

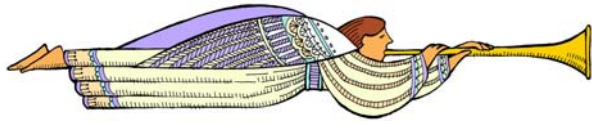
The Monarch butterfly is the symbol of the Presbytery of San Jose

The Monarch Messenger

The Newsletter of The Presbytery of San Jose

Serving Presbyterians in San Benito, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Monterey Counties

888 No. First St., Suite 320, San Jose CA 95112 • (408) 279-0220 • www.sanjosepby.org • Vol. 29 • Issue 5 • Nov., 2008



Joy to the World!

Alternatives for a commercial Christmas



What do you want for Christmas? Really want? Research and experience tells us that what we really want is a Christmas that has meaning, love, and family.

Commercial advertising is full of alluring and seductive, yet empty promises. Strong cultural pressures at Christmas, and throughout the year, lead many to live and celebrate in ways that are neither fulfilling nor joyful. We proclaim that celebrations and living can indeed be what we hope for. "Joy to the World" need not be an empty promise.

Here are ideas from the booklet "Whose Birthday is it Anyway? Ideas for a Christ-Centered Holiday" (can be ordered from the Presbyterian Distribution Service, PDS# 2543208302,

pds@pcusa.org, (800) 524-2612.)

Give Gifts That Support a Good Cause - There are many variations on the idea that you give some money to an organization and they do something good with it (provide food, bus tokens, clothing, gifts for shelter residents, etc for people in need that they serve), and in return give you a card you can give your family member, co-worker, or friend saying that instead of something they might not need, you gave them something desperately needed by someone else.

Local, Do-It-Yourself Version of this idea - Spend some money on needed items, give them to the agencies that need them, then make your own gift card to your friend ("I knew you probably didn't need another tie/purse/ book, so I bought some _____ and gave them to _____ in your name. Hope this gift makes both you and this agency and the people they serve happy this Christmas season!")

Give these gifts to any agency that serves the poor (see Presbytery website for a list of agencies: www.sanjosepby.org/Hunger Action Advocate, or the Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Program (see Refugee Advocates Elsa Amboy and Melissa Kreisa's phone numbers on p. 4 of this newsletter.)

- **The Gift of Transportation for low or no-income people.** Few things are more frustrating than wanting to go to a job interview or a medical appointment and not being able to afford bus fare: Buy bus tokens (in Santa Clara County from Valley Transit Authority, website (www.vta.org) for locations for buying these easily. They cost \$1.75 per ride or \$5 for a day pass (unlimited rides).
- **Grocery Store Gift Cards for the hungry:** Safeway, Lucky, and Save Mart all have \$5, and \$10 gift cards which people can easily use for food.

Stone Church PW Will Make You Fair Trade Coffee, Tea, Chocolate Gift Baskets - You can order gift baskets filled with Fair Trade coffee, tea, chocolate to give to family and friends. Not only are you sharing the justice message about fair trade products, but you are helping the Stone Church Presbyterian Women Group raise some extra money for their mission projects. Orders taken through November 16. **For questions** call the Stone church office at (408) 269-1593. **For order form**, go to <http://www.stonechurch.org/events/XmasBaskets.xls>



Less Local - Just as Worthwhile:

- **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance** asks for donations for needed emergency supplies, will send you gift card to give away. Get details at: www.sanjosepby/MissionAdvocate.htm
- **Presbyterian Medical Benevolence Foundation** (www.mbfoundation.org) Medical supplies for people in need, disease control, HIV/AIDS care, healthcare training
- **Presbyterian Border Ministries** Mexican Gift Market (www.binationalministry.org/marketmaterials.htm)
- **Partners for Just Trade** (grew from Presbyterian Joining Hands in Hunger group in Peru) (www.partnersforjusttrade.org) Catalog of fair trade crafts from Peru and other locations.
- **Alternative Gifts International** (www.alternativegifts.org) Catalog full of projects helping developing people in healthcare, education, housing and work.
- **Church World Service** Best Gift Catalog (www.churchworldservice.org) Catalog full of services, animals, helpful items for developing people.
- **Heifer International** (www.heifer.org) Buy bunnies, chicks, cows, and goats for developing people to use for income and food.

Other ideas:

- Adopt a family in need for the holidays (get referrals from local social service agency or schools) and take care of their needs instead of your own wants.
- Make all gifts, cards, wrapping paper; agree to buy all presents at thrift shops or garage sales.
- Wrap gifts in newspapers or fabric pieces and fabric ribbon (can be reused year after year.)

Love one another

Most of all, love each other as if your life depended on it. Love makes up for practically anything. Be quick to give a meal to the hungry, a bed to the homeless—cheerfully. Be generous with the different things God gave you, passing them around so all get in on it: if words, let it be God's words; if help, let it be God's hearty help.

(1 Peter 8-11, The Message)

Visit us at: www.sanjosepby.org





From Your Executive Presbyter The Rev. Joey Lee

We are living in anxious times. There seems to be no end in sight to the financial crises. By the time you read this, our nation will have elected a new president (barring any “hanging chad” type of issues!) Our church continues to debate important matters in theology and ecclesiology in our life together. To all these, add the various stresses and strains in our local church, our family, and ourselves. We are living in anxious times.

It is especially in these times that we are reminded that we are a people of hope, faith and love. In anxious times when there is a strong inclination to blame, or scapegoat, or to react with fear or retreat, the church, and we who are followers of Jesus, more than ever seek God’s faithfulness, knowing that “those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength.” (Isaiah 40:31)

This has been a great year of new and exciting changes. I continue to receive many compliments for the great job the Presbytery of San Jose did in hosting the 218th General Assembly. I’ve read commissioner reports in church and presbytery newsletters and blogs and continue to receive notes and comments from commissioners, observers and assorted presbytery, synod and General Assembly staff.

I’ve been thanking them for their kind words on your behalf, because the compliments are to you, the members of this presbytery that worked and extended warm greetings and genuine hospitality, all so the Presbyterian family could do its work.

As the holidays will soon be upon us, we look forward to a new year with more changes to come. We thank Elder Jim Bass, who moderated the Presbytery with patience and aplomb. We look forward to the Rev. Karla Norton as our new moderator in 2009. We also owe a debt of gratitude to Elder Jane Odell, as her service on presbytery staff comes to a close at the end of the year. On a personal note, I can’t thank Jane enough for her skill, commitment and dedication to this presbytery as Interim Executive and Acting Associate Executive. I have appreciated her as both a friend and a colleague, and look forward to her service to this presbytery and to the wider church in new and different ways.

We will still be in anxious times, but we are not without hope. We are faithful to our task because God is faithful to us.



BEN DANIEL WINS INTERNATIONAL SERMON WRITING CONTEST

By **Natasha Jackson**, Presbytery Support Staff

Ben Daniel, pastor of Foothill Church in San Jose, recently was the ONLY American winner of an international writing competition sponsored by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches focused on the 500th birthday of John Calvin. Ben is thrilled to represent the United States in the competition. “The best part about winning the award,” said Ben, “is that my wife and I will be flying to Geneva in May to attend the worship service celebrating Calvin’s birth.”

The topic of Ben’s sermon is “The Freedom and the Beauty of Diversity” from Acts 2:1-13. In his sermon Ben speaks of the Cathedral St. Pierre in Geneva from whose pulpit Calvin preached in the days when the people of Geneva gave birth to the Reformed Tradition.

Ben’s sermon has been translated into four languages and it will be published and distributed as part of the Official Calvin Jubilee materials. Ideas from the sermon will be used to develop the official worship service, which will be broadcast throughout Europe.

For the past two years Ben has written a column every other week for the online UPI Religion and Spirituality Forum (www.religionandspirituality.com). “I write faith-based social and political commentary because there is so much happening in the world of politics and society. But mostly “I write whatever catches my fancy!”

Ben’s website is: <http://bendaniel.org> To get on his email list which links to the website, email him at ben@bendaniel.org.
To read about the Calvin Sermon Contest go to: www.calvin09.org/EN/home/home2.html



From Your Moderator Jim Bass

November brings my last presbytery meeting as moderator. I feel very privileged to have had this opportunity to serve you. It has been a joy and a growth experience for me as I have participated in

your installations and ordinations and gotten to know so many of you better. My column this month is brief. I just want to say **THANKS** to each of you: each of you who participated at all levels of the GA experience and made it so great; each of you who encouraged me during and after each meeting as I continually made rookie errors; each of you who worked so hard on committees to keep the business of the presbytery moving and to make my task so easy. And to each of you who attend our presbytery meetings and who faithfully pray for our presbytery, our denomination, and the work of our Lord on earth.

My charge to you is simple, but not easy: to love one another. Love is not how we feel about one another, but how we act toward one another; not treating each other as they deserve to be treated, but treating each other better than they deserve. It is a great gift to be allowed to be part of the Lord’s work, and we should demonstrate our thankfulness for that both in how we treat the least among us and in how we treat each other.

Soulwork Studio Meditative Retreat

“Telling Our Sacred Stories”

Sat., Nov. 15, 9:00 a.m.—12 Noon

Woodhaven Retreat Center, Willow Glen Methodist Church, 1420 Newport Ave, San Jose



Flyer with details at:

www.sanjosepy.org/events.html





PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

GO TO LOUISIANA APRIL 19 - 25

By **Judi Pogue**, Presbyterian Worldwide Mission Advocate

One of the nicest times of year to visit Louisiana and the Gulf Coast is the month of April, which is why April 19-25 was chosen for members of the San Jose Presbytery ages eighteen and over to participate in a rebuilding trip to Houma, Louisiana.

Houma is located southwest of New Orleans and the residents there have endured destruction from Hurricane Rita and additional destruction as a result of Hurricane Gustav. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is rebuilding the volunteer village in Houma and it is projected to be ready to provide hospitality for volunteers in April. The village offers accommodations for sleeping and dining as well as hot showers and other comforts.

Although members of the Carmel, Northminster and Felton congregations and youth from Sunnyvale have taken mission trips to help rebuild homes on the Gulf Coast since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated so much of Mississippi and Louisiana, there is still a lot of work for the San Jose Presbytery to do there. The work to be done requires skills that vary from simple things like mucking out debris to the more complex tasks of hanging dry wall. Some members of the team may find that their gifts are more suited to cooking for the team or helping in the village.

As your Mission Advocate, I have made reservations for a group from this presbytery to follow the lead of many other presbyteries to offer our aid to our neighbors who have survived two hurricanes in the last three years. She will also make airline and van rental arrangements for the team. The estimated cost of the trip is between \$600 and \$800 depending on airfare and the number of people joining in.

Gary Ruschke, Lead Mission Elder from the Sunnyvale Church, will act as Team Leader for the trip. His role will be to help team members assess and use their skills effectively as well as to be the communication link with the Village Manager.

A trip to Louisiana is not complete without a visit to New Orleans, which will be included in the itinerary.

INTERESTED? Please contact Judi Pogue at judi@sanjosepby.org. Don't miss out - spaces are limited and airline reservations need to be made in December and early January.



GREEN CHURCH

2 MORE GREEN CHURCHES

Both Stone Church of Willow Glen and First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto have both completed all the requirements for the Santa Clara County Green Business program, church division. (They join Foothill and Sunnyvale.)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, PW!



July 20, 2008 was the 20th birthday of Presbyterian Women. That was the merging of Women of the Church (PCUS) and United Presbyterian Women (UPCUSA) following reunion. Much has been accomplished by Presbyterian Women during the past 20 years and we are especially proud of our giving to the mission of the Presbyterian Church.

Presbyterian Women (PW) always have been generous. Support of Presbyterian Women churchwide through the Mission Pledge has been \$61,644,282 from 1989 to 2007. Of that, \$52,465,326 has been given to the overall budget of the Presbyterian Church (USA). This support was given without restrictions, so that it may be used where it is most needed. Presbyterian Women also supported the mission of the church during that period through their two offerings:

\$17,002,501 was received from the Birthday Offering, and \$20,008,798 was received from the Thank Offering. All gifts given with joy and thanksgiving. Happy Birthday, PW, and best wishes for many more birthdays to come!

Claudia Hamm, Moderator, Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of San Jose



SAVE THE DATE: PWP Epiphany Tea, Sunday, January 4, 2009; Westminster Presbyterian Church, San Jose, 2-4 p.m. More details in the next *Monarch Messenger* or on-line on the Presbytery Website (www.sanjosepby.org/PW.htm).



JOIN US FOR THE PRESBYTERY MEETING

SATURDAY, Nov. 22, 9 a.m. at **First Presbyterian Church of Salinas**, 1044 S. Main St., Salinas 93901

Worship together, Installation of Rev. Karla Norton as Moderator for 2009, and much more!

What else?

Nov. 14, 6:30 p.m. "The Elections Are Over... So Now What?" dinner and discussion with Bread for the World California Organizer David Gist at San Jose First Presbyterian Church. (See below)

Nov. 15, 9 a.m.-12 noon - Soul Works Studio Retreat "Telling Our Sacred Story" (see p. 2)

Nov. 21, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. "Project Homeless Connect" in San Jose (go to: www.sanjosepby.org/HungerActionAdvocate)

Dec. 2008 - All Presbytery collection of food for local food pantries (see p. 4)

Jan. 4, 2 - 4 p.m. Presbyterian Women Epiphany Tea at Westminster Church, San Jose (See below)

Our next Presbytery meeting (after the Nov. 22 one) will be Sat. **Jan. 24; 9 a.m., Westhope Presbyterian Church**, 12850 Saratoga Ave., Saratoga

The Elections are over...

SO NOW WHAT?



Dinner and Discussion about hunger and poverty and hope in a hungry world, led by Bread for the World California Organizer David Gist.

**Fri., Nov. 14,
6:30 - 9:00 p.m.**

First Presbyterian Church of San Jose

49 N. Fourth St., San Jose 95112

RSVP to Pat Plant at (408)279-0220; pat@sanjosepby.org
Flyer at: www.sanjosepby.org/events.html

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The Monarch Messenger, the newsletter of the Presbytery of San Jose is published 5 times each year: January, March, May, September, and November, for the 45 congregations located in this four-county area.

NEXT DEADLINE:

The deadline for submission of articles for the NEXT issue of the Presbytery Newsletter is Jan. 6, 2009 for the Jan. 09 issue.



2009 PC (USA) MISSION YEARBOOK OF PRAYER AND STUDY

The 2009 Mission Yearbook of Prayer and Study is available now. This is the annual daily devotion book, prayer book and look at our denomination through the writings of Synod and Presbytery staff, Mission Workers and other people passionate about their faith and our work in the world. This year's theme and cover art carry over from last summer's GA with the spirit of Micah 6:8 and the original art painted by talented seminarian and Trinity San Jose's Children and Youth Director **Vincent Arishvara**.

San Jose Presbytery is featured on p. 250 (September 4th!) and we wrote about our growing Refugee Ministry. Know that on Sept. 4, Presbyterians all over the world will be praying for our Presbytery when they read our page in this important book.

There is also a Children's version of the annual Yearbook full of relevant children's activities.

To order the **2009 Mission Yearbook of Prayer and Study**, call (800) 524-2612. Copies are \$9.25 (for 1-9 copies, \$8 for 10-24 copies) plus shipping (10% of purchase price). You can mail check to PDS Prepaid Sales, PO Box 643674, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3674.

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING



The Christmas Joy Offering is one of the four annual offerings collected by our denomination, and benefits the Board of Pensions and Presbyterian Racial/Ethnic schools and colleges. For supplies (bulletin inserts, collection boxes,

etc.) and more information about this offering go to the PC USA website at:

<http://www.pcusa.org/cjoffering/about.htm> or call Alan Krome at 1-888 728-7225x5168 or email akrome@pcusa.org.



The **Hunger Action Advocacy** program of the Presbytery urges you and your church to consider holding a **Food Drive** on Dec. 7 or 14 and donating it to either Second Harvest Food Bank, or the food bank or program in your community or neighborhood. Please report the pounds of food you collect so we can come up with a Presbytery number to promote (contact **Pat Plant**, Hunger Action Advocate, (408) 279 0220; pat@sanjosepby.org).

For ideas on how to maximize your effort go to: www.sanjosepby.org/IDEASONGETTINGMOREFOOD.htm



REFUGEE TRANSITIONS HAS ARRIVED

Thanks to the generosity of the Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church congregation through the mission funds of their Capital Campaign, they have been able to set up a South Bay branch of San Francisco-based Refugee Transitions on their church campus (www.refrans.org). Refugee Transitions is a non-profit organization that helps refugees to become self-sufficient in the U.S. by training and nurturing volunteers to assist them with their English, life skills, and the academic skills they need to succeed in their new communities. Find out how you and your congregation can be a part of this new partnership. Please contact Elsa Amboy at rtsouthbay@gmail.com or 408-838-1331.

HOST A SALVATION ARMY DONATION TRUCK AT YOUR CHURCH AND SUPPORT NEWLY ARRIVED REFUGEE FAMILIES!



The Salvation Army provides household goods and clothing to refugees in our community who arrive to this country with little more than the clothes on their backs. We invite your congregation to help welcome our new

neighbors by arranging a donation drive at your church. Each time a truck is filled, the Salvation Army will contribute a \$300 voucher to the Catholic Charities refugee resettlement program. Donation drives can be organized as part of an educational awareness event, a mission fair or scheduled as a one-time collection.

Please contact Refugee Advocates **Elsa Amboy** or **Melissa Kreisa** at refugee@sanjosepby.org or call Melissa and Elsa (numbers in purple column to the left.)

HOW MUCH FOOD can we collect in December?