



# DECEMBER SUNDAY SCHEDULE

## PRAYER MEETINGS, SUNDAY SCHOOL, AND WORSHIP SERVICES

- 9:40 – 10:20 Sunday School in the Lumsden Chapel
- 10:30 – 10:50 Prayer Meeting in the Lumsden Chapel
- 11:00 – 12:00 Worship Service in the Sanctuary



### Sunday School Theme – Book of Isaiah

- |    |                                     |                        |
|----|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 3  | The Beloved                         | Isaiah 5:1-23          |
| 10 | Woe is Me (Woe is Us?)              | Isaiah 6:1-13          |
| 17 | A Child is Born                     | Isaiah 7:1-23          |
| 24 | A Shining Light and<br>a Tree Stump | Isaiah 9:1-7<br>11:1-9 |



## CHRISTMAS OUTREACH

Our adopted families this year are our own members. You can participate in two ways:

- ☞ Purchase a gift certificate to a local grocery store and
- ☞ Pick a gold star from the Christmas Giving Tree

Each star features the name of a child in our church with his/her age, clothing size, and favorite toy as suggestions on what to buy. The families will receive the grocery gift certificates and the children will receive their brand new and wrapped gifts at our Christmas Party and Potluck on December 17<sup>th</sup>.

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# BELL TOWER

December, 2006

## MISSION STATEMENT

We, at First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Watsonville, as part of the Church Universal, are committed to Spreading God's abounding Love, Proclaiming Jesus Christ's Message through the Truth of the Gospel by Word and Deed, and Spiritually Growing and Sharing the Gift of the Holy Spirit through Involvement and Interaction with the Diverse Community in which we live. In Faith, Unity; In Opinions, Liberty; In all Things, Love.



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## PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

BY DR. REUBEN NEGRON

Childhood memories of Christmas can be magical. Mine was. I come from a simple family, nevertheless, I have a wonderful recollection of Christmas. People's moods, colorful ornaments everywhere, the aroma of food, and the expectation of the season became a world of magic. I still remember the soft white winter snow on the streets of New York and our cozy living room decorated with a simple Christmas tree adorned with an assortment of colorful and printed ornaments. School prepared all sorts of activities, puppets shows, trips, and, of course, the classroom parties. Movies were scheduled to fit the occasion; my favorite was 'The March of the Wooden Soldiers' with comedians Laurel and Hardy. The scenes, the weather, the carols, the family gatherings, and the church program created the perfect ambience that entertained my senses and world. There was magic in the air.

Among these memories, one stands out vividly. My family's apartment had many closets but one could only be opened with a key. The closet was used to stash away birthday and

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# HOLIDAY CONCERT



The **Santa Cruz Chorale** will hold their Christmas concert, '**Season of Praise, Season of Splendor**' in our sanctuary on **Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup>** from 8:00 pm – 10:00pm. The concert features three outstanding settings of the Magnificat spanning four centuries.

- ☞ Claudio Monteverdi's *Magnificat Primo Tuono* from Selva Morale (1640) uses the Gregorian chant version of the Magnificat as a cantus firmus.
- ☞ Felix Mendelssohn creates a soaring Romantic interpretation of the same text in German, "*Mein Herz erhebet Gott, den Herrn*" (1847).
- ☞ Arvo Pärt composed his *Magnificat* for Artistic Director, Christian Grube's Berlin choir in 1989 and dedicated it to him.

Don't miss the chance to hear this contemporary masterpiece in Grube's authoritative interpretation.

The concert also includes music by William Byrd, Hans Leo Hassler, and Randall Thompson, along with a selection of lighter seasonal favorites.



## DECEMBER SCHEDULE

- 2 Decorate church for Advent Season
- 3 Advent Begins with Hanging of the Greens  
Hope Sunday  
Celebrate Members' December birthdays and anniversaries
- 10 Peace Sunday  
Special Guest, Ben Bohren, Regional Minister & President
- 17 Joy Sunday  
Christmas Special Offering  
Christmas Party and Potluck
- 24 Love Sunday and Christmas Eve
- 25 Christmas Day (holiday)
- 31 New Year's Eve



Christmas presents along with family items of value. Oh, what I would have given to possess that key! One "magical" day my mother forgot to lock the closet door; it was ajar. The opening was enough to allow me to see Christmas wrapped boxes on the top shelf. My heart pounded with excitement. Mom eventually locked the door but it didn't matter; I had found an invaluable treasure. Christmas was in the closet. If only I had the key.

Paul declared to the Corinthians, "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought as a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put away my childish ways." Christmas is not the product of trickery or illusions. It is not about entertainment or stimulating the senses. It is not circumscribed to memories. To go even further, the Christmas event is not an ancient religious platform. Christmas is an inspiring story, a healing event, a transforming experience; it is absolute good. For some Christmas, it is an existential struggle. The key to discovering the meaning of Christmas, however, is found in the birth of the child who, to this day, represents new beginnings, new opportunities, a positive interpretation of life, and fulfillment of our purpose on this planet. Consider the following. The child, Jesus, was born in a manger to inspire hope to those who struggle, peace to those in conflict, joy to those who have lost so much, and love to those who have been denied a place in life. The Christmas message is not meant to romanticize the reality of life but to declare that God wants to be part of our daily lives.

In our daily struggles, may Christ be forever born in our hearts.

*Reuben*

