



In this issue...

- Upcoming worship2
- Stewardship2
- Advent Labyrinth Walk2
- Advent Evening Prayer2
- Alternative Christmas Market3
- Friday Morning Meditation.....3
- Christmas Pageant.....3
- Tapestry Retreat4
- Blow Up the Lawn4
- Adopt-a-Family.....4
- Year End Giving.....4
- Poinsettias5
- Worship Online Tutorial6
- By the Numbers6
- Prayer List.....7
- Weekly Schedule.....8

Advent 2020: Waiting in the Dark

Most Decembers, churches have to defend Advent as if it is a castle under siege. Beginning with pre-Black Friday sales, we stand against the onslaught of shopping, parties, jingle bells, and decorations trying to protect Advents' territory: silence, waiting, listening, hoping, searching for light in the darkness.

This year, though, the themes of Advent are the themes of our lives. We are all waiting for this long and horrible pandemic to finally be over. We are all listening hard, trying to hear a word of truth in the midst of the bitter rants of this election year. We are all hoping for reconciliation across the divisions that this year has revealed. We are all looking for light in the darkness of racial unrest, economic instability, and the rising death toll from COVID-19.

Much of what we usually associate with "the holiday season" will be diminished or lost in 2020: travel, family gatherings, community celebrations, singing carols together, holiday concerts, even Christmas Eve Worship in our sanctuary.

But the promises of Advent ring all the clearer:

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light!

Arise, shine, for your light has come.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth--peace.

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, God with us.

Karen Sapio

Upcoming Worship

(all worship services are accessible through Facebook Live unless otherwise noted)

December 5, 4:00 PM

Evening Prayer on the Lawn
Advent 2 Wreath Lighting

December 6, 10:00 AM

Second Sunday of Advent
“What John the Baptist Saw”
Karen Sapio preaching

December 12, 4:00 PM

Evening Prayer on the Lawn
Advent 3 Wreath Lighting

December 13, 10:00 AM

Third Sunday of Advent
“What the Shepherds Saw”
Virtual Christmas Pageant

December 19, 4:00 PM

Evening Prayer on the Lawn
Advent 4 Wreath Lighting

December 20, 10:00 AM

Fourth Sunday of Advent
Lessons and Carols

December 24, 5:00 PM

Candlelight Worship on the Patio

December 24, 9:00 PM

Contemplative Worship on Zoom

December 24, 10:00 PM

Christmas Eve Worship on Facebook Live

December 26, 10:00 AM

First Sunday of Christmastide
“What Anna and Simeon Saw”
Brian Gaeta-Symonds preaching

We look forward to gathering both online and in person outdoors during the Advent/Christmas season. However, we will comply with any updated LA County Health Department orders that may further restrict public gatherings. If we need to cancel any events, we will post this information on our church website and social media platforms.

Update: Stewardship 2021 Hold Fast to Hope

Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. Hebrews 10: 23

When the followers of Jesus encountered difficult times in the early years of the Church, the author of The Letter to the Hebrews urged the community to “hold fast to hope.”

Thanks you so much to all of you who have made a pledge to support our congregation financially in 2021. As of November 15, we have received 87 Pledges totalling \$383,204 toward our goal of \$465,000. If you have not yet made your pledge for 2021, we encourage you to do so as soon as possible.

Waiting... Watching... and Walking a Spiritual Path: A Workshop and Contemplative Experience in the Labyrinth

This tumultuous year of unexpected change has upended nearly all our plans and made ordinary things seem very precious. We are hungry for calm and peace to return. We yearn for healing.

One way spiritual wisdom can break into our personal world is through the practice of walking the Labyrinth—the ancient tool of silently walking its winding clear path to a center point, stilling out mind going in, pausing to notice what God/Spirit may reveal, and then slowing waling back the same path, savoring whatever has become known.

On Sunday, December 6, please join us for an online workshop to learn how this ancient walking practice has been experienced by millions around the world for spiritual knowledge and transformation. Christopher McCauley, spiritual director and teacher and host of international pilgrimages and retreats will join us via Zoom for an enjoyable live 90 minutes. Then, Claremont Presbyterian Church will open its permanent, community Labyrinth to anyone to come and walk the sacred path. Materials will be provided via email for all who register for this workshop. This Workshop is offered free of charge and open to all whether you know the Labyrinth well or its you first time. Come and explore.

Zoom online workshop begins at 1:00 - 2:30 PM.

Labyrinth opens at 3:30 PM. Facilitators are available to assist you and answer questions. To learn more and to register, go to claremontpres.org/events/adventlabyrinth2020

Advent Evening Prayer

During Advent our weekly Service of Evening Prayer on the church lawn (Saturdays, 4:00 PM) will include the lighting of our church Advent Wreath—along with music, prayers, and reading from the Advent scriptures. Bring a mask, a lawn chair or blanket, and perhaps a jacket and experience this opportunity to come together in person to pray for hope and peace and to seek the light that shines in the darkness.



Alternative Christmas Market

The virtual Alternative Christmas Market for CPC is now in full swing. You should have received a packet in the mail with descriptions of the various mission partners participating, along with a shopping list and a return envelope. Please send those in at your earliest convenience. If you prefer to shop online go to the ACM page on the church website www.claremontpres.org.

What an easy way to shop for Christmas!

We would like you to complete your shopping by December 13 but will cheerfully receive donations after that date. Please give generously. Because of the pandemic these organizations are serving more clients than ever. The need is always there but this year is more severe than ever.

Happy shopping and Merry Christmas!

Updating Your Estate Plan? Remember the Loaves and Fishes Society

If updating your estate plan is on your year-end “to do” list, be sure to remember CPC in your planning! The Loaves and Fishes Society, the bequest program here at CPC, provides all of us with an additional way to “give back” to our wonderful Church, in response to all that we have received.

The Society was founded in 2008, and presently there are thirty members. You become a member by informing the Church that CPC is included in your estate plans. Questions? Request a copy of our Bequest Brochure, and the Church will be happy to send one to you. You’ll be glad you did – and CPC will be grateful to you.

~The CPC Special Gifts and Endowment Committee

Join Us For Friday Morning Meditation

Our Friday morning at 8 AM meditation continues online and you are most welcome to join us. Duane Bidwell, Sam Atwood, and I take turns leading participants in Centering Prayer.

Many of us are new or relatively new to meditation and

we particularly welcome those who are curious or just have a thirst for a different means of opening themselves to the Holy Spirit.

It’s a silent meditation—no voices in the background telling you to breathe or relax your muscles. Generally, we start with a little introduction about Centering Prayer, then mediate for about 25 minutes, ask for prayer concerns and moments of grace, and close with the Lord’s Prayer.

Although most of the participants have been from Claremont Presbyterian Church, we have welcomed friends from all over California, other states, Canada, the UK, and Spain.

We meet at 8 AM and are finished by 8:45.

Our online gathering is made possible by an organization called Meditation Chapel. They ask that you register before joining a group; this as a way of preventing malicious visitors, better known as Zoom bombers, from disrupting the sessions. You can register at Meditationchapel.org or, easier, you can send me an email at charlestaylorkerchner@gmail.com and I will register you and send the links you need to participate.

~Chuck Kerchner

2020 Christmas Pageant “Do Not Be Afraid”

Our annual Christmas Pageant will be premiering Sunday, December 13 during our 10:00 AM worship service on Facebook Live.

The Christmas Pageant this year will once again take all of you to participate and bring it to life. The familiar story of Jesus’ birth will be told through song, script, picture, and acting; and all from your own home.

Illustrated Ministries’ “Do Not Be Afraid” Christmas pageant is designed especially for these times when we cannot be together in person. Your creativity and imagination will help this years pageant come to life right on screen.

In order to make this happen (there are songs, and 12 scenes) we need many families and households to sign up to depict a scene or part of this loved story. Anyone of any age can participate. We are on a bit of a time crunch and so...

If you would like participate in any of these ways, or are curious and want more information, please reach out to Barbara MacKenzie: Send her an email at bjmackenzie321@gmail.com.

Do Not Be Afraid! Be excited and join in the retelling of the Christmas story.

Tapestry Youth Fall Retreat

by Pastor Brian Gaeta-Symonds

Trauma and Crisis – these were the words used when designing and developing the fall weekend retreat for the Tapestry youth. Tapestry leadership wanted to address the real lived lives of our youth and give them an experience they could take with them after the weekend was over.

Like much of our lives these days, this retreat was conducted on Zoom. It was divided into four 1-hour sessions over the first weekend in November. We played games, had worship, and dove into deep conversations in our small groups in breakout rooms.

Our main speaker was Ryan Thomas. Ryan has a PhD in Psychology and is a licensed marriage and family therapist. He loves working with young people and especially when it comes to matters of faith. Ryan also has a Masters of Divinity degree. As leaders we recognized that none of us were experts in therapy or trauma. This made Ryan the perfect person to address these sometimes difficult discussions with young people.

The youth walked away from this retreat with some terminology and tools on how to identify and cope with trauma in their own lives, and how to do this as people of faith. It was a special weekend and definitely one for the books.

Ornament Exchange & Blow Up The Lawn

Many of our Advent traditions are changing shape this year. This includes the long-held ornament exchange and night of fun with friends, and the newly added Blow Up The Lawn walking display. Two very different experiences, and yet both with a continued longing by many people.

This year on Saturday, December 5 from 4:30 - 6:00 PM these two activities will be combined and offered as an in-person outdoors event at the church. Safe social distance practices and COVID protocols will be in place to ensure we can have fun while keeping safe. These include wearing masks and keeping a distance of 6 feet from others.

What will this look like? Immediately following the Evening Prayer on the Lawn (4:00 PM) you are invited to enjoy the walking display of Christmas themed inflatable lawn decorations around the edges of the church front parking lot.

Then, take part in the Ornament Exchange. This exchange will be a 'bring one take one' activity. You are encouraged to bring a wrapped ornament to leave on the orna-

ment table. Then you are invited to take one of the wrapped ornaments left by someone else. When you get home you will be able to unwrap your ornament and enjoy the wonderful surprise awaiting your excitement and its opportunity to adorn your tree.

If you have questions please contact the church office 909-624-9693.

CPC Adopt-A-Family

Adopt a Family is happening with Uncommon Good and CPC this year!

You can help adopt a family this Christmas by giving to eh Deacons through the Alternative Christmas!

The CPC Deacons are planning on adopting 5 families suggested by Uncommon Good this Christmas, with a budget planned for \$200 per family. The goal is to raise \$1,000 to Adopt these 5 families.

100% of the funding will be raised via the Alternative Christmas Market, via donations listed under the CPC Deacons Adopt-a-Family.

This year, gift cards will be purchased at Target, Walmart, and assorted grocery stores specified by each family. Should we be fortunate enough to exceed our goal, we will adopt an additional family.

Thank you in advance for your generous donations to help to provide a Christmas for five special families!

Your CPC Deacons

Year-End Giving

Current economic conditions have already required many of us to "go the extra mile," as we strive to fulfill our 2020 pledges and to pledge generously to CPC for 2021. If you are in this group, thank you for your support. For some, however, 2020 may have been a year of unexpected financial good news. If this is true for you, please consider making a special year-end gift to CPC.

A special gift of this type may be unrestricted or restricted. If unrestricted, the Session may choose to use your gift to close our 2020 books on a positive note. If restricted, you may designate your gift to support a particular part of our Church's program and outreach.

You might think of your special gift as a Christmas present to CPC, for all that our Church means to you and to each of us. An added bonus: if your gift is made by December 31,

How to Give when there's no Offering Plate

No offering plate? No organ music? No problem. There are still ways to support your church during this time when we are worshipping online and outdoors. Here's how;

- Check: As long as the US Mail is still delivering, we can receive contributions by checks mailed to our church office.
- Online: You can make an online contribution to Claremont Presbyterian Church by navigating to our website at claremontpres.org/giving-2. You may also use the following QR code:
- Autopay from your checking account: Your bank should be able to help you set up an electronic payment directly to CPC. You may also make contributions through Zelle if your bank offers this electronic payment service.



it may help reduce your 2020 income taxes – a win/win situation! Thank you.

~The CPC Special Gifts and Endowment Committee

Christmas Poinsettia Donations - There's Still Time

There is still time to make a donation towards the purchase of a poinsettia in honor or in memory of a loved one, or in celebration of a special event. Your donation will be listed in the January 2021 Communicator. Suggested donation is \$25.00 per poinsettia.

All poinsettias will be blessed, and will hear the organ and the sermon in worship with us on Sunday, December 13, streamed live from the CPC sanctuary, and then delivered by our CPC deacons to the homebound, bereaved, ill and recovering members of CPC.

If you would like to donate a poinsettia, you may mail in your check, to Neila Carey at CPC, or donate via Zelle, or via paypal. You may also email Delight Slotemaker de Bruine delight@claremontpres.org

Below is the list of Christmas 2020 Poinsettia donations received through November 16, 2020.

Joyce & Ted Alexander in honor of "Delight" and her wonders!!

Teresa Bernal in honor of first granddaughter, Evelyn Josefina Bernal and in memory of beloved sister, Marilou Amores

Thomas Bleakney in memory of Mildred Bleakney, William Bleakney

Susan B. Brinkama in memory of her husband and daughter, Nikolaus & Bettina

Neila Carey in honor of Vickie Wasner and in celebration of "Frankie" Strom

Herb & Carlynn Christian for the joy of great-grandkids, Malachi, Josephine, Lucie, Kayden, Violet, and Andilyn

Pastor Brian Gaeta-Symonds in memory of Uncle David Donaldson

Karee Galloway

Sue Likens in honor of children David and Elizabeth and their families

Beverlee Mitsch in memory of Gerry Mitsch, Aria Dodd, and Beverly Vance

Pat and Bill Reed in honor of our children and in memory of our parents and brother

Pastor Karen Sapio & Tony Becker in memory of Lloyd Becker and Victor Sapio

Susan Starr in memory of Mildred Staff (Brad's Mom), beloved Mother, Grandmother, Great-Grandmother

Dorothy Whitham in honor of Sam & Irene Atwood and in memory of Rick Whitham



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Submissions are subject to editing for content and length. To submit an article or item for the monthly calendar, please e-mail Lisa Strom (lisa@claremontpres.org) by the 15th of the month.

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Worship With CPC On Line: A Brief Tutorial

There are several simple ways to navigate to our online Sunday Worship services.

From our Church Website:

1. Go to claremontpres.org. The opening screen features an image that says "Worship Online" with a button to click to learn more. If you click this link it will bring up our Link Library, with the top line featuring a hyperlink to our church Facebook Page. The hyperlink looks like this:

Sunday

10:00 AM - Worship on Facebook

2. Click the word "Facebook" and it will take you to our church's Facebook page. If you do not have a Facebook account, you may see an invitation to set up an account. You can decline this and still view our Facebook page. Shortly before 10 AM on Sundays, our live video feed from the Sanctuary should be the top post.

From your web browser:

1. Open your browser (Safari, Firefox, Chrome, Internet Explorer, Microsoft Edge, etc.)
2. In the address bar, type the URL (or web address) "facebook.com/claremontpres" to navigate to Claremont Presbyterian Church's Facebook page. On Sundays, just before 10, our livestream should be the first post you see.

From Facebook:

If you are already logged on to Facebook, type Claremont Presbyterian Church in the search bar. This will bring up a link to our CPC Facebook page at the top of the list of search results. If you have not already "liked" our church page, we encourage you to do so.

To find Archived Services from previous weeks:

Go to www.claremontpres.org. At the top of the page, click the Worship and Music tab. This will bring up a drop down menu. From this menu,

CLAREMONT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AS OF 10/30/2020	ACTUAL	BUDGET
Pledges	\$360,180.07	\$391,660.00
Other Income	\$127,613.96	\$90,406.60
Expenses	-\$474,614.32	-\$498,219.70
Variance	\$13,179.71	-\$16,153.10
CHILDREN'S CENTER AS OF 10/30/20	ACTUAL	BUDGET
Revenue	\$414,160.20	\$758,116.60
Expenses	-\$667,216.15	-\$758,115.70
Variance*	-\$253,055.95	\$.90
*Note: these numbers do NOT include the PPP Loan amount. This income will be included once the loan is forgiven.		

click “Sermons”. This will take you to a page with recorded services from previous weeks.

Many of our services, music, and educational offerings are also viewable on our church YouTube page. Go to YouTube.com and enter “Claremont Presbyterian Church” in the search bar. You’ll see our channel close to the top of the page.

Please Lift Up Your Prayers

As we share in the grief of our friends and in the celebration of the life of our loved ones who have entered the space reserved for them with Christ, we lift up our prayers for: the family of Octavio and Veronica Guerrero, in the passing of Octavio’s father; the family of Geri Lindell in her recent passing; the family of Sue Stoddard Goodspeed and Stu & Jo Stoddard as we celebrate Marjorie Stoddard’s life, in a memorial service scheduled on zoom, December 4, 2020.

As we lift up those for whom we ask for healing, for strength, for courage, for the grace, peace, and comfort of the Holy Spirit, we pray for: Nancy Rice; Ron Perry for his continued recovery from successful surgery on Thursday 11/12; Trish Perry for her eye surgery on 11/23; Bob and Susie Cave, as they continue the journey of tests, treatment, healing and regaining strength; Frank Pinkerton, as he continues healing; John Watts; Cloyce Morrow, for upcoming breast cancer surgery, followed by treatment; Jeanne Master’s son-in-law, Bob DeJournett, severely ill in the hospital; George Shervington, Roger Shervington’s brother, as he remains hospitalized following cancer surgery; Richard Hettish; Kerry Ryan, recovering from an accident; Chikondi Tamaona, for successful continuing treatment for his knee (Surgery was on October 12); John Watts; Gennie Ransom continuing her recovery from surgery; Phyllis DeLeo for peace, relief from pain, and continued strength and courage in her cancer journey; Chinny Agwu as she awaits relief from chronic knee and hip pain; Carolyn Whitham; Rita Watt’s niece, Jennica, who suffers from a chronic condition called burning mouth syndrome for which they have found no cure or even treatment; Roger Denton’s friend, Roberto, who has many family members facing health crises; Sacha Lord’s daughter-in-law, Joanna Lord’s mother and father, Maria and Mike Lai, as he recovers from hand surgery in rehab; former CPCC teacher, Judith Rios, who has stage four bone cancer; Suzanne Brown and her son Jay, Kay Brown, the family of Barb MacKenzie, for Barb’s mother, continuing treatment; Jean Perry, Lenore Brashler, Jim Brashler, Chris Hartmire, Thom Bleakney, Ruth Auld, Phoebe DeV-

ille, Jane Glenn, John Najarian, Jean Underwood, Chet & Eileen Jaeger, Lee & Claire McDonald, Mike Layne, Barbara Myers, Mary & Ed Hughes, Sandra Deibel

As we stand beside our brothers and sisters, we lift up: Chikondi’s wife, Madalo (which means “Blessings” in Malawi), as she has her Visa interview to be able to come to care for Chikondi Tamaona; the caretakers offering love and support for their loved ones, as they journey through health challenges. We lift up prayers for our country, for our leaders and for peaceful transition. We pray for mutual respect, and for the adoption of kindness and compassion, by, of and for all. We pray for the families touched by Covid-19, both in death and in illness. We pray for the front-line workers delivering health care for Covid patients.

Should you or anyone in your family, or anyone of whom you know, be in need of prayer, and you have their permission to share their name, please email your requests to Delight Slotemaker de Bruine. You may indicate that you wish only the name listed. Or, you may wish to include details. Details are shared only as per your direction, otherwise, then they will be shared confidentially at the weekly staff meeting.

Flowers for Worship

Worship flowers were generously donated in the month of November 2020 as follows:

November 7 flowers were donated by Sharron Bentley in memory of and in honor of her husband, Bill’s birthday

November 21 flowers were donated by Nancy Rice in honor of her first great-grandchild, Junia Louise Zyla, on her 1st birthday, born on November 21, 2019. Junia’s mother, Nancy’s grand-daughter, Hannah Dreitzer, is a Presbyterian Minister, in St Louis, MO at Webster Groves Presbyterian Church. Hannah is the daughter of Wendy Rice, also a Presbyterian Minister. Wendy is the daughter of Nancy and Howard Rice.

If you would like to make a flower donation to be enjoyed during worship service in the CPC sanctuary, please contact Delight Slotemaker de Bruine delight@claremont-pres.org

Flowers are arranged by Sherwood Florist. You may select your colors, and flower selection and you may retain the arrangement, or have it divided and delivered as “cheer bouquets” by the deacons to folks who could use some cheer. Delight will take care of all of the arrangements.

Available dates: December 27, January 5 & 19, February 16.



COMMUNICATOR

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Deadline for January *Communicator* - December 15

Weekly Online Events

Sunday

- 10:00 AM - Worship (Facebook)
- 10:45 AM - Coffee Hour (Zoom)
- 12:00 PM - Toddler Sunday School (Zoom)
- 12:00 PM - Early Elementary Sunday School (Zoom)
- 1:00 PM - Tweens Sunday School (Zoom)

Wednesday

- 4:00 PM - Bible Study (Zoom)

Thursday

- 5:00 PM - Community Yoga (Zoom)

Friday

- 8:00 AM - Morning Meditation (Online Meditation Chapel)

Daily (except during Sunday Worship)

- 8:00 AM - Morning Prayer (Facebook)
- 11:30 AM - Quarantine Interlude (Facebook)
- 5:00 PM - Evening Prayer (Facebook) (4:00 PM Saturday on the Lawn)



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[claremont_pres](https://www.instagram.com/claremont_pres)



[giving](#)

For links to all these events, visit claremontpres.org/weekly-schedule