

The Newhall Press

First Presbyterian Church
24317 N. Newhall Avenue
Newhall, California 91321-2721

Return Service Requested

December 2014



Sunday Worship Services

Traditional Worship 9:00 a.m.
Contemporary Worship 10:45 a.m.



Deadline for the January Newsletter: December 18, 2014

Thank you for your articles and
input to the newsletter.

Special thanks to Ellie and Steve Fuller

Non Profit Organization
U.S. Postage PAID
Santa Clarita, CA
Permit No. 49

The Newhall Press

First Presbyterian Church of Newhall
24317 N. Newhall Avenue
Newhall, CA 91321-2721
(661) 259-0555; Fax: (661) 259-8054

E-mail: presby2@pacbell.net

Web Site: <http://www.presby-newhall.org>

Pastor: Bill Barnes (x102)
Pastoral Support: Phil Aijian (x106)
Dir. Christian Educ.: Sarah Bolin (x104)
Assoc. Children's Dir: Lelia Meadows
Assoc. Youth Dir: Ian Fletcher
Youth Worship Leader: Chris Clewett
Office Administrator: Sandy McIntosh (x101)
Music Conductor: Connie Woodson
2nd Service Worship Leader: Sam Besse
Treasurer: Dorothy Ng (x107)
Custodian: Nelson Orellana
Groundskeeper: Steve Fuller
Nursery Care Provider: Linda Weingarten
Little Shepherd's Nursery School
(661) 254-2312

THE NEWHALL PRESS



DECEMBER 2014



PASTOR'S COLUMN

Once again it is the Advent of our Savior's birth, the hoped for deliverance that the Patriarchs anticipated, and the Prophets foretold. I so enjoy the celebration of the beauty and wonder of the season of light and hope. Yet increasingly in that last few years, I've been getting more irritated with the fact that Christmas decorations, music, and ADVERTISEMENTS come out earlier and earlier, until we can't get through Halloween (let alone Thanksgiving) without hearing about Christmas. It used to be that Christmas didn't unfold to the world until AFTER Thanksgiving. It was a December holiday. (I realize this disposition has something to do with my aging process- but still I don't want to hear Christmas music in stores during October.)

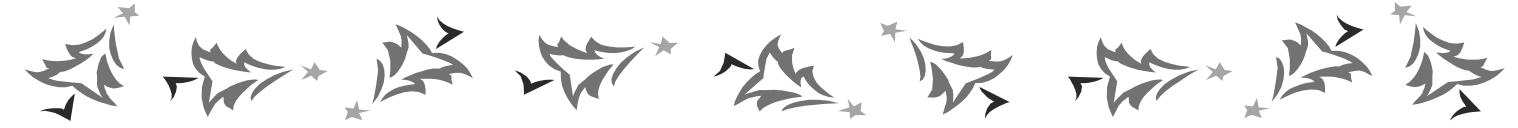
I worry that if we're not careful, all this prolonged anticipation, preparation, attention, and advertisement will wear us down until a numbing exhaustion will spoil the birth of Jesus. But then I remember how long the patriarchs anticipated and the prophets waited for His coming among us. Might it be that the season is NOT LONG ENOUGH? Maybe (although I do fear that sustaining the joy and celebration could wear us out) we should celebrate Christmas every week of the year. Then I realized that's what we do every first day of the week. We come to church to worship the Creator God who cared enough to become one of us and teach us how to live into what we were created to be. So be kind to our C & E visitors (that is our Christmas and Easter worshippers), but gently invite them to the weekly celebration of God's faithful love and concern for our well-being.

Galatians 4:4-7 (NRSV)

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

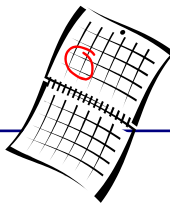
Merry Messiahmas,

Pastor Bill





The Church Life Committee promotes fellowship and fun activities for the church family by providing a variety of church, community, cultural and special events throughout the year.



BOOK BUDDIES

"Defending Jacob" by William Landay is the book for discussion when Book Buddies meet December 11th at 4:00 p.m.

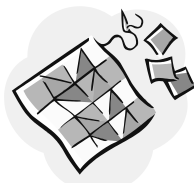
This is a novel of a family in crisis: a tale of quilt and betrayal.

The meeting and salad supper will be at Ellie Fuller's home, 25035 Greenmill, Newhall. RSVP Ellie 259i-4983.



HANDCRAFTERS

Every 2nd & 4th Tuesday of the month, at 10am, people are gathering in the Evans Room to share their skills, their interests, their accomplishments. We are the *handcrafters*, and everyone is welcome!



LADIES' NIGHT OUT

December 30th, 6:30 PM

Black Angus
27007 McBean Pkwy
Valencia, Ca 91355

Children's Ministry & Church Life Advent Celebration

Sunday, Dec. 7th



5:00 pm Tree-trimming; Decorating; Carol Singing; Children's Choir.

6:00 pm Ham dinner with fixings.
Cost: \$5.00 per person.*



*Seating will be limited, so please sign up on the patio.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS - OVER-80S

Janet Bingham Dec. 4
Jerre Crosier Dec. 10



Senior Holiday Feast

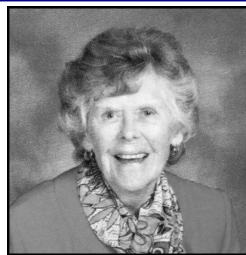
Tuesday, Dec. 16
11:30am
Fellowship Hall
\$6.00 per person

Please make reservations by signing up on the patio or calling the church office, 259-0555 x. 0

YOUR CALENDAR:

Dec. 7 & 14	Alternative Christmas
Dec. 7 5pm	Tree Decorating—Caroling
Dec. 7 6pm	Advent Dinner
Dec. 11 4pm	Book Buddies
Dec. 13 9am	PW Christmas Brunch
Dec. 14 4pm	Choir Concert
Dec. 16 11:30	Senior Lunch
Dec. 17 1:30	New Directions
Dec. 21 6pm	Youth Christmas Party
Dec. 24 5,7 &9	Three Christmas Eve Services

Carolyn Ritchie, our dear sister and Church Pillar, will be celebrating her birthday and Christmas in Heaven this month. In her honor and memory, we reprint her inspirational list, "What have I learned in these years?"



1. Put God first in your life.
2. People are more important than things.
3. The interruptions in our day are part of God's plan, so be open to listen to the needs of others.
4. Be good to yourself. You are important; you cannot help others if you are not whole yourself. Laugh a lot; spend time "Smelling the Roses."
5. God created us all equal, the poor and the unlovely; try to look at them as being as important to God as we think we are.
6. You cannot outgive God. He will supply our needs, not always our wants.
7. Find a place to serve others.
8. ALWAYS be thankful for what you have, even in hard times.
9. Establish homes where people can sense that God lives there daily.
10. Look for "surprises of joy," those "aha" moments, each day.

Please remember Carolyn's family in your prayers.

New Directions

(For all widows and widowers)

Wednesday, Dec. 17 at 1:30pm
at the home of Shirley Schneider

For more information, call the church office 259-0555 x. 0

Presbyterian Women, as forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, commit ourselves: To nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study, to support the mission of the Church worldwide, to work for justice and peace, and to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God's Kingdom.



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN CHRISTMAS BRUNCH

Saturday, December 13, 9:00 a.m., \$15
Marie Callender's Restaurant

All women are invited to attend the annual Presbyterian Women's Christmas Brunch. Our handbell choir, The **Ringtones**, will provide Christmas music and the 2015 Coordinating Team will be introduced. Tickets will be on sale between services on Sundays Nov. 30 and December 7.

PW CIRCLES—ALL WOMEN ARE WELCOME!

Elizabeth: Stephanie Linn (259-3914) – Meets first and third Tuesdays of the month at 10:30 a.m. in the Evans Room. Babysitting is provided.

Lois: Florence Craig (255-1389) – Meets second Thursday of the month at 10:00 a.m. in the Evans Room.

Lydia: Cathy Johnson (263-7193) & Wanda Lewis (296-2354) – Meets first Monday of the month at 9:00 a.m. in the Evans Room.

Mary Martha: Karen Sandoval (298-7977) – Meets second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in various homes.

Rachel: Tiffany Aune (478-2056) – Meets second Tuesday of the month at 6:15 p.m. in various homes and shares a salad dinner.

Why Get Excited About Christmas? Cont. from P. 10

people of Israel and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison, to release ... those who sit in darkness. (Isaiah 42:1-7)

Jesus inaugurating his ministry in the synagogue in Nazareth says he himself fulfills the Isaiah promise: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me ... to preach good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, sight for the blind, release for the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (quoting these very verses from Isaiah, Luke 4:14-19)

Anna: the prophetess who was a widow worshipping at the Temple day and night, coming up to Mary and Joseph when they brought the child for dedication, "gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem." (Luke 2:36-38)

Fulfillment: the Lord promised through Isaiah: "When the Lord returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people. The Lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God." (Isaiah 52: 8-10)

Do We Place Ourselves into the Advent Story of Jesus birth with the same excitement?

1. We can rejoice, as they did. God fulfills his promises. He is trustworthy. We can trust His plan and actions in history to right a wrongful world and a wayward human race.
2. We, too, can glorify God, who has come in Jesus to rescue the human race. Jesus is the Savior, the Redeemer, the Rescuer. Salvation comes through Jesus. God has come in Jesus to right the wrong of sin and evil, to restore creation and us.
3. We rejoice in the fulfillment of the promises. God's Kingdom of Heaven has invaded the kingdoms of earth through Jesus.
4. We rejoice with hope. We await with joy for the fulfillment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth – the consummation when the Lord's Kingdom will encompass the whole earth and all its peoples, when Jesus, who came once as the Suffering Servant, returns as the King, when every knee will bow to the King of kings and Lord of lords, the King on David's throne forever.

Now go as excited and joyful people. Read the verses cited above about the advent stories in Matthew and Luke. Read the prophecies. Share these readings around the family table during Advent, as you prepare yourselves and your families for Christmas and share with those you hold dear the real meaning of Advent.



The Adult Education Committee at First Presbyterian Church of Newhall encourages the congregation to mature in their knowledge and practice of their Christian faith as disciples of Jesus Christ both personally and in community with other believers.

WHY GET EXCITED ABOUT CHRISTMAS? BAH, HUMBUG!

From the Adult Education Committee, Written by Jack Irwin and Becca Cranert

LET'S LOOK AT THE VARIOUS CHARACTERS IN THE ADVENT STORIES IN MATTHEW AND LUKE. WOW, WERE THEY EXCITED ABOUT THE BIRTH OF THIS BABY. WHY? NOT JUST GLAD THAT MARY AND JOSEPH WERE EXPECTING, BUT GLAD FOR SOMETHING BIGGER. SOMETHING THAT THE JEWS HAD BEEN HOPING FOR AND LOOKING FORWARD TO FOR CENTURIES WAS FINALLY COMING.

Joseph: "I can't believe she is pregnant? ... I should put her away quietly."

Angel to Joseph: "...you will call the babe 'Jesus' for he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

Fulfilled what the Lord promised through Isaiah (745-681 BC): "he was pierced for our transgressions ... the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all ... by his wounds we are healed." (Isa. 53 - the prophecy of the "Suffering Servant" of God) This fulfills the Lord's promise to Eve: that her seed will strike the serpent's head, meaning the Promised One through Eve will deal the death blow to evil, sin and death itself. (see Genesis 3:14-16)

Angel to Mary: "... you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be the Son of the Most High. The Lord will give him the throne of David... and will reign forever ..." (Luke 1:31-33)

Mary: "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior ... He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers." (Luke 1: 46-55 Known as the "Magnificat")

Fulfilled: What the Lord promised through Nathan the prophet to King David (circa 1000 BC) "... the Lord will establish a house for you...I will establish the throne of your kingdom forever." (II Samuel 7:11-16) This is the promised King, the Messiah, echoed in Isaiah 9: "For to us a child is born... he will be Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace ... he will reign on David's throne with justice and righteousness ... forever." (Isaiah 9:1-7)

The Shepherds: they were terrified at the appearance of the angel and the glory of the Lord shining around them.

The angel: "I bring you good news. Today in the town of David a Savior is born to you; he is the Messiah [Christ is the English transliteration of the Greek Christos, which was the Greek word for the Hebrew word Messiah]; He is the Messiah the Lord."

Response: The heavenly host praising God, and the shepherds said, "Let us go!" (Luke 2:8-15)

Fulfillment: The Promised Messiah, as spoken by Jeremiah (626-580 BC), "Says the Lord, I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King, and in his days Judah will be saved and Israel live in safety. He will be called 'the Lord our Righteousness.'" (Jeremiah 23:5-6)

The Magi: Traveling from Persia, inquiring of King Herod and his court: "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him." (Matthew 2: 1-2)

Fulfillment: What the Lord promised through the Old Testament prophet Micah. The Jewish teachers answered the Magi: "In Bethlehem of Judea ... for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel," quoting the prophet Micah (750-686 BC).

Magi's response: upon finding the child with his mother Mary, the Magi bowed down and worshipped him, not just honored the babe. What is interesting about the Magi is that they were not Jews, but represent the entire non-Jewish world. Even as non-Jews, they were supremely excited about this momentous event. (Matt. 2:11)

Simeon: in Jerusalem, righteous and devout, waiting for the "consolation of Israel," and the Holy Spirit revealed to him that he would not die before seeing the Lord's Messiah (Christ).

His response to seeing the Child who Mary and Joseph had brought to dedicate Jesus at the Temple: "My eyes have seen the salvation from the Lord ... a light of revelation for the Gentiles and for the glory of your people Israel." (Luke 2: 25-32)

Fulfillment: The Lord promised through Isaiah: "Here is my servant ... I will make him to be the covenant [fulfillment of the promise] for the

Cont. on P. 11

CHILI AND DESSERT COOK-OFF REMEMBERED by Patrick Stokes

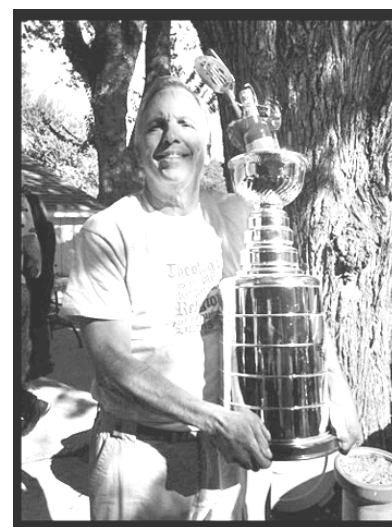
Sunday, November Second, was a beautiful fall morning in Newhall. At First Presbyterian Church, the Ten AM service had just let out and we all had a chance to learn more about what our church committees are doing and how they run, and hopefully to sign up as volunteers at our Annual Ministry Fair. All the while we enjoyed some snacks and sweets, provided by each of the committees and, participated in a contest to win some cool prizes. The Grand Prize: **Two Park Hopper tickets to Disneyland!**

As the Ministry Fair was winding down, commotion and excitement filled the air. Twelve hopefuls standing side by side with their entrees competed for the coveted titles of **2014 Best Traditional Chili, Hottest Chili and Best Non-Traditional Chili**. Also eight eager church members presented their desserts for the **Best Traditional and Best Non Traditional Dessert awards**. Some new competitors went up against some seasoned chili veteran's. They went toe to toe in this heated competition as we all awaited the results of the balloting.

About one hundred twenty-five guests sampled and enjoyed the twelve Chili's and eight Desserts, every one delicious, and unique. After the votes were in and the Chili Powder dust had settled, the results were announced.

Chili:	Susan Fletcher John Favalessa Roland Wrinkle	Traditional chili Non-Traditional Chili (Korean BBQ) Hottest B.A.R.F. Chili
Desserts:	Gail Stewart Jamie Kaiser & Stacy Williams	M&M Chocolate Chip Cookies Cheesecake Sopaipilla.

It was a beautiful and fun filled afternoon. Church Life would like to congratulate all our winners and extend a thank you to all the wonderful contestants who made this such a fun event. See you next year.



The Deacons of First Presbyterian Church of Newhall, following the example of Jesus Christ, are committed to provide supportive services and care to the community of faith.

The 2014 ornament in our church's mission statement series will be available for purchase in the kiosk beginning November 30.

Profits help fund the Deacons' activities, which include Sunday coffee service, over 80's birthdays, member support, community support, and Stephen Ministries.

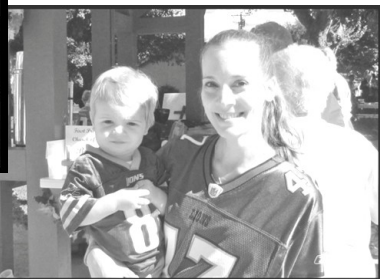


Last Year's Ornament

MINISTRY FAIR HIGHLIGHTS

A great BIG thank you to all the committees who donated prizes for the Ministry Fair and a huge thank you to all who participated in the Fair and visited each committee!! We had over 25 prizes donated and over 60 people who completed their time clock by visiting each committee and their table to learn what each committee does to make our church such a special place. It was a fun day of fellowship, learning, and enjoying the Fall Festival and the Chili Cook off. The theme for the day was "A TIME TO...." Reminding us that these events happened on "Fall Back" time-change day. Each committee was challenged to have a different type of clock on their table. I personally give the best clock display to the Building and Grounds committee. The hands of the clock were tools. Stick-it notes of all the things this committee does were placed where the numbers of a clock go. Very creative and informative! Thank you to Sarah for coordinating the Fall Festival and thanks to Church Life Committee, especially Candy Belcher and Sharie Telles for coordinating the Chili Cook-off and Dessert contest. If you have not received your prize yet, see Gail Stewart. Below are the winners of all the prizes:

- Homemade Favalessa Blanket- Chi Kanagi
- Youth Mission Dinner certificate- Amy Murrietta
- Griffith Park Observatory certificate- Sonja Tweedie
- PW Brunch certificate- Lois Beydler
- Advent Dinner certificate- Emily and Brice Morrow
- Starbucks Gift card- Don Hauenstein and Terri DeYoung
- NIV Large Print Bible- Jim and Mary Parodi
- Sizzler Gift card- Scott Bullock
- Jewelry- Harry and Nancy Davis
- Scarf and pendants- Lynn Parkinson
- Wishbone Necklace- Pam Jenner
- Tape measurers- George Watts and Juli Beiter
- Black notebook- Dava Millar
- 2015 calendars with pens- Colleen Knox, Robert Durham, and May Kawamura
- Cookie mix and football- Nancy Brown Davis
- Rainbow plant décor by Little Shepherds Nursery- Ann Barrett
- Plant display from Children's committee- Ilse Bracerros
- Amor t-shirts- Jeff Wheeler and Nicole McCreery
- Adult Education Pictorial Bible- Beverly Stokes
- Family Promise hat and mug- Carol Ramnarine
- Two Disneyland Park Hopper tickets- Florence Craig



KIDS, KIDS, KIDS

The Children's Ministry Committee at First Presbyterian Church will invite children to EMBRACE the Word of God through worship, games, songs, and other activities; ENCOURAGE their spiritual growth to become closer to our Lord, Jesus Christ; and EQUIP them to go out into the world and share God's love.

ADVENT

Hey families, the season of Advent is ALMOST HERE! This is season the church is having a fun-filled caroling service on Sunday December 7th at 5pm. Kids will be singing, families will decorate our church trees with their ornaments and a yummy dinner will follow! Our children's choir will be performing at the service and it's going to be fun for the whole family.



If your child would like to participate in the Advent choir or the Christmas Eve Choir there is still time to join! We are practicing in between services on Sundays with a few additional rehearsals before the performances. Ms. Sarah has practice CDs that your family can use at home. Rehearsals in between services start Sunday November 23rd. There will be a Saturday practice on December 6th at 3:4:30 for the Advent songs, and practices will be held for the Christmas Eve Service on December 20th, and on December 23rd. Times for the December 20th and December 23rd rehearsals are to be determined. The children's choir is a great time for kids to sing, dance, and get a bag full of goodies! Let Ms. Sarah know asap if your child will be able to participate.

WINTER CAMP

Imagine...snowballs, late night games, hot cocoa, sled runs, and crazy counselors-that's right, it's winter camp! Winter camp is for 3rd graders through 6th graders who love to have a good time. It's going to be January 23-25th and the cost is \$185.00 per participant. If your child is interested in having fun in a cabin with other kids and staying up late and learning all about Jesus, then talk to Ms. Sarah asap so she can add your child to the list. Please turn in a \$50.00 deposit to hold a spot. Forest Home is a wonderful place for kids to experience community and a time to hear God's word. Scholarships are available based on need but we will need for your family to fill out a scholarship application before the payment deadline of January 15th. You can also check out the www.foresthome.org website to see pics and learn more about camp. I hope that your kids will be able to be a part of this amazing experience.

The purpose of The Mission Committee, in order to further share the gospel of Jesus Christ, is to responsibly use the resources of First Presbyterian Church of Newhall, wherever we find a neighbor in need. We are committed to meeting mission needs in our local community, across the nation, and globally, by sending money, food, clothing, volunteers, or whatever else is needed.



The Giving Tree will be in the Narthex from Sunday, December 1st through Sunday, December 14th. The Santa Clarita Sheriff's office is hosting this Community wide holiday toy drive. Choose a card from the tree for a child or teen. Bring a new unwrapped gift with the attached card and place it under the tree. Gift card donations can be placed in the designated box on the table in the narthex.

Your donations of toys and gift cards will be distributed throughout the community in an effort to reach as many families as possible, and provide local families in need with gifts for their children. Participating agencies in the SCV include; the Santa Clarita Food Pantry, Single Mother's Outreach, Domestic Violence Shelter, and the SCV Community Center.

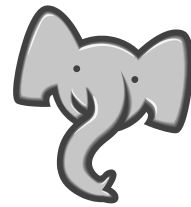
All donations must be received at the Church no later than **Sunday, December 14th**.





The Youth Committee nurtures the Junior High and Senior High-aged youth as well as the college-aged young adults of First Presbyterian Church of Newhall, and the community; by providing a Christ-centered program of worship, education, fellowship, and service in order to equip them with a framework in which they can realize their spiritual gifts and live a Christian life.

CHRISTMAS PARTY



“Grandma got run over by a reindeer,” “Falalalalala,” or however your favorite Christmas carol or song goes, be sure to be at the youth group Christmas party! We are going to wear our ugliest sweaters, and PARTY! On December 21st from 6-8 we will play games, eat some good food and have an elephant gift exchange. (So bring an elephant, or a fun gag gift to exchange with everyone). This is ALWAYS a fun time, so bring friends. The place is still being worked out, so stay tuned for the location. There will be a ton of fun and you won’t want to miss it! December 21st 6-8 - be there!

WINTER CAMP

Winter camp time is approaching fast, and we are taking sign-ups for spots now. Junior High and High school camp are amazing times for youth to connect to their peers, their leaders and to the Lord. There is time for worship, games, and snow. If your teen is in 7th -12th grade then they WILL have fun. The Junior High camp is January 9th - 11th and is a total of \$200.00 per participant. High School camp is February 20th -22nd and the cost is \$240.00 per participant. If your child is interested in going, please talk to Sarah or Ian about spots. Your family will need to pay a \$50.00 non-refundable deposit no later than 10 days before the departure date and final payment will be due on the departure date. Payment plans and scholarships are available based on need, but your family will need to fill out a scholarship application by the deposit due date. Winter camp is an amazing time and your child will really benefit by their participation. If you have any other questions or concerns about camp talk to Sarah or Ian who both have been to Winter Camp a number of times. You can also check out the www.foresthomes.org website to see pics and learn more about camp. Hope that your kid can make it!



The purpose of The Mission Committee, in order to further share the gospel of Jesus Christ, is to responsibly use the resources of First Presbyterian Church of Newhall, wherever we find a neighbor in need. We are committed to meeting mission needs in our local community, across the nation, and globally, by sending money, food, clothing, volunteers, or whatever else is needed.

This year sure has been a busy year for the **Mission Committee**. We started by hearing from **Pastor Ramazon** representing the Antalya Evangelical Church in Turkey; we were able to listen to the beautiful sounds of **Afrizo**; and we almost finished our year with receiving testimony from a few of our own **Dale and Gloria Boss** and a representative from the **SCV Senior Center**. I write “almost” because we have our last event in December, our annual **Alternative Christmas on December 7th and 14th**. This is a time to give to many organizations helping others in the name of Christ. From assisting the homeless population, to getting water to those who go without, and preaching the good news in a volatile environment, we are aiming to get as many organizations as possible the opportunity to be funded and supported through your contributions.

The organizations we will be assisting this year are: **Pastor Ramazon in building Antalya Evangelical Church, Bread for the World, Living Waters, Samuel Dixon Health Center, SCV Senior Center, Help the Children, Santa Clarita Shelter, Habitat for Heroes, Family Promise, Little Shepherd’s Nursery School, SCV Food Pantry, AMOR Ministries, and Free Wheelchair Mission**. You can read about these organizations in the booklets available on the Narthex table. We have been touched by so many organizations and individuals, advocating what we hear every Sunday, specifically what Jesus taught his disciples in Mark 16:15 (NIV) *He (Jesus) said to them (Disciples), “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”*

Also, we can’t forget our two **Amor** trips that we do every year. The partnership between our church and the Amor organization spans over a decade and we look forward to having another decade of not only helping the citizens in Mexico, but also helping us. We couldn’t do this without all of the hard work that everyone puts in to make a stable home for a family in Mexico. One thought that resonates through our many activities, as best stated by Saint Francis of Assisi, “Preach the gospel, and if necessary, use words.”

Bean Counter’s Corner



by Dorothy Ng

I still remember the words my father said to me on the night I graduated from high school: “Just because you’ve graduated doesn’t mean you stop learning.” Indeed, even though I remember little from my formal education, the things I have learned from the school of life have stuck with me. Yes, in the school of life, the curriculum is broad, the subjects are many, and the courses infinite, and you never really graduate. But there is one central lesson – “Trust Me,” says the Lord. God is calling us to trust Him. It is the secret of a successful Christian Life.

In life’s school there are many examinations, tests, and pop quizzes and the successful will always be the ones who learn the lesson of trust. You need to trust God, especially, in the matter of money. People spend much of their lives worrying about money. Experts say our worry over finances has less to do with how much we make and more to do with how we spend it. Most Americans don’t even have a budget. It’s hard to be responsible with your money without one. Many people never learn the secret of trusting God for finances, but spend much of their lives worrying about them. It’s time to change that.

As with all of God’s promises, there are conditions attached to them. The condition in the area of finances is one that many people like to ignore. We are to give and on that basis we can claim His promises of abundant blessings. God wants us to be like Him which means we have to learn to give. First and foremost, we must give back to God in our tithes and offerings. Tithe is 1/10 of what we make – 1/10 of our increase. Tithe doesn’t mean simply “giving back to God” nor does it mean “some portion” of income. Tithe means one thing and one thing only – 1/10!

God made everything. He owns it all! He gives it to us as stewardship. Yet He declares the tithe belongs to Him. It’s not negotiable. It is His and we are not to keep it. If we do, dire consequences follow.

Many people are impeding the work of Christ as well as bringing misery upon themselves because they are not obeying God. In Freedom From Financial Fear, author D. James Kennedy, Ph.D., states, “Through disobedience, we are demonstrating an absence of faith in God’s promise; we are showing ingratitude to God, who has given us everything to enjoy. We are showing a lack of love toward Him in whom we live and move and have our being.”

In Malachi, God says, “Try Me.” Try God and strengthen your faith. Tithing is not a matter of finance. Some people say they don’t make enough money to tithe. But God says that if we do tithe, He will bless us such that there won’t be enough room to receive it. Who can afford not to tithe with that kind of promise?

Let’s just do a little math problem. The federal poverty level for 2014 is \$23,850 for a family of 4 and ten percent of that amount is \$2,385. At the end of 2013, our church had a total membership of 359. If every member of our church earned the poverty level and pledged ten percent a year, the church would receive \$856,215 in income! Now I know that some of our members are high school and college students who perhaps haven’t started tithing yet and there are members who are out of the area (Neither one of these is really a good excuse not to tithe; are we taught that all members should tithe?). So let’s just say that if two thirds of our membership tithed that would be about 240 people. Multiply that by \$2,385 and the number is still \$572,400! That amount doesn’t include the loose change in the offering plate or people who don’t turn in a pledge card but give a regular offering or the parking lot rentals. That amount would just be our members trusting God enough to say “Here is my ten percent, Lord. Do with it what you will.”

You see, tithing is not a matter of finance. It is a matter of faith – of simply taking God at His word. Do you believe He keeps His word?

There are many surprises in store for those of you who have never tithed or who are just beginning to tithe. They are 1) the amount of money left for the Lord’s work; 2) the way your spiritual life and faith are deepened; 3) the ease at meeting your own obligations with the remaining 9/10 which always seems to go farther than the whole 10; 4) the ease you will experience in going from 1/10 to a larger percent of income; 5) the preparation this gives to be a faithful and wise steward over your remaining money; and 6) wondering why you waited so long to adopt true tithing in the first place.

It all comes down to this: obey God’s command – His ordinance. Bring your tithes and offerings and trust Him in His work. He will provide for all your needs out of His riches in glory. Learn life’s one great lesson – trust Him and He will bless you! There is no exhausting His resources!



The Worship Committee will strive with God's guidance and grace, to create Christ-centered worship experiences, inspiring God's people as they respond to the word proclaimed in prayer, song, scripture, sacrament and message.

Worship

SEASONS OF THE CHURCH — ADVENT by Sonja Tweedie

God has provided a rhythm of seasons which orders life and influences the church's worship. God's work of redemption in Jesus Christ offers the Church a central pattern for ordering worship in relationship to significant occasions in the life of Jesus and of the people of God. The Church thus has come to observe the following days and seasons:

Advent, a season to recollect the hope of the coming of Christ, and to look forward to the Lord's coming again.

Christmas, a celebration of the birth of Christ.

Epiphany, a day for commemorating God's self-manifestation to all people.

Lent, a season of spiritual discipline and preparation beginning with Ash Wednesday, anticipating the celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ.

Holy Week, a time of remembrance and proclamation of the atoning suffering and death of Jesus Christ.

Easter, a day of the Lord's resurrection and the season of rejoicing which commemorates his ministry until his Ascension.

The Day of Pentecost, the celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit to the church.

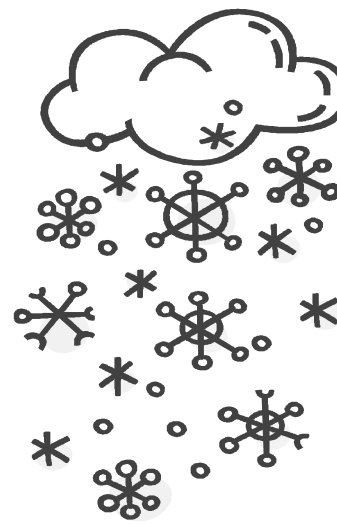
Each of these are commemorated with special colors of vestments, stoles and banners. The times between the seasons are called Ordinary Time. During this period, the choir wears green stoles and the large green banner is hung.

We are currently in the season of Advent. The usual liturgical color for Advent is purple; the vestments of pastors, stoles of choir members and wall hangings generally reflect either purple or blue, the color of hope.

At Newhall First Pres, one of our traditions each Sunday of Advent is the Candle Lighting ceremony where families, couples or friends light a new candle each week signifying Hope, Faith, Love and Peace as they read scripture and share a personal story on these topics. We also light the Christ's candle on Christmas Eve. We decorate the church with lighted trees and colorful wreaths. We have special music programs and sing carols of Christ's coming.

Advent is the beginning of the Church year and always begins the fourth Sunday before Christmas. The entire season is a celebration of the truth about God, the revelation of God in Christ whereby all of creation may be reconciled to God.

We culminate Advent with the amazing joy of Christmas Eve where we celebrate with a family oriented/children's service at 5 p.m. and two identical, glorious, combined traditional/contemporary services at 7 and 9 p.m. Come, let us celebrate together!



"A WINTER'S TALE"

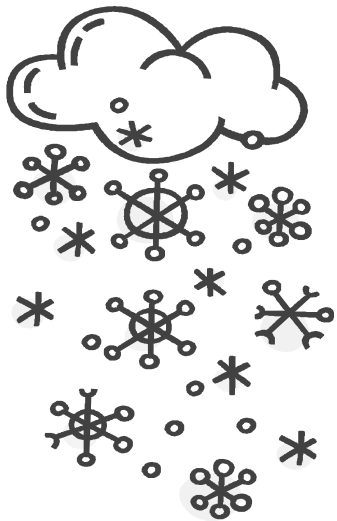
Christmas Concert

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH – NEWHALL

24317 N. Newhall Avenue, Newhall, CA 91321

DECEMBER 14, 2014

4:00 P.M. IN SANCTUARY



The First Presbyterian Newhall Chancel Choir in collaboration with the Ojai Community Chorus and our ensemble of musicians invite you to share in "A Winter's Tale" of Christmas experiences and a celebration of the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

First we honor **Mother Mary** with the beautiful "Breath of Heaven" and comfort the awed shepherds with the proclamation, "Angels Watching over Me." Then join us in welcoming the **Season**, the **Old Man**, the **Children's Joy**, and a **Tale of Peace** as they inspire us with "A Winter's Tale".

We will ring in the **Season** with images of snow and Christmas presents for young and old with "The Holiday Season" and "Snow, Snow, Beautiful Snow", even though most Southern Californians rarely glimpse these icy crystals.

The **Old Man** will take us on a "Sleigh Ride" pulled by horses wearing their tinkling bells. And, memories of being "Home for Christmas" will warm our hearts.

Let the **Children's Joy** bring a smile to your face with "Sparkle, Jolly, Twinkle, Jingley" and the affirmation that "There Is a Santa Claus".

And wrapped in Christmas garlands and warm wishes is a **Tale of Peace** securing "The World for Christmas" and "A Place in the Choir" for all of God's creatures.

Please join us in celebration this Christmas season. Seats are first come – first served and admission is free. A love offering in support of our choir and musicians will be appreciated.

Warmest Regards, Connie Woodson, Musical Director

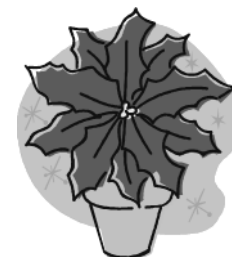
Alternative Christmas Gift Markets

will be available on Dec. 7 & Dec. 14

For details about this year's giving opportunities, please see the Mission Committee article on page 8.



POINSETTIAS



Poinsettias will go on sale beginning Sunday, November 30, and will be used to decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas Eve services. Price = \$8.50. Purchased plants will be available to take home after Christmas Eve services.