



ALTAR LIGHT
DECEMBER 2018

A Note From Pastor Dan:

Hi church family.

“Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’” - Matthew 1:23

If there is a single act of God’s that most amazes and astounds me, it is the incarnation. I can imagine an all powerful God creating the universe, granting life, and putting galaxies in motion. Of course. That’s what a God would do.

I have a harder time imagining that God would step down into the universe God made. How is this even possible? That the Creator of the universe could become a creature in the universe seems incomprehensible. Especially to a planet and people who seem to have such a difficult time accepting God, and living according to God’s ways. Even if God were deign to show up, wouldn’t God come as God, in all God’s glory? That God would be willing to come to our planet, not as God, but as one of us - divinity clothed in the form of a helpless human baby - this is almost inconceivable to me-

And a beautiful mystery beyond words.

That said, Immanuel may be one of the best words-God with us.

That God loves us enough to join us as one of us - this is as close to the definition of love as anything I can imagine.

Love is incarnational. Love is embodied. It meets us right where we are: in our humanity; in our frailty; in our confusion and myopia and distraction and selfishness

and joy and hope and sadness and suffering; our victories and defeats, in our birth, our life, our death. God is with us. Love is with us. All of us. Each of us.

For me, this is the deepest and most inspirational aspect of Christmas: the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.

Love moved into the neighborhood.

And the neighborhood will never be the same!

Merry Christmas!

-Pastor Dan

PARADISE FIRE FUND

Thank you for your contributions to our Paradise Fire Fund. As of November 30th, we have received \$5,000 in monetary donations, as well as quite a few gift cards. Thank you again for your generosity.

STEWARDSHIP DRIVE

The stewardship drive will begin December 1st. We will be sending out stewardship letters soon, which will include your year-to-date giving statements. Your pledges help us to prepare our budget for the upcoming year.

TUESDAY NIGHT BIBLE JOURNEY

Pastor Dan is leading a class that explores the books of the Bible on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. in the Social Hall. We are currently studying the Book of Luke. The discussions are lively and thought provoking. This Bible study does not include a potluck meal and does not meet on Consistory meeting nights (2nd Tuesday of month and on quarterly Ault Fellowship nights).

THE ELDERS NOVEMBER REPORT

The freshly painted narthex has been well received. The new light Pastor Dan put up in the ceiling looks great and the area is more spacious and less cluttered. The Elders are working on getting a metal wall hanging to attach our magnetic name badges to when not being worn.

June is getting people to participate in the Hanging of the Greens service on December 2nd. She will have close to 30 people participating in this special church service.

Jeff is looking into getting a defibrillator for the church. He also is forming a church safety team that will set some guidelines and protocol in case of an emergency. A representative from the Woodland Police Department will be meeting with Jeff and touring the church campus to give recommendations for our safety.

Jan has been doing an excellent job keeping up the church website and the church's Facebook page. She also is in regular contact with the Daily Democrat to get our church activities some publicity.

A church new members class will be begin sometime in the first half of next year. The Elders will assist Pastor Dan with some of the content of the class.

HELP NEEDED IN SOUND ROOM

We would like a few volunteers to learn how to run the sound equipment in the sanctuary. Ideally, we'd like to rotate volunteers so that their commitment is just once a month. Sharing the duties will give volunteers flexibility and the ability to sit, listen and participate in worship services all but one Sunday a month. Please consider this volunteer opportunity.



HANGING OF THE GREENS SUNDAY,

DECEMBER 2nd AT 10 A.M.: Many members of the congregation will participate in this service when we will decorate our church for Advent with items symbolic of the Christmas season. We will also be singing many familiar Christmas carols. This will be the first Sunday of Advent, as well, so we will light the first candle in the Advent wreath. We hope you can attend this special worship service.

CHRISTMAS WREATHS



The live Christmas wreaths, sprays, and centerpieces arrived this week. We still have extra items available if you would like to make a purchase. Contact Marilyn Mitchell at 530-908-1676 if you are interested.

CHURCH POINSETTIA ORDERS

Dolores Neilson will be taking orders through December 7th for poinsettias to adorn the altar area through the Christmas season. The cost will be \$10 per plant. Your donation can be made "In memory" or "in honor" of loved ones. If you want to make a donation for a poinsettia, but will not be in church to see Dolores, you can drop your donation by the church office or send it in by mail.



THE JUNIOR CHOIR PRESENTS- "CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD"

The very talented St. John's Junior choir will present their musical on December 16th at our 10 a.m. worship service. A special Christmas message will be delivered through beautiful songs and a meaningful story. Following the service, join us in the Social Hall for Baby Jesus' birthday cake and goody bags for the kids. The Junior Choir will not practice until January following their performance



THE CHOIR PRESENTS "BETHLEHEM STORY" ON DECEMBER 23RD:

The choir will sing a collection of beautiful Christmas arrangements during our 10 a.m. worship service that day. This is the 4th Sunday of Advent and the candle of Love will be lit. We hope you will join us on this special day.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE 7:30 P.M.

Join us for our candlelight service of carols, Scripture and a special Christmas message. Bring your family and friends and feel the true meaning of Christmas come alive.



With a very grateful heart, I want to express my sincerest thanks for your many prayers and cards following my spine surgery and long period of convalescing. I'm hoping for all good news when I have my second post-opt December 19th appointment. Again, thank you so very much. Blessings ... Shirley Schroeder

CHRISTMAS SHOEBOXES

In August, we purchased school supplies for the 30 shoe boxes that will be given to 4th & Hope families at Christmas. We will be purchasing additional items for the boxes in the next 2 weeks. See Marilyn Mitchell to make a financial contribution to purchase the remainder of the items for this project.



DECEMBER MOVIE NIGHTS

14th- "The Santa Clause"

28th- "Gladiator"

The Friday night movies begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Social Hall, with snacks provided, but you are welcome to bring a snack to share. These are fun evenings of fellowship during the holidays.

CRAFT FAIRE

Our 9th Annual Craft Faire was held November 16th & 17th. This year we had fewer venders due to at least two other churches having their craft events on the same weekend. Our attendance at the event was also lower than previous years.

FACILITY PROJECTS UPDATE

Last month Pastor Dan, Jeff Bourke and Tom Hall painted the narthex. Pastor Dan installed a new light fixture and Jim Neilson greased the bell. It looks clean and inviting.

Pastor Dan also painted his office and refinished the wood flooring that was under the old carpet in that room. Tom Hall and Carol Neilson helped with this project. The floor looks great.

Thank you work crew for your hard work.

Future projects we will be working on include:

Replacing the original single paned windows in back of the overflow room of the sanctuary, the CCA classroom window near the ramp and two windows in the sound room. Quote \$6,254. The sound room windows may be deferred until later.

Replacing one preschool door, 3 doors that open to the play yard from the social hall and 1 sanctuary door south of altar area. Quote \$7,000

We are looking into additional bids for the doors.

Painting the outside of the preschool and social hall facing the courtyard.

Painting the front of the preschool.

Painting the social hall wall and preschool wall facing the play yard.

Work on the above projects will be done as funds are received.



Jim Neilson

It was a dark and stormy night on November 9th 1950 when James Edward Neilson (that's me) was born at 12:38 a.m. at the Yolo General Hospital in Woodland, California to Lawrence and Dolores (Hayes) Neilson. I have no brother or sisters. I guess I broke the mold. Growing up, I attended Woodland Schools from kindergarten through 12th grade. I attended one year of college at Sac State. During all of these years, I spent as much time as possible at the ranch riding with my grandfather and working with him.

In 1971 I got married and we had three kids: Tara, Traci and Leland. From them I have eight grandchildren: Trenton, Kyra, Colton, Carston, Cody, Brittany, Lee and Eric. And from them, I have one great-grandson, Oliver and another great-grandson due in April.

In 1969 I went to work for Northrup King Seed Research Company. In 1976 I went to work for Roy Riegels (farm) Chemicals. In 1985, I knocked down the old house on the ranch where my mother was born and with my father, built the house that I

live in today. In 2005, I was able to have my dream and passion to farm full time. It took a while, but in God's own time.

In 2013 I married Carol. Third time is the charm. In God's own time. She keeps me focused on farming, the church and my faith. We see that living on the ranch and every day we see God's glory and his work.

I have always gone to St. John's ever since I can remember and wouldn't have wanted it any other way. What I like most about St. John's is that we are a family. I appreciate the closeness, concern and caring we all have for each other.

What I have learned in my life, having God with me through the whole journey, is that I am Blessed and Highly Favored. I wish everyone would feel that and say that and pass it forward so everyone could feel it also.

GRAVY FOR CHRISTMAS BASKETS

Our church is providing the gravy for the WEMM Christmas Baskets again this year. We have purchased 350 packets of gravy and are accepting donations toward this purchase. Please write "gravy" in the memo section of your check when you make a donation toward this community outreach project.

FIJI OUTREACH

We will be sending 4 wardrobe boxes to Fiji in the near future. Over the last two years we have sent over 42 boxes to churches in three different areas of Fiji.

KEEP THEM IN YOUR PRAYERS

Faye Brannan, Paula Castles, Sammie Collins,
Al Massa, Derril Peabody, Bob La Blanc
Dathion Ruiz, Lois Lawson, Shirley Schroeder,
All of the families without homes
and the families who lost loved ones in the wildfires
firefighters and first responders
for the caregivers within our community,
those serving in the military and their families,
local, national, and international leaders,
all who suffer persecution around the world.

ADULT FELLOWSHIP

On Tuesday, December 18th we will have a Christmas Carol sing along at 5:30 p.m. in the social hall with deserts. Come join in the merriment.

SEE'S CANDY AT VILLAGE GIFT SHOP

The Lifesavers auxiliary is selling See's Candy at the St. John's Retirement Village Gift Shop. We also sell greeting cards, stuffed animals, jewelry, hand-made items, puzzle/word find books, jam, honey, etc. In addition, we will have a lot of holiday items available for sale. We are open 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday. If you need candy at the last minute you can call Marilyn Mitchell @ 908-1676.

ANNUAL MEETING-JANUARY 27TH

**CONSISTORY BOARD REPORTS DUE IN
THE CHURCH OFFICE-DECEMBER 28TH**

LOCAL OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES:



We are continuing our collection of ***new or gently used bath towels, wash cloths, soap and toiletries*** for 4th and Hope. We are also still collecting ***unopened pet food, new and used towels***

and ***laundry detergent*** for the Yolo County Animal Shelter. You may bring these items to the social hall or the back hallway of the church where there will be designated boxes to put the items.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

6th Shirley Schroeder
19th Sally Reed
20th Kristina Palmer
18th Audrey Hicks
30th Frank Sieferman



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARY

1st Don & Paula Castles

WHEN IS YOUR BIRTHDAY AND ANNIVERSARY?

We do not have all of your birthdays and anniversaries on file in the office. We'd like to know these special dates so that we can wish you happiness and love. If you haven't seen your name in your birthday or anniversary month Altar Light, please let Carol Lou know, so that we don't miss it next year!

ST. JOHN'S RETIREMENT VILLAGE

The Dove Campaign is underway. The Dove Tree in the lobby of the Village is being adorned with "doves" in memory and in honor of loved ones. The donations are used for facility upkeep and upgrades. The tree will shine in the lobby throughout the holiday season. Call St. John's Village (662-1290) for information on how to donate to the campaign. The tree lighting is scheduled for November 30th at 5:30p.m. Holiday Parties for the residents are scheduled for the first two weeks of December.

UPDATING CONTACT INFORMATION

In an effort to maintain current contact information, we are requesting that the members and friends of St. John's Church update their contact information (address, e-mail address(es) and both home and cell phone numbers) and e-mail to: **saintjohnswoodland@gmail.com** or call the church office (**662-5921**) or mail in the information (**432 Cleveland Street**). Thank you to those of you who have turned in information cards.

ST. JOHN'S PRESCHOOL

The Apple Hill Pie Fundraiser was a great success. We sold 137 pies which were delivered for pick up on November 19th. Our Thanksgiving feasts in each classroom were held Tuesday, November 20th. The preschool was closed Wednesday through Friday for Thanksgiving. The preschool's annual Christmas program is scheduled for Thursday, December 13th at 5:30 in the sanctuary, followed by a short reception in the social hall to see Santa and have refreshments. We will be closed December 24th through January 1st.

ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
432 CLEVELAND STREET
WOODLAND, CALIFORNIA 95695

Address Service Requested