

*December 2017 Notes from the Presbytery of Nevada*  
*Presbytery Pastor – Rev. Hilda Pecoraro*

*Between Memory and Hope – an Advent Reflection*

An excerpt from the *Companion to the Book of Common Worship* (Geneva Press, 2003, 96)

In Advent we expectantly wait for the One who has already come.

We anticipate the promised justice of God’s new world, yet we praise God who raised the “righteous branch” to rule with justice and righteousness.

We hope for the restoration of the afflicted, the tormented, and the grieving, yet we delight that healing has come in Christ.

We long for the beating of swords into plowshares, yet we rejoice that the Prince of Peace has appeared.

We yearn for the barren deserts of our inner cities to flourish, yet we laud the desert Rose that has bloomed.

We dream of the land where lions and lambs live in harmony, yet we acclaim the child born to lead us into the promised land.

Christ has come! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!

In Advent, we are living between the first and the second coming of the Lord. The dialectical tension of *maranatha* [alternately translated “Come, our Lord!” or “Our Lord has come”] — placing us between memory and hope, past and future — may strengthen our Advent liturgies.

Perhaps we need to cling to the ancient cry of *maranatha!* and its paradoxical meanings so we may freely embrace “the new thing” prophesied by Isaiah (Isaiah 43:19) that God is doing among us right now. The tension and paradox we find in Advent shapes our celebrations during the season.

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*Prayer for Christmas Eve*

Jesus Christ, holy child, glory of God revealed,

by starlight we first saw your face; now by candlelight we sing your praise.

Though the night is long, you are our hope. Though the path is dark, you lead the way.

By your Spirit, help us to shine with the brightness of your truth and share the warmth of your great love, so that all may believe, rejoice, and give thanks, for you are the light of the world.

*Office of Theology and Worship, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

*Prayer for Christmas*

All glory to you, great God,

for the gift of your Son,

whom you sent to save us.

With singing angels,

let us praise your name,

and tell the earth his story,

that all may believe, rejoice, and bow down,

acknowledging your love;

through Jesus Christ our Lord,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. **Amen.**

*(Book of Common Worship, p. 187)*

### **Christmas Joy Offering**

This Special Offering of the PCUSA received during the season of Advent and Christmas provides financial assistance to individuals and families who have dedicated their lives to the church, and supports leadership development and education for students attending Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges. The Offering is divided in two areas:

-50% - Providing Opportunities – *Racial Ethnic Leadership Development*, Leadership development and education at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges.

-50% - Giving Back – *Assistance program of the Board of Pensions*, providing critical financial support and grants for current and retired Presbyterian church workers in their time of need.

For more information and a wealth of resources, go to: [presbyterianmission.org/christmasjoy](http://presbyterianmission.org/christmasjoy).

### **Creative Gift Ideas for the People on Your List who “have everything.”**

What do you give to that person on your list who seems to have everything he or she could possibly want or need? Why not give a gift in his/her name to those in greatest need? The Presbyterian Mission Agency makes Alternative Christmas giving easy with the **Presbyterian Giving Catalog**. *The Presbyterian Giving On-line Catalog* is available at <https://presbyteriangifts.org/> and is easy to use. What a wonderful way to share the love of Jesus with those in need – even as you honor your family and friends! You may also wish to explore local and global projects you can gift through organizations like **Heifer International** ([www.heifer.org/catalog](http://www.heifer.org/catalog)) or **World Vision** (<https://donate.worldvision.org/giftcatalog>). Go on-line to find their Gift Catalogs with many opportunities to support individuals and families and communities all over the world.

### **Proud to Be a Member of Nevada Presbytery!**

I love this Presbytery! One example of why the Presbytery of Nevada is such a special place came recently when we had the opportunity to provide tangible support to the Presbytery of the Redwoods, one of our sister presbyteries in the Synod of the Pacific. As most of you know, Redwoods presbytery suffered tremendous losses in the October Wine Country fires. Among the thousands who lost homes and businesses were a number of our Presbyterian brothers and sisters. The physical, emotional and financial losses to the impacted communities and families are astronomical. There are years of rebuilding and recovery ahead.

A heartfelt thanks to Joan and Vern and the Mission Outreach Committee, and to Presbytery Council for approving a gift of **\$10,000** to the Presbytery of the Redwoods to be used for relief and recovery. The monies for this generous gift come from funds received by our presbytery from our dismissed congregations. Let us continue to pray for all victims of both natural and un-natural disasters.

### **Great news from Zephyr Point Presbyterian Conference Center**

In the November 13 edition of PointGuard, the following “praise” was recorded: “Praise God that gifts keep coming in for our Dobbins Hall Renovation. Between gifts already received and commitments made, we are well over the \$700,000 mark on our way to our \$1,000,000 goal.” The plans for the Dobbins Hall Renovation include new ADA restrooms, new kitchen, new lighting, heating, roofing, flooring, windows, and so much more. Both the interior and exterior of this 80 year old building will be transformed and enhanced. We look forward to what God has in store for the many camps and conferences that use Dobbins Hall for worship, fellowship, music, meetings and growing in faith. Donations of all sizes are welcome. For more information on how you can contribute, please contact Zephyr Point staff, Bedford Holmes or Stan White, at 775-588-6759.

## Welcome New Synod of the Pacific Executive Staff Members

### New Synod Executive

At the October assembly of the Synod of the Pacific, the Synod unanimously voted to elect **the Rev. Robert “Bob” Sheldon** as our new Synod Executive, effective January 1, 2018. Bob brings enthusiasm and warmth to this important position as well as years of experience at every level of the Presbyterian Church. Bob has a special gift for stewardship and fundraising. He loves to attend presbytery meetings and he looks forward to providing leadership, inspiration, training and encouragement throughout the Synod. Bob is coming to us from Naples, FL where he is currently serving as an Interim Pastor at Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church. Bob and his wife Ginger will be moving to the Bay Area and Bob will begin to get to know the eleven unique presbyteries that make up the Synod of the Pacific. We look forward to welcoming Bob to Nevada! Let us keep him – and all our Synod staff in our prayers as they faithfully serve.

### New Interim Synod Stated Clerk

With the death of the Rev. John Kelso, the Synod Personnel Committee was tasked with calling an Interim Stated Clerk. They are pleased to welcome **the Rev. Kathy Runyeon** to this position. Kathy knows the Synod well and has just finished serving the Presbytery of San Francisco as full time Stated Clerk for the last 15 ½ years. Kathy brings wisdom and experience to this position, as well as pastoral sensitivity and a vast knowledge of the organization and polity of the PC(USA). Let us keep Kathy in our prayers as she begins this new ministry.

## Christmas Concerts

\*12<sup>th</sup> Annual DIY (Do It Yourself) Handel’s Messiah on Wednesday, December 6, 2017 7:00pm at **Green Valley Presbyterian Church**. Concert features GVPC Valley Chorus, GVPC Chamber Orchestra, soloists, and Dr. Spencer Baker conducting from the harpsichord. Proceeds from the concert will once again be donated to the **Henderson Presbyterian Church** Food Bank.

\*“Christmas Classics” Concert at **Grace Presbyterian Church** – Central Campus on Sunday, December 17, 2017 at 3:00 p.m. Come enjoy beautiful sounds of the season presented by the Christmas Choir, Pipe Organ, Chamber Orchestra and Bells of Grace. The concert is free and open to all. A free-will offering will be received and the proceeds will go to support the Walter Hoving Home.

## Invitation to “Go Deeper”

Come be still in the presence of God at our next gathering on Saturday, December 16, 2017 from 9:00 AM to Noon in the Chapel at Community Lutheran Church (3720 East Tropicana Avenue). Our contemplative experience will be through a Visio Divina (divine viewing), using a spiritual/religious image together with scripture as a focus for reflection, prayer, meditation, and sharing. There is no cost. If you have questions, please contact Ken Larson, at 702-675-5690 (call or text).

## Love and Prayers

\*Our love and best wishes to our marvelous Stated Clerk **Joan Jeffers** as she celebrates her birthday on December 3! May the year ahead be filled with health, joy, laughter and peace. God bless you Joan!

\*Prayers for **the Rev. Lee Styer** as he goes in for surgery on Monday, December 4 at noon. Lee has been diagnosed with prostate cancer. Please keep Lee, Linda and the whole family in your prayers for God’s healing and for strength and peace.

### A Service of Lessons and Carols – from the Presbyterian Mission Agency website

*This Service of Lessons and Carols is adapted from the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols that has been celebrated annually at King's College, Cambridge, for almost a century. The nine Scripture lessons are those traditionally used at the festival, while the carols provided to accompany each passage have been selected from the Presbyterian Hymnal.*

*Pastors and church musicians are encouraged to consider other hymns or appropriate spiritual songs, taking into account the cultural context and worship style of the congregation. The multiple readings present an opportunity to involve a number of different people from the congregation in the leadership of worship. Near the conclusion of the service, a time is set aside for prayers of thanksgiving and intercessions for the church and the world.*

## **A Service of Lessons and Carols**

**PROCESSIONAL HYMN**                      "O Come, All Ye Faithful"                      PH 41

**OPENING SENTENCES** *Psalm 96*

Sing to the Lord a new song;

**sing to the Lord, all the earth!**

Sing to the Lord and bless God's name;

**tell the good news of salvation from day to day.**

Declare God's glory among the nations, God's marvelous works among all the peoples.

**For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised.**

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice.

**Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world, and those who live in it.**

Let the whole creation sing for joy at the presence of God, who is coming.

**God is coming indeed, to judge the earth with righteousness, and the peoples with equity and truth. Praise the Lord!**

**OPENING HYMN**                      "Once in Royal David's City"                      PH 49

**FIRST LESSON**                      Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19  
*Adam and Eve disobey God's command and disrupt the order and goodness of creation*

**CAROL**                      "O Little Town of Bethlehem"                      PH 44

**SECOND LESSON**                      Genesis 22:15-18  
*God promises that, through Abraham, all the peoples of the world will be blessed*

**CAROL**                      "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"                      PH 9

**THIRD LESSON**                      Isaiah 9:2, 6-7  
*The people who walk in darkness receive the promise of the Messiah*

**CAROL** "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" PH 38

**FOURTH LESSON** Isaiah 11:1-4a, 6-9  
*The Messiah will come from the root of Jesse to restore the peace of creation*

**CAROL** "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" PH 48

**FIFTH LESSON** Luke 1:26-35, 38  
*An angel appears to Mary and announces that she will bear a holy child*

**CAROL** "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" PH 31

**SIXTH LESSON** Luke 2:1-7  
*Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem, where Mary gives birth to her child*

**CAROL** "Away in a Manger" PH 25

**SEVENTH LESSON** Luke 2:8-16  
*Angels appear to shepherds in the fields and announce the birth of the Messiah*

**CAROL** "Angels We Have Heard on High" PH 23

**EIGHTH LESSON** Matthew 2:1-11  
*Magi from the East come seeking the Messiah and offer gifts to the baby Jesus*

**CAROL** "We Three Kings of Orient Are" PH 66

**NINTH LESSON** John 1:1-14  
*The Word of God becomes flesh and lives among us, full of grace and truth*

**CAROL** "Silent Night, Holy Night" PH 60

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**  
**THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**CLOSING HYMN** "Joy to the World!" PH 40

**CHARGE AND BLESSING**

*Office of Theology and Worship, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*