December 1  Everything Christmas Sale
December 5  2nd Sunday of Advent Communion
December 12  3rd Sunday of Advent
December 19  4th Sunday of Advent
December 24  5pm Christmas Eve Service
December 25  MERRY CHRISTMAS!
Weekly Word

Weekly Word email: If you would like to receive the email David sends out each week about the upcoming Sunday, please email or call the church office and tell us to add you to the “Weekly Word” list.

Contacting the Church

If you have any questions or concerns, you may call the Church Office at 662-2971, email us at ucoffice@unitedchurchla.org, or send us a message on Facebook.

The Church Office is open Monday thru Friday:
8:30am – 2:30pm.

You may also reach the pastors at the office number, email, or phone numbers below:

David Elton
979-219-8640 cell
david@unitedchurchla.org

Keith Lewis
505-412-9954 cell
gohorns_99@yahoo.com

Kara Windler
719-930-6563 cell
DCE@unitedchurchla.org

December

1st Everything Christmas Sale

4th Santa’s List Day

5th Sangre de Cristo Chorale Concert (Sanctuary)

7th Norm Wilson Memorial Service – 11:00am

9th National Pastry Day

16th National Chocolate Covered Anything Day

17th Last day of the 1st Semester for LAPS!

21st 1st Day of Winter

24th Christmas Eve Worship Service – 5:00pm

25th Christmas Day

26th Boxing Day

30th Annual Reports Due

31st New Year’s Eve
It’s nice to see more events on the Advent and Christmas calendar on the cover page of this Chimes edition. It’s certainly better than last year! While eating together is still hindered by COVID-19 rules, it’s wonderful to be able to worship together each Sunday and on Christmas Eve!

Our theme for Advent and Christmas Day & Season this year is: *Heaven and Earth Sing*. And sure enough, there are numerous places in the two gospels with Christmas narratives (Matthew and Luke) where God’s people sing. While it’s not the case in many of the psalms, all of these songs are joyful. They are inspired by the amazed and joyful responses to God’s wonders and work. Please see the scripture readings throughout Advent and Christmas below.

May these songs from people and angels through whom God worked to bring about and celebrate Christ’s coming give us much amazement and joy this Advent and Christmas!

*David*

### *Heaven and Earth Sing*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 28</td>
<td>Luke 1:42 – 45</td>
<td>Elizabeth’s Song</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 5</td>
<td>Luke 1:46 – 55</td>
<td>Mary’s Song</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 12</td>
<td>Luke 1:68 – 79</td>
<td>Zechariah’s Song</td>
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<td>December 19</td>
<td>Matthew 2:1-9a</td>
<td>Magi set out…</td>
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<td>Christmas Eve</td>
<td>Luke 2:8 – 20</td>
<td>Angels’ Sing</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2</td>
<td>Luke 2:29-32</td>
<td>Simeon’s Song</td>
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We are now entering our fourth rotation in our *Bible Quest* Children’s Sunday School program. Over the Advent Season we are studying the Arrival of the Magi/Wisemen during the Sunday School hour. Our focus is learning the story as well as the significance of the star they followed and gifts they bring to the newborn Messiah. We will begin with a mini Advent Workshop in Fancy Nancy’s Art Studio on 11/28…move to Wise Gals n Guys and Starry Skies on 12/5…Parable Playhouse (Drama) on 12/12 and we will wrap things up with “The Little Drummer Boy” in Burning Bush Studios (Craig Hall) on 12/19.

**Please note that we will not have Sunday School for all ages on 12/26 and 1/2**

We will resume class with an Epiphany Party during Bible Quest on Sunday, January 9th.

Blessings, Keith

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**Year-end thoughts from the Finance Board**

The year is fast coming to a close and we would like to remind you of several things related to your contributions to the church.

- You all received a statement from Treasurer showing your giving record through October 2021. This might help in thinking about your giving in December before the close of the year.
- Are there some Memorial Gifts you want to do and have not gotten around to doing them? Is there some additional year end giving you might want to do, like Alternative Giving, support for flowers, Mexico Mission, other missions, etc.
- Remember if you do Standard Deductions on your taxes, you can still take $300 per person ($600 per couple) off on your tax return.
- Giving Tuesday is November 30, a good time to think about additional gifts!!!

Finally, since New Year’s Day is on Saturday. Friday, December 31st is a Bank Holiday, so all year end deposits must be completed on Thursday, December 30th. Therefore, we ask that all donations to the church as part of your 2021 giving be at the church before Thursday, December 30, 2021.

Thank you all for your continued support to the United Church of Los Alamos.
**Update on 2022 Stewardship Campaign**

Sunday, November 15, 2021, was *Loyalty Sunday* when many pledges were received. Since then more cards have been received.

At the time of this Chimes article publication, we have received pledges of about $360K, though we are still receiving cards. If you have not returned your pledge, we encourage you to do so.

Taking this amount plus an estimate of pledges still to come (based on last year’s giving - $123K), together with an estimate of non-pledge income ($61K) and other income ($40K), we estimate a total income in 2022 of approximately $585,000. This is short of the proposed budget of $632,000. We hope the additional pledges will show an increase.

The next step will be to arrive at the best estimate of total 2022 giving, look at making refinements in the proposed budget and ascertain the level of operating reserve funds we want to use to supplement the income for a balanced budget. This process will continue through December and most of January with the goal of presenting a final budget for approval at the annual congregational meeting in late January.

**PRAYERS**

Please continue to hold these persons in your prayers during the month of December:

Jim Stapp ~ Richard Swenson ~ Betty Wilson

John Rebstock ~ Buck Siglock ~ Bob Bliss

Barbara Jean Wilson ~ Larry & Betty Briscoe

Nancy Scheer ~ Bob & Gladys Erickson ~ Paityn Griffith
May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you, O God!

I hope that these words mean something to all of us this year. There is a glut of everything this time of year, including words, from companies trying to attract business to those spouting out “Season’s Greetings.” Our modern society lives with a glut of words consistently – opinions galore, the right to tear people down verbally, mixed with other’s words of hope and interest. It seems people have the “right” to say whatever they feel at that time, true or false.

People often see themselves as reflections of others’ words. As the Body of Christ we can choose sincere words that become a gift, that uplift, show appreciation and bring lightness and joy. Words that reflect God’s Love.

We have much to celebrate with Jesus’ birth. Jesus’ words are true gifts to humanity: Love, Healing, Sacrifice, Forgiveness, Grace, Comfort, Compassion, Wisdom and Healing. His words help us to know God’s nature. They did not disgrace the outcasts, sinners and people that society avoided or said harmful words to. His gift parables help generations to uncover deeper meanings about God’s Kingdom. His words tell us to love each other, even our enemies, as much as we love ourselves. His resurrection and words catapulted fearful apostles to risk their lives, to spread the Good News.

**AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US! We are Christ’s Body and HIS WORDS can be gifts from our mouths too.** Even with COVID precautions, we can gift non-verbal wrappings like side hugs, smiling eyes, thumbs up and hand hearts.

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However, words can do so much harm. We all have wounds from something that was said. “Sticks and Stones can break my bones but WORDS can pierce my heart.” They do not evaporate. Once out they cannot be reeled back in.
“Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue is also a fire... With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God’s likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be!”  James 3:5b- 6a, 9

Flattery is insincere and can be a damaging shield which deflect real compliments. However, Words that say, “I see you and you are valuable, beloved of our God,” can heal and give confidence. Lies are a pandemic in our society that we need a vaccine for.

This year let’s give the gifts of:

* **Kind words** that bless others

* **Funny words** that can bring a smile, a laugh, even break a tense moment

* **Gentle words** that sooth a troubled soul and give courage

* **Truthful words** said for the common good

* **Thankful words** can brighten a day

Acknowledging words that help others know they are seen and appreciated

**Memorable words** that celebrate past adventures, laughter, beauty

**Patient words** that give others the courage to try again

**No words** when they do not help. Sometimes listening is the best gift

**Loving Words.** Speak to others as you wish they would speak to you!

There is a lot of fear, mistrust, and anxiety in our country... We have choice this holiday of piercing a heart, ignoring a person or uplifting a soul, encouraging joy, forgiving, giving hope.

May the words of my mouth be acceptable to you O Lord

Have a blessed Holiday season and be a blessing to others.

On behalf of all good, imperfect relationships, Betty Smith
Alternative Giving

Probably all of us have family members or friends for whom selecting a Christmas gift that’s unique is almost impossible. “It ain’t necessarily so…” The Missions and Service Board is suggesting (urging) you to consider giving a gift-contribution (on behalf of that individual who might be difficult to please) to one or more of the four organizations described below. These are all life-giving projects that the Missions Board considers extremely worthwhile. You can purchase these Alternative Gifts during the month of December in Fellowship Hall following Sunday Worship or at the Church Office during Office Hours (Monday – Friday: 8:30am to 2:30pm) There will be more information and brochures available, as well as gift cards for you to fill out and send to your recipients. We are all aware of the poverty and desperate needs of so many people in the world, particularly when compared with the abundance in our lives. We would urge you to consider an Alternative Giving Project in your gift-giving celebration of Christmas this year.

Reece’s Rainbow, www.reecesrainbow.org based in Wisconsin, is a nonprofit organization started in 2006 by the mother of a son, Reece, with Down Syndrome. Reece’s Rainbow advocates and finds homes for children with disabilities from countries across the globe. Programs, or former programs, are active in 26 countries, including Ukraine, Russia, and republics of Bulgaria, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, China, Hong Kong, and Vietnam. In the 14 years of its service, Reece’s Rainbow has found homes for nearly 2100 disabled children, many of whom were abandoned by their families due to the stigma surrounding disability in their countries of origin. It has been noted that stigmas of the disabled exacerbates abuse and neglect in orphanages as well; it is often too late to help some afflicted children who are transferred to adult institutions.

Potters for Peace, www.pottersforpeace.com is a U.S. based nonprofit dedicated to an inexpensive ceramic clean water system, made locally. PFP’s founder, Ron Rivera (1943-2008), a Puerto Rican American potter and Latin American Peace Corps volunteer, settled in Nicaragua in 1988, perfecting ceramic pot filters to meet modern health standards while working with local potters to encourage their knowledge and the aesthetics of their ceramic heritage, thereby becoming a bridge to marketing in the developed world. A representative of Potters for Peace spoke to the church a few months, reinforcing how important this project for thousands without adequate clean-water sources.
World Vision, www.worldvisiongifts.com, a goat, a share of a cow, a share of a pig, a share of a sheep, or 2 chickens are some of the opportunities of support. When you give any animal through World Vision, a family will get much more than just the animal: breeding stock, offspring, training in animal care and agriculture, extra animals or dairy products to sell. World Vision, a Christian-Humanitarian organization, has been helping children and families worldwide since 1950. It is a great way of “helping people help themselves.”

The Baby Box Project www.mp.org/baby-box-project (again, is an important focus of Mission Possible). This organization brings help and the Gospel to those in Eastern Europe who are marginalized and forgotten. The Baby Boxes are packages given to new moms and returning moms who have little resources for even basics. Because many of these mothers and families simply do not have finances to purchase necessary baby items (diapers, wipes, clothes, Vaseline etc.), Mission Possible assembles packages and distributes them—a baby shower in a box! Funds generated through your gifts will be designated for assembly/distribution of the Baby Boxes.

Don’t forget when you do your holiday shopping you can support The United Church by shopping through AmazonSmile! The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to us. You can either search for The United Church of Los Alamos as your preferred charity or use this address: https://smile.amazon.com/ch/85-0119358. Just remember, you must shop through AmazonSmile (if you accidentally visit regular old Amazon, they will usually remind you to use their “Smile” site).
From Amor Ministries:

We are so grateful and humbled by your amazing gift in support of Amor! Your long time partnership with Amor has had such a huge impact on all of us and hundreds of families. On behalf of the entire Amor team, the pastors, and the families we serve, Thank You! You are changing the world, one family at a time.

Gracias! - Forrest Fowler

(Thanks to the generosity of members and friends, The United Church was able to send a donation of $10,000 to Amor Ministries to support building homes in Mexico!!)

United Church Returns to Truchas Pre-School

On Thursday, December 16th Santa and friends return to Truchas Pre-School for our annual Christmas Party. Our list of children run the spectrum of boys ‘n girls ages 2-8 years old. (Two eight-year-old boys) We will collect toys n clothing items (hats, mittens, coats) beginning immediately and request that items bound for Truchas be delivered to the church by Sunday, December 12th so we can sort and pack items for the children in appropriate bags. We will constantly update needs and other info via email in Weekly Word and Sundays during worship. If you are interested in making this fun trip up to help distribute toys/hats and gloves to children up north, please let Keith know. We usually leave the church around 9am and return after lunch. Thank you in advance for supporting this longstanding relationship with the families and children of Truchas!
Dignity Mission

Update

On November 7th, nine of our United Church youth assembled more than 200 Christmas bags for distribution in December to children living in facilities and camps in Ciudad Juarez while awaiting their asylum hearings in the US. They are collected, transported and distributed by volunteers in Placitas, NM and El Paso, TX, calling themselves the Dignity Mission.

The bags were designed by Carole Watanabe and sewn by Carole, Terry Fitzpatrick, Nancy Lemons and Nina Thayer. They are filled with Beanie Babies and other toys, also a packet of band aids, lip balm, child-sized mask, 2 candy canes, and a Christmas card handwritten in Spanish by our volunteers. See the pictures below.

This mission was funded by the Memorial & Gifts Committee and made possible by the donation of over a thousand small toys by our Thrift Shop.
Thrift Shop Holiday Closures

Our United Church Thrift Shop is taking an extended holiday break. The shop will be closed for SALES and DONATIONS for two weeks: December 20 through January 2. Volunteers are still welcome to price, sort, cull and clean during this time. It will reopen for donations January 3 with the first sale day January 5.

We wish all our over-worked and under-paid volunteers a Very Merry Christmas and a Wonderful New Year 2022.

New volunteers are most welcome. Please contact the Church Office, 505-662-2971.

Wayne Hardie 01  Ginny White 13  Jesus 25
Randy Erickson 05  Mark Mundt 16  Sarah Hayes 27
Hanako Brown 05  Mark Crawford 17  Emi Wilson 28
Kathleen Logan 10  Nicholas Hayes 21  Jill Forman 30
Jen Schmierer 11  Anthony Puckett 24  LeAnn Purtzer 30
Larry Luck 13  Ed Van Eeckhout 25  Joan Upham 31
Friday Morning
Women’s Bible Study
Online via Zoom, Fridays 10am – Noon

All women are welcome to come try out our Friday morning group! We are largely comprised of women of The United Church, although not exclusively, and you are certainly welcome to bring a friend with you! We spend time each week in study and, equally as important, in fellowship and prayer.

This December, the class is delving into favorite Advent devotions this Christmas season. After the new year, we will begin reading Richard Rohr's Everything Belongs. We're always happy to have more folks join us! We spend part of our time in study and part of our time sharing prayer concerns and joys with one another. Please contact Kara or the office for the Zoom link if you'd like to join us. We meet Friday mornings from 10-12 via Zoom. Come for all our part of the time.

Monday Morning Women’s Book Study
Online via Zoom, Monday 11:00am – 12:30pm

The Monday Book Study, which meets at 11AM, is reading William Shakespeare's The Tempest for Advent!

The Tempest
11/22 Act 1
11/29 Act 2
12/6 Act 3
12/13 Acts 4&5
[Christmas Break]
1/10 First Meeting of 2022

Please contact Pastor Kara or the Church Office if you would like more information or links to join one or both of these discussion groups.
Merry Christmas!

The United Church Staff wishes each of you God’s hope, peace, joy and love this Christmas Season and New Year!