



# The Celtic Courier

January 2025

## From the Rector

As we continue in our celebration of Christmas and move into Epiphany, there is often a temptation to “move past” Christmas as quickly as possible, just as there is a temptation to “get to” Christmas as quickly as possible and bypass Advent. It is understandable. Christmas is exciting and the waiting of Advent doesn’t have the same sparkle. Likewise, Christmas is also exhausting, and we would like to get back to a normal, predictable schedule.

However, in our liturgical tradition, Christmastide lasts twelve days and the season of Epiphany lasts three months, giving us time to slow down and fully appreciate and rest in the Incarnation and all of its significance. In my own spiritual life, I have found icons to be very helpful invitations to do precisely that. Below you will find a reflection on a well-known Marian Icon called *Hodegetria*, which means “She who shows the way.” It originated in the early Middle Ages. The image portrays the Child Christ sitting cradled by his mother’s left arm while she points to him with her right. In most versions, his eyes are on her and he sometimes has a hand raised in blessing.

Let us look at the icon. As we do, pay attention to where your eyes are drawn.



All icons “show a way” by drawing our eyes along lines, like a kind of journey around the image. This path our eyes take is an invitation to a continuous act of contemplation. In the *Hodegetria*, we begin our path at the Virgin’s gesture toward the Christ Child. Notice how Christ’s eyes guide us to Mary’s face and Mary’s eyes are turned to us.

Mary is clearly addressing us and introducing us to her son, who is, in turn, focused on her. These two are defined in relation to each other. According to former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams: “It is not only that we cannot understand Mary without seeing her as pointing to Christ. We cannot understand Christ without seeing his attention to Mary. Jesus does not appear to us a solitary monarch, enthroned afar off but as someone whose being and loving is always *engaged*, already directed towards humanity.” Mary stands as an example of someone who bravely lives her life in such a way that points toward Christ. The prize of such living is a Christ who does not stand as an isolated unit but one who already stands in loving, self-forgetting engagement with his mother.

When we are led to Christ by Mary’s gesture, we are invited to love Christ alongside Mary and we are led by him, in turn, to share his loving gaze. That is, we are invited to love what Christ loves, which includes Mary and the rest of humanity for which she represents.

Moreover, notice how when Mary selflessly points towards Christ, she finds his loving gaze already upon her. She returns to herself through Christ’s gaze. That is, she is given a new identity that is shaped through the Jesus’ loving eyes.

When we follow this circular movement from Mary to Christ, back to Mary, we contemplate what it would mean for our hands to point away from ourselves and our day-to-day grind toward Christ and to all those to whom Christ lovingly looks, including ourselves, only to be remade by that loving gaze.

May the peace of the Lord be upon you as we continue to celebrate his birth and revelation to the world.

Faithfully yours,

*Fr. Michael*

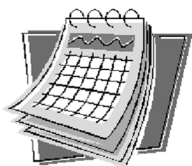
ST. COLUMBA’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Rev. Dr. Michael P. Anderson, Rector

Francina Anderson, Director of Family Ministries

Brett Hanley, Director of Music

## Dates to Remember



- ✓ **New Year's Day Holiday/Parish Office Closed, Wednesday, January 1**
- ✓ **Morning Prayer, 9:00 a.m., Mondays and Wednesdays (except January 1 and 20)**
- ✓ **Thursday Eucharist, 10:00 a.m., Thursdays, January 2, 9, 16, 23, 30**
- ✓ **Epiphany of Our Lord, 9:30 a.m. Eucharist, Sunday, January 5**
- ✓ **Project Hope Food Pantry, 5:00-6:00 p.m., Thursday, January 2 / 9:00-10:00 a.m. and 5:00-6:00 p.m., Thursdays, January 9 and 23**
- ✓ **Three Congregations Taizé at Mount Cross, 7:00 p.m., Friday, January 10**
- ✓ **Vestry Budget & Finance Meeting, 9:00 a.m., Saturday, January 11**
- ✓ **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18-25**
- ✓ **Vestry Meeting, 11:45 a.m., Sunday, January 19**
- ✓ **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Holiday/Parish Office Closed, Monday, January 20**
- ✓ **Annual Potluck and Meeting, following 9:30 a.m. Eucharist, Sunday, January 26**
- ✓ **Lunch Bunch, 12:00 noon, Wednesday, January 29**

The **parish office** will be closed on **Wednesday, January 1,** for the New Year's holiday.

Have a safe, healthy,  
and happy New Year!



## January Birthdays

<b>Beverly Pearson</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Tim Brown</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Alison Hillbrant</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Mona Cecil</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>George Anderson</b>	<b>29</b>

### Annual Meeting – Reports Requested

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on **January 26** following our 9:30 a.m. service. If you are in charge of a ministry, please email ([office.manager@stcolumbaca.com](mailto:office.manager@stcolumbaca.com)) your report to be included in the Annual Book of Reports to the parish office by **Friday, January 17.**



### 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.

### Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

The parish office will be closed on Monday, January 20, in observance of the holiday.



**Rector:** Our rector is the Rev. Dr. Michael Anderson. His email address is: [michael.anderson@stcolumbaca.com](mailto:michael.anderson@stcolumbaca.com).

The deadline for articles for the February *Celtic Courier* is January 15.





“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’”  
—Martin Luther King Jr.  
(from *ChurchArt.com*)

THE CELTIC COURIER  
PUBLISHED MONTHLY  
ST. COLUMBA’S EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH  
1251 Las Posas Road  
Camarillo, CA 93010  
ISSUE 1

### From the Treasurer

Due to a generous donation from one parishioner, extra donations from many other regular pledgers, and continuing lower expenses, it looks like we will end the year at just a small deficit. The 2024 budget deficit was projected to be \$58,000 but we’re hoping for closer to \$5,000 or less in the red. We are still planning to use reserves, the excess funds from 2023 and past years, 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! We netted almost \$7,000 from the two events! We really appreciate everyone’s hard work and support of these events.

The Buildings & Grounds Committee is still busy! The termite tenting was delayed due to the weather and the committee is looking for a time to do the work in the spring. 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. The new roof over where the bees were entering the area above the sacristy in the church cost us \$14,500. That still leaves over \$44,000 from the current \$59,000 grant to spend on repairs and improvements! The two projects mentioned above will spend about \$32,000 of this year’s grant. And the Endowment can provide another grant of 3-5% per year (equating to \$30,000-\$50,000) for further work. 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.

The 2025 Budget will be finalized in early January. The expenses are almost the same. We’ll pay a little more for the new janitor and a little less for our Director of Family Ministry. We also need to speak with the Diocese about the Mission Share Fund payment. It used to be a pledge but is now a requirement to pay 12% of our income used on expenses in 2023, as reported in the Parochial Report for that year. The biggest question is the income side where we’re still trying to finalize the pledges and other income. Based on all this, it looks like the Budget would be \$42,000-\$52,000 in the red (more expenses than income). We’ll provide an update at the Annual Meeting at the end of January.

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. Fr. Michael has lots of wonderful ideas of how to do this and the Vestry is eagerly moving ahead with them.

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 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, January 29**. 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,

It has been an honor and my profound pleasure to serve as Senior Warden of the Vestry for the last three years. During these three years, we said “farewell” to Fr. Greg Larkin and Nancy; we embarked upon a journey of transition in which we practiced intensive introspection in order to ascertain the needs and our desires for the future of St. Columba’s; we developed a plan to search for a new rector who could lead us into that vision; we carried out that plan and we found just the right person in The Rev. Dr. Michael Anderson; we welcomed Fr. Michael and his family; and now we have begun to flourish and grow under his energetic, loving, and capable leadership.

During these three years, we have prayed, worked, laughed, and cried together. There are so many who have spent long hours in support of this church and its parishioners. The Rev. Mark Asman devoted fourteen months of his retirement with passion and compassion. The Rev. Susan Klein lovingly came to us at the end of Fr. Mark’s tenure. The Rev. Nancy Brown and The Rev. Jerry Kahler were always willing and able subs. I want to personally thank those wonderful brothers and sisters in Christ who have loyally served on the Vestry, giving countless hours of ministry: Teri Helton, as Junior Warden; Paul Amendt; Marjo Gardner; Marianne Hyde; Lara Tyas; Tom Ledsam; Maurice Hill; Michele Hauser; Carlos Barraza; and those who have moved away, Lorelee Brown, Doug Miller, and Deborah Brown. Norma McQuade serves diligently as Clerk of the Vestry. Gail Hill blesses us with her expertise in finance and human resources. Thank you, too, to Carol Browning, who keeps the parish office running smoothly, and to Brett Hanley for his excellent music skills and for pruning, mowing, etc., around the property.

Happy 2025! We have much to look forward to in the coming year. So, let’s get to it ...

May you be blessed today and every day.

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***



As of December 15, we received 39 pledges in the total amount of \$186,039. We request that you turn in your pledge cards **no later than Monday, January 6**, so that the Budget & Finance Committee can prepare the 2025 budget. This Committee and the Vestry will meet on Saturday, January 11, to discuss and finalize the budget. Your pledge is part of your *Walk in Love* and is critical to St. Columba’s. Thank you!

**Poem of the Month: Ode to the Maggot**

*Yusef Komunyakaa*

Brother of the blowfly  
& godhead, you work magic  
Over battlefields,  
In slabs of bad pork

& flophouses. Yes, you  
Go to the root of all things.  
You are sound & mathematical.  
Jesus Christ, you're merciless

With the truth. Ontological & lustrous,  
You cast spells on beggars & kings  
Behind the stone door of Caesar's tomb  
Or split trench in a field of ragweed.

No decree or creed can outlaw you  
As you take every living thing apart. Little  
Master of earth, no one gets to heaven  
Without going through you first.

**Children and Youth Ministry 2025: Meet our new Director of Family Ministries**

Francina Anderson has worked in youth ministry for around fifteen years. She has a multiple subject teaching credential and has taught fifth grade, as well as junior high science. Most recently, Francina was the EYC Director (Episcopal Youth Community) at the Episcopal Church of the Annunciation, in Lewisville, Texas. She also has led several women's bible studies, and she and Fr. Michael have hosted a family Bible study out of their home for several years.

Francina is a gifted teacher, who brings a calm, gentle approach to ministry. She is excited for the opportunity to help children, youth, and families to grow in faith and experience more deeply the love of Jesus.

Beginning January 5, for worship, students will start in the nave with the parish and then walk together to our new class space in the Children's Learning Center. They will join back at the peace to share in communion with their church family.

And stay tuned for details on youth group Sundays with lunch, fellowship, and Bible study.



Happy New Year! The baby Jesus has been born, Santa has come and gone, gifts have been made, and while it's hard to believe for me, the merriest time of year is over. We hope it has been a blessed season for all of you. As winter continues, the children will be learning about and enjoying snow themed activities. There may not be snowflakes to land on heads and noses, but winter rains might bring puddles to stomp in which is always fun. The joy of learning and growing is always present in these precious children, and their enthusiasm is a wonderful reminder for all of us embrace whatever the new year might bring with joy.

*Sarah Wigert for the CLC Board*

**Food Ministry**

In 2024, we were serving about 65 families in need three times a month. A dozen parishioners helped out in this process—getting groceries and produce, packing bags, taking bags out to family cars, and delivering to those who can't pick up. And, importantly, many of our parishioners have generously donated money for us to buy groceries and produce or brought items in for us to use. We thank everyone for all you have done and will continue to do in 2025! Please read the Food Ministry report in the 2024 Annual Report for further information. And remember, we **need plastic grocery bags**—bring your bags in—we pack them with fresh produce for the families each week. Please contact Maurice Hill if you are interested in participating in this ministry.



**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 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of each month, at 7:00 p.m.—**Friday, January 10**, 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.



2025 Pledge Offering envelopes are available in the church narthex (or contact the church office to make other arrangements to get your envelopes).



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.

### *Project Hope Gifts*

*A huge THANK YOU to all of you who participated in gifts for our Project Hope children! Thanks to your generosity, we were able to make Christmas merrier for 45 youngsters. Again, thank you!*



Although Fr. Michael Anderson has been at St. Columba's since the end of last January, he has yet to be officially "installed" by Bishop Taylor as our Rector. That date will be happening sometime in February so watch for details of the celebration!



### ANGRY AND UPSET?

I'm so upset with this person about opinions during a recent conversation! It is just the wrong way to think!

A popular early tune from the past, "I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter." DO IT!

Write your opinions with your side of the story. Seal the letter in an envelope and destroy it. Some studies have shown this simple act brings a feeling of relief and satisfaction. The clients who kept their letters were less satisfied with how they felt over those who got rid of their letters. Now, you can pursue happier encounters in your life.

Do you remember someone giving you a big hug sometime in the past? It could have been your team won or celebrated a finished project or a comforting hug. The human touch is important and is another way of staying connected. There is joy in having faith, family, and friends. We can share the joy of life and send greetings to important people in our lives. We end many of our letters—LOL and HUGS.

The Parish Nurses



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**ST. COLUMBA'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

1251 Las Posas Road  
Camarillo, CA 93010

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

## Annual Meeting Next Month

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 26**, following our 9:30 a.m. worship. After worship, we'll gather in the parish hall for a potluck and meeting. Please plan to be here for this important gathering and bring a dish to share.



We need **ALL REPORTS** to be included in the Annual Book of Reports submitted to the parish office by **Friday, January 17**. If possible, it is preferred that reports be emailed as an attachment to [office.manager@stcolumbaca.com](mailto:office.manager@stcolumbaca.com).