



"To Discover and Grow in God's Grace and Love"

Vol. 374 No. 12

Published Once A Month

December 1, 2021

December

Merry Christmas

May the peace of Christ be with you this Advent Season

Worship

community

Preparation

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ANAHEIM

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"Grateful for the Past—Hopeful for the Future!"

“Prepare Your Heart for God”

Dr. Jim Schibsted

What do you expect for Christmas?

What does it all mean to you?

After all Christmas is just a few weeks away.

How do you prepare your hearts for God this Advent Season?

In Luke 3:1-20 John the Baptist urged his hearers to prepare a way for the coming of the Lord. Keep in mind that the poor were being mistreated. The powerful were abusing their authority. John the Baptist spoke against the evil which was going on. It cost him his freedom as he was put in prison and eventually he was executed.

That's what this Scripture reading is about. The day of salvation is about to come upon them. John the Baptist urges his hearers to ***"prepare a way for the Lord."*** The Lord's coming does not depend on their efforts. He's coming regardless. John reminds his hearers of **their need** to respond to God. We have to allow ourselves to be loved by God. Then having experienced that love we will naturally want to share it with others. When we have been touched by the love of God it should affect the way we treat others.

When the multitudes asked John the Baptist what they must do to prepare for the coming of the Lord, He responded in Luke 3, verse 11: ***"Let the man who has two tunics share with him who has none; and let him who has food do likewise."*** In other words, share out of your abundance. God has blessed you so you can bless someone else.

If we could only get that idea into our minds. There would be a lot more sharing going on. Most of us really have much, much more than we need. To the tax collectors John the Baptist said in verse 13, "Collect no more than what you have been ordered to." To the soldiers He said in verse 14, "Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages."

(Continued on Page 7)

Connect

Sunday Morning Worship

10:45am, Sundays

In Person and on Facebook Live

Encouragement for Today

Pastor Jim, Pastor Emily and friends share short encouraging videos on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday each week on Facebook and Instagram.

Church Social Media Pages

Find us on Facebook at "Anaheim Chapel at First Congregational Church of Anaheim" or on Instagram under "FCCAnaheim."

Women's Christmas Lunch

Monday, December 6th
11:30-1:00pm
McKenzie Hall

JOG: Just Ordinary Guys

Monday, December 13th
12:00-1:30pm
Christmas Special Luncheon
Guest Speaker, Cece Leyton
\$12, First Time Visitors Free

Operation Bless

Food Distribution

Wednesday, December 15th
4:30-6:30pm

*Drive thru for free food from the Food Bank! Volunteers may arrive at 3:30pm to begin sorting food.

Christmas Calendar:

5 Star Band in Worship

Sunday, December 12th

Advent Quiet Prayer Service

Wednesday, December 15th
9:00-10:00am
Griffith House Chapel

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Friday, December 24th
7:00pm

FCCA News



Thanksgiving Worship and Meal

It was so good to celebrate Thanksgiving as a church family the Sunday before Thanksgiving! Cheryl Cook's husband and another close friend cooked tasty turkeys for us, and we enjoyed a meaningful worship service during which many of you shared what you thank God for this year. It was a blessing to enjoy time together, giving thanks for God's presence and for each other.

Thankful Thursdays in November

This month we highlighted different church members for "Thankful Thursdays." Thank you to all who shared – we heard from Katie and Dick Purvis, Raul Caicedo, Jeffrey Williams, Jayden, Desi and Aiden.

Women's Christmas Lunch

Monday, December 6th from 11:30-1:00pm

At this lunch, we will be collecting Christmas decorations and donations to help us decorate Sonia's House for Christmas – a Grandma's House of Hope location. Decorations or financial gifts welcome.

Advent Prayer Service

Wednesday, December 15th from 9:00-10:00am in Griffith House Chapel

Come enjoy a time of quiet, prayerful reflection with us this season.

Operation Bless Food Distribution

Wednesday, December 15th from 4:30-6:30pm

*Volunteers are welcome to arrive at 3:30pm to begin sorting food.



JOG's Christmas Special Luncheon

Featuring Guest Speaker, Cece Leyton



After 17 years of experience in the finance industry, Cece felt a calling to follow her true passion. Her career in fashion began by designing a piece of paradise. Her luxurious, one-of-a-kind resort wear is design to inspire and transform. Ladies that experience her designs are transported to their favorite tropical destinations as the look and feel of luxury brings paradise to mind and body. Today, she is focused on creating a faith-based line where faith meets fashion. Women are clothed in God's

truth through her exquisite Robes of Truth. Her background provides her the business acumen needed to effectively operate a company while her travels around the world inspire her designs and collections. Recently, Cece expanded her calling to begin a women's ministry, The Well. Cece is passionate about helping other sisters, not only to survive, but to thrive in Christ.

When: Monday, December 13th, 2021

12:00pm - 1:30pm

Where: First Congregational Church of Anaheim

515 North State College Blvd; Anaheim, Ca 92806

(Located one block south of La Palma on the west side of State
College in the city of Anaheim)

Cost: \$12

Plan on enjoying another delicious meal prepared especially,

By: Culinary Chef Jose Ramon Chavez.

Please RSVP via email at chuck@penningtons-inc.com or
Call Chuck at 714-350-8983 or Mike Austin at 714-425-2649




Of Orange County

Just Ordinary Guys

Meeting the 2nd Monday of Every Month

Missions Corner



We empower children to bring ideas to life, unleashing the potential each child has.

Mission Ministries Philippines Update

Thank you to all who donated to Mission Ministries Philippines last month! MMP hosted a fundraiser in November to help with their financial challenges during COVID-19. Thanks to you, we contributed \$1,145.00!

Mission Ministries Philippines serves community and the poorest by partnering with churches, Non-Government Organizations, community based groups and authorized individuals in setting up or enriching Early Childhood Development Programs.

Decorating a Grandma's House of Hope location for Christmas!

We adopted a Grandma's House of Hope location for Christmas. Members of the church will be decorating Sonia's House on Wednesday, December 8th. Women are invited to donate Christmas decorations at the Women's Lunch on December 6th. Financial donations are also welcome so that we may purchase a live tree, wreaths and garland for the home. Mark any donation "Grandma's House Christmas" if you would like to contribute.

Grandma's House of Hope exists to empower the invisible populations of Orange County. One of their programs is Rescued & Restored Housing through which they provide safe, confidential, emergency and transitional shelter/housing for those who are experiencing homelessness and in need of trauma informed care and support.

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Cash Christmas Baskets

2021

We are happy to report that our 2020 year of online classes ended with the distribution of "Cash Christmas Baskets" to our families. The pandemic forced us to change the way we usually helped, and it worked out! This support was enough to buy food for a nice Christmas dinner and to buy groceries to last up to two weeks.

We appreciate the privilege you give us to be your extended helping hand to Panamerican Institute's families.

This wonderful tradition started with the distribution of a couple of grocery bags to 3 or 4 families. Next December will be the 50th consecutive year! and with your generosity, we hope all our families will receive this needed aid.

Please continue supporting our families so each one receives a "Cash Christmas Basket" at \$60 each.

From Tijuana, México, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year!



Send your tax-deductable donation to

Panamerican Institute

P. O. Box 433872

San Ysidro, CA 92143

or online at

www.paischool.org



December Birthdays

- 1 Joshua Williams
- 4 Maria Doyle
- 14 David Hoke
- 17 Ryan Rolnicki
- 19 Natalie Garis
- 20 Maria Caicedo
- 21 Bruce Edwards
- 23 Vito Di Camillo
- 25 Schvounder Robinson
- 27 Cindy Ramsey
- 28 Stephana Williams
- 31 Deborah Miller

If you would like to have your birthday included in the CALL, please contact the church office at 714-776-0960 or fccaooffice@gmail.com.

("Prepare Your Heart" Continued...) Christianity is a very practical, down to earth religion. If we are to prepare our hearts for the Lord we must share our surplus with those in need. Another way to prepare for the coming of the Lord was that the people needed to prepare a place in their busy lives for the Messiah. The picture out of the book of Isaiah which John the Baptist quotes in verse 4-6 is a **construction picture**. Some of you have worked construction at some time in your life. This passage of Scripture is a construction picture. Clearing a way through the rubble of the wilderness. Smoothing out the rough areas and grading down the areas that were too high. Fill dirt would be brought in for the low spots. That which was impassable was made fit for travel.

Like a bushwhacker with a machete, or a voyager cutting his way through the jungle, God cries out to us, **"Make a place for me!"** Make a road for me to travel on that will lead to the depths. What should we expect during this Advent Season? What is our responsibility? Simply, we are invited to allow God into our lives, to help us, to make us into the people He longs for us to become. When you and I take some time to unclutter our busy lives by examining some of those inner noises and voices that drain our energy, the leading and guidance of God's spirit will become more recognizable.

Take a moment and pray the following prayer.

Eternal God, We pause in the quiet of this moment to wait for the peace and calm that comes from your presence. Be with us in our waiting, which includes both our fears and our hopes. Lord, we open our hearts in confession to you. With Christmas coming closer sometimes we find ourselves worrying about our wills, and our rights, in the midst of preparation, shopping and parties. Our expectations at times prevent us from truly seeing others and their needs. Please make us sensitive to those around us. Please comfort their hearts. We pray for the leaders of our world: that they may act in ways that promotes justice and peace. We pray for those who are suffering that the light of Christ may shine on them today. Make us ready to celebrate with expectation the birth of Christ. We offer these prayers humbly in his names. Amen.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ANAHEIM

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Check us out on the web at www.fccanaheim.org

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Member: Cal-West Association—Since 1964

Please consider sponsoring an issue of "The Call".
Your donation of \$50 can help offset the cost.
Please contact the Church Office for details at 714. 776.0960