



DECEMBER 2021–JANUARY 2022



Continuing a tradition we began last year, we will again feature luminarias (also known as farolitos and luminaries) on our front patio during this advent season to remind us of Jesus's light in a world often heavy with darkness.

The luminarias serve to honor and remember people and prayers that our in our hearts.

**Luminarias will be displayed on the patio on Dec. 10 and 11 from 5:00–7:00 p.m. Drive or walk by and tune your FM radio to hear a special Advent message.**

You may submit the name(s) of someone you wish to honor or remember with a luminaria, OR you can submit a brief hope or prayer for your life, your family, friends, our country or our world. The name(s) and your hopes and prayers will be written on a luminaria as well as posted on our website.

Luminarias are free. To place your order, watch for a link in the church e-news or call the church office by Dec 8.

## A Multifaith Call to Action: Human Rights for All

In light of multiple hate messages and incidents in our local communities, including some which personally threaten individuals and community leaders, we will gather on the eve of World Human Rights Day to say NO to hate and YES to the dignity and worth of every human being.



Join us on Thursday, Dec. 9, at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.

In conjunction with Multifaith Voices for Peace ([multifaithpeace.org](http://multifaithpeace.org)), people from diverse faiths and spiritual backgrounds will stand together in solidarity for the human rights of *all* people—locally and globally.

The event will be in-person with COVID safety requirements and also streamed on YouTube. Masks and proof of vaccination are required for in-person attendance. ♦

## Plan to Attend the Church Conference

First UMC Palo Alto will hold its annual end-of-the-year Church Conference on Sunday, Dec. 12, at 1:00 p.m. in Kohlstedt Hall. The Rev. Kathi McShane of Los Altos UMC will preside. Refreshments will be provided by the Hospitality team.



The conference is open to all church members. You are encouraged to attend! Bring proof of vaccination and wear a mask. We hope also to have a Zoom option.

The main topics on the agenda are:

- Approval of the compensation package for Rev. Dr. Debra Murray for 2022
- Approval of Centennial Endowment grants for 2022
- Approval of the Membership Report for 2021

Questions? Contact Charlotte in the church office at [charlotte@firstpaloalto.com](mailto:charlotte@firstpaloalto.com) or 650-323-6167. ♦

## Enduring the Season of Waiting

Our oven recently bit the dust, and the needed replacement part is no longer manufactured. Due to an appliance shortage, we had to wait eight weeks for a new oven! Yet even amid inconvenience, I see God's purpose. We were thankful to have a grill and slow cookers in the meantime. We creatively attempted to cook favorite meals in different ways. And though we craved anything baked in an oven—cookies, casseroles, even chicken nuggets—we realized that waiting eight weeks for an oven isn't truly a trying time.

Many of us wait for much greater milestones and miracles: physical healing, the return of a prodigal child, an end to financial struggles. Paul offers us hope as we wait: "May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had." (Romans 15:5, NIV)

When you're in a season of waiting—including Advent—consider what you're thankful for and what you crave. Tell God how you're feeling and ask for endurance while you wait.

—Janna Firestone, The Newsletter Newsletter



## Joy of Giving Lists Local and Global Charities

The Joy of Giving is a Christmas tradition at First Palo Alto United Methodist Church, an opportunity to show Christ's love to people in our local community and the world.

Through the Joy of Giving, you indicate to which listed organization(s) your financial gift should be allocated. Consider giving a gift in honor of someone on your Christmas list. This makes a very thoughtful gift. Gift cards that you can personalize for gift-giving are available.

All gifts are tax deductible.

Local Joy of Giving opportunities this year are:

- Pastor's Discretionary Fund
- Coding Collaboratives
- Ecumenical Hunger Program

Global opportunities are:

- Creating Hope International
- Missionvale Care Centre
- Fistula Foundation

Pick up a Joy of Giving brochure on Sunday mornings in December or find more information on the church website.



Poinsettias will be on display in the sanctuary Dec. 19–26. If you would like to order a Christmas poinsettia in honor of a loved one, watch for a link in the weekly e-news or call the church office. The cost is \$15 each and you must order by Dec. 12.

# Help Stock the OSC Holiday Shoppe

The holidays are here and that means family, warmth, friends, and sharing with one another to show that we care. We would like to share gifts with our homeless community to show we care.

Life Moves is sponsoring the Opportunity Services Center (OSC) in Palo Alto once again. The OSC is hoping to collect enough items to host a Holiday Shoppe for their clients to pick out warm jackets, sleeping bags, winter gloves, and much more. The holiday event will take place on Wednesday, Dec. 15. LifeMoves will be providing a holiday meal.

If you want to support the OSC during the holidays, please see the list of most needed items (sidebar) as well as the Amazon Wishlist (below).

Here's how you can donate:

- Drop off unwrapped gifts at the church collection bin
- Order online from the Amazon gift list:  
[amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3oYCQ5MGMXSGT?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3oYCQ5MGMXSGT?ref_=wl_share)
- Drop off gifts at the Opportunity Services Center at 33 Encina Ave, Palo Alto, CA 94301

Donations must be received by Friday, Dec. 10.

For a donation receipt, see [forms.lifemoves.org/388497](https://forms.lifemoves.org/388497)

## Most Needed Items for OSC Holiday Shoppe



- Sleeping bags
- Blankets
- Undergarments (underwear, socks/men & women)
- Warm coats/heavy hoodies (adult sizes)
- Wool hats/beanies, winter gloves/scarves
- Backpacks, umbrellas, and rain coats/ponchos
- Gift cards for gas (for a car), Walmart, Safeway, Target, McDonalds

## A Financial Note as We Near the End of the Year ...

The end of the year is only a few weeks away—12/31/21.

If you made a 2021 Estimate of Giving (EoG), please fulfill it by year's end. As a reminder, the EoG does *not* include donations to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund, UMCOR, Disaster Relief, etc.



Estimates of Giving are the primary source of income for our Operating Budget. The Operating Budget pays for the salaries of our hard-working staff, utilities, property insurance, property taxes, and the salary of our pastor.

Thanks in advance for your continued generosity.

—The Finance Committee

## UMW CONNECTIONS

by Nancy Olson

Advent is a season of prayer and preparation as we wait for Christmas, the birth of Christ, a new world. The spiritual practice of waiting isn't passive. It's a time to wonder and hope. It's a time to prepare for what we hope for.

Tara Barnes, Editor of *RESPONSE* magazine writes: "United Methodist Women is the inheritor of the vision and work of the women's missionary societies of eight denominations. We are still around more than 150 years later because we know who we are and what we are called to do. Faith has always been our foundation. Action has always been our call. Sisterhood has always been how we put our faith into action. And we have always changed as the world has changed."

It is our turn to make some changes in order to be what women, children and youth need us to be today. In addition to trying new things, we will be debuting a refreshed look to better reflect who we are and who we want to be. But for now we wait, we anticipate, we pray and we prepare for a bright future."

As our national organization prepares for the new year and new challenges, hopefully our group here at First United Methodist Church in Palo Alto, California, can come together to identify community needs we can address. Perhaps we will put our energy behind the Safe Parking Program to aid those forced to live in their vehicles.

During the pandemic our group has reached out to our church shut-ins to let them know they are not forgotten and still part of our church family. We want to continue this outreach into the new year.

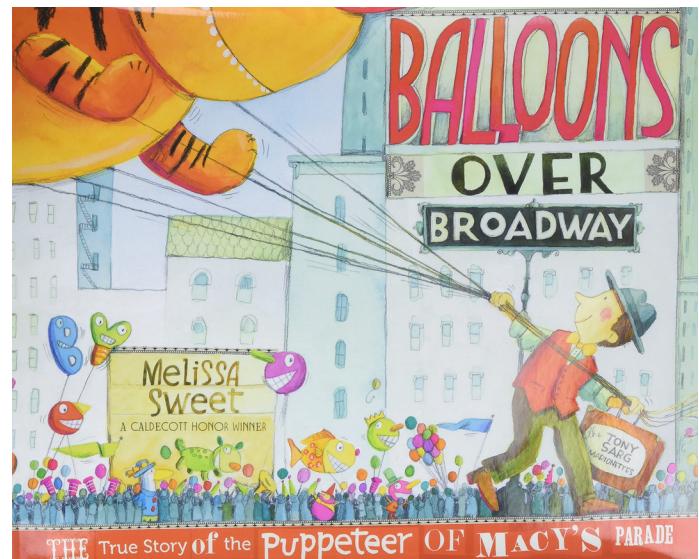
While projecting into the future is not one of my strong points, I do anticipate help with selling Christmas cards and greeting cards after church during December. I do anticipate a luncheon Circle meeting, in person, in January. I do anticipate inviting some interesting speakers to address us on current affairs. I do anticipate some new, creative ideas from each of you!

Have a blessed Christmas season! May God bless us one and all in the new year! ♦

## Hello First Palo Alto Readers!

by Charlotte Cutkosky

For many people, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade is the first event to mark the Christmas season. I had no idea the history and innovation behind the parade's famous balloons until I read *Balloons Over Broadway* by Melissa Sweet. This picture book introduces readers to Tony Sarg, the puppeteer, illustrator, and animator who invented the Macy's parade balloons—"upside-down puppets"—as they were playfully called when he created them in 1928. Sweet presents the story through a mixture of illustration and multimedia collage, re-creating Sarg's blueprints and conceptual designs and displaying books, toys, and other memorabilia from the time that inspired him. Check out *Balloons Over Broadway* for a fun and educational way to ring in the Christmas season, and as always, happy reading! ♦





# Green Notes

by Nancy Olson

As we approach this gift-giving time of year, it is a good time to remember all the gifts God has given us and continues to give us. The air we breathe, the food that grows from the earth, the beauty of the world around us .... Thank you, God!

There are Earth-friendly ways to celebrate Advent, Christmas, and the New Year. We just have to remember to stop, take a deep breath, and think about our actions. In general, consider simplifying in all the ways you can.

Look for fair-trade and/or locally made goods. Choose organic, natural materials, and avoid plastics.

Help cut down *tons* of extra holiday garbage by recycling, reusing or doing without gift wrap (or wrap with a scarf, a towel, fabric).

Give the gift of time: call, send cards, invite a FaceTime or Zoom with homebound members of your church or far-flung family members and friends.

Simplify gift giving. One idea is drawing names and deciding on a limit to spend. Regifting is good—just be thoughtful of the original giver. Throughout my whole life, my extended family always drew names for holiday giving. The one thoughtful gift at the family Christmas-eve gathering was greatly appreciated, and finding out who had your name was fun. Parents



provided a special gift to their children on Christmas morning.

Give a charitable gift in a giftee's name. Examples include the Joy of Giving (see page 2) or Heifer International. Or support local and national/world eco-justice organizations like UMW, UMCOR, Sierra Club ....

For holiday meals, cook seasonal foods raised locally, i.e. shop at farmers' markets. Remember to compost scraps.

As you decorate your home, replace your incandescent light bulbs with energy-efficient LEDs; invest in a timer for outdoor displays. LED holiday lights use up to 95% less energy than larger, traditional holiday bulbs and last up to 100,000 hours indoors. Over a 30-day period, lighting 500 traditional holiday lights costs \$18.00 (maybe higher now—I didn't double check) while the same number of LED lights costs \$0.19.

Here's a wild idea: send Christmas and New Year's cards to your state and national senators and representatives and President Biden and urge their pro-environment vote on legislative bills in the New Year.

Many blessings of the holiday season and a very Happy and Green New Year! ♦

**"Christmas is not as much about opening our presents as opening our hearts."**

—Janice Maeditere

## **Service Opportunity: Lay Liturgists Needed**

Would you like to take part in the Sunday morning worship service *occasionally*? Become a lay liturgist!

Lay liturgists lead the Call to Worship and the Offering Prayer in person on Sunday mornings. The text for both of these parts of the service are written in the church bulletin. As a lay liturgist, you would read the text aloud from the lectern while the congregation reads along.

You don't have to write the text! You only have to read it!

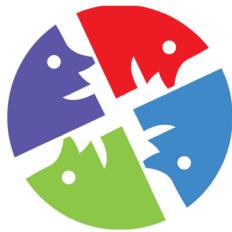
You don't have to do it every week, just sometimes! (You decide when.)

Please contact Mira Dabrowski or Colleen Crangle if you would like to sign up or learn more.

**"Each of us is an inn-keeper who decides if there is room for Jesus."**

—Neal A. Maxwell

## **Great Decisions Series Begins in February**



First Church will again host the Great Decisions discussion series on contemporary international

issues beginning in February. The series will be held from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. on successive Sundays from Feb. 20 through April 10. Additional details on the topics and speakers will be provided in the February issue of Insights.

**HUMAN RELATIONS DAY**

January 16



# **TOGETHER**

## **OUR REACH IS BEYOND MEASURE**

The United Methodist Church's special giving structure ensures your generosity blesses as many people as possible in sustainable, strategic ways

**YOUR DONATION CHANGES THE WORLD ONE LIFE AT A TIME**

**GIVE TO YOUR CHURCH:**  
Make checks payable to your local church or donate online via credit/debit card at [ResourceUMC.org/SSGive](http://ResourceUMC.org/SSGive)

**TO GIVE ONLINE SCAN QR CODE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE CAMERA**



 Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.  
**The people of The United Methodist Church®**



# WOMEN'S RETREAT

Come for spiritual renewal,  
friendship, laughter, and relaxation  
in a beautiful setting

VILLA MARIA DEL MAR, SANTA CRUZ • JANUARY 21 ~ 23

Retreat Leader: SHARON FENNEMA, Ph.D

Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley

Assistant Professor of Christian worship, director of worship life,  
and director of the certificate in sexuality and religion program

- By the retreat center's policy, all registrations must include proof of vaccination.
- Register by filling out a print registration form and returning the form, fee, and a copy of your vaccination record to the church office.
- Or register online ([tinyurl.com/fumcpawomensretreat21](https://tinyurl.com/fumcpawomensretreat21)) and upload proof of vaccination.



**Make checks payable to:** First United Methodist Church/Women's Retreat

**Mail to:** FUMCPA, Women's Retreat, 625 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94301

*Please print clearly:*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Early Bird Registration (by Dec 20). Private Room \$330 \_\_\_\_\_ Double Room \$215 per person \_\_\_\_\_

Regular Registration (by Jan. 10)    Private Room \$370 \_\_\_\_\_ Double Room \$235 per person \_\_\_\_\_

If you want to share a room, indicate roommate: \_\_\_\_\_

If you need a ride or can offer a ride, please indicate here: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any dietary restrictions or need an ADA-accessible room, let us know here: \_\_\_\_\_

# DECEMBER

Birthdays

12/1 Brian Steen  
 12/1 Angela Chen  
 12/1 Owen Iglehart  
 12/1 Jania Serkes  
 12/3 Mel Smith  
 12/3 Kevin Nichols  
 12/3 Tuli Fakalata  
 12/4 Salome Bikai  
 12/6 Florence Jensen  
 12/6 Patrick Peterson  
 12/7 Joanne Perry  
 12/8 Jamie McCartney  
 12/9 Bill Bauridel  
 12/9 Lucy Tompkin  
 12/10 Judy Buttrill  
 12/10 Mark Shaull  
 12/11 Wayne Wiebe  
 12/12 Carol Carpenter  
 12/12 Drew Camens  
 12/12 Aavya Kalas



## Finance Update

12/13	Karen Black	1/03	Jose Irizarry
12/13	Lakshmi Arunachalam	1/04	Megan Sheridan
12/17	Marcia Sterling	1/09	Peggy Foiles
12/17	Allie Newton	1/09	Carl Herbert
12/19	Jesse Fifita	1/10	Allyson Laughton Santos
12/20	Mira Dabrowski	1/11	Tom Fingar
12/22	Phyllis Sherlock	1/12	Samantha Sasaki
12/23	Emily King	1/18	Andrew Breen
12/25	Carol Kumer	1/19	Kyle Trammell
12/25	Tutu Fakalata	1/19	Mark Bui-Ford
12/27	Charlotte Cutkosky	1/20	Fran Moyer
12/29	Maeva Herbert-Paz	1/20	Joseph Witte
12/31	Jo Zimmerman	1/23	Thomas Garner
		1/24	Andrew Michel
1/02	Pamela Cutkosky	1/25	Ally Yang
1/02	Diane Keller	1/27	Chrissie Blair
		1/28	John Larson III
		1/29	Al Nilsen
		1/30	Scott Thomas

# JANUARY

Birthdays

1/02 Pamela Cutkosky  
 1/02 Diane Keller



12/04/2010 Jose and Sally Irizarry  
 12/26/1987 Gary Ahlberg, Lin Stewart  
 12/28/1968 Tom and Orlene Fingar  
 12/31/1943 Orin and Jo Zimmerman  
 01/22/1994 Keith and Heather Perry

The Finance Committee thanks you for your generous and gracious support and requests that you continue to keep your pledges current. Please direct inquiries to Lou Bellardo: lou@bellardo.com

October 2021 Income and Expense Summary FINAL	October 2021 Actual	Actual YTD 2021	Budget YTD 2021	Budget Annual 2021
<b>Income</b>				
Total Member Giving	80,309	357,846	332,667	409,000
Total Income All Other Sources	9,819	146,148	161,950	197,800
	90,128	503,994	494,617	606,800
<b>Expenses</b>				
Conference Tithe	8,909	42,458	44,000	54,000
Council on Ministries	3,033	15,366	30,500	38,930
Staff Parish Relations	25,738	284,625	327,070	394,860
Office and Finance	1,468	13,845	16,462	19,975
Board of Trustees	15,260	127,622	135,664	158,582
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>54,408</b>	<b>483,916</b>	<b>553,696</b>	<b>666,347</b>
<b>Excess (Deficit) of Income over Expense</b>	<b>35,720</b>	<b>20,078</b>	<b>-59,079</b>	<b>-59,547</b>

# December

- 5 UMW Card sales, morning  
Advent Processional  
with Lessons & Carols, 7:30 p.m.
- 7 SPRC, 7 p.m.  
Church Council, 5 p.m.
- 8 Last day to order luminarias
- 9 Call to Action—Human Rights for All, 7:30 p.m.
- 10 Luminarias on display, through Dec. 11,  
5–7 p.m.  
Last day to drop off unwrapped gifts for  
LifeMoves/Opportunity Services Center (OSC)
- 12 UMW Card sales, morning  
Church Conference, 1 p.m.  
Last day to order poinsettias
- 19 UMW Card sales, morning  
Christmas Carol Sing (tentative, time tba)
- 20 Women's Retreat early bird registration deadline
- 21 Finance, 7:30 p.m.
- 24 Christmas Eve
- 25 Christmas
- 26 Traditional worship service at 10:45 a.m.



# January



- 4 SPRC, 7 p.m.
- 10 Women's Retreat registration deadline
- 11 Trustees, 7:30 p.m.
- 16 UMC Human Relations Day (special offering)
- 17 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 18 Finance, 7:30 p.m.
- 20 Insights deadline for February issue
- 21 Women's Retreat (offsite), through Jan. 23
- 25 Church Council, 7:30 p.m.

Our electronic giving page is always open! Give with a few clicks at [firstpaloalto.com/giving](http://firstpaloalto.com/giving) or text Give to 1-650-376-6784 for a link with instructions. Your generosity makes our mission possible. Thank you!

[Donate](#)



## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

→ In-person worship has resumed on Sunday mornings, but many activities are still online via Zoom. Please check in advance.

→ The church office is open. However, the office doors will remain locked. Please phone the office—or ring the electronic door bell—to be admitted. **Masks are required.** Office hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

### Sundays

- 10:45 a.m. Worship, in-person in the sanctuary.  
**Proof of vaccination or exemption is required.**  
**Wearing masks is required.**  
Some services are also live streamed.  
Find links at: [firstpaloalto.com](http://firstpaloalto.com)  
Coffee & Chat, after worship  
Sunday School  
Community Affairs discussion

### Mondays

- 7 p.m. Social Justice movie discussions. See the church e-news for movie details.  
7:30 p.m. Bible Study

### Tuesdays

- Noon Community Chats & Check In  
2 p.m. Bible Study, Channing House

### Wednesdays

- 7 p.m. Upstream Bible Study and Contemporary Worship Service

### Thursdays

- Noon Community Chats & Check In  
7 p.m. Chancel Choir

**Information for the next issue of the Insights newsletter is due Jan. 20.**

Photos of church events are accepted at any time. Include photographer's name, date of the photo, and a brief description of the event. Everything is subject to editing. Please send your submissions via email to Insights editor Michele W. Conway: [insightsfirstpa@gmail.com](mailto:insightsfirstpa@gmail.com) or bring them to the church office. Thank you!



FIRST PALO ALTO  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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## FIRST PALO ALTO UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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**Next INSIGHTS deadline: Jan. 20**

