

NOVEMBER 2023

A Season of Abundance with Stewardship

by Julianne Stafford and the Finance Committee

During October, you've had a chance to learn about some of the folks with whom you worship, through the Stewardship Moments. Tom, Emily, Carol, Nancy, Sumith, Julianne, and Pastor Burke shared experiences of giving their own resources to support our church community. These are the practical stories surrounding the Stewardship campaign.

These folks talked about what makes giving to FUMCPA meaningful for them, and how they have planned their giving. They shared about participating in worship, fellowship groups, community outreach, and other FUMCPA gatherings that inspire and connect them.

Oct. 29 was Consecration Sunday, when we asked for God's blessings on the estimates of giving for the coming year. If you have not returned your estimate of giving for next year, please take a moment to complete and return that card to church. This makes possible the planning for the coming year.

Blessings to you and thank you always for being a vital part of this faith community. �

All Saints Day To Be Observed Nov. 12

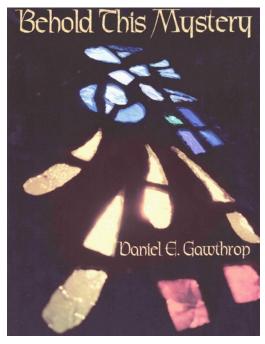
by Pamela Cutkosky and Pastor Burke Owens

In worship Sunday, Nov. 12, we will remember our dearly departed and honor them as the saints they are. In our 10:45 a.m. worship, we will remember them by name in the sanctuary and we will chime the bells in their memory.

The Chancel Choir, along with instrumentalists, soloists, and organist Diane Keller, will present "Behold This Mystery" by composer Daniel Gawthrop.

The All Saints Day service is one of the most meaningful of the church year.

While Nov. 1 is traditionally observed in the Catholic Church as a day to honor certified or more precisely beatified Saints, here we will honor the saints we have known in our lives and



from our church who have made a difference. By remembering these everyday saints, we honor the soulful world beyond our sight and ken, where all who lived travel after they pass on and where we ourselves will journey too ... one day.

Pastor Burke and Char Cutkosky are collecting the names of those saints of our church who should be remembered and named. The congregation is also encouraged to bring pictures of loved ones who have passed on to display in the sanctuary Nov. 12.

We see them now with the eye of memory,

Their faults forgiven, their virtues grown larger.

So does goodness live, and weakness fades from sight.

We remember them with gratitude and bless their names. *

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Dear friends,

Saint is a funny word. Not funny, ha-ha, but funny in that it may mean more than one thing. For example, this month, All Saints Day is honored Nov. 1, the day after All Hallows Eve. First UMC Palo Alto will celebrate All Saints Day in church Nov. 12. But what do we really mean by saints? The ones with halos and martyr days, the ones who worked miracles and whose relics can be found in sanctuaries throughout the world? Or do we mean those who have faith, those who give themselves to what God asks to the best of their ability? Is the focus

on those who built all the churches, all the communities, all the faith traditions ever followed, worshipped, and relished in all ages and times?

What I mean is not so much the Saints as the saints; the ones remembered for a briefer time yet loved with as much fervor and sweetness as any of the marquee figures like Francis or Paul or Catherine or Teresa. The everyday, simple folks who attend worship each week, who serve on committees, who are our parents, our aunts and uncles, our friends, our neighbors, our dearly departed and always our dearly beloved. These are the saints we remember this season, the ones who made this church and its blessings possible so that we may worship here today. We ourselves will, one day, be remembered as people who strengthened the church, allowing future believers to strengthen this foundation, built over generations.

This year we have seen some of our living saints suffer from illness and setbacks of one kind or another. We ask God to heal them and pray that their bodies and souls be made whole, healed and well so that they can continue to worship with us for many days to come. For each of them has a special gift, a talent that is unique, something wondrous that reveals the sacred center that dwells within each person.

But something we should consider, along with praying for those who are ill or suffering, is acknowledging how we miss the ones who are gone. It is important that we admit to ourselves, and to our community, that we feel a hole from losing them. For we are saddened by the loss of our family, friends, and fellow worshippers. We wish that we could see them again, tell them once more what they meant to us, how we remember them always. Our church friends and family are central to our lives; they help give us meaning, value, and connection. This is true when people move away as well as when they pass on to the next life. All of us, when life changes too much or too quickly, need to take the time to process, and grief is a way to digest the change so that God's love can sink deeper roots.

Life doesn't stop. Everything changes, nothing stands still, and flux is one of the constants in all of creation. It is also one of the hardest lessons to accept and often the most difficult to deal with.

Romans 12:1-2

So, brothers and sisters, remember that God is merciful and loving. I encourage you to present your lives as a living sacrifice that is holy and pleasing to God. This is your appropriate sacred service. Don't be conformed to the patterns of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your heart and soul so that you find out what God's will is—for what is good and pleasing and mature to God makes you whole and well.

So, go ahead and live life to the fullest. Grieve and rejoice, plant and harvest, laugh and cry, pray and act, worship and wonder—do all that God asks of you and give it your all. This life, as full of change and challenge as it is, is a magnificent blessing and one to approach with curiosity, hope, joy, and an abiding sense of gratitude.

continued on page 4

Stock Up on Greeting Cards at UWF Annual Sale

United Women of Faith (UWF) card sales begin Sunday, Nov. 19, and will continue for the following three Sundays on the patio after worship.

Come and peruse the variety of Christmas cards, plus cards for all occasions—birthday, sympathy, get well, thinking of you. All the cards are lovingly hand-made by members of FUMC's women's group.



Rev. Dr. Roberta "Bobbie" Corson is a

UMC Elder and has a

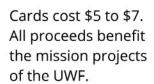
PhD in Clinical/Depth

Psychology. She won the Nautilus "Books for

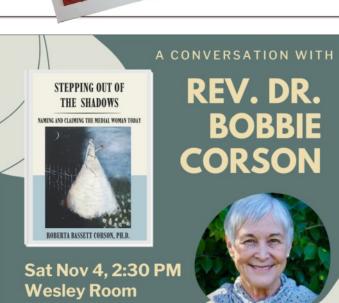
a Better World" Award

for Stepping Out of the

Shadows.



Card sales are their biggest fundraiser of the year.



outward world that is considered "reality" and the inner world of the

Questions? Email sweetjanet@aol.com

MISSIONARY KATHERINE PARKER

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 12 5 PM, KOHLSTEDT HALL

Missionary Katherine Parker of Global Ministries of the UMC will give a presentation on her humanitarian work in Nepal.



INSIGHTS November 2023 3



A Time of Reflection After Worship

Our worship time each Sunday morning is a great

blessing, a chance to sing, pray, enjoy music, and honor God.

Yet at times, the movement from worship in the sanctuary to snack and chat on the patio is too quick a transition.

After reflecting on this, I offer an opportunity on Sundays, after worship from noonish to about 12:30, for folks to gather and reflect on the worship experience or simply sit in the quiet of their soul. Not required but available to all who would like to participate. Come to Kohlstedt Hall after worship for 30 minutes, beginning Sunday, Nov. 12.

Questions? Ask Pastor Burke. �

Pastor's Corner from p. 2

Thanksgiving is coming up later this month, one of the great holidays in the year and most reflective of our American heritage. For it is the result of those who fled the old world, looking for a place where they could worship as they saw fit, a place where God could be appreciated and acknowledged in all the ways a child of God is inspired to worship.

Blessings to you and yours,

Pastor Burke

November Worship Series

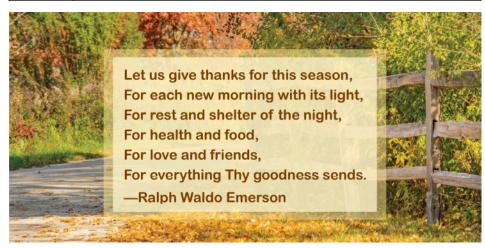
Building Gratitude in Heart and Soul

"If you concentrate on finding whatever is good in every situation, you will discover that your life will suddenly be filled with gratitude, a feeling that nurtures the soul." —Rabbi Harold Kushner

Gratitude is a part of faith that takes time to build and realize. Through patient efforts, the way we live and gratitude for what we are given can become more and more prevalent in our lives. But realizing gratitude in our day-to-day existence takes effort, practice, and kindness toward ourselves, the world and God. Like growing roses or orchids, establishing gratitude successfully requires us to pay attention to our often-contrary patterns of behavior and thought. Rarely does gratitude come naturally to us, for it is a unique flower which thrives on selflessness and self-sacrifice, making it quite rare to be embodied in a human being.

This month we celebrate Thanksgiving, so let us consider gratitude and its elegant, altruistic workings in the heart and soul.

| Nov. 5 | Holy Communion. 23rd Sunday after Pentecost Scripture: 1 Kings 8:65-66 Sermon: Gratitude for this wonderful world |
|---------|---|
| Nov. 12 | All Saints Day. 24th Sunday after Pentecost Scripture: Colossians 3:12-17 Sermon: For all the Saints! |
| Nov. 19 | 25th Sunday after Pentecost Scripture: Psalm 100 Sermon: Thanksgiving for all our blessings |
| Nov. 26 | Christ the King Sunday Scripture: Luke 7:36-50 Sermon: Gratitude for this church and its beloved community |



Joy of Giving Campaign Invites Your Input

by Nancy Glaser, Chair, Social Action Committee

On behalf of the Social Action Committee, I want to introduce the Joy of Giving Campaign for 2023. The Joy of Giving has been a holiday tradition at our church for many years. It is an opportunity to show Christ's love both to people in our local community and the world through donations at Christmas.

Six nonprofit organizations will be listed in the Joy of Giving brochure. These can be organizations you suggest to the Social Action Committee yourselves. The preferred criteria are as follows:

- A qualified 501 c (3) nonprofit organization
- · An organization you can vouch for as a donor or board member
- A small nonprofit organization where our collective donation can make a real difference

If you have an organization for our committee to consider, please send the contact information and website to glasernancy@gmail.com by the closing date of Nov. 10.

Through the Joy of Giving, donors will indicate to which listed organization(s) their financial gifts should be allocated. All gifts are tax deductible.

You should see the Joy of Giving brochure in your bulletin starting in late November. It will give you the details for the nonprofit organizations selected and the instructions for giving to the organizations of your choice.

Consider giving a gift in honor of someone on your Christmas list. This makes a very thoughtful gift! ❖

The Other 98%

Two peoples, one land, Three faiths, one root, One earth, one mother, One sky, one beginning, one future, one destiny, One broken heart, One God. We pray to You: Grant us a vision of unity. May we see the many in the one and the one in the many. May you, Life of All the Worlds, Source of All Amazing Differences, Help us to see clearly. Guide us gently and firmly toward each other, Toward peace.

-Rabbi Sheila Weinberg, Jewish Community of

Amherst, Massachusetts

Amen.



United Methodist Student Day Is Nov. 26

Every year, the United Methodist General Board of Higher Education and Ministry awards an average of \$5.5 million in financial aid to United Methodist students. Currently, there are more than 70 scholarships available for undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral United Methodist students. The special offering taken on United Methodist Student Day, which is Nov. 26 this year, is one opportunity to support these scholarships.

One hundred percent of every dollar received goes towards supporting and educating a new generation of principled Christian leaders for the church and the world. Many of the young people who grew up at First UMC Palo Alto have received a scholarship. Supporting this Special Sunday is truly an investment in our future.

Donate at church Nov. 26 or online anytime at UMC Giving. .

INSIGHTS November 2023 5



Trunk-and-Treat, organized by First UMC Palo Alto Children's Ministry, was held in our parking lot Oct. 29. Church members as well as families from the local community came dressed in costume to collect treats and decorate pumpkins and cookies at this fun event.

Children's Ministry thanks our decorated-car volunteers: Rick and Diane Allen, Pamela and Char Cutkosky, Curt and Carol Gleason, Jeff and Emily King, Sumith and Gladys Kalas,

Debbie Krueger, Susan Stephens, Mike McCartney, plus Pastor Burke and Caroline and Pastor Gerardo and Ana Espinoza.

Thanks also to Rick and Diane for the games corner; to Dan Evans for his pet snake; to Pam Cutkosky, Mira Dabrowski, Juana Reynoso, Debbie Krueger, Sarah Joy Espinoza Evans, and Emily King for staffing our pumpkin painting, cookie decorating, and church information tables; and to Dan Fifita and Pastor Gerardo for keeping the event running smoothly!

More than 80 people attended the "Twilight" concert after Trunk-and-Treat. Thank you, Pastor Burke and Diane Keller, for a spook-tacular evening of scary tales and spine-tingling organ music! ❖





Remember to Say "Thanks"

by Tom Fingar, SPRC Chair

The season of Thanksgiving and stewardship is a time to reflect on all that God has given us and the many things for which we can be deeply grateful. Holiday decorations and seasonal

opportunities to express appreciation for God's grace, bountiful harvests, and the love of friends and family. They should also remind us to think about and acknowledge the many ways our lives are enriched by the dedication and diligence of extraordinary "ordinary" people. Supermarket clerks, baristas, Uber drivers, and many others brighten our lives with a smile and words of greeting. To say that they are "just doing their jobs" misses the point. What they do makes our lives easier and more enjoyable. We remember and sometimes whine about grumpy service workers but often neglect to acknowledge and express appreciation for those who bring joy into our own lives or simply make it easier to accomplish what we want to achieve.

First Church has many extraordinary ordinary people. Our pastors, members of our staff, and dozens of volunteers contribute time and effort to enrich our worship experience, provide comfort to those in

events provide many reminders and

need, set up and take down tables, and in dozens of other ways do the "invisible" but essential tasks that make First Church the wonderful place that it is. I'm sure that every member of the staff and those who volunteer would appreciate a smile or simple thank you. Saying "thanks" will make both of you feel happier. Try it. �



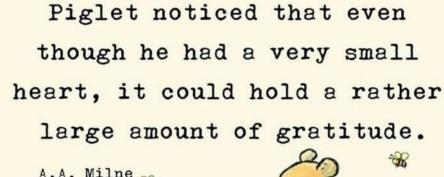
Special thanks to all who helped present the Mystical Poetry Salon last month. Fiume di Musica was outstanding, and the technical help of Bill, Scott, and Steve made the event viewable and available to experience later.

Pastor Burke plans to offer another salon early in the New Year.

Many thanks to those who contributed soup, breads, and cookies on World Communion **Sunday** for our soup and bread lunch Oct. 1.

Thank you to Mary Lou Wood, Steve Wood, Peter Colby, Orlene Fingar, Nancy Glaser, Linda Grossman, Janet Nicholls, Mike McCartney, Carol Kumer, Mira Dabrowski, and Sandra Florstedt.

And a special thanks to Carol, Mira, and Linda for setting up and cleaning up. ❖





To a Mouse

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,

O, what a panic's in thy breastie!

Thou need na start awa sae hasty,

Wi' bickering brattle!

I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,

Wi' murd'ring pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion,

Has broken nature's social union,

An' justifies that ill opinion, Which makes thee startle At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,

An' fellow-mortal!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,

In proving foresight may be vain;

The best-laid schemes o' mice an 'men

Gang aft agley,

An'lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,

For promis'd joy!

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me

The present only toucheth thee:

But, Och! I backward cast my e'e.

On prospects drear! An' forward, tho' I canna see,

I guess an' fear!

-Robert Burns

UWF CONNECTIONS

by Nancy Olson

While days seem to go by slowly, actual weeks and months are whizzing by. Thanksgiving Day is set aside for us to be truly thankful one day of the year—meet with family and friends and express how blessed, how happy to be together.

God showers us on an everyday basis with many blessings. Shouldn't we be thanking God every day in return? Let's be thankful for our church community.

UWF will again be selling hand-made greeting cards before and after Sunday worship for several weeks beginning Nov. 19 to raise funds for our mission projects.

Attention Church Kids and Families!

UWF invites you to bake three dozen cookies for the cookie plates that we will prepare and deliver on Dec. 7 to homebound church members and those on the ongoing prayer list. Watch the bulletin and e-news for drop-off details.

Call Nancy

Olson with

questions.

Ruthie Waters, our creative and generous member, can use help assembling cards. Give her a call to arrange some time you can help with this fun activity. We will also need some help with sales, so please put aside an hour to help out on a sale day.

We will be preparing and delivering Christmas cookie plates to homebound church members and those on the ongoing prayer list. Families are invited to contribute cookies—perhaps a fun project involving kids in the spirit of sharing. Cookie plates will be assembled in the Patio Room on Thursday morning, Dec. 7. Details to come.

I encourage you to explore the United Women in Faith website. When Kathy Rose went exploring she was amazed at all the resources available.

There are no boundaries with United Women in Faith Digital! Monthly community gatherings have 80–200 women in regular attendance. Together, participants engage with the Program Resource by experiencing the following month's program with the author. We experience soul care together, connect with sisters across the country, and use this online community to network with one another. Women gather from all over to experience and explore the Program Resource online.

I have attended many of these meetings. We sign in with our name and location. Several UMC Conferences have encouraged including the name of original tribes who inhabited the land you now call home. I have often been the only Californian at the meeting. Last month I attended break-out sessions with those from Tennessee, North Carolina, Georgia, and Wyoming. Fascinating!

I am thankful for my church home and for each one of you. ❖

What's New in the Church Library?

by Char Cutkosky

November is Native American Heritage Month. For the occasion, we'd like to highlight the recently published *Never Whistle at Night: An Indigenous Dark Fiction Anthology*. This anthology, edited by Shane Hawk and Theodore C. Van Alst Jr., collects short horror stories by contemporary indigenous authors, all inspired by traditional lore and folkways.

The title refers to a common piece of lore across the Americas and Pacific Islands that whistling at night can bring bad luck and supernatural attention, though the entity summoned through whistling varies from place-to-place. In Hawaii, you run the risk of summoning the ghosts of ancient warriors; in parts of Mexico, you might find yourself face-to-face with an owl witch.

Dip into Never Whistle and explore a wealth of folktales with a modern twist. �



by Kyle Sofman

This month we have two thrilling concerts! I hope you are as excited as I am to hear such beautiful music. Both concerts promise to bring a variety of music with something for everyone. I hope to see you there.

San Jose Symphony Chorale Concert, Sat., Nov. 11 at 8 p.m.

Under the baton of Elena Sharkova, this concert entitled "San Jose Symphony Chorale performs A Marriage Made in Heaven" includes:

Benjamin Britten • A Wedding Anthem

Penelope Thwates • Missa Brevis

William Walton • Jubilate Deo

Edward Elgar • O Solutaris Hostia

Johannes Brahms • Ave Maria

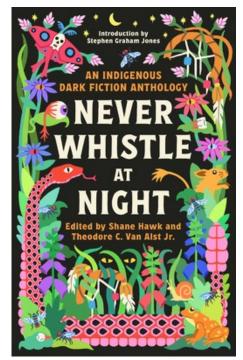
Gretchaninoff • Credo from Missa Festiva

For tickets: https://www.symphonysanjose.org/buy-tickets/ticket-buying-options/

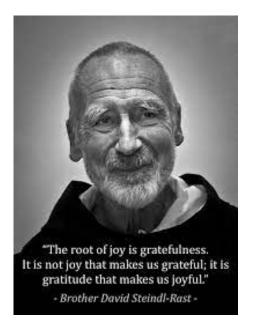
Bay Choral Guild Concert, Saturday, Nov. 18, with a pre-concert talk at 6 p.m. and concert at 7:30 p.m.

This season opens with two stellar works created in Vienna during the Classical era for chorus, orchestra, and soloists. The concert begins with Franz Schubert's Mass No. 2 in G and continues with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Mass in C minor, K. 427

For tickets: https://www.baychoralguild.org/tickets.html







INSIGHTS November 2023

9

Advent Is Next Month!

First UMC Palo Alto will present a variety of seasonal programs in Advent. Mark your calendar now for these December events:

- **+** Lessons and Carols in the sanctuary, Sunday, Dec. 3, 7 p.m.
- +Community Carol Sing in the sanctuary, Sunday, Dec. 17, 4:30 p.m.
- +Christmas Caroling in Palo Alto, Saturday, Dec. 9, in the afternoon
- **→** Family Christmas Eve Worship, Sunday, Dec. 24, 5 p.m.
- **+**Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship, Sunday, Dec. 24, 11 p.m.

Our Advent worship theme is "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens



| 11/1 11/2 11/3 11/4 11/7 11/8 11/9 | Isileli Fakalata, Jr. Amiyah Huston Paula McKinney Blair Helu Alicia Breen Rick Branner Caroline Pietrangelo Owens Michele Conway | 11/20 11/20 11/21 11/22 11/22 11/22 11/23 11/24 11/25 11/25 | Kevi Mina Glad Jose Alex Rayı Bryr Davi Jerry | ney Keller n Keller a Kiringoda lys Kalas ph Rahn Riley mond Bailon in Iglehart id Blackburn, Jr. y Johnson |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| 11/10 11/10 11/10 11/12 11/12 11/16 11/16 | Michele Conway Linda Grossman Justin Fung Annie King John Pencavel Jacob Morris Michael Riley John Kispert | | Cary Alice Mar | |
| 11/18 | Marion Hollar Patty Bellardo Steve Hickman Bill Michel, Jr. | 11/11/1 | | Lucy Tompkin, Scott Thomas George Carpenter, Carol Carpenter |

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

| September 2023 Income and Expense Summary (DRAFT) | September 2023 Actual | Actual YTD 2023 | Budget YTD 2023 | Budget Annual 2023 |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| | | | | |
| Income | 19,421 | 287,328 | 256,617 | 386,556 |
| Total Member Giving | 18,025 | 163,713 | 141,452 | 220,500 |
| Total Income All Other Sources | 37,447 | 451,041 | 398,069 | 607,056 |
| | | | | |
| Expense | | | | |
| Conference Tithe | 3,712 | 42,980 | 36,913 | 52,000 |
| Council on Ministries | 1,043 | 11,524 | 30,160 | 41,650 |
| Staff Parish Relations | 32,071 | 291,148 | 313,922 | 418,563 |
| Office and Finance | 1,344 | 11,950 | 15,062 | 20,100 |
| Board of Trustees | 23,222 | 163,371 | 160,851 | 200,700 |
| Total Expenses | 61,392 | 520,973 | 556,908 | 733013 |
| | | | | |
| Excess (Deficit) of Income over Expense | -23,945 | -69,932 | -158,839 | -125,957 |



- 4 Dr. Bobbie Corson, 2:30 p.m.
- 5 Daylight Savings Time ends
- 7 SPRC, 7:00 p.m. (Zoom)
- 10 Closing date for Joy of Giving suggestions
- 12 All Saints Day Missionary Katherine Parker, 5 p.m. Fellowship Friends, 5 p.m.
- 14 Trustees, 7:30 p.m. (Zoom)
- 19 UWF card sales begin on the patio after worship
- 20 Insights deadline for December-January issue
- 21 Finance, 7:30 p.m. (Zoom)
- 23 Thanksgiving Church office closed
- 24 Church office closed
- 26 United Methodist Student Day, special offering Fellowship Friends, 5 p.m.
- 28 Church Council, 7:30 p.m. (Zoom)

Save the Date: Church Conference on Dec. 5 at 5 p.m. All church members are encouraged to attend. District Superintendent Samuel Hong will preside. Conference topics: pastor compensation, Centennial Endowment Fund grants, membership report.

Come, Lord Jesus, our guest to be
And bless these gifts
Bestowed by Thee.
And bless our loved ones everywhere,
And keep them in Your loving care.
—Moravian blessing

Our electronic giving page is always open! Give with a few clicks at <u>firstpaloalto.com/giving</u> or text

Give to 1-650-376-6784 for a link with instructions. Your generosity makes our mission possible. Thank you!



WEEKLY SCHEDULE

- → Masks are recommended for in-person activities. Some activities meet online via Zoom, as noted. Hybrid activities can be attended in person or via Zoom.
- → Church office hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Doors are kept locked. Please phone the office or ring the electronic door bell to be admitted. **Masks are recommended.**

Sundays

10:00 a.m. Sunday School for ages 3-11

10:45 a.m. Worship, in person and live-

streamed. Check $\underline{\text{firstpaloalto.com}}$

or Friday e-news for the link.

11:45 a.m. Snack 'n Chat (after worship)

12:15 p.m. Couples Group, alternate Sundays

6:00 p.m. Covenant Class (Zoom)

Mondays

7:00 p.m. Social Justice movie discussions

(Zoom) See e-news for details.

7:00 p.m. Fiume di Musica Rehearsal

Tuesdays

10:00 a.m. Walking Group

Noon Current Affairs Fellowship (Zoom)

Wednesdays

7:00 p.m. Upstream Contemporary Worship

(Zoom)

7:15 p.m. Bible Study (Zoom)

Thursdays

1:00 p.m. Call to Prayer

7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Information for the combined December-January issue of the Insights newsletter is due Nov. 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 or bring them to the church office. Thank you!

INSIGHTS November 2023



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

FIRST PALO ALTO UNITED METHODIST CHURCH Inside this issue of INSIGHTS November 2023

- · All Saints Day, p 1
- November Special Events, p 3
- A Time of Reflection, p 4
- Remember to Say "Thanks," p 7
- UWF Call for Cookies, p 8
- · Advent Schedule, p 10

Next INSIGHTS deadline: Nov. 20

