



Blue Christmas

WORSHIP SERVICE

Saturday, December 21
3 PM



Christmas Eve

Joy

Candlelight Worship 5 PM



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

“For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven.”

Ecclesiastes 3:1 NRSVUE

Greetings Church Family,

It's beginning to look a lot like... the Christmas Cycle! In our Christian tradition, Christmas is more than a day, more than even twelve days, it is a cycle that begins at Advent, continues through Christmas, and wraps up at Epiphany.

Advent is a preparatory season symbolized by the color Purple, suggesting both penitence and royalty. Christmas is a festival season symbolized by the color White, expressing joy. Then after Epiphany we enter a season of ordinary time symbolized by the color Green, representing growth. At this special time, I invite you to look for the many ways we use color to evoke imagery and deepen our worship experience.



Sometimes called the season of giving, that proves true here at Aptos UMC. We are grateful for the success of our Stewardship Campaign. Your pledges help us allocate our resources to plan for all our ministries in the upcoming year. We are blessed by your generosity and investment in our future.

We also recognize your gifts of service. Our invitation for all to join in our worship ministry has placed new faces in positions of leadership. We will also welcome new people to our committees and ministry teams in the upcoming year. I am grateful for all who have faithfully served, and for their inclusion and mentorship of those who bring their willingness to share their gifts for the good of our community.


As always I am inspired by your dedication and by your demonstrated love. Ours is a living faith, and we are indeed alive! May God richly bless you, and sustain you in this and in all times.

*“As long as the earth endures,
seedtime and harvest, cold and heat,
summer and winter, day and night
shall not cease.”*

Genesis 8:22 NRSVUE

Grace and Peace be with you all,
Pastor Gabe

Join us for in-person worship in our Sanctuary every Sunday at 10 AM.

We are now livestreaming on YouTube.  YouTube

To watch live click [HERE](#), or go to <https://www.youtube.com/@aptosumc/streams>.

In addition to watching worship live, recordings of services will be available there.

Please also subscribe to our YouTube channel: [@aptosumc](#)

Online giving is available on our website by clicking on the 'GIVE NOW' button, or by clicking [here](#).

Alternative Christmas Returns in December

Aptos UMC again will welcome Alternative Christmas on December 8, 15, and 22. Alternative Giving is a program whereby you may donate to a charity and give a card representing that donation to a loved one. This is a gift that honors your loved one while helping others in need. The four Alternative Christmas charities this year will be Heifer International, NAMI, Second Harvest Food Bank, and Missionary Katherine Parker.

You may give any amount you want. Then you may pick out a card to give to a loved one, telling that person that a donation has been made in their honor. Aptos UMC will transmit all the proceeds from Alternative Christmas to the four chosen charities. Please join in supporting these charities through giving the gift that gives on giving.



Peace
ON EARTH



Heifer International: "We work to end hunger and poverty in partnership with the communities we serve. Our programs support entrepreneurs around the world, creating lasting change from the ground up. It begins with a seed investment of livestock or agriculture, followed by mentorship to help project participants build a business, and ultimately to gain access to supply chains and markets. These families are able to earn a living income and continuously lift up their communities as they train the next generation of leaders. By supporting and training the world's farmers, ranchers, and female business owners, we're investing in a new breed of success."

You are welcome to pick a specific item to gift by referring to the [gift catalog](#). Picking a specific gift is not required. Your financial gift will still go to Heifer for where it's most needed.



NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness): NAMI SCC envisions a world where people affected by mental illness experience acceptance and compassion, and live healthy, fulfilling lives supported by a caring community. Their Mission is to provide education, support, hope, and healing for people affected by mental illness and their families. They advocate for sufficient resources to advance lives free of stigma or discrimination. Aptos UMC members have provided leadership for the group, and NAMI has been a mission outreach project for the church for many years. For more information about NAMI go to www.namiscc.org/.



Second Harvest Food Bank: Help [Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County](#) continue to fill the gap and feed hope by providing healthy food throughout current challenges and beyond. 100% of the funds raised during their Holiday Fund Drive goes to providing food to distribute throughout Santa Cruz County. Second Harvest Food Bank has the ability to provide 30 healthy meals for \$10! There is a major need for food support for families in our county, and Second Harvest depends on faith groups like Aptos UMC to provide financial support to buy healthful food for families in need.



Missionary Katherine Parker: Aptos UMC has been in a covenant relationship with Katherine for the past eleven years. Katherine is a UMC Global Ministries missionary and is attached to the United Mission to Nepal. Aptos UMC contributes \$1,000 each year through Alternative Christmas and a Special Offering to support Katherine's work. Katherine comes to Aptos UMC whenever she returns to the United States and shares how she helps Nepal villagers to provide clean water, organize for change, educate children, and other forms of outreach.

Church and Society

In December, we celebrate Christmas and a new year! It's a time to enjoy annual traditions connected with the holidays and a time to make resolutions for how we will approach our role in the world in the year ahead. Part of that consideration is how we can support the work of our church in the coming year.

For the past five years we have been supporting our local Habitat for Humanity chapter by supplying lunches to volunteers on the 5th Tuesday of months with 5 Tuesdays. This has been a fun and rewarding mission for us. There will be a new build starting probably in the spring of 2025, and once again we will have the opportunity to provide lunches if we so choose. I am looking for someone to coordinate this project and drive the lunches to the new site, which may be in Watsonville. For a variety of reasons, I will no longer be driving very much which curtails my ability to gather the lunch components, come to church to assemble them, and then to deliver the lunches. If this is a project you feel you can do, please contact me. I will need to know sometime in January so that I can inform the Habitat chapter of our willingness and ability to continue. If no one steps forward, we may have to drop this project. Therefore, I am hoping that one or two of you will be willing to take this on!



Cailan Darling has very kindly taken on the coordinating of the Faith Community Shelter Friday dinners at St. John's. At the moment, this involves perhaps one Friday per month; however, we may take on a regular slot in 2025. This is very much appreciated!

The Aptos Circle of Village Santa Cruz continues to meet once monthly at our church. Several members of our church are now participating regularly in this mission to provide seniors in our community with social connections and vital information related to aging. All are welcome. I hope you will consider joining us. The next two meetings will be on December 4, 2024 and then January 8, 2025 from 1 to 2:30 PM.

As one year ends and another begins, I would like to focus on another of the social principles which are the foundation of our greater church and delineated in the Revised Social Principles adopted at the most recent General Conference of The United Methodist Church: **Health and Wholeness.**

Jesus said, *“I came that you might have life, and have it abundantly.”* (John 10:10b) Abundant life includes health and wholeness, and access to good health care. Our priority is to live into God’s vision of abundance. That is why we work in the areas of health care, mental health and addictions.

Our Social Principles state *“Creating the personal, environmental and social conditions in which health can thrive is a joint responsibility—public and private.”* (Social Principles, ¶162.V) God created all of us to thrive and be well. Today’s world poses barriers to that. Too many of us lack access to quality health care when we are sick, and preventive care when we are well.

Our work on health care, mental health and addictions seeks to address unjust policies and practices that obstruct good health. The United Methodist Church declares, *“Health care is a basic human right.”* (Social Principles, ¶162.V) It also says, *“It is unjust to construct or perpetuate barriers to physical or mental wholeness or full participation in community.”* (Social Principles, ¶162.V)

Our call as members of the greater Methodist Church is to advocate for policies that promote access to health care, including mental health and addiction resources.

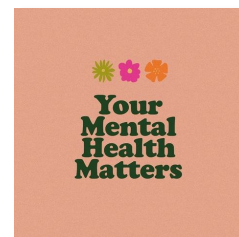
Addictions: Abstinence from alcohol, illicit drugs and gambling is part of living into the life God has prepared for us.

Global Health: Our highest priority regarding health must be the promotion of the circumstances in which health thrives.

Health Care in the U.S.: We call for a system where everyone has access to high-quality, affordable health care.

World AIDS Day Continues Support for People Living with HIV and AIDS: Our United Methodist commitment to addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic is rooted in our unwavering covenant of care and advocacy.

Mental Health: We pledge to foster policies that promote compassion, advocate access to care, and eradicate stigma.



I invite each of you to reflect upon these principles adopted by the United Methodist Church.

Aptos UMC is a community -- Living our Faith, Seeking Justice, and Pursuing Peace.

Joyce D. Rodgers

Chair of Church and Society, Missions/Green Team

January Special Offering

January 19 - *Human Relations Day*

We celebrate Human Relations Day the Sunday before Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday to recognize his vision of "the beloved community." Human Relations Day encourages United Methodists to recognize all of God's children as human beings and foster relationships with one another. 57% of your donation on Human Relations Day Sunday help support Community Developer's Program (CDP). Local recruits serve on the staff of traditionally Black, Hispanic, Asian and Native American congregations. CDP is dedicated to building, maintaining, promoting, and strengthening minority congregations of the United Methodist Church and advancing the church's capacity to be in mission through local congregations

Small Group Meetings

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

- **Blaney Group** - Sunday at 11:15 AM in the Youth Room
- **PACT** - every other Monday at 10 AM (*December 2, 16, & 30; January 13 & 27*)
<https://zoom.us/j/97895982359?pwd=dURlM09lZlXl4V2pLN3ByZkxwT1pHQOT09>
Meeting ID **978 9598 2359** Passcode **813515**
- **Alive Now** - Tuesday at 10 AM in the Fellowship Hall
- **Upper Room** - Tuesday at 7 PM
<https://zoom.us/j/94925380499?pwd=OGNpaHc4VmZ2OFhiczVML2M2ME5Ddz09>
Meeting ID **974 1046 9403** Passcode **935450**
- **Scott Group** - Friday at 10 AM in the Fellowship Hall

Online Giving

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





Thriving in Community: Our Conference Focus for 2025

As we step into 2025, the California-Nevada Annual Conference is continuing to embrace the bold and transformative vision adopted in 2023, focusing our attention this year on *Thriving in Community*. Rooted in the scriptural foundation of **Jeremiah 29:7** and **Acts 2:41-47**, this part of our vision invites us to seek the welfare of our communities, nurture the spiritual growth of our churches, and witness the ripple effects of God's love throughout the world.

Biblical Foundations for Thriving in Community

Jeremiah 29:7 calls us to “seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.” This verse reminds us that our thriving is intimately tied to the well-being of the places where God has planted us. Similarly, the early church's example in Acts 2:41-47 paints a vivid picture of thriving in community: believers devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer. Their unity and generosity not only strengthened their faith but also inspired awe and transformation in the wider community.

These passages challenge us to move beyond isolation and division, calling us instead to deepen our connections within our churches and neighborhoods. They urge us to grow spiritually, serve selflessly, and create spaces where others can encounter the love of Christ.

A Year of Growth and Impact

This vision of *Thriving in Community* speaks directly to our call as the Church to grow in two key areas:

1. **Church Growth**
2. **Community Impact**

Resources to Equip and Inspire

To support this vision, the Conference is excited to offer several resources and events in the coming year:

- **Lenten Devotional**
- **Snapshots of Thriving**
- **The "Thrive" Conference**

Living the Vision

As we embark on this journey of *Thriving in Community*, let us remember that thriving is not an individual pursuit; it is a collective effort. Like the early church, we are called to be a community marked by love, generosity, and service—a community that reflects the heart of Christ.

In the words of Jeremiah, let us seek the welfare of our cities, praying and working for their flourishing. And like the believers in Acts, may we devote ourselves to one another in faith and love, trusting that God will do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine.

Together, we can thrive—growing in faith, building stronger churches, and transforming our communities in the name of Jesus Christ.

For detailed information on our Conference Strategic Vision Articulation, visit: <https://www.cnumc.org/vision-values>.

This article has been edited for space. To read this article in its entirety go to <https://www.cnumc.org/newsdetails/thriving-in-community-our-conference-focus-for-2025-18757092>.



Birthdays

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

Anniversaries

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



Birthdays

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

Anniversaries

- 16 Clyde & Sheila Vaughn

If your birthday or anniversary is missing from our calendar or incorrect, please contact the office.



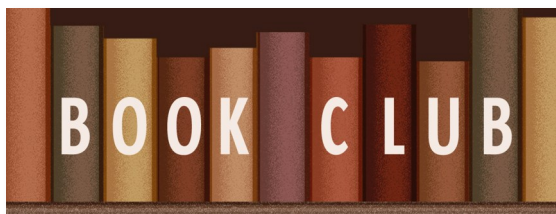
Equal Exchange Coffee and Chocolate

Every first Sunday of the month Laurel and Bob Blaney offer coffee and chocolate from Equal Exchange for sale.



You are invited to join our Prayer Team.

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




Book Club

Check your bulletin and weekly email for December and January schedule and book selections.

The Book Club meets at 1:30 PM on the third Wednesday of every month in the Youth Room. *Anyone is welcome to attend.*

For more information, please contact Barbara Coy-Bulicz at 689-9772 or bcoybulicz@gmail.com.

Worship Assistant sign-ups are available in the Fellowship Hall.

Altar Flowers	Ushers	Liturgist	Coffee Volunteers
			

Positions are open to ALL. No prior experience is necessary! Contact Pastor Gabe if you have any questions.



Aptos Community United Methodist Church

"The Church Worth Finding"

221 Thunderbird Drive, Aptos, CA 95003

831.688.2210

www.aptosumc.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Sunday Worship at 10 AM in person
and livestreamed on YouTube**

YouTube channel: @aptosumc

<p>Deadline for February Tide Friday, January 17</p>

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

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

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

Church Staff

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