



The Chimes

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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

Pastor: Andrew Sampson

Ministers: Every Member of the Congregation

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



According to Wikipedia, Advent is:

A season of the liturgical year observed in most denominations as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for both the celebration of the Nativity of Christ at Christmas and the return of Christ at the Second Coming. Advent is [also] the beginning of the liturgical year in Western Christianity.

Advent begins next Sunday, November 29 and continues through Christmas Eve. One way to count down the days is through an Advent calendar, and over the past few weeks I have noticed several options for these calendars. For example, if you are a dog owner you can get a calendar with dog treats and there are quite a number of others - hot sauce, Legos, and socks. It seems that companies have found another way to make a profit off another aspect of Christmastime.

Regardless of whether or not we use a calendar, Advent can still be a time of anticipation, renewal, and hope in the midst of life's happenings.

This is one reason why the worship coordinators have decided on the theme, "Advent: Beauty through the unexpected." The holidays will certainly be different this year, and we need to acknowledge the losses that we will experience. However, this Advent we should be attentive to the surprising joys that we may encounter.

I believe that with the decreased activities and obligations that we might be more attentive to the moments that we may have overlooked before. Without our usual distractions we might be able to more easily see the God moments within our lives that previously we may have missed. As you journey through Advent this year and feel that you have had an unexpected beautiful moment; please appreciate it and then share it with your church family.

~Pastor Andrew



Please join us for worship on Modesto Church of the Brethren's Facebook page at 11 AM each Sunday.



**COMING SOON to your MAILBOX...
A 'MASON JAR' ADVENT**

As we polish off the last morsels of the turkey, we're reminded that Advent is 'just around the corner.' Anxiety may set in as we take stock of our normal 'to do list' in preparation for the holidays...Christmas decorations, cards, gifts & baking. If we get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the 'trappings' of Christmas, it's easy to relegate 'spiritual' needs to the back burner.

As we consider Christmas activities during this fearful time of COVID we may find ourselves doing things differently. In response to this unique time with new challenges, we're offering a different kind of devotional, 'A Mason Jar Advent.' Our hope is that these simple 'hands on' opportunities for reflection and response will provide meaningful ways to prepare our hearts for the annual 'journey to Bethlehem.'

This special packet will arrive soon via "snail mail" with 3 kinds of color-coded tags to cut out and pop into a Mason jar to draw from daily:

- **"Get Praying"** Readings & prayers
- **"Get Connected"** Conversation starters
- **"Get Moving"** Actions of love & grace
- **"Get Social"** Social media starters

As we reflect and respond to these simple daily 'prompts,' may we each experience the simple blessings of Christmas: love, joy, peace, and spirit!

--The Worship & Spiritual Life Commission



A Happy Birthday to Rita M.!

Hold Joann E. and her family in your prayers as her sister passed away.

Keep Dan and Trish G. in your prayers, as Trish's brother Merritt Hulst passed away last Friday.

Linda S. has been hospitalized with COVID but is now home, but Bob has it too.

Barbara and Dan B. also have COVID.

Margaret J. asks for prayers for her son, Patrick. He and two others at his group home have COVID.

Keep Carole G. in your prayers as two of her cousins passed with COVID.

Pray for Hannah and Dave K. in PA whose four adult children and many grandchildren are in need of strength and peace.

Evan C. asks for prayers for school districts across the nation as they make difficult decisions.

Luella C. asks for prayers for her daughter Kate's family in PA as Kate's daughter Hope has been diagnosed with COVID.

Shari S is thankful for so much, but is missing her California family at Thanksgiving.

Allison S. asks for prayers for her mother who is undergoing cataract surgery Monday. She also asks for prayers for friends Candice and Brandi with health issues. She is thankful for a surprise flower delivery.



Rise Up, Brethren!

The Church of the Brethren has much to celebrate and an incredible history of responding to all types of disasters- hurricanes, tornados, earthquakes, floods, war, violence, and much more. Now we are responding to a major pandemic

As Brethren Disaster Ministries (BDM) responds during this time, we are faced with significantly decreased financial support for the Emergency Disaster Fund (EDF). BDM is following Jesus' example and boldly reaching out to those in need. With individual and congregation giving down, EDF reserves, which fund all BDM and Children's Disaster Services (CDS) programs in the U.S. and abroad are being depleted. The three large annual auctions that support the EDF were canceled in 2020 in order to keep people safe during the pandemic. This has meant an additional loss of about \$500,000 for the EDF, which substantially impacts the funds available for this important work.

Additional funding is crucial to continue the COVID-19 grant programs and to respond to this year's very active wildfire and hurricane seasons, other inevitable disasters, and the growing global crisis. The Rise Up campaign was developed to call for your support.... Please join us and Rise Up in support of BDM programs.

~Excerpted from Brethren Disaster Ministries newsletter, BRIDGES, Vol. 21, Summer 2020

Pacific Southwest District Unity Statement

District Conference, 10/13/2007

On this 300th anniversary of the founding of the Church of the Brethren, we remember the words of Jesus:

"Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples - when they see the love you have for each other." (John 13: 34, 35; The Message)

Recognizing we are a living peace church, and that God is constantly revealing, we commit to humble ourselves, and to engage in the tension of community necessary for new birth.

Not focusing on our differences, but in the spirit of love and acceptance, we choose to focus on Christ.

We purpose to remain open, as we listen to one another and to the Holy Spirit, working in love to mutually support and encourage our various ministries.

If I had ever read the Pacific Southwest District Unity Statement, I definitely had forgotten about it. Recently, I participated in the district conference insight session in which Moderator Mary Kay Ogden, former district board chair Paul Lovelace and the LaVerne COB pastor Susan Boyer each talked about the formation and adoption of the statement at district conference in 2007. At the time, there had been quite a lot of contention among members of the board and district churches.

Then district executive minister Brian Boyer sent a group of people from the district representing very diverse perspectives into a room. Their task was to craft a statement that could bring everyone together as a Christian district community.

Each of the insight session presenters talked about the day the statement was adopted. They spoke of the "holy moment" among the conference delegates as they voted and the statement became official. The presenters also talked about how they felt the statement has played a part in the life of PSWD since.

I learned that Pacific Southwest District is the only Church of the Brethren district with such a statement. Susan Boyer made the comment that calling it a statement is really a misnomer and that it is truly an agreement. Our district chose to adopt the unity statement in lieu of the denominational idea of a punitive plan for dealing with churches. I got the impression that in moments of disagreement or tension, the unity statement may be used to remind all parties that we all exist to pursue a common goal.

My concern during the insight session came from my own question. I asked if the unity statement was frequently revisited at board meetings or district conferences. The disappointing answer was "No, because we are all such good friends". I cautioned that there are now many involved that are "new" friends and it is quite likely not aware of the agreement that was made 13 years ago.

Let me do my part to remedy that situation in a small way by including the PSWD Unity statement. My hope is that as the Modesto Church of the Brethren,

we too can utilize this statement to remember we are a Christian community within the Pacific Southwest District of the Church of the Brethren, striving to continue the work of Jesus simply, peacefully and together.

With you on the journey,
Kim Boardman

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST DISTRICT CONFERENCE THOUGHTS

If you participated in any part of the on-line PSWD Conference between November 9 and November 15, please share your thoughts and experiences with the congregation. You can send a sentence or a paragraph to chimes@modcob.org and they will be shared in the Chimes as Kim's was.

Board Reorganization Gathering

This meeting, formerly called the **Board Retreat**, is scheduled for January 16, 2021 and will be held as a Zoom event. More information will be forthcoming as we get closer to the date.

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.

Meeting called to order by Moderator Linda Hunter at 1:13pm after a quorum was established.

I. Devotions by Linda Hunter: Excerpts about Thanksgiving from Messenger, Nov. 2020

II. Approval of Agenda, as amended M/S/P: Karleen Daniels, Marye Martinez

III. Approval of Minutes

A. January 26, 2020, approved M/S/P: Pat Royer, Marye Martinez

B. October 18, 2020, approved M/S/P: Jeannie Canter, Elaine Forcier

IV. Recommendation from the board to adopt a revised constitution (see attached)

1. Karen Cosner gave background information about the formation of the constitution revision committee and the process they followed

Felton Daniels explained procedures and guiding principles followed in the revision process

2. Motion from the board was brought to council to approve the proposed constitution.

3. Discussion:

-How many have actually read the proposed constitution? Show of hands, but no count taken.

4. Amendment proposed by Margaret and Bill Johnson, second by Johnathan Goodrich

There is a need for our congregation to meet together, in person, to discuss the revision of our church constitution.

1. *There has been a lack of congregational involvement in the constitutional change process.*

2. *There are numerous areas of concern.*

3. *Submitting written amendments to the proposed constitution, for a zoom vote, is too confusing, presents logistical problems and eliminates some members from this process.*

4. *There are, currently, pandemic restrictions about public gatherings due to Covid-19.*

We move that a vote on the proposed constitution revision be delayed until the congregation can have in-person discussion meetings. The Constitution Revision Committee members have a responsibility to make changes that reflect congregation input. Upon completion of that process, and further discernment by the congregation, a new date may be established for a council vote on proposed revisions to the constitution.

5. Discussion of Amendment

-Many expressed agreement with the motion; one wanted to be sure we heard "the other side"

-Karen Cosner shared that filling 5 commission positions has become difficult with smaller numbers in the church; itemized descriptions were removed to give commissions flexibility

-Felton Daniels shared that waiting to adopt the revised constitution really only affects the ballot

-Marye Martinez expressed concerns for the nominating committee and proposed that we move forward as the ballot stands

6. Question to end discussion of the amendment was called by Jeannie Canter

7. Amendment vote: passed unanimously

V. Recommendation from the board to adopt a proposed budget for 2021 (see attached)

1. Discussion

-Pat Royer and Felton Daniels each asked about the reduced amount to Bethany Seminary in the Witness commission budget. (Line 502)

-Response from Luella Cole: The commission decided to add more to local outreach without raising the total for the Witness budget.

-Many people gave input concerning Bethany students that receive money for training, whether giving money to the seminary results in more pastors, personal experiences at Bethany, and concerns when non-Brethren pastors are hired in churches.

-Luella Cole expressed sympathy to Bethany concerns, but also expressed the concern of the commission to keep funding other agencies.

2. Amendment to Proposed budget by Felton Daniels, second by Pat Royer

I move to amend the proposed budget for 2021 by increasing line item 502 (our Contribution to Bethany Theological Seminary) from \$7,500 to \$9,000.

3. Question to end discussion concerning amendment was called by Jeannie Canter, second by Sue Messamer; passed by majority

4. Vote on amendment passed by majority
5. Question by Pat Royer about advertising (line item #516); Answer by Luella Cole: It was used for postcards.
6. Question by Maren McCourt about giving to PSWD
 - Answer: It has remained the same for a while; some cutting due to budget problems years before
 - Answer: district has money from sale of properties
7. Question to vote on amended budget; passed by majority
8. Vote on amended budget; passed by majority

VI. Calling of Church Officers (see attached proposed ballot)

1. Leslie Wilkinson presented the proposed ballot with some changes
2. Discussion: Will the vice-chair person and member-at-large continue since the revised constitution was not adopted? Answer: Yes
3. Motion to accept proposed ballot: M/S/P: Marye Martinez, Terhesa Gamboa

VII. Affirmation of Deacons

1. List of deacons was presented by Marye Martinez (see agenda for names)
2. Motion to accept proposed deacon members: M/S/P: Karleen Daniels, Felton Daniels

VIII. Other:

1. Thanks to the officers of the church.
2. Thanks to Karen Cosner for her service.

3. Question from Peggy Hoover concerning filling positions on commissions. Response: Nominating committee will not be responsible for those positions.

IX. Meeting adjourned at 2:32pm by Moderator, Linda Hunter

Respectfully submitted by Kim Boardman, Church Clerk

