

January 2025



CASCADES
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

THE CHURCH BELL

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JANUARY

DEACON OF THE MONTH

Karen Montovino

“When the magi had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. ‘Get up,’ he said, ‘take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.’” Matthew 2:13

If the Cascades family is truly representative of the broader society, then I’m sure we are as divided politically as our country. The New Year brings a new presidential administration who will very likely govern very differently than the predecessor. Based on the platforms projected throughout the election season, for some this will be a much welcome change. For others it will bring uncertainty, concern, and fear.

I am particularly mindful of our undocumented members of society. They are those, who like many of our ancestors years ago, came to the United States fleeing violence, economic disparity, or persecution, in search of a better life for their families. These were good hard working people upon whom the backs of our great nation was built. Who wouldn’t want to live in a country that offers peace, prosperity, and the pursuit of happiness for all? Having spent time in Honduras, one of the poorest areas of the world, if the shoes were switched, you’d bet I would want what America has to offer.

Through the Cascades’ Benevolence Board, we have close contact with the Family Community Resource Coordinators at the local public schools. What these dedicated public servants do is extraordinary. Many of them are people of faith who feel called to serve the least of these in our communities. Not only do they help meet these students, and their families’ physical needs, but they also attend to their emotional ones as well. What we are hearing on the ground from these FCRCs is that the students from undocumented families are fearful of being deported or having their families ripped apart in the process. It is absolutely heart breaking.

Regardless of where we fall on the political spectrum on these issues of immigration, Jesus calls us to have compassion...to be a people of peace. And welcome. And care. The Old Testament, in fact, commands us to look after the alien in our midst because at one time God’s people were themselves aliens in Egypt (Exodus 23:9, Leviticus 19:33-34). AND as the scripture above from Matthew notes, Jesus and the Holy Family sought asylum in Egypt when King Herod sought to kill Jesus as a child, the one born King of the Jews.

My friends, the Church ought to be the conscience of the nation. A voice crying out in the wilderness. Saying what no one else is willing to say. And that may mean holding our governmental leaders accountable for the decisions they make and the injustices they create that negatively affect all of us, documented or not.

In Christ,
Rev. Dr. Chris Montovino



Welcome
2025!


SOLVE THE RIDDLES

What do snowmen eat for breakfast?

What do snowmen do on weekends?

Why do snowmen never get married?

Stumped?
See page 5 for the answer.

As you enjoy reading this month’s Bell, try to find the hidden cross. 

CONGRATULATIONS TO SARAH OSTRAND, MDIV

While we know Sarah Ostrand as our beloved Youth Director, Deacon, and leader of Eternally Beloved Senior Care Ministries, she has been busy completing her Masters of Divinity Degree at Jessup University (formerly Multnomah Biblical Seminary). Sarah is a truly gifted minister and lives out her calling so beautifully among us. Please congratulate Sarah on completing her degree and equipping herself for future ministry.



A THANK YOU TO MY CASCADES FAMILY



Over the last 22 years I have had the pleasure to work with and for the amazing people at Cascades Church. There have been many folks who have moved on over the years, as well the many new faces joining this amazing 'family' we share. You each have been an amazing gift to me throughout the years and I appreciate every one of you. You have laughed with me, prayed for me, and trudged along beside me when I had a difficult day. (Chris, I apologize for any gray hairs I might have caused you!). I

have learned so many things from all of you and I am humbled by your strong faith and giving hearts. Thank you to everyone who helped organize such an amazing retirement party. I apologize to those of you who came but did not have a chance to talk to me. Just know that I appreciate you celebrating with me. Please welcome Lisa as she takes my place in the office. She will do an excellent job as your Administrative Assistant.

Andy and I are looking forward to moving to Montana within the next year to be near my sisters, our daughter and her family (especially our granddaughter!). Please pray for us as we continue to look for the right property to fit our needs and our pocketbook!

Thank you again for the privilege of working for you and many blessings to you all!

Michelle Drexler

*Happy
New Year!*

DECEMBER SESSION NOTES

Pastor Chris led a devotion from one of his favorite theologians, Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Discussed staff changes. Celebrated Michelle Drexler's retirement and Sarah Ostrand's graduation. Approved a balanced budget based on results of fall stewardship campaign. Discussed tree maintenance, repairing church signage, and improving lighting around the church parking lot. Considered online presence and the importance of filling front rows of seats in front of the pulpit. Approved Benevolence Board grants and building use requests. Overall we feel an extreme degree of gratitude for the many generous people who give their time, talents, and resources to further the mission and ministry of the church.

daily Devotions



Blessed by God

Jan 1 Jeremiah 31:7-14
Jan 2 Psalm 147:12-20
Jan 3 John 1:10-18
Jan 4 John 1:10-18

Disclosure of God's Love

Jan 5 Matthew 2:1-12
Jan 6 Matthew 2:1-12
Jan 7 Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
Jan 8 Isaiah 43:1-7
Jan 9 Psalm 72:10-14
Jan 10 Acts 8:14-17
Jan 11 Ephesians 3:1-12

In Your Light, We See Light

Jan 12 John 2:1-11
Jan 13 John 2:1-11

Listening to God

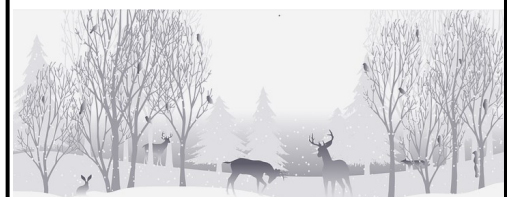
Jan 14 John 2:1-11
Jan 15 1 Corinthians 12:1-11
Jan 16 1 Corinthians 12:1-11
Jan 17 Psalm 36:5-10
Jan 18 John 2:1-11

The Wholeness of God

Jan 19 Psalm 19
Jan 20 Psalm 19
Jan 21 Psalm 19
Jan 22 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a
Jan 23 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a
Jan 24 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a
Jan 25 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

Trusting in God's Providence

Jan 26 Jeremiah 1:4-10
Jan 27 Jeremiah 1:4-10
Jan 28 Psalm 71:1-6
Jan 29 1 Corinthians 13:1-9
Jan 30 Luke 4:21-30
Jan 31 Luke 4:21-30



CASCADES YOUTH GROUP

Yuletide Blessings!

As we wrap up 2024, I would like to share some of the highlights from the Youth Group.

We began the school year with a youth retreat at Menucha Retreat Center. We talked about how we create identity and how to take steps today to become the person we want to be tomorrow. We also played hide and seek tag, wink-assassin, and allowed for down time and exploring.

In October we cohosted our Trunk or Treat Harvest Party. The youth were very excited to lead games and pass out candy to children from our church and beyond. They were even happier the following week when we had our own Halloween party which featured Mario Kart and the leftover candy.

December is a month of festivities. We had our own Thanksgiving meal the first week of the month and we will have our Christmas party just before we break for the holidays. The youth were also pleased to participate in the Hanging of the Greens and setting up the Nacimiento.

Our lessons have included diving into topics of grace, role models, and mental health. In all of these, we discussed living a Christ-like life, trusting others (and when to create safe boundaries), and taking care of ourselves. We end each meeting with a group prayer in which everyone must pray. The youth continue to amaze me with their thoughtful prayer requests and compassionate hearts.

We look forward to growing our faith, learning more about God, and sharing His love in the New Year!

God's Peace,
Sarah Ostrand

FAREWELL TO NATALYA



One of the great things about Cascades is how the youngest of us are welcome in the worship service. There may be a cry or two, but how we delight as they get older and spontaneously dance in front of us! It is these little ones who have the special privilege, when they are not in the sanctuary, of being in the loving care of our nursery worker, Natalya Fassold.

On other days of the week, Natalya is the nurturing lead teacher of the Fireflies, the 18-24 month-olds at the Goddard School at Salmon Creek, an early learning institution for infants and toddlers through pre-kindergarten children.

Natalya, born in Burien, WA, graduated from Mountain View High School, and now attends Clark College, majoring in early childhood education. She is very family-oriented, as older sister Serenity lives in Fall City, step-sister Keira attends Kelso High School, and recent high school graduate brother Liam lives in Portland with his mom. Her grandparents live in Hillsboro, where a giant sturgeon occupies a pond in their backyard! Every Friday her grandmother would gather Natalya from school (elementary, middle, and high) to spend the weekend together. What a wonderful reminder of the influence grandmothers have on the lives of their grandchildren!

Currently, Natalya shares her home with boyfriend, Kraig, and with her co-worker, an assistant teacher. Her Norwegian elk hound, Stella, and cats, Marley and Judy, also inhabit the home. Natalya enjoys garage sales, estate sales, and thrifting, which allow her to find knick-knacks and the giant pair of working scissors she prizes.

She also treasures time with her dad as they fish for trout in Canada or hunt elk and deer in the Kelso area on all-day trips. Natalya fully participates in all aspects of hunting and fishing. A favorite travel location was to Barbados where she experienced the joy of being on the water while watching the stars overhead.

Since this was written, we have learned that Natalya is no longer able to serve in our nursery. Thank you to Natalya for her loving care in our congregation. We wish her well in future employment elsewhere. We especially intend to pray as Natalya helps care for her father after his recent leukemia diagnosis. Natalya, thank you for your kindness, your care, and your service to our congregation!

A BIBLE STUDY ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Are you ready to live fully prepared and equipped to handle anything life throws at you? As Christians, we can be courageous and confident, knowing that God has placed us in human history for his purposes, and he will empower us regardless of our circumstances. In this eight-session series, pastor and author Matt Chandler will walk us through the book of Revelation to remind us of God's fierce, conquering, commanding authority over all the earth. So join us at 9:00am on Sunday mornings starting January 12, 2025 in the Small Conference Room off the Narthex. If you'd like some additional study material on the subject Scot McKnight's *Revelation for the Rest of Us - A Prophetic Call to Follow Jesus as a Dissident Disciple* would be a good companion book to pick up.

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

On Wednesday, December 15, 2024, Cascades held The Longest Night Service, A Sacred Night of Naming Our Sorrow. Our culture and the Church are great at helping us celebrate during the Christmas Season, but not so helpful about acknowledging our grief, pain, or sorrow. We were led through a solemn and reflective liturgy that helped us name our losses or griefs and release them to God. About 17 people attended. Thank you to Worship Leader and Elder Josh Krane for the vision of hosting such an event and to Josh and Heather Krane, Laura Livingston, and Kaylene Campbell for their musical talents, Seth Hartrim-Lowe for doing our PowerPoint, Erin Suttan for the candles and lighting, Sherry and Bob McKusick for the greenery, and Pastor Chris, Sherry McKusick and Joan Detrick for offering prayer following the event. It was a very powerful and meaningful service.

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING IS WONDERFUL! (WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER)

Early in October, I fell into owning 215 pair of socks. I got them for a modest donation to a local non-profit that had way more socks than they could use. Good socks can be the difference between life and death for someone living on the street. Good socks can help someone who works outside avoid illness. But 215 pair was way more than I could deliver by myself to people who need them. What to do with them?

I spoke to a few people at Cascades and little by little, we whittled the "problem" down. Fifty pair went to The Giving Closet with Sue Holcomb who volunteers there. Fifty pair went to alumni of Family Promise via Christy Mistrot. The Cascades Youth Group took thirty-five pair through Sarah Ostrand to put into their comfort bags. Betty passed on fifty-one pair to friends who cook a soup supper every week for a homeless encampment. And at Betty's suggestion I took fifty-four pair to Share. Just like that, the socks went out into the world where they could keep feet dry and warm.

Cascades does much bigger things to benefit our neighbors, but the little things add up, too, one pair of socks at a time.

Lindsay Winsor
Member of the Cascades Benevolence Board



TOP OF THE HILL SENIOR POTLUCK

All seniors in our church family are invited to gather for our Top of The Hill Senior Potluck on Sunday, January 19 following the church service. Nancy Bisbee will be on hand to share information on our new Hymnal. Top of the Hill meets the third Sunday of each month and will include discussion topics or information shared by members or guests. All seniors are welcome.



JANUARY CALENDAR

BIRTHDAYS

Jan 1	<i>New Year's Day</i>	Office Closed
Jan 2	1:30pm	Giving Hands Ministry
	6:45pm	Choir Practice
Jan 5	9:00am	Pancake Breakfast
	10:15am	Worship Service
Jan 7	7:00pm	Deacon Meeting
Jan 8	6:30pm	Youth Group
Jan 9	7:00pm	Session Meeting
	1:30pm	Giving Hands Ministry
	6:45pm	Choir Practice
Jan 12	9:00am	Sunday School All Ages
	10:15am	Worship Service
Jan 15	6:30pm	Youth Group
Jan 16	1:30pm	Giving Hands Ministry
	6:45pm	Choir Practice
Jan 19	9:00am	Sunday School All Ages
	10:15am	Worship Service
	11:30am	Top of the Hill Potluck
Jan 20	<i>Martin Luther King Jr. Day—Office Closed</i>	
Jan 22	6:30pm	Youth Group
Jan 23	1:30pm	Giving Hands Ministry
	6:45pm	Choir Practice
Jan 26	9:00am	Sunday School All Ages
	10:15am	Worship Service
	11:45pm	Annual Congregational Meeting
Jan 29	6:30pm	Youth Group
Jan 30	1:30pm	Giving Hands Ministry
	6:45pm	Choir Practice

Marcella Chandler
Ralph Hudelson
Steve Lind
Rod Swanson

ANNIVERSARIES

If you don't see your anniversary or birthdate listed here please contact the church office!

NOVEMBER FINANCES

Income \$26,247.64
Expenses \$25,878.46
Total \$ 369.18

Year to Date 2024
\$ 12,129.80

WARM HANDS, WARM HEARTS

Right before Thanksgiving, 112 pieces of warm winter clothing were delivered to the Family Resource Center at Silver Star Elementary School. They were a gift from Cascades Church and were brought together by the Giving Hands Group. Many of the 11 scarves and 61 hats were knitted or crocheted by Giving Hands members. The rest of the items, including 4 long underwear pieces and 36 gloves/mittens were donated by members of the congregation. It was a way for all of us to give thanks for the many blessings God has given to us and to pass some of those blessings on to those who need them. Our hearts are warmed by thoughts of children and their families having beautiful winter wear for this winter season.



Answers:
1. Frosted flakes!
2. Chill out!
3. They always get cold feet!



CASCADES
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED

*Happy
New Year!*

PANCAKE BREAKFAST
January 5 @ 9:00am

SUNDAY WORSHIP
9am Sunday School All Ages
10:15am Worship Service

TOP OF THE HILL POTLUCK
January 19 @ 11:30am

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
January 26 @ 11:45pm