

# Los Altos

United Church of Christ

## *Windows*

*the monthly newsletter of Los Altos United Church of Christ*

December 2021

### Highlighted In this issue...

#### KEEPING IN TOUCH...

In Person Worship - **NOTE: A NEW LIVESTREAM LINK!**  
Sunday Morning Worship LIVESTREAM ON FACEBOOK  
at <https://www.facebook.com/LAUCCMEDIA>

#### ADVENT STUDY SERIES

Christmas Poinsettias

REPORTS

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## KEEPING IN TOUCH...



Beloved,

I suppose that this year you may be sending more hopeful Christmas Cards to family and friends. More hopeful because we are coming out of this pandemic that has altered our lives so dramatically. While there are still concerns, the science is in our favor. And I do trust the science!

It reminded me that several years ago, scientists in the United States sent a unique message to unknown recipients. The message was from Earth to whoever-might-be-out-there. Edward Hays writes: *“The communication was brief: a three-minute transmission in a mathematical code, describing the make-up of our solar system, the inhabitants of Earth and the present population of this world. The target of this signal was a cluster of some 300,000 stars located on the remote fringe of the Milky Way, a cluster called Messier 13. The message was addressed simply to ‘Occupants.’*

*“Earth’s Christmas signal, traveling at the speed of light, 186,000 miles per second, will not reach the star cluster for 25,000 Earth years! If anyone is listening and cares to answer it, it will take at least as long to reply! But nonetheless, a response to our greeting is requested by Christmas of the year 51974 A.D.”*

I can hardly wait!

Hays goes on to note that Christmas is a celebration when God sent us a message. *“The Word was made flesh. Unlike our message sent to the outer limits of the Milky Way, God’s message was not mathematically coded, but made clear and understandable. We are not alone; Emmanuel, God is with us!”*

See you around the Advent Wreath,  
Stan Smith, Supply Pastor

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## **CALENDAR**

### **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE - 6:00 PM**

Invite family and friends to this festive, family friendly, joyfilled celebration of the birth of Christ.

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**LAUCC SUNDAY IN-PERSON AND LIVESTREAM:**



**Join us December 5, 2021  
The Second Sunday of Advent  
"Savoring the Wait"**

Lighting of the Second Advent Candle!

**IN THE SANCTUARY**

**In Person and on FB Livestream!**

**Fellowship time will follow Worship in Patterson Hall and in the Courtyard!**

**NOTE: THIS IS A NEW LIVESTREAM LINK!**

**(you do not need to be a Facebook subscriber!)**

**Sunday Morning Worship LIVESTREAM ON FACEBOOK**

at <https://www.facebook.com/LAUCCMEDIA>

[CLICK HERE FOR THE December 5th ORDER OF WORSHIP](#)

**We politely ask** that all congregants and visitors to the church campus respect the safety and comfort levels of others - this means wearing a mask, maintaining social distance and limiting contact if asked to do so by another. After a stressful 21 months of living with Covid in our communities, people may be weary of physical contact or still prefer to remain masked for their own peace of mind.

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**Communion this Sunday**

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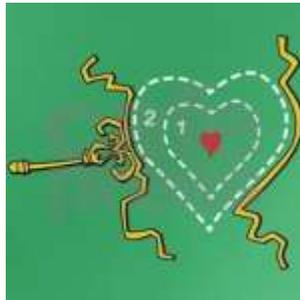


## Face-Covering Policy Reinstated

Effective August 1st all attendees to Sunday Worship will again be required to wear a cloth face-covering indoors regardless of their Covid-19 vaccination status. This is a policy that was reinstated, in line with current CDC recommendations for public indoor spaces. Masks will be available in the Narthex for those who need one. Thank you for your understanding.

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## ADVENT STUDY SERIES...



### The Heart That Grew Three Sizes *Finding Faith in the Story of the Grinch*

How the Grinch Stole Christmas! has remained an iconic story for several generations because of its seasonal theme, happy ending universal ambiguity, and moral conclusion. author and pastor, Matt Rawle, examines this modern-day classic Christmas story , challenging Christians to discover the Advent season in new and unexpected ways.

On the 4 Sundays in Advent, following worship and fellowship time, we will offer Matt Rawle's guide to Advent via video and open discussion of his presentation. We will be using our new audio equipment and monitors in the sanctuary. Join us:

- December 6: "When Christmas Isn't Christmas"
- December 13: "When Light Shines"
- December 20: "When Joy Is Our Song"

This is going to be a fun Advent Time together! if you haven't read *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, take time to find a copy and red it. If you have a copy bring it with you.

*Ginger Joseph*



Would you like to help decorate the Sanctuary with Poinsettias? You can simply provide a plant for the sanctuary beginning on December 12, and let us know who it is in honor or memory of... We will list the names in the bulletin on December 19.

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Please consider supporting the special UCC Offering, the Christmas Offering, this year. This offering is used to support clergy who may need assistance with medical care, health premiums and unexpected expenses that they may incur. Your support will be greatly appreciated by the men and women who have so generously, and graciously, served the Church throughout the years. We will be collecting this offering the 12th and 19th of December or you can note a special gift on Givelify.

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## **SUPPORT LAUCC through Amazon Smile!**



### **Unique AmazonSmile link**

Always share your unique link in your email, social media and on your website. When customers sign up for AmazonSmile, they're asked to select one of over a million charities to support. When customers click on your unique link, they skip this charity selection process. Instead, they're taken to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and are automatically asked if they want to support Los Altos United Church of Christ.

The unique LAUCC charity link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/95-6004382>



## RECYCLING

A reminder that we are still recycling clear plastic and aluminum cans. Bag them up and leave them by the gate at church or give Mark Allen a call . Unfortunately we cannot accept glass.

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### How can you help?

#### FELLOWSHIP TIME

Each Sunday we have some fellowship time in the Courtyard following worship. If you would like to help by providing some treats and goodies for a Sunday in the future, please sign up in the hallway outside Patterson, or email the church office - [office@losaltosucc.org](mailto:office@losaltosucc.org)

#### Looking for Lay Readers!

Would you like to be a part of a Sunday online service? We're looking for individuals, couples, and families to serve as liturgists. If you would like to participate in Sunday Worship, please contact Judy Ekmalian, [jlekmalian@gmail.com](mailto:jlekmalian@gmail.com) and let her know.



## GIVING...

Thank you for your giving, which supports our ministries, including both our in-person and online worship. We certainly encourage you to give generously as you are able, by leaving your donation in the offering plate at the rear of the Sanctuary. You may also donate by mail, or you can go to our church website [losaltosucc.org](https://losaltosucc.org) click on the tab **DONATE**, and use your credit or debit card with a one-time or recurring gift. As an alternative you may also click the following link: <https://losaltosucc.org/ways-to-give/>

Take now a moment and reflect upon ways in which you can offer gifts and be filled with gratitude.



## NEW OFFICE HOURS

Now that Los Angeles County has lifted all COVID-19 restrictions, it is acceptable to have staff return to offices.. In light of this we are bringing back LAUCC office hours with Cindy on Monday through Friday, 9:00 - 2:00. **WE DO ASK THAT YOU WEAR A MASK INDOORS!** Stan will be in the office on Mondays and Thursdays, and by appointment. Please contact us at any time at [drstanleydsmith@gmail.com](mailto:drstanleydsmith@gmail.com) or [office@losaltosucc.com](mailto:office@losaltosucc.com)

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### **New Zoom Update Policy Begins November 1, 2021**

“Beginning November 1, 2021, customers will be required to update their Zoom software to ensure it is no more than nine months behind the current version, at any given time. From that point on, users will be prompted to update their software when using the platform should their version fall behind this nine-month window.”

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### **LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!**

Did you know LAUCC has a Facebook page? Please check it out and Like us on Facebook. It is a great way to keep up with what is going on in the life of the church. <https://www.facebook.com/losaltosucc>

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### **Congregational Care**

*TonieLynn Palermo*

Wow! Where has the time gone? It is that time of year again, The Holidays.

As we approach the end of the year, let's look to the season of Advent and embellish in the spirit, glory and the magic of the season.

I find myself not only celebrating the spirit of Christmas, in the birth of Jesus, but thinking about the concept of “time” as it relates to Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol. Not the

“ghosts” of past, present and future, but, rather reflection, the now, progression, future and growth!

Holiday season, especially the New Year, should allow us time for introspection and a review of the year. This year, Denise and I find ourselves reflecting on the lives of loved ones we lost. Sadly there have been many this year. We address our sadness by sharing their life with other family members and friends. That engagement process has given us energy as we can recall the memories we once shared together with our families. It feels like a renewal process and helps to erase some of the loss we feel.

I look to the future and how these stories we share can enrich the lives of others; the little piece of them in me that I can pass along in lifting and celebrating their spirit.

Maybe during the season we can reflect on a notable person or situation, maybe a person who has inspired you? How might this person/situation affect your past, the way you view & experience life and how you may approach your future, spiritual essence, body and soul.

May the spirit and magic of the holiday season bring you and your families much joy, peace and love.

I will start the sharing process with the story of a young boy who at such a young age inspired me, he filled my heart and had a profound effect on my life. He is thought of often especially during the holiday season!

## **My Christmas Angel**

by *TonieLynn Palermo*

Over the years, I have many beautiful and fond holiday memories with family and friends. There is one memory that shines everyday as the most inspiring, but, especially during the Christmas Season.

For 13 years, I had the opportunity and pleasure to Volunteer in many different capacities for the annual Ronald McDonald Christmas party. My employer hosts this party each year! I remember befriending the most amazing little boy, whose lust for life, understanding of his place in the world and love for his family, friends was truly remarkable.

Our first encounter was when he found me taking a break sitting under a tree. It was cold, windy and just not the ideal setting for a sick child. My ball cap flew off and this little boy walked up and handed me his beanie. He said, *"Hi my name is Zach and I think you need my beanie so it does not fly off, it is cold out here."* My heart swelled with so much emotion as I wanted to reach out and hug him. We laughed and talked the whole time and by the end of my break he managed to swindle my ball cap. He was a good fast talker that one.

For the next 12 years my volunteering position was more in a capacity that allowed me mobility (working with studio operations) Zach and I started a game of Tag - who could find who first. The winner would get a ball cap or beanie!

My head size was much larger than his so I purchased a child sized ball cap each year. No surprise he tagged me first each of these years. We would talk and catch up on the prior year's events sharing stories about his family, and friends, and what he does to cheer up

the other sick children. Which turns out was to tell his favorite stories about family, his brother who he loved very much.

Zach was always interested in my life and his face always put a smile on mine. He explained that some years he was so sick, but insisted that he attend the party so he could give his friend Tonie a yearly hug and make her smile. We found each other that year and talked about how he had been in the hospital much of the year. Zach refused to let his health bring him down because of his need to continue work. By the way, his work was lifting other children's spirits and his family to his last dying day. This sent a chill throughout my body.

At that point, the realization of a little boy who is dying has actually taught me and others the true meaning of what it means to be alive. My own issues were suddenly insignificant. This little boy!! I asked God why did you bring us together? Why was there such a strong bond of familiarity?

Another year would go by and this particular year (2004), I was working behind the scenes handing out gifts to the elves at each of the Santa's Houses. At some point my coworker and I were called to become elves as Santa's Helpers. It was there that Zach found me and said Tag. He did not look well and spoke with a weakened voice. My heart was breaking as I looked over towards his parents who smile's wore sad faces!

That year my special gift to Zach was a stuffed dog requested the previous year. He hugged the stuffing out of me and the doggie. My coworker saw my face and realized what was transpiring - she held my hand as Zach spoke with Santa. Zach told Santa all he wanted was for his parents to be happy and understand that it was his time to go, God was calling him and that his work was done. He also asked Santa to give me anything I wanted and to find another little boy to hug and make me smile every year. My heart sank just writing this story. We exchanged big hugs, and our words "I love you my friend and I will miss you." Zach said he would save me a spot next to him so we can talk more, but not next year. I will watch over you - I am your angel!

This child impacted my life so dramatically and influenced how I live everyday. When times are tough, I think you can. Never give in - the mind is stronger than the body.

There are many untold stories of our conversations, but Zach was nothing short of amazing and he is thought of often especially this time of year! My Christmas Angel.

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## **OUTREACH**

*Roberta Boyd*

## **BEACH PANTRY**

Thank you for donating granola/ protein bars for CSULB Beach Pantry.. This is an important outreach in our community!

## **TICHENOR CHRISTMAS FAMILIES**

With the help of Scout Troop 126, we are sponsoring two families from the Tichenor Children's Clinic..If you can help with any last minute needs, let me know!

## UCC CHRISTMAS FUND

There will be envelopes in the bulletins the month of December or you can note a special gift on Givelify.. these funds help retired clergy and church workers.

Roberta Boyd/ Outreach

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Hello Everyone,

This year, each classroom will have their own Christmas tree so the kiddos can decorate it and enjoy it for the entire season. We were lucky enough to have different families donate an artificial tree, which will now give us the option of using them every year! Every student will make their own ornament to decorate the tree. We are also continuing our new tradition of having a Christmas spirit week and added our Polar Express themed days (pajama days)! We will enjoy all the festive fun with silly hats, themed snacks and holiday music. Happy Christmas and Happy Holiday wishes from Discovery Preschool! We are looking forward to a New Year! Take care and stay safe!

It is officially the holiday season and Discovery Preschool is celebrating in new safer ways! We concluded our Thanksgiving community projects and collected granola bars for Cal State Long Beach students; as well as cat food for a local animal shelter. Our students in the Yellow Room inspired the idea of collecting cat food because of their fascination with cats and pets. Meow!

Warmly,  
*Roxy Menendez*  
Director  
Discovery Preschool at LAUCC  
(562)596-2108  
[discoverylaucc.com](http://discoverylaucc.com)

*When we play, we learn.*

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## CELEBRATIONS

*For the Blessings in our lives...*

**BIRTHDAYS: 12/05- Jackie P.; 12/06 - Lindsay K.**

*(If you have a birthday or an anniversary that we haven't celebrated, please email the office with your dates.)*

**Gratitude** for all those helping with the refurbishing of our facilities.

**Gratitude** for all the health care workers during this time of pandemic.

**Gratitude** for our **Chancel Choir**

## **CONCERNS**

*And now those people and places that weigh heavy on our hearts... I invite you to say a name or place that is important to you, and know in saying it we hold it in our hearts...*

**Prayers** for **Elaine D.**, Cindy's sister-in-law with possible breast cancer. (awaiting test results)

**Prayers** for Sumer's grandmother **Bonnie M.** now recovering at home.

**Prayers** for **Cheryl H.** who is having back problems.

**Prayers** for Pamela's wife for her health.

**Prayers** for Caran's granddaughter and Angelee's niece, **Amelia**, in the hospital.

**Prayers** for Kate and Jackie's friend, **Melanie** who has bladder cancer and will be needing surgery and chemo.

**Prayers** for **Kristen W.**, diagnosed with colon and liver cancer, undergoing chemo treatments.

**Prayers** for **Brenda K.** who has been diagnosed with cancer in the brain.

**Prayers** for Judy's mother **Diane** who fell and is in rehab.

Jackie P.'s friend Dave asks for prayers for his wife, **Rosie** suffering from dementia.

**Prayers** for **Tom T.**

**Prayers** for Hazel's grandson **Spencer.**

**Judi's** continued recovery at home, and for **Michael** who looks after her.

Continue to pray for our homebound members: **Clark P., Vi D., Darryl S.**



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|----|-------------------|
| 1  | Ben Joseph        |
| 3  | Tom Provencher    |
| 5  | Jackie Provencher |
| 6  | Lindsay Kersey    |
| 23 | Sally Lane        |

*(If you have a birthday or an anniversary that we haven't announced, please email the office with your dates.)*

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## **LINKS TO RESOURCES**

### **SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE UCC**

<https://www.scncucc.org/>

Keep up with the latest **OFFICIAL SOURCES** for news on the current Coronavirus pandemic:

**Official California Covid-19 Response Site:** <https://covid19.ca.gov/>

**Centers for Disease Control:** <https://www.cdc.gov/>

**World Health Organization:** <https://www.who.int/>

### **RESOURCES for ANTI-RACISM**

<https://www.scncucc.org/responding-to-racism>

<https://www.pbs.org/weta/reconstruction/>