



## Tributaries

Do you remember those signboard cartoons often found in the NY Times? - A man is walking down a busy street, with a signboard announcing that the end of the world is coming soon: "The end is near."

I remember seeing another cartoon whose signboard had a message that is a better fit for the season of Advent that we travel in the weeks leading up to Christmas. That sign said, "The world is not going to come to an end, you are just going to have to cope."

Diana Butler-Bass is a sociologist, historian, and inspiring theologian. She sees signs of hope for churches such as ours all around the country that commit themselves to deepening the spiritual practices of compassion, hospitality, and social justice as the primary function of the church.

I mention her at this moment because I heard her give a lecture on a verse from the Gospel of Luke, often read during the season of Advent, which fits well with the second signboard.

"But be mindful, praying for strength, that you may escape the fears that roil the earth, and may stand with God." (Luke 21:36)

Here are my notes from her lecture on this passage:

1. Be mindful (paying attention to what is really going on around one's self, a congregation, and society; being discerning; listening);
2. Pray for the real situation, for wisdom, for courage, for risk, the Spirit's involvement in one's actions; and

3. Stand firm by having confidence in God, your own discernment, convictions, and passions. Not to be shaken by resistance or people who make money from fear.

The signboard I referred to earlier said the world is not going to come to an end; you are just going to have to cope. The message of Advent is that we can do more than cope, we can hope.

Diana Butler-Bass has given us a spiritual practice for Advent so that we may prepare deeply for the coming of Christ into our lives.

Be mindful, pay attention to what is really going on, just notice it;

Pray, for what you see, and for what God sees;

Stand in hope, stand in trust of God's presence in life.

Hope is a powerful force that is not based upon our best wishes or intentions. It based upon a mindful, prayerful, confident standing with our Creator/Creating.



# COMMITTEE NEWS

## FROM OUR MODERATOR

*A reflection on church leadership from the Moderator*

On December 13 the congregation will be asked to vote on the proposed budget for 2016 and the slate of officers, council members at large, and committee members. This is an important time when we look forward to the coming year and affirm our new leadership. We are a small congregation but mighty when it comes to volunteering and sharing the work that needs to get done. UCC Sonoma is blessed with a wealth of talent and folks ready and willing to help. Our spirit of cooperation is fantastic, but as I write this there is one vacancy that goes unfilled. Quite simply, we need a new Treasurer. Candi Horton will be stepping down at the end of December and the crucial role of church Treasurer is in need of a volunteer (or two). We are exploring the possibility of job sharing so that, if necessary, two people could share the duties on a weekly and monthly basis - reducing the weekly time commitment from about 5-6 hours per week to 2.5-3 hours. Candi has provided a detailed Annual Treasurer Calendar that lists all the tasks that need to be done, and she has graciously offered to train the new treasurer (or co-treasurers).

We are all called to serve. I'm hoping one or two of you feel called to serve in this particular way. It will make a world of difference to our congregation and a gift of your time and talent that will be deeply appreciated. If you are interested please contact me, Patricia Serota or Candi Horton. We'd be happy to answer your questions and provide whatever guidance you might need to reach a decision.

I'm reminded of the words carved in a wooden sign over the entrance to Vesper Point at UCC Camp Cazadero, a place near and dear to my heart for over 50 years: "Enter to Worship, Depart to Serve."

May it be so here on the Camino de Sonoma.

In peace, Margie



## TREASURER REPORT

Through the end of October the church's income is over budget and expenses are also over budget.

Income actual	\$ 202,261
Income budgeted	<u>\$ 197,860</u>
Income over budget	\$ 4,401

Expenses actual	\$ 193,939
Expenses budgeted	<u>\$ 192,353</u>
Expenses over budget	\$ 1,586

The special collection for the fire victims came to \$397. This was matched from the Pastor's Discretionary Fund so a check has been sent for \$800. Great thanks to all who participated.

Financial statements are on file in the church office for your inspection. Electronic versions are available on request. Let Candi Horton know if you would like to receive these via email.

--Candi Horton

## YOUTH COMMITTEE

**"Energy stagnates when clutter accumulates."**

Members of the youth committee have begun to clean out cupboards and closets in the Fireside Room.

The intent is to assess and organize Sunday School materials and clearing the space of old and outdated resources. We joined with our historian, Patricia Serota, to look at boxes of documents and records. Terry Jensen and several choir members are sorting and cleaning files of choir music. We have lots of accumulated "stuff" to clean and clear!!!!

### Future Education

There has been a suggestion that next year this committee expand its scope to create and coordinate educational opportunities for adults in the congregation. If you are interested in this idea and want to be part of the transformation speak to Alan Claassen, Dotty Abbott, or anyone on the nominating committee.

--Dotty Abbott

## WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Plans are in place for services through the end of the year.

Advent starts Sunday, November 29. In addition to the regular Sunday services, there will be a caroling program led by the choir at 7 p.m. Friday, December 18, and a Christmas Eve service at 7 p.m. Thursday, December 24.

We hope to have holiday greens in the sanctuary by November 29 and poinsettias by the December 18 caroling event.

New members will join the church in January. We also hope to offer a training session for new liturgists after the first of the year.

*--Brian Smucker*

## PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

Your Pastoral Search Committee is happy to announce that, after many weeks of dedicated work, we have completed our Local Church Profile. It has been sent off for review to Pastor Alan Classen and Drew Nettinga, who is the NCNC conference minister.

We hope to share the profile for approval with Council at their December 3 meeting, so that it can then be posted in December. Once it is posted, we will be ready to receive profiles from pastors who would like to know more about us.

*-- Nancy Denkin*

## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

### Let's Celebrate!

Our recent Stewardship Campaign brought in \$144,000 in pledges which is a 23 percent increase from last year's pledges.

Our thanks to everyone who helped us achieve this wonderful result! It bodes well for the future of our beloved church.

*--The Stewardship Committee  
Patricia Henley, Bill Hutchinson, Keith Ridenhour*

## EARTH CARE COMMITTEE

### Earth Care Tips for Greener, Healthier Holiday Food Choices

Looking for a way to celebrate the holidays in a way that honors Creation, keeps your family healthy, and minimizes your carbon footprint? California Interfaith Power & Light has compiled guidelines for creating a climate-friendly, healthy holiday feast.

Guidelines were released for Thanksgiving but are good for any holiday feast!

Visit the website:

<http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/programs/cool-harvest/climate-friendly-holiday-meal-ideas/>

**Earth Care Committee hosts Sunday, December 6, Social Hour.** Pick up and put into practice the Earth Care Committee's new "Cleaning Products Shopping List" and its revised guidelines for healthy, climate-friendly foods for potlucks and coffee hours.

*--John Donnelly*

## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

### Women's Fellowship Holiday Luncheon

All the women of FCC are welcome to the annual holiday luncheon on Tuesday, December 15 at 11:30 a.m. in Burlingame Hall. The cost is \$15 per person due with reservation. Contact Viola Butler at 935-6408 or Judy Weiner at 938-1318 to RSVP.

### Congratulations FCC Sonoma!



**The recipient of  
California Interfaith Power and Light's  
GREEN BUILDING award.**

## GET INVOLVED!

### ALTERNATIVE Gift Fair

Watch for the Alternative Gift Fair after worship service on December 6. It is your opportunity to donate to an organization sponsored by Outreach, and honor someone with that gift of a donation.

### NOTICE of CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

A congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, December 13, in the Sanctuary after worship service to vote on the proposed budget for 2016 and the slate of nominees for officers, Council members-at-large and various committee members.

Please mark your calendars and plan on attending this brief, important meeting.

### CAROLING, CAROLING

On December 18, our choir invites everyone to an inaugural Christmas Carol sing-along in the poinsettia-filled, candle-lit sanctuary at 7 p.m.



We will bring back a real old-fashioned Christmas—with all the old favorite carols: O Little Town of Bethlehem, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, Away in a Manger, Silent Night, and many more; piano and organ accompaniment, solos and group performers and instrumentalists will be highlights. Songbooks provided. Cider and cookies afterward. Free (free will offerings for F.I.S.H.) All ages welcome, bring friends and, if you desire, dress for the season!

**Warm up your voice—Fa la la!**

### MEMBERSHIP INQUIRY CLASS

For those interested in learning more about progressive Christianity, the United Church of Christ and membership in FCC Sonoma, there will be a two session class on December 1 and 15, from 6:30-8 p.m. There will be a second option of taking an abridged version of this class on December 6 from 4-5:30 p.m. Please contact Pastor Alan if you are interested.

## In Memoriam

*Darlene Noel*

*Loving mother  
of Pat Noel*



*George White*

*Dear friend of  
Janet Volkman*

## Advent

### Worship Services and Celebrations

**November 29**

1st Sunday of Advent - Hope

**December 6**

2nd Sunday of Advent - Peace  
Holy Communion

**December 13**

3rd Sunday of Advent - Joy  
Taize Service  
Hanukah with Shir Shalom, 5-7 p.m.

**December 18, 7 p.m.**

Christmas Caroling in the Sanctuary

**December 20**

4th Sunday of Advent - Love  
Hand Bell Choir

**December 24, 7 p.m.**

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

**December 27**

1st Sunday after Christmas  
A time to sing carols





# Give a Pointsettia!



Our Church will be decorated with poinsettia plants for Christmas. If you are interested in giving a plant, please fill out the form below. A donation of \$10.00 will pay for the plant. Payment should accompany your form. Make checks payable to **FCC** and write **poinsettia** in the memo line. A list of those donating poinsettias will appear in the Christmas Eve bulletins.

I / We would like to give a poinsettia. # \_\_\_\_\_ of plants at \$10.00 each.

Total enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_ check \_\_\_\_\_ cash \_\_\_\_\_

In honor / memory of:

1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_ 4) \_\_\_\_\_

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Liturgist</b>	<b>Deacon</b>	<b>Ushers</b>	<b>Flowers</b>	<b>Coffee Hour</b>
<b>December 6</b>	Garen Patterson	Tim Boeve	Harry and Karen Boon	Viola Butler	Earth Care Committee
<b>December 13</b>	Nancy Denkin	Tim Boeve	Mary Evelyn Arnold and David McFarland	Linda States	
<b>December 20</b>	Gitte Cochrane	Nancy Denkin	Viola Butler and Judy Weiner		Church Council
<b>December 24</b>	Brian Smucker	Eugene Campagna			
<b>December 27</b>	Keith Ridenhour	Nancy Denkin	Sara Donnelly and Florence Porter	Veda Lewis	Kathleen Gray and Gitte Cochrane



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 4:00 pm CR Encyclical Study  5:00 pm Earth Care  7:00 pm S Choir	2  12:45 pm CR Caring Friends  7:00 pm CR Pastoral Search	3  3:30/4:15 pm CR Bells  7:00 pm CR Church Council	4  8:00 am CR Meditation	5
6 F.I.S.H. Sunday  9:00 am CR Spiritual Inquiry  <b>10:30 am Worship and Communion PEACE</b>	7  4:00 pm CR Poetry Group	8  4:00 pm CR Encyclical Study  7:00 pm S Choir	9	10  3:30/4:15 pm CR Bells  7:00 pm CR Worship Committee	11  8:00 am CR Meditation	12  9:00 am BH Congregation Shir Shalom Service
13  <b>10:30 am Worship Taize Service JOY</b>  Congregational Meeting S  5:00 pm BH Hanukah	14  4:00 pm CR Poetry Group	15 <i>January Grapevine submissions due</i>  11:30 am BH Women's Fellowship Christmas Lunch  4:00 pm CR Encyclical Study	16  3:00 pm S Outreach  7:00 pm CR Pastoral Search Committee	17  3:30/4:15 pm CR Bells	18  8:00 am CR Meditation  5:00 pm BH Congregation Shir Shalom Service  7:00 pm S Christmas Sing-along	19  10:00 am CR Congregation Shir Shalom Torah Study
20  9:00 am CR Spiritual Inquiry  <b>10:30 am Worship LOVE</b>	21 10:00 am S P & F  4:00 pm CR Poetry Group  7:00 pm CR Seekers	22  7:00 pm S Choir	23	24	25  <b>Merry Christmas!</b>	26
27  <b>10:30 am Worship</b>	28  4:00 pm CR Poetry Group	29  7:00 pm S Choir	30	31  3:30/4:15 pm CR Bells		

## Happy December Birthday!

5 - Brian Smucker  
6 - Lynn Ross  
6 - Jackie Steuer  
8 - Kathleen Carter  
9 - Veronica Love  
9 - Susan Harris  
12 - Tyler Dickie  
17 - Toni States  
25 - Betsy Claassen



**First Congregational Church of Sonoma**  
252 West Spain St., Sonoma, CA 95476

[www.sonomaucc.org](http://www.sonomaucc.org)

(707) 996-1328

[contact@sonomaucc.org](mailto:contact@sonomaucc.org)

Office Hours: Wednesday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

**Worship Service and Sunday School - 10:30 am Sunday**

We are an Open and Affirming Earth Care Church

**Interim Minister:** Alan Claassen, [alan@sonomaucc.org](mailto:alan@sonomaucc.org)

**Music Director:** Terry Lezama-Jensen

**Pianist:** Sondra Cooper

**Sunday School Teacher:** Emily Webber

**Childcare Providers:** Anna DeSmet & Natalie Baker

**Office & Event Manager:** Angela Ljung

**Facilities Manager:** Steve Cook

**Pastor Emeritus:** David McCracken

**West Spain Thrift Shop**

**Store Hours:**

Thursday and Saturday from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

**Donation drop-off hours:**

Regular store hours, and Monday, Tuesday, and Friday from 9 a.m.-11 a.m.