

## *President's Note for December 2018*

"Light one candle to watch for Messiah...."

Each Advent here at St. Paul's we start our worship service by lighting the Advent candles, first one, then two, building to four just before Christmas Eve. For me there is beauty, serenity, and grace as we watch, listen and wait with anticipation and reverence for the coming of our Lord the Messiah. While we may know the story well there is newness and a fresh awakening of the spirit each year as we rehear what Fulton Oursler relates in his bestseller as *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. Christ is the light who will banish darkness and bring salvation to the world. His coming is both a reminder and invitation to each of us, Jews, gentiles, believers and non-believers alike that there is goodness, truth, light and salvation by the grace of God through the birth, death and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the true Messiah if we humble ourselves, acknowledge and accept him as our savior.

We've seen some new faces of late here at St. Paul's. On behalf of the church and council a sincere welcome to each of you as you worship here with us. I suppose all times have had their share of challenges and adversity, but our region seems to have had more than its share of late with seemingly senseless and random shootings like in Thousand Oaks and with the devastating fires to our south and north, particularly what's now named the Camp Fire. Thanks to all who've done what they can to assist those whose lives have been torn apart. Your prayers, deeds and monetary donations help immeasurably. Lutheran Social Services and Lutheran Disaster Response are two good places to contribute and if you're a Thrivent member consider giving through them as they will match your contribution dollar for dollar until the total reaches two hundred fifty thousand or January 31st, whichever comes first.

A couple of points concerning upcoming events and worship that everyone should be aware of: our Christmas Eve service will be at nine pm as it was last year. Our neighbors, Grace Sacramento Presbyterian, will be holding their Christmas Eve service at seven pm. That following Sunday, December 30th, we'll have a joint service with our friends and brothers and sisters in Christ from Grace Sacramento. Worship will start at ten am in St. Paul's sanctuary and members from both

congregations will take part. Pastor Daniel Yoon from Grace will give the homily. We may have a light luncheon following worship. We look forward to mixing and celebrating word and sacrament with our neighbors once again. And we're making plans to have a small New Year's Eve gathering in the Fireside Room as has become tradition. Festivities will start at six pm and will be potluck. Check with Dede McKinnon for details and a signup sheet.

With the passing of our good friend and man of many hats Tom Keim, Punky Dias has stepped in to serve as financial secretary. Thank you Punky. Punky has worked with Tom and has extensive knowledge of and history in the banking business and in her semi-retirement years at Cal Expo. We're blessed to have her assume Tom's position. Remember, as always, there will be time for input and voting on all council positions at our annual January congregational meeting. I would be remiss to mention that Gayle Maxon has stepped up to fill the role as sacristan that Tom had also held. Thanks Gayle. Many will remember that Gayle's dad Bob served as sacristan for many years, so it seems rather fitting for Gayle to now carry on with what has become a family tradition.

As the days grow shorter and as we live in a world too often filled with dark days and dark deeds we look to our Lord again this Advent with anticipation, hope and confidence as the Alpha and the Omega, our way, truth and life enters and will reenter our world, not to condemn, but to bring salvation to those who accept and believe. Come travel with us in worship each Sunday this Advent and Christmas as we await His coming. Thanks be to God.

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." John 8:12 NRSV

Peace, blessings and light,

Chuck Prewett

Council President