

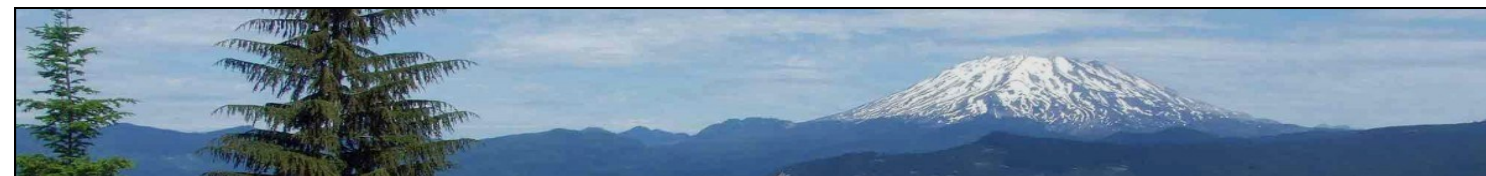


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PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED



DECEMBER

DEACON OF THE MONTH

Karen Montovino



SOLVE THE RIDDLES

What did the
gingerbread man put
on the top of his bed?

What did the
Christmas tree wear to
keep it warm?

Stumped?
See page 4 for the
answers.

As you enjoy reading
the Newsletter try to
find the hidden cross
somewhere in
the newsletter.
It looks like this.



THE CHURCH BELL

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“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9

These were the Words of the Lord spoken to Joshua, Son of Nun, Moses’ predecessor just before he led the Israelites across the Jordan River and into the Promised Land. They were about to embark upon a new and exciting adventure having wandered in the wilderness for forty years and finally arriving to inhabit the land that God had promised to their forefather, Abraham, generations before. The trouble was that this land was already inhabited by another people who would not let go of it without fighting tooth and nail. This task would require strength, courage, and faith. “Do not fear.”

Likewise, we hear the same mantra throughout the Advent narratives surrounding Jesus’ birth. When the Angel Gabriel appears to Zachariah while serving at the temple and announces that Zachariah and Elizabeth would give birth to a son in their old age, Gabriel says, “Do not fear.” When Gabriel appears to the Virgin Mary and tells her that she would miraculously give birth to God’s son, Gabriel says, “Do not fear.” When Gabriel appears to Mary’s fiancé, Joseph, in a dream and tells him that he would be step-father to the Messiah, Gabriel says, “Do not fear.” When the angels appear to the shepherds out in the fields on the night of Jesus’ birth, the angels say, “Do not fear.”

“Do not fear” is a thread that runs throughout each of these stories. So this Advent or four weeks leading up to Christmas when we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we will focus on this call and how we too are being called out of our dark shadows of fear and into God’s glorious light.

The truth is that we live in uncertain and fearful times. We may fear the actions of our government and leaders. We may fear what may happen to our undocumented friends, family, and neighbors. We may fear a drop in the economy and our tanking our retirement savings. We may fear the horrors of war raging around us. We may fear losing our job in this poor job market. We may fear getting sick or losing our health. We may fear the irreversible effects of global warming on our planet.

We may fear. Fear is a natural emotion when life is uncertain or out of our control. But the Words that we hear from God are “Do not fear.” Why and how? It’s the second part of God’s words to Joshua. “For the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” Or what Gabriel said to Joseph, “The virgin will be with child and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” - which means “God with us.”

This is what gives us license to not fear...through Jesus Christ, we can know beyond a shadow of a doubt that God is with us. And He will never leave us nor forsake us. That is good news. That is the message I hope we hear repeatedly throughout this Advent Season. So let’s pray that the words of the great Christmas Carol O’ Little Town of Bethlehem ring true. “The hopes and fears of all the years, are met in thee tonight.”

Merry Christmas,

Rev. Dr. Chris Montovino, Pastor



SPOTLIGHT ON OUR MEMBERS



Our youngest at Cascades are truly blessed to have such a caring nursery worker. Pam Boehning, a third generation Vancouver resident and Evergreen High School graduate, who grew up in the Sifton area in a small home in a quiet neighborhood, says, "Children are truly where my heart is. I love working with children. I feel that I truly understand children and what their needs are. I love to watch children get excited when they learn something new." During the Covid era, she earned her Early Childhood Education degree, with honors, from Clark College, while also graduating with honors from Ultimate Medical Academy with a degree in Medical Billing and Coding.

Pam, as a child, was part of a close-knit family. While her dad traveled for his job, her stay-at-home mom "held down the fort," always provided a hot meal, homemade clothing, and her presence. She taught Pam cooking, sewing, and encouraged her to be the best mom and wife she could be.

In 1979, Pam, on a blind date set up by her best friend, met and later married Rudy, the love of her life. "We have learned how to navigate the changes that life throws at us. We have become better people because of all the changes we have been through." They adopted two children through the foster system. Daughter Stephanie, now 34, provided a nine-year-old grandson, Aiden. Son Chris, 31, gave them an eight-year-old granddaughter, Anna. They also raised niece Michelle, providing another granddaughter, Tailar, 19, and another grandson, Quinn, 16. Pam finds happiness from grandchildren who "are her world" and keep her young.

Previously employed at the childcare center at Clark College, she had fun with the kids and made friends on the staff, while "learning so much." She later answered an ad and, so, became employed at Cascades Church. "I love my job at Cascades because the families are so caring and friendly. I love how they make everyone comfortable from the minute they walk in the door. I have free reign to create what I feel is important to the children and their families. I love how I am made to feel like I belong."

As a breast cancer survivor, Pam expresses gratitude that her "lesser diagnosis" allowed for quick and relatively easy treatment. She appreciates and thanks all those who prayed for her.

Pam has traveled to Montana, Oregon, California, and Georgia, but small-town Fort Payne Alabama, with all its trees, won her heart when she visited their June Jam and saw country music artists perform. The "icing on the cake" was to see her favorite group, Alabama. She met two of the band members in person and found them to be the "nicest, most down-to-earth people she has ever met." Pam's dream place to visit would be Nashville.

Pam enjoys crocheting, currently making lap blankets for cancer patients, and also enjoys Diamond Painting, which is similar to paint-by-number. All this, while enjoying her other children: Maxie May, Emmy Jo, and Gracie Anne, who are three Tuxedo kitties (tuxies) that range in age from six months to four years old.



ADVENT SERVICES



Nacimiento—The youth have refreshed the Nacimiento with each youth assembling their own tableau using the figurines from the Nacimiento. These tableaus are assembled in the same location as the previous Nacimiento was displayed and available during the Hanging of the Greens.

The Longest Night service on Wednesday the 17th of December at 7pm. The purpose of this service is to provide a sacred night for naming our sorrows and lamenting our losses. If you attended the service last year the liturgy will be the same with the addition of a homily from Pastor Chris. We are also exploring some car-pooling options for those who wish to attend but are prevented from doing so because they don't drive at night. Stay tuned for more information on possible car-pools.

Christmas Eve Service, Wednesday, December 24th at 7pm. Last year we had a full house that evening so please plan on arriving early to ensure you can get family seating together. A note to parents of young children; we now have new LED candles for children too young to handle real candles. These candles will be available in the Narthex with the regular wax candles.



Dec 1	12:30pm	Bowling Fellowship
Dec 2	7:00pm	Deacon Meeting
Dec 3	12:30pm	Bowling Fellowship
	6:45pm	Youth Group
Dec 4	1:30pm	Giving Hands Ministry
	6:45pm	Choir Practice
Dec 7	9:00am	Pancake Breakfast
	9:00am	Sunday School All Ages
	10:15am	Worship Service
Dec 8	12:30pm	Bowling Fellowship
Dec 9	7:00pm	Sessions Meeting
Dec 10	12:30pm	Bowling Fellowship
	6:30pm	Youth Group
Dec 11	1:30pm	Giving Hands Ministry
	6:45pm	Choir Practice
Dec 13	8:00am	Men's Breakfast Bible Study
Dec 14	9:00am	Sunday School All Ages
	10:15am	Worship Service
Dec 15	12:30pm	Bowling Fellowship
Dec 17	12:30pm	Bowling Fellowship
	7:00pm	Longest Night Service
Dec 18	1:30pm	Giving Hands Ministry
	6:45pm	Choir Practice
Dec 21	9:00am	Sunday School All Ages
	10:15am	Worship Service
Dec 22	12:30pm	Bowling Fellowship
Dec 24		Church Office Closed
	7:00pm	Christmas Eve Service
Dec 25		<i>Merry Christmas!</i>
Dec 28	9:00am	Sunday School All Ages
	10:15am	Worship Service
Dec 29	12:30pm	Bowling Fellowship
Dec 31	12:30pm	Bowling Fellowship

BIRTHDAYS

Renetta Lindsey
Bruce VanderPloeg
Jerry Divens
Margaret Kneller
Carol VanderPloeg
Jeff Engley
Phyllis Myers

ANNIVERSARY

Bruce & Carol VanderPloeg

OCTOBER FINANCES

Income	\$26,768
Expenses	<u>\$25,911</u>
Total	\$ 857

Year to Date 2025
\$24,351



Deadline for submissions to the January Bell Newsletter will be Thursday, December 18th



Answers:
1. A cookie sheet
2. A: A fir coat!

NOVEMBER SESSION NOTES

Pastor Chris led a devotion about gratitude and thanksgiving. Discussed Fall Stewardship campaign status. Still waiting for more Planned Giving Cards to be turned in. Reported back to congregation on Sunday, November 23. Provided update on Kitchen Remodeling project. Approved Giving Hands Christmas Quilt Raffle at the Hanging of the Greens Potluck and Sunday following to raise funds for their quilting supplies. Benevolence Board reported November activity. Looked at lists of new people coming to Cascades and discussed how we can make them feel more welcome. Pastor Chris provided update on his time away at Duke Divinity School in October for the gathering of this year’s Reflective Leadership Grant. Discussed book called Canoeing the Mountains about Lewis and Clark’s journey and how it relates to leading in the Church today. Looked at the survey of spiritual gifts present within the church congregation. Discussed facility use requests by members of the community. Overall, we are thankful for our church family, a successful Women’s Conference on November 1, 2025, our connections to the community. Some of us are learning to lead in a new way. Realize the work we do is not fast or easy. But we are trusting and listening to God. We may not know how God will work things out, but we have a strong sense the God has all of our concerns in his hands.

STAR WORDS



Hey folks, this is your last chance to live into your Star Words received on the Epiphany last year after Christmas. These have been fun words for growth, encouragement, challenge, and hope. And be ready on the Epiphany 2026 to receive new guiding words for the year.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Wonder of Christmas: A Fresh Look at the Story of Advent
Many of us are familiar with the story of Christmas. Maybe we’ve even heard about the manger scene and the birth of Christ every year for as long as we can remember. But what if we revisited the Christmas story with new eyes? What would we discover? In this four-part series, pastor Jarrett Stephens will unpack Jesus’s birth story in the Gospel of Luke. Join us Sundays at 9am and rekindle the wonder of Christ’s presence, his good news, his plan, and his people.

No Christian Education Classes on December 28, 2025 or January 4, 2026. Sunday school will resume on January 11, 2026. No Youth Group during Christmas break either.

Reading Thru the Bible...

The Bible Recap is a 365-Day Chronological Reading Plan you can start any day of the year. Reading through the Bible chronologically takes you through the story of Scripture as it happened. It helps you to see where and how it all fits together.

When you read through the entire Bible it helps you see the big picture of God & what He is trying to tell us about Himself. Hopefully after the last 2 months of reading you have developed a habit and maybe even an excitement for the Word of God and for what might come next in your reading! Let’s keep going strong on the final month of December and gear up for a great start on Day 1, January 2026! If you are not able to read every day you can keep track of where you are by marking the boxes or just read on the days that you can. The most important thing is to keep reading and don’t give up! An option to reading would be to listen to the Bible on an app such as YouVersion®. As a help for understanding what you are reading each day you may want to purchase “*The Bible Recap One Year Guide*.”

More info for The Bible Recap can be found at thebible Recap.com

Day 335 1 Cor 9-11 DEC 1	Day 336 1 Cor 12-14 DEC 8	Day 337 1 Cor 15-16 DEC 15	Day 338 2 Cor 1-4 DEC 22	Day 339 2 Cor 5-9 DEC 29	Day 340 2 Cor 10-13 DEC 29	Day 341 Rom 1-3 DEC 29
Day 342 Rom 4-7 DEC 8	Day 343 Rom 8-10 DEC 15	Day 344 Rom 11-13 DEC 22	Day 345 Rom 14-16 DEC 29	Day 346 Acts 20-23 DEC 29	Day 347 Acts 24-26 DEC 29	Day 348 Acts 27-28 DEC 29
Day 349 Col 1-4 Phm 1 DEC 15	Day 350 Eph 1-6 DEC 22	Day 351 Php 1-4 DEC 29	Day 352 1 Tim 1-6 DEC 29	Day 353 Titus 1-3 DEC 29	Day 354 1 Pet 1-5 DEC 29	Day 355 Heb 1-6 DEC 29
Day 356 Heb 7-10 DEC 22	Day 357 Heb 11-13 DEC 29	Day 358 2 Tim 1-4 DEC 29	Day 359 2 Pet 1-3 Jude 1 Christmas!	Day 360 1 John 1-5 DEC 29	Day 361 2 John 1 3 John 1 DEC 29	Day 362 Rev 1-5 DEC 29
Day 363 Rev 6-11 DEC 29	Day 364 Rev 12-18 DEC 29	Day 365 Rev 19-22 DEC 29				



YOUTH GROUP

Hello Cascades Family,
We at the youth group are excited for the Advent season to begin! We've had a lovely fall so far. We've been working our way through the Old Testament, going through the books slowly and making sure we understand each major person and event. This past week we began looking into Moses' life. We've also had a pumpkin carving party, a Thanksgiving meal, and a Reformation day celebration. We are also excited to have a bigger part in the Hanging of the Greens at the end of November!
In the upcoming year, we hope to do more at Bonaventure, host another fun Bunco day, and explore lessons on peer pressure, healthy relationships, and seeking God. As always, youth help run the tech booth each Sunday morning.
I am so blessed to spend time with these youth every week, to see them grow and reflect, but also to see them laugh and play games.
Thank you, Sarah Ostrand



WOMEN’S CONFERENCE—SHINE & BLOOM THROUGH YOUR CRACKS



Forty women joined together on Saturday, November 1st for a day of interactive fellowship, thought-provoking learning and meaningful connections with other women. Our guest speaker, Dr. Deborah Baker from Tacoma, provided strong teaching and guided conversations on the presence of the Holy Spirit in each of us, and of the power of God’s spirit to shine through our human “cracks” in ways that reveal His spirit to those around us. Each woman constructed a small cracked terra cotta flower pot as a reminder that we are jars of clay in God’s hand and can show God’s light to others no matter how fragile or fallible we may be.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS RESULTS

Throughout our series on the Holy Spirit, we learned that upon faith in Jesus Christ that God gives us at least one Spiritual Gift that can be used to build up and edify the Church. These gifts include Administration, Apostleship, Craftsmanship, Discernment, Evangelism, Exhortation, Faith, Giving, Healing, Helps, Hospitality, Intercession, Knowledge, Leadership, Mercy, Miracles, Missionary, Music/Worship, Pastor/Shepherding, Prophecy, Service, Teaching, Speaking in Tongues, Interpreting Tongues, Wisdom. We gave people Spiritual Gift assessments, had them write down what three gifts they believed they possessed, and had them turn them in. Interestingly and not surprisingly, Cascades most prevalent Spiritual Gifts were Service, Exhortation, Administration, Helps and Mercy. It will be exciting to see how God works as we offer and exercise these gifts to God’s service at Cascades. If you would still like to take the assessment, reach out to Pastor Chris.

WOMEN OF CASCADES

Join together with other women **Saturday January 24th, 8:30-10am** for a time of connection, shared food, and guided conversation as we explore ‘The aroma of faith’. Future dates are **March 21** and **June 6** from 8:30-10am. If you are interested in joining the team planning these and other women’s events, please contact Dian Poujade.

NEW HOPE OPPORTUNITY SOLAR PROJECT

In case you didn't already receive the newsletter, I wanted to be sure to share the good news: the solar project that Cascades Presbyterian Church generously contributed to is now in place and operating down at New Hope Opportunities, Honduras! We now have a much more reliable, clean, and affordable source of electricity for our school's lights, computer labs, and other vital systems. Thank you for your huge role in the project, as a partner in the ministry and as an advocate in raising funds from Cascades. Your support is huge, and Cascades "dug deep" and was very generous to make this project happen. I'm very grateful for your ongoing support, and I appreciate how New Hope serves as a ministry-bridge to keep us connected personally.
Blessings to you,
Joe Foster, New Hope Opportunities Board Member
P.S. from Pastor Chris. If you'd like to be more involved personally in our partnership with NHO in Honduras, talk with NHO Board Members Janet VanFleet or Heather Hartrim-Lowe.