



The Chimes

Date: December 18, 2018
Volume 18 Number 26

Modesto Church of the Brethren

2301 Woodland Avenue, Modesto, CA 95358-9501 (209)523-1438

fax: 209-523-1469 ♦ e-mail: office@modcob.org ♦ web site: www.modcob.org

Ministers: Every Member of the Congregation

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



Advent Reflection

*By David Steele, Church of the Brethren
General Secretary*

"And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people'" (Luke 2:8-10, NIV).

I recently received a text message from my 21-year-old daughter, Aubrey, who has Down syndrome. She told me that there were going to be thunderstorms at home and clarified, "Dad I hate storms rain." As I have done many times before, I assured her that everything would be okay.

"Do not be afraid" are the words of comfort that parents offer their children as they hold them tightly through the thunderstorms of life. These words sometimes come easily with little forethought. Yet, as we hear about the hurricanes, flooding, and fires that have displaced many; the tragedy of a mass

shooting; a medical diagnosis with an uncertain prognosis; or the death of a loved one, it is more difficult to find comfort or assurance in these words.

We continue to face those storms within our church as well: diminishing attendance and the possibility of having to close the doors; a long, tiring search process for a new pastor; changes that test the boundaries of our traditions, values, and biblical interpretations; finger pointing and conversations about the possibility of a split; the spread of misinformation; and broken relationships within the fellowship. These things give us great concern and can distract us from hearing the good news.

Living in the plains of Kansas while in college, I was fascinated by watching a thunderstorm develop many miles in the distance—clouds billowing into the heights of the heavens and lighting bolts dancing from the sky to the earth. Of course, my fascination was replaced with fear as the severity of the storm increased and moved closer, especially with the uncertainty of how powerful the storm could become.

The shepherds faced not a storm but the glory of the Lord, with the appearance of the angel. I like to think the fear, and yes, even terror, that we may experience during storms is like the initial terror of the shepherds as the angel appeared to them. Yet more significant than their fear is the proclamation of the angel, *"I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people."*

It may be hard to hear the good news in the midst of our storms, especially when they have caused damage or great harm to us and those we love. Yet the good news is present for us and, in some cases, we represent that good news for others. As followers of Jesus, we carry that good news. As a church, we are at our best as we offer comfort and assurance to one another and to all those who fear the storms of life. We are at our best when we reach out to those who have suffered great loss due to the physical storms that have stripped them of their homes, belongings, and sometimes loved ones. Through our acts of service and grace, we also convey the good news to those who do not know Jesus. Through your gifts of prayer and financial support, the Church of the Brethren has been able to share the good news of Jesus:

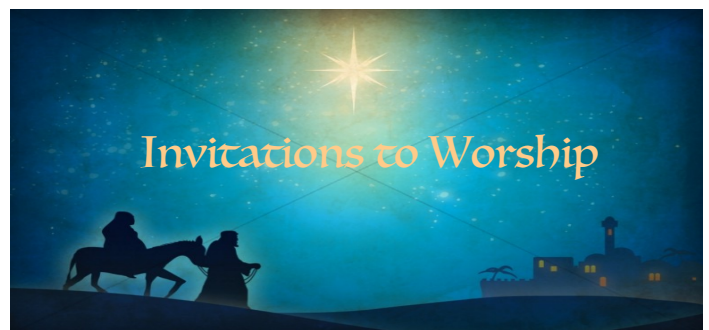
- More than 300 youth, young adults, and advisors served in 19 workcamps.
- 734 "Gift of the Heart" kits (for schools, health, or clean-up) were assembled or donated at NOAC for Church World Service.
- The Disaster Ministry Response team of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria)

provided eight food distributions which fed more than 300 families on each occasion.

- Children's Disaster Services sent 153 dedicated volunteers to 13 locations affected by disaster or trauma and cared for more than 2,328 children.
- 45 Brethren Volunteer Service volunteers faithfully served around the world.

Friends, *"we (as the Church of the Brethren) hold an inexhaustible cup of cold water, water that can assuage the need of a thirsty world. We possess the cup, we are the cup, we know what it contains, and because we've experienced firsthand its wonderful promise we can pass it on. If we can accept and live this single metaphor, we and our work cannot fail, and will not end"* (Reflections on Brethren Image and Identity, adapted).

This Advent, as we anticipate the birth of the one who will bring great joy for all people, may we together be the cup, share the good news, and be a source of comfort through the storms of life..



December 23, Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 23 is a big day for music and worship, (although each time we gather for worship, it's a big day!) featuring the adult choir, piano/organ duet, carol singing, and seasonal scripture readings. Music will help guide/lead us into Christmas Eve worship, and Christmas Day. ~Stephen Reddy

December 30 "Which Way Do I Go?"

Guest Pastor, Julia Wheeler

Associate Director of Development
University Advancement
University of LaVerne

Rev. 2:17

"Are your ears awake? Listen. Listen to the Wind Words, the Spirit blowing through the churches. I'll give the sacred manna to every conqueror; I'll also give a clear, smooth stone inscribed with your new name, your secret new name."

Have you ever been confused, sought God's guidance, or tried to listen to what God was telling you? How do we participate in the glorious gift of Living a Life of Light?

In Ephesians 1:4 it is written: Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love.



December 24th 7:30 PM

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

All are welcome to share in remembrance of the birth of the Christ Child. Come enjoy Christmas carols and the Christmas story, ending in lighting the candles around the sanctuary while singing "Silent Night".



Greeters for December:

Dec. 23 - Terhesa Gamboa & Gayle Hernandez

Dec. 30 - Joann Ewert & Bev Jefferies

Deacons on Call

December:

Marye Martinez

January:

Jim Martinez



Sarah Glass

December 27, 2017

*Perhaps they are not stars, but rather
openings in Heaven
where the love of our lost ones pours
through
and shines down upon us to let us know
that they are happy.
Author Unknown*





Remember the family of Jack Names, who passed away earlier in December.

Keep in your prayers Terhesa Gamboa's friend Robert, who is back in rehab. Also pray for Terhesa's sister, who has the same cancer that took Terhesa's nephew two years ago.

Keep in your thoughts Rachel and Josh Gilstrap-Katen, faced with a move before the end of December.

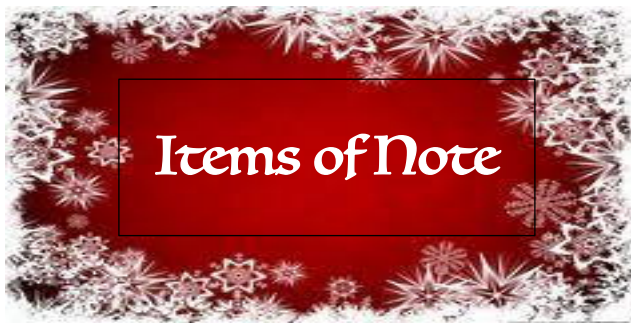
Keep Carole Greathouse in your prayers as she is still recovering from major surgery.

Felton Daniels rejoices at the large number of children up in front for Childrens' Time.

Anita Pedersen-Pennock is grateful for Jim and Kim Boardman's leadership of the Young Adult Ministry.

Linda Bustle is rejoicing over No More Chemo.

KayLee Stubbs' mother is still battling pneumonia.



Outreach Offerings

The Stewardship Commission has been busy looking at our near year-end financial numbers. We thank all our church family for your generous donations to our church budget this year.

Donations were off a bit this last month. In looking at our Outreach budget we are in need of future donations as this year ends.

The Witness Commission oversees our outreach, which includes the following Church of the Brethren denominational partners: Pacific Southwest District, the Mission and Ministry Board-Elgin, Bethany Theological Seminary, On Earth Peace and Brethren/Mennonite Council/Supportive Communities Network. We also support local outreach partners: Inter-Faith Ministries, the 9th and D Shelter, Family Promise, Camp Peaceful Pines, and Local Outreach.

All of these Outreach categories are an extension of our church's mission and actions of our faith. We ask that you consider one last act of giving to this area of our budget as we are about \$16,000 short. Please prayerfully consider this request.

Proverbs 11:25 A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.



The SERRV Shop in Room 4 of the Christian Ed wing of the church will be open every Sunday in December before and after worship. The SERRV Shop has handmade jewelry, housewares, decorative items including Nativity scenes, and FairTrade coffee, tea and chocolate. SERRV International was launched in 1949 by the [Church of the Brethren](#) as a way to help refugees in Europe recover from [World War II](#). The name SERRV is an acronym for Sales Exchange for Refugee Rehabilitation and Vocation. Crafters whose work is sold by SERRV receive fair pay for their work.

In the Days Ahead



Reminder: After Faith Bites this Wednesday, December 19, those who have signed up will bring Christmas carols to shut-in members and friends of the congregation. Gather at 6:30 in the narthex to arrange rides.

MCOB Prospectors' Christmas Party!

6 p.m., December 21,

At the home of Eldon and Linda Williams,
3200 Barbera Ln., Modesto (524-2724)

Bring an appetizer, snack,
or dessert to

share. ("finger-foods")

We will also have our
traditional **White Elephant**

Gift Exchange, so wrap up a "treasure" hiding
in your closet, shed or garage, for someone
else's holiday cheer.



Reminder! Tickets for *Steel Magnolias* at the Gallo Center on Feb. 2 must be purchased from Linda or Dave Owen by December 30! (Tickets make great Christmas presents!)



The Advent Book Study of *The First Christmas* by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan will continue on Thursday night, December 20, skipping December 27, and ending on January 3.

Holiday Schedule Changes

Due to caroling on Wednesday, December 19, Choir practice will begin at **5 PM**, and end at 6 PM. The church office will be closed on December 24-25 and also on January 1. There will be no Faith Bites on December 26. Faith Bites will resume on January 2.

John McCutcheon Concert January 15

Benefit for Modesto Peace/Life Center
Get your tickets from Evan Campbell or

consider a sponsorship: Five levels of
sponsorship are available:

Autoharp — \$40 One ticket

Guitar — \$75 Two tickets

Banjo — \$150 Four tickets

Piano — \$300 Eight tickets

Hammer Dulcimer — \$500 Sixteen tickets,

For information on sponsorships contact Joseph
Homer, 209/681-3596 or Jhomer42@gmail.com



The Condensed Calendar



Monday-December 17

Tuesday-December 18

Wednesday-December 19

- 5 pm Choir Practice
- 6 pm Faith Bites
- 6:30 pm Caroling

Thursday-December 20

6 pm Advent Book Study

Friday-December 21

6 pm Prospectors' Christmas Party-
Williams' Home 3200 Barbera Ln

Saturday-December 22

Next Sunday-December 23rd

- 9:30 Sunday Morning Study
- 10:30-11am SERRV Shop Open
- 11 am Worship-Choir Concert
- 12:15 SERRV Shop Open



DECEMBER

- December 24 7:30 pm Christmas Eve Service
- December 24-25 Christmas-Office Closed
- December 26 NO FAITH BITES
- December 30 Deadline for *Steel Magnolia* tickets

JANUARY

- January 1 New Year's Day- Office Closed
- January 2 6 pm Faith Bites
- January 3 6 pm Advent Book Study
- January 5 8:30 am Board/Commission Retreat
- January 15 6 pm John McCutcheon Concert
- January 19 Sr. Ministry Heart of the Valley
Quilt & Textile Arts Show/Centre
Plaza
- January 21 Martin Luther King Jr. Day-Office
Closed

HEART FEBRUARY HEART

- February 2 Sr. Ministries--*Steel Magnolias*
at Gallo Center for the Arts
Buy tickets by December 30
- February 3-10th Hosting Family Promise

