

The *SP* *ter's* PRESS

Monthly Newsletter of San Mateo Presbyterian Church, San Mateo, FL

December 2015



A Letter from Pastor Larry



Greetings to All:

Here we are in the season of Advent and Christmas. We all look forward to this time of the year. Christmas decorations, lights, shopping, baking, and lots of eating. We get in a special mood that for some reason comes upon us – to notice those in need and a burning desire to help them “have Christmas”.

I think a better phrase would be to “experience the presence of Christ” in our hearts and our community. The greatest present ever given is the presence of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 9:6 *“For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”*

We see the words Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy in our weekly worship in the season of Advent. What are these words to you? Are they words to make you feel good about yourself? NO!!! Are they words that are a call to action? YES!!! We are to take the Hope, Peace, Love and Joy that we experience every day from the Lord and share that with everyone we meet!!

We look around at this broken world; at the violence, the poverty, the suffering, yet again and again we gather as a community of faith and say YES to God.

I think it takes a lot of courage and a lot of faith to come together week after week and say YES! To hope, peace, joy, and love.

My friends, let this Christmas be the one that changes lives. Let it be the one where others can find peace in the Lord. Let it be the one that others can see hope through the Lord. Let it be the one that others can feel the love of the Lord. Let it be the one that others can experience the JOY of the Lord Jesus in their heart.

Let this Christmas be the one that we show the world what the true meaning of Merry Christmas is. It’s all about Jesus. It’s all about the hope, peace, love, and joy that we can only experience through Him.

I have one word to give you that will make this the best Christmas ever for you – OTHERS!!! When you make Christmas about others, you will know the true meaning of hope, peace, love and joy.

As the Christmas song says *“And so I’m offering this simple phrase -- To kids from one to ninety-two
- Although it’s been said many times, many ways -- Merry Christmas to you”*

Gloria in excelsis Deo,

Pastor Larry

December Happenings

Kids' Care leaders for each Sunday are listed by that Sunday's Worship Service in parenthesis.

Tuesday, December 1

10:30 am Presbyterian Woman

Wednesday, December 2

6:00 pm Choir Practice

Sunday, December 6

9:15 am Sunday Bible Study

10:30 am Worship Service (Hillary & Matt)

Tuesday, December 8

6:00 Christian Ed Meeting

Wednesday, December 9

6:00 pm Choir Practice

Saturday, December 12

8:00 am Breakfast with Santa Outing

Sunday, December 13

9:15 am Sunday Bible Study

10:30 am Worship Service (Amy+☺)

12:00 pm Fellowship Luncheon

7:00 pm Cantata

Wednesday, December 16

5:30 pm Youth Dinner & a Movie (6thgr+)

6:00 pm Choir Practice

Saturday, December 19

10:30 am Bread of Life

11:00 am Welaka Parade Lineup

Sunday, December 20

9:15 am Sunday Bible Study

10:30 am Worship Service (Weezie & Casey)

12:00 pm Worship Committee Meeting

12:00 pm Gingerbread House Making

Wednesday, December 23

6:00 pm Choir Practice

Thursday, December 24

6:00 pm Christmas Eve Pageant

Friday, December 25

Merry Christmas!

Sunday, December 27

9:15 am Sunday Bible Study

10:30 am Worship Service (Leah & Jody)

12:00 Session Meeting

Wednesday, December 30

6:00 pm Choir Practice

Check us out on the web @ SanMateoPres.com

Do you know the weekly sermons and bible verses are online? That's right, they are! So, if you are out of town or want to share a particular message with a friend, visit our website @ SanMateoPres.com. To find the sermon archives, click on "About Us" then select "Sermon Archives".

Newsletter Information

Please send in any announcements, information or photos, etc., to Leah Hadrava (leahyh123@gmail.com) or Amy Poupore (poupores513@gmail.com) so we can include it in the next newsletter.

Committee News

Session

- December's **session meeting** is scheduled for the 27th after worship service.

Presbyterian Women

- **PW meeting** is December 1st @ 10:30 am in the Potters House.
- The women are holding a **fundraiser** by selling tickets for a chance to win one of the following: a blue and white quilted tree skirt (on display in the Potter's House), a crocheted afghan and a table runner. Tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5. See Sandi Carle, Pat Janowski, Beverly Wainwright or Leslie Mullins for more details. The drawing will be after the fellowship luncheon on the 13th.

Mission, Evangelism & Fellowship

- **Adopt-A-Soldier** – we have packed and sent out 14 boxes already to our LOCAL troops while overseas and have received several personal “thank you's” back from the servicemen. Keep the items coming in!
- **Thornwell Home for Children**
- **Good Samaritan Fund**

Christian Ed

- The **Adult Bible Study** class will begin studying “The Anatomy of a Deceased

Church” by Thom Rainer on Dec 6. All are invited to attend!

- Youth will help **pack Adopt-a-soldier boxes** after Pageant practice and prior to dinner. Beginning at 6p. Anyone is welcome to help!
- The Youth will have their 2ND **Dinner & Movie Night** on Wed, Dec 16 @ 6:30p. The movie this time will be the Grinch.
- The **Christmas Pageant** is in the works. Join us @ 6pm on Dec 24 for the show! The plot: children are reminiscing in an attic with their grandparents. Each time a new item is pulled out of an old hope chest a story is recalled. Many favorite Christmas Carols are included. Practice Schedule will be announced in church soon.
- Youth & Parents – **Winter Jam Concert** is coming soon to Jax. (Mark your calendars for Jan 15!!) We can get a group rate with early admission if we purchase soon! See Mrs. Amy for details.

Worship Committee

- **Worship Committee meetings** will be the 3rd Sunday of the month after the service. This month's meeting will be on the 20th.

Building & Grounds

- New chairs for the fellowship hall are coming soon.

December Events



December 13 at 7:00 pm
The choir is excited present
a Christmas musical

“One Small Child”

All are invited!
Please bring finger food
to share in fellowship
following the Cantata.



Bring a dish to share after worship on the 13th.
“Thank you” to the Presbyterian Women who provide the yummy fried chicken for our Fellowship luncheons. **Don't forget to bring canned or dry goods for the Food Pantry.**



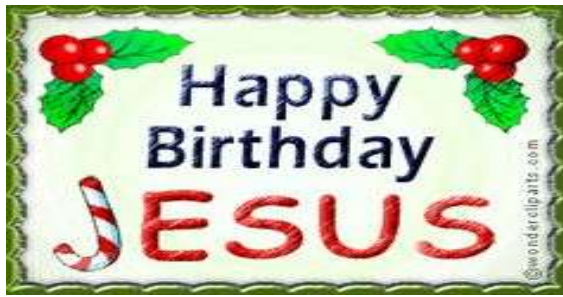
What better way to celebrate the birth of our Savior than with children???
After all didn't God send a baby, not a Regal King?

Come celebrate a Special Children's Christmas Pageant December 24th at 6:00 PM

The youth will be having movie nights once a month usually on the 3rd Wednesday of the month with a dinner. This month we will be watching **“The Grinch”** on **December 16th at 6:30**. We will be having Chicken Kabobs (made by Rylee Kenyon and her Grandpa Runt), baked potatoes, broccoli casserole and Miracle Cake for dessert. Please bring a friend!!! We had 15 youth last month...Wonderful people. We will be finished by 9:00.

Parents, this is a reminder that the children WILL NOT have their cell phones. They are to be placed in a basket so that they have the opportunity for REAL fellowship with each other.

“I love your children and appreciate that you have let me experience some LIVING, LEARNING AND LIFE with them. I treat them as if they were my very own children”. Tracy
If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me at 386-546- 4441 or 386-329-0538.



- 12/6 Jocelyn Bell
- 12/8 Charlotte Homback
- 12/8 Stephanie Eubanks
- 12/11 Betty Jane White
- 12/11 Seager Jordan
- 12/13 Lou Hooper
- 12/16 Jennifer Murwin
- 12/17 Hannah Stoudt
- 12/18 Noel White
- 12/19 Jim DuPont
- 12/24 Inaree Evans
- 12/24 Jessica Timberlake
- 12/25 Charlie Baird
- 12/27 Helen Preston
- 12/29 Scott Stoudt
- 12/29 Landry Futch
- 12/30 Amy Woznick

Due to the Advent/Christmas season, there is no Thursday night community dinner this month. Look for Fried Chicken Dinners in January!!!

Building Soldier Boxes

A BIG "Thank You" to all who donated needed items, money and time to show our local soldiers we care. *Remember*, this is an on-going ministry. Donations can be dropped off in the narthex or at the Potters House throughout the year. December 16th @ 6 pm is the next 'build a box' at the Potters House.



- 12/6 Joyce & Jim Taylor
- 12/14 Joan & Harold Bessey
- 12/20 Janie & Garry Register
- 12/23 Helen & Rudy Hoering
- 12/26 Diane & Tom Ward

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born



Youth Progressive Dinner - So Much Fun!!

Many, many thanks to all the youth that gave this 'travelling dinner' a chance and all the adults that opened their homes to us in the name of fellowship and fun. The kids all had a BLAST - many of them asked when we were going to do this again (yay!) – and the food was absolutely amazing!! It warmed my heart as we travelled along and felt the love and open arms of everyone. Thank you, thank you, thank you. –Amy



At Tim & Leslie's Home for an Appetizer of chips, quesadillas & salsa provided by them with Jim & Pat Janowski. L to R (Back Row): Mylie Woods, Tanner Smith, Kyndall Sweat, Andi Wells, Jim Janowski, Leslie Mullins, Hannah Stoudt, Jaiden Michael, Pat Janowski, Hunter Poupore, Hiding: Tim Houghtaling, Tracy Piscetello. Front Row: Rylee Kenyon, Macee Woods, Colby Poupore, Anslee Wells and Caelyn Wells.

Below: Same group at Mrs. Janette Atkins' Home for salads



Below we were at Mrs. Anna Hadrava's home for the main course. The kids caught a major case of the giggles while enjoying dinner on the porch. The laughter was truly contagious!



(below) Finally, we made our way back to the Potter's House where Casey Griffis organized the desserts for everyone. With her were Mrs. Lulu Gail Griffis and Mrs. Peggy Cone. And since we were finishing up, several of our children joined in the fun for yummy snacks. Pictured Front row: Teryn Woods, Luke Griffis, Tessa Woods and Mikah Gilyard.



Good Food, Good Friends, Great Memories!
Thanks to All!

From our Presbyterian Woman:

The purpose of the Presbyterian Woman is to build a caring community of women. By providing the fellowship dinners and through fund raisers, we strive to grow our faith and fellowship.

All women are invited to attend. We meet the first Tuesday of each month at 10:30 am in the Potters House.

We have a fun day planned for December 29th at 10:00 am with a Quilting Bee. The quilt will be raffled as a fundraiser.

See Helen Prescott to coordinate Poinsettia donations to decorate for the cantata. Please call her if you have any questions @ 386-983-0550.



Good Samaritan Fund

The Good Samaritan Fund was established to help persons in need in our congregation and community.

To those who have been blessed with much, remember those less fortunate that may consider us a blessing to them. If you would like to donate to the Good Samaritan Fund, please indicate this on your check and/or envelope during the Sunday morning offering.

See Pastor Larry if you know of an individual or family who may need our assistance.

DEVOTIONAL

Christmas recalls the story of travelers propelled by the unhurried rhythm of their animals:



*We three kings of Orient are
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and
mountain,
Following yonder star.*

Why did these wise men undertake such a journey?

A tall astronomer, advisor to the Persian king, springs from his midnight vigil in the palace courtyard. "Casper, come! Look along the rod I've sighted toward the constellation of the Jews." Casper peers into the blackness. "Do you see it? That brilliant star is new tonight! It must signify the birth of a mighty king."

A soft whistle escapes him as he spots it. "There it is!" He's talking rapidly now. "I've read ancient Hebrew scriptures which tell of this ruler's star." [1] Rising, he announces, "We must see him. We must go!"

Traversing the caravan routes of Persia, Babylon, and Syria for 1,200 miles, they ford broad rivers, pass ancient cities, cross barren deserts. Three months they trek westward, day after day, "following yonder star."

In Jerusalem they inquire, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him." [2] Worship? So the Babe is more than a king!

Now they follow the shining star till it rests over a simple Bethlehem home. At early dawn neighbors gather to watch the richly- robed travelers dismount. Joseph meets them at the door.

"We've come to see the child, the King." The wise men fall before the Babe, faces to the floor, royal counselors doing homage, worshipping the Christ child. Outside, their servants unload weighty chests from the camels and set gifts before the King. Heavy fragrances of frankincense and myrrh mingle to fill the room as one by one the boxes are opened.

A touch of the boy-child's tiny fingers, a final longing look, and the men rise to go. Camel bells soon fade in the brisk morning air.

We, too, travel at Christmas, visiting family and friends. Yet, like the wise men, the most important journey we make these hectic holidays is to draw nigh Jesus himself with the gift of our hearts.