



# The Chimes

Date: December 17, 2019  
Volume 19 Number 26

## Modesto Church of the Brethren

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Pastor: Andrew Sampson Ministers: Every Member of the Congregation

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



... And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup> And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

<sup>9</sup> And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

<sup>10</sup> And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

<sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

<sup>12</sup> And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

<sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, <sup>14</sup> Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

~Luke 2:7-14 KJV



**December 22's** scripture is Zechariah (Luke 1:5-13, 57-80), and Christmas Eve is Luke's telling of the birth in Luke 2.

**Quiz Question:** Which Gospels tell of Jesus' birth?

**December 29:** What Do You/We See? Read Luke 2:8-18 about the shepherds! What did they see upon arriving at the place where Jesus lay? How did they interpret what they saw? What were the signs? What we see...how does it inform our faith journey? How does our faith journey inform what we see and how we understand?



### December Greeters:

22nd-Wolfe Family

29th-Jim & Marye Martinez

### January Greeters:

January 5<sup>th</sup>-Jolinda Reddy & Monique Sanders

January 12<sup>th</sup>-Fran Adkins & Rita Matthew

January 19<sup>th</sup>-Syl Bupp & Darlene Mathias

January 26<sup>th</sup>-Al & Elaine Forcier



### Sunday, December 8:

Terhesa Gamboa reports that she is getting help for her friend Robert

Kim Boardman remembered that December 8 was her Grandmother Kathryn Duncanson's birthday.

Linda Bustle had a checkup that showed that she is free of cancer.

Stephen Reddy thanked the crew that decorated the sanctuary for Christmas.

Mimsie Farrar had a celebration for her father's birthday.

Kelly Gepley went back to work December 12<sup>th</sup>.

### Sunday, December 15:

Larry Cole is in Garden City skilled nursing, receiving physical therapy and pain management for his foot.

Kim Boardman celebrates the blessing of community and the guidance of others.

Sara Miller asks for prayers for Steve as he has another knee surgery

David Messamer reported that his mother Sue is in ICU after a fall

Elaine Forcier asks for help for Jaimie Campbell, who is filling in for Sue in preparing the reception for Candles and Carols

Tammy Firch needs to find another place to store some boxes and help in moving them.

Rachel Gilstrap-Katen asks for prayers for her best friend's sister with cancer.

Annaliese Hausler-Akpovi gives thanks for the work Christian Education is doing, especially Karleen Daniels.

Shaun Gepley showed off his new "Dad" tie and is pursuing his Masters degree and licensing as a counselor.

Bob Vardaman and Rose both have had falls that caused injury. Please keep them both in your prayers.



**Just a reminder: This Chimes is the last one for 2019! The next deadline for articles and other items for the Chimes is **December 28**, but the Chimes will not reach your inboxes until **January 2, 2020**!**

## Items of Note

### Without Exception Brethren Mennonite Council/Supportive Communities Network statement of response to the creation of the Covenant Brethren Church

On November 16, 2019, a group of discontented Brethren gathered in Virginia to organize a new denomination called Covenant Brethren Church. This split represents a frustration that several decades of attempts to mold the Church of the Brethren into a more fundamentalist and LGBTQ exclusive denomination have not been more successful.

At this time, the number of congregations that will elect to leave the Church of the Brethren in order to affiliate with this new denomination is unknown. The COB Leadership Team and District Executives will work to facilitate the departure.

Not surprisingly, a foundational tenet of this new church is a clear rejection of LGBTQ people. As pastors and members of congregations that have been blessed by the full participation and gifts of LGBTQ members, we lament the harm that is inflicted by policies and practices of exclusion and condemnation. As these congregations depart, we will continue to bear witness to the goodness and resiliency of LGBTQ people and embrace with open arms those who are excluded or spiritually harmed.

BMC will provide resources and support for LGBTQ people and their families regardless of their denominational affiliation.

In her newest book, *The Lost Art of Scripture*, author Karen Armstrong reminds us that religion is an art form that pulls us to ponder the mysteries and possibilities of life and the divine.

At its best, religion calls us into the world with a compassion that "treats everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equality and respect."

In Jesus, we witness a way of life that affirms the sacred worth of each individual and moves us towards acts of peacemaking, service, compassion and justice. In rejecting the temptations of a self-assured legalism, the Jesus of the gospels invites us into a deeper understanding of the richness of the complexities and ambiguities of life. By embracing Jesus' call to inclusion, our communities are strengthened and blessed.

We are grateful for the many ways that our Brethren tradition has guided us in this way of Jesus. The best of our Brethren heritage, belief and practice holds respect for conscience, recognizes the blessing of all of God's children, embraces the love of Christ, and calls us to be open to the Spirit. It has led us to the margins, where we greet the living Christ in the messiness and joys of human life. In the words of Christian author Sarah Bessey, "the margins are our center." We wish our siblings in the Covenant Brethren Church peace in their journey. In these uncertain times as a denomination, we as SCN congregations will continue to affirm the dynamic and expansive love of God for all people, and move with hope and anticipation into an abundant future. (Continued on next page)

By Supportive Congregations Network  
Steering Committee:

Kurt Borgmann, North Manchester COB

Susan Boyer, La Verne COB

Enten Eller, Ambler COB, Living Stream  
COB

Brian Flory, Beacon Heights COB

Sarah Kinsel, Portland Peace COB

Bonnie Kline Smeltzer, State College

University Baptist and Brethren Church

Zandra Wagoner, University of La Verne

Joanna Willoughby, Common Spirit Grand  
Rapids COB

Carol Wise, Brethren Mennonite Council for  
LGBTQ Interests

Chris Zepp, Bridgewater COB



For Christmas the Witness Commission is again promoting a sock drive for Modesto's Cleansing Hope Shower Shuttle. They really appreciated our sock donations last time since these items are really needed.

Be looking for the Shower Shuttle Sock donation boxes in the Narthex! Sock it to those boxes! The more socks we get, the better for the folks who use the Shower Shuttle and receive a new pair of socks every time they shower. Clean, new socks are vital for homeless folks, to keep their feet healthy. Many are on their feet most of the time, and worn or no socks can cause many foot ailments. So....

**Give**  
**SOCKS**

## A TIME TO GIVE

We are near meeting our budget, however the Stewards are asking our church family to give a little extra this last month to insure we meet our budget. Last year the giving for December was a little over \$30,000 which enable us to indeed meet our budget. We ask at this time that you consider a little extra giving tis last month.

We are fine with the monthly operating expenses but could use some help meeting our outreach goals. We must remember that we are a church that believes to put our faith into action. One way we do this is though our Witness goals of helping others including world mission assistance along with our Denomination. ~Prayerfully, Your Stewards



I am very grateful for the many words of appreciation for the work I do for our children's program. It is nice to be appreciated. **However**, we could not have a children's program if it weren't for the many others who sacrifice their time and put in their hard work. I want to mention and give a heartfelt thanks to some of those folks who help make our children's Sunday an exciting day for our children.

Elaine Forcier worked several Sundays with the children to help them learn their song. Kevin Miller created a beautiful backdrop for the stable scene. Leslie Gallagher willingly edits all our videos and makes them look great. (Continued on next page)

Parents helped dress, manage, and encourage our children for the few Sundays the video was produced. Pastor Andrew and Jolinda Reddy also helped plan ways for the children to participate in the worship service.

I also want to mention that in addition to this Children's Sunday, Janeen Studley is in children's church with me **every** Sunday helping me wherever she is needed. Ann Marie Washington is always a willing person to help with children's church when needed. Bonnie Munson, Kim Boardman, Jim Martinez, Mary Martinez, and Margaret Johnson have all been substitute teachers with Linda Owen and Gayle Hernandez as their helpers.

Bonnie Munson has also taken over all of our monthly "FUN" events since November. She will now be leading the planning, creating, publicizing, and hard work of carrying the event out each month.

We have an awesome Christian Education commission that meets religiously every month to help plan our children's programs from nursery through high school. Those folks are myself, Bonnie Munson, Josh Gilstrap-Katen, Kelly Gepley, and Anna Hazen. We are also blessed with appointees Janeen Studley and Ann Marie Washington. As well as attending our commission meetings, these folks are also there every month for our "FUN" events to provide the leadership it takes to make "FUN" a successful program.

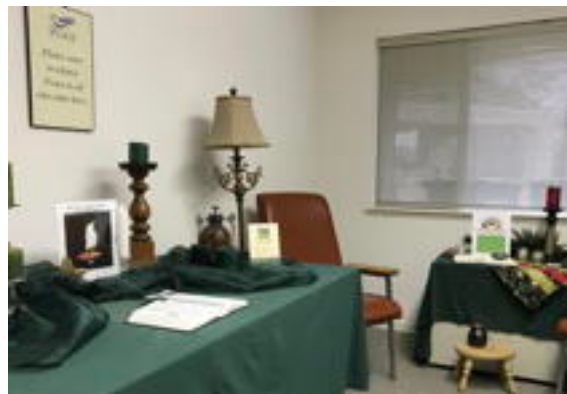
I want to give my deepest and sincerest gratitude for everything these folks provide and I hope that everyone will let them know how much you appreciate them as well.

Sincerely  
Karleen Daniels



Ladies - Celebrate the Season!  
At the home of Annaliese Hausler-Akpovi ,  
401 East Fairmont Ave., Modesto  
Thursday, Dec. 19 at 5:00  
Bring a sweet or savory finger-food and your  
\$5 gift for the fun-filled exchange

## The Quiet Place



The Quiet Place has been updated to reflect the changing seasons and our theme for Advent: "**Journey into the Light**". Here you will find seasonal colors, images and music 'reflecting' this focus. You're invited to 'come, one and all & see for yourself'...

## The Condensed Calendar



Monday, December 16

Tuesday, December 17  
11am Young at Heart Exercise Group

Wednesday, December 18  
Caffeinated Church-Fox Pub  
1111 11<sup>th</sup> Street

6pm Faith Bites  
6pm Christmas Caroling

Thursday, December 19  
11am Young at Heart Exercise Group  
6pm Book Study

Friday, December 20  
6pm FUN Night

Saturday, December 21

Next Sunday, December 22  
9:30 Sunday School  
11am Worship  
6pm Young Adult Christmas party  
Boardman's

December 24/25 NO Faith Bites  
December 24 7:30pm Christmas Eve  
Service

December 24/25 Christmas-Office closed  
December 31 New Year's Eve NO Faith Bites

## JANUARY

January 1 New Year's Day-Office Closed  
January 7 10:30am Sr. Ministries Meeting  
January 9 12pm Sr. Ministries event  
Viking River Cruise  
January 14 7pm John McCutcheon Concert  
January 18 8:30 am Board Retreat  
January 19 3pm Gene Palsgrove Memorial  
January 20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
Office closed

### Welcome Statement



Believing that God's unbounded love and grace, as taught by Jesus, are offered to all and meant to be shared and celebrated by all, we embrace persons of every age, race, sexual orientation, ethnic and religious background, physical and mental ability, and economic means as vital and integral members of God's family. As an Open and Affirming congregation we welcome everyone to participate in the life and worship of our church.