



The Chimes

December 5, 2017
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Modesto Church of the Brethren

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Interim Pastor: Michael Fletcher

Ministers: Everyone in the Congregation

Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together.

Reflections

For over twelve years I've been aware of a majestic ginkgo tree on Kansas Avenue. I can see it through the window of the scuba diving pool house where I swim. It is really something to see; probably the largest ginkgo tree in Modesto. From season to season I look forward to watching the changes in its structure and leaves. From bare silhouetted trunk and lacy winter branches to mossy green, newly emerging leaves, gloriously full in the summer and richly golden in the fall. It is a truly magnificent sight.

One morning while awaiting the unlocking of the pool facility I began to closely examine my surroundings. Not just the parking lot, but the neighbor's fence, the privet trees and graceful young olives and the ginkgo. But wait! Was that truly my favorite, huge tree? It was, but the entire perspective had altered. No longer was the tree the main focus framed by the edges of the window. It was part of the larger picture of houses and sheds, fences and other trees. It had changed! Or had it? It was a much younger, much smaller tree taking up a lot less of the skyline. Oh, my! I was astounded and flummoxed by my new view.

How many times in my life have I seen an event or situation through the perspective limiting frame of my imperfect understanding? How often has that frame gotten in the way of my acceptance of a new idea or a chance to experience something different?

Oh, Lord, in your wisdom, enlarge my scope of vision, open my understanding and give me the grace to allow others the same gifts of new perspectives. -NancyB

Invitations to Worship

Advent Theme - Home for the Holidays

December 10 - 2nd Sunday of Advent

The Roadmap - Isaiah 40:1-11

When planing a road trip we usually take the time to plan our route and while computer mapping and GPS systems might show us the fastest way, a roadmap might present a more interesting or more adventurous course that creates a meaningful experience as opposed to a mundane commute. Our faith journey works this way as well.

December 17 - The 3rd Sunday of Advent

Launching - Isaiah 61:1-4

Isaiah 61 shares an extremely encouraging word to the people who were returning from captivity to a Jerusalem that was badly in need of a rebuild. Jesus uses these words to launch his public ministry. Sometimes when faced with a daunting task the most difficult part is take the first step, God's encouragement.

Advent Bible Studies

"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." -(Isaiah 9:6)

We've started an Advent Bible study looking at the ways Jesus fulfills the four roles mentioned in this Isaiah passage. Even if you've missed the first session and/or not able to make it to all the upcoming sessions, you are still welcome to attend.

Each session will be presented on Wednesday evening and the same session will be repeated the following Sunday morning. The schedule for the remaining weeks is as follows.

Session 2 - Mighty God

Wed. Dec. 6 Sun. Dec. 10

Session 3 - Everlasting Father

Wed. Dec. 13 Sun. Dec. 17

Session 4 - Prince of Peace

Wed. Dec. 20 Sun. Dec. 24

Advent Themed Devotionals

Devotionals for Advent have arrived and are in the narthex awaiting pickup. We have several options available to various groups. There are individual choices for teens and young children among others.

Please stop by the display table and choose a devotional to enrich your experience of Advent. Hopefully each day we can squeeze in a little reading and reflection time in an effort to 'slow down and see Jesus' amid the hustle and bustle of the Christmas rush!-Elaine Forcier, for the Witness and Spiritual Life Commission

30 Years?

Yes, December 17th is the 30th occasion for A Service of Candles and Carols. The first one was December 1988, almost ancient history! You're invited to an evening of beautiful choral and instrumental music mixed with some familiar carols, and handbells ringing...a quiet way to help move your journey through Advent and Christmas.-Steven Reddy

Hold in the Light



Gisela Flores December 1, 2016

"Only a moment you stayed, but what an imprint your footprints have left on our hearts".-Dorothy Ferguson

John Edwards December 17, 2016

"Gone from our sight, but never from our hearts".-Anonymous

An Expression of Faith from the writings of St. Edith Stein:

"I have an even deeper and firmer belief that nothing is merely an accident when seen in the light of God—that my whole life, down to the smallest details has been marked out for me in the plan of Divine Providence and has a completely coherent meaning in God's all-seeing eyes."

Deacon on Call for December:



Marye Martinez

From the Pastor's Desk:

I will be in the office Mondays and Wednesdays through Fridays from 8:30 to 11:30 through December 22. Please feel free to contact me to schedule other times to get together. You can call the church office or email me at mfletch21625@aol.com or call 313-303-1227.-Michael Fletcher



In the Days Ahead

Wednesday Evening Offerings

5:00 - Games and fellowship in the Gathering Place

OR

5:00 Advent Study in the sanctuary:

Session 1 - Wonderful Counselor

Session 2 - Mighty God

Session 3 - Everlasting Father

Session 4 - Prince of Peace

6:00 - Faith Bites

7:00 - Choir

OR

7:00 Talk Around the Table

topics:

Dec. 6 - What is Worship?

Dec. 13 - Favorite Christmas Traditions, Memories and Stories.

Dec. 20 - Christmas Caroling (no Talk Around the Table)

Faith Bites December Schedule

December 6th and 13th follow the schedule above (Wednesday Night Offerings).

The folks who have been coming early completed their 1000 piece puzzle this past week, and it's time to start a new one. They would love to have other puzzlers join them.

December 20th is the week we will be serving at the Shelter. Since the weather will be colder they will be full. That means we will prepare a meal for 200, so we'll need a lot of help with at cleanup.

Please plan to help!

Also, remember to signup to serve at the shelter for the 20th. Monique is counting on your help.

After the 20th we will take a little break as everyone recovers from the holidays.

December 27th and January 3rd - no Faith Bites. We'll resume on January 10th.

Annual Ladies Tea

Karleen Daniels extends to the ladies an invitation to Christmas Tea and Gift Exchange on Saturday, December 16th at 2:00.

Please RSVP by December 12th to karleenfelton@gmail.com or 209-484-3163 and specify if you are bringing a sweet or savory finger food to share.

Traditionally, those with favorite teacups bring them. Each lady brings a gift worth not more than \$5 for the gift exchange. Wearing a hat is appropriate, but not necessary. It just adds to the fun!



Youth Activity Coming Up

Saturday, December 16th, join us at our Annual Youth Lock in. Things will be a little different this year. The Lock in will be on Saturday and will be starting at 3p. We will start by wrapping up our Hutton House project donations and then we will

get the normal Lock in fun started! The plan is to

attend worship together the next morning so pack overnight clothes, clothes for Sunday and a tooth brush. As always, we ask each family to contribute a snack to go with those

we will provide. If anyone from the congregation would like to get involved with this event, let me know.-Tera Tera@modcob.org or call 209-596-9737



FUN!

We will be taking a break this month from all the FUN (**Family Unity Night**) we have been having. We will be doing so to attend the Christmas Dinner, Candles and Carols, etc. But we will be back in January, so mark your calendars! Here's to a wonderful year of games, songs, food, family and FUN!-Joshua Gilstrap-Katen

Items of Note

Hutton House Project

Have you done anything to help fill the "house" in the narthex? That's the house the Youth group built in which to collect items for the teens in need at Hutton House. In case you're wondering what's needed, here's a list:

*Clothing: small thru large sweat pants, pjs and hoodies, socks for males and females

*Hygiene: shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste and toothbrushes, curling irons and straightening



irons, feminine hygiene products, hair removal creme, lice treatment

*Furnishings: 5 radios, solid colored bedding sets (no red or blue), comforters for 9 twin beds, 9 pillows

*Entertainment: board games such as Candy Land, Pictionary, Life, Scramble, Uno cards, Dominos, Jenga, decks of cards, X-Box 360 NON VIOLENT games, recreation passes for movies, fast food or FunWorks

*Craft supplies: pens, markers, paper, coloring books, paint and brushes

As always, checks are appreciated. Make out to MCOB and note Hutton House in the memo line, please.

The Youth want to wrap up these items for really festive looking Christmas gifts so need the donated things by the Friday the 15th, please.



Report on 21st Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration

With assistance from many of you, the Stanislaus County Interfaith Council (SCIC) held its 21st Thanksgiving Celebration at the downtown Redeemer Church on November 20th. This annual event is done to support Inter-faith Ministries of Greater Modesto, 120 Kerr Avenue. Cash donations this year totaled about \$1,450.00, in addition to the barrels of food items and clothing donated to restock the Interfaith Ministry's Emergency Food Pantry and Clothes Closet. The program featured presentations by 12 different faith groups, followed by refreshments for all. Many individuals from these varied faith groups expressed the sentiment that this year's event was the best one they had ever attended. Among the highlights were introductory music from the El Vista LDS (Mormon) Stake's choir and closing music by the Redeemer's praise band, a lovely duet from the Catholics, two songs from the Central Modesto Seventh Day Adventist Youth Choir, and stirring chants or songs from the

Buddhists, Hindus and Sikhs. A final highlight near the end of the program was a highly positive, inclusive presentation entitled, "Giving Thanks in Islam," in both Arabic and English, by the Islamic Center's Imam.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who participated this year. Thanks to Stephen Reddy and the members of our choir for presenting a joint selection, "I Choose Love," along with choir members of the College Avenue Church. Thanks to Sue Messamer for coordinating the baking, provision, and plating of at least 18 dozen cookies from a large number of volunteer bakers in our congregation. And thanks to Evan Campbell and Cal Aukeman for assisting the Redeemer's staff with the parking duties, along with three of the Islamic Center's young men. And a special thanks to Jill in our office, who figured out how to print, fold and staple all 300 programs mechanically this year, saving us hours of time. Finally, another BIG thank-you to one and all who attended the event. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did!

As an aside, the cookies provided by three faith groups were more than sufficient. In fact, some 200-300 of them were hand-carried by a group from the Redeemer Church to an orphanage in northern Mexico, while another 500 cookies were delivered to Inter-Faith Ministries on the morning of the day of their annual free turkey distribution. As the SCIC member in charge of snacks this year, I once again thank ALL of you cookie bakers out there: the plethora of those delicious treats allowed them to be tasted by grateful folks even beyond the borders of our own country!

And as a final aside, and perhaps due to the multiple hurricanes and the wild fires in northern California, Inter-faith Ministries is experiencing a cash shortfall as the year-end nears. If any of you are still feeling the need to give more after contributing to our youth project's Hutton House, you might consider spreading some of your generosity to Inter-faith Ministries.-Dan Galt, MCOB SCIC representative

McCutcheon Concert info

Come see six-time Grammy nominated folk musician John McCutcheon in his 16th benefit concert for the Modesto Peace/Life Center. John is a master of many instruments, including guitar, banjo, hammer dulcimer, piano and fiddle. Johnny Cash called him "the most impressive instrumentalist I've ever heard." His socially and politically conscious songs inspire us, his songs about family and every-day life move us and his wicked sense of humor entertains us. Don't miss the Annual John McCutcheon Concert on January 9. Also visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/john-mccutcheon-concert-tickets-37896918704>



Thank-you

to the Banner Babes and Boys for decorating the sanctuary for the Advent season: ladder climbers- Linda Hunter and Cal Aukman, designers-everyone in the group, director- Jolinda Reddy , tree assemblers Steve Reddy and Linda, general gofers, bow tiers and eyes for details, Karen Cosner and NancyB plus the rest group, too. This is very much a group activity. We would greatly welcome anyone else interested in decorating the church throughout the year. The Babes and Boys are reaching the point where we would be happy for new ideas and bodies less prone to aches and pains to achieve those ideas!

Loop Slides

Those wanting a slide made for the announcement loop, please get the information to NancyB, by the Wednesday before you want the slide shown. Include logo or photo, if you wish and tell who , what, when, where. Note SLIDE FOR LOOP in the subject line, then email to: chimes@modcob.org

The Condensed Calendar

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

7a Men's Group – Perko's
Pastor's Sabbath

Wednesday-

5p Advent Bible Study-Wonderful Counselor I 9-6
6p Faith Bites
7p Talk around the table topic: Merry Christmas or Happy Holidays-politically correct?

Thursday-

Friday-

Saturday-

6:30p Prospector Christmas Party-
William's White Elephant exchange, finger food

Next Sunday – December 10th

9:30a Advent Bible Study
9:30a Sunday School – Jr. High-adult
(Infant to 5 years welcome in the nursery
with Shaun and Kelly!)
11a Worship

IN THE NEAR FUTURE

December 16 2p Ladies Christmas Tea
Karleen Daniels' RSVP by 12/12
December 17 5p Candles & Carols
December 20-Serve at Homeless Shelter
Caroling at 6:30

December 21 9a Sr. Ministry Christmas Visit McHenry
Mansion
and Museum Sign up by 12/12

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

January 9 7p John McCutcheon Concert
January 14-20 Family Promise



Articles and photos for the next issue of Chimes are due by Thursday, December 14th. Use article name in the subject line and email to: chimes@modcob.org.

The Editor thanks you.