

# THE MESSENGER



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## SESSION MEMBERS

- **Jim Appleton**
- **Gayle Timilione**
- **Luann Bangsund**
- **James Rager**
- **Kasim Barus**
- **Al Polchow**
- **Jack Brennan**
- **Paul Lambert**
- **Marcia Fagan—Clerk  
of Session**



## The Pastor's Corner "Be Here Now"

I think Andy Williams was the first to sing this catchy Christmas tune, "It's the most wonderful time of the year." The first verse goes like this, "It's the most wonderful time of the year, with the kids jingle belling and everyone telling you to be of good cheer. It's the most wonderful time of the year." And the next phrase builds our expectations of this season saying, "It's the hap-happiest season of all."

Yet, we all know that Advent and Christmas seasons are fraught with many emotions and memories. Often many memories are "hap-happiest," but certainly not all. Sometimes this season is difficult to navigate, especially if a significant loss is still raw or another life circumstance has unexpectedly interrupted one's life.

So, what if we modified our expectations of this season. What if we didn't build up the expectation that this would be the "hap-happiest" time of year. What if we simply focused on the art of being fully present with each other and see where it takes us. What if we stopped worrying about buying the perfect present and started practicing being present to those we encounter along the road of life, whether at a grocery store or at home. What if this season, our presence with each other was the present?

I know the surgeon general of the United States, Dr. Vivek H Muthry, would support this focus. He learned on a listening tour across America that many people feel isolated, invisible, and insignificant and his tour was even before the pandemic. Since the pandemic social disconnection has escalated and even been declared an epidemic. This disconnection or loneliness is far more than a bad feeling for it harms both individual and societal health and puts individuals at greater risks for all sorts of medical issues. So being present with each other can be life giving and this shouldn't

*(Continued on page 7)*



## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN MONTHLY BOOK CLUB

The FPC Book Club will meet Thursday, December 14, at Luann Bangsund's home, to discuss *The Maid*, by Nita Prose. Luann will lead the discussion.

The group chose two children's books for January! *The Magician's Nephew* and *The Last Battle*, both by C.S. Lewis .



December 1	Zachary Emmanuel
December 2	Norman Hamada
December 4	Zyana Mariam Medlicott
December 6	Daniel Pew
December 6	Sylvia Tendean
December 12	Simone Alfred
December 13	Lisdur Pakpahan
December 13	Ria Margaretha Gurring (Purba)
December 14	David Purba
December 14	Lina F. Tan
December 15	Anmol Sanchez
December 16	Joseph Timilione
December 17	Gaby Butarbutar

December 18	Angela Lambert
December 18	Thomas Arnold
December 20	Paula Mawei (Kembuan)
December 23	Ronald I. Duvall
December 23	Richard Cunningham
December 25	Carol M. Luebbe
December 27	Ben Hamada
December 29	Lynn Phelps
December 29	Rochelle Rager

**First Presbyterian  
Church of Redlands**

**DECEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

**All Services Will Be In-Person on Sunday  
and on Facebook Live on demand**

<https://www.facebook.com/First-Presbyterian-Church-of-Redlands-106569590974548>

**English Worship Service 10:00 A.M.  
Indonesian Worship Service 5:00 P.M.**

**Third Sunday of the Month—11:30 A.M. Urdu  
(Facebook Live Only)**

**December 3, 2023 1st Sunday of Advent  
Communion Sunday, All Church Worship Service  
and Congregational Meeting**

First Reading	Psalm 80:1-2 and 1 Corinthians 1:4-7
Second Reading	Mark 13:24-37
The Message	Being Present with Hope

**December 10, 2023 2nd Sunday of Advent**

First Reading	Isaiah 40:1-11 selected verses and 2 Peter 3:8-10, 13-15a
Second Reading	Mark 1:1-8
The Message	Being Present with Peace

**December 17, 2023 3rd Sunday of Advent**

First Reading	Isaiah 61:1-4, 10 and Psalm 126:1-3
Second Reading	Luke 1:41-55
The Message	Being Present with Joy

**December 24, 2022 4:00 PM**

**All Church Worship Service  
4th Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve**

The Message	Being Present with Love and Light
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**December 31, 2023 1st Sunday of Christmas**

First Reading	Isaiah 62:1-3 and Galatians 4:4-7
Second Reading	Luke 2:22-40
The Message	Being Present with Assurance

**Congregational  
Meeting**

**December 3, 2023,  
Immediately After  
Service**

On Sunday, December 3, 2023, the Session has called a congregational meeting to elect Elders and Deacons and to approve the Pastoral Compensation package for Pastor Cheryl. The congregational meeting will take place immediately following the All-Church Worship Service planned for that day.

It will be necessary to have a quorum to conduct business and according to the Book of Order a quorum is no less than 10% of the congregation for a congregational meeting. As of November 1, 2023, we had 162 members, so at least 16 members will need to be in attendance for us to have a quorum, which should be a breeze!

The meeting will also be available on Zoom, if you are unable to attend in person, and the link will be in the Saturday update.

If you have any questions, please let Pastor Cheryl or Marcia Fagan, Clerk of Session know.





**Christmas Eve All Church Worship  
December 24<sup>th</sup> at  
4:00 P.M. in-  
person and  
through Facebook  
Live**

We will be challenged throughout Advent to being present with one another with hope, with peace, with joy, and with love. The simple yet profound gift of presence is powerful, especially in our frenzied world. To let others know they are seen and heard is sheer gift.

As we gather on Christmas Eve we will welcome the Holy Child through carols, scripture, story, and meditation. Invite your out-of-town family as well as local neighbors to be with us this night as we worship.

Our worship will conclude with the singing of Silent Night, affirming the truth of Emmanuel, that God is with us.



**Hanging of the Greens  
Saturday, December 2, 2023**

We will gather at 3:00 P.M. to adorn the sanctuary for Advent!

There are several ways to help, so come and help make our sanctuary beautiful for the season. We will be hanging wreaths and garland, Advent banners, and decorating a Christmas Tree for the narthex, all while Christmas music is putting us in the spirit of this season of expectant waiting.

See you Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>!



**Staff  
Whereabouts**



Judy will be out of the office the entire week of December 18—22, returning on Tuesday, December 26.

The church office will be closed for the Christmas holiday Monday, December 25 and the following Monday, January 1, New Years Day.

Happy holidays!

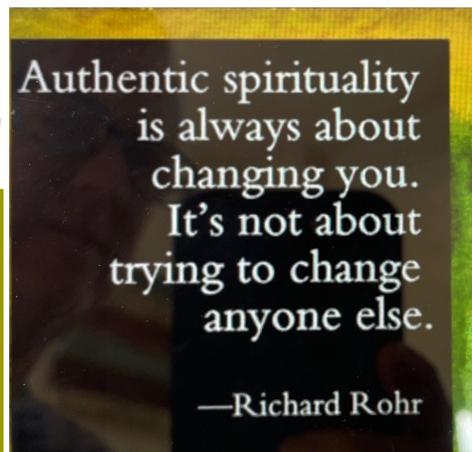




Photo by [Sage Friedman](#) on [Unsplash](#)

## *Contemplative Corner*

### *Praying the Gospel of Matthew*

Although we move to the Gospel of Mark in Advent, I want to circle back and invite you to reread the first two chapters of Matthew as we close out this year with praying through Matthew. What part of the birth story of Jesus resonates with you this Advent given where you find yourself?

- Does the genealogy of Jesus call to mind ancestors of your own?
- Does Joseph's dream call forth something that God is drawing your attention to?
- What about the wise ones speaks of your faith journey, for when have you listened to God and changed your direction?
- How does the need for Joseph, Mary, and baby Jesus to flee their home speak into our world today? How does this help you see the humanity of those who flee for their very lives?
- What caution does the power of Herod to destroy life have for us today? How should we choose those who lead us?
- As the holy family returns home, how does it help you understand what home means for you?

Read and reread these two chapters, praying for the Spirit to speak into your life this Advent season. We worship a living God, one who is actively transforming our lives from one degree of glory to another.



## ‘Tis the Season Scrip Preorders for Christmas

As you consider your Christmas plans, remember that you can pre-order scrip that goes beyond our normal inventory, for Christmas gifts for family members, friends, colleagues and even your non-profit of choice.

Susan Hunter is our coordinator, and she is ready to receive your orders! She will be at the Scrip table after the morning service on Sunday, **December 3, 2023, which is the last Sunday for special orders.**

Susan is available at other times to receive your orders or ecard orders as well. We look forward to a great season of giving that also gives to the Christian Education endeavors of the church through our everyday shopping and gift giving!

## Outreach – Share Ministry



On Saturday November 25, a delightful crew from the First Presbyterian Church of Redlands gathered at the First United Methodist Church to prepare and serve a Thanksgiving feast to those without homes in our community. We had 4 turkeys to carve and lots of mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, veggies, and rolls to heat up, and pies to slice! Once prepared we enjoyed serving our guests from 3:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Are you being called to participate in the Share Ministry in the coming year? Here are the dates for 2024 when we will be serving again! Make note on your new calendars now and plan to participate.

January 27	July 27
March 23	September 28
May 25	November 23

This will take a village! We will need cooks, prep workers, and servers. You can always invite friends and neighbors to participate with you!



## The Season of Advent Faith Formation

This Advent Pastor Cheryl is offering the following Adult Faith formation opportunities after church on two Sundays after the morning service, December 10 and 17. We will be exploring the topics introduced by Amy G. Oden’s book entitled, *Right Here Right Now: Christian Mindfulness*.

On December 10<sup>th</sup> we will be focusing on Hope and Peace.

On December 17<sup>th</sup> we will be focusing on Joy and Love.

We will explore Christian Mindfulness and how we can be more present to one another in our daily lives.

## Small Gifts - Big Impact

Have you noticed that we no longer insert envelopes for special fund drives every other week? Instead we have established a once-a-year drive we call The Power of Connection. But that doesn't mean you are limited to giving just once a year. Your favorite projects are still being funded through the Presbyterian Giving Catalog.

How it Works: You give a gift that supports a cause that's close to your heart; your gift joins with others—you unite with thousands of others giving to Presbyterian mission through the Giving Catalog, increasing your gift's capacity to bring hope to communities around the world;

### **YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

Your gift provides help, hope and relief to people, families and communities in need.

You can peruse the catalog in the church office or go to [presbyteriangifts.org](http://presbyteriangifts.org) to choose your cause to support



*(Continued from page 1)*

## *The Pastor's Corner*

come as a surprise given the reason for this season.

As Isaiah cried out to God, "O that you would tear open the heavens and come down." And God did— in baby Jesus. I appreciate the way Eugene Peterson describes this incarnation of God in Jesus, he writes, "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood." Jesus's physical presence was the present. Emmanuel - God with us! And I believe it is this "withness" that we are called to live out in our daily lives with each other. A "withness" that helps dispel the feelings of isolation, invisibility, and insignificance for each other.



When we feel seen and heard something within us soars. When others take the time to call or visit, to send a note or drop by some flowers by we know that we are not alone. Often words are not even necessary for a simple smile can brighten someone's day.

As we move through this season of Advent and Christmas, I want to challenge all of us to be fully present with others. A presence that is genuinely present and not distracted by a to-do list. I know you have heard this saying before, but this season let us all try to live it: "Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift of God which is why we call it the present." The present moment is the only moment we have, yet we often let our yesterdays or tomorrows rob us of the present.

Back in my corporate days, I was part of a facilitator team that led a four-day training seminar. I remember one group that was particularly annoyed that they had to participate – a bunch of corporate lawyers. Well, one by one at the end of the seminar they came to thank me for the segment I facilitated titled, "BE HERE NOW." Their "AHA" was that they never were present to the moment, whether at work or at home and this hit deeply for their home lives. They realized being present in the now was a gift.

Let us remember why we celebrate this season for The Word moved into our neighborhood. May we all be flesh and blood, fully present with each other in the now. Be the gift of presence to others this holy season.

Practicing Being Present,  
Pastor Cheryl

## PROPERTY AND FINANCE UPDATE



### 2024 Pledges

On Sunday, October 26<sup>th</sup> we began to receive pledges for 2024. Thank you to everyone who has already submitted a pledge. If you have not had the opportunity to submit a pledge, cards are available in the sanctuary narthex or the office. Our collective pledges will help the Session finalize our 2024 Ministry Budget. Our collective generosity makes our ministry possible.

### Finances and Property Usage

Here are some broad highlights from our financial reporting Year to Date November 30, 2023:

	<u>Actual</u>	-	<u>Anticipated</u>	=	<u>Difference</u>
Donations and Pledges	\$ 155,995.11		\$ 171,666.66		(\$ 15,671.55)
Rental Income	\$ 95,007.50		\$ 98,208.34		(\$ 3,200.84)
Total Income	\$ 265,530.96		\$ 281,979.18		(\$ 16,448.12)
<u>Total Expense</u>	<u>\$ 258,988.53</u>		<u>\$ 277,075.62</u>		<u>(\$ 18,087.09)</u>
Net Unrestricted Income*	\$ 6,542.43				
Adjusted *NUI	(\$ 23.24)				

So, what do these numbers mean? Our donations and pledges are less than what was anticipated at this point in the year by \$15,672. Our Net Unrestricted Income (NUI) was more than our expenses by \$6,542. The Adjusted NUI happens below the NUI line because the principal payments on our loan of \$6,565.77 YTD are not considered an expense for accounting purposes, although the principal payment does come out of our checking account. Therefore, at the end of October our Adjusted NUI was less than our expenses by \$23.34, that is, *we have spent slightly more than we have received so far this year.*

As the year draws to a close, *to finish the year financially strong we will need our collective generosity to address the deficit, which may grow because of a large insurance payment that occurs in December.* Yearend financial gifts need to be in the office or postmarked before the end of the year. We trust that God's provision will be enough for us as we rely on God's abundance. Our collective generosity and our community partnerships, along with the movement of the Spirit among us, make our ministries possible. Thanks be to God for our ministries.

If you ever have any questions or concerns about finance or facility issues, please ask James Rager, our Property and Finance Moderator, or Pastor Cheryl.



Our Advent Chains have already been made, but I am sure if you missed creating one on November 27<sup>th</sup> there are still supplies to make one, just ask Mr. Wilson or Ms. Sereena. Our young disciples will be exploring the Christmas Story on December 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. On December 24<sup>th</sup> we will meet for Christmas Eve Service only, no morning worship.

A shout out to all the Young Disciples who have helped lead worship through the sharing of the Prayer for Illumination during November worship services: Penelope Cunningham, Lorence Kayange, Zachary Emmanuel, Veronica Cunningham, and Alison Kayange.

Parents, please remember that all children and youth elementary age and older are invited to participate in worship by leading the Prayer of Illumination or more if they would like. Just let Mr. Wilson know. If your children and youth would like other opportunities let Pastor Cheryl know.

May we instill in our children and youth a lifelong passion for nurturing their relationship with God!



Winter camp program at Big Bear Lake Christian Conference Center still has space available.

Winter camp will be the weekend of March 15<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup>. The cost for Junior and High School kids is \$135. This year's March Madness includes crafts, worship, and other activities.

If you would like more information, go to [www.bblccc.com](http://www.bblccc.com).

## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS NOVEMBER 2023



The Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Redlands held its regularly scheduled Stated Session Meeting on Monday evening, November 20, 2023, via a Zoom Meeting, and took the following actions:

- Received the Unaudited Financial Report for the month ending October 31, 2023.

Total Unrestricted Income:	\$24,482.81
Total Unrestricted Expense:	\$27,052.15
Unrestricted Income (Loss):	(\$2,569.34)
Less Principal Payment on Loan:	(\$663.36)
Adjusted Unrestricted Income:	(\$3,232.70)
Total Operating Funds (in the General Account):	\$38,578.64

- Received information about the work of the Board of Deacons and the various church committees during the months of October and November 2023.
- Approved the 2024 Terms of Call for Rev. Cheryl Raine, with gratitude and thanks for her service to our church.
- Approved a Congregational Meeting, to be held on Sunday, December 3, 2023, after the morning Worship Service, for the purpose of electing Ruling Elders and Deacons and for approving the 2024 Terms of Call for Pastor Cheryl.
- Reviewed the FPCR Membership Roll.
- Scheduled a Leadership Training Meeting for the Board of Deacons and Ruling Elders for Saturday, January 13, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. to noon, in-person on the FPCR campus.

## Advent Sunrise Lectio Divina



Sunrise Lectio Divina will continue on Thursday mornings December 7 through January 4, at 7:30 A.M. via zoom for the Advent and Christmas Season. We gather to listen to God's still small voice through the spiritual practice called Lectio Divina, which simply translated means "divine reading". The text selected by the facilitator will reflect a portion of a text being used for the upcoming Sunday. As we gather from our homes, we will still our bodies and quiet our minds as we listen deeply for the stirrings of the Holy One among us. Every morning when we gather the Spirit gifts us with new insights, as we willingly open our lives to the movement of the Holy One among us. Come and join us on Thursday mornings.

Here are the dates:	A passage from these will be used		
Thursday, December 7 <sup>th</sup>	2 Peter 3:13-14a	Thursday, December 14 <sup>th</sup>	Luke 1:46-49
Thursday, December 21 <sup>st</sup>	Isaiah 9:2, 6-7	Thursday, December 28 <sup>th</sup>	Isaiah 62:2-3
Thursday, January 4 <sup>th</sup>	Mark 1:4-11		and Galatians 4:4-6

As we celebrate the gifts of presence, you are invited to explore how you might be present to the hope, peace, joy, love, and light offered to us through a relationship with the divine mystery we call God.



## A MERRY MOMENT FOR DEACONS

By Patti Robertson,  
Moderator of Deacons

Let us be one of the first to wish you all a Merry CHRISTmas! The first of each month always comes with a “my goodness it is that time again”. This one is no different! Where have the last 11 months gone? This is the only month I really do not mind, though. Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year. There is so much happiness, kindness, and love in the air.

As deacons we especially love the season. It provides us with so many opportunities to serve others. We will be hard at work getting poinsettias for the sanctuary to add that splash of red to our beautiful new sanctuary! That leads me to remind you to watch for the poinsettia insert in the bulletin to be able to donate to the purchase of poinsettias and to dedicate them for a loved one in memory, or celebration, or just because! You can even take one home to add to your garden after Christmas if you like!

This is also a month we help those in our congregation who need a little more cheer! Our ability to do that is due to generosity of our wonderful congregation. We so appreciate all of the donations to our fund. We are able to help many in our community as well. It doesn't take much to make someone's life just a little better.

We are in need of some help from our congregation on our wonderful sign-up boards that Judy, from the office does for us. We used to have them on a table for folks to sign up for coffee fellowship, greeting and flowers. Since the reopening of the sanctuary there is a nice board on the wall, beside the new bathroom door.

We really need volunteers for coffee fellowship and greeting. This is the season when everyone likes to bake those yummy cookies, breads, and cakes and we would love for you to show off your favorite recipe and share with everyone after service. Ask a friend to help and combine your efforts! The board is pretty empty for the rest of the year. The greeter's board looks lonely as well.

Please step up and welcome folks to our beautiful new sanctuary!

## Lilly Clergy Renewal Grant - Pastoral Sabbatical

**June 1, 2024 –  
September 3, 2024**

Pastor Cheryl's three-month sabbatical will begin on June 1<sup>st</sup>, so we have six months to finish our preparations! As a church we made a commitment to this sabbatical on October 30, 2016, when we voted to call Pastor Cheryl as our lead pastor. Pastor Cheryl then began her call on Monday, January 16, 2017. This coming January 16<sup>th</sup> will be her 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary as our pastor. The Lilly Grant we have received will financially bless all of us as she embarks on her sabbatical.

The Session will be finalizing a job description for a part-time temporary pastor for this three-month period to help us stay true to our calling to live the heart and mind of Christ at the heart of the city faithfully. Pastor Ron Duvall will also be preaching once a month and assisting the temporary pastor as needed with pastoral care. If a student is available, we also hope to hire a part-time social media intern for 3-months to assist with our Facebook and website posts that Pastor Cheryl regularly does.

If you have any questions, about Pastor Cheryl's sabbatical in 2024, she would be happy to talk with you about her plans. Her major travel will take place in July, when she will return to the Republic of South Africa, where she spent a year of high school. She looks forward to seeing the country again and experiencing the beauty it has to offer from Cape Town in the south to the game reserves in the north.

First Presbyterian  
Church of Redlands

Living the heart & mind  
of Christ at the heart of  
the city

The mission of the First  
Presbyterian Church of  
Redlands is to grow  
spiritually with the  
community by sharing  
the love of Jesus Christ  
with all who seek to  
know God through  
worship, relationships,  
exploration, and prayer.



## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF REDLANDS

AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY  
OF FAITH, LIVING THE HEART  
AND MIND OF CHRIST AT THE  
HEART OF THE CITY

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CHURCH OF REDLANDS

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