CROSSROADS

BETHANY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2024

Join us at Bethany during Advent:

- **Morning Prayers** will be held in the sanctuary at 8:30 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from December 3rd through December 24th.
- A **Labyrinth Walk** for the community will be available in the sanctuary on Friday, December 13th at 7pm.
- The Bethany community has the opportunity to join Songbird Studios for a **Holiday Sing Along**, Saturday, December 14th, from 5-8:30 pm. (registration required, see page 8)
- Bethany's handbell ensemble, **Bell Appeal, will perform** at Bethany on Sunday, December 22. First during worship, which will include its own take on Celtic music. Then at 1 p.m., Bell Appeal will perform a mini-concert it has dubbed a Bell Appeal Christmas Tea. Bell Appeal will also return for the 4 p.m. Christmas Eve service.
- Our **Christmas Eve services** will include a Family Service at 4pm and a Lessons & Carols Service at 7pm.

COMING SOON

Dec 6 - Ring Out Danger
Dec 8 - Bob Armstrong Art Show
Dec 12 - Ukulele Sing Along
Dec 13 - Labyrinth Walk
Dec 14 - Holiday Sing Along
Dec 19 - Food Donations for Mission Education Center
Dec 19 - Vigil Memorial for Unhoused
Dec 22 - Handbell Concert
Dec 24 - Christmas Eve Services
Dec 30 - Interfaith Winter Shelter Meal

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Bethany's Halls Ring with Music During December

by Michael Eaton

Throughout December, Bethany will be filled with holiday music! As we begin our advent season with a focus on Celtic music, there are many groups bringing the joy of holiday music to the church. On Saturday, December 7, the children of Noe Music will hold a morning concert in the sanctuary. The following day, December 8, piano teacher and frequent Bethany user Kelli Casey will host a piano recital.

Christmas Carols: The excitement continues on Saturday, December 14, when Songbird City Choir, a group that uses our sanctuary for weekly choral rehearsals, will host a Holiday Singout/Caroling Extravaganza! While the event is being held for community members for a fee, Bethany members can register and attend for free. This follows a successful event from 2023. "Songbird sing-along was a great surprise for our family last year," said Shannon Horton. "A great event and we will do it again this year." See page 8 for information on registering for the Songbird event.

Tubas Galore: Then on Sunday December 15, the sanctuary will be filled with tubas from San Francisco Tuba Christmas. Stay after church if you'd like to see them rehearse. In 2023, over 40 tubas arrived for a similar event.

Handbells: Bethany's handbell ensemble, Bell Appeal, will perform at Bethany on Sunday, December 22. First during worship, which will include its own take on Celtic music. Then at 1 p.m., Bell Appeal will perform a mini-concert it has dubbed a Bell Appeal Christmas Tea. Bell Appeal will also return for the 4 p.m. Christmas Eve service

I hope you all will find an opportunity to enjoy some of this special music!

PHOTO GALLERY

A PEEK AT RECENT ACTIVITIES IN THE BETHANY COMMUNITY!

THANK YOU PASTOR ROB AND EVAN!

On Sunday, November 24th, we were abundant with staff appreciation. Thank you, Pastor Rob and Evan, for sharing your gifts and talents with us to help make Bethany such a special place! We love and appreciate you.

Many thanks to John and Jay for setting up Bethany's Christmas Tree!

These past weeks, we were blessed once again with wonderful altar décor. Thank you Gloria and Carole for all your amazing work!

LAY NOMINATIONS for 2025

On November 10th, Bethany held its annual Charge Conference. As part of this meeting, members elect lay leaders for the coming year. Our leaders and their roles are outlined on the next two pages.

Lay Leader: Jeff Friant

Covenant Council

Chair: Cathy Personius

with administrative assist from Shannon Horton

Secretary: TBA

Representatives From:

Finance: John Nelson

SPRC: Julie Freeman

Trustees: Michael Eaton

Worship: Lawson Barnes

Nurture/Outreach: Cathy Personius

Lay Member to AC: Shirley Perkins

At Large Members:

Gloria Soliz

Marilyn Herand

Jeff Friant

Trustees: Michael Eaton, Chair

2025	2026	2027
Joel Creager	Bob Armstrong	Michael Eaton
Jerry Winniczek	Racquel Redondiez	Thomas MacBurney*
John Nelson	Shirley Perkins	
Walter Thoma*		

Staff Parish Relations Committee: Julie Freeman, Chair

2025	2026	2027
Erin Halden	Jeff Friant	
Julie Freeman	Stanley Watson	
Jeannette Given		
Josh Webster		
Elena Fuentes-Afflick		

ex officio—Shirley Perkins, Lay Member to Annual Conference

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LAY NOMINATIONS-cont'd

Lay Leadership & Nominations Committee: Rev. Rob Herrmann, Chair

2025	2026	2027
Jeff Friant	Steve Wereb	Jeannette LaFors
Shannon Horton		
Gloria Soliz		

Finance Committee: John Nelson, Chair

Treasurer: Steve Wereb
Finance Secretary: Jerry Winniczek
Trustees Rep: Michael Eaton
Church Council Chair: Cathy Personius
SPRC Rep: TBD
At Large: Erin Halden
Liam O'Connor

Lay Member to Annual Conference: Shirley Perkins
Alternate Lay Member to Annual Conference: Thomas MacBurney*

Nurture/Outreach: Cathy Personius, Chair

Jeff Friant
Marilyn Herand
Walter Thoma
Mike West
Racquel Redondiez
Kate Armstrong*

Worship: Lawson Barnes, Chair

Rev. Rob Herrmann
Gloria Soliz
Evan Alparone
Lizzy Hull Barnes

*Indicates new this year

BUDGET UPDATE

by Steve Wereb, Treasurer

Through November, we received $115,147 in donations and $152,901 in rental income for a total of $268,048. Our expenses through November were $275,355. In the coming months, we expect significant repairs, including for our bell tower which is estimated to cost over $28,000 and for which we've received an insurance payment of $7,145. Our budget for the year is $293,618 in donations and rental income, and $320,895 in expenses, which would result in a deficit of -$27,277 and be funded from our cash balance.

Also included below is giving information. The distribution of pledges is shown below. Overall, our total average pledge amount is $5,670 per person. We have 13 people giving between $1 and $6,000, 3 people giving between $6,001 and $9,999, and we have 3 people giving over $10,000. Total donations through November have been $115,147 across 43 people (for both pledgers and non-pledging donors) which results in an average gift of $2,678 person. For perspective, to have a balanced budget and eliminate our budgeted deficit of -$27,277, we would need another 5 people giving $5,670. Our available cash on November 30th was $108,362.

We are very fortunate to have the financial support of our community which helps to sustain Bethany and fund our staff and programs.

Thank you for your support and generosity.
Kind regards, Steve Wereb, Treasurer

Summary of Donations

Expected Giving for 2024 ==> $127,243

Actual Giving thru 11/30/24 ==> $115,147

Left To Go ==>$12,096

Actual vs. Budget	**Actual thru 11/30/24**	**Budget for 2024**	**Actual vs. Budget**
Donations	$ 115,147	$ 127,243	$ (12,096)
Rent	152,901	166,375	(13,474)
Total Income	268,048	293,618	(25,570)
Staff & Programs	134,901	153,410	(18,509)
Tithe	22,500	29,362	(6,862)
Building Costs	82,576	100,081	(17,505)
Building Repairs	35,378	38,042	(2,664)
Total Operating Costs	275,355	320,895	(45,540)
Insurance received	7,145		7,145
Net Result	**$ (162)**	**$ (27,277)**	**$ 27,115**

Cash Balance, 11/30/24 $ 108,362

Distribution of Pledges			
Gift Amount	Number of Households	Pledge Amount	%
$1 to $2,500	8	$ 10,330	10%
$2,501 to $6,000	5	$ 23,900	22%
$6,001 to $9,999	3	$ 21,500	20%
$10,000 & Above	3	$ 52,000	48%
Total	19	$ 107,730	100%
Average/person		$ 5,670	

YTD Donations Received		**%**
YTD pledges received	$ 88,367	77%
YTD other donations	$ 26,780	23%
Total donations	$ 115,147	100%
Total number of givers	43	
Average gift/giver	$ 2,678	

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 6th @ 9:30 am, every 1st Friday of the month, we ring our bells in solidarity with ***Ring Out Danger: People of Faith Opposed to Gun Violence*** (https://ringoutdanger.org). Please join us, in front of Bethany, no ringing experience is required.

Labyrinth Walk, Friday, December 13th @7pm
Join us for another evening of contemplative music and explore the deeply centering tradition of walking the labyrinth, a journey inward and then back out. The service is very casual and is designed to be whatever you make of it.

We will play music for about an hour and during that time you can sit and listen, sing along, walk the labyrinth, dance the labyrinth, or do whatever it is that you need in the moment.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

December 14th @ 5-8:30 pm, once again the Bethany community has the opportunity to join **Songbird Studios for a Holiday Sing Along**. Please register using the QR Code provided.

Help us prepare 100 warm meals for the unhoused through the Interfaith **Winter Shelter Program**, **Saturday, December 30th**. We'll be cooking, delivering, and serving the meals.

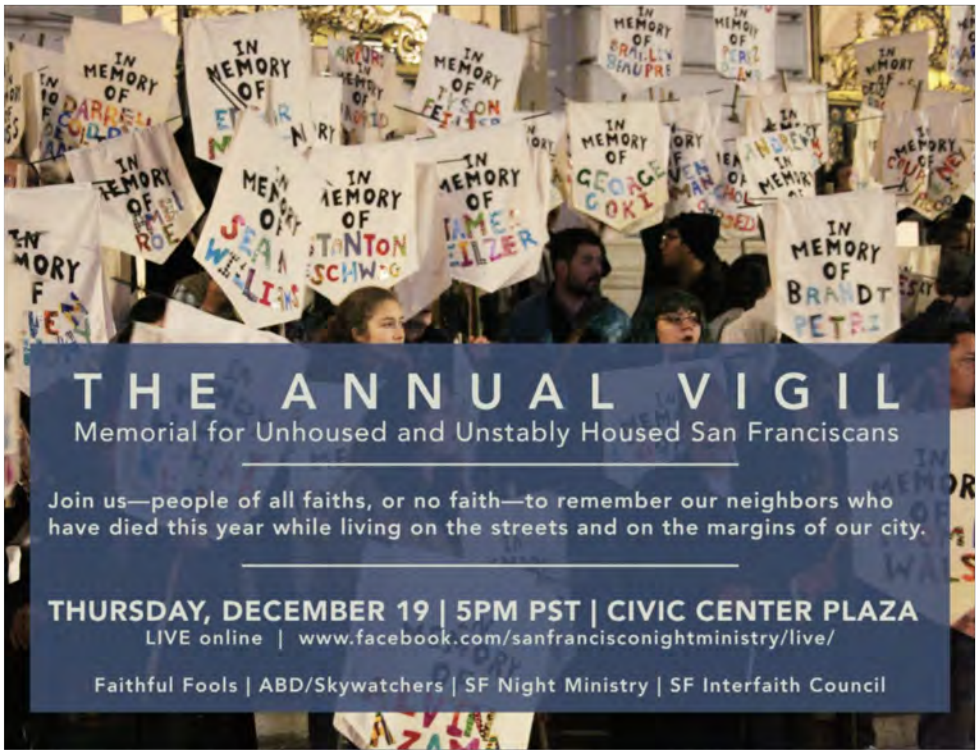
San Francisco INTERFAITH COUNCIL

Interfaith Winter Shelter Meal
Monday, December 30th

Help provide 100 warm meals for the unhoused through the Interfaith Winter Shelter Program

Help purchase food, cook, transport and/or serve

- **Cook at 2 pm**
- **Delivery at 5pm**
- **Serve at St. Mary's Cathedral from 5:30-8:30 pm**



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Through December 19th, Bethany is collecting non-perishable food for the students and families of the Mission Education Center (MEC) to take home over winter break. MEC, at Noe and 30th Streets, is the school district's elementary program for newly-arrived Spanish-speaking immigrants. These families struggle with food insecurity, especially when school meal programs are closed.

Bible Study

Wednesdays 3-4pm on zoom. Join to discuss the scripture for the coming Sunday. All are welcome. Email Marilyn for more info mherand@sbcglobal.net

Small Groups – Sign-up at bethanysf.org

Group options:

-2nd Saturdays each month @ 8:30am

-2nd Wednesdays each month @ 7pm

community celebration board

From Jeannette LaFors ... Our upcoming Advent season features Celtic traditions, and one of San Francisco's premier choral ensembles is featuring Celtic musical traditions at their annual winter holiday concert! **Join a group from Bethany to see the San Francisco Girls Chorus Present: A Celtic Winter with Edwin Huizinga and Ashley Hoyer - 7pm, December 23rd (Monday)**. The San Francisco Girls Chorus returns to the Davies stage for this favorite Winter tradition. This year, the concert highlights Celtic folk music and features violinist Edwin Huizinga and Mandolinist Ashley Hoyer. The entire audience is invited to sing a couple verses of carols to finish the night and put everyone in the holiday spirit.

Jeannette LaFors purchased a block of tickets ($35/each)! Please let her know if you are interested in being a part of a Bethany contingent at the performance **(jlafors@stanfordalumni.org** or 415-425-7589). So far there are 10 Bethany folks going, and she has 5 more tickets available at $35/each. Sliding scale on the cost of tickets available as needed. Deadline for reserving a ticket is 7pm on Sunday, December 8th.

Special thanks to Carol Heard, a Noe Valley neighbor and participant in Gloria's ukulele class at Doelger Senior Center, for providing prayer strips for our Prayer Wall.

Because of Bob Armstrong, the red, white, blue, and purple prayer strips were cut off. We returned to green prayer strips in November. In the season of Advent, we will switch to blue.

CONTACT US

If you have articles, photos or announcements that you would like to share, please contact us!

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DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

6: Dona Malan

7: Dominic Bannister

31: Steve Bauer