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# DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

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## PACIFIC BEACH PRESBYTERIAN

2022



### DEAR PB PRES FAMILY~

Lord willing, you each had a wonderful, joyful, filling Thanksgiving. I trust the post-turkey comas and pie-induced sugar highs have worn off by now, and you are ready for Advent.

I imagine many of us are busy thinking about presents this time of year. I am also learning a lot about presence these days; and I thought I'd share the wisdom of a few sages, with the hope that it might make this Advent more memorable and meaningful for you.

In his letters to his father in 1930, missionary Frank Laubach wrote about what he called "boundless joy broken loose." He declared, "The most wonderful discovery that has ever come to me is that I do not have to wait until some future time for the glorious hour. I need not sing, 'Oh that will be glory for me---' and wait for any grave. This hour can be heaven. Any hour for any body can be as rich as God!"

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Henri Nouwen, the wise Catholic priest and theologian, took Laubach's idea and infused it with specifics for Advent. "I keep expecting loud and impressive events to convince me and others of God's saving power... Our temptation is to be distracted by them...When I have no eyes for the small signs of God's presence – the smile of a baby, the carefree play of children, the words of encouragement and gestures of love offered by friends – I will always remain tempted to despair. The small child of Bethlehem, the unknown man of Nazareth, the rejected preacher, the naked man on the cross, he asks for my full attention. The work of our salvation takes place in the midst of a world that continues to shout, scream, and overwhelm us with its claims and promises."

Wisdom traditions in our world consistently point to the practice of mindfulness – present moment awareness – as a way of connecting with God and with the realities of the presence of God-With-Us. I hope that, amidst the busy-ness of Advent and the holiday season, you will be proactive to be mindful of God's presence in this hour, in the small signs and big signs, in the quiet or the chaos, in presents given and presents received, and in both the promises God has fulfilled as well as those yet to come.

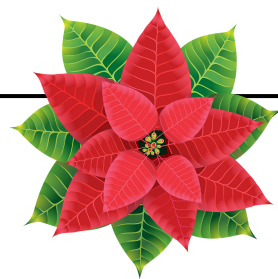
May the hope, joy, peace, and love of Emmanuel be with you this Advent.

~ Pastor Bill



All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:  
"Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

Matthew 1:22-23



**Esther Jordan**  
**Director of Worship Arts**

The Season of Advent is here, and the musicians at Pacific Beach Presbyterian Church are working on inspiring music to help prepare everyone for the joy of the season and for worship!

November 27 – First Sunday of Advent with guest harpist Heidi Fleischbein providing exquisite music to usher in the season of preparation.

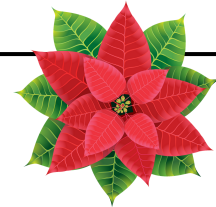
December 14 – Communion and Second Sunday of Advent with Anne Bay providing beautiful organ music in addition to Sounds of Worship.

Sunday, December 11 – Third Sunday of Advent – “Lessons and Carols” Service led by the Choir, Sounds of Worship, Chamber Orchestra, Organ, Piano and Congregation, with scripture narration by Geof Hollenbeck and Joy Phillips. Come early to hear skilled violinist and cellist setting the tone with a prelude of gorgeous Christmas Carols before the service begins.

Sunday, December 18 – Fourth Sunday in Advent. Crusader Bells will delight us with a mini-concert of beautiful and worshipful Christmas carols before the service begins. They will be joined by Phil Dannels on piano and Chelsea Johnson, soprano. Come to church a half hour early (9:30 a.m.) and be blessed!

Saturday, December 24 – Christmas Eve Service at 6:30 p.m. with carols and candlelight for the entire family! We will end with the singing of “Silent Night” on the patio with candles.

Sunday, December 25 – A simple Christmas Day Service at 10 a.m.



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**Grant Kay**  
**Director of Christian Education**

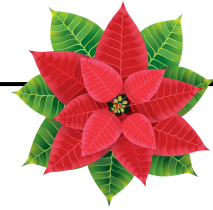
Sometimes, God moves most powerfully when things don't go according to plan. And sometimes you will encounter God's grace and mercy most powerfully when you least expect it. And at our Roots service a few weeks ago, I was reminded of both of these things when our service went horribly off-script before it even began.

In order to understand what happened that night, I first need to introduce you to two women who have been attending Roots for the past month or so (I will avoid using their names so as not to invade their privacy). These two women have been through a lot in their lives, based on the stories they have been telling us. They are clearly in a difficult situation financially and in their living situation, where they are routinely persecuted for their faith and who they are. Both of them clearly struggle with mental health, and it's no wonder given all they've gone through. One expresses this through near constant speech, words flowing out and often jumping from subject to subject with fairly thin connecting lines. The other is much more anxious, often quiet, but clearly feels emotions intensely. These women are also both gender non-conforming, which only adds to their sense of persecution and alienation in many places.

Now on the night in question, both of these women arrived pretty early to Roots, while Roa, Tony and I were still setting up the courtyard. They hung around and made small talk for a while, and eventually Neil came by and he and I started chatting about various things. At this point, however, one of the women, the quieter one, anxiously got up from her seat, grabbed all her things, and made a somewhat dramatic exit. Her friend followed after her, and soon returned to ask Tony if he would talk to her friend.

Tony, to his great credit, went and engaged in conversation with these two women, and Roa soon went over as well. I finished the setup for the night and stayed by the patio, not wanting to leave expensive instruments and equipment unwatched, yet wanting to join my coworkers and help pastor these women. At this point it was almost 7pm, and other people started showing up for Roots. Without Roa, we didn't have a worship leader present to start the music for the night, and so I simply talked with those present and kept an eye on my phone, hoping to hear from Tony and Roa that things were going ok.



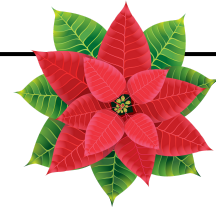


At about 7:10, wanting to be mindful of the time given up by all those present, I went over to see what was going on, and found Roa and Tony over on the bus bench listening to these two women pour out their pain about their living situation. At that point, I felt a nudge from God inviting us to ditch the “plan” for Roots that night, and instead act to welcome and comfort these two women. I invited them back to the service so that we could all hear about what was happening, and lift them in prayer.

And so that’s what we did. Rather than a sermon, rather than a bunch of worship songs, we spent the next 20 minutes letting these women share the hurts and anxieties of their existence. And then we prayed for them, all of us together, letting them feel the love and welcome of the church community. After this time of prayer, we sang a couple of songs together at their request, and then spent the rest of our time praying for everyone else at the service.

It was far from an ordinary night, and I’m sure it was not what anyone there expected it to be. Yet I was moved beyond words by the grace and love shown by our community. No one complained about the change – they embraced the time of prayer and the needs of these women. I’m certain that politically and theologically, not everyone in that circle was of the same mind about these two women and how to behave towards them, yet everyone embraced them lovingly in prayer regardless of their personal opinions. I was blown away by the maturity and love demonstrated by Tony and Roa, taking as much time as needed to sit with these women and offer a listening ear. And I was astounded at the compassion of these two women, who took the time to pray for everyone else and not just for themselves, despite their severe needs.

What greater picture of the Kingdom of God could I ask for? That a small group of people, different from one another in age, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, political affiliation, income and lifestyle could all come together as one in prayer and worship to the God of the universe – that is the power of the gospel at work, in which Jesus invited all people to come lay their burdens at his feet. We are far from perfect as a church community, but moments like this are a reminder of the best that church has to offer – a beacon from the future when every knee shall bow and tongue confess that Jesus is lord; when people from every tribe and nation will sing praises to God together; when there will no longer be slave nor free, male nor female, Greek or Jew, only Jesus Christ all in all.

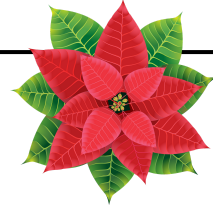


**Stacey Kay**  
Community Connections Administrator  
Kingdom Kids

As I write this just a day before Thanksgiving, Grant, Tony and I want to give thanks to the awesome Kingdom Kids volunteers, including those who make our yummy dinners each week. We are also grateful for the help we received from the congregation in making our Family Night a success. We will be putting together 15 Christmas Dinner packages to deliver to CCSA. The families will also be making, and going home with, their own Nativity scene and prayer prompts to help them engage in Advent at home.

December is a short month for Kingdom Kids – only two meetings before Christmas break, but on December 14 we are excited to introduce the new kids to our tradition of playing in the snow, surprise them with full stockings and, new this year, invite the families to come and watch an impromptu Christmas pageant put on by the kids at the end of the night.

Join us in praying that, through the fun and the chaos and the connections, the children and their families will see and know the love of Jesus and the reason we celebrate Christmas.



**Tony Daskalakis**  
Director of Youth  
Ministries

Hello everyone!

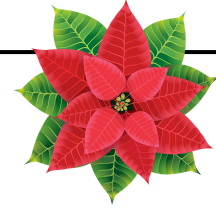
It is with a heavy heart that I announce I am formally resigning from my position on the staff team; December will be my last month as your director of youth ministry. Due to changing life circumstances, I find myself unable to carry on, but I want to share just how grateful I am for the past two and a half years.

From our outstanding youth, to their amazing families, I've been nothing short of blessed in my time here! I will certainly miss all of the fun times, and awe inspiring ways I've been able to serve Gods kingdom as a staff member. I also look forward to seeing how youth ministry evolves and adapts, as it always done when a new leader steps into place. It is my hope to carry on as a volunteer after a brief time away and continue serving our youth, just in a new way.

To be absolutely clear, PBPC is my home church, and I have no intentions of going anywhere – I am simply planning to hand off my professional responsibilities. It is my hope to worship, pray, and seek God with y'all for the remainder of my time on staff, and thereafter also!

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns don't hesitate to reach out!

Prayerfully,  
Tony Daskalakis



**Steve Ritz**  
Outreach & Missions

AS WE COME TO THE END OF 2022, WE HAVE MUCH  
TO BE BLESSED FOR, SO LET'S SHARE IT!

### **Christmas Letter**

This year's Christmas Letter proceeds will be going to World Vision, through which we sponsor a child named Emmanuel, who lives in Koro Bobi, Uganda. We will have a Christmas card to sign and start collecting donation December 4th.

### **Christmas Joy Offering**

Through your donations we also support the PCUSA Christmas Joy Offering, which this year takes place Sunday December 18th.

### **Life Packs**

We also started collecting supplies for our Life Packs. Items we need:

- Emergency Blankets (Mylar Thermal Blankets). These are hard to find in stores, but I was able to purchase some (12 pack) on Amazon with a quick delivery.
- Tylenol or Advil sleeve caplets (found at target, CVS, Rite Aids, in their travel supply section). They come in small round case and hold about ten caplets
- Toothpaste (travel size)
- Toothbrush
- Dental Floss
- Sunscreen (travel size)
- Snacks like granola bars or small cookies

Once collected enough supplies we will hold a stuffing party on the patio directly following church.

Watch out for upcoming events, like:

Hospitality for Hero's Date Night – where we will watch kids of our military families while parents go out for the evening.

Can't wait to see what next year holds in store for PB Pres.





## **"Jesus Messiah"**

## **SERMON SERIES**

November 27: "Jesus Messiah: The King" Isaiah 9:1-7

December 4: "Jesus Messiah: The Prophet"  
Acts 3:17-23. The Lord's Supper

December 11: "Lessons and Carols" Various texts

December 18: "Jesus Messiah: The Priest"  
Hebrews 5:1-6 Christmas Joy Offering

December 24: Christmas Eve at 6:30 PM  
"Jesus Messiah: The Christ" Matthew 1:1-17

December 25: Christmas Day at 10:00 AM  
"Jesus Messiah: The Lord" Luke 2:15-20

## **Birthdays**

### **Dec 9**

Luke Cowell  
Meri Murch

### **Dec 21**

Irene Forbes

### **Dec 23**

Rosemary  
Rogers

### **Dec 25**

Holly Hagan

### **Dec 28**

Kris Linberg

### **Dec 29**

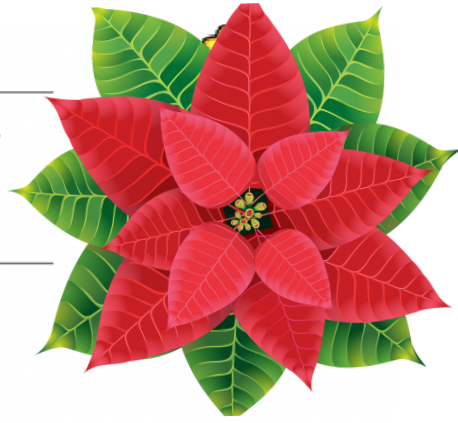
Roa Pselio

## **WINTER SEASON DISCIPLESHIP OPPORTUNITIES – "BELIEVE"**

PBPC, we think 2023 is going to be a great year for growing in faith as we grow closer to one another. From January through July, we're going to THINK, ACT, and BE more like Jesus as we go through a series together called "Believe." Your Discipleship Ministries Staff would like to support you in forming small groups to enjoy shared activities, Bible studies, or meal gatherings.

If you have an interest in helping organize or lead a small group of that sort, we'll provide study material or discussion questions to help your group deepen your walk with Jesus as you deepen your friendships within our community. For more information about starting, organizing, or leading a group, contact Grant Kay at [Grant@pbpres.org](mailto:Grant@pbpres.org). We hope to kick off the first round of groups on January 1!

# Christmas Word Search



S N O R T H P O L E W M I Y V R Q I W E  
A P N C N U T C R A C K E R S N X O K U  
N L F A Z S H G H F Z S H N T G Q U J A  
T W T R X M M I D E L V E S O G C Q V U  
A R L O W Q R F E Q N Q U S C X L Y N P  
C I A L Y X U T H C W Y Y Z K C I G B V  
L U R S E C G S T R E E C P I A G R E D  
A G I N G E R B R E A D A A N N H E L E  
U I C E L E B R A T E Q R M G D T E L C  
S D E C E M B E R N R N D L S Y S T S O  
Z S M C V P Q S H C F A S T V C D I R R  
F N P H M U I A N Z C A F F E A N N E A  
G O N I G O R U B O Q D M W R N X G I T  
B W K M L E N J Y U W M I I I E T S N E  
J C Q N P C H R I S T M A S L N Y J D F  
A D V E N T C A L E N D A R D Y T W E H  
S X W Y H O L I D A Y P W N L Q N E E U  
V F O R N A M E N T S C O O K I E S R V

HOLIDAY  
GINGERBREAD  
BELLS  
COOKIES  
STOCKINGS  
ELVES  
GREETINGS

CAROLS  
CANDY CANE  
NORTH POLE  
CELEBRATE  
ADVENT CALENDAR  
CARDS  
LIGHTS

DECEMBER  
WINTER  
SNOW  
SNOWMAN  
DECORATE  
CHIMNEY  
TREE

REINDEER  
SANTA CLAUS  
FAMILY  
NUTCRACKER  
ORNAMENTS  
CHRISTMAS  
GIFTS