



# The Grapevine

*"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower."*

John 15:1

## Calendar for December 1-15

### **Sunday, December 2—First Day of Advent**

- 9:30 a.m.      Worship— Communion  
9:30 a.m.      Rev. Dr. Jeff Japinga,  
                    guest preacher

### **Tuesday, December 4**

- 1:00 p.m.      Staff Meeting w/  
                    Personnel

### **Wednesday, December 5**

- 9:30 a.m.      GIFT (Growing in Faith  
                    Together) Group  
7:00 p.m.      Choir Rehearsal

### **Saturday, December 8**

- 9:30 a.m.      Baker's Group

### **Sunday, December 9**

- 9:30 a.m.      Worship- Rev. Dr. Jeff  
                    Japinga, guest  
                    preacher

### **Monday, December 10**

- 12:00 p.m.    **GRAPEVINE DEADLINE**  
7:00 p.m.      Session Meeting

### **Tuesday, December 11**

- 1:00 p.m.      Staff Meeting w/  
                    Personnel

### **Wednesday, December 12**

- 11:00 a.m.    GIFT to SummerWood  
6:00 p.m.      Deacon's Meeting  
7:00 p.m.      Choir Rehearsal



**Meet Mari Joy, born Monday, November 19th** at 7lbs. 13 oz., and 21 inches long. We are all doing well and appreciate all of the well wishes and good thoughts that have been sent our way. ❤️

Her first name, Mari (rhymes with starry ✨ or sounds like the first part of mariposa 🦋), is a name that we heard and loved in our travels throughout both Scandinavia and Japan, and Joy was Jeff's mom's middle name, and couldn't be more fitting for our little one :)

## **PLYMOUTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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## **PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

**OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE**

### **The flame shall not consume you**

Dear family of God,

We know that your hearts, like ours, have been broken as the devastation wrought by wildfires in California continues to increase in severity. In addition to the destruction of land and forests, the cost to lives and human community has been unprecedented, and those costs are still rising. The town of



*Seminole Springs Mobile Home Park in Cornell, California  
(Photo by PDA NRT member, Dave Doehnert)*

Paradise has been leveled; more than 80 people have been confirmed dead at this writing, and thousands more are unaccounted for. In Northern California, families are living in tents and having difficulty accessing basic services; many of those who have lost their homes are older than 60. While the focus is on those closest to the fires, the impact is widespread. Due to the smoke, communities hundreds of miles from the fires are being impacted by unhealthy air quality. What's more, after the wildfires there is an increased risk of mudslides.

Through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been present since the beginning of the disaster. Working closely with leadership in the affected presbyteries, we have released emergency grants to support the presbyteries in meeting the urgent needs of their neighbors. At the request of the Red Cross, PDA has deployed four disaster spiritual care providers from our national response team to work directly with survivors in shelters and the affected communities. We are deploying additional PDA teams to support the presbyteries in their assessment and response as they help their neighbors begin recovery. Additional grants for ongoing emergency support for survivors and long-term recovery will be forthcoming.

**Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (Cont'd next column)**

### **HOW YOU CAN HELP:**

Your gifts to [\*\*DR000165 \(U.S. Wildfires\)\*\*](#) will ensure that PDA has adequate resources to support the recovery. [\*\*Gift of the Heart\*\*](#) kits are a hands-on way to help others and a fun project for the Advent season; hygiene kits and school kits will especially be needed in California.

As people of faith we seek comfort, support, and direction from God. We ask that you join your spirits with ours as we walk with our California neighbors through the valley of the shadow.

### **Merciful God,**

Once, long ago, your people followed a pillar of cloud by day And a pillar of fire by night, and found their way to a land of promise.

But in these days, among your children in California, These signs bring terror, and not hope. Clouds of smoke bear witness to a still looming threat, and the ashes of loss. And fire by darkness reminds us that both the land and the people who dwelt on it are still in danger and facing losses that can scarcely be imagined.

So not by fire and cloud, but by water and the spirit abide with us now. Bring your healing balm to those who dwell in parched places. Quench these fears and the fires of destruction with the tears of your compassion, water those who suffer with your grace.

May your courage and strength uphold those who are engaged in rescue and recovery, and may they be protected from additional harm while they are given grace to seek those who are endangered and lost.

May those families who have lost loved ones, or who wait anxiously for news, know your sustaining grace, and feel the touch of your hand in the touch of their neighbors and friends.

May those who have been injured, as well as those whose homes and livelihoods have been destroyed, know that You are near, have respite from pain and horror, and taste the waters of life, even in the midst of cloud and fire.

May the land that has been ravaged be restored to life and sheltered from further degradation.

May our prayers be acceptable to you and our tears, a beginning of a balm to suffering souls. In the name of Christ the Healer we pray. Amen.

**The Rev. Dr. Laurie Kraus**  
**Director, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance**



### What is Advent?

The Christian season of Christmas actually begins on Christmas Eve and lasts for twelve days, ending on January 6. (No, the twelve-day season of

Christmas did not start with the song. It was the other way around.) **The time before Christmas is Advent**, a season of preparation for Christmas. Christians prepare for celebrating the birth of Jesus by remembering the longing of the Jews for a Messiah. In Advent, we're reminded of how much we ourselves also need a Savior, and we look forward to our Savior's second coming even as we prepare to celebrate his first coming at Christmas. The word "Advent" comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means "coming" or "visit." In the season with this name, we keep in mind both "advents" of Christ, the first in Bethlehem and the second yet to come.

I loved Christmas when I was young, partly because it celebrated the birth of Jesus, but mostly because it was a giant party in which I received lots of presents. In a sense, the Christian observance is a bit like my boyhood Advent calendars, though it has a much more serious purpose. It's meant to get us ready, not for a present-opening party, but for a transformational celebration of the birth of Jesus.

by Rev. Dr. Mark D. Roberts

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/markdroberts/>



**Chuck Slocum** will be doing his annual Christmas story during worship on 12/23. **Christmas services will be at 4:00p.m. and 9:00p.m. on Christmas Eve.**



### Bloom Early Learning and Child Care at Plymouth Presbyterian Church

As you know, we anticipate opening **Bloom Early Learning and Child Care in May 2019**. But you don't have to wait to get involved! **Volunteer today!**



• **Quilters needed!** We provide every child who comes to Bloom with a hand-made quilt to wrap them in love. Start now! We can share samples of what others have made to show the size.

• **Join the Marketing Committee** We especially need people experienced in-marketing, public relations, social media, writing, videography and photography. Share your talents with us!

- Join the Friends of Bloom committee to develop and maintain strong ties between Bloom and PPC.
- Sign up for one-time volunteer activities, such as stuffing envelopes or providing hospitality at an event.

For more information and to sign up, please contact **Melissa Musliner, Bloom Executive Director**, at [melissa@bloomearlylearning.org](mailto:melissa@bloomearlylearning.org) or 612-325-2077.

**Sunday, December 23rd**, we will welcome new members, **Mary Frances and Bill Stoneburg** to Plymouth Presbyterian Church. Please help us welcome them, as they officially join our church family!



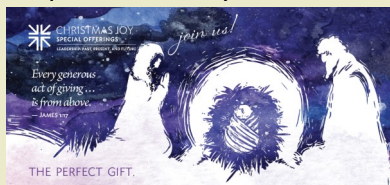


## Christmas Joy Offering

PPC will take the Presbyterian Church USA's annual special offering for Christmas Joy over **the weeks of December 9, 16 and 23**. All monies will support current and retired church workers when they have specific needs and will encourage our future leaders and communities of color through programs at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges. Look for envelopes and inserts in your pews. Thank you.

### The Mission Committee

Suzy Robertson and Kyle Larson



**Please order poinsettias to decorate the sanctuary.**



We will be ordering double poinsettias with green foil wrappers. Each poinsettia will cost \$15.50

**Name:**

\_\_\_\_\_

Please circle choices

Please make check payable to Plymouth Presbyterian Church with Poinsettias in Memo line

**Color:**

Red

White

Pink

**Remembrance:**

**In Honor of:**

**or In Memory of:** \_\_\_\_\_

Quantity \_\_\_\_ X \$15.50 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Orders and money due by Monday,  
December 3rd.**

Your flowers can go home with you on Christmas Eve.



## *The True Blessings of Parenthood-* *(which "we" older parents sometimes forget)*

- 1** You finally stop to smell the roses, because your baby is in your arms.
- 2** Where you once believed you were fearless, you now find yourself afraid.
- 3** The sacrifices you thought you made to have a child no longer seem like sacrifices.
- 4** You respect your parents and love them in a new way.
- 5** You find that your baby's pain feels much worse than your own.
- 6** You believe once again in things you believed in as a child.
- 7** You think of someone else 234,836,178,976 times a day.
- 8** Every day is a surprise.



A wee bit of heaven  
drifted down from above-  
A handful of happiness.  
a heart full of love.  
The mystery of life,  
so sacred & sweet.  
Precious & priceless,  
so lovable too.  
The world's  
sweetest miracle,  
baby, is you.

*Helen  
Steiner-Rice*



*Congratulations,*

*Rev. Jeff and Kelly,*

*may God bless, guide*

*and watch over you*

*and your baby, Mari!*







### Update on Bloom Early Learning -

It's fun to be in advent awaiting the birth of Jesus while we celebrate the new life of Mari Joy and also await the arrival of Bloom children in May! Here's the latest from those who are working with dedication to create this mutual mission between PPC and Bloom.

~Penny Blankenship and Suzy Robertson are in close touch with the Bloom Expansion team, which meets weekly, keeping tabs on all the necessary tasks.

~There are at least 20 applications for the director's position. Bloom hopes to make a decision by mid-December with a January start date. The director will hire the assistant director and they will start hiring teachers.

~The application for a state license has been submitted.

~A Bloom supporter offered a \$25,000 matching grant, which has been matched! \$440,000 has been pledged over three years, \$15,000 over Bloom's goal. So many people are happy to give to this great cause of helping all children be ready for kindergarten.

~The lease between PPC and Bloom is progressing, and the goal is to have it signed by the end of the year, so construction can begin in January.

~Bloom is exploring plans for an eco-playground to be located adjacent to our existing one. Their playground will be fenced in and for their use during program hours.

~Session has reviewed the draft of the site plan. A copy of the plan will be displayed in the narthex for members to view in December. The \$10,000 Presbytery grant money will be applied towards the cost of the new ovens.

~Melissa Musliner and Interfaith Outreach's, LaDonna Hoy, will identify scholarship families (50%) for our site. The marketing strategy for full-pay children (50%) is nearly ready, and there are multiple families who have expressed interest.

**Please continue to pray for this venture and to bring any concerns to Penny or Suzy.**



Thank you to Penny Dando's Grandson, Dane and Rick Ackerman, who's morning project involved putting the new tall tables together at church.

**Adopt-a-Family Christmas 2018-** Our church family will sponsor 15 people from two families in need of



Christmas cheer this year. Pick a person to sponsor from the table in the narthex and spend \$50 on the suggestions they have

offered. Each gift **must be returned to the church no later than Wednesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>**. See the instructions on the display for the proper labeling. Anyone wishing to help get them packed up and **delivered to Interfaith Outreach, can talk to Kyle Larson or Suzy Robertson. Thanks!**