs and congregations. The vividness of human voices singing well-known carols wraps me in the unconditional love of the Christ child.

Every Christmas I find myself reflecting on a Christmas sermon I heard about 25 years ago in which the minister preached on the "babe in Bethlehem." While this minister marveled at the miracle of the Savior's birth in a stable, he cautioned the congregation to acknowledge the shadow of the cross hanging over the babe in the manger. A cross on which the beautiful baby would die a brutal death to give humankind eternal life.

Then the minister went on to say, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). This scripture is the part of the sermon over which I have most meditated. As I have mulled over cross situations in my life—two bouts with cancer, a son with a chronic illness, months of coping with Valley Fever, a husband who now faces multiple health problems—, my first reaction to each difficulty was less than positive. *No way can I handle this. I'm not a super woman. Enough is enough.* After I have finished my tantrum, I would pray to God for emotional and spiritual strength to deal with whatever I faced. As I prayed, calmness would flow through me. I knew the Christ of the Cross would uphold me as I dealt with formidable circumstances.

While I will continue to revel in the glorious beauty of these Christmas days, I also will remember the shadow of the cross hanging over the babe in Bethlehem.



Dear Friends at FCCA and CPC,

Greetings on this first Sunday of Advent.

I have been talking with your pastors for a number of weeks now, getting to know your congregations and your work together as East County Shared Ministry. In coming together in worship and mission, you are forging the way for the church of the future. I am moved by your courage and commitment, by the faith that calls you to take the bold steps to weave the traditions of your two congregations together in a new, yet-to-be-discovered way.



Just a bit of introduction: I'm working with CPC and FCCA in my capacity as a church renewal consultant for The Center for Progressive Renewal. I am also a local church pastor, currently serving Decatur United Church of Christ in Decatur, Georgia ([www.decaturucc.org](http://www.decaturucc.org)). Prior to coming to the UCC, I was a pastor and elder (similar to a conference minister in the UCC or Presbytery Exec in the PC(USA)) in Metropolitan Community Churches. I have Bachelor's and Master's degrees in music, a Master of Divinity (Emory University), and did D.Min. work at PSR in Berkeley. My primary ministry interests are new church starts, church renewal, ecumenical/interfaith ministries, and worship.

As I anticipate being with you in early February, I have enjoyed reading the devotionals along with you as you have shared that practice over the past couple of months. When we meet in person, I look forward to hearing your stories about your connection to your church, your thoughts about the identity and place of the church in today's world, and your hopes and dreams for the future of your congregations. You have exciting opportunities ahead: opportunities to shape a new mission, to cast a vision for your church in what many consider a post-church world. As you make decisions together, I would love to hear what areas of ministry are rewarding to you, what worries you, and what you find exciting about your future.

Sometimes we think of Advent as preparation for Christmas, but Advent is truly a contemplative season. Like Lent, Advent invites us to reflect, to watch and wait with open hearts and anticipate God's new work in us and through us. Your Advent worship themes: Listening, Discerning, Trusting, and Celebrating offer a creative lens through which to experience the birth of Jesus, both in history and in the fertile time of change in your churches' life. May these days of Advent be a time of hope for each of you.

In Prayer and Service with you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glenna Shepherd". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Glenna Shepherd



# Parish Notes

December 2011

A monthly newsletter of First Congregational Church of Antioch  
United Church of Christ  
An Open and Affirming Congregation

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Visit us on the web!  
[www.uccantioch.org](http://www.uccantioch.org)



## Blessing of the Animals

