

December 2023



DECEMBER

DEACON OF THE MONTH

Sherry McKusick

FISH FOOD

Canned Fruits & Vegetables

Merry Christmas




SOLVE THE RIDDLES

What do you call Santa
when he's broke and has
no money?

I hide around the house,
moving during the nights.
Santa sent me to see
who's naughty and nice.
What am I?

Stumped?
See page 5 for the
answer.

As you enjoy reading this
month's Bell, try to
find the hidden cross. 

THE CHURCH BELL

Published Monthly

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"O Holy Night, the stars are brightly shining; It is the night of the dear Savior's birth! Long lay the world in sin and error pining, Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth. A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn."

"We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right upon to the present time." Romans 8:22

I must confess that I have no idea what childbirth physically feels like. But as a husband and a father of four, I have witnessed my lovely wife experience excruciatingly long and painful hours of labor. Then, once the baby was safely in our arms, there was both weariness and rejoicing. It was this crazy mixture of joy, pain, relief, and exhaustion all mixed in the one and same event. I've often reflected how those first twenty four hours after childbirth were some of the most peaceful and heavenly moments one could ever experience. God felt so near!

The words of the first verse of *O Holy Night* and those of the Apostle Paul to Roman Christians speak about this odd crossroad of painful childbirth and weary rejoicing. In order to get to the joy of holding that child in our arms, we've got to go through the pain.

Right now our world seems engulfed in pain as we watch yet another world crisis unfold in Israel and Gaza. It has been heartbreaking to hear stories of Jewish loved ones brutally murdered or taken prisoner by Hamas terrorists. It has been equally difficult to witness so many innocent Palestinians lose their lives in Gaza as Israel defends itself against Hamas. Creation is literally groaning.

I am struck by this idea of groaning. Groaning describes a moment when words fall short to explain the depth of one's pain. Scripture tells us that the Holy Spirit is able to intercede for us before God when all we can do is groan. Groaning is a cry for our God to intercede and make a way when there seems to be no other way but through pain and suffering. And God's people surely have known pain and suffering for a very long time. In fact the Prophet Isaiah way back in 700 B.C. described Judah as a people walking in darkness and living in the land of the shadow of death. Sure sounds like today!

But the Prophet Isaiah also said that one day God's people would see a great light. That every garment rolled in blood and every warrior's boot would one day be burned as fuel in a fire. That one day God would shatter the yoke of their oppressor and restore peace, justice, and joy. He also said, "For onto us a child is born, a Son is given. And the government shall rest on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)

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In this season of Advent, or four weeks leading up to Christmas, we light a candle each week representing Jesus' hope, peace, joy, and love. Though the days get shorter and darker, Jesus' light grows brighter. Jesus is the light of the world, and nothing can ever extinguish his light in this present darkness. Jesus said, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world!" John 16:33.

So this Christmas season, may we hang onto this hope when the days get especially dark and weary. May we rejoice that Jesus has come into the world and promises a new and glorious morn! And may we share it with everyone we meet!

Merry Christmas,
Rev. Dr. Chris Montovino, Pastor

HANGING OF THE GREENS HELP NEEDED

Please come to the church on Thursday November 30 at 3:00pm to help prepare decorations for the Hanging of the Greens Service on Saturday December 2. We will need to pull out decorations from storage and put up the Christmas tree in the sanctuary. Many hands make this work light!

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

O Come All Ye Faithful,
This year Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday which means we will be having a regular Sunday worship service led by Cascades Choir at 10:15am and an evening service led by the Cascades worship team at 7:00pm. Both services will be extremely meaningful as we celebrate the birth of Jesus our Lord.

CHRISTMAS ANGEL TREE

This year's angel tree project is supporting families at Open House Ministries, a transitional housing shelter for families in Vancouver. Gift tags can be collected from the Angel Tree in the Fellowship Hall and wrapped gifts with the tags attached to them can be returned to the Church by Sunday December 17, 2023. Thank you for your support!

**daily
Devotions*****Before You Know It***

Dec 1 Mark 13:24-37
Dec 2 Mark 13:24-37

Our Wait Continues

Dec 3 Mark 1:1-8
Dec 4 Isaiah 40:1-11
Dec 5 Isaiah 40:1-11
Dec 6 Psalm 85:1-2,8-13
Dec 7 2 Peter 3:8-15
Dec 8 2 Peter 3:8-15
Dec 9 Mark 1:1-8

Joy in the Day-to-Day

Dec 10 Isaiah 61:1-4
Dec 11 Psalm 126
Dec 12 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
Dec 13 Psalm 126
Dec 14 Luke 1:46b-55
Dec 15 Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Dec 16 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Living Out Love

Dec 17 Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
Dec 18 Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
Dec 19 Luke 1:46b-55
Dec 20 Luke 1:26-38
Dec 21 Luke 1:46b-55
Dec 22 Luke 1:26-38
Dec 23 Luke 1:26-38
Dec 24 Luke 1:26-38

The Light Has Come

Dec 25 Isaiah 9:2-7
Dec 26 Isaiah 61:10-62:3
Dec 27 Galatians 4:4-7
Dec 28 Luke 2:22-40
Dec 29 Luke 2:22-40
Dec 30 Luke 2:22-40
Dec 31 Psalm 148:1-14

CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING—OUT OF CHAOS/HOPE

As violence escalates in and around Israel/Palestine, the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Program is again providing humanitarian assistance through partners on the ground and through ACT Alliance. PDA has approved solidarity grants and will continue supporting our partners providing humanitarian assistance. Our response efforts will encompass a wide array of vital humanitarian interventions, including but not limited to medical supplies, shelter, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene), food and non-food items and delivering crucial psycho-social support to individuals. Our hearts break for all people in that region and we pray that God's shalom would come quickly.

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR MEMBERS

"Come. Be fed. Be sent." So states the sign we see at the back of our sanctuary as we leave each Sunday to enter our mission field. That has special meaning for this lady born in Chicago, who, at six years old, had her dad move his Sicilian-heritage family into a post-World War II bungalow in a small town in the South Side. She grew up in this blue-collar Catholic neighborhood, populated by second generation Italian, Polish, and Irish families, and from this larger hard-working, loving, and honest community family, she learned to stand up for what she believed and also learned to polka as she danced in her driveway! Music was always around as her dad played guitar, banjo, ukulele, harmonica, and wash tub fiddle.



After six different elementary schools in the area, Faye Salomone graduated from Reavis High School, Burbank, IL, then briefly studied speech and English at Northern Illinois University and Eastern New Mexico University. More significantly, she received the Certified Property Manager designation from the Institute of Real Estate Management, based in Chicago.

Faye, our current buildings and grounds elder, has worked hard and long, starting at age 13 with the park department, had various other jobs, including being a car hop on roller skates, being a circuit instructor at Curves, owning her own property management company, retiring from it all at the age of 73.

Her favorite road trip was to New York City, where as part of a large choir, she stood on the stage of Stern Auditorium and sang at Carnegie Hall!

Memorable was her head-on car collision, which hospitalized her for three months, leaving her left leg an inch shorter than her right. She maintains a limp even now, and has had her right ankle replaced twice. She sustained 26 broken bones from her upper thighs down, leaving her legs full of pins and rods. She spent six months in a wheelchair, but during that time still managed to coach a kids' soccer team!

She was married for 20 years, then her husband left her. Another brief marriage took her to Plains, Montana, where she enjoyed small town life yet again. She has three children and seven grandchildren, one each in Orlando, Hamburg, Guam, Vancouver, Boise, and two in Tigard. Family is still so important to Faye, and life has certainly given her a good sense of humor.

While attending an Alliance church in Montana, Faye took to heart the sign at the back of the church that said, "You are now entering your mission field." So, 13 years ago while searching for a church when she moved to the Vancouver area, she knew she was home when she saw our similar sign here at Cascades. "I love the way I've been embraced and supported by the community. There is a hymn entitled All Are Welcome, and our church exemplifies that."

Submitted by Bill Honey, Elder



NOVEMBER SESSION NOTES

Meeting opened with devotions on Matthew 25:14-30 and giving abundantly from the gifts that God entrusts to us. Approved baptism for Kiaan Dayal during worship on November 26, 2023. Discussed details about upcoming Advent Season and the Hanging of the Greens Potluck and Service. Set Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Program's work in Israel/Palestine as recipient of this year's Christmas Eve Evening Offering. Discussed at length need for consistent janitorial services in between hires. Created Building Closure Checklist for all groups to ensure building is secured and left ready for next group to use. Approved church use for another round of Neighborhood Association Meetings to discuss local railroad usage and for regular monthly use by the 4H Alpaca Club. As we continue to regulate post COVID, we are finding ourselves busier than ever and needing to be intentional about the time we spend during the holidays. We continue to connect with people outside the church and spread the joy that Christ has given us.

YEAR END PLANNED GIVING TO CASCADES

A recent year end planned giving webinar by the Presbyterian Foundation reported that the Church is typically very good about asking for and receiving cash gifts, but not as good about asking for and receiving larger gifts. Statistics showed that 37% of giving occurs in the 4th quarter (Oct-Dec) with 20% coming in December alone. Over the next 20-25 years more than \$70 trillion will be passed down to other generations with \$22 trillion going to millennials, \$31 trillion to GenXers, \$8 trillion to Boomers, and \$9 trillion to charity. Often times when people consider their annual giving, they typically consider their income streams, but not other assets like stocks, bonds, mutual funds, real estate, or crypto currency. Income streams can represent only 9% of a person's true wealth where as other assets can be as high as 91%. Several tips that the Presbyterian Foundation recommended were:

Consider making a charitable stock in-kind gift directly transferred to Cascades. This avoids any capital gains while maximizing your charitable deduction for the full value of the security. If you need help with that, the Presbyterian Foundation or your stock broker can assist with details of the stock transfer.

Set up a Donor Advised Fund through the Presbyterian Foundation. These funds are opened with a minimum of \$2500 where the donor directs grants in minimum increments of \$100 to charities of their choice. Note that this sort of giving cannot be used to satisfy annual pledges however.

Give annual gifts to the church from your traditional IRA and NOT from your checkbook. This is especially true for people over age 73 who must take required minimum distributions (RMDs) from their IRAs. Gifts from traditional IRAs through RMDs are considered Qualified Charitable Distributions which do NOT count towards a person's taxable Adjusted Gross Income and can be given annually up to \$100,000. The Presbyterian Foundation strongly advised that giving through Qualified Charitable Distributions is the smartest way for people over 70 to give charitably.

Consider how you might like to give to Cascades through bequests such as wills, life income gifts, retirement accounts, or charitable lead trusts.

Overall, if we consider all of the assets that we have been entrusted with, we can give out of abundance and not out of scarcity. We would be happy to arrange for a representative from the Presbyterian Foundation to come and give a seminar to help answer any questions that people may have regarding their planned giving.





DECEMBER CALENDAR

Dec 2	10:00am	Seedlings Poetry Workshop
Dec 3	9:00am	Pancake Breakfast
	10:15am	Worship Service
	11:30am	Benevolence Board Lunch Mtg
Dec 4	12:30pm	Bowling Fellowship
Dec 5	7:00pm	Deacons Meeting
Dec 6	12:30pm	Bowling Fellowship
	6:30pm	Youth Group
	6:30pm	Worship Team
Dec 7	1:00pm	Giving Hands Ministry
	6:45pm	Choir Practice
Dec 9	7:30pm	JSV Concert
Dec 10	9:00am	Sunday School All Ages
	10:15am	Worship Service
Dec 11	12:30pm	Bowling Fellowship
Dec 12	7:00pm	Session Meeting
Dec 13	12:30pm	Bowling Fellowship
	6:30pm	Youth Group
		Worship Team
Dec 14	1:00pm	Giving Hands Ministry
	6:45pm	Choir Practice
Dec 16	8:00am	Men's Breakfast/Bible Study
	5:30pm	Family Game Night
Dec 17	9:00am	Sunday School All Ages
	10:15am	Worship Service
	11:30am	Top of the Hill Potluck
Dec 18	12:30pm	Bowling Fellowship
Dec 20	12:30pm	Bowling Fellowship
	6:30pm	Youth Group
	6:30pm	Worship Team
Dec 21	1:00pm	Giving Hands Ministry
	6:45pm	Choir Practice
Dec 24	10:15am	Worship Service
	7:00pm	Christmas Eve Service
Dec 27	12:30pm	Bowling Fellowship
	6:30pm	Worship Team
Dec 28	1:00pm	Giving Hands Ministry
	6:45pm	Choir Practice
Dec 31	10:15am	Worship Service

BIRTHDAYS

Della Brandt
Jerry Divens
Andy Drexler
Margaret Kneller
Renetta Lindsey
Phyllis Myer
Bruce VanderPloeg
Carol VanderPloeg

ANNIVERSARIES

Jim & Judy Scovil
Bruce & Carol VanderPloeg

OCTOBER FINANCES

Income \$23,240.26
Expenses \$23,913.44
(\$ 673.18)

Year to Date 2023
(\$ 10,013.25)





CASCADES

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED

HANGING OF THE GREENS

December 2
Potluck 6:00pm Service 7:00pm

SEEDLINGS POETRY WORKSHOP

December 2 @ 10:00am

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

December 3 @ 9:00am

JUNIOR SYMPHONY OF VANCOUVER CONCERT

December 9 @ 7:30pm

MEN'S BREAKFAST & BIBLE STUDY

Dec 16 @ 8:00am

FAMILY GAME NIGHT

December 16 @ 5:30pm

TOP OF THE HILL POTLUCK

December 17 @ 11:30am

O Holy Night

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
December 24 @ 7:00pm



SUNDAY WORSHIP

10:15am Worship Service