



THE REDWOODS LOG

December 2023

Grace and Peace to Redwoods Presbyterian Church!

As we enter the Advent season, we focus each Sunday on the themes of hope, peace, joy and love. I am reminded of Christmas hymns and carols that exemplify these themes:

HOPE:

*Born in the night, Mary's Child,
a long way from your home;
coming in need, Mary's Child,
born in a borrowed room.*

*Clear shining light, Mary's Child,
your face lights up our way;
light of the world, Mary's Child,
dawn on our darkened day.*

*Truth of our life, Mary's Child,
you tell us God is good;
prove it is true, Mary's Child,
go to your cross of wood.*

*Hope of the world, Mary's Child,
you're coming soon to reign;
Savior of all, Mary's Child,
walk in our streets again.*

PEACE:

*Silent night, holy night
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace*

JOY:

*O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant
Come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem
Come and behold Him, born the King of Angels
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
Christ the Lord!*

LOVE:

*Love has come – a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;*

*Hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.*



We will light our first advent candle of Hope this Sunday, December 3. On Sunday, December 24, we will light the candle of Love at the 10am service, and the Christ candle at the 5pm Christmas Eve service. We hope you will join us in-person, online, or in spirit, as we embrace the season and embody, like Christ, the themes of hope, peace, joy and love at Redwoods this year.

We want to acknowledge that many of us are experiencing darkness and despair regarding the war in Israel/Gaza, and the overwhelming needs and suffering in our world today. Please see page 2 for an offer of responses.

Advent and Christmas blessings,
Stephanie

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. — John 1:5



Responding to Needs of Our World Today

Many of us are feeling anxiety, concern, and devastation about the war in Israel/Gaza. One of our Bible study participants, Mark Chambers, shared that he is praying this:

*Gratitude for those whose lives have been spared;
Mercy for those in harm's way;
Compassion for the families of those who have lost their lives.*

Mark's wife, Rev. Keenan Kelsey, shared in prayer during last Sunday's service that although we can't feed all the hungry, clothe all the poor, visit all the sick and imprisoned, or save all the people in need, we can give thanks for organizations like Bread for the World, World Bank, Doctors without Borders, Salvation Army, Amnesty International. We can indeed support organizations that have a mission to serve those in need and alleviate suffering. Some of these will be represented at our Alternative Christmas Faire in Fellowship Hall after worship this Sunday, Dec. 3.



God, we can't do everything. So we give thanks for organizations that have a broader reach. We can't feed everyone, but there is Bread for the World. We can't provide water for everyone; the World Bank invests in clean water and distribution, and UN Relief brings safe water into war-torn areas. We can't welcome every stranger, so we pray for countries that open their doors to displaced peoples. We can't clothe everyone; organizations such as Salvation Army work toward that. Although we can't care for all the ill, we give thanks for Doctors without Borders. And we give thanks for Amnesty International who advocates for prisoners when we cannot. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

World Aids Day is December 1st

"For I was ill and you comforted me" — Matthew 25:36



I was recently reflecting on the beginning of the Covid pandemic and how we felt in early 2020 as the situation developed. I was reminded at the time of the beginning of the AIDS epidemic in the 1980's and how we reacted back then. In my case the reactions were similar – we faced life-threatening illness for many, too many, without initial hope of cure or vaccine. Some of us lost many friends and felt much grief. But we also witnessed an outpouring of love and support for those affected by the virus. In the decades since, much progress has been made in treatments and cures, and there is still much to do in the world to protect others.

World Aids Day was first recognized in 1988 and is a day to raise awareness, offer education and support to end the epidemic. This is a day to reflect on the progress we've made in treatments and cures. What was once a dream is now reality – people infected with HIV can live out a normal life span with treatments and protocols. There is still work to be done to educate and assist people with prevention and treatment. World AIDS day is a day to recommit to this cause.

PCUSA established the Presbyterian HIV Network to address issues around the epidemic and advocate and care for people affected by HIV. Their goal is to encourage us to live out Jesus' ministry of love and justice for those living with AIDS. This is my prayer – to live out the principles of Matthew 25.

Jan Salas



Deacon's Corner

The Qualifications for God's Work featured in "Glimpses of Grace" by Madeleine L'Engle

Slowly I have realized that I do not have to be qualified to do what I am asked to do, that I just have to go ahead and do it, even if I can't do it as well as I think it ought to be done. This is one of the most liberating lessons of my life.

The qualifications needed for God's work are very different from those of the world. In fact, when we begin to think we are qualified, we have already fallen for the tempter's wiles. Not one of us has to be qualified in order to employ lesson, meditation, and orison; to read, think and pray over Scripture. We do not need to have gone to a theological seminary, or to have taken courses in Bible in or out of college. We do have to be willing to open ourselves to the power of the living Word. And sometimes that can be frightening.

Advent

A poem by Keenan Kelsey

Take a quiet moment during this busy season...

*Light a candle,
say a prayer,
see beauty.*

*We are on a spiritual journey.
Remember the sacred
underlying the mundane
in this season of lights.*

*Something Holy
is about to be born
on earth,
and in us.*

*In the dark lie possibilities:
the seed in the ground,
the seed in the womb,
the seed in our souls.*

*The deepest desires
of our heart and soul
lead us toward God.*

*A way is being prepared
in the wilderness of our lives.
On this way will be
Vision.
Strength.
Encouragement.
Amazement.*

*Even answers
Hope starts small
and overtakes us,
stretching the borders
of what we have known.
Get ready.*

♪ Music Notes ♪

Spirit, when stirred, is like a waterfall, an unstoppable outpouring of the soul.

Music fills us with spirit, reaches into our senses, stirring emotional responses poignant and passionate, flooding us with joy, melting us to states of awe and wonder as our ears receive the physical manifestation of some of the most sublimely beautiful melodies ever created, composed and left as an inheritance for all. We are stirred with emotions as we witness fine, rousing, celebratory anthems of states, countries and religions and spellbound by the purity of a children's chorus, a solo voice singing to a child. Music evokes memories and sets up hope for the future.

What would the world be like if all music stopped, if the voices of all singers, the sounds of all orchestras and instrumentalists, all who create music, were made silent? Thankfully, the world is filled and overflowing with sounds that comfort, caress and heal, ease us back to solid ground when there is grief, bring life and light into dark corners, draw our attention to beauty and allow us to let go, relax, smile, laugh and cry, embrace each other, find solace, recover, know ourselves and our interconnectedness better.

When all the familiar music plays this month of December, be it a holiday song or the Messiah, we must be ever grateful for being able to hear it, have freedom to share it, and most of all, feel it.

Wishing all a wondrous Christmas season,
Denise



Alternative Christmas Faire

December 3, 2023, in Fellowship Hall at 11:00 am

Join us on Sunday, December 3 for a fundraiser supporting Cents-Ability and providing grants addressing food insecurities. Featured exhibitors include Equal Exchange, Habitat for Humanity, Heifer Project, Bread for the World, and Faith in Practice.

Additionally, the sale of *Equal Exchange* products helps to build long-term trade partnerships that are economically just and environmentally sound, to foster mutually beneficial relationships between farmers and consumers and to demonstrate the contribution of worker co-operatives and Fair Trade to a more equitable, democratic and sustainable world.



Homeward Bound's Contributions to Marin County

Homeward Bound, which our church has supported for many years, has recently been offering programs to thank their supporters and volunteers and share their vision for the future. Following are some highlights from these gatherings which some of us from Redwoods have attended.

They are about to celebrate their 50th anniversary in 2024. Through the visionary leadership of Mary Kay Sweeney and Paul Fordham, the organization has accomplished amazing successes and are proud to introduce their latest accomplishment – opening a new permanent supportive housing facility for 24 homeless military veterans in May, 2024. A recent event was a Veteran's Day breakfast and tour of the new facility under construction.

Homeward Bound currently provides adult and family permanent supportive, transitional and emergency housing in 18 locations with housing for over 500 individuals. Two of their adult projects are in Larkspur and Corte Madera: King Street Senior Housing and Casa Buena Permanent Supportive Housing. In addition to housing, they provide mental health services and numerous other support services through their partner organizations.

Adding to their incredible success in housing the unhoused in Marin, they offer job training programs including the Fresh Starts Culinary Academy and paid apprenticeships in janitorial and building maintenance, landscaping and gardening. The Fresh Starts Culinary Academy provides delicious and creative food for events at The Key Room used by many local organizations and groups.

Future plans include enlarging their Fresh Starts Culinary program and building low income housing at their Hamilton location.

Redwoods Church has been supporting Homeward Bound through our monetary donations to the organization over the years: monthly food delivery to Mills Street (now Jonathan's Place); volunteers serving meals at a shelter and shopping for food for Jonathan's Place at the S.F./Marin Food Bank. For more information on volunteer opportunities please contact Nancy Rademacher or Pastor Stephanie Ryder.

Some ways that Homeward Bound suggests helping is for individuals and organizations to host a gathering in The Key Room, their beautiful event place; purchase Wagster dog treats, made by the culinary academy and available at local markets and attend a Fresh Starts Chef Event held several times a year.

Homeward Bound has made outstanding progress in finding temporary and long-term housing and support for the most vulnerable among us. We are so fortunate to have such a dedicated organization in our community.



Christmas Joy Offering – The Perfect Gift

During the season of Advent, we remember and reflect on God's perfect gift, Jesus Christ. This child, the Word made flesh, became one of us. Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we honor this amazing gift by supporting leaders among us — past, present and future. The Christmas Joy Offering equally supports retired ministers and church workers and their families through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and students in Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color as they pursue education and prepare to use their gifts in service to the church and world.

The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families. Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. This has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years.

The gifts in 2022 provided assistance for 272 individuals, retired church workers and their spouses. The total collected by PCUSA was \$1.1 million. Hundreds of emergency grants were also provided to assist people facing financial hardships.

We invite you to participate in this Offering on Christmas Eve during the morning worship and the following Sunday at our Café Style service in Fellowship Hall. If we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

Happy Birthday, Gabriele Putzi

As read by her daughter, Simone Martin at the wonderful Putzi-hosted brunch on Sunday, Nov. 19

Thank you for being here to have a meal with our mother. When my sister and I began asking her almost 6 months ago how and what she wanted to do to mark this special milestone with her wide circle of friends and family, she dithered, and wavered, and stalled. But on one point she had a clear vision and resolution, she wanted to do something special with her church family.

Around these tables are her fellow pilgrims on the faith journey she has been on these last 90 years. She came to Redwoods Church over 55 years ago looking for people who have similar values but more importantly, who shared the longing to know Jesus better. Unlike any other group of friends my mother spends time with, you are the ones who can go to the deep places of life, to see beyond the temporal to the eternal. You are the ones with whom she can share her struggles and musings about the mystery of Christ.

She was drawn to the type of people who Redwoods attracts, salt of the earth people who quietly shine God's light to their family, friends, and community. You have a humility and authenticity, that particularly in Marin County can be a challenge to find. There is no flash and awe to attract the seeker, but a genuine welcome to those who are hungry and thirsty for the Bread of Life. And Jesus honors that. In the Scriptures we find that to find God, it begins with humility. Peter said, "All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." Or Micah said, "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." These are things that Redwoods Church has tried to do and what are my mom's core beliefs. The love and grace shown to us by this family, many who have already passed on has touched my mom and us deeply.

So today my sister and I thank you for being that family that has been with her as she walks through life. Thank you for being with her in the ups and downs of being a sojourner in this world. Thank you for being a genuine light to her in so much darkness. You are her brothers and sisters in Christ, bound together by love as you walk towards the glory of God. You refresh her and keep her going. You have helped her to continue to be a light in our family and we so appreciate that. Thank you and Happy Birthday mom!



2 Cents a Meal – Also Known as ‘Cents-Ability’

Each month we are reminded by Pam Hooper to contribute to our Cents-ability fund. If we all pause for a moment at each meal we take to set aside a few cents to help others, we can truly make a difference for our neighbors facing food insecurity. Below you can read communication from our Hunger Action Advocate at Redwoods Presbytery regarding the fund.

“Dear Friends,

As food insecurity persists, inflation raises prices of essential goods and 2023 winds to a close, please be reminded that many people in the Presbytery of the Redwoods and throughout the world are relying on your Cents-Ability Donations to sustain them in their times of need.

The Presbytery of the Redwoods Hunger Task Force has been hard at work this year, reviewing grant requests and funding 13 timely, creative, innovative and necessary projects. Through your contributions and by God's grace, we have awarded \$25,450.00 to date to support hunger alleviation projects in our communities. Some of our 2023 grantees are:

- Church of the Roses, Santa Rosa who received \$5,000 to provide a hot, nutritious breakfast and a safe space before school for Montgomery High School students.
- Knox Presbyterian Church, Santa Rosa who received \$1,250 to provide community garden beds for low income individuals and families living nearby.

To date, the Cents-Ability account balance is approximately \$2,000.00. Before December 31, 2023, the Hunger Task Force anticipates receiving more applications for hunger relief projects in our Presbytery, especially those projects that assist those in the community during Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Thank you for your continued service to God, to the Church and to the World! May God continue to bless you and yours abundantly as you continue to be Jesus' hands and feet in the world!

Peace and blessings,
Corinne L. Quinn”

Compassionate Kids!



Compassionate Kids is an after-school program for children in Kindergarten - 5th grade.

Through bible stories, art, drama and music, children will practice peace, tolerance, communication, kindness, and empathy. Compassionate Kids will be held at Redwoods Presbyterian Church, 110 Magnolia Avenue in Larkspur, and is open to children of all faiths. The program will begin January 10, 2024 and will meet Wednesdays, 3:30 – 4:30 pm through February 7. There will be optional participation in the Sunday Service at 10:00 am on February 4.

Please contact office@redwoodpres.org or (415) 924-4832 for more information or to sign up.

Lessons and Carols: The Way of Peace

Welcome to the Way of Peace! Join for a very special evening of worship and music to celebrate the Holiday season. The SFTS Seminary Singers and the Allen Temple Baptist Church Women's Choir will be performing their celestial sounds.



The event will take place on Monday, December 2, 2023 at 5:30pm.

Stewart Memorial Chapel, Geneva Hall, 109 Seminary Road, San Anselmo, CA

Thank You

- ♥ Our immense gratitude to the service and care of Rev. Stephanie Ryder.
- ♥ Thank you to Rev. Cornell Barnett, D.Min for his November 5th sermon.
- ♥ Thank you to Rev. Charlotte Cramer for her November 12th sermon.
- ♥ 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 November Ushers: Ginger Gmahling, Conrad Williams, Robert Putzi and Angi Burgel.
- ♥ And we thank our November Liturgists: Keenan Kelsey, Stephanie Ryder, Clay Wiens and Nancy Rademacher.
- ♥ 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 December birthday members and friends!



December 1	Bryan Webb Charlie Ryder
December 4	Kelly McNaughton

December 17	Colton Berger
December 21	Maisie Campbell
December 24	Robert Putzi



Calendar

Friday, December 1	12:00 pm	Bell Choir Practice
Sunday, December 3 <i>1st Sunday of Advent</i> <i>Holy Communion</i>	10:00 am 11:00 am	Worship Fellowship / Alternative Christmas Faire
Tuesday, December 5	10:30 am	Bible Study
Friday, December 8	12:00 pm	Bell Choir Practice
Sunday, December 10 <i>2nd Sunday of Advent</i>	10:00 am 11:00 am	Worship Fellowship
Tuesday, December 12	10:30 am	Bible Study
Friday, December 15	12:00 pm	Bell Choir Practice
Sunday, December 17 <i>3rd Sunday of Advent</i> <i>Birthday Sunday</i>	10:00 am 11:00 am	Worship Fellowship
Tuesday, December 19	10:30 am	Bible Study
Friday, December 22	12:00 pm	Bell Choir Practice
Sunday, December 24 <i>4th Sunday of Advent</i> <i>Christmas Eve</i>	10:00 am 11:00 am 5:00 pm	Worship Fellowship Candlelight Service
Tuesday, December 26	10:30 AM	NO Bible Study
Friday, December 29	12:00 PM	Bell Choir Practice
Sunday, December 31 <i>1st Sunday of Christmas</i>	10:00 AM	Café Style Worship in Fellowship Hall

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

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

Contact the church office at 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