

CROSSROADS



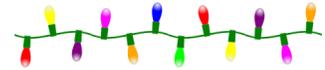
Guided by God's radical love for all, Bethany seeks to... Offer sanctuary, Inspire personal transformation, Foster a faith community, and Engage locally and globally for social justice.

Bethany United Methodist Church Newsletter

December 2018



Pastor's Message



Rev. Kerry Greenhill creator of our advent series this season offer this reflection, "Many people think of Christmas as a time to focus on family, and the images of picture-perfect family celebrations are everywhere for weeks beforehand. But when our real-life families don't measure up to the Hallmark cards, Norman Rockwell paintings, or Macy's ads, we can feel disappointed, embarrassed, stressed, or anxious. This Advent you are invited to prepare for the birth of Jesus with a focus on "Becoming the Family of God," as we explore what the Bible tells us about Jesus' family and our own families. Each week, we will explore the reality about families – joys and challenges – and light a candle of good news in response."

Our advent themes each week will reflect on different aspects of family through the lens of Christ

Week 1: Every Family Has a History: Jesus' Family Tree

Week 2: Every Daily Has Conflict: Biblical Insults and How to Use Them

Week 3: Every Family Has Secrets: Mary's Little Problem

Week 4: Every Family Has Insiders and Outsiders: God's Family Values

May we use this season to reflect and remember and Journey along side Jesus as we re-tell the narrative we know so well, with open hearts. May we open ourselves to new insights and understandings and may we grow in Christ's love with one another as we celebrate that we, Bethany UMC, make up another kind of family.

In Christ's Love

Sadie



You're invited to the annual parsonage open house. **This Sunday December 2nd** at 829 Duncan St, @ 6pm. Please join my family for food and fellowship. We look forward to seeing you all there.

Blessings,
Sadie, Reid, Eli & Emerson

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Fire Updates and Save the Date

During November we all felt the devastating impact of the smoke from the fires that destroyed much of the city of Paradise, CA. Gratefully the fires are out but the impact will be long lasting. Due to the air quality we ended up canceling our annual Harvest Fest, and were so grateful for everyone's flexibility and quick action as we came to that decision.

Bethany was able to hand out masks to our congregation as well as to many in the community who were in need. In part thanks to donations of masks sent from some of Pastor Sadie's friends from across the country. Our thanksgiving offering is going towards the relief efforts of the fire with UMCOR, who is currently on the ground, receiving intake forms, handing out gift cards, and processing information to best assess the needs.

On January 26th Bethany in collaboration with SURJ SF will hold a rummage sale with all the benefits going to immigrants impacted by fires. We need your help spreading the word and also collecting donations of high quality items that we can sell for this amazing cause.

Thank you for your support as we work to provide some aid to those most directly impacted by this devastating fire.



Flute Recital

December 7, 7pm

Bethany United Methodist Church,
1270 Sanchez St, San Francisco

John Speers, Flute, Alto-Flute & Piccolo
Jef Caers, Flute & Piccolo
Matt Yang, Piano

Telemann Fantasie flute solo
Mendelssohn flute concerto
Carmen Fantasie, Bizet
Debussy, trio for flute, alto flute & piano

I am delighted to inform you that there will be a FREE recital of flute and piano music on Friday, December 7, at 7:00 PM. The recital program should last about one hour and will be followed by a reception with light snacks, wine and other non-alcoholic beverages. There is no admission charge!

The two flautists are personal friends and colleagues of mine who will be performing an incredible program featuring works by Felix Mendelssohn, Georges Bizet, Claude Debussy, Ian Clarke, and others. I'm particularly excited to hear the arrangement of Claude Debussy's Sonata for Flute, Viola and Harp which will be performed on Flute, Alto Flute and Piano. In my opinion it's the single greatest work ever composed by Debussy—should be a real treat!

Get in the holiday spirit with us! Friday, December 7, at 7:00 PM. Hope to see you there, and do please spread the word!

Featured Artists: John Speers, flute, alto flute, piccolo; Jef Caers, flute, piccolo; Matt Yang, piano; Ray Capiral, piano.

Advent Devotions

From Jeannette LaFors

Isaiah 65: 17-25 "New Heavens and New Earth"

When I contemplate this passage I am relieved, humbled and restored.

I am worn out by the constant strife I witness in the world —news from war-torn regions such as the middle east and parts of Africa, divisive (and/or fraudulent) elections in my home country and others too, desperate immigrants, victims of hate crimes and nature's cruel havoc.

But Isaiah 65 invites me to focus on God's promise of peace — a vision of constant rejoicing, a world where none toil in vain, a place where no child suffers and no one dies before they grow ancient. I can visualize perfect harmony and peace. There is no prey. There is no predator.

This brings me relief. At the same time, it humbles me. It humbles me because the vision I hold of Jesus in the manger this Christmas season — the KING OF PEACE — calls me to bring this vision of peace, harmony and love to the here and now.

It humbles me because I struggle with how to embrace others with opposing views and values from mine. God calls me to support and defend the weak and love my neighbor. But what do I do when my neighbor is preying upon the weak? I tire thinking about how hard it is to do both, when I perceived them to be in conflict.

In Isaiah I find hope in the promised peace and I am restored. I am restored to bring Christ's message to others through my love and actions so I might actively share God's peace as we await God's perfect peace.

Jeannette LaFors, devoted to my family and friends, the precious earth we live in, the rights we all have to learn, grow and express our true best selves, and daily doses of chocolate.

From Steve Bauer

One thing I remember about my Christmas experiences is about how my family used it as the one time a year that we celebrated our ancestral heritage. My dad's grandparents came from Germany and my mom's grandparents from Sweden. We had different traditions for each side of the family depending on what Christmas celebration we were attending.

On my mom's side we would celebrate at my uncle's house, Ray. Ray was a great cook and would make traditional Swedish dishes like pickled herring, sausage called Korv, duper (bread dipped in the sausage juice), Swedish bean called Bruna and Swedish cookies. The house always included little red holiday Gala horses, a village holiday calendar which had little windows that you would open each day of the year to see a little surprise, and holiday candles where the heat from the candle would rotate a the scenery.

On my dad's side we always had a big family gathering with lots of uncles, cousins, and extended family. The even always included a special appearance by my dad dressed up as Santa (little extra padding needed) who had a strangely German English accent, when he spoke in his low voice he rarely fooled anybody except those under the age of 4.(cont.)

The other big tradition was the singing of Silent Night (German Stillest Nacht) in German. When I was younger, the grandparents and some of my aunts and uncles could sing the song in German without needing the printed words, but over the years as they passed away, we now have only one uncle (92 years old) who can sing without the lyrics printed. The other tradition, not specifically German, was that we would go around the room and everybody would share what was going on in their life since the last Christmas celebration. In many cases, this was the only time that I had to keep up with all of the 20-30 relatives that attended.

From Kay Nemeth

CHRISTMAS NIGHT

It was a crisp, cold winter's night. Christmas day was full of the quiet delights Christmas brings; delicious holiday foods, phone calls from family and friends far away, our door open in Christmas hospitality...followed by a magical Christmas night.

Mike and I took an evening neighborhood walk. It was cold. Cold enough for me to wear my faux fur coat! We walked down our street that was so very quiet. A hush filled the air. We stopped at the corner ready to cross the street when we noticed a house lite up with the Christmas tree in the living room window. There dancing around the room with complete abandon were two children. Their happy dancing filled my heart with Christmas joy. I could feel the children's happiness. It was the perfect ending to Christmas day. One of those rare moments when a great sense of content comes over you...and I shared it with Mike!

Merry Christmas!

From Bruce Pettit

Startling Christmas

My parents divorced in 1953, but I first learned something was not quite right in their marriage at Christmas 1952 when I was 7 years old.

We moved to Iowa in 1951 for my dad's job. I thought we were a happy family. Actually, I didn't think about it. One just expects that's the way things are. I picked up on no clues that something might be amiss. My parents had met in Panama in 1941, where my dad was a naval officer, and my mom a teacher of officers' children. My dad was quite promiscuous, I learned many years later, and my mom got pregnant with my brother. He married her because he thought he would not survive the war, and wanted her and his child to get his GI benefits.

After we had opened all our presents that Christmas of 1952, my brother, aged 9, thinking, I guess, that it was quite an appropriate Christmas question, asked, "Mommy, do you love Daddy?" Our mother answered a firm, but not emphatic, "Yes."

"Daddy, do you love Mommy?" Our dad answered quietly, without hesitation, a simple but firm "No."

Startling. My brother asked why not, and I don't recall that he got an answer. My mom divorced our dad the next year for "cruelty," according to court documents – I guess a euphemism used in those days for promiscuity. (cont.)

My dad was always blunt. After he and I reconciled many years later, he told me he never loved my mother. It was one of those war things. His bluntness to me about myself surely affected who I am today.

From Shannon Horton

Advent and Christmas has historically been a tough time in my life since my teenage years. I lost both of my beloved grandparents, Marie and Cliff Conrad, within 15 days of each other between Thanksgiving and Christmas in 1991. They were central figures in my life. They lived 10 minutes away and I chose to spend all the time that I could with them...weekends, school holidays and summer vacation. They were the reason I grew up in the church. It wasn't my parents, but my grandparents who faithfully took me to church each Sunday. Losing them meant that I lost my church community in some ways, though I continued to attend the same church until I left for college. But it was never the same. Especially with that first year in 1991, I lost the Christmas spirit in so many ways and each year brought back the same emotions and looming doom of Christmas. It wasn't until I started attending Bethany in 2001 that I started to be revived by the celebration of Advent and Christmas. Seventeen years later, I continue to look forward to the Annual Kid's Sleepover, creating a unique nativity scene with our children and youth, my favorite worship service of the year, Christmas Eve, and serving our local homeless with Interfaith Shelter Meals. Though I have many years of wonderful memories with my husband, two beautiful children as well as fabulous family and friends, each year it's these Bethany events that ignite the spark of inspiration for me as we enter into the Advent Season.

From Pastor Sadie

During my second year of college my parents divorced. While home for Christmas that year, we learned my dad was leaving. One last Christmas together as a family, and then the next day a family that would never look or feel the same. After that, "going home" for Christmas no longer meant my house. The house my parents dreamed of together. The land they bought and proudly showed us when it held nothing, 5 acres of sage brush; but to them this 5 acres of sage brush was their dream.

A little at a time as time and money allowed, my parents built our home; doing all the work themselves. It was an unconventional home. A basement, with a doublewide mobile home on top, but it allowed the space our family of eight needed. We moved in before it was finished, an empty concrete basement, with the rooms blocked out and mapped out with furniture. The walls, the bathroom, would come in time. It was home, my parents dream, and when my dad left it never felt the same, but I found respite across town at my in-laws.

My in-laws home so different than my own, but a comfortable, cozy place, where we gathered to eat, read, and always play card games. It too was my home, the place we stayed each summer between years at college, the place we moved after seminary graduation with our infant twins as we searched for jobs, and then too my divorce stripped this home away, and my mom sold my childhood home, and now when it's time to "go home" I no longer have an answer or image for what or where that is.

Of course since becoming a pastor 8 years ago going home for Christmas hasn't been an option, and in those 8 years I've had 4 different churches to call home. Each one ful

(cont.)

-filling a hole and a longing especially at Christmas when the loss of home feels most acute.

I recognize that when my children think of "home" it's likely they will think of many places. As PKs in the Methodist Tradition at 9 years old they've already called 3 states, and 6 different cities home, but the one constant for them has also been church. Churches that have become as comfortable to them as the homes we occupy.

Christmas for me, is all about church. Home for me is the churches I serve and the connections with the people in it. Each year, especially on Christmas Eve when we gather together, and we tell the familiar story, sing the familiar hymns, and light the candles and dim the light. I. AM. HOME. Jesus was born in an unassuming way, in an unassuming place, born to show us that home isn't a physical location, but a feeling and connection we make with each other. I am grateful each session for the familiarity of the season. For the lights, the singing, the gatherings, and for the comfort of gathering with my church family in my church. How blessed am I, to be called home, with Christ, wherever I am.



Bethany United Methodist Church

1270 Sanchez St.

Christmas Eve Services

4pm Family Service

7pm Lessons & Carols

www.bethanysf.org

Interfaith Breakfast

Pastor Sadie attending the Interfaith Thanksgiving Breakfast with the Bishop and the District Superintendent and other United Methodists from San Francisco. The 30th anniversary of the winter shelter was celebrated and Bethany was honored as a participant. Bethany member Bruce Pettit also attending with San Francisco Night Ministry.

We look forward to serving meals once again this month on December 27th and Dec 28th. We need folks to sign up to cook, transport and serve. Contact Shannon for more information or look for sign ups in worship.



Art Exhibit December 8 to January 7

Bob Armstrong will be having an art exhibit of his carved paintings at Lola's Boutique and Gallery, directly across the street from Bethany. It will run from Saturday, December 8th, until Monday, January 7th. Please stop by!

Knitting Ministry at Bethany: it's all about community and connections!

I love the chance to celebrate a fellow Bethany Knitter when they finish a project. Most items—even “smaller” ones such as the cowl pictured below, modeled in the other photo by its maker, Christine Linguanti—can take several weeks or even months to complete. Knitting requires a certain degree of discipline, and imparts the skills of attention to detail, patience, and valuing “the process”. In the end, you’ve really accomplished several things: you’ve made a unique, one-of-a-kind piece that’s both aesthetically pleasing and practical. You can give the gift of warmth and comfort to yourself or to any number of people in your life—even to a complete stranger who might need a little extra protection during the colder months. And you’ve broadened your skill set with a craft that gives back hours of enjoyment or helps to pass the time in moments enjoyed either in solitude or with community.

I’ve already written and spoken at length about the transformative journey that knitting brought to my life. But I’ll never grow tired of watching how sharing this skill, and giving space and time to others who want to pursue it, is a source of joy and inspiration that continues to surprise me, and it is so wonderful to watch it transform others’ lives for the better.

As always, the invitation is open to anyone who is interested in learning to knit or crochet, and all supplies and instruction are provided free of charge. NOTE: due to the timing of New Year’s Day, Bethany Knits will meet on the SECOND and FOURTH Tuesdays in January (8th and 22nd), 7:00-8:30 PM. Feel free to come join us—and spread the word!



Bethany Church Memorial Funds

As the year comes to a close, please consider donating to the Bethany Memorial Funds. These funds are used for mission and advocacy work. We currently have four memorial funds.

Trinity Training Fund: This fund was started when Bethany and Trinity UMC merged in the 1990s. It has been used to pay salary of interns from Pacific School of Religion, to train lay people on church matters and to provide education of volunteers and staff.

Archibald Mission Fund: Irene Archibald was a long-time member of Bethany, who had a true spark for mission work. Her fund has supported Bethany members on mission trips to Nicaragua, New Orleans and the Philippines.

Reconciling Fund: This fund is dedicated to the memory of Fritz Schultz. Fritz was a Sunday school teacher and is one of those remembered on our AIDs quilt. This fund is used for Reconciling Ministries' conferences, and in support of other LGBT, inclusive and diversity causes in the United Methodist Church.

Wild Bill Hinson Memorial Fund: This fund in honor of Wild Bill is used for Children and Youth Outdoor adventure programs, like church camps and youth group outings. This fund allowed Eli and Emerson to attend UMC summer camp.

Budget Update

The charts below give a picture of our Church Operating Budget for 2018. Through November, total donations have been \$155,000 and expenses have been \$142,000. Remaining donations for the year need to be \$3,000 to meet our budget.

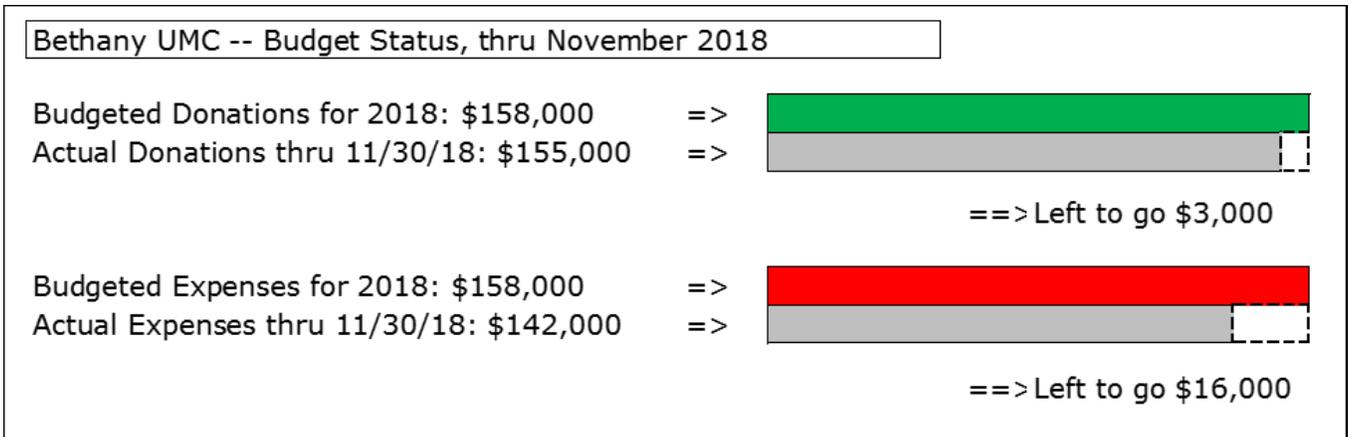
Our Thanksgiving Day collection was \$1,035 and 100% of these funds will go to help the victims of the California fires through UMCOR (the United Methodist Committee on Relief). Thank you to everyone who donated. Here are some recent articles on this.

<https://www.umcor.org/umcor/resources/news-stories/2018/august/no-end-in-sight-for-church-wildfire-response>

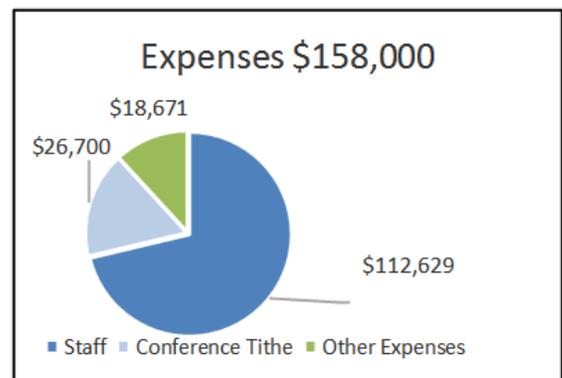
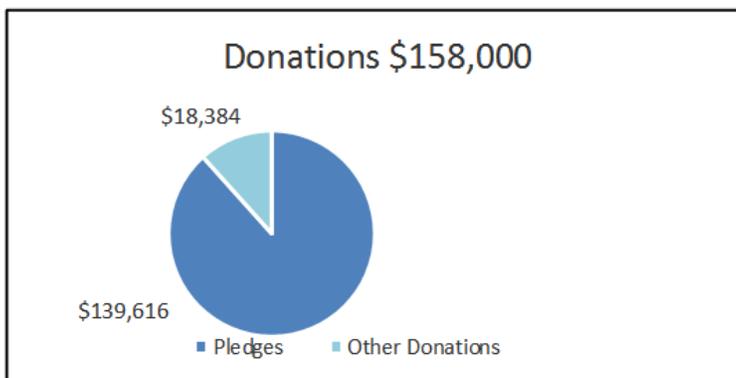
<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/united-methodists-help-struggle-amid-wildfires>

In November, we also paid the remaining amount of our estimated full year Tithe to the California-Nevada Conference of the UMC (\$17,000 paid in November, and \$27,000 paid year-to-date).

Thank you to everyone for your continued financial support! Kind regards, Steve Wereb, Finance Chair



Annual Budget



DECEMBER 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Charge Conference 12:30pm
2 Food Bank Collection Worship 10:45 Fellowship 11:45 Parsonage Open House 6pm	3 Moldovan PS (PS hours: 8:30-5:30)	4 Moldovan PS Curry Without Worry 1-5 Chorum 6:30-10p Bethany Knits 7-8:30p	5 Moldovan PS SF Sangha Meditation 7-9	6 Moldovan PS Firecracker Math 3:40-6:50 Al-anon 7-9	7 Moldovan PS	8
9 Worship 10:45 Fellowship 11:45 Girl Scout meeting 4-6p	10 Moldovan PS	11 Moldovan PS Curry Without Worry 1-5 Chorum 6:30-10p	12 Moldovan PS SF Sangha Meditation 7-9	13 Moldovan PS Firecracker Math 3:40-6:50 Al-anon 7-9	14 Moldovan PS Moldovan Book Fair 8:30-5:30 Moldovan Winter Family Recital 4-5	15
16 Worship 10:45 Overnight Youth group thru 12/22	17 Moldovan PS Overnight Youth group	18 Moldovan PS Overnight Youth group Curry Without Worry 1-5 Chorum 6:30-10p Bethany Knits 7-8:30p	19 Moldovan PS Overnight Youth group SF Sangha Meditation 7-9	20 Moldovan PS Overnight Youth group Firecracker Math 3:40-6:50 Al-anon 7-9	21 Overnight Youth group	22 Overnight Youth group
23 Worship 10:45 Fellowship 11:45	24 Christmas Eve Worship 4 & 7 Church Office Closed	25 **Christmas** Church Office Closed Curry Without Worry 1-5	26 Church Office Closed SF Sangha Meditation 7-9	27 Winter Shelter Meal Prep 3p Al-anon 7-9	28 Winter Shelter Meal Prep 3p	29
30 Worship 10:45 Fellowship 11:45	31 Church Office Closed					

Open Cathedral Bagged Lunches

Bethany members along with some Noe valley residents put together 150 bagged lunches for the SF night ministry Open Cathedral. We are grateful for our partnership with them and look forward to it's continuation in 2019.



Please note that the church office will be closed on **December 24 & 25** and **December 31 and January 1, 2019.**



December Birthdays

4: Geoff Gould

6: Dona Malan

7: Dominic Bannister

25: David Ferguson

26: Steve Kroner

If you have articles, or photos that you would like to share with the Bethany community, please contact us!

Bethany United Methodist Church

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Visit us on the web at
www.bethanysf.org