



# Presbytery of San José

December 11, 2025  
Second Week of Advent

## A Pastoral Letter to the Presbytery of San José **Rest**

Dear Members and Friends of the Presbytery of San José,

Grace and peace in the joy of the Christ Child, Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God-with-us. By the time you receive this message, my wife and I will be heading to meet up with our young adult sons as we start a long-awaited family vacation. After tons of meetings and emails to the wazoo, I'm looking forward to going incommunicado for awhile, enjoying the Christmas markets of Eastern Europe, and recalibrating mind-body-spirit for 2026.

Acts 17:28 says that we "live, and move, and have our being" in the living God. The Holy One gives our life, our breath, our purpose. Sometimes, especially in the holidays, it can feel like, we live and move and have our being in: meal/party preparations and planning, Christmas shopping, year-end deadlines, grieving of missing departed loved ones, staying warm, family visits, missing family visits, decorating the Christmas tree, remembering holidays of days past, writing the remaining sermons for the year and planning for the next.

All of this activity and the mental, physical, emotional, and physical energy it takes to do all of this can sap our joy. Some of you know that I'm an early-riser, starting my day at 5:30am, with calisthenics, breathing exercises, enjoying yogurt and blueberries for breakfast, two mugs of black coffee, meditation and reflection. This morning, I came across this year-end video message from my dear friend and colleague, The Rev. Dr. Tom Taylor, President/CEO of the Presbyterian Foundation, whose Board of Trustees I served for eight years, four of which as Vice Chair and Chair. Tom's poignant video is on point as he reflects upon the necessity of rest. Take a listen to Tom's pastoral word for all of us: [click here for his video message](#)

I'm off to finish packing. May you find some time and space to take a breath, to breathe a word of gratitude for being alive, to reflect upon the goodness of God and the God of all goodness. From our family to you and yours, have a blessed Advent and Christmas

In Joy and. Justice,

Neal D. Presa  
Executive Presbyter

408.763.5004 | [Neal@sanjosepby.org](mailto:Neal@sanjosepby.org)

#CalledToCommunity  
#CommittedToJustice

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### Upcoming Travels/Preaching of our Executive Presbyter

- December 11-26: Vacation
- January 4, 2026 (10:00am): Preaching at First Presbyterian Church, Palo Alto

- January 10, 2026 (10:45am): Attending installation of The Rev. Jason Barraca as Designated Pastor, Lincoln Avenue Presbyterian Church-Salinas
- January 26-28, 2026: Lead, Presbytery Clergy Retreat at Villa Maria Del Mar, Santa Cruz
- January 29-February 1, 2026: Strategic Planning Meeting and Installation of the General Secretary, World Communion of Reformed Churches at Hannover, Germany



## 2025 Advent-Christmas Devotional

We are in the sacred season of Advent.

Teaching and ruling elders of the Presbytery contributed their reflections and prayers for this year's devotional booklet based on the Scripture passages of the lectionary.

To access the devotional booklet and to share with others: [click here](#)



## Presbytery Accountant/Bookkeeper Retiring March 31

On December 1st, our longtime Presbytery accountant/bookkeeper Ruling Elder Diane Case announced her retirement, effective March 31, 2026, with the Financial Affairs Committee and the Personnel Committee, having previously shared this news with Presbytery staff. Read her retirement letter in her own words: [click here](#)

Diane has served faithfully for over three decades in this role, working with all of our congregations/worshipping communities and their staff, our various governance entities, and vendors. Her institutional memory and knowledge are extensive. Two years ago, she and her husband moved from the Bay Area to Alabama to be closer to family. She has been working 100% remotely since then, and in that time, her family welcomed a granddaughter.

She is well-known throughout the denomination for her accounting acumen and is regularly invited, together with our Treasurer, The Rev. Edd Breeden, to teach workshops and webinars and provide phone consultations to church treasurers and finance officers.

Diane will be with us at the in-person Presbytery meeting on Saturday, February 7 at Trinity Church-San José. We will celebrate her and her ministry.

Thank you, Diane, for your faithful ministry and friendship among us!



Presbyterian minister, the late Rev. Frederick Buechner, famously observed on the nature of vocation and a Christian's calling to serve: "Calling is where the heart's deep gladness and where the world's deep hunger meet."

Are you or someone you know being called to serve in the Presbytery or in one of our churches?

The Search Committee for our next Stated Clerk has begun its work. See the Ministry Discernment Profile [here](#). Share this with your networks.

The Presbytery is also hiring for three new positions:

- Executive Assistant
- Communications Coordinator
- Peacemaking & Justice Advocate.

Also, Santa Teresa Hills Presbyterian Church is looking to hire their next Director of Music.

This is an exciting time to be a part of God's mission. Please pray for all these search and hiring processes, for all those involved, and for the persons whom the Holy Spirit is already preparing to serve in these ministry calls.

To learn more about all these employment opportunities, please [click here](#).





## Winter 2026 Clergy Retreat

Church Health & Growth Working Group and EP Neal Presa invite all teaching elders for our Winter 2026 Clergy Retreat, which will be held on January 26-28, 2026 at Villa Maria del Mar in Santa Cruz. This will be a 2-night/3-day gathering. We will focus on the theme "Joy in These Anxious Times" based on EP Neal Presa's book *Worship, Justice, and Joy: A Liturgical Pilgrimage*

Overnight registration is \$200; Commuter registration is \$100.

Register by December 25 [here](#)

There are limited slots, so register soon. Looking forward to seeing there!

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## RESOURCES AND NEWS

- **Immigration Justice**

At a recent online meeting of mid-council leaders (execs/clerks) of the Synod of the Pacific with Amanda Craft, Manager of Immigration Advocacy for the PC(USA), the following resources were provided to assist congregations with accompanying, advocating for, and supporting immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and their families. Access those resources [here](#)



- **Special Offerings**

In that same meeting, mid-council leaders from the Synod met with The Rev. John Wilkinson, Vice President of Stewardship and Funds Development for the PC(USA), as he shared about the three special offerings -- One Great Hour of Sharing, World Communion, and the Christmas Joy Offering. There's a new grant program to support congregations and worshipping communities funded by the World Communion offering. To learn more about these special offerings and the grant program, click [here](#)

- **228th General Assembly (2028)**

Commissioners and advisory delegates to next year's 227th General Assembly (2026) in Milwaukee will consider a proposal from the Unification Commission to have the 228th General Assembly (2028) in Puerto Rico, at the invitation of the Synod of Boriquen and the three presbyteries of that Synod. This would be a

historic gathering as this would be the first General Assembly, if the way be clear, to be meet outside of the contiguous United States. Read the news story [here](#)



The recent federal government shutdown has affected millions of Americans who rely upon SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) to procure basic food for themselves and their loved ones, and thousands of food pantries across the country which rely upon SNAP funding to stock their food supply.

Our Presbytery Hunger Advocate, [The Rev. Ryan Althaus](#), together with The Rev. Rebecca Barnes (Manager, Presbyterian Hunger Program of the PC(USA) Unified Agency), have some valuable resources to help support our local communities. Here's a word from Ryan, a list of local resources, and at the bottom of his note are links to some of those resources. [Click Here.](#)



Is your church's story being told?  
Share it today in the Mission  
Yearbook!

We're collecting stories for the Mission Yearbook website and want to feature yours! Share how God is moving in your congregation, through ministry, mission, or spiritual growth and inspire others across the Presbyterian community.

Send 300–600 words, a photo or link to a video, whatever you have to [MissionYearbookStories@pcusa.org](mailto:MissionYearbookStories@pcusa.org). Find all the details here: <https://hubs.ly/Q03z9ch0>

If you have a preferred timeframe in mind when you would like your story to run, please submit at least 4 weeks before your preferred date.



## Presbytery Unity Candle Sunday, December 14: Westminster Presbyterian Church-San José

This coming Sunday, please pray for Westminster Presbyterian Church (WPC)-San José, and their pastors, The Rev. Dr. Bryan Franzen and The Rev. Neneth Ross.

On June 25, 1891, WPC met for the first time, seeded with 105 members from the First Presbyterian Church of San Jose. WPC's initial mission was to minister to the growing community south of Santa Clara Street.

Located on Second Street near Williams, it was originally called "Second Presbyterian Church." Thankfully, the first church building was built with no debt, allowing the congregation to focus on its larger mission in the neighborhood and the world. In 1902, this even included helping to found Mount Hermon Christian Conference Center.

In the 1920s, WPC moved to its current location on The Alameda. WPC's mission witness is local and global, engaging with The Bill Wilson Center, ministries addressing hunger and houselessness, affordable housing, social justice, and much more. They celebrated their 125th founding anniversary in 2016, and this past Fall they recognized 100 years of ministry presence on The Alameda.

Sunday worship is at 10:30am.

Westminster Presbyterian Church's website is: <http://www.westpres-sj.org/>

Follow the path of the Unity Candle: <http://tinyurl.com/SJUnity2025>

Presbyterian Women of the Presbytery of San Jose celebrate their

*19th Annual  
Epiphany Tea  
at Stone Church of Willow Glen  
Sunday, January 4th, 2026 at 2 PM*

1937 Lincoln Ave, San Jose, CA

And you are invited! RSVP by December 28, 2025  
to Rosaleen Zisch, [rmgzisch@gmail.com](mailto:rmgzisch@gmail.com)



*Begin the New Year with food for body and soul.*

All are warmly invited to join Presbyterian Women for tea and cake, followed by candlelit worship in the style of the Taizé Community: chanted song in prayer, meditation on scripture and seasonal readings.



# Registration is open!

<https://tinyurl.com/GatheredinFaith-Jan31>



Asian Presbyterian Women, Northern California Chapter  
Invites you to our 2026 Winter Gathering

*Gathered in Faith:  
Empowering Hearts,  
Changing Lives*

Jan 31

9:30 am - 3:00 pm

Westhope Presbyterian Church  
12850 Saratoga Rd, Saratoga  
Cost \$10

“For where two or three are gathered in my name,  
I am there among them.” Matt 18:20

Join the Northern California Chapter of Asian Presbyterian Women for a special day of learning, encouragement, and fellowship among our Asian sisters in faith, led by:

Rev. Deborah Lee,  
Interfaith Movement for  
Human Integrity

Rev. Ruth Kuo,  
Presbytery of San José



Registration ends Jan 17

*We look forward to gathering in faith with you!*

[www.sanjosepby.org](http://www.sanjosepby.org)

[View as Webpage](#)

Presbytery of San Jose | 890 Meridian Way | San Jose, CA 95126 US

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