

The Celtic Courier

December 2024

From the Rector

Advent: Reclaiming the Season of Expectation

The clocks have gone back, the days are shorter, and the church furnace has been turned up. And the Christian Church is preparing to mark the new beginning of its year, NOT (as you might think) with Christmas, but, several weeks earlier, with the arrival of Advent, the season of waiting.

What Advent urges us to await and look forward to is not Christmas (as many suppose). Rather Advent is producing in us a yearning for the final fulfilment of God's promise to "make all things new." We assume a posture of waiting for God to bring the world and our lives at last into the fullness of God's kingdom.

The story of that fulfilment begins with Christmas—with the light that comes into the world and shines in the world's darkness. But it does not end with Christmas. Advent reminds us that the events of the Christmas story are part of something much bigger. If we would appreciate the meaning of Christmas itself, we need to keep this bigger picture in our sights. Advent is about hope and looking forward to something that is still very much to come. It is an adjustment of our perspective, lifting our gaze from a preoccupation with the past and fascination with the trials of the present, and insisting again that we must see all of this in the light of what God has promised which is yet to come.

Advent poses a challenge to our current underdeveloped communal aptitude for waiting. We just do not have to wait for very many things all that often. And for those few things which require waiting, there is plenty to distract from the waiting. However, Advent is an invitation to "dwell" in the experience of waiting. An experience to which we are not very accustomed.

Wider society has next to no interest in it, concentrating instead on full exploitation of the commercial opportunities of December 25th and New Year's. And even in the life of the church, the emphasis placed on Christmas has tended to creep ever earlier into December, eating into the weeks set aside in the church calendar for this vital "rebooting" of our spiritual system.

That shift may be good news for shopkeepers and for restaurateurs hoping to profit from sustained demand, but it's a distinct challenge to Christians in their attempts to disentangle themselves from all that. Advent is an opportunity to relocate ourselves in time, to realize that we are living in the *time between*. Advent contains within itself the crucial balance of the now and the not-yet that our faith requires. As Saint Paul reminds us, in that time between we "ourselves are hidden with Christ in God; when Christ who is our life appears, then we also will appear with him glory" (Col. 3:3-4). During this season, may the Spirit remind us of our location in Christ and in the in-between.

Faithfully yours,
Fr. Michael

ST. COLUMBA'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Rev. Dr. Michael P. Anderson, Rector

Wendie Roberts, Director of Family Ministry

Brett Hanley, Director of Music

Dates to Remember

- ✓ **Advent I/Stewardship Sunday, 9:30 a.m.**
Eucharist / **Advent-Wreath Making at Mount Cross, 11:00 a.m., Sunday, December 1**
- ✓ **Morning Prayer, 9:00 a.m., Mondays and Wednesdays (except December 25)**
- ✓ **Advent Lectio Divina, 7:00 p.m., Monday, December 2, 9 (off-site) and 16**
- ✓ **Thursday Eucharist, 10:00 a.m., Thursdays, December 5, 12 and 19 (no Eucharist on December 26)**
- ✓ **Project Hope Food Pantry, 5:00-6:00 p.m., Thursday, December 5 / 9:00-10:00 a.m. and 5:00-6:00 p.m., Thursdays, December 12 and 19**
- ✓ **Vestry Meeting, 11:45 a.m., Sunday, December 8**
- ✓ **Sharky's Fundraiser, Monday, December 9**
- ✓ **Three Congregations Taizé at Mount Cross, 7:00 p.m., Friday, December 13**
- ✓ **Gold Coast Concert Chorus, 7:30 p.m., Friday, December 13, and 2:00 p.m., Saturday, December 14**
- ✓ **Lessons & Carols, 9:30 a.m., Sunday, December 15**
- ✓ **Cookie Crumble, 10:30 a.m., Sunday, December 15**
- ✓ **Lunch Bunch, 12:00 noon, Wednesday, December 18**
- ✓ **Blue Christmas Service at Mount Cross, 4:00 p.m., Sunday, December 22**
- ✓ **Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist, 4:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m., Tuesday, December 24**
- ✓ **Christmas Day Holy Eucharist, 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, December 25**
- ✓ **Christmas Holiday/Parish Office Closed, Wednesday, December 25**

The parish office will be closed on **Wednesday, December 25**, for the Christmas holiday. Christmas blessings to you and yours!



December Birthdays

John Kromka	6
Skylar Kavanaugh	8
Kelly Privitt	9
Meg Thorne	13
Curt Miller	15
Brett Hanley	22
Caylin Roderick	26
Ann Luthringer	30



A **Blue Christmas** service is for those who are carrying grief, loss, sadness, or depression during the holiday season. St. Columba's Episcopal, Mount Cross Lutheran, and Camarillo United Methodist Churches welcome you to a Blue Christmas service at Mount Cross (102 Camino Esplendido, 93010) on **Sunday, December 22, at 4:00 p.m.** There will be space within the service for you to remember loved ones who have died and to be with others who may be struggling to find hope and joy for whatever reason.

Special Christmas Flower envelopes have been put in the pews for those wishing to donate money for floral arrangements in the church for Christmas. The last day for contributions is December 15.



2025 Budget Meeting

The Vestry and the Budget & Finance Committee will be meeting on **Saturday, January 11, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.** to finalize the proposed budget.

Rector: Our rector is the Rev. Dr. Michael Anderson. His email address is: michael.anderson@stcolumbaca.com.



The deadline for articles for the January Celtic Courier is December 15.



“Blessed is the season which
engages the whole world in a
conspiracy of love.”
—Hamilton Wright Mabie
(from *Church.Art.com*)

THE CELTIC COURIER
PUBLISHED MONTHLY
ST. COLUMBA'S EPISCOPAL
CHURCH
1251 Las Posas Road
Camarillo, CA 93010
ISSUE 12

From the Treasurer

We continue to have a significant negative balance for the month and the year, but we continue to be at or below budgeted expenses. The 2024 budget deficit was projected to be \$58,000, but we're hoping for closer to \$30,000 in the red. To date, we have a deficit of under \$22,000. We want to thank the Children's Learning Center again for their gracious excess donation to help bridge part of this budget gap!! We are still planning to use reserves, including the excess funds from 2023 and past years, and fundraising to cover the remaining deficit. You are all very generous, giving extra gifts when you can!

The fundraising has been very successful this year! The Oktoberfest and Celtic Christmas Faire were both big successes! It looks like we will net over the \$5,000 budgeted from the two events! We really appreciate everyone's hard work and support of these events.

The Buildings & Grounds Committee is still busy! The area where the bees were above the sacristy has had a new roof installed which should eliminate the problem. The church and all of the buildings are being tented the week of Thanksgiving for termites. Then additional roof repairs will take place on the church building. The Committee is working on other projects that need to be done. All the funds for these projects are coming from Designated Funds, not the budget that we use to pay salaries and normal operating expenses. And the CLC has also donated funds for some projects near their entrance in the rear of the church. We thank them profusely for those funds!

Part of these Designated Funds are grants from the Endowment Fund that can be spent on ministries or Buildings & Grounds projects. Right now, we have a total of \$59,000 we can spend on repairs and improvements! The three projects mentioned above will spend about \$46,000 of this year's grant. This is a good start to pay for what needs to be done. We are so blessed to have our Endowment Fund and give thanks for everyone who has donated to it.

We continue to bless each of you as we count your pledge on Sundays or receive it via PayPal. We're doing this together to maintain our church family, grow it to spread God's love, and continue the work that God intends for us to do.

We've started work on the 2025 Budget, and you heard more about it during my Narrative Budget presentation.

If anyone would like to join us on the Budget & Finance Committee or see what we're doing in more detail, you are more than welcome. We can truly use more help, thoughts, and ideas. We want to thank Doug Miller, who has relocated, for all of his support and ideas! We want to be transparent with expenses and income. If you would like to see the most recent Financial Report, please just ask. We don't take anyone and their contributions for granted. Thank you all!

Gail Hill, Treasurer

On Behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee

(Bev Pearson, Maria Fernandez & Sarah Monroe-Allen)



LUNCH BUNCH

Lunch Bunch will be **Wednesday, December 18**. Come and enjoy lunch and fellowship, hosted by Michele Hauser, Diane Off, Beanie MacLaurie, and Jarrel Fuller, at **Noon** in the parish hall. **Sign up** on the bulletin board in the narthex.

From the Senior Warden

My dear friends,

While praying for inspiration for my December letter to you, something sweet happened that reminded me that joy and inspiration come to me in everyday life, often in the mundane.

Last summer I wrote to you, “Bees, termites and foxes, oh my!” The bees have been removed, and the foxes are currently not causing any trouble, so they are being watched. When we were recently preparing for tenting the buildings for fumigation, we remembered our resident bat who has lived many years under the eave above the side door on the south side of the church. We were told that the technicians would try to coax him out but that generally bats tend to hang on and refuse to budge. Therefore, after the tent is removed, we would probably find him deceased on the porch. Well, I certainly lost some sleep over that grim thought. Then Maurice Hill had the idea to contact our fox guy, Luis. Luis came out and looked over the situation. As I write this letter, the plan is for Luis to remove the bat, take him to his home to feed and care for him, and bring him “home” after the tent is removed. Never, ever did I think that I would have compassion and concern, much less a bit of affection, for a BAT! Thanks be to God!

This Advent, let us keep the coming of the Christ Child in our hearts.

May you be blessed today and every day, and Merry Christmas to you and those you love!

In Christ’s love,
Susan Doswell

The flower chart for 2025 appears on a narthex closet door.

To sponsor the altar flowers:

- Put your name next to the date of choice.
- Fill out the form in the basket at left on table below the chart.
- Enclose a check (\$50 for High Altar).
- Put the form in a colored envelope from the basket.
- Deliver the envelope to the parish office.

It is helpful to receive the form well in advance of the date of sponsorship to help in bulletin preparation. Call Marjo Gardner at (805) 415-2315 with any questions.



Dance of the Thorns

Once again, our lead rosarian is issuing the annual invitation to the ***Dance of the Thorns*** (aka: the annual rose pruning party). Veteran pruners and unseasoned novices are invited to the “Dance.” Even if you are unsure of your skills as a rose pruner—have no fear—we will have our Master Gardener Julian Hoyle on hand to provide expert instruction on the thorny issue of rose pruning.

If you have enjoyed the colorful show that our roses have provided, come and join us!

When: *Saturday, January 18, 9:00-11:00 a.m.*

Rain Date: January 25

Bring: Gloves and pruning shears

Walk in Love: Pledge Campaign



Please prayerfully consider your 2025 financial commitment and **return your pledge card by Sunday, December 1**, when Fr. Michael will bless all the pledge cards received to date. Thanks for your support of St. Columba’s and our ministries. If you have any questions, please contact Maurice Hill.

Poem of the Month: "O Adonai" (Malcolm Guite)

I cannot think unless I have been thought,
Nor can I speak unless I have been spoken;
I cannot teach except as I am taught,
Or break the bread except as I am broken.
O Mind behind the mind through which I seek,
O Light within the light by which I see,
O Word beneath the words with which I speak,
O founding, unfound Wisdom, finding me,
O sounding Song whose depth is sounding me,
O Memory of time, reminding me,
My Ground of Being, always grounding me,
My Maker's bounding line, defining me:
Come, hidden Wisdom, come with all you bring,
Come to me now, disguised as everything.

Emergency Contact Information

Because of the recent Mountain Fire emergency, we realized that we are missing cell phone numbers, emails, and possibly up-to-date addresses for some of our members and attenders. Additionally, the Diocese is requesting email addresses for communicating their regular news. Watch for details and a form to help us collect this current information. Thank you for your help with this project.

Annual Meeting Date Set

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on **January 26, 2025**, following our 9:30 a.m. service. Please mark your calendars now and save the date.



The Holiday Season is in full swing up in the Children's Learning Center. The annual Thanksgiving Feast was held all together for the first time since COVID in the parish hall. Blessings were shared and a yummy Chick Fil A lunch was served thanks to the generous owners who donated the lunch and the money that had been collected for Happy Meals to fire relief efforts. Thank you! The children are turning their thoughts and activities toward Christmas, and are eagerly preparing their Christmas Program. They will be sharing some of their songs with us in church on December 8th, so be sure to come and enjoy some Christmas cuteness! All of us at the CLC wish each of you a very blessed Advent and Christmas!

Sarah Wigert for the CLC Board

Lessons & Carols and Christmas Cookie Crumble

On Sunday, **December 15**, we will once again observe our Annual Service of **Lessons & Carols** at our 9:30 a.m. Eucharist. We will follow the traditional format of tracing the prophecies of the Messiah, and the stories of the Incarnation, told with music between each lesson.

Join us for the **St. Columba's Christmas Cookie Crumble**—Sunday, **December 15**, after Lessons & Carols. Dig out your favorite Cookie recipes and put together those Christmas cookies that have been in your family for years, or try a new recipe and start a new tradition.



Three Congregations Taizé

If you're interested in a contemplative, meditative type of worship, the Three Congregations (Camarillo United Methodist, Mount Cross Lutheran, and St. Columba's Episcopal Churches) are offering in-person Taizé-style prayer, held in the intimate setting of the Mount Cross sanctuary (102 Camino Esplendido, 93010) on the 2nd Friday of each month, at 7:00 p.m.—**Friday, December 13** this month. Taizé is an international, ecumenical community in France, dedicated to peace and reconciliation, whose prayer includes meditative singing, scripture, silence, and spoken prayer.



Camarillo Community Band Christmas Concert
Sunday, December 8, 2024, 4:00 p.m.

Community Center (1605 E Burnley St., Camarillo)

Free concert; special guest – Santa Claus.

<https://camarillocommunityband.com/performances/christmas-concert/>

Gold Coast Concert Chorus
Comfort & Joy

Come experience an enchanting evening of music and merriment at **Gold Coast Concert Chorus' holiday concert**. Immerse yourself in harmonies that bring healing to your heart, offering comfort in every timeless melody and joy in every festive chord. In a time of conflict all over the world, let us be grateful for the gift of togetherness, and celebrate our community well—with music to fill all who listen with light.

Friday, December 13, 7:30 p.m. & Saturday, December 14, 2:00 p.m. at St. Columba's Episcopal Church. Tickets:

<https://www.goldcoastchorus.org/box-office>



It is fall. Not fall of the year, but the number of times that one in four U.S. adults over 65 and older report falling in any given year.

What is your emergency plan? Have a plan that you have made while you were healthy and could think calmly and clearly. Have someone you trust to assist you with transportation or recuperation. That person could be the person named to make your health care decisions if you are unable to make decisions yourself. This designation requires a legal, notarized document called a durable power of attorney for health care. Such documents are available online and you can download free forms at <https://www.caringinfo.org/>.

There are several companies that make medical alert systems, and help is available at the touch of a button. They are available with a FALL ALERT app. The devices with this feature sense that you've fallen and help is on the way.

Take a body survey, if, after a fall, you are able. Can you wiggle your toes and feel everything? Did you hit your head or lose consciousness? Are you cut and bleeding? CALL 911, even if you think you're okay, even if you didn't hit your head and you don't have pain and can move everything, says Dr. Julia Webb, an interventional physiatrist at Harvard-affiliated Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital. She specializes in non-surgical treatment for back and neck pain, which often results from falls and fractures, and says it's reasonable to call your primary care doctor and ask if an appointment is necessary. Dr. Webb says, "Watch for symptoms that may appear later, such as headaches, dizziness, imbalance, muscle weakness or numbness, difficulty speaking, feeling faint, changes in bladder or bowel function, sore muscles or joints, neck or back pain, or blurry vision. Call your doctor to report the symptoms immediately."

Do you have grab bars installed in the bathroom? Do you help your body wake by sitting up a few seconds, then standing a few seconds and taking a few seconds before walking? Do you use your cane or walking stick or walker to keep you steady on your feet? Check out *Harvard Special Health Report*, "Preventing Falls," <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/preventing-falls>.

It's never too early to be prepared.







The Parish Nurses

Re: *Harvard Health Letter*, "Fear of falling: Do you have an emergency plan?" November 2024.



DECEMBER 2024



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Advent 1C Holy Eucharist 9:30— Stewardship Sunday/ Blessing of Pledges Coffee Hour 10:30 Advent Wreath Making at Mount Cross 11:00	2 Morning Prayer 9:00 Chapel Boy Scouts 6:00 PH Advent <i>Lectio Divina</i> 7:00	3 Staff Meeting 10:00	4 Morning Prayer 9:00 Chapel Craft Group 2:00 PH Women's AA 5:45-6:45 PH Women's AA 7:00 PH	5 Holy Eucharist 10:00 Project Hope: 5:00-6:00 PH Choir 6:00 	6	7 DOK 10:00 (Ofc.)
8 Advent 2C Holy Eucharist 9:30 Coffee Hour 10:30 Vestry 11:45	9 Sharky's Fundraiser Morning Prayer 9:00 Chapel Boy Scouts 6:00 PH Gold Coast Chorus Rehearsal 6:30 Advent <i>Lectio Divina</i> 7:00 (off-site)	10 Staff Meeting 10:00	11 Morning Prayer 9:00 Chapel Craft Group 2:00 PH School Board 4:00 Gold Coast Chorus Rehearsal 6:30 Women's AA 7:00 PH	12 Project Hope: 9:00-10:00, 5:00-6:00 PH Holy Eucharist 10:00 Choir 6:00 	13 Three Congregations Taizé at Mount Cross 7:00 Gold Coast Chorus Concert 7:30 	14 Camarillo Christmas Parade Gold Coast Chorus Concert 2:00
15 Advent 3C/Courier Deadline Lessons & Carols 9:30 Cookie Crumble 10:30	16 Morning Prayer 9:00 Chapel Boy Scouts 6:00 PH Advent <i>Lectio Divina</i> 7:00	17 Staff Meeting 10:00	18 Morning Prayer 9:00 Chapel Lunch Bunch 12:00 Craft Group 2:00 PH Women's AA 7:00 PH	19 Project Hope: 9:00-10:00, 5:00-6:00 PH Holy Eucharist 10:00 Choir 6:00 	20 CLC 8:00-Noon Patio	21
22 Advent 4C Holy Eucharist 9:30 Coffee Hour 10:30 Blue Christmas at Mount Cross 4:00	23 Morning Prayer 9:00 Chapel Boy Scouts 6:00 PH	24 Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist 4:00 Holy Eucharist 11:00 	25 Christmas Day / Church Office Closed Holy Eucharist 10:00 Women's AA 7:00 PH 	26	27	28
29 Christmas 1 Holy Eucharist 9:30 Coffee Hour 10:30	30 Morning Prayer 9:00 Chapel Boy Scouts 6:00 PH	31	Our food distribution schedule this month is: The 1st Thursday of the month, 5:00-6:00 p.m.; the 2nd and 3rd Thursdays of the month, 9:00-10:00 a.m. and 5:00-6:00 p.m., because of the Christmas holiday. No distribution on the 4th Thursday.			

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www.stcolumbaca.com

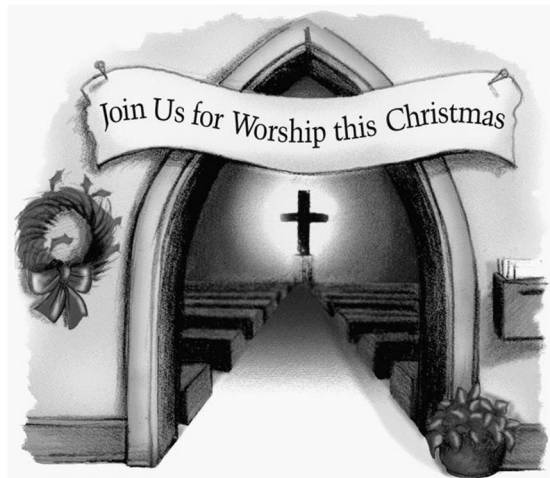
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ST. COLUMBA'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

1251 Las Posas Road
Camarillo, CA 93010

Phone: (805) 482-8831
E-mail: office.manager@stcolumbaca.com



Our Christmas Worship Schedule is:

Tuesday, December 24, 4:00 p.m. – Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist

Tuesday, December 24, 11:00 p.m. – Christmas Eve Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, December 25, 10:00 a.m. – Christmas Day Holy Eucharist



Anyone who is ill or shut-in and would like to receive Holy Communion during the Season, please contact the parish office at 805-482-8831, so that arrangements can be made.