

Golden Nugget

A NEWSLETTER FOR OUR CHURCH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

A Word from the Pastor

"This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things."

1 Peter 10:4b-12



It's December! It's always crazy to me how quickly it seems that the year flies by; it's so hard to believe that my family and I have been in California for almost 6 months already. This month is always an exciting time because, when the calendar turns to December, it means that Thanksgiving has come and gone and now the Christmas season can get into full swing. I know at my house, Karla and the kids are always ready to start decorating the house for Christmas before we have even finished digesting our turkey!

In churches across the world, the Christmas season that begins on December 1 is known as Advent. Almost every church has special celebrations and observance to commemorate the Advent season, but I am willing to bet that many church members do not actually know what Advent is, or why we celebrate it.

December 2019

Advent is a season of anticipation and rejoicing for the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; not just His coming into the world in that stable in the Middle East 2000 years ago, but His return to the world that has yet to occur. The word "Advent" itself comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means "coming;" and *adventus* itself is a transliteration of the Greek word *parousia*, which means "presence after absence" or "arrival." The word *parousia* is used throughout the New Testament to refer to the second coming of Jesus.

The celebration of the season of Advent links the situation of the church of Jesus Christ to the people of Israel when they were in exile. While they were away from their homeland, God's people looked back to the time that God brought them out of exile and slavery in Egypt as to give them hope that God would act for them once again and bring them out of Babylon and back to the Promised Land. In the same way, the church of Jesus Christ in the present age, during the Advent season, looks back to celebrate Jesus' first coming as a way to give us hope in the fact that He will return for us and usher in His kingdom in the New Heavens and the New Earth.

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First Presbyterian Church of Columbia † "Church of the 49ers"

GOLDEN NUGGET

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"Church of the 49ers"
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Office Hours:
Tuesday through Friday
9:00 am—3:00 pm

Worship Service:
10:00 am Sundays

STAFF

Rev. Keith Reid, Pastor
Rev. Lee Warford, Assistant Pastor
Deb Johnson, Office Administrator
Carolyn Sylva, Accompanist

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We are the Church of the 49ers,
where God is the gold. We serve
and worship God in spirit and in the
truth of the scriptures. We live by faith
and will be known by our love
for others and our voice of hope.

CHURCH FINANCIAL SUMMARY January 1 through October 31, 2019 (exclusive of other income/expenses)

	Budget	Actual	Difference Over/(Under)
Income	\$207,681	\$199,871	(\$7,810)
Expense	\$200,549	\$197,553	(\$2,996)

Net Ordinary Income as of October 31: \$2,317.62
Mortgage Balance as of October 31: \$78,129.03
Oct. 2019 Mortgage Principal Payment: \$940.59

November Session Highlights

Highlights of the November 20th
Session meeting include:

Pastor Keith announced he and family
will move momentarily to their new
address in Twain Harte.

Representatives from the Monday
Night Dinners outreach presented a
Behavioral Guidelines document out-
lining conduct expected by our guests
before, during and after the meals.
Session voted to allow the Commu-
nity Dinner workers to open the
doors to their guests as early as 2 pm,
so that they can come in out of the
cold weather, and volunteer with the
dinner set-up.

A reminder was given to all commit-
tee chairs to turn in their reports to
Deb Johnson for the Annual Report
by December 18.

Tuolumne County will be holding a
Town Hall meeting in Faith Hall on
Sunday, March 8, 2020.

Session authorized repair of the Bell
Tower siding (East and South sides),
which will begin in December.

Line Dancing

Carolyn Sylva teaches a
FREE Line Dancing Class
once per week in Faith
Hall - from 9:30 to
10:30 am every
Wednesday. If you're
looking for a fun way to
exercise, come on
down to Faith Hall and
join us. And bring your
friends too!

A motion was made and approved to
grant the church employees a cost-
of-living raise to be added to the
budget. With this change added, the
entire budget was approved. This will
be presented to the membership at
the Annual Congregational Meeting
in January 2020.

The next Session meeting will be on
January 22, 2020, at 2:00 pm in the
Lower Sanctuary, and members are
welcome to attend. Check with the
Office first for the correct start time
and location.

Diane Brandt, Clerk of Session

LOVE CAME DOWN

by Denella Kimura

The Love of God came softly
In the power of the Spirit
Overshadowing the virgin
To conceive the holy child
And she named him, "Jesus,"

"The Lord saves"
"Savior"

This Love fell gently
As the Holy Spirit
Filled this child of light
Favored of God and men
Who called him, "Immanuel,"

"God with us"
"Son of God"

God's love came down
As the Son of David, born to reign
Forever, died and rose again,
And forgave my sins
Because he loves me
And fills *my* heart
with love.

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49er Family News

Grieving

Family and friends of **Peggy Bergeron**, who died November 4 at the age of 86. There was no memorial service.

Bill Lane was called Home to Jesus early on December 1 at the age of 77. Information about a memorial service for Bill will come later.

Congratulations!

Two of our members were honored at the annual Centenarian Luncheon November 8th: Although **Jewel Guhl** was unable to attend, she was recognized as a centenarian at 104. And **Helen Johnson**, at 98, is now a junior member of the Tuolumne County Commission on Aging's University of Life.

Welcome!

Richie and Amanda Lertora and big brother Waylon welcomed **Rhyse Lynn Lertora** on November 6th. She weighed 4 pounds 10.5 ounces and was 18 inches at birth, and is now almost 6 pounds. Rhyse's grandparents are Kim and Tony Lertora, and great-grandparents are Louise Lertora and Ken Minett and Pirkko and Dick Dyer.

Thank You

Jeff, Weston, and I are very appreciative and grateful for the congregation's prayers, cards, and phone calls this last month after Jeff's accident. Everyone's care and concerns have helped us so much. And thank you to God and Jesus for their healing, strength, love, peace, and comfort!

In God's Peace,
Jeff, Shelly, and Weston Goularte



Recently the Mission Committee gave a donation to the Special Olympics in honor of Cheryl Pittman. Cheryl is in the front row wearing a red t-shirt.

December Birthdays

*Happy birthday to you,
Happy birthday to you.
May the Lord bless you
And keep you,
Your whole life through.*

Dec 1	Tony Lertora
Dec 2	Bob Lertora
Dec 2	Harold Wesley
Dec 4	Jeff Goularte
Dec 4	Susie Porte
Dec 6	Paula Njirich
Dec 7	Jon Whited
Dec 8	Alice Morris
Dec 9	Angelica Annett
Dec 9	Jessica Annett
Dec 22	Judy Haughton
Dec 24	Ed Sudduth
Dec 29	George Fifer

Happy Anniversary!

Richie and Amanda Lertora
3 years on December 17

Darrol and Marijean Davis
62 years on December 28



Parish Nursing

Valerie McCale, Parish Nurse, will provide free Blood Pressure Checks on Sunday, **December 15**, following worship, right inside the door in Faith Hall.

Pastor

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My prayer for each one of us this holiday season is that even during the hustle and bustle of decorating, buying presents, going to Christmas parties, and everything else that goes along with the holidays, we will all take the time to slow down and remember what Christ both has already done and is going to do for us. Christ came into this world to pay the penalty for our sins that we could never pay on our own; He came into this world to conquer sin and death and purchase our inheritance, the gift of eternal life. But, not only has He already come into the world for this purpose, He has promised that He is going to return for us to fully and finally establish His reign and His rule and to bring us our full inheritance as joint heirs with Him to eternity. And that, brothers and sisters, more than presents, Christmas trees, or eggnog, is most certainly a reason to celebrate during the month of December!

Pastor Keith



Invite your family and friends
to our special **Candlelight &
Choir Christmas Eve Service --**
7:00 pm on Tuesday,
December 24th

Special Office Hours

The church office will be closed from December 24th through January 1st. If you have a pastoral emergency, contact Pastor Lee Warford at 925-470-9953.

Sermons and Scripture

December 1

Genesis 3:6-15; Luke 1:26-38
"The Savior is Coming!"

December 8

Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 1:18-24
"The Son of Joseph"

December 15

Isaiah 11:1-9; Luke 1:46-55
"Mary's Song"

December 22

2 Samuel 7:11b-16; Luke 1:68-79
"Zechariah's Song"

December 24

Lessons and Carols Service 7:00 pm

December 29

Jeremiah 31:27-34; Galatians 4:1-7
"A King's Inheritance"

Visit churchofthe49ers.com to listen to any past sermons. Click on "Worship" and "Sermons" and then the small white triangle on the left underneath each sermon listed. The audio includes the Scripture verses being read and goes right into the sermon.

Sunday School

Currently Sunday School for the children is in the Ramont Room, but we're anticipating moving into the three newly refurbished classrooms in the Christian Education building as soon as they're complete.

The women's Bible Study will meet in the Lower Sanctuary on Thursdays at 2:00 pm, beginning December 12; and the men will meet at Sonora Hills Multipurpose Room on Wednesdays at 10:00 am, beginning December 11. Both studies of the New Testament book of James will meet two times in December, then break for Christmas.

Pastor Keith will hold a Bible Study at the church in the evening once his schedule settles down. That time and room will be announced in the future.

Interfaith News

We are still collecting canned items for the holidays. Thanks to those of you who were able to contribute for our Thanksgiving meals passed out to our local families.

December 7th we will be having our annual coat drive hopefully at the Standard Ballpark. If raining or snowing, you can bring your coats to the Interfaith Quonset Hut. If you can't make it that day, bring your coats to church, I'll make sure they get delivered.

We still have openings for volunteers in various departments, if you can help in any way or any day, please talk to me either by phone or at church. I'll try to fit you in an area you are most comfortable. Thank you for all you currently do to help others.

Vi Morgado, Interfaith Liaison

First Presbyterian Church of Columbia † "Church of the 49ers"

Columbia's Las Posadas Nativity Procession

Sunday, December 8, 5:30 pm

Las Posadas is a Spanish tradition that re-enacts the biblical story of Mary and Joseph's search for shelter in Bethlehem on the original Christmas Eve. The people of Columbia put on their own version of Las Posadas each December—with a distinctive 1850s flavor. This year it's the 37th annual! Columbia State Historic Park is decorated for the Christmas season with traditional boughs and wreaths, and the ambiance is enhanced with luminaries on Main Street, lighting the way for the evening procession. The cast of characters includes Mary riding on a donkey led by Joseph, angels carrying lanterns, the Wise Men, tax collector, innkeeper, gold miners as shepherds, townspeople in 1850s costume, and the baby Jesus. The Mirth & Glee Carollers provide music for the procession, and on-lookers participate also in this touching Columbia Christmas tradition—singing Christmas carols by candlelight.



Come support the Reid Family! Pastor Keith is portraying the Priest/Narrator, daughters Hailey and Ella will be angels, and little Travis is the baby Jesus.

Christmas Tea

All women are invited to the annual **Presbyterian Women Christmas Tea** on Thursday, December 5th, 11:00 a.m. in Faith Hall.

The program includes a devotional by Pastor Keith, presentation of the PW Honorary Life Member Award, and singing Christmas carols.

The potluck Christmas Tea follows, with tea sandwiches, fancy breads, cookies and other festive foods, and tea, coffee, and hot cider.

All women are invited to this special PW event. Come, and bring a friend!



Community Chorus Concert December 6, 7, 8

The annual **"Sounds of the Season" concert by the Columbia College Community Chorus** with orchestra is the first weekend of December (December 6 -8) at the Sonora Opera Hall: Fri 7:30 pm, Sat 3:00 pm, Sun 3:00 pm. Most of our church's 49er Chancel Choir members also sing in the Community Chorus and have tickets available for \$12 presale (\$15 at the door). Led by Dr. Daryl Hollinger, the first half features Vivaldi's "Gloria," with the chorus accompanied by a full orchestra; and after the opportunity to win fanciful gift baskets during the intermission, the 53-voice chorus will perform traditional Christmas carols settings, one with handbells, and some jazz arrangements too. Also included is the chorus's traditional "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's "Messiah," and the ever-popular audience sing-along.



Sing-Along Messiah December 15 - 3 pm

The Red Church Concert Series is sponsoring the every-other-year Sing-Along Messiah on Sunday, December 15, at 3:00 pm in the Church of the 49ers sanctuary. Come and sing with us, or just sit and enjoy Handel's glorious music. Donations accepted.

Men's Breakfast Fellowship

All men are welcome to meet for a no-host breakfast at Brooks Ranch Restaurant on Mono Way in Sonora – 8:00 am Saturday, December 14.

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Helen Johnson Monday Night Dinners

The Helen Johnson Community Dinner Committee has had a very busy few weeks...with Thanksgiving planning and the dinner on Monday, November 25th, and also working together to plan our Christmas dinner which will be held on Monday, December 16th.

Our annual Thanksgiving "feast" was headed up by Kathy Sudduth, who once again did an amazing job! Right behind Kathy and also working along with six college student volunteers was Renee Woolf. These ladies, along with many volunteers from the community and our church family, worked several hours on Saturday cooking pies, after church on Sunday preparing turkeys, stuffing and potatoes, and then all day on Monday. Kathy actually arrived at Faith Hall Monday morning at 5:40 am! Our first round of turkeys (eight turkeys in all - two in each of our four ovens) were cooking by 6:00 am ...and out by 10:30-11:00. By noon the second round of four turkeys were in the ovens.

A big thank you to all of you who donated these wonderful turkeys and also the many pies that were served on this evening – and also another **HUGE thank you to Pat Loring** for helping us to

purchase our additional stove...which made the preparation of the food **so much easier and efficient!**

On Monday the weather took a turn and it was quite cold...and by 5 o'clock Faith Hall began to fill up. The tables were decorated with colorful table mats and pine cones and there was music for the evening by Alex and Bethany Kash. The total number of community dinner guests served was approximately 170. In addition we provided take out dinners for another meal to approximately 20 guests.

We would like to thank the many volunteers for their help and commitment to this mission. In addition to our committee of regulars (Patti and Doug Lau, Vi Morgado, Tom Kimura, John

Etheridge, Melissa Shultz and Kathy Mastenbrook,) we had help from Susie Porte and her daughter Suzanne, Jennie Moiso, June Perea, Marilyn Williams, Larry and Pat Lincoln; and also Rachael, Randy and others who attend our dinners were helping throughout the day. It was a wonderful evening and we were blessed that both Pastor Keith and Pastor Lee were among our guests, along with family members. It was a lot of work by a lot of people and we are so grateful to all of you for helping to make this Thanksgiving dinner so special.

Blessings to each of you.

**Margie and Suzanne – Co-chairs
Community Dinner Committee**



Many of the Thanksgiving Feast volunteers

Christmas Feast is December 16th

This year our Christmas dinner will be held on Monday, December 16th. Dinner will be served at 6:00 pm. Please consider volunteering for a few hours during the day or evening... we always need help and we always have things

that need to be done. We will be making announcements regarding needs, but at this time we do not have specifics. We will not be serving turkey on this night, but ham. The hams will all be purchased...They are small ones from Costco, and will allow us to cook and carve them efficiently, Dessert is still unknown, but we will let you know if we need contributions.

Again we appreciate everything that was contributed for our Thanksgiving dinner, and all the help you gave. Also, **PLEASE** join us on this evening for a holiday feast with friends you may or may not know, and enjoy the entertainment by Alex Kash and some Christmas music.

Suzanne and Margie

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Fellowship News

12th Annual Soup Lunch & Christmas Caroling

is Sunday, December 22nd, following worship. We have three people lined up already to bring homemade soup (in crockpots) to share with the congregation, and would like about six more. If you want to bring a soup, or bread or crackers or cookies to round out the meal, contact Leslie.

After dining together in Faith Hall, all are encouraged to sing Christmas carols (music provided). And if we have enough singers, we'll go out on the road and visit a few of our home-bound members – bringing music and the peace of Christ to them!

Leslie Davis, Fellowship Chair

Keep Safe Connections

Parish nurse, Valerie McCale, has been trained in SafeTALK, a suicide prevention tool. She can talk and listen with someone who asks for help, and connect them with the help they need. She posted a list of emergency numbers on the bulletin board in the sanctuary, including:

- Tuolumne County Crisis Assessment & Intervention Program: 533-7000, 533-6245, 800-630-1130
- National Suicide Prevention Crisis Line: 800-273-8255
- Friendship Line (for seniors 55+): 800-971-0016
- California Youth Crisis Line: 800-843-5200
- 24-hr Parent Support Line: 888-281-3000
- ER Sonora Adventist Health: 536-5000
- Center for a Nonviolent Community (domestic violence/sexual assault): 533-3401
- Sonora Police: 532-8143, 532-8141
- Tuolumne County Sheriff: 911, 533-5815

Mission Committee

Joe Aldridge, Superintendent of Columbia Elementary School, met with the Mission Committee in November. He came to thank us for our continuing support of students and families at the school. In recognition of our donations, he presented us with a beautiful wooden plaque from the school, which had been handcrafted by Mr. Aldridge himself. He shared some of the ways in which our funds have been used. The committee and Mr. Aldridge discussed additional ways in which we could help each other.

The Mission Committee has purchased three propane-generated heaters that would provide emergency heat during a power outage for those in need who have no other source of heat. The heaters will be stored at the church and distributed as needed. Heaters will be made available by contacting Margie Fooshee or Suzanne Williamson.

The committee agreed to donate \$1,250 to the First Presbyterian Church of Santa Rosa. The money would be designated to go to their Fire Relief Committee to

be used at their discretion for families impacted by the recent Kincaid Fire. Our traditional Alternative Christmas Fair will take place December 1, 8 and 15. A table will be set up in Faith Hall after each service. People are encouraged to support one of three mission outreach groups. One recipient will be Allen Graham for his work in spreading the gospel internationally. Global Belief will be the second organization, which is run by Taylor and Jake Radovich. Their mission is to spread God's word through providing clean water, building wells, teaching hygiene and educating children in Uganda. Taylor and Jake visited our church earlier in the year. The third choice is Give Someone a Chance. Their mission is serving the homeless in Tuolumne County. They have a bus, which provides showers for people in need. Give Someone a Chance aims to provide a sense of dignity, job access, links to mental and medical care and opportunities to enter drug and alcohol treatment programs for the homeless.

The Session agreed to designate the Christmas Eve offering to Habitat for Humanity Tuolumne County.

Ken Minett brought an absolutely beautiful quilt to share with the committee. The quilt has a patriotic theme and is called an "Honor Quilt." It was lovingly made by Louise Lertora and will be given to a veteran in honor of his or her service. Thank you, Louise!



Honor quilt made by Louise Lertora

Our next meeting will be December 17 at 12:00. We will meet at El Jardin in Columbia for lunch and afterwards gather in the lower sanctuary for our business meeting.

Judy and Roger Haughton
Mission Committee Co-Chairs

History of the History Committee

By Dick Dyer, Co-Chair and Historian

As the senior member of the 49er Church History Committee, several friends have asked me about the history of the History Committee. Since the founder is no longer alive, what follows in this article are my recollections of the committee reinforced by some seldom consulted archival records and several quotes and restatements from Will and Ariel Durant's *THE LESSONS OF HISTORY* -- a classic for historians. As church members, we need to be reminded that "We should be grateful for the 49er Church's inexhaustible legacy...that may put meaning into our lives...and transmit it to our children."

Dr. Ronald M. Lambert was a church member who encouraged several of us in 1991 to join him in describing the unique heritage of our beloved church. However, who was Ronald Lambert? He lived only a few houses from the church campus. Frequently, he spoke about acquiring the use of the empty white house at the corner of Jackson and Parrotts Ferry Roads as an outpost for church members to fellowship in their small groups. (Recall, Ramont Hall was rapidly aging.) No transaction was finalized. However, in Columbia he was among the colorful characters during those early years. I always thought of Ron as our "Pied Piper Poet;" that is, with his elaborate walking staff he strolled into Columbia almost daily searching for a wandering wayfarer. When a stranger was cornered, if he listened to his latest "magnum opum poem," the visitor was invited to the nearby Presbyterian Church. For several years the poet of the 49er Church was known as our "man about town."

The challenge confronting the History Committee is that Historiography requires more than scientific proceedings of a church's growth and struggles. It must include the spiritual, social and ministerial examples of the people. Despite some difficulties, *Our Story* is inspiring and exemplary of a people in search of the character of the First Presbyterian Church of Columbia. The History Committee has proceeded humbly and modestly; however, the challenges are ever present.

Initially, my "modus operandi" was to describe representative contributions by the History Committee's volunteers who uncovered informative and valuable vignettes about our faith. When my list of contributors included more than twelve members, I knew the *GOLDEN NUGGET* editor would say, "No. Too many!" So, my alternative is the following synopsis illustrating committee meetings and various outreach activities.

First and foremost, History Committee members advocate the protection and expansion of our church archives -- not as easy as it may sound since we have a substantial collection. At the initial meetings, we struggled with an archives in a damp closet and some mildew problems; later we moved to a cold and dark basement room. Also, a few were indifferent about recreating bygone days. Nevertheless, it brings to mind the scholarly Durants reminder: "To break sharply with the past is to court the madness that may follow the shock of sudden blows or mutilations."

An early memorable recollection includes former pastor and committee member, Rev. Arch Marston, who related many tall tales, sometimes even about Presbyterian pastors; each had a way of adding chuckles to enliven tedious discussions. For me, the original sign at the front of the sanctuary was troublesome. In 1932 a visiting pastor,



Chris Holman refurbishing historic sign in January 2011

Rev. Payne, said, "Columbia's Presbyterian Church is the oldest Presbyterian church in California that is still being used for services. (Actually, older active Presbyterian churches are located in San Francisco and Stockton.) Fortunately in 2011 the sign was refurbished (thanks to artist Chris Holman); and corrected to state the 49er Church is "...the oldest Presbyterian church building in the Sierra."

Additionally, I always felt our congregation enjoyed an occasional Pulpit Talk. Recall several of those short reminiscences: several pastors; church architecture; fire of 1950. Always interesting, usually informative. The ice cream socials were always FUN. No one will ever forget the twentieth anniversary History Committee potluck, held at Sonora Hills in October 2012. Recently, a church member reminded us that Russ Edell provided an appetizing and liberally endowed dish for the potluck and Pastor Janet said, "No thanks!"

In recent times, after many years of planning for a display of our pastors, Ron and Pat Federly and other committee members helped organize, design and install the Pastors' Wall in Faith Hall (2017). The photographs with short descriptions were featured in the *Union Democrat*.

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History

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And the future? Friends, keep reading your GOLDEN NUGGET for the next article by a History Committee member who will reminisce about a memorable event.

The History Committee's Vision Statement includes several long-range objectives, although, once again, a few still have mixed feelings. Unfortunately, the committee is still in search of a few gifted volunteers to pursue its objectives and replace the aging and retiring traditionalists. Where are the millennial



Pastors Wall completed August 2017

"whiz kids" with valuable skills to assist in this electronic age? However, be warned, we are reminded that "...the sanity of a group lies in the continuity of its traditions..." In any event, we continue to persevere; there are hints of progress as we enter the "Catalogit

Venture." Soon our selected archival "treasures" will become accessible on the World Wide Web as we transmit Our Story. (Perhaps even to my wife's distant and beloved Finland.) Your History Committee uses its gifts and archives to move onward with precious memories.

In conclusion, during a recorded interview many years ago with an old timer friend, Doc Dambacher said, "Dick, I have been to many places but there is no place like Tuolumne County."

Dick Dyer, Church Historian

News from Allen Graham, Missionary

Hello Church of the 49ers family, greetings from Europe. November has been quite a month, and God has been moving in many ways through Reach Beyond and our partner ministries in North Africa and the Middle East.

Thank you for praying for my trip a couple of weeks ago. It was a total of 11 days, taking in work and potential work in three countries. I was able to teach at a writers' workshop with a long time media partner. This gave me the opportunity to meet more of their team who prepare the radio programs as well as short videos for their YouTube channel. My translator was a young, former Muslim believer. I will share more of Alex' story in next month's *Golden Nugget*.

The next country provided an opportunity to see the ministry of a multi-agency team serving refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Some of the refugees and IDPs have recently arrived; others have been more than six years in the various camps. The greatest personnel needs here are medical workers, teachers and experienced counselors. I was able to observe a

group counseling session with fifteen 14-18 year old boys. The facilitator received training by professional counselors on how to lead these young men in dealing with and moving on from the trauma they have experienced. Since I could not understand the language, I was able to focus on the group dynamics and interaction of the facilitator with the boys. It was a very touching experience.

The last two days, I visited the ministries of a church that has grown from a membership of 200 people to over 1,300 in the last seven years! Even more impressive is the fact that more than 70% of the congregation are refugees and former followers of Islam. I was able to attend one of the bilingual (Arabic and English) services at their main campus, and I was excited to see how well integrated the national and refugee communities were. It was like a look at how we will be in heaven as described in Revelations 7:9, "After these things I looked,

and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands."

As we come into the Christmas season, all of us know many people who are not yet followers of Jesus Christ. Let's pray and look for opportunities to tell at least one or two of them about who Jesus is and why He came to live among us. May God open the door for some of our friends and/or loved ones to receive the greatest gift of all this year, the gift of eternal life as a follower of Jesus Christ!

Thanks for your prayers and faithful partnership in the ministry. Happy Christmas! **Allen**



First Presbyterian Church of Columbia † "Church of the 49ers"

December Calendar

Sunday meetings begin 30 minutes after worship ends

RR = Ramont Room FH = Faith Hall CE3 = Christian Ed Bldg
SNR = Sadie Nicholls Room LS = Lower Sanctuary (basement)

- 1 First Sunday of Advent. Worship 10:00 am, Communion, 49er Choir sings
- 2 Bible Study 5:00 pm in LS; Community Dinner 6:00 pm in FH; Spiritual Roads 7:00 pm in SNR
- 4 Line Dancing 9:30 am in FH
- 5 PW Christmas Tea and Potluck 11:00 am in FH
- 6 49er Choir Rehearsal 10:30 am in SNR; Handbell rehearsal 3:00 pm in LS
- 8 Worship 10:00 am, 49er Choir sings
- 9 Bible Study 5:00 pm in LS, Community Dinner 6:00 pm in FH, Spiritual Roads 7:00 pm in SNR
- 11 Line Dancing 9:30 am in FH; Men's Bible Study 10:00 am in Sonora Hills Multipurpose Room
- 12 Women's Bible Study 2:00 pm in LS
- 13 49er Choir Rehearsal 10:30 am in SNR; Handbell Rehearsal 3:00 pm in LS
- 14 Men's Breakfast Fellowship 8:00 am at Brooks Ranch Restaurant
- 15 Worship 10:00 am, 49er Choir sings, Chancel Ringers play handbells; "Just Dance" 1-4 pm in FH; Sing-Along Messiah 3:00 pm in Sanctuary
- 16 History Committee 9:30 am in CE3; Bible Study 5:00 pm in LS; Christmas Feast Community Dinner 6:00 pm in FH; Spiritual Roads 7:00 pm in SNR
- 17 Finance Committee 1:00 pm in Office; Mission Committee 12:00 pm at El Jardin Restaurant in Columbia, followed by a meeting in LS
- 18 Line Dancing 9:30 am in FH; Men's Bible Study 10:00 am in Sonora Hills Multipurpose Room
- 19 Women's Bible Study 2:00 pm in LS
- 20 49er Choir Rehearsal 10:30 am in SNR; Handbell Rehearsal 3:00 pm in LS
- 22 Worship 10:00 am, 49er Choir sings; Soup Lunch & Christmas Caroling in FH following worship
- 23 Bible Study 5:00 pm in LS; Community Dinner 6:00 pm in FH; Spiritual Roads 7:00 pm in SNR
- 24 Christmas Eve "Candlelight & Choir" service 7:00 pm in Sanctuary with 49er Chancel Choir
- 25 CHRISTMAS DAY - Office is closed.
- 26-31 Office is closed.

Sundays 10 am – Worship Service in Sanctuary, followed by Fellowship Time in Faith Hall. **Children's Sunday School** – Children are dismissed to Sunday School after the Children's Moment in worship. Nursery is available every Sunday.

Mondays

6 pm — Community Dinner served in Faith Hall. All welcome.

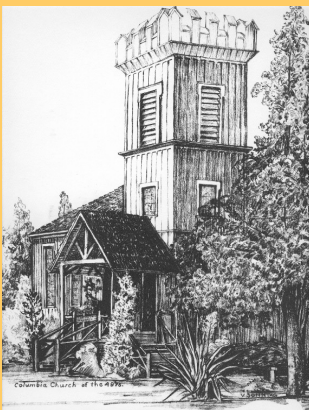
Tuesdays

8:30 am — Intercessory Prayer in Pastor Keith's Office

First Presbyterian Church

"Church of the 49ers"

11155 Jackson Street
Columbia, CA 95310



TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL

Address Service Requested

Cost-cutting Measure: For those of you who receive this newsletter through the US mail, please consider a donation of \$15 per year to cover printing and postage costs. Thanks!