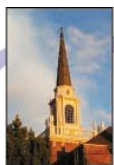


FCCB THE CARILLON



First Congregational Church of Berkeley • United Church of Christ • Berkeley, California

Dec. 22 & 29, 2019 • Vol. 73 • No. 25

DECEMBER 22, 2019 FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT (LOVE)

Matthew 1:18-25

9:40

Carol Sing, Sanctuary

10:00

Worship, Kit Novotny, preaching; Amar Khalsa, musician; Elizabeth Forsyth, organist; Derek Tam, director of music, Sanctuary

Musical Highlights, "Mary, Did You Know, arr. Pentatonix, Songs of the Soul, Linda Crebbin-Coates, director; "African Noel," arr. André J. Thomas, Sanctuary Choir

11:15

After Party, Pillar Room

DECEMBER 29, 2019 PJS & POEMS ALL-AGES SUNDAY/ FIRST SUNDAY IN CHRISTMASTIDE

10:00

Worship, Kit Novotny, meditation, Amar Khalsa, musician; Elizabeth Forsyth, organist; Derek Tam, director of music, Sanctuary

11:15

After Party, Terrace

Carol Sing this Sun., Dec. 22 at 9:40 am in the Sanctuary!

Poetry and PJs on Dec. 29

For the **Sunday after Christmas, Dec. 29**, we'll have a fun, relaxed **PJs & Poetry Sunday!** Roll out of bed and come in your coziest pajamas, sweats, or slippers. The service will intersperse poetry and music, and a brief reflection from Rev. Kit. It will be an all-ages worship, meaning no Sunday School classes will meet, including for preschoolers. Feel free to bring pillows, blankies, sleeping bags, and stuffed animals for an extra cozy fort area up front.



Wed., Dec. 18, **Winter Solstice Service**
(7 pm, Sanctuary)

Thurs., Dec. 19, **Blue Christmas** (6 pm,
Sanctuary)

Tues., Dec. 24: Join us for our three
Christmas Eve Services:

- 4 pm, **All-Ages Family Celebration**
- 6 pm, **Outdoor Christmas in the Cloister**
- 10 pm, **Candlelight Service**

...plus a fun **All-Ages Epiphany Pageant**
on Sun., Jan. 5 during worship!

Blue Fire Update

On Sun., Jan. 12, immediately following worship, the **Blue Fire Team** will provide an update about **Pilgrim Hall**. As you recall, at the Nov. 3 congregational meeting, Blue Fire was given a new mandate to envision alternative possibilities for building on campus since the insurance proceeds would not cover rebuilding Pilgrim Hall as it was with code upgrades. Blue Fire has met several times over the past two months and is excited to tell the congregation about multiple options envisioned for the whole campus within the budget of the \$9 million insurance proceeds.

Winter Solstice Service

All are invited to a contemplative, **Winter Solstice service Wed., Dec. 18, 7 pm** in the **Sanctuary**. It will include music, meditation, and readings.

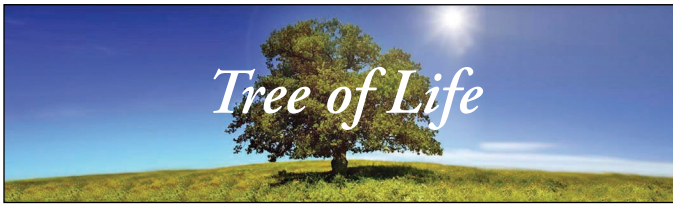
Blue Christmas Service

First Church offers a **Blue Christmas Service** on **Thurs., Dec. 19, at 6 pm** on the **Chancel** in the **Sanctuary**. This service gives us room to acknowledge grief, overwhelm, loneliness, and other feelings that don't ordinarily fit into the season of cheer. It will include prayers (silent, written, spoken), Scripture, music, and healing rituals.

Christmas Offering

As we move together through the Christmas holidays, we accept once again that we are the church in the world. We accept Jesus' call to serve him by serving others—the hungry, the homeless, the refugee and immigrant, the oppressed. This year's Christmas offering, to be received **Sun., Dec. 22** and **Christmas Eve**, will be directed toward three organizations: the **Berkeley Food Pantry**, **Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity**, and **Casa Connection, Inc.**

Please give generously using the envelope provided in the Christmas letter you will receive (or one in the pew racks). If an envelope is unavailable, please write a check to FCCB and add "Christmas Offering" in the memo line. You may also donate online at www.onrealm.org (in your Profile, first click "Giving," then click on the blue +Give button, and then choose "Christmas Offering" from the drop-down menu under "Sustaining Gift" in the pop-up box).



Congratulations on the birth of **Elena Bousset Hester**, born Dec. 4, who traveled home to Oakland from Southern California with parents **Ben Hester & Caroline Bousset** to meet big brother, Enzo. Grandparents are **Bob & Bonnie Hester**.



The memorial service for former staff member **Rev. Dr. Forster Freeman**, who died Nov. 5 at the age of 92, will take place **Jan. 2, at 2 pm**, at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, 147 NW 19th Ave., Portland, OR. RSVPs and remembrances are welcome at: <https://everloved.com/life-of/forster-freeman>.

Healing prayers for **Alexandra Ellman** who is in treatment for cancer.

Prayers for **Holly Coates-Bash** as she recovers from surgery.

Prayers for **Imogene Crebbin** as she recovers from RSV.

Continued prayers for **Margie Coates**.

New Format for *The Carillon* in 2020

The next *Carillon* will be launched in a new, user-friendly format. It will be a weekly email blast highlighting church news and events with links to featured stories on our new website. For those currently receiving *The Carillon* via email, expect to see an email blast in your inbox on Thursdays instead of Wednesdays. For those receiving a print version in the mail, you'll continue to receive *The Carillon* every other week. Not a subscriber yet? Go to firstchurchberkeley.org/email to sign up. Please send all future *Carillon* submissions to **Communications Specialist Ben McKnight** at communications@fccb.org.

THE CARILLON

Margaret Copeland, Editor

Ben McKnight, Communications Specialist

Deadline: Three weeks before event

Email submissions to: mcopeland@fccb.org

All submissions are subject to editing.

First Congregational Church of Berkeley

United Church of Christ

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510/848-3696

The View from Here

Molly Baskette

Senior Minister

Belonging>Belief>Reality



When now almost-18-year-old Rafe was a toddler, I agonized aloud to a church member that I didn't know what I was going to do in regard to Santa. "What if I do the whole Santa thing, and later on when it turns out Santa is not real, he thinks God and Jesus are not real either?"

The man I confessed this to was a paradoxical sort of person: a physicist who considered himself both a mystic and a non-theist. He didn't believe in much, he was willing to admit. But he understood the superlative importance of staying open to wonder. And when it came to Christmas, he was a total convert. "There's nothing like the almost unbearable excitement of Christmas for a child. Don't you want him to experience that?" I acquiesced.

Once neither of my children believed in Santa anymore, it took a lot of the pressure off of me as mom/minister to midwife all the magic at home and at church. But that doesn't mean they don't insist on the traditions. Carmen in particular is the keeper of ritual in our house, lovingly moving the crèche figures week to week as the drama unfolds through Advent, calling us to the table to light the candles every Sunday, following the Advent calendar prompts with zeal, and setting out the traditional salad and beer for Santa on Christmas Eve (who needs more cookies?).

Ritual guides us and provides a safe container when the world has gone mad. But it's more than that. Every time we light a candle, tell the story, sing a carol, do anything deliberate to remember and renew this vision of a world God intimately enters and inhabits, we are dance partners with a whole host of others unseen: angels, saviors, a singular God with skin on. We are stage managers enacting an alternate reality—one that is just as real, or can be, as the sometimes cold, dreary, despairing, and desperate plane of material existence we live in day to day.

Our new vision avers that "belonging is more important than belief" in our community. But that doesn't mean belief has no value. Right now the secular world is selling us sparkly cushions, rustic wall hangings, and overpriced travel mugs that all proclaim "Believe." But what does it really mean to believe? Belief is not about intellectual certainty or assent to a fiction; it's about being open to wonder, uncertainty, mystery, magic, transformation, and curiosity about how things might be different than they appear (for they often are).

This is my Advent wish for you: to know the unbearable excitement of the child at Christmas once more, grateful to be alive, optimistic about what gifts God will bring next, and open to believing beyond the limits of the ordinary-time mind.

The “Dolly Mama” New Year’s Retreat with Donna Schaper!

Donna Schaper, who sometimes goes by the title “Dolly Mama” and other times by “The Rev. Dr.,” who teaches leadership at Hartford Seminary to Doctor of Ministry students, and is senior minister at Judson Memorial Church in NYC, will come visit us to say what little she knows about mature and humorous spirituality at a **day-long retreat** at First Church on **Sat., Jan. 11, 9 am–3 pm** (and she’ll be our guest preacher the next day!).

Donna may also put in a good word for religion. :) Her books about the time famine and approaches to the end of life will form the spine of the retreat day—and the heart of the day will come from her book *I <3 You Pope Francis: Love Letters from a Reluctant Admirer*. It takes a whole life to become spiritually mature, even if you were born Christian.

This winter spend a day with Donna, path-finding, trailblazing, and spirit sleuthing. You will leave less afraid of the end of things, more capable of a time feast, and more of an eco-feminist in what is still a man’s world (men and folks of all genders most welcome). Dolly Parton and the Dalai Lama are also sources. He advises non-attachment; she attaches wildly. Both join the Pope in loving all things material and spiritual.

Register at <http://bit.ly/2YTzIU2> or by contacting **Louise Halsey** (lhalsey@fccb.org). \$20 suggested donation; no one turned away for lack of funds. Continental breakfast provided; bring a brown bag lunch or \$ to eat out in the neighborhood during the lunch break.

Christmas Cookie Events!

Care, Fellowship & Invitation

Ministry invites you to share your holiday hospitality at the following two fun holiday events:



The Great

Christmas Cookie Bake Off,

Sat., Dec. 21, 1–4 pm, Durant House.

Contact **Sara Woods** with any questions.

Christmas Eve Cookie Fest After Party, after the **Candlelight Christmas Eve service (10 pm, Dec. 24).**

Look for inserts in the Order of Worship at regular Sunday worship services in December to sign up with your contribution of cookies and/or help. Contact **Pat Pratt** with any questions.

Stewardship Update!

As of Dec. 12, the church has received **158 sustaining** giving commitments totaling **\$653,000** for 2020. There’s still time to submit your commitment — complete a **2020 Commitment Card** (<http://bit.ly/2EldQYu>) and email it to **Kit Dunbar** at kdunbar@fccb.org or go online and update your **Realm** account.

Also, consider making an end-of-year extra gift for 2019 as you are able—this will help enormously in closing out the small deficit that we anticipate for this year. Three church members have put up \$2,500 to match additional gifts for 2019—matches must be completed by Christmas Eve. To learn more about giving to First Church, go to www.firstchurchberkeley.org/give/.

Did You Know...?

...that there will be a **Budget Information session** after church on **Sun., Jan. 19** before the **Congregational Budget Vote** on **Sun., Jan. 29?**

...that First Church youth **Terry Durham** was named Youth of the Year for his chapter of the San Francisco Boys and Girls Club?



To read more about what Terrell’s activities and his plans for the future, go to: <https://www.kidsclub.org/get-involved/yoy#2020>

Greeters & Ushers Needed

The **Care, Fellowship & Invitation Ministry** is looking for **greeters** for the three **Christmas Eve** services: **4 pm Family Service, 6 pm Service in the Cloister & 10 pm Candlelight Service.** You can sign up for more than one! For more info, contact **Diana Graham**.

We also need **ushers** for the **4 pm & 10 pm Christmas Eve** services! Contact **Louise Halsey** (lhalsey@fccb.org).

Coming Up!

Epiphany Pageant

Sun., Jan. 5, 10 am, Sanctuary

Blue Fire Team Update

Sun., Jan. 12, Immediately after worship, Sanctuary



Celebrating with confetti as the church photo was taken after worship on Sun., Dec. 15.

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Come to a New Year's Eve Party Hosted by the Young Adults

Come ring in 2020 in **Loper Chapel** from **8 pm-midnight on Tues., Dec. 31**. It will be a potluck, so bring whatever snacks you desire. Bring your own noisemakers and party hats to celebrate the New Year at 9 pm for the east coast time and 12 am for the west coast. This is an **alcohol-free** event and is open to everyone, 6th-grade and

up. Contact **Niema Durham** with any questions.

Birthday Potluck at Coffee Hour

Everyone is invited to bring food to share during coffee hour once or twice during your birthday month or any Sunday you have extra to share! Bring bread, fruit, cheese, hard-boiled eggs, homemade treats or anything at all! Please put your offering on the table before church prepped and ready to serve. Include an ingredient list for homemade items, if you can. **December birthday folks, you still have a chance; January folks — get ready!**

Save the Date for the Deckers

Deckers will gather at the **Alameda County Food Bank** in Oakland to assemble and bag fresh produce on **Tues., Jan. 7, 8:30–11:30 am**, followed by optional lunch at an eatery nearby. Questions? Contact **Ann Jensen**.

Taizé Services in 2020

First Church **Taizé services** will move to **once a month on Sunday evenings** beginning in January. Stay tuned for more details.

From top: Fun and community at the Advent Crafts Fair on a recent Sunday; free confetti after the church photo!; caroling party hosted by the Kukulans.

Weekly Calendar

Sunday December 22

SONGS OF THE SOUL REHEARSAL

8 am, Room 4, EBSB

MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TEAM

8:45–9:45 am, Room 5, EBSB

AFFORDABLE HOUSING MEETING

9 am, Room 7, EBSB

WORSHIP

10 am, Sanctuary

AFTER PARTY

11:15 am, Pillar Room

GOSPEL CHOIR REHEARSAL

11:45 am, Sanctuary

YES & WINTHROP YOUTH GROUPS

11:45 am, Tower Room

Tuesday 24, Christmas Eve

ALL-AGES FAMILY CELEBRATION

4 pm, Sanctuary

OUTDOOR CHRISTMAS IN THE CLOISTER

6 pm, Cloister

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

10 pm, Sanctuary

Wednesday 25, Christmas Day

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

Sunday 29

SONGS OF THE SOUL REHEARSAL

8 am, Room 4, EBSB

WORSHIP

10 am, Sanctuary

AFTER PARTY

11:15 am, Terrace

Tuesday 31, New Year's Eve

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

8 pm, Loper Chapel

Wednesday January 1,

New Year's Day

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

BIBLE STUDY

7 pm, Durant Room

Thursday 2

RACISTS ANONYMOUS

6:15 pm, Durant Room

