

# TIDINGS



**Advent and Christmas 2023**  
Newsletter of St. Timothy's Episcopal Church Danville, CA

Merry Advent y'all,

I am really looking forward to our time together in December. This is an unusual year, as there are effectively only three Advent Sundays.

## **Christmas Eve**

December 24<sup>th</sup> is 'Advent 4' and obviously Christmas Eve as well. The worship team and I decided to celebrate Christmas Eve at 3pm, 5pm and 7pm and NOT have December 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday morning services.

## **Advent Wreath Lighting and Children in Church**

For our 3 Sundays in Advent (December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>), we will have different families lighting the Advent wreath at the beginning of church (right after the opening song). See Pastor Susan's article about our children's offerings during the 10am service.

## **Christmas Flowers**

Once again, you will have the opportunity to contribute money towards the purchase of the Christmas poinsettias. There will be envelopes in the church pews, in the narthex and in the church office for your contributions. All donations are greatly appreciated and will help make the sanctuary beautiful for Christmas. See Patty's article for more information and deadline.

## **Adult Education**

*December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> in the Parish Hall @ 9:15am*

Also, for our 3 Sundays in Advent, I will be leading a discussion on the history and politics of Israel / Palestine. It will be in the Parish Hall from 9:15am to 9:45am. I know a lot of history, but am hardly an expert. I hope to offer a methodology for how to understand your faith considering the Middle East, ancient and modern. It will **not** be livestreamed.



## **Gaudete / Blue Sunday**

*Dec 17<sup>th</sup> 8am, 10am AND 4pm*

Traditionally, the third Sunday of Advent is called “Gaudete Sunday.” In the olden days, Advent was considered a mini-Lent. In this older approach, individual and corporate practices were geared toward penitence and preparation. As things have evolved over time, there is still a heavy emphasis on preparation. Advent today is still about preparation, but is more connected thematically to faith, hope and love in the season. The reason I tell you this is that Gaudete Sunday (December 17<sup>th</sup>) will be a break to rejoice in the midst of this mini-Lent.

## **Rejoice and Be Blue**

Without Advent being a mini-Lent, the call to rejoice is still the same. On this day, December 17<sup>th</sup> 2023, we also want to offer a different pathway for some during the holidays. Many people feel less connected, less joyous in December because culture elevates family and togetherness above all else. For those who have family that have moved, died, or otherwise been separated from, they actually feel “blue” during the jingle jangle of Christmas red and green. So, we will offer Blue Christmas in church on December 17<sup>th</sup> at 4pm. It will be beautiful, quiet, worshipful and holy. We will have liturgy that is meditative and music appropriate to the vibe.

## **December 3<sup>rd</sup>**

1<sup>st</sup> Advent

Adult Ed @ 9:15 - 9:45am

## **December 10<sup>th</sup>**

2<sup>nd</sup> Advent, Selfie and Grandparents’ Day  
St. Nicholas will pay a visit (hint: KA)

Adult Ed @ 9:15am

## **December 17<sup>th</sup>**

3<sup>rd</sup> Advent and Blue Christmas (at 4pm)

Adult Ed @ 9:15am

## **December 24<sup>th</sup>**

Christmas Eve

**3pm** - Walk on children’s pageant, Christmas carols and Eucharist

**5pm** - Christmas carols, Eucharist and candles with “Silent Night”

**7pm** - Christmas carols and choir, Eucharist and candles with “Silent Night”

## **December 25<sup>th</sup>**

Christmas Day - Christmas Day with Christmas carols and Eucharist

10am worship only

## **December 31<sup>st</sup>**

Regular Sunday schedule

## **January 7<sup>th</sup>**

We will celebrate the Epiphany with our regular Sunday schedule.



## MORE ADVENT OPPORTUNITIES

### **Intergenerational Advent Preparation** (December 3rd)

Wreath making with greens and candles will take place following the 10:00am service on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Do you have greens? Bring them. We will have some ribbon and prayers for lighting the candles. Candles will be available and a few advent candle holders – or bring your advent wreath holder from home! We are suggesting a donation of \$10 for the candles.



### **Would your family like an Advent Countdown Candle?**

Families of children may like our single Advent countdown candle! We love them! Families can say a prayer together then extinguish the candle that will be lit again the following day until Christmas Eve!

*(The photo shows only the top of the candle.)*

We are suggesting a donation of 10 dollars for the candle.

### **Advent Children's Liturgy**

On Sunday mornings, children will gather briefly in the Children's Liturgy room in Parish Hall, share a scripture lesson and then join the congregation quietly. Advent is an exciting time in the life of the Church as we prepare for Christmas and think about our own longing for baby Jesus to be born. Children may join their parents in a pew or sit with parents at the back of the church with activities which help them to focus on what they are seeing in church.

Children and families will light our Advent wreath at the beginning of the worship service as we anticipate the coming of Christmas and the Light coming into the world.

## YOUTH ROOM UPDATE

I am so excited that we're close to having our youth room debut! The windows have been put in, the space has been reconfigured. We are putting in a TV with a gaming center.

We have a snack cart fully stocked! And I'm really excited about the potential we have to minister to middle school and high school families.



# NOVEMBER IN PHOTOS



## Fellowship Luncheon

Pastor Todd led a lively conversation about AI and showed many creations! Below is ChatGPT's vision of women church greeters wearing witch costumes. (Thank you Jim C for the idea!)





## Stitching Group

Check out what our creative crafters are doing! Join them with your current project on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month. 10am-12pm in Overby Conference room. You don't have to be a stitcher... all crafters are welcome!



**Everyone LOVES  
Coffee Hour!**  
*(Just ask these 2!)*

Thank you to all who have volunteered to host. If you would like to host a coffee hour, sign up [HERE](#).



**SRVUSD School Board Meeting**

Todd and other I-SRV faith leaders spoke at the school board meeting on November 14th in support of the District's commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for ALL students. Click [HERE](#) to see the 14-minute video of their presentations.



Latest from SRVUSD



SRVUSD Board of Education Meeting 11-14-2023

San Ramon Valley Unified School District (SRVUSD) is committed to creating a safe and welcoming learning environment for every student.

If you would like to see links to equity resources listed by the District, click [HERE](#).

**Young People's Time**  
Don't we all love these kids?



**Thank you Altar Guild!**

The work you do behind the scenes makes our worship experience beautiful and special!



**Baptism**

We receive you into the household of God.



## CHRISTMAS FLOWER DONATIONS



At Christmas time, St. Timothy's sanctuary comes alive with festive sounds and colors. A large part of the decor is made up of many beautiful poinsettia plants. If you wish, you may contribute money toward the purchase of the poinsettias. You may do so to honor or remember someone or as a sign of your own gratitude for having St. Timothy's as part of your life.

There will be envelopes in the church pews that are marked for making your donations. You may also find envelopes in a basket on the table in the narthex or in the church office. When you return the envelopes, please mark them with the names or occasions you wish to remember. These dedications will be acknowledged in the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day bulletins. The envelopes can be placed in the collection plate on Sundays or can be sent to the parish office. The LAST date for submitting your contribution and dedication will be Wednesday, December 13.

If you have any questions, you can contact Patty A at [mrs.sun@comcast.net](mailto:mrs.sun@comcast.net). Patty's phone number is in the church directory.

All your donations are greatly appreciated and will help make the sanctuary appropriately beautiful for Christmas! Thank you!

## RISE AGAINST HUNGER MEAL PACKING

We Packaged 16,632 Meals!

Thanks to the hardworking effort of the volunteers and donors, we were able to package a total of 16,632 meals. That's enough to feed 77 children for an entire school year. Since we started hosting the event in 2016, St. Timothy's has packaged 135,396 meals for Rise Against Hunger.



Since we are located in the Bay Area, the meals are likely to be sent to Southeast Asia to areas of food insecurity, orphanages and schools. Rise Against Hunger is also focusing on distributing meals to Ukrainian refugees displaced by war. We'll provide an update when we know exactly where our meals were sent.

This international service project will make a difference in many lives. On behalf of the Outreach Ministries Committee, thank you for answering the call to serve. We hope you also had some fun in the process!







# NEW LITURGICAL YEAR

On **December 3<sup>rd</sup>**, the **first Sunday of Advent**, you will see a large hand painted banner hanging above the altar. It is a contemporary abstract piece painted by Kathy Wills and Leslie Firth. The dark colors of blues and purples evoke a feeling of unease and mystery. It is a time of anticipation and reflection. Something big is coming. At the top of the banner there is part of a sun with golden rays of light. It represents the hope and love that is coming into the world with the birth of Jesus.

The wreaths on the pillars around the church have blue bows this year for Advent, and the pedestal under the cross and altar are draped with blue fabric.

**Christmas Eve** there will be a large white banner with a giant glittering star. The three dimensional center looks like an explosion of light. There is a suggestion of a cross made of sticks that was actually a happy accident which I then decided to emphasize. It makes me think of the birth and death at the same time of the life of Jesus.

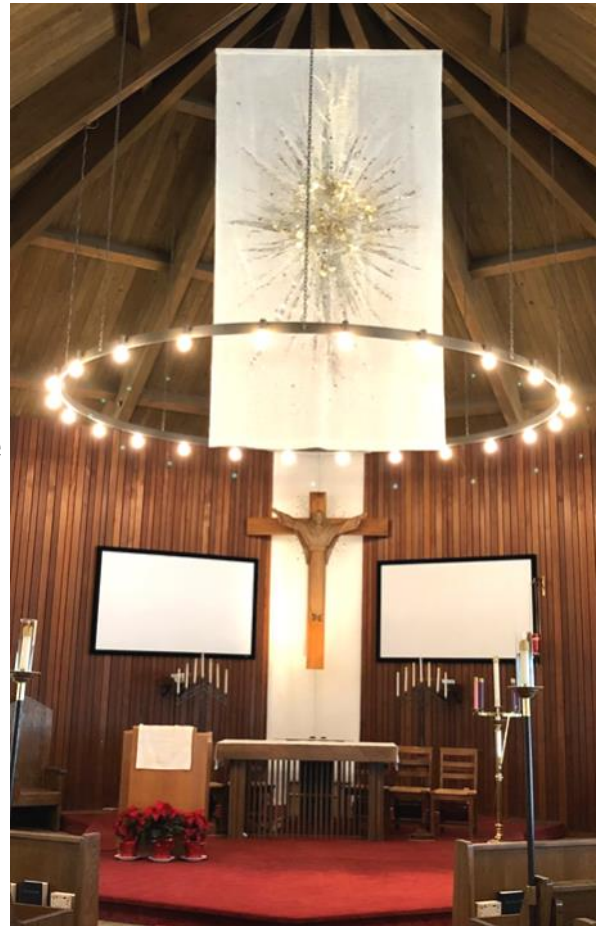
This took about six weeks to create on my dining room table. It slowly evolved to what you see today. I tried using glitter but it looked like gray from a distance. I bought 1/4" glitter by the pound in order for it to have a sparkling affect, and tiny mirrors glued on reflected the light the way I wanted it to look. I can't wait to see how it will shine with the new lighting on the circle of lights above the altar.

**Helpers Needed:** This banner will be installed on **Tuesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at 10 am**. It is interesting to install because the center piece has to be attached by me to the banner with the help of two people. I will need 6 or 7 people to help put this together. It should take about two hours or less. The big ladder will be needed. Also, one person will be needed to change the bows on the wreaths to red ones.

**Epiphany** will be celebrated on **Sunday, January 6<sup>th</sup>**, and the banner will need to come down right after the last service around 11:15. About 6 **helpers will be needed to take it all down** and roll up the banner for storage.

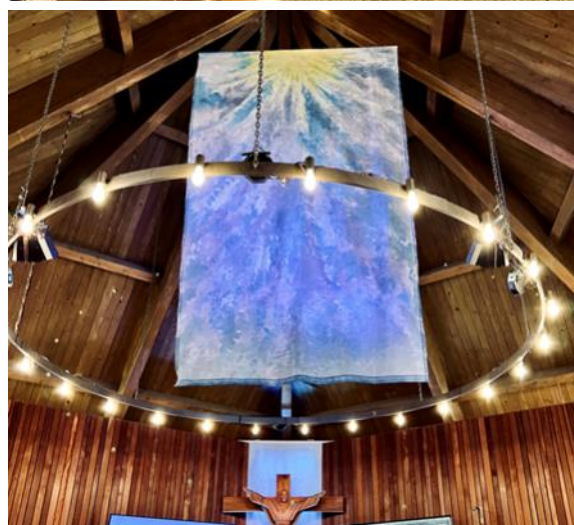
Please let Leslie F. know if you can help with one or both of these projects

Contact: [Lesliefirth@comcast.net](mailto:Lesliefirth@comcast.net)



## Advent Prep in the Church

Thank you to the helpers! Good work!



## CONFIDENTIAL PRAYER & PASTORAL CARE

### Confidential Prayer

Do you or a loved one need a prayer? Our confidential prayer team is honored to pray for your concerns. Just send your request to [prayers@SaintTimothysDanville.org](mailto:prayers@SaintTimothysDanville.org) and we will forward it to our team. You can also go to St. Timothy's homepage and scroll to almost the bottom where you will find a box titled "Email Prayer Request." Any questions, contact Helen C or Patti F.

EMAIL PRAYER REQUEST

### Pastoral Care

Email clergy for a time and we can set up a video, make a phone call or schedule a visit.  
Pastor Todd: [rector@sainttimothysdanville.org](mailto:rector@sainttimothysdanville.org)  
Pastor Susan: [sgeissleroneil@sainttimothysdanville.org](mailto:sgeissleroneil@sainttimothysdanville.org)

For urgent pastoral care needs, call the church phone number 925-837-4993 and dial ext. 120 (or simply follow the prompts). The call will be returned quickly by either Pastor Susan or Pastor Todd.

# CONTRA COSTA INTERFAITH COALITION

Thank you, St. Timothy's, for your ongoing support of this amazing little non-profit that makes such a difference for the neediest in our community. The outreach grant of \$5,000 we were enabled CCIC to immediately bought more much needed mattresses.

As of mid-October, this all-volunteer non-profit has provided essential furnishings, bedding, kitchen ware, cleaning supplies, and furnishings to **over 118 families!** The families are clients of over 20 C.C. County social service agencies and are referred by their case workers. All are unhoused, transitioning to permanent housing. Most have nothing.

**All these families have been helped for \$22K to date this year.** The largest expenses are new mattresses (\$14k, purchased from St. Vincent de Paul for under \$300 each), and food cards (\$6500).

You will see requests ongoing because the need is constant. Gently used towels, kitchen items (especially silverware and water glasses), bedding (not King), small furnishings, mattresses free of tears for stains. For more information contact Tania at [taniahd@comcast.net](mailto:taniahd@comcast.net)  
[www.ccichope.org](http://www.ccichope.org)



## ADOPT-A-FAMILY BIKES

We are at it again. This is our 19<sup>th</sup> year setting up shop to receive donated bikes, fix them up, and donate them to local non-profits, title 9 schools, and children in our own school district referred by their school counselor.

This all started here, at St. Timothy's! Just ask Kimberly how many emails and calls come to the office wanting to donate bikes!

Come join this proud tradition by cleaning bikes. Yup, we can put them up on a table for you, provide gloves, rags, and 409. **A good family service project one afternoon.**

Hours are 10-4 Saturdays and Sundays (not Thanksgiving or Christmas weekends).

Join us on Facebook Adopt-A-Family Bikes or check out [www.adoptafamilybikes.org](http://www.adoptafamilybikes.org) for more info. Bikes will be accepted until approximately Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>. A \$25 donation per bike is requested to defray the costs of parts, new helmets, locks, and delivery trucks.

Questions? Contact [taniahd@comcast.net](mailto:taniahd@comcast.net)



# WARM WINTER DRIVE

## Share the Warmth

To benefit Loaves and Fishes &  
Options Recovery Center Toiletries Drive



*Help keep our brothers and sisters warm this winter.*

**December 3<sup>rd</sup> to JANUARY 14<sup>th</sup>**

*We are grateful for anything you can give:*

- \* **Socks: wool or wool blend, and/or cotton socks (not white)**
- \* **Knit caps, hats, scarves, gloves, mittens (no jackets for now)**
- \* **Plastic ponchos and emergency thermal blankets for Homeless rain kits (see these on Amazon) – the rain is coming!**

See [HERE](#) for ponchos. See [HERE](#) for thermal blankets. (Examples)

- \* **Small toiletries for Options Christmas gifts – ends Sunday December 17<sup>th</sup> so they can stuff their gift bags for clients in time**

**Collection boxes will be in these locations *on Sundays*:**

- 1. Parish Hall entry outside or under the Outreach Bulletin Board**
- 2. Grace House entry until 11:00 am**

OR

**To drop off during the week:**

**Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10am to 3pm**

**Two volunteers needed to help with the drive.  
Please contact: Leslie F, [lesliefirth@comcast.net](mailto:lesliefirth@comcast.net)**

# LOAVES & FISHES OF CONTRA COSTA

**Grand reopening of the Martinez Dining Room was on November 10<sup>th</sup>. Loaves & Fishes has been serving for 40 years. This year, it has been chosen as the non-profit of the year by Senator Dodd of Sacramento.**

Loaves and Fishes Martinez Dining Room re-opened their Martinez Dining room on November 10<sup>th</sup> to start having guests dine inside again. They are doing a hybrid system of still serving food in to-go containers out the door and also having seated guests at tables in the dining room as before.



Our loyal volunteers from Saint Timothy's have been on hiatus for 3 years due to the pandemic. We have missed going, but the good news is that **we will begin volunteering again on the fourth Monday of the month starting in January.** Our volunteer roster is down to 8 people. We need to have 8 people present to help on our day. Some of us have been volunteering at L & F for over 20 years. Once you go to Loaves and Fishes to help, you will want to be a regular volunteer.

We welcome new volunteers to our roster because we must always have substitutes to fill in due to vacations, illness, conflicts, etc. This is a commitment of once a month in Martinez from 9:30am to 1:15pm. (Some of us carpool the 30 minute drive.) Not everyone will be able to attend every month. You must be able-bodied, and it entails standing while chopping food and serving quickly. There is a kitchen director to give us instructions.

It is one of the most gratifying hands-on ministries that we do to serve others. Joann O, Dave S, and I have volunteered while we were on hiatus and, we all realized how much we missed doing this work. You get to know the regular clients, and they are so grateful for the food.

If you are interested in joining us, please email me, and I will guide you through the on-line registration process for all volunteers.

Contact: Leslie F, [lesliefirth@comcast.net](mailto:lesliefirth@comcast.net)



**Opportunities to Volunteer**  
By joining our volunteer family, you will have a significant impact on the 281,000+ friends and neighbors in Contra Costa County who are fed annually.

# VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

## November

The Vestry met on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, at 6:30pm in the Conference Room in Grace House.

### MOTIONS:

- The Vestry unanimously approved the October Vestry meeting minutes, the reports and documents submitted by the treasurer, and several submitted rector and commission reports submitted prior to the meeting.
- The Vestry unanimously approved to accept the Diocese's 2.9% COLA increase.
- The Vestry unanimously approved to accept Traverso Tree Company's bid, up to \$11,000 for the removal of three liquid amber trees, grinding stumps, and the trimming of the valley oak adjacent to Diablo Road.

### PARISH FINANCES:

#### Financial Summary for January – October 2023

	10-month Actual	10-month Budget
Total Income	\$612,980	\$600,033
Total Expenses	\$669,439	\$663,986
Net Operating Income	(\$56,459)	(\$63,953)

### PROPERTY:

- **Trees**  
Various trees throughout the campus are scheduled to be trimmed or removed due to safety concerns.
- **Solar Study**  
The vestry is continuing to investigate the possibility of converting to solar. After considerable discussion with many possible options, the vestry decided to defer further investigation into installing solar until seating the 2024 vestry. This deferral was deemed necessary so that the vestry can concentrate on the 2024 budget.

Parish members are welcome to attend vestry Meetings. The next meeting is on Wednesday, December 20th, 2023, at 6:30 in the Conference Room in Grace House.

The minutes of the Vestry meeting will be filed in the Parish Office after they are approved by the Vestry.

Submitted by Kris Manning, Vestry Clerk

# WINTER NIGHTS FAMILY SHELTER

## SAVE THE DATE! WINTER NIGHTS SHELTER (WNS) January 15 – 29



With the help of St. Timothy's and Beth Chaim volunteers, we will once again open Parish Hall to become a WNS serving approximately 25 guests (families with children.) We will provide breakfast, lunch, and dinner; laundry services; showers; assistance with homework; space for play and relaxation. Transportation, counseling, and other services to help families move into stable housing are provided by the WNS program. <https://cccwinternights.org/>

St. Timothy's has hosted the **Family Shelter** since the program began in 2004. We also support other programs offered by WNS with donations of extra food and supplies to:

**Oasis Day Center** – During the daytime, families can go to the Oasis Center in Concord with access to laundry, computers and other support services.

**Two Safe Parking Program Locations** – Provide a safe place to park overnight for families and individuals living in their cars. Clients have access to restrooms, food, and weekly mobile showers.

**Continued Success Program** – Maintains connections with alumni households to help the families stay housed.

There are many ways to help with the WNS at St. Timothy's. Signups will be available soon on the church website and on Sundays. Contact Joann O - [joannmarieoliver@gmail.com](mailto:joannmarieoliver@gmail.com)

## CONTACT US

**The Rev. Todd Bryant** - Rector  
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**The Rev. Susan Geissler-O'Neil** -  
Associate Rector  
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**Shipra Rastogi** - Preschool Director  
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[NoahsArk@SaintTimothysDanville.org](mailto:NoahsArk@SaintTimothysDanville.org)

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**Dick Firth** - Treasurer (Volunteer)  
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**Kimberly Bryant** - Parish Administrator  
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**Carleen Carns** - Pledge Secretary  
(Volunteer)  
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