



THE SPIRE

Special Dates:

- **Advent Craft Faire,**
December 3, 4 p.m.
(dinner at 6)
- **Blue Christmas,**
December 5
- **High School L.O.G. Retreat**
December 8-10
- **Christmas Eve Services**
December 24 at 4 & 10 p.m.
- **New Member Class**
January 20, 9-1
- **Pancake Breakfast**
January 21
- **Annual Meeting**
February 4

Inside:

New Member Class.....	2
Sophia's Layette.....	2
Annual Meeting.....	2
Staff Updates.....	3
Bookends.....	3
Children's Ministry.....	4
Adult Education.....	5
Stated Clerk.....	5
Music Notes.....	6
Youth News.....	7
Mission Minute.....	8
Financial Report.....	9
Growing Footprints.....	9
Preachers' Lab.....	10
Boy Scouts.....	10
Birthdays & Anniversaries...11	
Christmas Eve Services.....	12

*From the Pastor,
Rev. David G.
Watermulder*

Secret Codes



Our daughter Abby loves coming up with secret codes. She will spend hours in her room composing coded messages and then delights in showing them off to her friends. Recently, I bought her a spy code book, where there are a series of word games, clues and puzzles for her to solve.

And in this book, the codes aren't straightforward or simple. On one page, you have to solve the clues, and then use the information you learn to untangle the puzzle on the following page. There's a two-step process involved.

The logic of this code-book is similar to the logic of Advent. Where this month ahead might seem like a straightforward stroll toward Christmas, the reality is, that this is can be a complex time of year. There is a "two-step process" to engaging with the season of Advent. First, is remembering how Jesus came at Christmas, and then second, in looking ahead with hope for how Christ will come again.

According to The Companion to the Book of Common Worship, "In Advent we expectantly wait for the One who has already come... The tension and paradox we find in Advent shapes our celebrations during the season."

Have you ever thought about that? That in Advent, we are waiting and watching and preparing ourselves... for the One who has already come. Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate at Christmas "already" came (in the little town of Bethlehem, some 2,000 years ago). And yet, in this season of the church year, we are also called to wait.

For most of our neighbors and the culture around us, the month of December is an extended shopping season, with an assortment of holiday parties and special events. And, if we're honest, that's the way that many of us usually experience this time of year as well.

But the invitation that Advent offers, is to move beyond the simplicity of simply being joyful and jolly, and into the complexity and paradox of waiting for the one who has already come.

(continued on page 2)

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(continued from page 1) As a church, we do this through many of our activities together. The Advent Craft Fair is more than just a fun family event, it is also meant to help children begin to prepare their hearts for what Christmas will mean. We make Advent wreaths, we pack food for the hungry, we gather around inter-generational craft tables, we sit down to a classic church supper.

All of this is meant to start us on the journey toward Christmas. But as we go, we not only look forward to the excitement of Christmas Eve and morning, but also to the way that Christ comes again into our hearts.

I look forward to taking some time in the evenings this month, to have our Advent wreath lit on the table, the glow of our Christmas tree lights in the living room, and Abby nearby, trying to solve some codes and puzzles.

As we sit there, we will also have the chance to ask questions and reflect on the real puzzle that Advent is. Maybe this year, God will show us a little bit more of what this time really means. Maybe this year, our hearts will be even more ready to receive him again. But the promise of Advent is this: ready or not, Christ is coming. And our hope in this season, is that each of us will be open and ready for that great gift.

Peace,
Pastor Dave

New Member Class

Saturday, January 20

Please join us on Saturday, January 20 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. in the Fireside Room to get to know each other, get to know the church, and share lunch together.

Refreshments, childcare and lunch will be provided.

RSVP online at pclg.org/signup. Have questions? Send a note to members@pclg.org or call the front office.

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the congregation will be held on Sunday, February 4 directly after the worship service.



Sophia's Layette Project

We are in need of some knitters and crochet folks. We would like to include a Santa Hat in each Layette this December. We have patterns and yarn, we also have some baby hats that need some finishing. We would also like some baby size knitted wash clothes. We have yarn and patterns.



“Congratulations on your new role as Stated Clerk...but what does that mean exactly?” I’ve heard that a lot lately..

I was recently elected the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of San Jose for a 5 year term that begins in January, and unless you are a polity (church governance) nerd, you probably don’t know a lot about this role.

The Stated Clerk is the presbytery’s administrative officer, serving as the presbytery’s secretary and parliamentarian and dealing with legal issues on behalf of the

presbytery. The Clerk also serves as a polity resource to Clerks of Session, Moderators and the committees of presbytery.

I believe God has called me to support the mission of the presbytery by using my administrative gifts together with my pastoral gifts. Our presbytery serves 34 congregations located in four counties (Santa Clara, San Benito, Santa Cruz and Monterey), each congregation seeking to reach out to all people in the name of Jesus Christ and to grow and nurture their communities. I love the idea that I can help facilitate this mission.

I love being part of our church family, and I feel that my Parish Associate role fills my deep desire and my calling to love and serve a particular church family. Since the Stated Clerk position is a half-time role. I’m grateful that this means that I can expand my role at PCLG to half-time. I’ll be continuing to serve in some familiar ways, participating in worship, teaching and preaching occasionally, but I’ll be able to engage more fully in some areas that are close to my heart. I will be exploring more family ministry and pastoral care ministries opportunities for PCLG, and I will be more available to our staff team and members during weekdays. I’m grateful and excited for this next season of ministry!

Grace & peace,
Pastor Erica

Carlo Panighetti, PCLG’s Ministry Support Coordinator, is getting a promotion! Starting in January he will have a new title, Ministry Programs Director, and increased responsibilities, especially in the areas of event and mission-trip planning, A/V system management and video production. He will also continue to oversee church communications and information technology. If you’re planning any kind of church program, be sure to include Carlo early in the process so he can use his skills to promote smooth planning and awesome results. Congratulations, Carlo!



Bookends

PCLG’s Book Club meets once a month, and new folks are always welcome!

Questions/info?
Contact Sue Hansen at

paigeturner007@hotmail.com.

December
Breakfast at Tiffany’s
by Truman Capote

January 2018
Hillbilly Elegy
by JD Vance



Children's Ministry

God's Place, December 2017:

I've always been a planner, a preparer, someone that is always ready and organized. So when it comes to Christmas I'm all set – tree is up right after Thanksgiving, house is decorated, shopping has begun, I am even planning menu ideas for when family arrives in town. For some of you this may hold true, and others, well maybe you start preparing on December 23rd!

Regardless of where you are in your Christmas preparation, I wonder if you are like me -- trying to work a little harder this season on preparing my heart for Jesus. For me, a planner, a preparer, I would think this would be easy but somehow whether I like it or not, the other stuff seems to clutter the way, leaving less time to prepare and plan for the true meaning of Christmas.

So, in true planner fashion, I sought out a list, and found this one that felt meaningful to me and relatable for my children too. My plan: post it on my car dash and on the family calendar as a daily reminder, as a way to help prepare as we hustle and bustle about. Maybe you and your family will find it useful as you prepare your heart this season.

May the joy of Christmastime fill your home and heart. I look forward to preparing and celebrating alongside

your family as we journey through Advent together. – Lauren, pclgl Lauren@gmail.com

REFLECT.

Thank and praise God

GATHER.

Be with those you love

SING.

And sing it loud

CELEBRATE.

The gift of Jesus

LISTEN.

It shows love

REMEMBER.

God sent Jesus to us

ENJOY.

Lights, decorations, people, moments

READ.

Meditate on the words in the passages of Christ's birth

PRAY.

For everyone

WORSHIP.

It's a way of life

Christmas Eve Sunday morning worship – God's Place will be offered for Preschool only and our Nursery will be available.

Christmas Eve worship – The 4pm service is wonderful for families. The service will include a new take on the traditional Christmas Pageant. Join us for this meaningful and special evening.



Adult Education

Look Who Comes For Christmas

Bible Study

with Rev. Paul Watermulder

Sundays in Advent

9 a.m. in the Fireside Room

Topics:

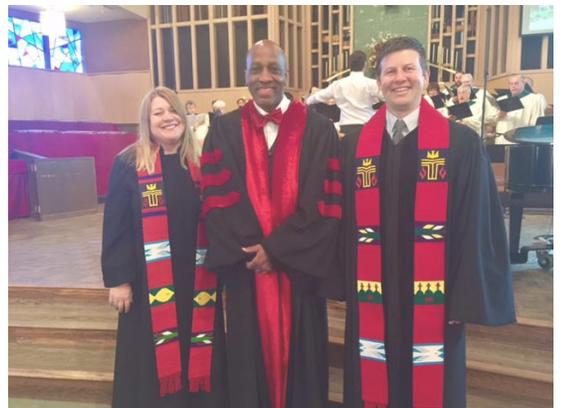
December 3: "Shepherds"

December 10: "Magi"

December 17: "Family"



In November, we were honored to host the Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, the Stated Clerk of The Presbyterian Church (USA). Dr. Nelson preached a wonderful sermon (which you can find online at pclg.org/sermons) and stuck around after worship to answer questions.





Music Notes



From the Music Director

Here we are at Advent anticipating a joyful Christmas celebration of the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Advent and Christmas always offer

up inspirational and traditional musical opportunities.



The Chancel Choir will begin Advent with "A Celtic Advent Carol." This wonderful, energetic anthem with a sound reminiscent of Renaissance music, features lilting tempos, flute, fiddle, drum, piano and Celtic harp. Our very own Bell Choir director, Ruthanne Adams Martinez will join us playing the Celtic harp. The Bell Choir directed by Ruthanne will also be part of Advent 1.

The Blue Christmas Service on December 5th at 7:00pm is an opportunity to remember those we've lost. The Bell Choir will play along with Ruthanne conducting and playing the Celtic Harp. Jennifer Baham and Michael Taylor will fill out the musical ensemble.

On Advent 3 the PCLG Brass Ensemble will play traditional favorites and play along with the choral anthem, the amazing "How Lovely is Thy Dwelling Place," By Johannes Brahms. This anthem is excerpted from Brahms' masterpiece the German Requiem and is a wonderfully rich, melodic and harmonically interesting piece.



Christmas Eve times three.

This year we are blessed with three services on Christmas Eve. Because Christmas Eve is on Sunday, we will have the usual 10:00 am service, our traditional 4pm service, and the evening service at 10:00pm.

CHRISTMAS EVE



Christmas Eve at 10:00am is the last Sunday of Advent. The Chancel Choir and the Worship Band will be singing some of your traditional favorites

Christmas Eve at 4:00pm is going to include a special Lessons and Carols segment of the service. which will include the yearly Children's Pageant. The Worship Band, our organist Katie Gueorguieva and the youth will help lead this perfect service for young people and early birds.

Christmas Eve at 10:00pm will include the Chancel Choir, The Bell Choir, The Youth Choir and instrumentalists. The sounds and joy of Christmas will ring out and inspire in celebration of the birth of Jesus.

All of us in the music program wish all of you a safe and sacred Holiday and Christmas Season.

In Christ,

*Michael Taylor, director of music
michaeltaylor@comcast.net*



Youth News

It only took one day for my dreamy vacation mindset to be hit by the to-do list locked in my head. And of course, my brain had to reboot in the middle of the night. That's how it goes for many of us, I think, and then we are in danger of asking, "why go on vacation at all?" The stress leading up to departure, the things left undone, the things you return to, the amount of Greek I've forgotten (sorry, John), is it even worth it?

It's OK to ask this question, but best not to dwell on it seriously. If you do, the bad guys win.

Built into the rhythm of God's people is a day of rest and eventually, a set of pilgrimage feasts and holidays in addition to that weekly rest day. Once slaves in a never-ending brick-making enterprise for Pharaoh, God's people were liberated and given a new way of living. The stories they told included a day of rest even for their God – that's how important it was.

This may be the 15th Spire article I've written with a theme of rest (or it's the second, I don't keep track!), but let me say it's questions like, "Is vacation or rest or sabbath even worth all this stress?" that illustrate how much we Silicon Valley natives need rest. And it's not just for us. By not resting, we don't let our families rest. We don't let land rest. We don't let other people further down the economic ladder rest. We almost never rest long enough to be bored into asking meaningful questions about our lives.

Enter Jesus, stage right; he'll ask those questions. "Why do you worry about what you will eat and what you will wear?" When our students have to get up in front of their peers and talk about Jesus as they will next week at our Love of God retreat, it's words like these they quote most often. Cast out demons and healed limbs? We've got shrinks and surgeons for that. A promise of rest and no need to worry (in this life, I might add), now you're preaching the Gospel.

Jesus, God of the universe, enters this massive life-filled sphere, and the boundary of his journeys are maybe 200 miles end to end. He avoids crowds. He rebukes his friends. He chills out alone on mountainsides or quiet places. We don't really know anything about his life for at least 18 years! God does not demonstrate ambition as much of a value. God in Jesus is a pretty laid back savior, worried at the last minute for a hot second in the garden, but all in all, he goes slow. He could have died an atoning death at birth if that was what it was all about, after all. Life is worth living, and living life takes rest. Life happens in the restful moments, or life passes you by.

So this is what I'm thinking about upon returning from an awesome trip to a tiny corner of the land down under, where my phone's data plan was so under-whelming that disconnection was imposed – and glorious! Thank you for being generous stewards of your employees' vacation time. Thank you to my family for putting up with me in that camper-van. Thank you to my volunteers for leading youth groups and Sunday schools without me.

Yes, absolutely, rest is worth it. Vacation time, family time, sabbath time, is worth the stress on either end (and if you figure out the magic of limiting the stress, let us all know). By all means, go slow. It's Advent time, prepare for Christmas, but make time for you and make time for God as well. Jesus says, "Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." Let it be, Jesus, let it be!

Steve Fainer, Director of Youth Ministries
fainer@gmail.com

Youth Group Sunday Schedule

SNiFF - Middle School Youth Group:
5 to 6:30 p.m.

Y.G. - High School Youth Group: 7:30 to 9:15 p.m.



Mission Minute

*Need a Christmas gift for a family member who has everything?
Make a donation to one of these projects and receive a card to send.
Spread some love by being generous this holiday!*

Immanuel House – a transition house for refugees newly arrived in San Jose. *Immanuel House is a project of the San Jose Presbytery.*

Front Door Ministry – a program that provides bag lunches, toiletries and other necessities to folks living on the street. *Front Door Ministry is a project of the First Presbyterian Church of San Jose.*

CIC Ministries Art and Spirit – a project that brings art and community to incarcerated men and women at Elmwood Jail.

Heifer International – an organization that provides farm animals, seedlings or other products that could lead to economic self-sufficiency and a hopeful future for needy families around the globe .

Cards will be available after worship on December 10 and 17.

Annual Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser

*Sunday, January 21
9 a.m. or after Worship*

Come eat pancakes and give your support for our two annual Mexico Mission Trips!

Our High school group will host and serve as they prepare for their trip in February.

Financial Report

Dear friends,

As I write this article we have just been reminded of the many things for which we are thankful. We are now entering into this Advent season where we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I do not yet have results for November, but we remain on target for our budget. I am putting pledge only giving statements in the Narthex for the next couple of weeks so that you can check to see if you are up-to-date on your pledge giving. Please note that there are only statements for those who pledged in 2017 and that only pledge giving is listed on these statements. I will issue complete statements for all givers in January for 2017. Remember, you may pay your pledge or make a donation up to December 31st by check or online at our website, www.pclg.org.

We currently have received 167 pledges for a total amount of \$729,284. We depend on our pledges to help establish a budget for the year. Last year, the total number of pledges we had was 195 in the total amount of \$834,844. Please consider how you can help PCLG thrive in the coming year.

I will have 2018 giving envelopes available for pickup in the Narthex this month. If you have not had envelopes in the past, you may request them from me. I have plenty of extras for both weekly and monthly giving.

You may contact me via email me at kristy.cole@pclg.org or call the office at 408-356-6156, ext. 21 for any questions you may have.

Thank you for your generosity.

Wishing you a wonderful Christmas and New Year to come,

Kristy Cole, Church Administrator



News

We have been blessed to contribute \$517 in toys/tools to the Mark West Community Preschool Project! The children enjoyed the pictures I shared with them in Chapel each week and shared with parents who have also donated!

We are continuing our focus on giving, and being thankful, as we support the Keepers Closet in Gilroy. You will find a purple bin in the

Westminster Hall for donations of the following:

- *New/Gently used children's clothing sizes newborn to 10Y (especially boys 4T-10Y)
- *New/Gently used children's shoes
- *New/Gently used Blankets
- *New Socks
- *Diapers

They will accept strollers and pack n' plays as well...please contact me for this type of donation.

All donations are used to serve local needy families and are NEVER sold! They are partnered with Aromas Bible Church Preschool as well! Help us support those in need by donating.

In December we will have our Pre-Kindergarten Christmas Program. You are welcome to join us at 12:30 in the social hall on December 20th (Refreshments following) as we celebrate the season.

Enrollment for the 2018-2019 school year begins in January for new students. Please contact me immediately as we do have a waiting list for the PCLG outreach program!

Blessings,

Cory Mullins, Growing FootPrints Director growingfootprints@yahoo.com.

Preacher's Lab, January 2018

In the first week of 2018, Pastor Dave will be hosting a group of Presbyterian pastors from around the country at PCLG. This is a study group where the focus is on helping preachers develop their craft, to encourage one another, and to have fellowship together. Last summer, the group met in Michigan, and this time about a dozen pastors will be here in Los Gatos!



The teaching time will be led by Rev. Dr. Adam Hearlson, who is a Homiletics Professor and author. Many PCLG people will remember him because he preached at Mateo Watermulder's memorial service. Adam will also be our special guest preacher on Sunday, January 7th.

As this group flies in from New Jersey, Connecticut, North Carolina, Florida, Michigan, and other parts of California, there is a need for some help with housing. If you are planning to be out of town in the first week of January (specifically, January 3-6) and would be willing to let some Pastors stay in your home, please contact Pastor Dave directly.

We are pleased to have this group on campus in early 2018, and will be proud to show off the beauty of the place where we live!



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

The Boy Scouts Are Coming to PCLG!

Something new is coming to PCLG in 2018, we are becoming the "charter organization" for Boy Scout Troop 339!

This Boy Scout Troop includes about 30 boys, and a number of our church families are already involved. The Scouts will meet in the Social Hall on Tuesday nights and will be a new opportunity for our community outreach and engagement. Troop 339 is known as a "high adventure troop," which means they go on backpacking and camping trips about once a month.

The Session of PCLG voted to become the "charter organization" for the Troop, and we are excited to get started. If you are interested in more information about the Troop or to become involved, you can contact PCLG member Nancy Smith (nancyws248@gmail.com) who is a parent leader in the Troop. Or, you can talk to Elder Steve Joiner (steve@joinerfamily.org) who is helping to get things started.

Look for more information in the months ahead about the ways that PCLG and the Boy Scouts are working together to train the next generation of leaders, to serve our community, and to strengthen our church family!



December Birthdays

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Margaret Ann Joiner | 20 Olivia Koury |
| Pat Jones | Vivian Gabel |
| 2 Jo Ann Khoobyarian | 21 Amelia Acosta |
| Jan Mortensen | 22 Dick Garland |
| 4 Cameron Logie | Juliana Damore |
| Ron McCormick | Kathryn Damore |
| Tom Shafer | Lucy Fainer |
| Isabelle Watkins | 23 Doreen Barger |
| 5 Cindy Hilliard | 24 Erin Heath |
| Mary Jane Bender | Shirley Byle |
| 7 Heather Metz | John Caselli |
| 8 Mildred Smith | Anthony Caselli |
| 9 Courtney Iqbal | Erica Rader |
| John Trujillo | 25 Bill Strandberg |
| 11 Bob Kennedy | 26 Steve Fainer |
| 12 Ed Fotion | 27 Daniel Thompson |
| Rafe Smith | Jennifer O'Brien |
| 14 Ted Bancroft | Joanne Thompson |
| 15 Caroline Smith | 28 Brian Jones |
| Gloria Baker | 29 Chris Field |
| 16 Natalie Lane | Collette Lynner |
| Sue Thomas | Derek vanKlaveren |
| 17 Ann Brookhart | Griffin Sinclair |
| Lauren Fredericks | Katie Clift |
| Natalie Finkle | 30 Samuel Nagalingam |
| 19 Gail Myers | Stewart Berkshire |
| Mary Smith | |

Anniversaries

- Jon & Linda Bale
- 2 Choe & Jeri Hickman
- 6 Craig & Sarah Parks
- 17 Albert & Natlie Cerussi
- 26 David & Erica Rader
- 27 Jay & Tanya Kruse
- 28 Willis & Joan Brown
- Pam & Ted Bancroft



*Don't forget—
Deadline for the
February SPIRE
is 2:00 p.m. Thursday,
January 25*



January Birthdays

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 2 Natanya Cerussi | 12 Kathy DeMerit |
| Mark Miller | Jason Kim |
| 4 Chad Froman | Mandy Smith |
| Joyce Gavino | 13 Dave Heacock |
| Kevin Michalicek | Toneh Thompson |
| Ryan Michalicek | 15 Elsie Matt |
| 6 Sue Michalicek | 16 Katy Rohrer |
| Moustafa Kobanghe | 17 Jim Myers |
| 7 Chris Hobbs | 18 Sabina Hernandez |
| 8 Skyler McKinnon | Celeste Putnam |
| Ian Froman | Mike Moore |
| David Michalicek | 20 Kristy Cole |
| Ying Smith | Ryan Gabel |
| 9 Mark Bodnarczuk | John Johnston |
| Ruthanne Martinez | 22 Marie Rector |
| Judy Thrasher | 23 Craig Parks |
| 10 June Buchanan | 24 Mei-Lie Swenberg |
| Karen Loomis | 25 Brenda Costanzo |
| 11 Julia Metz | Mardie Dailey |
| 12 Holly Boller | 28 Carina Castellino |
| | 31 Sarah Nelson |
| | Malcolm Bordelon |

Anniversaries

- 9 Scott & Janet Anvick

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Christmas
Eve

SERVICES:
10 A.M. 4 P.M. 10 P.M.