



A Word from Pastor John

A CHRISTMAS SYMPHONY

HERE 6:00 P.M. SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9TH!

The Praise Symphony Orchestra will be here Sunday, December 9th at 6:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary to present an evening of Christmas carols! The Praise Symphony Orchestra has been making music to the glory of God since it started over 30 years ago! 40 to 50 volunteer musicians from all over Southern California participate! Our own Choir Director, Rebecca Skidmore, has played viola in the orchestra for some time!

Please come Sunday evening December 9th for an evening of Christmas caroling to the sounds of strings, winds, brass, percussion and harp! There will be a cookie reception and CD's available in Fellowship Hall! Be sure to invite your friends! (A free will offering will be taken.)

May you have a Blessed Christmas and a Joyous New Year?

Pastor John

Thank You for Pastor Appreciation Sunday!

Thank you for the wonderful gifts for Pastor Appreciation Sunday last month! I received cards with notes of love and affection, chocolate, books and even cash gifts! Thank you so much! You are the greatest congregation in the world! Mary, Holly and I are grateful for your love!

The ten years I've been here are among the happiest in my ministry! You have welcomed me into your homes, encouraged my preaching with your faithful attendance and never failed to express your appreciation for my work as Sr. Pastor!

With Christmas approaching, Mary, Holly and I thank God for you—our wonderful church family! May you have a blessed Christmas and wonderful New Year!

Sincerely,

Pastor John

Poinsettias - Poinsettias

Poinsettias will be placed in the sanctuary for December 16-24. If you wish to donate in honor or memory of a loved one, you may do so by contributing \$10.00 per plant (checks made payable to First Presbyterian Church with memo "flower fund"). Please indicate the name(s) of those you wish to honor.

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL

Can't think of a gift for that person who has everything? How about a flock of chickens or part of a water buffalo given in their name? This year, as in years past, you will have the opportunity to help others help themselves. Heifer International uses the money raised to buy animals for families in need and to provide training on the care of these animals. In return, the recipient passes on the first born of their gift to another family. And the gift (and self-reliance) goes on. Stop by the mission table in the patio (or in Fellowship Hall if it is raining), on December 2, 9 or 16 and find out how you can become part of this wonderful self-help program.

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

A Presbyterian tradition for almost seventy years, the Christmas Joy Offering is one of the two special offerings we take to help support specific causes. Fifty percent of the Offering goes to the Board of Pensions' Financial Assistance Program, which helps retired church workers and their surviving spouses to live modestly and continue to maintain their independence.

The other half of the Offering goes to support racial ethnic schools, such as Cook School for Christian Leadership. Lay pastors are in great demand as their small churches cannot afford to support ordained ministers. A new program in health and wellness along with community leadership development is currently being developed. As we remember our many blessings, please consider this opportunity to share with those who do not have the resources that we have. Thank you for sharing, caring and supporting this mission work. There will be special offertory envelopes in the pews December 9 and 16, which will then be taken up and dedicated on December 16.

Christmas Extravaganza 2007

Christmas Is Coming!! And to celebrate this time of year, the Christmas Extravaganza will once again be entertaining you with music, songs, skits, general good cheer and sing-a-long Christmas carols. This year's festivities will begin at **6pm on Sunday December 16th** in the Sanctuary. A cookie reception will follow the program and the youth will host a very special coffee table featuring Starbucks' Christmas Blend. There will also be tasty ingredients available to enhance your drink (chocolate, cream, brown sugar, flavorings). **Invite your friends and relatives for a wonderful Christmas celebration of Joy.**

2-CENTS-A-MEAL

Most of you have noticed the “fishbowl” on the table in the Narthex on Sundays. Many of you have contributed loose change, saved-up coins and occasional dollar bills. All of which has been greatly appreciated.

These moneys have been sent to the Southwest Community Center which is located in a lower-income area of Santa Ana. The Center not only serves several meals a day to anyone who comes, but offers assistance with paperwork, referrals to different resources, clothes, bags of food and other essentials. In one month, recently, 27 families were provided rental assistance and seven homeless families were given assistance for motel rooms.

In a recent letter, Connie Jones, the Director, stated, “*Our challenge is great, but with the encouragement of your contributions we are making a difference. Thank you for your gifts.*” So, if you have some spare change (or a dollar or two); drop it into the “fishbowl” —YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE! THANK YOU.

Christmas Brunch

The Women’s Ministries will host a Brunch on **Saturday, December 8**, in the Fellowship Hall to celebrate the beginning of the Advent Season. We invite women of all ages to join us as we worship, dine and listen to our speaker and enjoy music. Come; bring your daughters, granddaughters, women friends and relatives.

Donations will be accepted with all proceeds, after expenses, benefiting the Heifer Project. Look for the sign-up sheet in the patio area. Last day to sign up is Sunday, December 2.

PRIME-TIMERS LUNCH

The Prime-Timers Luncheon will **NOT** be held in December and in 2008 we will be meeting on the **second Wednesday** of the month. The first Prime-Timers Luncheon of 2008 will be on January 9, 2008. Our guest speaker will be Dr. Kenneth R. Greenlee, founder and president of Teach Us To Pray, Intl. Dr. Greenlee accompanied Larry Rizzo on trips to Fiji and was active in a very vital prayer ministry among the people there. Come and hear how God is using this ministry to lead to a revitalized relationship with Him and how it can change and enrich your walk with the Lord.

The luncheon will be a potluck, so watch for the announcement in the church bulletin for the sign-ups. Come and bring a friend, a neighbor or family.

DEACON BEACON

This is the season for giving from the heart in Christian love for all the Lord has provided you so generously. If you are aware of someone who is in need of food around the holidays, please contact Delores Newton, Carole Smith or the church office **by December 7th**.

The Board of Deacons needs staples for the Christmas food boxes.

FOOD ITEMS REQUESTED: white sugar (2-5 pounds), flour (2-5 pounds), canned yams, canned corn, canned green beans, canned pumpkin, stuffing mix, dried pinto beans, rice (please no instant), Jell-O, cake mix, frosting, cranberry sauce, and canned milk.

Empty egg cartons (1 dozen size) are needed as well; also large department store shopping bags with handles.

Collection boxes will be in the narthex **through December 9th**.

And . . . If you enjoy baking, think about providing 1 dozen individually wrapped cookies that will be packaged **on December 9th** for our Care Family group. You can bring your cookies to the kitchen, marked Deacons, that morning before worship services.

There is more! **Early in December** you will see a small Christmas tree with children's names on gift tags (includes their age and gender) – be thinking about what special gift you can provide for some child (suggested value \$15-\$20).

Don't stop reading—there is still more! **On Thursday, December 20th**, the Deacons will need 3 volunteers with trucks for food pick-up at Sam's Club between 7:30-8:30 a.m. and then deliver to the church. Between 8-10 a.m. lots of volunteers are needed to unload the trucks and separate the food into boxes, and then from 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. some people to assist in loading food and the gifts into recipients' vehicles. We would also appreciate having a special person or two to pray with the recipients.

Again, let **Carole Smith or Delores Newton** know of your willingness to help in some way. May the Lord watch over you all.

ENTERTAINMENT BOOK

The "Entertainment Book" for 2008 is now available. It is full of terrific savings! Get yours today! Makes a terrific Christmas Gift for that someone on your list that "has everything"!

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

OCTOBER STATED MEETING

Treasurer reported September income of \$45,784 and expenses of \$42,923 with a budget of \$40,564. Year to date income is \$352,544 with expenses of \$336,624 and budget of \$365,072.

The investments with Raymond James Financial Services, Inc. gained a total of \$1,275.73 for the month of September.

Approved a monthly Coffee Fellowship project for the Youth to provide Starbucks and other gourmet coffee, special ingredients (creams, sugars, flavorings), and Danishes or muffins. This is an activity to try to bring the members of the two services together once a month or so during the break and is not a fundraiser.

Barney Ruble has been teaching on creation science in the High School Sunday School and in the Wednesday Night Fellowship Holly Furman has volunteered to give a study on appreciating what you have. Kirsten Travis will also make a presentation on Mormonism and Rick Travis is planning a study on Islam.

Mission Committee will send \$200 to Nicole Ofori-Atta to help her in her Peace Corps Volunteer assignment.

The "Dust to Glory" study, taught by Pastor Paul and Charlotte Jaeger-Hudson has moved to Sunday morning at 10:30 during the Education Hour.

Session adopted a Preliminary Budget for 2008 total \$470,000 (approx) against expected income of approximately \$460,000. The budget consists of Fixed Costs (salaries, utilities, etc) of nearly \$360,000 and the remainder is discretionary costs associated with "Projects" by the various committees. The requests for "Projects" were adjusted and allocated based on previously established priorities by Session.

The Budget and Pastors "Terms of Call" will be presented to the Congregation in a Congregational Meeting.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING (November 18, 2007)

After a quorum was met the First Presbyterian Church of Westminster Congregational Meeting opened with prayer. The 2008 church budget was presented and unanimously approved and the following church family members were elected to serve a term as Deacons or Elders:

DEACONS: Ruth Wiley, James Siler, Tere Benza, Jean Woesner, Delores Newton, Carole Smith and Julie Stephen

ELDERS: Ed Bush, John Lyttle, Sandy Olmsted, Charlotte Jaeger-Hudson and Robin Ruble