

Sierra Christian Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Merry Christmas To Everyone We Know!



And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord... And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward all."

Searching For A Christmas Truth To Share

It is not always easy to know what to write about each month for the Pastor's Pitch, and historically it has always been a little tougher during the holiday season. My ego wants to impart some message that has teeth, a Christmas Truth, you might say, but there are so many threads and angles and messages and promises that come with Christmas, it is not easy. It's like standing at the greatest buffet in the world with only a single plate. Besides, there are days when I just don't feel it.

There are a couple ways to look at this holiday season. With the state of the nation throwing just about everything into confusion and calling us to take stock of our values and defining sense of right and wrong—what matters—and what we are willing to stand up for and stand against, it would be easy to over-complicate Christmas.

...and to remind us most importantly, that no act of kindness, no act of courage, no act through which we seek peace with justice is ever too small or wasted.

We could sulk, we can pretend, or we can turn our eyes to the stars and remember in our bones that there is an essential truth to the season that no tyrant or aversion-soaked divide can tarnish.

I will start with the Christmas legend that tells of Joseph being warned in a dream to flee the planned treachery of King Herod. Several animals who had been present at the birth of Jesus in the manger decid-

ed to accompany the Holy Family on their journey.

Each of the animals was determined to protect the baby Jesus, and each felt sure his or her particular talents would prove invaluable in that task. There also happened to be a spider inhabiting the stable who insisted on coming along. The other animals couldn't see the point, unable to understand how the little spider could be of any help. How could an insect, without keen ears or sharp teeth, void of strong bones or powerful claws, be of any use? The spider insisted, and the other animals finally agreed she could come along as long as she did not get in the way.

The journey was not easy, and along the way the other animals, brave though they boasted to be, grew frightened by the impending danger and made for safer adventures. Herod's troops were closing in on the Holy Family, which had grown tired and needed to rest and hide. Finding a small and inconspicuous cave, they huddled inside, with only the donkey and the spider remaining alongside. Holding Jesus in her arms, Mary gently rocked him to sleep, and, for a while, it appeared everything would be fine.

The only immediate problem was the chill in the air. Seeking to be of help in some small way, the spider carefully wove a web over the opening of the cave to try to keep the baby warm. The spider had just finished her weaving when suddenly voices were heard outside the cave.

The soldiers had caught up with the Holy Family. They scoured the area for them, and when they came to the cave where the Holy Family was hiding,

Pastor's Pitch



Sierra Christian Church's pastor is the Rev. Christine Pobanz-Hartmire. Her challenge to us is to embrace, the beautiful truth that everyone is always welcomed at Jesus' table.

Please see Pitch, page 3

**Books That Bind Gathers on Zoom
Thursday, December 4, 6:30 pm**

Pitch

(Continued from page 2)

both Mary and Joseph held their breath, certain their doom was upon them. But the soldiers passed by the cave, noting that it would be a waste of time searching it since anyone in there would have broken the spider's web covering the opening.

The seemingly insignificant spider saved the day. The legend goes on to say that this is why we hang tinsel on our Christmas trees, to remind us of the silver strands of the web the little spider wove, and to remind us most importantly, that no act of kindness, no act of courage, no act through which we seek peace with justice is ever too small or wasted.

The legend also echoes another enduring truth. Not only do we need to keep Christ in Christmas but also, believe it or not, it is important to keep Herod in Christmas, as well.

Herod, like Pharaoh before him, worshipped the love of power (enforced by violence) rather than the power of love. Herod also reminds us that we do not live in an ideal world, but one where we often face both the threat and the destructive reality of violence and animus.

And this is my Christmas truth. For us to be alive in Jesus—to be alive in the adventure that Christmas calls us to—is to side with all those who are vulnerable, even as the Christ Child was vulnerable. It is to live in defiance of those who see the vulnerable as expendable. It is to refuse to bow to any and every Herod and any and every ruthless regime. It is instead to kneel in the manger and then to go out to weave whatever webs we can as we continue to commit ourselves to acting justly, loving tenderly, and walking humbly with God.

It seems I found the Christmas Truth I wanted to share with you after all.

Some Notes Worth Noting

1. Books That Bind meets Thursday, December 4 at 6:30 pm on Zoom. We are reading and may even discuss "First Lie Wins," a thrilling, suspenseful novel by Ashley Elston. The actress Reese Witherspoon, who has her own book club, loved it. She said, "This fast-paced read has everything you could want in a thriller: secret identities, a mysterious boss and a cat & mouse game that kept me guessing the whole way through." It was a good read.
2. Christmas Eve service will be, you guessed it, December 24 at 6:30 pm. Zoom only this year Have your candles and singing voices ready.
3. December 9 birthday greetings to Hunter Morgan
4. Sierra Christian Church's Men's Fellowship meets Saturday, December 6, at 9:00 am on Zoom.
5. Holiday Concert—Two performances of the SVCC Choir, which features singers from Arden Christian Church, will be held December 16 and 18th, at 7:30. (See poster on page 9)

"If God is the source of life, I worship God by living. If God is the source of love, I worship God by loving. If God is the ground of being, I worship God by having the courage to be more fully human; the embodiment of the divine." (John Shelby Spong)

I watched my dog chase his tail for 10 minutes, and thought, "Wow, dogs are so easily entertained." Then I realized I just watched my dog chase his tail for 10 minutes.



Pastor Christine offering Communion



Seated at the table with gratitude, and food



The table awaits the congregation



Dessert—Lemon Meringue pie, Pecan Pie, Pumpkin Pie, and more...

Our Thanksgiving Potluck



Diane Wilson, Liz Throne, and Pastor Christine



Gay Wilhelm



Elder Beth Murphy



Sandy Barry deciding what's next on the menu.



Norm Pobanz

Four Christmas Stories to Carry Us Through

1. The Littlest Angel, by Charles Tazewell

Long ago, by how we measure the passing of time, the Littlest Angel was miserable. When he arrived in Heaven he tried to hide it, but his lower lip trembled, and tears ran down his cheek.



His unhappiness had most all of heaven in turmoil. His shrill, ear-splitting whistle resounded at all hours through the Golden Streets. He vociferously sang off-key at the singing practice of the Heavenly Choir, and being so small it took him twice as long as anyone else to get to nightly

prayers. The Littlest Angel always arrived late, and knocked everyone's wings askew as he darted into his place.

And his appearance was even more of a concern. To begin with, he didn't really look like an angel. His halo was permanently tarnished where he held onto it with one hot little hand when he ran, and he was always running. Even when he stood very still, it never behaved as a halo should. It was always slipping down over his right eye. Or his left eye. Or sometimes slipping off the back of his head and rolling away down some Golden Street forcing him to chase after it.

And his wings were neither useful nor orna-

mental. When the Littlest Angel perched himself like a sparrow on the very edge of a cloud and prepared to take off, he would, after much hesitation, hurl himself into space only to fall flat because he always forgot to flap his wings.

When the day came for his progress review with the Angel of Understanding, he mustered up the courage to explain how terribly difficult it was for a boy who suddenly finds himself transformed into an angel. He explained there wasn't a whole lot in Heaven for a small angel to do. He missed his home, where he could climb trees, and splash in the streams near his home, and explore caves and run in the rain.

The Understanding Angel nodded like he truly understood and asked what would make him most happy here in Paradise. The Littlest Angel thought for a moment, and whispered in his ear.

"There's a box. I left it under my bed back home. If only I could have that."

The Understanding Angel understood. "You shall have it," he promised. And a fleet-winged Heavenly Messenger was instantly dispatched to bring the box to Paradise.

And then, in all those timeless days that followed, everyone wondered at the great change in the Littlest Angel, for, among all the young angels he was the most happy. And in no time at all he was

Please see Littlest Angel page 7

2. "Why the Chimes Rang, by Raymond Macdonald Alden

There was once a wonderful church with a steeple so high the top could only be seen on the clearest of days. Perched high in the steeple were chimes that legend said made the most beautiful music ever heard, a sound sweeter than the sound of the wind blowing through trees high in the mountains where the air is so clean and pure it made you feel young just to breathe it in.

They were Christmas chimes, and every Christmas Eve people from all over would come and lay gifts at the feet of the Baby Jesus in the hope that their offering would make the chimes ring. Only the greatest and most loving gift—one truly from the heart—could make them ring. No one alive had ever heard them ring.

Now, far away from the city in a country village lived a boy named Pedro and his younger brother. They knew of the legend and wanted very much to see the



Please see Chimes, page 10

3. Cappy Cordwainer, Inspired by a Leo Tolstoy short story

It was Christmas Eve and although it was still afternoon, lights had begun to appear in the shops and houses of a little Maine town that is no longer on any maps, thought it probably should be. It was where Cappy Cordwainer lived. He was, appropriately enough, the town's shoe cobbler, and everyone called him Cappy. The short winter day was nearly over. Excited children scurried indoors and now only muffled sounds of chatter and laughter escaped from closed shutters.

Though the town's only cobbler, he primarily kept to himself. He stepped outside his shop to take one last look around. The sounds of happiness, the bright lights and the faint but delicious smells of Christmas cooking reminded him of past Christmas times when his wife had still been alive and his own children little. Now they were gone. His wife dead, four of his six children also dead, and the other two far away leading busy lives they said were too demanding to take leave for to visit.



He had grown old and tired, bitter in a loneliness he did not fully understand except for the sadness that made him feel pointless. Then, with a sigh, he settled in his big armchair.

Cappy did not often read, but tonight he pulled down the big old family Bible and, slowly tracing the lines with one forefinger, he read again the Christmas story, which had been recommended by a man whose shoes Papa Panov had recently repaired. The man told him to read the New Testament, as it might—just might—help him. He read how Mary and Joseph, tired by their journey to Bethlehem, found no room for them at the inn, so that Mary's little baby was born in a barn.

“If they had come to my door,” Cappy said to no one, because no one was there, “I would have given them my bed, and I could have covered the baby with my quilt to keep him warm.”

Please see Cappy Cordwainer, page 8

4. Luke 2: 1-20

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while^[a] Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the

people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Littlest Angel

(Continued from page 5)

flying like an angel.

Then it came to pass that the Son of God, was to be born, and all of Heaven got busy preparing gifts for the baby. But the Littlest Angel sat by himself moping because he did not know what gift would be befitting the baby Jesus.

He could not figure it out. But when the day came, he decided what the best gift he could give would be. He proudly brought it from its hiding place behind a cloud, and humbly placed it before the Throne of God. It was only a small, rough, unsightly box, but inside were wonderful things he thought that even the Child of God would treasure!

But seeing his beat up and rough little box alongside gifts of radiant splendor and beauty that lit the heavens, he felt ashamed. It was ugly. It was worthless. If only he could hide it away from the sight of God before it was even noticed.

But it was too late! The Hand of God moved slowly over all that bright array of shining gifts, then paused, then dropped, then came to rest on the lowly gift of the Littlest Angel.

The Littlest Angel trembled as the box was opened, and there, before the Eyes of God and all His Heavenly Host, was what he offered to the Christ Child. There was a butterfly with golden wings, captured one bright summer day on the hills above Jerusalem, and a sky-blue egg from a bird's nest in the olive tree that stood to shade his mother's kitchen door. And two white stones, found on a muddy river bank, where he and his friends had played, and, at the bottom of the box, a limp, tooth-marked leather strap, once

worn as a collar by his dog, who had died as he had lived, in absolute love and devotion.

The Littlest Angel wept. Why had he ever thought the box was so wonderful? Why had he dreamed that such utterly useless things would be loved by anyone else, let alone the Son of God. He turned to run and hide, but he stumbled and fell, and with a cry and clatter, his halo rolled to the very foot of the Heavenly Throne!

There was an ominous silence in the Celestial City, a silence complete and undisturbed save for the sobbing of the Littlest Angel.

Then suddenly, the Voice of God, like Divine Music, rose and swelled through Paradise.

And the Voice of God spoke, saying, "Of all the gifts of all the angels I find that this small box pleases me most. Its contents are of the Earth and of men, and My Son is born to be King of both. These are the things My Son will know and love and cherish and then, regretfully, will leave behind when His task is done. I accept this gift in the Name of the Child, Jesus, born of Mary this night in Bethlehem."

There was a breathless pause, and then the rough box of the Littlest Angel began to glow with a bright, unearthly light, then the light became a lustrous flame, and the flame became a radiant brilliance that blinded the eyes of all the angels!

The Littlest Angel watched it take its place in the night sky, a perfect white light shining over a stable where a child was born, lighting the way for shepherds and kings, and men and women for all time to come.

Christmas Carols on Strings at First United Methodist Church

Saturday, December 20 , Candlelight Concert First United Methodist Church

Doors open 45 minutes before the show and close 5 minutes prior to the start. Late arrivals will not be permitted.

String Quartet - Range Ensemble - Sacramento

View the FAQs for this event [here](#)

Seating is assigned on a first come first served basis in each zone

Check out all the [Candlelight concerts](#) in Sacramento

To treat your friends and family to a Candlelight gift card, click [here](#)

Tentative Program

12 Days of Christmas Angels from the Realms of Glory O Holy Night

Angels We Have Heard On High. Away in a Manger Carol of the Bells

Deck the Halls. Ding Dong! Merrily on High. Do You Hear What I Hear

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen Greensleeves (What Child Is This) Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

the World. O Christmas Tree (O Tannenbaum). O Come All Ye Faithful. The First Noël



Cappy Cordwainer

(Continued from page 6)

He read about the wise men who had come to see the baby Jesus, bringing him splendid gifts, though Cappy had no idea what they were. His face fell. "What could I have brought the Baby Jesus if I saw him?" he asked himself.

He put down the Bible, got up and stretched his long arms to the shelf high up in the closet in his little room. He took down a small, dusty box and opened it. Inside was a perfect pair of tiny leather shoes. Cappy Cordwainer smiled with satisfaction. Yes, they were as good as he had remembered—the best shoes he had ever made. "My son would have loved them," he said, not without some heartbreak.

"I would give the Baby Jesus these shoes," he thought to himself, "if I ever had the chance. If I ever saw Him."

He then read more of Luke, more about Jesus's life, and something, small perhaps, but something, started to open in him.

He was feeling even more tired now, and the more he read the sleepier he became. The print began to dance before his eyes so he closed them. Just for a minute. Cappy was fast asleep.

And as he slept he dreamed. He dreamed that someone was in his room with him and he knew at once, as one does in dreams, who the it was. It was Jesus. "You have been wishing that you could see me, Cappy Cordwainer," he said kindly "Look for me tomorrow. It will be Christmas Day and I will visit you. But you will have to look carefully."

When at last Cappy woke, the bells were ringing out and a thin light was filtering through the shutters. "Bless my soul!" said Cappy Cordwainer. "It's Christmas Day!"

He stood up and stretched himself for he was rather stiff. The familiar loneliness and sadness was still with him, but he remembered the dream and could not help but smile. Would Jesus really come and visit? He decided he would pay close attention all day so that he would not miss Him if indeed he came.

Cappy Cordwainer put on a special pot of coffee for his Christmas breakfast, took down the shutters and looked out the window. The snow was quiet and deep, and the street was deserted; no one was stirring yet. No one, that is, except the street sweeper. With his broom, he looked as miserable and dirty as anyone might having to work on a cold and freezing Christmas morning clearing snow from in front of doors and

stoops.

Cappy opened his shop door, letting in a thin stream of cold air. "Come in!" he shouted across the street cheerily. "Come in and have some hot coffee and get out of the cold! It's Christmas morning!"

The sweeper looked up. He was only too glad to put down his broom and come into the warm room. His old clothes steamed gently in the heat of the stove, and he clasped both raw red hands round the comforting warm mug as he drank.

Cappy watched him with satisfaction, but every now and then his eyes strayed to the window. He was keeping a vigilant watch.

"Expecting someone?" the sweeper asked at last. So Cappy Cordwainer told him about his dream.

"Well, I hope He comes," the sweeper said in unfiltered sincerity. "You've given me a bit of Christmas I never expected to have. You deserve your dream."

Cappy thought, but didn't say, "We all do."

When he had gone, Cappy put on cabbage soup, then went to the door again, scanning the street. He saw no one, until he did see someone.. Someone was coming.

The girl walked so slowly and quietly, hugging the walls of shops and houses, that it was a while before she came into view. She was tired, and she was carrying something. As she drew near, he could see that it was a baby wrapped in a thin shawl. There was such sadness in her face and in the pinched little face of the baby, that Cappy Cordwainer's heart went out to them.

He waved to her. "Please. Please come in," he called, stepping outside to meet them. "You both need a warm place by the fire to rest."

The young mother let him shepherd her indoors and to the comfort of the armchair. She gave a big sigh of relief.

"I'll warm some milk for the baby," Cappy said, "I've had children of my own—I can feed her for you while you rest." He took the milk from the stove and carefully fed the baby from a spoon, warming her tiny feet by the stove at the same time.

"She needs shoes," Cappy announced.

With tears in her eyes, the girl said,, "I can't afford shoes. I'm on my way to the next town to look for work."

Please see Cappy Cordwainer, page 9

Cappy Cordwainer

(Continued from page 8)

Without a word, Cappy went to the closet and pulled down the box with the little shoes he would have given to the Baby Jesus if he had the chance. He looked again at the cold little feet and knew without a shred of doubt what he had to do.

"Try these on her," he said, handing the baby and the shoes to the mother.

The beautiful little shoes were a perfect fit. The girl smiled happily and the baby gurgled with pleasure.

"You have been so kind to us," the girl said, when she got up with her baby to go. "So generous. May all your Christmas dreams come true!"

There was a hint of sadness, perhaps defeat in Cappy's smile when he nodded to her. Perhaps he had missed his visitor? He looked anxiously up and down the street. He saw some of his customers on their way to Christmas meals with family. He waved to them and wished them a Merry Christmas. And he saw beggars, cold, tired, and hungry. He waved to them but instead of wishing them a Merry Christmas he beckoned them to his door, where he gave them hot soup and large chunks of bread, all the while keeping an eye out just in case.

Night brought a deep darkness and Cappy

Cordwainer fell into his chair in despair. No one was visiting him today. He must have fallen asleep, because he suddenly, surprisingly, felt like he was not alone in his room. Then all at once he knew he was not alone in the room.

This was not dream, He was wide awake. At first, he seemed to see before his eyes the long stream of people who had come to him that day. He saw again the old road sweeper, the young mother and her baby, and the beggars he had fed. As they passed, each whispered, "Didn't you see me, Cappy Cordwainer?" "Do you see me now?"

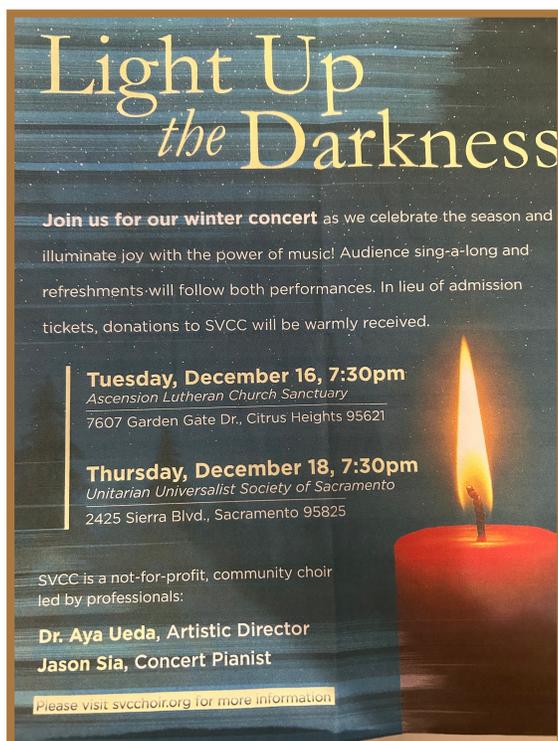
"Who are you?" he called out, bewildered.

Then another voice answered him. It was the voice from his dream the night before.

"I was hungry and you fed me," he said. "I was naked and you clothed me. I was cold and you warmed me. I came to you today in every one of those you helped and welcomed."

Then all was quiet and still. Only the sound of the big clock ticking. A great peace and happiness seemed to fill the room, overflowing Cappy Cordwainer's heart until he wanted to burst out singing and laughing and dancing with joy.

"Merry Christmas," he said to no one in particular, except perhaps the whole world.



**Light Up
the Darkness**

Join us for our winter concert as we celebrate the season and illuminate joy with the power of music! Audience sing-a-long and refreshments will follow both performances. In lieu of admission tickets, donations to SVCC will be warmly received.

Tuesday, December 16, 7:30pm
Ascension Lutheran Church Sanctuary
7607 Garden Gate Dr., Citrus Heights 95621

Thursday, December 18, 7:30pm
Unitarian Universalist Society of Sacramento
2425 Sierra Blvd., Sacramento 95825

SVCC is a not-for-profit, community choir led by professionals:

Dr. Aya Ueda, Artistic Director
Jason Sia, Concert Pianist

Please visit svcchoir.org for more information



A Dignity Cookbook - Global Ministries

by Evan Huegel, Elena Huegel, and Mercedes Cadena Based on themes from the Hebrew Bible, recipes, and stories from Latin America and around the world, A Dignity Cookbook offers exercises to practice the dignity values expressed through hospitality in body,

[Read More](#)

Chimes

(Continued from page 5)

great church on Christmas Eve and maybe hear them ring. So, their grandfather slipped a few silver coins into Pedro's hand and told him to be careful.

"Take these as offering to the Baby Jesus," Grandfather said. "It is not much, but it is what we have. Be polite and kind to each other and anyone you meet."

As Pedro and Little Brother approached the great church, they saw a woman lying in the snow. She had fallen and was too sick and tired to continue. Pedro knew he had to stay and keep her as warm as possible, or she might not live through the night. He looked at her silently and told Little Brother he would have to continue to the church without him.

"Alone?" said Little Brother. "But you will not see the Christmas service?"

"This poor woman will freeze to death if nobody cares for her. When the service is over bring someone to help her. Maybe I can get her to eat the bread that is in my pocket."

"But that is our food," Little Brother said.

"She needs it more than we do," Pedro answered.

"I don't want to leave you," said Little Brother.

"You must see and hear everything twice, Little Brother. Once for you and once for me. I am sure the Baby Jesus knows I would love to come with you and pray to Him. Here, Little Brother, give the Baby Jesus these small silver coins when no one is looking."

Even though he knew he was doing the right thing, Pedro fought back tears as his brother walked

away.

The great church was beautiful that night. When the organ played and the thousands of people sang, the walls shook with the sound. Young Pedro, outside the church, scared to go in, felt the earth shake around him.

When it was time to make offerings to the Baby Jesus, rich men, important men, gave their gifts. Some brought jewels. A great writer gave a book he had been writing for years. Last of all, came the king. When he offered his jeweled crown, everyone knew the chimes would finally ring.

But all they heard was the cold wind in the tower, and they began to believe that the legend of the chimes was a myth. Their surging outrage was cut short, however, when suddenly, the organist stopped playing. The old priest stood and held up his hands. He was looking up toward where he knew the chimes hung.

As all the people listened, there came softly but clearly through the air, a sound no one had ever heard before. The chimes. It was much sweeter than even the legend claimed. It seemed to rise and fall in the sky. To the old and sick it sounded like health and rejuvenation. To the young and restless it was full of peace and guidance. To the sad there was hope. To the angry, solace. The sound of the chimes spoke with beauty to everyone who could hear it, and no one who heard it would ever be the same again.

Everyone looked to the front of the church to see what great gift had caused the chimes to finally ring. But all anyone saw was a child, a young boy, moving silently away from the altar, where there were now several small pieces of silver shining in a light that had no obvious source.

**Christmas Eve Service on December 24, 6:30 pm.
It will be Zoom only this year.
Invites will go out in plenty of time. Invite family
and friends and have candles ready and your
singing voices warmed and strong.**

Sierra Christian Church Monthly Calendar

December 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4 10:30 am Worship	1	2	3	4	5	6 9 am Men's Fellowship Breakfast
7 10:30 am Worship	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 10:30 am Worship	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 10:30 am Worship	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Service 6:30 pm on Zoom	25 Christmas Day!	26	27
28 10:30 am Worship	29	30	31 New Year's Eve	1/1/2026 Welcome to 2026!	2	3

List & Links of Regional Events

February 28, 2026: Anti-Racism Training (Save the Date)

May 15-17, 2026: Women's Tri-Regional Gathering (Save the Date)

Some Significant December Dates in History

December 2, 1893—Harriet Wood, known as Pauline Cushman and Pauline C. Fryer, died in San Francisco at age 60. She was a stage actress and Union spy during the Civil War.

December 2, 1913 - The U.S. Senate passed the Raker Act. That let San Francisco dam the Tuolumne River in Yosemite National Park for water-collection and power-generation facilities.

December 2, 1938—The first persons were executed in the gas chamber at San Quentin State Prison. Robert Lee Cannon and Albert Kessell were executed for their role in the riot at Folsom State Prison where the warden, a guard and two inmates were killed.

December 2, 2011 - Santa Clara city officials announced \$850 million in funding for a new 49ers football stadium estimated to cost \$1.02 billion.

December 3, 1786 - The first marriage was performed at the Santa Barbara Presidio. Joseph Calisto, a 23-year-old Spanish soldier, wed Juana Vitala Feliz, who was around 13-years-old. They had 13 children.

December 4, 1941—The newly proposed state of Jefferson elected John Childs as the first governor of the breakaway territory that separated from California and Oregon.

December 5, 2011—U.C. Berkeley astronomers reported finding two black holes, each 10 billion times the mass of our sun, in galaxies more than 300 million light years away.

December 6, 1931 - The U.S. Senate approved Hetch Hetchy Dam in Yosemite National Park. It became the main water source for San Francisco and other Bay Area communities.

December 6, 1935 - The San Francisco Chronicle reported that there were more rats than people in the city by a factor of 3 to 1

December 6, 1994 - Orange County filed for bankruptcy protection due to some \$2 billion investment losses, the biggest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history

December 7, 1872 - Los Angeles Public Library was founded. Today, it is among the greatest U.S. libraries.

December 8, 1941—San Francisco held its first air raid and blackout at 6:15 p.m. during which people reported hearing Japanese attack planes. A master power switch at the Presidio accidentally shut off and harbor defenses were plunged into darkness.

December 10, 1941- A Pan American Airways Clipper plane landed at the San Francisco Treasure Island seaplane harbor with bullet holes from Japanese guns at Wake Island on December 7.

December 11, 1932 - San Francisco recorded a temperature of 27°F, its coldest day ever and it snowed.

December 12, 1953 - Chuck Yeager reached Mach 2.43, or 1,620 mph, in the Bell X-1A rocket plane. He flew from Murac Army Airfield near Palmdale—the X-1 was the first manned airplane to exceed the speed of sound in level flight.

December 13, 1944 - Los Angeles recorded a record low temperature, 28°F. The record high, 92°F, was in 1938.

December 14, 1963 - Baldwin Hills Reservoir in Los Angeles, built above an active fault line, broke open. In three hours, 250 million gallons of water flooded the surrounding neighborhood, destroying 277 homes and killing five people.

December 16, 1913 - Charlie Chaplin began his film career at Keystone Studios in Edendale, earning \$150 a week

December 16, 2009 - San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom struck a deal with the U.S. Navy to acquire Treasure Island for a guaranteed payment of \$55 million over several years.

December 19, 1964 - Heavy rain from December 19, 1964 to January 7, 1965 flooded nearly every river in coastal Northern California. It was called the Christmas Flood.

December 20, 1849 - Peter Burnett became the first state governor of California. He proposed that blacks, slave or free, be banned from the state and thought it necessary to exterminate the state's native people.

December 21, 1946 - Frank Capra's "It's a Wonderful

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Life” premiered. The Christmas fantasy comedy drama, starring James Stewart

and Donna Reed became a holiday classic.

December 22, 1965 - The Byrds recorded “Eight Miles High” in Hollywood. It was one the first full-blown psychedelic rock recording and was banned from the radio shortly after release.

December 23, 1849— A German immigrant named August Lang set up the first Christmas tree in his San Francisco home, marking the beginning of the tradition in the state.

December 24, 1849— A fire that started at a San Francisco gambling parlor burned most of the city because there was no fire department. It was one of seven major fires in two years.

December 24, 1914— John Muir, Scottish-born American naturalist and Sierra Club founder, died in Los Angeles at age 76. He fought to preserve Yosemite Valley, Sequoia National Park and other wilderness areas.

December 24, 1997 - The U.S. Air Force agreed to

sell McClellan Air Force Base to Sacramento County for a some \$90 million, payments to begin in 2008 and continue for 45 years.

December 25, 1939— Snow actually fell in Los Angeles, the only time in recorded history that the city has experienced a white Christmas.

December 26, 1846 - Trapped in snow in the Sierra Nevada and without food, starving members of the Donner Party resorted to cannibalism.

December 26, 1966 - Kwanzaa was first celebrated by Maulana Karenga, chair of Black Studies at California State University, Long Beach.

December 27, 2002— Bridgeville in Humboldt County was sold on Ebay for \$1.77 million. After the deal failed, a Southern California investor bought the 82-acre town for \$700,000 in 2004.

December 28, 1902 - The Trans-Pacific cable that linked Hawaii to the U.S. landed at Ocean Beach in San Francisco near the Cliff House. It was met by a large crowd, dignitaries and a brass band.

December 31, 1965 - California became the most populous state in the U.S.

Affordable Housing Not A Dead Dream After All

It is hard to know whether it was a stroke of dumb luck, an extraordinary coincidence driven by cosmic forces, or a gracious act of the spirit that led to Sierra Christian Church’s recent meeting with Sydney Stone of the Cesar Chavez Foundation and the rebirth of the prospect of senior affordable housing on the church’s property.

Stone, formally of Christian Church Homes, was part of the original discussions between CCH and the SCC to develop housing on the 5+ acres. But CCH backed away from the project when funding became problematic and a new leadership team took over. Stone then went to work with the Cesar Chavez Foundation, which developed and now manages the Chris Hartmire Plaza in Pomona. CCF has developed 300 single-family homes and more than 5,000 affordable multi-family units in 39 communities across four states.

It was a casual conversation at the grand opening of the Chris Hartmire Plaza that Stone happened to overhear. Pastor Christine, John Hartmire, and Paul

Chavez were discussing Sierra’s hopes to develop affordable housing on its land, and when Chavez probed a little more, Christine filled him in on the details. Stone recognized the property and project and told Chavez that he was very familiar with the property and what an excellent site it is for an affordable housing community.

CCH’s plans were soon shared with Chavez, who immediately forward them to Stone with guidance to pursue the possibility. Stone then called for the November 21 meeting and after walking the property asked if the church would want to sell the property to the foundation outright or lease it and receive monthly payments—a discussion the congregation will have.

Stone, his enthusiasm palpable, said he would be meeting with his board as soon as possible and would be in touch after the holiday season. Getting in his car, he remarked, “Such a great piece of land for such a great vision.”

“It was the spirit,” said Christine, answering a question that wasn’t really asked.