

# THE REDWOODS LOG

January & February 2024

Grace and Peace to Redwoods Presbyterian Church!

As we launch into a new year together, we have already celebrated in various ways at Redwoods. On our first Sunday of the year, we received "Star Words" during the service, a tradition of which I was just recently made aware. These printed words may serve to remind us of a theme to guide us for 2024.

On our second Sunday, we ordained Pam Hooper to the office of deacon, and installed her along with deacons Ginger Gmahling, Debbie Lundberg, and elders John Girton and Nancy Rademacher for the Class of 2026. We are off to a great start to the new year!

We are looking forward to hosting Rev. Charlotte Cramer, Chaplain for the San Rafael Street Chaplaincy, for an inaugural Homelessness Education Workshop. The forum will begin Thursday, January 25 from 4-5pm, and continue for the next 4 Thursdays through February 22. The purpose of the workshop is to help us come to a deeper understanding of what homelessness is, what causes it, and the ways we can participate in community healing through compassionate presence.

The workshop will help us to:

- compassionately explore and rewrite judgements, narratives and physiological/emotional responses that exist within us and our culture.
- educate us on the realities of trauma, mental illness, addiction/substance abuse, and how all of these interplay into homelessness.
- illuminate the realities and experiences in the life of an unhoused individual.

We hope that you will be able to join us for this experience Rev. Cramer has prepared for us. She is launching the program with us at Redwoods, and hopes that it might become a program she can present at other churches and organizations. I am touched to reflect that Charlotte manifested this idea after serving as our guest preacher this past November. She said afterward that Redwoods was the most receptive church she had ever encountered. She was inspired by the congregation's receptivity and hospitality to launch this series on Homelessness.

Thank you for being this church, one of receptivity, and may we continue with this outlook as we journey together in the new year.

Blessings,  
Stephanie

*Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord. – Psalm 31:24*



## 2023 Comes to a Close

*A letter from Presbytery of the Redwoods*

Dear Friends,

As we gaze on the manger scene, it is easy for us to think about what a change a baby makes in the lives of its whole family. Of course, the baby Jesus changes the whole world, too, in ways we have a hard time comprehending even two millennia later. In our day, the church is changing rapidly, and 2023 has been no exception for all of you in our Redwoods Presbytery congregations. We have welcomed new pastors, and we have heard pastors' announcements about their retirements. Many of our congregations have welcomed new members, and many have said goodbye to members, too. We have continued to navigate new trends in worship attendance, mission, and ministry; we have learned new technological tools; we have seen how the needs of our communities and the world continue to change; and we have done our best to respond to that change with the best tool we have: the old, old message of Christ's grace, hope, and peace.

As your presbytery staff, we have seen the clergy and lay leaders in our presbytery's congregations apply skill, creativity, passion, and deep faith this year. We have been witnesses as you offer your best to Christ and his church. You have navigated difficult situations, you have affirmed each other's contributions to the whole, and you have found beautiful new ways to use the resources you have at hand to meet the needs of your communities and our world. In our collective work, you all have shared your wisdom and care for all of our congregations as we have worked together to foster health in our congregations and in the church as a whole.

We want to take this opportunity to thank you. We stand together with you gazing at the manger, where the very human and the profoundly divine join in that small, vulnerable child. It is a privilege for us to face the human realities of the church alongside you and to witness the divine glimmers that always keep sparking in the worship, ministry, and mission of the church.

We all know that 2024 will continue to bring change. In our congregations, we know you will continue to use your talent and faith to adapt as the world continues to turn. In the presbytery, we know that we are changing the ways we gather together, we continue to update our policies and procedures to seek greater health and clarity for our congregations, and we anticipate more hellos and goodbyes in the coming months. We will navigate all of that together, with all of us bringing our best, using the gifts we share, and seeking God's help to give us what we don't already have.

But for now, all is calm and bright, because God is with us. Thanks be to God, and thank you for the opportunity to witness the miracle of Christ with you.

Peace,

Your Presbytery Staff:

Ariel Mink, Associate Presbyter and Stated Clerk

Corinne Quinn, Hunger Action Advocate

Eric Beene, General Presbyter

Judith Kale, Controller

Pam Sommer, Administrative Associate and Bookkeeper



## Membership/Fellowship Committee

Happy New Year from the Membership/Fellowship committee! We look forward to the New Year and planning events to celebrate our loving and faithful members and friends and provide fellowship activities.

Long time and very active Redwoods Church member, Gabriele Putzi, will be sharing her story with us on Saturday, January 27<sup>th</sup> at a breakfast in the church library. The potluck breakfast begins at 9:30AM with the program at 10:00. We hope you are able to join us.

Following Redwoods Church's Annual Meeting on Sunday, Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>, you are invited to a potluck salad lunch. Please bring a favorite salad to share if you can. The M/F committee will provide the setup, drinks, dessert, etc. The salad lunch is a long time tradition of our church and always a delight.

Attending Ross Valley Players as a group has been a joyful event over the years. Their current performance is the classic play, *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder. We are planning to attend on Sunday, Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> at 2:00PM. There will be a light lunch beforehand for those who would like to stay at the church. We will then carpool to the theater. A sign-up sheet is in Fellowship Hall so please sign up as soon as you can. Ross Valley Players has advised me there are limited tickets available for this performance and all other Sunday matinees are sold out so tickets need to be ordered very soon.

Stay tuned for more events to come!

Blessings,  
Nancy (on behalf of the Membership/Fellowship Committee)

### Souper Bowl of Caring

Sunday, February 11, 2024

Tackle Hunger's signature Souper Bowl of Caring effort is a movement utilizing the energy of the Big Game to work across the nation to tackling hunger in their local communities. Mobilizing grassroots resources including churches, schools, civic groups and caring individuals, Tackle Hunger and the Souper Bowl of Caring movement has created over \$193 million worth of support that stays completely local to make sure no one goes without soup in their bowl.

Join us on Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup> after our Annual Congregational Meeting to donate any canned foods, dry foods, or a dollar to this cause. Redwoods Presbyterian Church forwards donations to the SF/Marin Food Bank.



We hope to see you there!

### First Coming

*A poem by Madeleine L'Engle*

He did not wait till the world was ready,  
till men and nations were at peace.  
He came when the Heavens were unsteady,  
and prisoners cried out for release.

He did not wait for the perfect time.  
He came when the need was deep and great.  
He dined with sinners in all their grime,  
turned water into wine.

He did not wait till hearts were pure.  
In joy he came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.  
To a world like ours, of anguished shame  
he came, and his Light would not go out.

He came to a world which did not mesh,  
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.  
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh  
the Maker of the stars was born.

We cannot wait till the world is sane  
to raise our songs with joyful voice,  
for to share our grief, to touch our pain,  
He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

## A Prayer for Peace in Israel and Palestine

### God of Comfort,

send your Spirit to encompass all those whose lives are torn apart by violence and death in Israel and Palestine.

You are the Advocate of the oppressed and the One whose eye is on the sparrow.

Let arms reach out in healing, rather than aggression.

Let hearts mourn rather than militarize.

### God of Justice,

give strength to those whose long work for a just peace might seem fruitless now. Strengthen their resolve.

Do not let them feel alone. Show us how to support their work and bolster their courage. Guide religious leaders to model unity and reconciliation across lines of division.

Guide political leaders to listen with their hearts as they seek peace and pursue it.

Help all people choose the rigorous path of just peace and disavow violence.

### God of Love,

we lift up Palestine and Israel — its people, its land, its creatures.

War is a monster that consumes everything in its path.

Peace is a gift shared at meals of memory with Christians, Muslims, and Jews.

Let us burn incense, not children. Let us break bread, not bodies.

Let us plant olive groves, not cemeteries.

We beg for love and compassion to prevail

on all your holy mountains.

### God of Hope,

we lift up the cities of the region: Gaza City and Tel Aviv, Ramallah and Ashkelon, Deir El Balah and Sderot, so long divided, yet so filled with life and creativity.

Come again to breathe peace on your peoples that all may recognize you.

### God of Mercy,

even now work on the hearts of combatants

to choose life over death, reconciliation over retaliation, restoration over destruction. Help us resist antisemitism in all its forms, especially in our own churches. All people, Israelis and Palestinians, deserve to live in peace and unafraid, with a right to determine their future together.

### God of the Nations,

let not one more child or elder be sacrificed on altars of political expediency.

Keep safe all people from unjust leaders who would exploit vulnerability for their own distorted ends.

Give wise discernment to those making decisions to pursue peace.

Provide them insight into fostering well-being, freedom, and thriving for all.

Teach all of us to resolve injustices with righteousness, not rockets.

Guard our hearts against retaliation, and give us hearts for love alone.

### Strengthen our faith in you, O God of All Flesh,

even when we don't have clear answers, so that we may still offer ourselves nonviolently for the cause of peace.

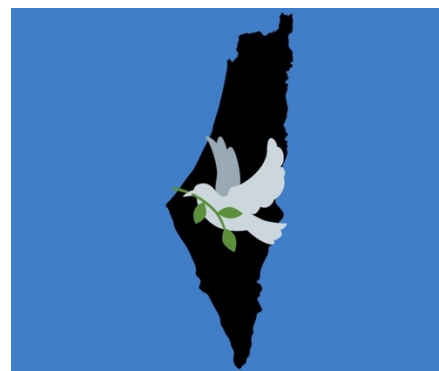
Amen.

## Disaster Relief for Israel & Palestine

As violence escalates in and around Israel/Palestine, PDA is providing humanitarian assistance through partners on the ground and through ACT Alliance. (ACT Alliance is a global alliance of more than 145 churches and related organizations from over 120 countries created to provide humanitarian aid for poor and marginalized people. 76% of its member organizations are rooted in the global south, 22% in the global north and 2% have a global presence.)

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 psychosocial support to individuals.

- To give by phone, call 800-872-3283.
- To send a check, please designate Israel/Palestine on the memo line and mail to:  
 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
 P. O. Box 643700  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700
- To donate online go to:  
<https://pma.pcusa.org/donate/>



## Per Capita 2024

Every year, Per Capita is used by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to provide training, support, advocacy, oversight, governance and assistance to congregations in need. Because every Presbyterian benefits from PC(USA)'s system of government, the expenses associated with coordinating this system should be shared by everyone as well.

The Per Capita donation made by Redwoods Presbyterian Church is contributed to the General Assembly (PC:USA) Synod of the Pacific, and Presbytery of the Redwoods. Our expected contribution for 2024 is \$36 per member. If you are able, please make a contribution of \$36.00 for per capita this year. When making the donation, please indicate that is for Per Capita 2024 with a note or on a check memo.

## The Story Behind the Carol

From member Oakley Dexter



### O Holy Night (1847)

*O holy night! The stars are brightly shining,  
It is the night of our dear Saviour'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.  
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!  
O night divine, O night when Christ was born:  
O night divine, O night, O night Divine.*

*Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming,  
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand.  
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,  
Here come the wise men from the Orient land.  
The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger;  
In all our trials born to be our friend.  
He knows our need, to our weaknesses no stranger,  
Behold your King! Before Him lowly bend! (repeat)*

*Truly He taught us to love one another;  
His law is love and His gospel is peace.  
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother;  
And in His name all oppression shall cease.  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,  
Let all within us praise His holy name.  
Christ is the Lord! O praise His Name forever,  
His power and glory evermore proclaim. (repeat)*

In 1847, a French priest commissioned this beloved song for his parish. Lyricist Placide Cappeau finished his poem, and pleased with his work, he asked Adolphe Charles Adams to compose the music. The song was sung for Christmas Eve mass.

Initially, *Cantique de Noel* (the song's French name was widely loved. Later, leaders learned Cappeau was a socialist and Adams a Jew— and the song was banned from services. But the French people loved it so much, they continued to sing it.

Ten years later, John Sullivan Dwight introduced it in America. An abolitionist, he was moved by the third verse. (Chains shall he break for the slave is our brother). Although banned in France, *Cantique de Noel* became popular with Americans.

On Christmas Eve in 1871, in the midst of fierce fighting between France and Germany during the Franco-Prussian War, an unarmed French soldier jumped out of the trenches, walked onto the battlefield, and started singing the song's first line in French. After singing all three verses, a German soldier emerged and started singing a sacred German hymn. Fighting stopped for the next 24 hours in honor of Christmas Day. Temporary peace was initiated by *O Holy Night*.

Fast forward to 1906. Reginald Fessenden figured out that by combining two frequencies, radio could do more than transmit Morse code. It would be possible to speak! For the first time in history, a human voice was heard on the airwaves; Fessenden read the Christmas story from the book of Luke, then picked up his violin and performed *O Holy Night*.



**2023 – 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Alternative Christmas Faire**

Christmas was just a month ago...

As I write this it seems impossible that it is almost February in 2024. However, it is always time to remember our holidays and continue to welcome Jesus in our lives. At Redwoods we celebrate in many ways, including the annual Alternative Christmas Faire. Our members and friends generously donated the following to support the work of the agencies involved:

Bread for the World:	\$125.00
Faith in Practice:	\$260.00
Habitat for Humanity:	\$275.00
Heifer Project:	\$240.00
Cents-Ability:	\$221.00
 Total:	 \$1,121.00

In addition, we forwarded \$221.00 to Patty Sanders of Presbytery for the Fair Trade portion of the items purchased.

We are extremely grateful for the time and effort of Nancy Rademacher and Stephanie Ryder for the set-up, follow-up and all the details involved in the presenting of the Faire. We are also thankful to the Deacons who contributed their time and festive refreshments during the faire. The 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Alternative Christmas Faire was a great success and will help the agencies continue in their critical missions.

Peace and Merry Christmas,  
Jan Salas

## Lenten Prayers to End Hunger: Bread of the World

*Jesus said to [the woman at the well], “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” — John 4:13-14*

Nearly 15 percent of U.S. households — more than 40 million Americans, including 12 million children — struggle to put food on the table. Here the measure of hunger is “food insecurity” — an ongoing uncertainty of where the next meal will come from. More than 1 in 5 U.S. children are at risk of hunger. To the surprise of many, most Americans (51.4 percent) will live in poverty at some point before age 65.

Advocating for this ongoing issue, Bread for the World urges U.S. decision makers to do all they can to pursue a world without hunger. Their mission is to educate and equip people to advocate for policies and programs that can help end hunger in the U.S. and around the world.

To receive weekly devotionals go to [bread.org/prayer](https://bread.org/prayer) and click the “Pray” button at the top of the webpage to sign up.

To receive a daily Lenten devotional e-mail please let the office know at (415) 924-4831 or e-mail [office@redwoodspres.org](mailto:office@redwoodspres.org)



## Thank You

- ♥ Our immense gratitude to the service and care of Rev. Stephanie Ryder.
- ♥ The staff of Redwoods Presbyterian Church are immensely grateful to our members and guests for their generous Staff Gifts this past Christmas.
- ♥ Thank you to Rev. Charlotte Cramer for her Adult Education interactive classes on Homelessness.
- ♥ Thank you to our musicians: Music Director Denise Wharmby and the Parke Kurtz Bell Choir (Beverly Carter, Diane Forster, Debbie Lundberg, Gabrielle Putzi, Nancy Rademacher and Elani Wallace).
- ♥ We appreciate the help with the Sunday live-streaming by Denise Wharmby.
- ♥ Much appreciation for our Sunday School teachers, Nathan Girton and Tani Girton.
- ♥ Thank you to Keenan Kelsey and Ellie Chestnut for festively decorating the Fellowship Hall bulletin boards and Keenan for the Sanctuary liturgical adornments.
- ♥ We thank our December and January Ushers: Sara Lauryens, Clay Wiens, Conrad Williams, Bonnie Kaiser and Ginger Gmahling.
- ♥ And we thank our December and January Liturgists: Tani Girton, Nancy Rademacher, Brook and Charlie Ryder, Keenan Kelsey, Conrad Williams and Clay Wiens.
- ♥ We appreciate those who keep things running: Rev. Stephanie Ryder, Mark Chambers, Jan Salas, Aranda Dill, the Deacons, Committee Chairs, and everyone who participates in the family of Redwoods Presbyterian Church.

### 🎂 Birthdays 🎂



Happy Birthday to our January and February birthday members and friends!

January 1	Bill Ryder
January 11	Rory Little
January 19	Clay Wiens
January 23	Elein Phipps
January 25	Molly Rademacher
January 27	Pamela Hooper

February 3	Conrad Williams
February 5	Anna Barnett Whitney McNaughton
February 6	Andrew Little
February 9	Ben Girton
February 12	Keara Roethke Hunter Newton
February 14	Jim Gorder
February 18	Mark Chambers



## Calendar

<b>Saturday, January 27</b>	9:30-11:00 am	Saturday Potluck Breakfast with Speaker Gabriele Putzi
<b>Sunday, January 28</b> <i>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany</i>	10:00 am 11:00 am	Worship Fellowship
<b>Tuesday, January 30</b>	10:30 am	Bible Study
<b>Thursday, February 1</b>	4:00 pm	Adult Education Series on Homelessness (part 2)
<b>Friday, February 2</b>	12:00 pm	Bell Choir Practice
<b>Sunday, February 4</b> <i>5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany</i> <i>Holy Communion</i>	10:00 am 11:00 am	Worship Fellowship
<b>Tuesday, February 6</b>	10:30 am	Bible Study
<b>Thursday, February 8</b>	4:00 pm	Adult Education Series on Homelessness (part 3)
<b>Friday, February 9</b>	12:00 pm	Bell Choir Practice
<b>Sunday, February 11</b> <i>Transfiguration of the Lord</i>	10:00 am 11:00 am 11:15 am	Worship *Annual Congregational Meeting Potluck Salad Luncheon and Souper Bowl of Caring
<b>Tuesday, February 13</b>	10:30 am	Bible Study
<b>Thursday, February 15</b>	4:00 pm	Adult Education Series on Homelessness (part 4)
<b>Friday, February 16</b>	12:00 pm	Bell Choir Practice
<b>Sunday, February 18</b> <i>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent</i> <i>Birthday Sunday</i>	10:00 am 11:00 am	Worship Fellowship
<b>Tuesday, February 20</b>	10:30 am	Bible Study
<b>Thursday, February 22</b>	4:00 pm	Adult Education Series on Homelessness (part 5)
<b>Friday, February 23</b>	12:00 pm	Bell Choir Practice
<b>Sunday, February 25</b> <i>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent</i>	10:00 am 11:00 am 2:00 pm	Worship Fellowship <i>Our Town</i> by the Ross Valley Players
<b>Tuesday, February 27</b>	10:30 AM	Bible Study
<b>Friday, March 1</b>	12:00 PM	Bell Choir Practice

\*The annual congregational meeting will be held immediately after worship on Sunday, February 11. The purpose of the meeting is to receive the Annual Report, elect the Nominating Committee for 2024, and approve the Pastor's terms of call.

### **WORSHIP IS EVERY SUNDAY AT 10:00 A.M.**

For those unable to attend the Sunday service in person, the live stream link is available at 9:55 a.m.

[Click here for the YouTube live stream \(if viewing the LOG online\)](#)

The link is also available by going to the 'Join us' page on our website at [www.redwoodspres.org](http://www.redwoodspres.org)

Bible Study meets Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom.

Contact the church office at [office@redwoodpres.org](mailto:office@redwoodpres.org) to inquire about joining the study. All are welcome!

Redwoods Presbyterian Church 110 Magnolia Avenue, Larkspur, CA 94939 | (415) 924-4832 | [www.redwoodspres.org](http://www.redwoodspres.org)

