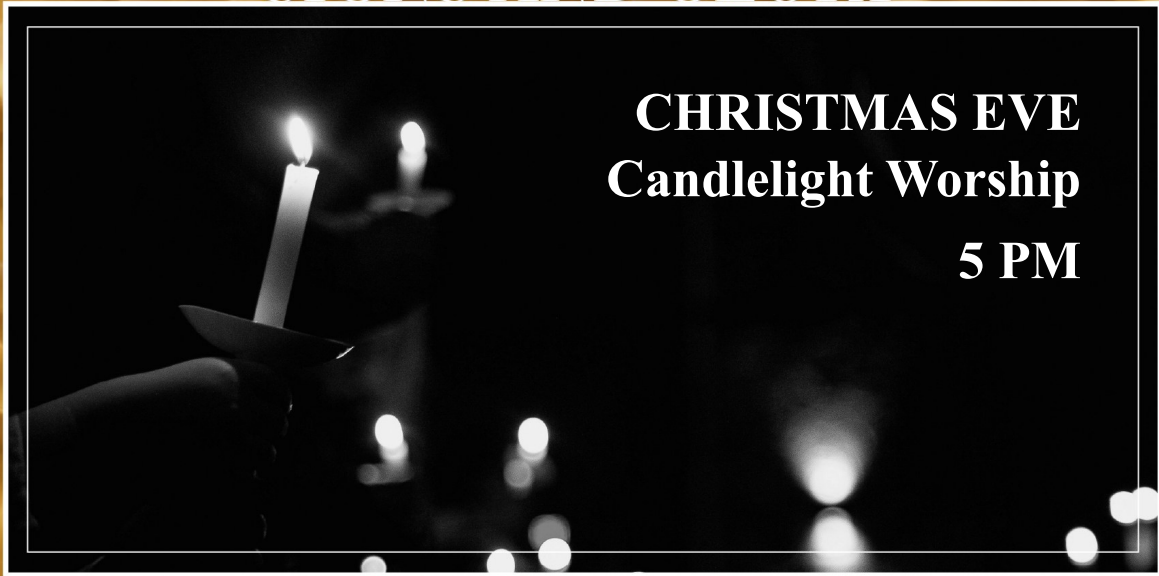




SIGNS AND GLORY



CHRISTMAS EVE
Candlelight Worship
5 PM



Alternative Christmas

available through December 21

Second Harvest Food Bank

NAMI Santa Cruz County

Heifer International

Missionary Katherine Parker

See pages 4-5 for more information about Alternative Christmas Giving.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

“But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

Matthew 24:36 NRSVUE

Greetings Church Family,

Happy New Year! (Or should I say, Happy Christian New Year!) Each year our liturgical calendar concludes with Christ the King Sunday, then our new church cycle begins as we enter the Advent season. So now is the time, as Christians, to get a jump start on our resolutions!

As one of the mainline Christian denominations, United Methodists typically follow the Revised Common Lectionary, which is a three-year cycle of readings intended to navigate the major themes of the Bible in three years. This year also happens to be the beginning of a new lectionary cycle, as we once again begin our journey through the scriptures.

Throughout this Advent season we will be exploring the idea of waiting. Our faith is hopeful. We eagerly anticipate the return of our Lord, and the restoration of all God's creation. But this waiting isn't passive; it's active and alert. Our belief that God will make all things right doesn't lull us into a sense of complacency, but rather motivates us to live in a way that prepares us, and those around us, for the Advent of God's kingdom.



So during this season, I encourage you to wait well. Focus on how you're living today. Engage in spiritual disciplines like prayer and scripture reading. Invest in service and justice. Participate in one of our church's ministries. Bring a friend to our Christmas Eve service. Make wise use of the great gift of time that we've all been given.

In this time when so many people around us appear joyful on the outside, it can be extremely difficult for those who are struggling on the inside. If you see someone in need, lend a hand. If you are experiencing hardship, reach out for support. When it comes to doing good, there is no time like the present. May the expectation of God's coming inspire you to live faithfully and love fully.

“Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

Matthew 24:44 NRSVUE

Grace and Peace be with you all,
Pastor Gabe



Small Group Meetings

Small Groups are open to anyone. If you have questions about any of the groups, please contact Pastor Gabe.

- **Blaney Group** - Sunday at 11:15 AM in the Youth Room
- **PACT** - every other Monday at 10 AM (*December 1, 15, & 29 and January 12 & 26*)
<https://zoom.us/j/97895982359?pwd=dURlM09lZXI4V2pLN3ByZkxwT1pHQT09>
Meeting ID **978 9598 2359** Passcode **813515**
- **Alive Now** - Tuesday at 10 AM in the Fellowship Hall
- **Upper Room** - Tuesday at 7 PM
<https://zoom.us/j/94925380499?pwd=OGNpaHc4VmZ2OFhiczMML2M2ME5Ddz09>
Meeting ID **974 1046 9403** Passcode **935450**
- **Scott Group** - Friday at 10 AM in the Fellowship Hall

January Special Offering

January 18 - *Human Relations Day:*
Build the Beloved Community

Human Relations Day is an opportunity for us to celebrate and support ministries that empower communities and nurture hope. On the Sunday before Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, we'll collect a special offering to support programs like Community Developers, Youth Offender Rehabilitation, and United Methodist Voluntary Services.

Your support funds ministries of advocacy and community engagement

57% of your donation funds the community developer's program

33% of your donation funds rehabilitation programs

10% of your donation funds United Methodist Voluntary Services

HUMAN RELATIONS DAY

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church®

Online Giving

To give online, go to www.aptosumc.org and click on the 'GIVE NOW' button, or click [HERE](#), or scan this QR code using your smartphone. Creating an account online is not necessary unless you would like to set up a recurring payment or if you would like to save your payment information for future transactions. Contact the church office (office@aptosumc.org or 831-688-2210) if you have any questions or need assistance.



Church and Society

Each year, our church has a tradition of **alternative gift giving** at Christmas time. For several years now, the choices have been **Second Harvest Food Bank**, **NAMI**, **Heifer International**, and **Missionary Katherine Parker**. I'd like to tell you a little more about each one of these in hopes of inspiring you to take part in this holiday ritual.

This year, the **Second Harvest Food Bank** is in desperate need of your help. Because of the extended government shutdown, food banks all over the country did not receive the funding on which they depend for several weeks. At the same time there has been a sharp increase in demand. The benefits for the nearly 42 million Americans who rely on SNAP have been significantly reduced and hundreds of thousands of people will lose their benefits at the new year. Even as the temporary challenge is solved, there remain many people right here in our own community who will continue to need our help. Second Harvest Food Bank helps to feed 500,000 clients every month. However, *with less Federal funding and increased demand, you can see how important your donation would be.*



NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness, is dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. The Alliance includes more than 650 NAMI State Organizations and Affiliates who work in your community to raise awareness and provide support and education to those in need. However, much of the funding for all of this has been drastically cut by the present administration.



The United States is meanwhile in the midst of an ongoing mental health, overdose, and suicide crisis, one of the most widespread and enduring public health challenges of our time. More than 84 million adults, and millions of children and teens, live with mental health or substance use conditions that affect people in every community, across every background and belief. We are not immune to this within our own church community. We all know those who have family members in crisis. NAMI works to save lives and help families. *A contribution to this cause will make a difference!*

Heifer International is a non-profit organization that works to end hunger and poverty by providing farmers with livestock, training, and resources to build sustainable livelihoods. Founded in 1944, it has helped over 39 million people by empowering them with the tools to become self-sufficient and break the cycle of poverty.



Heifer provides animals like goats or cows, along with training on animal care and sustainable agriculture practices. Families can then move from poverty to self-sufficiency, generate income, put food on the table, and send their children to school. Through its programs, Heifer helps farmers connect with each other and form cooperatives, sharing knowledge and resources to help entire communities thrive. *A donation to this organization is a popular one to give in honor of a child you know and love.*

Missionary Katherine Parker is a missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church serving as a Health and Community Transformation Advisor with the United Mission to Nepal (UMN). The Methodist Church has supported the UMN since its founding 65 years ago.

(continued)

Katherine was previously based in one of UMN's field offices in western Nepal and now works in participatory research across the organization from a base in Kathmandu, where she is also a part of the UMN leadership team.



Our church has been supporting Katherine's work in Nepal for many years, starting with when Anne and David Scott joined our church and brought her work to our attention. In fact we have a covenant relationship with Katherine Parker to send at least \$1000 every year to support her work. She has visited our congregation several times to speak about her work in that part of the world. *A donation to Missionary Katherine Parker will help us meet our goal.*

Alternative Christmas giving is available through December 21. In-person giving is available after worship on December 7, 14, and 21. Online giving is available by [clicking here](#).

As we go into the new year, there will be several possibilities for doing mission work. Aptos UMC at times prepares meals for the unhoused community; we support the work of the Mid-County Homeless Coalition, providing showers for the unhoused, by attending the February Chili Cook Off; we joyfully support Santa Cruz Pride by co-sponsoring a table at the Pride Parade in June; we have historically supported the work of Habitat for Humanity, and will do so again when there is a build nearby. In November, I invited folks to consider running a pet ministry at our church. If you would be interested in organizing that, let me know. It could be a support group for those who have recently lost a beloved pet or a pet visit for a shut-in member.

Additionally, our church provides space to the Aptos group of Village Santa Cruz, an organization dedicated to helping seniors in the community maintain their independence. That group will next meet at 1 PM on December 3, 2025 and again on January 7, 2026 at our church. You are welcome to join if you are interested.

May everyone have a blessed holiday and plenty of optimism in the new year due to your faith and hope in the Lord!

Joyce D. Rodgers
Chair of Church and Society/Missions/Green Team



Equal Exchange Coffee and Chocolate

Your purchases support



Regenerative agriculture to help farmers combat climate change



Farmer-led gender equity workshops and youth empowerment programs



Pre-harvest financing of farmers' crops allow for dependable livelihoods

Every first Sunday of the month, Laurel offers coffee and chocolate from Equal Exchange for sale in the Fellowship Hall.

Check out our new chocolate bar flavor - **Dark Caramel Crunch with Sea Salt!**



October Financial Report

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	YTD Over/Under Budget
<u>INCOME</u>			
Pledge, Plate, Other Giving	145,270.00		
Secret Garden, Building Use	51,497.08		
Investment Income	<u>3,679.85</u>		
TOTAL INCOME	\$200,446.93	\$210,156.70	-\$9,709.77
<u>EXPENSES</u>			
Church Program & Office			
Conference Apportionments	21,000.00		
Church Program Funding	2,281.33		
Maintenance, Supplies	369.59		
Office Expenses	1,992.75		
Employee Compensation	<u>41,074.80</u>		
Subtotal, Church Program & Office Expenses	\$66,718.47	\$70,147.30	\$3,42883
Church Campus			
Custodial	2,300.00		
Utilities	21,134.10		
Insurance	9,581.12		
Taxes	1,152.79		
Maintenance, Improvements	<u>11,909.94</u>		
Subtotal, Church Campus Expenses	\$46,077.95	\$45,025.80	-\$1,052.15
Pastoral Ministry & Parsonage			
Salary	47,427.60		
Housing & Utilities	3,750.00		
Travel, Annual Conference, Education, Supplies	3,269.27		
Health Insurance	8,456.60		
Pastor's Pension	10,278.90		
Parsonage Mortgage, Insurance, Taxes, Maintenance	<u>22,436.41</u>		
Subtotal, Pastoral Ministry & Parsonage Expenses	\$95,618.78	\$96,325.10	\$706.32
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$208,415.20	\$211,498.20	\$3,083.00
NET INCOME - EXPENSES	-\$7,968.27	-\$1,341.50	-\$6,626.77



Birthdays

- 1 Teresa Fehr
- 3 David Treffkorn
- 4 Thomas Inskeep
- 7 Jana Daley
Dick Wood
Boyd Brown
- 8 Nate LaHue
- 13 Jillian Holmberg
- 14 Keri Swenson
- 20 Beth Hinton
- 25 Sally Hicks

Anniversaries

- 15 Richard & Marilyn
Manning Lonergan
- 19 Jim & Linda Theiring
- 20 Craig & Cathy Wright



Birthdays

- 8 Linda Sizelove-Secola
- 15 Bruce Hicks
- 17 Suzanne McCourt
- 26 Mike Sampson
- 29 Steve Green
Cora Joubert
Paula Phipps

Anniversaries

- 16 Clyde & Sheila Vaughn

If your birthday or anniversary is missing from our calendar or incorrect, please contact the [office](#).



**A Memorial Service for Bob Blaney
will be held on Saturday, December 27 at 11 AM
at Aptos UMC.**

I want to thank you all for your love, prayers, and cards.

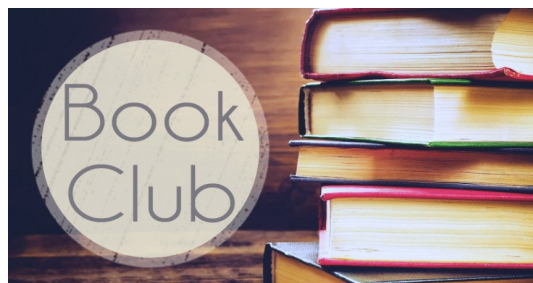
They really lifted me up in the days after Bob's death. You are all God's angels.

Peace, joy, and love,
Laurel



You are invited to join our Prayer Team.

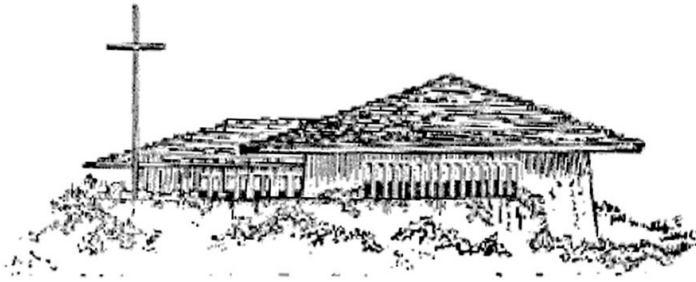
The Prayer Team receives a weekly email with prayer requests. To **join** the Prayer Team or **submit** a prayer request, please contact the church [office](#).



No Meeting in December

January 21 *Other Birds* by Sarah Addison Allen

The Book Club meets at 1:30 PM on the third Wednesday of every month in the Youth Room. *Anyone is welcome to attend.* For more information, please contact Barbara Coy-Bulicz at 689-9772 or bcoybulicz@gmail.com.



Aptos Community United Methodist Church

"The Church Worth Finding"

221 Thunderbird Drive, Aptos, CA 95003

831.688.2210

www.aptosumc.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Sunday Worship at 10 AM in person

and livestreamed on  YouTube

YouTube channel: @aptosumc

**Deadline for
February Tide**
Friday, January 16

The Tide is published monthly by Aptos United Methodist Church. Aptos UMC is an inclusive community that welcomes and encourages full participation of *all persons*, regardless of race, culture, age, economic circumstance, sexual orientation, gender identity, or physical/mental abilities.

We affirm our denomination's motto – ***Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors.***

The church office is open Monday through Thursday from 9 AM to 2:30 PM.

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