

December 2011  
January 2012



Eureka First Congregational United Church of Christ

# The Window Newsletter

## December/January Events

Christmas is a time of wonder and awe as children enjoy the colors and beauty of the Advent season. As adults, there is still a magical spell of wonder and love that comes to our senses and opens up the possibilities of caring for others as we see the Christ child welcoming us into the love of God. In this season, the deacons have focused on the wonders of the Advent worship services. In addition to the Hanging of the Greens, the Christmas tree in the social hall will be decorated for the season.

**Poinsettias** will be welcome from anyone of the congregation to bring to the church on Sun. Dec 11. This is in addition to the poinsettias that the deacons provided.

The loveliness of the Christmas story will be told on Sunday Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> in an intergenerational way and the children will sing.

**The Advent Retreat** will be on Sat. Dec 10 from 9-12:30. This will be a time to reflect and contemplate with spiritual worship and joy in our God who continues to speak to us.

**Christmas Eve**, Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> Christian Church will hold an early family service around 5 pm. Our church will hold a service at 11 pm.

**Christmas day**, Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>, we plan on some special music to enjoy this worshipful time to remember the reason for the season as we come together and worship the one who came to bring us God's wondrous message of love.

**On January 1st**, there will be a coffeehouse to ring in the New Year. Communion will be served on **January 8<sup>th</sup>** for Epiphany. There will be no New Year's Eve service but for those who are interested, there will be a prayer vigil with Center for Spirituality at 4 a.m. on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

In the New Year, the deacons will be putting out the new directory and are looking forward to having the end-of-life service in the spring.

Continue to pray for the deacons as most of us have had health and family issues as we have continued to serve and minister to you, the members and friends of the congregation.

We the deacons, wish all of you a wondrous, awesome Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Ted Adams



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# Pastor's View

## JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

Are you walking or running, skipping or moving slowly as you head to Bethlehem and the celebration of Christ arrival in our world?

Some of you may be running and breathing hard trying to keep up with all the activities and obligations. Others may be filled with joy and energy in anticipation of the big day and loving every step on the journey. Some of you may be wanting to sit down and take a rest - exhausted not only from the activities but just the thought of what needs to be accomplished in the next three weeks.

Our arrival at Bethlehem (Christmas) is important but we are also called to pay attention to the journey along the way. Mary and Joseph would have had enough time on their journey for conversations, contemplation and prayer. For Mary it would have been a difficult journey whether walking or riding; can you imagine riding on a donkey being nine months pregnant? In her time of travel and waiting, she was likely praying for herself and the safe arrival of this special baby.

As we journey along our own road to Bethlehem I suggest we spend some time of reflection and prayer as we walk the road before us. Our congregation is offering us the opportunity to rest along

the way with some meaningful time to reflect, refocus and open our hearts to be ready for God's coming.

The Advent Retreat on Dec. 10th will allow us the opportunity to walk the journey through the labyrinth. There will be a floor labyrinth in the Social Hall along with tables offering a variety finger labyrinths. If the weather permits we will have at least one outside labyrinth - either in the garden area or the upper parking lot. Maybe we will have one in each area! The idea is to remind us to slow our pace in life. As we slowly walk towards the center, we are encouraged to let go of busyness and the hyperness of our secular activities. As we stand in the center we can prayerfully open ourselves to God's Spirit and on the walk outward we are invited to refocus and open ourselves to the calm centering of God's presence. May you discover renewed energy through this ancient walking custom.

Our new prayer group meets for the second time on Tues., Dec. 13th, when we will again offer ourselves and others into God's loving hands. Knowing that we don't walk this journey alone keeps us strong and allows us to rest and drink in God's presence through those around us, through scripture and meditation and the lighting of candles. Our time of focusing on prayer is a response to Jesus' call to

pray for ourselves and others. Come join others in this active time of prayer and reflection.

As we continue our journey to Bethlehem and the newness before us, may we remember the road that we have traveled this past year and all times God was with us through ups and downs and the off road adventures. It is good to reflect and let go of the past in preparation for what God has planned for us in the year to come.

Peace and Blessings,  
Pastor Carlotta



# Moderator

## “The Imperfect Tense”

In preparation for writing my final moderator’s message, I reflected on the past three years. As I began, my thoughts and words seemed to be trapped in the language of the past and, I realized, didn’t quite fit with our belief that God is *still* speaking. Instead of thinking of the previous three years as being in the past tense, the more appropriate verb tense for our congregation is the imperfect. Also referred to as the continuous past, the imperfect is a verb tense used to indicate a continuing state or an incomplete action that started in the past. In thinking about our time with Ron Buford, for example, his time as summer pastor has ended, but the spirit of his work lives on and continues to propel us towards action. I am sure Ron continues to pray for us and his love for us did not stop with his departure. Similarly, Pastor Carlotta’s summer sabbatical has come and gone, but the insights and

rejuvenation she gained during that time continue to inspire us. Going forward, our congregation will continue to reap the spiritual rewards from Pastor Carlotta’s sabbatical. The Vitality Task Force is coming to an end as well, but the energy and activities created by its members continue to have an effect on our fellowship and the group plans to continue meeting on an informal basis. So, the idea of the imperfect tense seems to be perfect for us!

Yes, so many things have happened and, seemingly, been completed, but are they really over? My husband Dave died in the first quarter of my term as moderator, but his love has sustained me and will continue to do so. Maybelle’s death this year was a shock and loss for us all, but her steadfastness and vision continue. Plans are being made to construct a labyrinth as she had hoped. The spirits of all those

have gone before us continue to have an impact on our fellowship, even though unseen. Consider our wonderful 150<sup>th</sup> celebration, a result of the Spirit’s leadership over many years, a leadership that is ongoing.

In Romans 8:35, Paul says, “... neither death nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.” As I conclude this message, knowing how many things have been accomplished and are being accomplished by our fellowship, I find Paul’s words reassuring and know the Spirit will continue to lead us.

Merry Christmas and a Happy Imperfect New Year!

*Sharolyn*

# Falling into Fellowship



# January Annual Meeting

In January is our annual meeting. This means that all the ministries need to have their reports in no later than the 10th. This is an important meeting of the church as it sets the agenda for the coming year.

As many of us know, the situation in regards to continuing ministry as a church is contingent on the contributions of the members and friends. We all want to insure that the church is making good use of the resources that God has given to us. We also need to plan for what is the new year's outlook. It has been

tough in all churches as everyone has been affected by the financial situation of our state and nation. While we should continue to pray about our leaders as they grapple with leading our country, our church has obligations and needs so that our ministry and service to the community of believers and the outreach to others in our community can continue. Each of us needs to pray and ask God for ideas and peace of mind as we all contemplate what is before us. It is very difficult to know sometimes how to decide things. That is

why it is good to have the leading of the Holy Spirit for all of us. Remember this church in your prayers and come to the meeting with an openness to the leading of our continuing speaking God.

This coming year holds many challenges, but also many blessings for us from God. May God continue to lead and bless the work and ministry of this church and all who come here.

# The Christmas Fund

On Sunday, December 18, 2011, will be the United Church of Christ's Special Mission Offering, **The Christmas Fund**. This is a ministry of compassion and care for those who serve or have served our UCC church, and has been a part of the congregational churches for over 100 years.

How has your life been touched by an employee of the UCC? Please prayerfully consider your response to the 2011 Christmas Fund Offering and give to the best of your ability. Your donations help provide Pension and Health Premium supplementation to low-income retired church workers, emergency grants to needy families of clergy and lay

employees serving the UCC today, and Christmas "Thank You Gift" checks to 900 annuitants. More information available at [www.Christmasfund.org](http://www.Christmasfund.org).



## Christian Education

The Sundays of Advent are Nov. 27th, Dec. 4th, Dec. 11th and Dec. 18th. As we journey through the Advent season, the children continue to count their blessings. Change collected in blessing boxes is offered each week at the ARKS time and will go to the Companion Animal Foundation at the end of the school year. We hope to work with the shelter so that the chil-

dren will have an opportunity to see what the money will go toward (namely, providing food and vaccines for the pets of elderly people with fixed incomes).

Our youth will be involved in a few special Sunday presentations this month. They will prepare a song during ARKS time that will be presented to the congregation during worship on December 18<sup>th</sup>. Also

on the 18<sup>th</sup>, we will hold our traditional Christmas Pageant. Any children who would like to participate by dressing up as an angel or shepherd should arrive fifteen minutes before worship. On Christmas day, children will stay in worship with their families.

Katri Pitts

## Treasurer's Corner

### Treasurer's Corner

*By Reg Kennedy*

This financial update covers the period January through October 2011.

Total income: \$70,389.92

Total expenses: \$75,452.58

#### Pledge update:

The pledge amount received through October is 47,507.25. This is 90% of the expected pledge.

#### Tables and chairs fund update:

The amount remains \$117.05 in the fund.

#### Imagine Building Fund 2010 update.

There is \$7,886.30 in this fund from your pledges and the monthly raffle.

A reminder...please make it clear on your offering check or envelope

what portion of your offering goes towards your annual pledge and what part goes towards your Imagine Building Fund pledge.

#### 2011 Treat and Talent Fund Raiser update.

We exceeded our goal. As of November 21, 2011, the amount raised was \$6,805.27. Our goal for this year was \$6,750.00. Thanks again to all who helped with the fundraiser.

The complete financial statement is available for your review in the Church Office during normal office hours.





# December 2011

**Church Office Hours:**

**Carlotta:**

Tues. & Thur.  
10 AM-12 PM  
Wed.  
Afternoon

**Home:** Available at any time if needs arise.

**Christine:**

**Wednesdays**  
4-8 PM

**Deacon of the Month:**  
**December:**  
**Kathy Hanson**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 Book Group 7 pm	2 Pathways to Health 1:30—4 pm	3
4 Communion Hanging of the Greens Potluck Birthdays	5	6 MAC	7 Row Study 6 pm Choir 7:30 pm	8 Outreach 1 pm	9	10 Advent Retreat 9-1pm
11 Deacons	12	13	14 Lunch Bunch Noon ROW Study 6 pm Choir 7:30 pm	15	16	17 Church Improvement Day 9:30—12:00
18 Intergenerational Xmas Program Popcorn Sunday/Board games	19 Vitality 6:30	20	21	22	<b>23</b>	24
25 Communion	26	27	28	29	30	31 Peace Vigil 4 am

# December Lectionary

**December 4:** Isa. 40:1-11; Ps 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Pet 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

*Words of Comfort*

**December 11:** Isa 61:1-4, 8-11; Ps 126 or Luke 1:46a-55; I Thess 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

*Hope Restored*

**December 18:** 2 Sam 7:1-11,16; Luke 1:47-55 or Ps 89:1-4, 19-26;

Rom 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

*God With Us*

**December 25:** Isa 52:7-10; Ps 98; Heb 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14

*Sing With Joy*



## December Birthdays & Anniversaries

## Into Your hands, O God

12/1 Dillon Hart Arnold  
12/2 Patty Larson  
12/9 Dennis Bawden  
12/9 Dennis & Mary Bawden  
12/11 Heather Huber  
12/15 Memia Kennedy  
12/15 Ted Speier  
12/24 Doug & Kathy Hanson  
12/26 Joe Sobolik  
12/30 Bill & Linda Shapeero  
12/31 Charlotte Peters  
12/31 Jeanne Vallergera & Jeff Dyche



**Please keep the following people in prayer:**

Howard & Lois Willson, Mj Goble, Janet & Glenn Griffith, Doug Hanson, Richard Tolleson, Dennis Bawden, Ted Adams, David Adams, Rafael Leon, Marcus Powell and partner Ashley Pierce, Joanna, and our Congregation.



## Book Group

Our book of the month is "Major Pettigrew's Last Stand" by Helen Simonson. This is a beautiful love story that is expected to be a pleasant and easy read. We will meet on January 19th at Pastor Carlotta's home, 7 p.m.





**Church Office Hours:**

**Carlotta:**

Tues. & Thur.  
10 AM-12 PM  
Wed.  
Afternoon

**Home:** Available at  
any time if needs  
arise.

**Christine:**

**Wednesdays**  
4-8 PM

**Deacon of the  
Month:  
January:  
Ted Adams**

# January 2012

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Coffee House	2 Fellowship 6 pm Michelle's	3 MAC	4 Row Lec- tionary 6 pm Choir 7:30 pm	5	6	7
8 Commun- ion Sunday	9 Council	10 Annual Reports Due Prayer Group 1 pm Narthex	11 Choir 7:30 pm	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 Choir 7:30 pm	19 Book Group 7 pm Vallerga Home	20	21
22 Annual Meeting after worship	23	24	25 Choir 7:30 pm	26	27	28
29	30	31				



# January Lectionary

**January 1:** Isa 61:10-623; Ps 148;  
Gal 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

*Called to Gift*

**January 8:** Gen 1:1-5; Ps 29; Acts  
19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11

*New Beginnings*

**January 15:** 1 Sam 3:1-10 (11-20);  
Ps 139:1-6, 13-18; I Cor 6:12-20;  
John 1:43-51

*Called and Recalled*

**January 22:** Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Ps  
62:5-12; I Cor 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-  
20

*Moving Forward*

**January 29:** Deut 18:15-20; Ps 111;  
I Cor 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

*With Authority*



# January Birthdays & Anniversaries

1/8 Lois Willson

1/9 Keith Andersen

1/22 Zoe Ziegler

1/23 John & Christine Tomascheski

1/25 Jean Warner

1/31 Rob Enge



# Buildings and Grounds

Greetings from Buildings and  
Grounds.

You haven't heard from us for a  
few months, but that doesn't mean  
we haven't been busy. Quite the  
opposite.

The general cleanup and mainte-  
nance keeps us very busy, as does  
planning future projects.

You've no doubt heard that we re-  
ceived the McClean Foundation  
grant for \$7,500.00. That means  
that we will be able to start remod-

eling the Sanctuary bathroom very  
soon.

We will also have a new storage  
shed before Summer. The College  
of the Redwoods Construction stu-  
dents are building it for us. This  
year, when we have our Spring  
cleaning work party, we will have  
places to put all of the seasonal  
and seldom used things. Our goal  
is to have places for everything  
along with labels and a map, so  
everyone will be able to help put  
things away where they belong.  
Special thanks to Tom Schmidt and  
his elves for trimming the branches

on the big pine tree in the parking  
lot.

It's now safe to park under the two  
big pines. Go for it Larry!

The next Church Improvement day  
will be Saturday December  
17th We hope to see you there.

We wish you Blessings of the  
season.

# Serving in Worship for December 2011

## Deacon of the Month:

Kathy Hanson

## Sunday, December 4th: (Communion Sunday)

Greeters:

Kim Pinches, Pete Vallerga

Reader: Phil Smith-Hanes

Children's Sermon: Roberta

Duggan (2nd in series on Advent)

Acolyte: Jordan Schmidt

Ushers: Janet Foos, Dexter Luther

Communion Servers: Michelle Fell-Casale, Doralee Smith, Judie Norton, Lois Willson

## Sunday, December 11th:

Greeters:

Stan Smith-Hanes, Howard Willson

Reader: Lew Norton

Children's Sermon: Roberta

Duggan (3rd in Advent Series)

Acolyte: Jennifer Schmidt

Ushers: Rafael Leon, Lew Norton

## Sunday, December 18th:

Greeters: Sara Pillow, Lois Willson

Reader: Janet Griffith

Children's Sermon: Advent Special

Acolyte: Emma Pinches

Ushers: Howard Willson, Kim Pinches

## Sunday, December 25th (Communion Sunday):

Greeters: Janet Foos, Janet Griffith

Reader: Ted Adams

Children's Sermon: Christmas Special

Acolyte: Jordan Schmidt

Ushers: Pete Vallerga, Tom Schmidt

Communion Servers: Rafael Leon, Phil Smith-Hanes, Roberta Duggan, Kim Pinches

## Social Justice and Outreach Ministry



PFLAG will be meeting on December 12th at 6:30 PM. Remember this group in your prayers. Though not a part of the church ministries, yet this group meets a real need of our LGBT community for support and caring.

## Monthly Volunteer Opportunity

MAC :The Multiple Assistance Center at 2413 2nd St., Eureka, serves families with children, in transition from homelessness, under the Redwood Community Action Agency. Our congregation provides volunteers the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month: November 1 and December 6, from 4:45-5:45 p.m. helping serve supper for the residents and/or 6:30-7:30 p.m. helping with activities for children

during parental meetings. To volunteer, contact Sara Pillow by the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month (December 6, January 1).

## Scrip

Remember that Scrip is available each Sunday and is the **no-cost to you Fundraiser!**

- Abruzzi
- Wildberries Market
- Ramone's Bakery
- Shafer's Ace Hardware
- Moonstone Grill
- Co-op
- Murphy's Market
- Papa Murphy's Pizza
- Plaza Grill
- McDonald's

# Serving in Worship for January 2012

**Deacon of the Month:** Ted Adams  
**Sunday, January 1st: (Coffee hot-house Sunday)**

**Greeters:** Sara Pillow, Lois Willson  
**Reader:** Leslie  
**Children's Sermon:** Kim Pinches  
**Acolyte:** Estella  
**Ushers:** Cameron, Dexter Luther

**Sunday, January 8th (Communion Sunday):**

**Greeters:** Michelle Fell-Casale, Pete Vallerga  
**Reader:** Roberta Duggan  
**Children's Sermon:** Janet Foos  
**Acolyte:** Emma Pinches  
**Ushers:** Lew Norton, Leslie  
**Communion:** Kim Pinches, Phil Smith-Hanes, Fred Jewett, Judie Norton

**Sunday, January 15th:**

**Greeters:**  
Stan Smith-Hanes, Sara Pillow

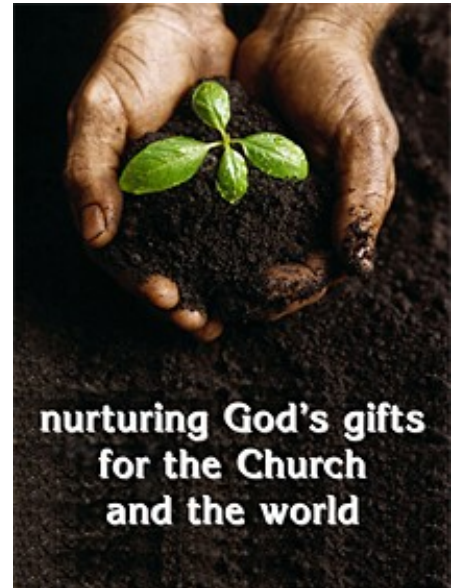
**Reader:** Sharolyn Hutton  
**Children's Sermon:**  
Meredith VandenBrandon  
**Acolyte:** Jennifer Schmidt  
**Ushers:** Cameron, Doralee Smith

**Sunday, January 22nd:**

**Greeters:**  
Janet Griffith, Lois Willson  
**Reader:** Lew Norton  
**Children's Sermon:**  
Michelle Fell-Casale  
**Acolyte:** Estella  
**Ushers:** Kim Pinches, Tom Schmidt

**Sunday, January 29th:**

**Greeters:**  
Sara Pillow, Howard Willson  
**Reader:** Fred Jewett  
**Children's Sermon:**  
Roberta Duggan  
**Acolyte:** Jennifer Schmidt  
**Ushers:** Rafael Leon, Mary Bawden



## Food Bank Donations

Our Food Basket in the Narthex is donated every month to Food for People at the Food Bank of Humboldt County, which serves 12,000 qualifying at-risk people each month through 12 community food programs, and addresses the root causes of hunger. Financial support includes 32% from governmental and 68% from donations. Non perishable foods that will provide the maximum nutrition include:  
protein items

canned meats  
chili/stew  
canned tuna  
grains, pasta, & rice  
soups  
breakfast cereals  
nutritional drinks  
boxed & canned juices  
beans  
canned fruits & veggies  
Note: There is a can for monetary donations also.

Outreach and Social Justice Ministry encourages everyone to donate locally to the Food for People Food Bank. Our total donations numbers to the U.C.C. Mission 1 project was 240 units and \$220.



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900 Hodgson Street  
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**FORWARDING SERVICE  
REQUESTED**

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At First Congregational United Church of Christ we gather to worship God. We know ourselves as a Christian community through worship, learning, fellowship, and service. As part of the Body of Christ, we seek to express, receive, and share spiritual wholeness, strengthen our knowledge of God's love for us and for all people, cherish individuality, and to be aware of and respond to the needs of all God's people.