



Banner

*We are a sharing, loving fellowship of Christian believers, rooted in biblical faith, that actively seeks and celebrates God. We desire to praise, love and serve with all our hearts in our faith community and to reach out to our neighbors, continuing the work of Jesus peacefully, simply, together. In God we find the source of all our joy.
Hallelujah!*

December 2023

Vol. 50 No. 10

Christmas is Coming!

Thanksgiving is over the guests are gone, the turkey soup is on the stove, the weather is turning. It's time to get out our tree and pull the decorations from the rafters. Santas and snowmen, reindeers and bears, candles and garlands, advent calendars and the advent wreath. The wreath of anticipation and joy.

The wreath of wonder and hope. As I place out my advent wreath and calendar that I carefully picked I wonder where the tradition came from. Is it something adopted and adapted from our Pagan ancestors, or is it something we created.

Advent began around 480 CE and has evolved to what it is today. Scholars believe advent began as a way to prepare new Christians who would be

baptized in January of the new year. The advent wreath origins can be traced back to Germany although the exact date is unknown. Lighting candles around a wreath in anticipation of warmer weather and spring was commonly practiced by the Pagans who lived in Germany and the practice was likely taken from them. By 1600 CE the Catholics and Lutherans had formal practices surrounding the advent wreath and the tradition spread beyond Germany to other European countries and the Americas.

The advent wreath we use today came about in 1839 by Johann Hinrich Wichern, a Protestant pastor in Germany and a pioneer in urban mission work among the poor. With the impatience and anticipation of the children in mind he created a wooden ring with 19 small candles and 4 large candles in it. Everyday a candle was lit. On Sundays they would light a large candle and a small candle would be lit on the other days. The tradition continues today, however only the large candles are lit and used.

As we celebrate and anticipate Christmas today the meaning of the wreath has changed as well. Pulling from the Pagans who we adapted this tradition from, the beliefs held in the Anabaptist beliefs, and our roots in the beginning of Christianity we have created a beautiful tradition full of meaning, hope and love.

The wreath made of evergreen branches, leaves and pinecones symbolizes continuous life, a life that doesn't end because we have Jesus. The circle of

the wreath symbolizes the eternity of God, and the immortality of the soul
which we have through Jesus.

Each Sunday has a different meaning and focus symbolized in the candles that we light every week. The first Sunday and candle symbolizes hope and is often purple. It is sometimes called the “Prophecy Candle” in remembrance of the prophets, especially Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Christ. It represents the expectation felt in anticipation of the coming Messiah. The second candle, also purple, symbolizes faith. It is called the “Bethlehem Candle” as a reminder of Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem. The third pink candle is called the “Shepherd’s Candle,” and is pink because rose is a liturgical color for joy. The third Sunday of Advent is Gaudete Sunday and is meant to remind us of the joy that the world experienced at the birth of Jesus, as well as the joy that the faithful have reached the midpoint of Advent. On the fourth week of Advent, we light the final purple candle. This final candle, the “Angel’s Candle,” symbolizes peace. It reminds us of the message of the angels: “Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men.”

As you decorate your house this year, slowly count down the days on your advent calendar and put out your advent wreath remember the meaning, history and joy it holds; and the stories it holds in its candles and evergreen branches.

Written by Laura Lovelace who used Wikipedia and Our Little Rose as references.



those limited or confined for health reasons: **Cathy Banks, Marcheta Pletcher.**

Our **Thoughts & Prayers** are with... We also uphold these members, friends and family members of our congregation who have prayer concerns:

Bill Lemon
John Nelson

Chuck Snyder
Darren Reader

PFCOB STEWARDSHIP INFORMATION
Through October 2023

2023 Annual Budget	\$193,255.00
Total Budget Income thru September	\$125,890.46
Giving '23	\$79,206.00
Interest & Other Income '23	\$46,684.46
Total Budget Expense thru September	\$(110,632.98)
Budget Balance thru August	\$15,257.48
August Special Non-Budget Offerings	
Inland Valley Hope Partners Beta	\$25.00
Trunk-or-Treat (Service & Outreach program)	\$45.00

December Worship Schedule

December 3, Paul Lovelace is preaching
December 10, Jerry Davis is preaching
December 17, Julie Wheeler is preaching
December 24, Paul Lovelace is preaching
December 31, The Preaching Team is Preaching

Upcoming Meetings

Stewards, Tuesday Dec. 5 at 3:30pm
Music & Worship, Wednesday Dec. 13 at 11am
Service & Outreach, Wed. Dec. 13 at 10:30am
Church Board, Thursday Dec. 14 at 6:30pm

Every Tuesday at 7:30 p.m., **Bible Study** over Google Meet. Contact Sander Eller for details.



An Irish Christmas Blessing

“May the blessing of Christmas be with you,
 May the Christ Child light your way,
 May God’s Holy Angels guide you,
 And keep you safe each day.”



Birthdays

Dennis Wallstrom on the 15th
 Jerry Davis on the 17th
 Sarah Mundy on the 18th
 Virgil Pletcher on the 19th
 Dana Smith on the 24th
 JoAnn Mills on the 24th

Anniversaries

Cody & Dana Smith on the 12th

Service and Outreach News



Giving Emphases for the Month

Thank you for your continued response in our effort to support the local food bank. Our food emphasis for **December is Food For Families.**

As our Adopt-a-Family is through IVHP we won't have a separate food donation for them.

IVHP will provide their food. For all canned food please provide Pop-Top cans. As always, staple items are always needed and welcome.



Our giving emphasis for December is **Our Adopt-a-Family through IVHP.**

“Celebrating over 50 years of commitment, Inland Valley Hope Partners serves over 75,000 men, women and children each year through

“Our House” family residential shelter; and Rapid Re-Housing; BETA, SOVA, Claremont, San Dimas and South Pomona food pantries; and the Pomona Farmers’ Market throughout 13 communities including Chino, Chino Hills, Claremont, Diamond Bar, La Verne, Montclair,

Mt. Baldy, Ontario, Pomona, Rancho Cucamonga, San Dimas, Upland, and Walnut.

The shelter houses five families for up to 90 days. The food pantries distribute five days worth of food per person to no and low income families. Clients may come once every 30 days.

The Farmers Market operates every Saturday morning and accepts WIC and EBT cards.

Begun in 1968 as the Pomona Council of Churches, today the non-profit is a collaboration of faith communities, businesses, community groups, and individuals who care about their neighbors.” (August 2023 IVHP Newsletter). Our church has a long history with Inland Valley Hope Partners. From its

very beginning members were on the organizing committee, have served as members of committees, taken part in a wide variety of their programs. This year we are partnering with them in the Christmas Adopt A-Family Program. Bringing staple food items and holiday foods for the food pantry will be a blessing to the struggling families in the neighborhood. Thank you for sharing your spirit of love and caring.

Written by Phyllis Eller

Christmas, The Time of Joyfully Giving

Just Us 4 Youth

Service and Outreach has another worthy program for the Pomona Fellowship to participate in! JUST US 4 YOUTH, a youth-oriented organization in Pomona, houses young women at the First Presbyterian Church offices in Pomona. We've been asked to provide 20 stuffed stockings for these young women who were formally unhoused. The JU4Y Transitional Age Youth Program is a transitional housing opportunity that is offered to homeless youth who are in need of a stable home so they can

take the proper steps to get their lives back in order. Through case management, individualized service plans are developed with clients to determine the resources available to help them transition to more stable and self-sufficient lifestyles. Clients are required to work, go to school, job search, and pay rent. Benefits of program: Basic needs such as shelter, food and clothing are provided. Homelessness is negated. Addiction is curbed. Mental health is improved. Stability is provided.

Quality mentoring is offered. Vocational opportunities are made available. Structure and discipline are cultivated. Crime is positively impacted. Service and Outreach will be at the back of the hall on Sunday with a sign-up list if you want to give these young women a

Christmas morning stocking!

Written by Julie Wheeler

God's Pantry

As in years past, Pomona Fellowship will have a Christmas Tree where you can hang your Christmas cards to the congregation, saving you time and expense. The money saved is then donated to a worthy organization. This year, Service and Outreach has chosen God's Pantry. God's Pantry's – Mission and Vision Statement: Our vision is to create an organization that is run and led by individuals with social barriers that

in turn offer hope, training, and support to their peers. GP allows them to redirect their lives and become contributing members of our community. Our mission is deeply rooted in the work of Jesus which calls us to meet the basic wellness needs of the communities we serve in a practical way. We strive to create a world where everyone can find a second chance despite their current and past life experience. Feeding more than 8,000 families each month, God's Pantry provides more than food. They provide low-income housing to young adults while providing life skills such as credit building, budgeting, and learning to save for the future. They have a staff of case managers who work with the clients on case expungement and family reunification.

They provide work experience and career development and also offer court-appointed classes such as parenting, anger management, domestic violence, and drug and alcohol education. They work on gang intervention and offer re-entry services after incarceration.

You can give an extra gift in your regular offering or a separate amount. Please indicate how much you are allotting to support God's pantry. You may start bringing your cards on Sunday, December 3rd. For more information about God's Pantry please visit their website www.gods-pantry.org.

Written by Julie Wheeler

Banner articles are due by December 20th

The *Banner* is published by the
Pomona Fellowship Church of the Brethren
Address: 242 E. Alvarado St.

Pomona, CA 91767

(909) 629-2548

Email: office@mypomonachurch.org

Website: mypomonachurch.org

Services & Activities

Sunday Worship at 10:00 a.m. in the Parish Hall

Bible Study on Google Meet Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m.

Paul Lovelace

Moderator

Laura Lovelace

Admin. Assistant

The *Banner* is published once a month. Articles and announcements to appear in the next issue of the *Banner* are due in the church office by the 20th of each month.



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3 Paul Lovelace Preaching	4	5 Stewards 3:30pm Google Meet Bible Study @ 7:00pm	6	7	8	9
10 Jerry Davis Preaching	11	12 Google Meet Bible Study @ 7:00pm	13 S & O 10:30am M & W 11am	14 Church Board @ 6:30pm	15	16
17 Julie Wheeler Preaching Christmas Potluck & Party with St. Paul's	18	19 Google Meet Bible Study @ 7:00pm	20	21	22	23
24 Paul Lovelace Preaching	25 Merry Christmas	26 Google Meet Bible Study @ 7:00pm	27	28	29	30
31 Preaching Team Preaching						