



COMMUNICATOR

News from Claremont Presbyterian Church

December 2014

Branching Out and New Beginnings

This year our Advent/Christmas Theme is Branching Out. This theme is inspired by the Prophet Isaiah whose proclamation in Isaiah 11 is a central scripture text during the Advent Season:

Worship Plans

Sunday, December 7 10:00 a.m.

Second Sunday in Advent

The Rev. Karen Sapio preaching
"A Tale of Two Josephs"

Sunday, December 14 10:00 a.m.

Third Sunday in Advent

Church Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 21 10:00 a.m.

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Christmas Cantata by Daniel Pinkham
performed by CPC Sanctuary Choir
The Rev. Karen Sapio preaching
"Shepherds Guard and Angels Sing"

Wednesday, December 24

Christmas Eve

5:00 p.m. Family Christmas Eve Worship
Jaeger Brass Ensemble on patio following
5:00 p.m. service

11:00 p.m. Candlelight Lessons & Carols

Sunday, December 28 10:00 a.m.

First Sunday after Christmas

Carol Singing with Jaeger Brass Ensemble
The Rev. Karen Sapio preaching

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

Christians interpret this passage as a sign of hope for the coming of a Savior for God's people. Out of what seems destroyed, abandoned, and hopeless shall come a green shoot of new life and new promise.

This text can also be our inspiration as we continue our progress through the New Beginnings process offered for churches in our Presbytery. Nine congregations in San Gabriel Presbytery are engaged in this process together. New Beginnings is a congregational assessment and discernment process offered through the Mission Agency of the PCUSA.

New Beginnings assesses the strengths and challenges for your congregation as it seeks to engage in significant ministry in your community. The assessment service, along with follow-up strategic interpretation with your congregation's leaders, enables churches who have experienced decline to envision a new path for their future. (from New Beginnings website).

There are four phases to the New Beginnings process: On site assessment, leadership training, small group meetings that involve the whole congregation, and decision regarding future directions for ministry.

We have already completed Phase 1. On October 23, New Beginnings Assessor Bill Lawser visited CPC. He met with our Facilities Manager and Property and Finance chair for an in depth look at our physical plant. He got a one hour tour of Claremont. He met with our Treasurer and Bookkeeper to get a picture of our financial health as a congregation. He met with both pastors and our Clerk of Session to review our ministry calendar and how much time our congregation and pastors spend on various ministry and administrative efforts. Finally, he led an

open meeting for members of the congregation to share their insights into our congregation's strengths and challenges.

Phase 2 will take place this month on December 5-6. Both of our pastors and about 6-8 lay leaders will attend a New Beginnings Leadership retreat along with the pastors and leaders of the other New Beginnings congregations in our Presbytery cohort. During this retreat we will receive the Assessment Report from our October assessor's visit and begin the work of interpreting the results, experience a workshop on leading change in congregations, and finally receive training on how to use the Small Group curriculum around which Phase 3 is organized.

Stay tuned for updates on this process and how you can participate!



Sunday Morning at Nine Adult Education

December 7, 14, and 21 at 9:00 a.m. - *Messiah*

Adult Education during Advent will offer a fresh look at Handel's oratorio, *Messiah*, a familiar, yet ever-surprising, classic that has been performed somewhere (many "wheres" all over the world!) every single year since it premiered in 1742. We shall consider such probing questions as:

1. Why is *Messiah* generally performed during Advent when it premiered during Holy Week?
2. What's the difference between oratorio and opera and who or what killed English opera in Handel's day?
3. How come *Messiah* doesn't end with the "Hallelujah Chorus?" It sounds like a grand finale and everyone's standing up anyway. (And why ARE they standing up anyway?)
4. Who wrote the lyrics (libretto) and why did the author select those particular scriptures? Some people say they're anti-Jewish; are they?
5. Scholars say Handel illustrated the selected scriptures with madrigalisms; if I knew what that meant, would I appreciate the oratorio even more?
6. Will we listen to the music (yes), read from the King James Version of the Bible? (of course), be introduced to modern adaptations of *Messiah* in rap, hip hop, ragtime, blues, and jazz? (it's possible).

Come hear the oratorio, explore the text, share the joy! The sessions will be led by Dale Morgan who is not a musician, nor a singer, but is a great admirer of Handel and lover of *Messiah*.

New Mission Partner at ACM on December 7

Come to the Alternative Christmas Market **December 7** and meet our newest Mission Partner, REAL connections. CPC members Bill and Pat Reed are local leaders in providing a resource that offers trusted information and valued services and enriching relationships that enable individuals to live and age well in their homes and communities.

Join us following worship on December 7 to learn more about REAL connections and 24 other Mission Partners in Fellowship Hall. You'll be energized by the work that so many are doing in our community across the world!

Christmas Pageant - December 14

Come one, come all to experience a modern day re-telling of the traditional Christmas story we all love. During worship on **Sunday, December 14** the CPC Pageant will be presented by our angelic singers (ages 5-11) and our dramatic youth (ages 12-19). Join us on a journey through time, as we re-tell the Christmas Story with a 21st Century spin.

Christmas Breakfast

Invite your friends and family to join you on **Sunday, December 21 beginning at 8:30 a.m.** for a Christmas Breakfast Social in Fellowship Hall. No reservations are required. This holiday breakfast fellowship was started by the late Daisy Najarian, and has become one of CPC's traditions. This is a great time to share the Christmas spirit with your CPC family.

If you would like to offer to bring a dish to the breakfast or to help at the breakfast, please call the church office at (909) 624-9693.

Hope to see you there!

Christmas Poinsettias

If you would like to help provide poinsettias and greens to decorate our Sanctuary during Advent and Christmas, please use the "Advent and Christmas Poinsettia" form included with this *Communicator*.



Please join us to celebrate the holiday season!

**Traditional CPC
Christmas Party
& Ornament Exchange**

Saturday, December 13, 6:30 p.m.

Kent & Teddie Warner's

No RSVP necessary – just come!

PLEASE BRING:

A wrapped, fun, inexpensive ornament to exchange

(one per person who wants to exchange)

Beverage of your choice and

A hearty Hors d'oeuvre or Dessert

Children welcome

Sunday Mornings for Children & Youth

Each Sunday morning child care will be available for infants and toddlers up to 3 years of age during both the 9:00 and 10:00 hours.

During the 10:00 worship hour children age 4 - 5th grade will be excused from worship following the "Time with the Children"

Children ages 4 - first grade will go to Godly Play from 10:15 - 10:45.

Children grades 2 - 5 will go to Music & Movement with Ms. Taylor from 10:15 - 10:45

Children grades 2 - 5 will go to Godly Play from 10:45 - 11:15.

Children ages 4 - first grade will go to Music & Movement from 10:45 - 11:15

Youth from 6th - 12th grade will meet for Sunday School at 9:00 a.m.



Adopt-a-Family

For several years the Deacons have sponsored the Adopt-a-Family program and each year the CPC congregation has responded with generous support. The congregation has the opportunity to share their Christmas spirit with families that might not otherwise be able to celebrate Christmas with gifts by choosing a gift tag or tags from the table which will be on the patio after church on November 30 and at the Alternative Christmas Market on December 7. Each tag will have the gender, age, size and gift request for a member of a family. Purchase the gift or gift card requested, wrap it, attach the gift tag to the gift and bring it to the Narthex or to the church office by Sunday, December 14. The gifts will be delivered by Deacons.

If you are unable to shop or if you prefer, monetary donations will also be accepted.

Sanctuary Choir to Perform Christmas Cantata

Sunday, December 21 the CPC Sanctuary Choir will be performing the Daniel Pinkham *Christmas Cantata* during the 10:00 a.m. worship service.

Daniel Pinkham, born 1923, is a graduate of Harvard and has studied under a distinguished roster of composers that includes Walter Piston, Aaron Copland, Artur Honegger, Samuel Barber and Nadia Boulanger. His mastery of the keyboard owes much to his studies with Wanda Landowska on the harpsichord and E. Power Biggs on the organ. He was appointed director of the King's Chapel, Boston, a position he held until 2000; he served concurrently as a member of the faculty of the New England Conservatory of Music.

Godly Play

On the first Sunday of December children in the Godly Play classroom will continue learning about the Season of Advent. Godly Play will not meet on December 14, 21 or 28. Nursery care will be available on those Sundays for children up to age 5. Godly Play will resume in January. If you have any questions regarding this schedule or Godly Play please contact Krista Wuertz by email at Krista@claremontpres.org.

Family Christmas Caroling - December 21

CPC's junior high and high school students invite everyone to join them in caroling at Mt. San Antonio Gardens. This is a fun and meaningful way of sharing the good news of the season in song, and involves cocoa and cookies at the end! Meet at CPC at 5:00 p.m. We should return by 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Joy Offering

Each year on the Sunday before Christmas, Presbyterian congregations express profound appreciation for our clergy and other servants of the Church by receiving the Christmas Joy Offering. We honor our church leaders both for their faithfulness in tending to our spiritual needs and in recognition of their decision, in many cases, to answer the call to ministry rather than pursue a life of material comfort.

A Presbyterian tradition for nearly 70 years, the Christmas Joy Offering gives vital funding to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions as well as to Presbyterian-related racial-ethnic schools and colleges.

Please give generously on December 21.



People in the Church: Wendy & David Menefee-Libey

You might call them “the accidental pew sitters,” since they did not start out to make church an important part of their lives. College changed that.

And the particular college was in some ways also an accident.

Wendy spent her early youth growing up in Dallas. She was six when President Kennedy was assassinated. She remembers that the local church was also the meeting place for the Ku Klux Klan, and that most of the church leaders were also Klan members. When it was time to apply to colleges, Wendy’s mother urged her to experience a residential college, and particularly one where the students lived too far from home to desert campus life and go home every weekend. Wendy applied to all the elite colleges, got accepted, but in the meantime a friend invited her for a weekend visit to St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. The distance (350 miles from home) was fine, the campus seemed nice, and that satisfied Wendy. Well into her freshman year, she had a minor epiphany: “You mean Lutherans have ‘saints’? Like in ‘Saint’ Olaf?” She was mildly embarrassed that she had not researched the college more fully, yet she instinctively knew it was the right place for her.

David comes from a long line of college graduates. His grandfather was an Episcopal priest and seminary professor, but the next generation, children at the time of the Great Depression, became doctors and dentists and kept a sharp eye on finances. When David was contemplating college, a family friend advised him, somewhat eerily like a famous scene from the movie, “The Graduate,” to study engineering and then law, and “you will make tons of money!” Advice also meant expectation, so although David applied and received acceptances from places like Pomona and Oberlin, he chose St. Olaf College, reasoning he could remain in Minnesota and get access to an excellent engineering program.

Something happened on the way to (*not*) becoming a rich lawyer with an engineering degree. Wendy and David each took religion courses (St. Olaf required three) where for the first time they encountered people serious about their faith, their theology, and its intellectual component. “We read theology, liberation theology, feminist theology,” David noted. “We soon realized that in this relatively conservative college the departments of theology and philosophy were the most free,” Wendy added. It captured them. Beyond that, St. Olaf encouraged its students to consider the person they were becoming and how faith fit in. Wendy decided to major in Women’s Studies. David moved toward Political Science. They both became social activists, meeting each other for the first time at an anti-apartheid meeting on campus.

Their activism continued in Chicago, where David earned his Ph.D. in Political Science. Some old friends were also there as students at McCormick Seminary. Through many conversations and actions with those friends their own faith, grounded in social justice, grew and matured. Theologically they came to realize that they were Reformed. Speaking seriously, David explained that Calvinism offers “a good way

to deal with privilege: it’s undeserved.” Especially for the privileged, those who have received much in talents and opportunities, Calvinism closes the door on our hubris and self-righteousness. We are reminded, time and again, that we are fallible, that we live by Grace.

David and Wendy both continued their explanation, adding that we need community to protect us from our own egos, our inflated feeling that we know, without a doubt, what is right. Wendy recalled the words of a wise college professor who had exclaimed, “If I thought for a moment that it were possible to practice Christianity in the privacy of my own living room, I would be the first to sign up!”

Arriving in Claremont where David accepted a position in the Political Science Department of Pomona College, they did some “church-shopping.” That quickly ended one Sunday when they arrived at CPC, heard Bear Ride preach, and discovered that Lee and Claire McDonald, whom they greatly admired and respected, were founding members. “We were in,” Wendy simply said. They remember being warmly welcomed and invited to join many groups. “It was,” David affirmed, “the right church.” With vigor they threw themselves into church functions and over the years filled numerous roles in church and Presbytery leadership.

Sounds ideal. But we then explored one of the more difficult and confusing aspects of church life: raising children in the church. Their three children, Sam, Ike and Nell, all grew up in CPC, all took Confirmation Class at their parents’ insistence, and all declined to be confirmed. Why, I wondered, but decided not to ask directly. As our conversation continued I pieced together a partial answer.

If anything, stopping short of confirmation is probably due to the difficulties of handling doubt. Even the saints admitted doubts, plunging into that “dark night of the soul” on more than one occasion. Time and again the followers of Jesus showed by their actions that they too had doubts. Doubt is, Wendy noted, “a sacred, even cherished tradition.” But it has a downside, as David acknowledged. “It is hard for teenagers to manage ambiguity.” Even today Sam shrinks from being called a “Christian” as that term in his mind seems to have been shanghaied by groups who promote bigotry and hatred rather than love and compassion.

But did the church fulfill its responsibility to support and sustain Sam, Ike and Nell. To that question their parents gave a resounding “yes!” Wendy revealed that when she called Sam to tell him that Betty Shepherd, Sam’s third grade Sunday School teacher, had died, Sam wept. The children adored Harry Brunger as well, who had taught sixth grade. And with a laugh Wendy told that Sam had recently asked for Sandy Tice’s phone number so he could call her. Spoiled by her consistently good preaching, he had discovered a newfound admiration for it when compared to the sermons that he now endures in the D.C. area.

(see **Menefee-Libey** on page 6)



Year-End Giving

Current economic conditions have already required many of us to “go the extra mile,” as we strive to fulfill our 2014 pledges and to pledge generously to CPC for 2015. If you are in this group, thank you for your support.

For some, however, 2014 may have been a year of unexpected financial good news. If this is true for you, please consider making a special year-end gift to CPC.

A special gift of this type may be unrestricted or restricted. If unrestricted, the Session may choose to use your gift to close our 2014 books on a positive note.

If restricted, you may designate your gift to support a particular part of our Church’s program and outreach.

You might think of your special gift as a Christmas present to CPC, for all that our Church means to you and to each of us. An added bonus: if your gift is made by December 31, it may help reduce your 2014 income taxes – a win/win situation! Thank you.

~The CPC Special Gifts and
Endowment Committee

Subscribe to Weekly Email

CPC will be starting a new weekly email update for all the last minute news and announcements. To subscribe to “The Latest” please use the link on our website www.claremontpres.org or on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/claremontpres>. You may also contact Jo Colclough at jcolclough@claremontpres.org to say you would like to subscribe.

Financial Highlights

CLAREMONT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AS OF 10/31/14	ACTUAL	BUDGET
Pledges	\$ 397,398	\$ 416,667
Other Income	66,821	85,916
Bequests/Gifts	5,500	0
Expenses	(503,526)	(524,682)
VARIANCE	(33,807)	(22,099)
CHILDREN'S CENTER AS OF 10/31/14	ACTUAL	BUDGET
Income	\$ 589,352	\$ 603,762
Expenses	(611,100)	(603,762)
VARIANCE	(21,748)	0

A more complete financial report is available in the church office.

Two Ways to Send Your Donation to CPC

1. By going to Paypal.com. If you have a PayPal account and you log in to your account you can send your pledge to cpcpaypal@claremontpres.org. There will be no fee to you or to CPC.

2. By going to the church website. The Claremont Presbyterian Church website is www.claremontpres.org. Click on the “Giving to CPC” tab. Then click on the “Donate” button and follow the instructions. Please note that if you send a donation to CPC using this button on the website and choose either credit card or PayPal, CPC will be charged a service fee.

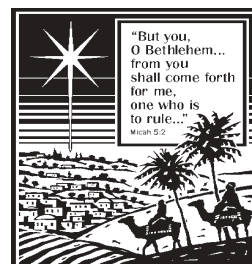
CHS Performances

Many of CPC’s youth are involved in Claremont High School band, orchestra, choir and theater. December provides us with many opportunities to see and hear them perform.

The theater will be presenting “A Coney Island Christmas” on December 4, 5 and 6 at 6:00 p.m. in the CHS Theatre.

The CHS Instrumental music program is offering its Winter Concert on Tuesday, December 9 at 7:00 p.m. in the Claremont High School Theatre.

Tuesday, December 16 at 7:00 p.m. the choirs will celebrate winter with some of the most famous music of the season at Garrison Theater, 1030 Columbia Avenue, Claremont.



A Contribution Note

In order to claim a charitable contribution deduction for 2014, all donations for 2014 must be either: placed in the offering plate by December 28, 2014, brought to the office by **noon Wednesday, December 31** or postmarked by December 31, 2014. Checks that are placed in the offering plate on January 4, 2015 will not qualify for a charitable contribution in 2014 even if the check is predated to 2014 or was actually written in 2014.



The *Communicator* is published monthly (except in summer) by Claremont Presbyterian Church. Submissions are subject to editing for content and length. To submit an article or item for the monthly calendar, please contact the church office by the 15th of the month by telephone at (909) 624-9693, email jcolclough@claremontpres.org or fax to (909) 624-4743.

Editor: Jo Colclough

Pastors

Karen Sapio
Rocky Supinger

Church School

9:00 a.m.
(Except in Summer)

Worship

10:00 a.m.

Nursery Care
available both hours

Menefee-Libey (cont. from Page 4)

There's another story that reveals how much CPC means to their children, and how much they have affirmed David and Wendy's insistence that Christians deeply need community. In these days, with the children grown, striking out on their own, we don't see David and Wendy in the pews as often. It's a natural occurrence, it seems, when the children are gone and other priorities, long submerged, have a chance to reassert themselves. People you wanted to see, the homework assignments that didn't get graded, a blessed chance to catch up on sleep for once, they all gnaw away at your good intentions. Significantly, in this situation, it is the Menefee-Libey children who are urging their parents to get to church. Well aware of the imperative of Christian community, they are saying in various ways, "It's ok if we are too busy to attend church at times, but you need to go." Nell, during those times when she arrives home from Smith College, consistently turns to her parents and says, "Let's go to church."

Good advice, Nell, good advice. Was that advice only for your parents or for all of us?

~Dick Johnson

Updating Your Estate Plan? Remember the Loaves and Fishes Society

If updating your estate plan is on your year-end "to do" list, be sure to remember CPC in your planning!

The Loaves and Fishes Society, the bequest program here at CPC, provides all of us with an additional way to "give back" to our wonderful Church, in response to all that we have received. Since the founding of the Society in 2008, more than thirty people have become members, by informing the Church that CPC is included in their estate plans. We'd like to welcome you, too!

Questions? Pick up a copy of our bequest brochure in the Church office or at the Information Kiosk on the patio after church any Sunday morning. You'll be glad you did – and CPC will be grateful to you.

~The CPC Special Gifts and
Endowment Committee



World AIDS Day Is December 1

All are welcome to Claremont's World AIDS Day Service & Candlelight Walk on Monday, December 1. Lend your voice to people of faith assembling worldwide. Co-Sponsored by Foothill AIDS Project, we will nurture our neighbors living with HIV and remember loved ones lost to AIDS. The service at Claremont United Church of Christ begins at 7:00 p.m. and the six block long walk begins at 8:00 p.m.

Eight Secrets to Finding a Job in 2015

The average American will hold eight jobs and will change his/her career three times over a lifetime of work. The person who now gets hired is not necessarily the one who can do that job best but the one who knows the most about how to get hired. ICON is holding a LIFE/Work Planning course to lead individuals through the process of discerning new career potentials, doing life planning and honing job-search skills. Dr. Vernon Visick, who is a LIFE/Work Planning consultant trained by the author of *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, will lead eight Monday night sessions from January 5 through March 2 at La Verne Heights Presbyterian Church on Baseline Road in La Verne. The cost of the course is \$100.00 which includes a 2015 edition of *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, a course workbook and assorted papers. Scholarships are available to help defray cost. For more information contact the church office at (909) 624-9693.

CPC'S 60th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS - BIG EVENTS COMING SOON!

Gala celebrations are coming in 2015 in honor of CPC's 60th Anniversary.

As part of the festivities, we all will be invited to participate in a comprehensive and visionary Capital Campaign, entitled "Celebrating our Past and Embracing New Beginnings." Since its founding in 1955,

CPC has been committed to mission, education and community outreach, stewardship of all types, and music. These four pillars have been reaffirmed as we have shaped the objectives of this Campaign to minister to a vibrant and changing world.

Stay tuned!

The CPC 60th Anniversary

Capital Campaign Steering Committee

Roger House, Dee Kelley, Sue Likens, Scott Randles, Karen Sapio,

Kent Warner, Chair



COMMUNICATOR



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Deadline for next issue of the *Communicator*: December 15

“Like” Us on Facebook

Did you know that CPC has a Facebook page? Look for the Claremont Presbyterian Church page on Facebook and click on “like” to begin receiving news feeds about what is happening at CPC.

Be sure to share it with your friends!

Pledge Envelopes for 2015

If you have submitted a pledge for 2015 and have indicated that you will be paying weekly, monthly or quarterly, pledge envelopes have been printed for you. Please pick them up in the Narthex.

Help Support CPCC

The second Monday of each month the Claremont Presbyterian Children’s Center has a fundraiser at the El Ranchero Restaurant on Foothill Boulevard in Claremont. **On Monday, December 8 from 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.** eat at El Ranchero Restaurant and tell them you are with the Claremont Presbyterian Children’s Center.

The center will receive a portion of the proceeds and you will enjoy a delicious Mexican meal. If you prefer to eat at home you may get your food to go. Thank you for your support!

Prayer Chain

If you (or a loved one) are in need of prayer, the Prayer Chain of the Presbyterian Women is there for you. You may call the church office at (909) 624-9693 with your prayer request. Please be sure you have the permission of the person for whom you are requesting prayer.

New Website!

CPC has (or will soon have) a new, updated website. It is still a work in progress but check it out at www.claremontpres.org.