



DECEMBER 2023 | ISSUE 1

FCUMC CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER

A special holiday newsletter from FCUMC



What's inside this holiday issue:

**A MESSAGE FROM OUR
PASTOR**

**"EN LA LUCHA" AN
INITIATIVE FOR
WOMEN IN FCUMC**

**MEMBER TESTIMONIAL
| ANDRES DE ARCO**

**CHRISTMAS CAROL
INVITATION!**

DECEMBER CALENDAR

FIRST COMMUNITY QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Maya Angelou

We tremble at the sound. We are thrilled by its presence.

It is what we have hungered for.

Not just the absence of war. But, true Peace.

A harmony of spirit, a comfort of courtesies.

Security for our beloveds and their beloveds.

We clap hands and welcome the Peace of Christmas.

We beckon this good season to wait a while with us.

We, Baptist and Buddhist, Methodist and Muslim, say come.

Peace.





"At this Holy Instant, we celebrate the Birth of Jesus Christ Into the great religions of the world. We jubilate the precious advent of trust. We shout with glorious tongues at the coming of hope. All the earth's tribes loosen their voices To celebrate the promise of Peace."

Maya Angelou

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR

Lights, shopping, and gift wrapping remind us that it is time to prepare for that wonderful time of the year of celebration. We remember the promise of Immanuel – God with us from Matthew 1:23 - f and the traditional song for the first Sunday of Advent O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

At these complex and difficult times when hope and peace is so needed around the world, the words of this hymn come into our own lives as a prayer for peace during this new time of Advent.

O Come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appears.

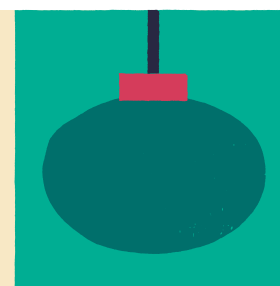
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us its ways to go.



May this Advent time be one for a new time of reflection and relationship-building with others and God. May we indeed welcome the presence and Wisdom of God as we remember and celebrate new life among us and pray for peace that can only come from knowing and experiencing God with us. Happy time of Advent and Christmas for you and your family!!

Pastor De La Rosa





"EN LA LUCHA" PROJECT | A PROJECT OF CARE

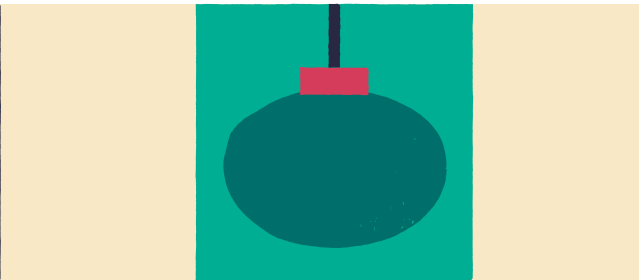
Ana Maria Rodriguez Alfonso

We are excited to share the heartwarming journey of our "En la Lucha" project, a heartfelt initiative that has sprouted from the seeds of unity, spirituality, and mutual care. Thanks to the generous support of CORR, whose grant has been a beacon of possibility, we embarked on a mission to nurture a community of Latina women from diverse faith backgrounds.

In our gatherings, we've celebrated life, faith, and the profound strength that emerges when women join hands in community.

"En la Lucha" provides a sacred space where women can openly share their unique challenges they face as women, immigrants, and individuals navigating the complexities of being racialized in the United States. As we reflect on the journey so far, we're filled with gratitude for the support and appreciation showered upon us by the FCUMC community of Medford.

Your encouragement has been the cornerstone of this ministry's growth, and we are truly blessed to have such a caring community standing beside us. Looking ahead, we aspire to continue developing "En la Lucha" with unwavering love and a profound appreciation for the dignity inherent in each woman. Together, let us continue to foster a space where bonds strengthen, spirits soar, and the beauty of diversity shines brightly.





MEMBER REFLECTIONS | CAFÉ GRACIELA

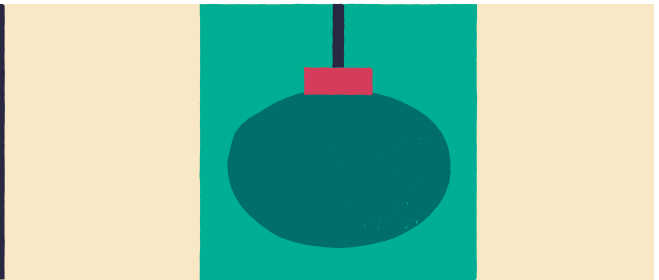
Andres De Arco

As the founder of Café Graciela, a young Colombian coffee enterprise, the holiday season has blossomed into a beacon of hope and transformation for me. Starting this venture wasn't just about introducing a new way to enjoy coffee; it was about creating a positive impact on the lives of young students in Colombia. Our efforts have been centered in Maria la Baja, a community that has shown remarkable unity and dedication to strengthening educational opportunities for its children.

This festive period reminds me of the incredible journey we've embarked on. It's a time when I reflect on how our coffee business has become an integral part of this effort. The holiday season, with its spirit of giving and unity, mirrors our mission at Café Graciela. We've seen firsthand how a simple cup of coffee can bridge communities and continents in support of education.

What truly fills me with hope is the way our customers in the U.S. have embraced our vision. They've understood that every purchase is more than just enjoying a high-quality Colombian coffee; it's a contribution to a larger cause - the empowerment of young minds through education. Their support has been instrumental in providing resources and opportunities for after-school programs in Maria la Baja.

This season, as we indulge in festive cheer and the aroma of freshly brewed coffee, I'm reminded that our collective efforts have made education more accessible and enjoyable for many. Café Graciela, along with the support of FCUMC, stands as a testament to the power of community, passion, and the belief that even a small coffee business can make a big difference in the world.





YOU'RE INVITED TO JOIN OUR CHRISTMAS CAROLING!

Dear Church Family,

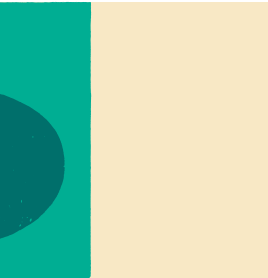
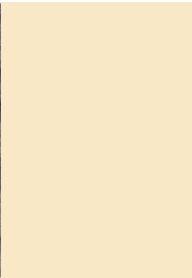
As the festive season approaches, we're excited to announce a special Christmas Caroling event! Join us on December 14th right after our church service, as we spread joy and cheer through song.

This heartwarming event will be led by the talented Stephanie Finley and Dot Seamster. Whether you're a seasoned caroler or a first-timer, your voice is welcomed. It's a wonderful opportunity to come together as a community, share in the spirit of Christmas, and make lasting memories.

Details:

- Date: December 17th
- Time: Immediately after church service

Let's make this Christmas season a time of joy, fellowship, and beautiful music. We look forward to seeing you there!





2023 DECEMBER CALENDAR



FCUMC DECEMBER CALENDAR

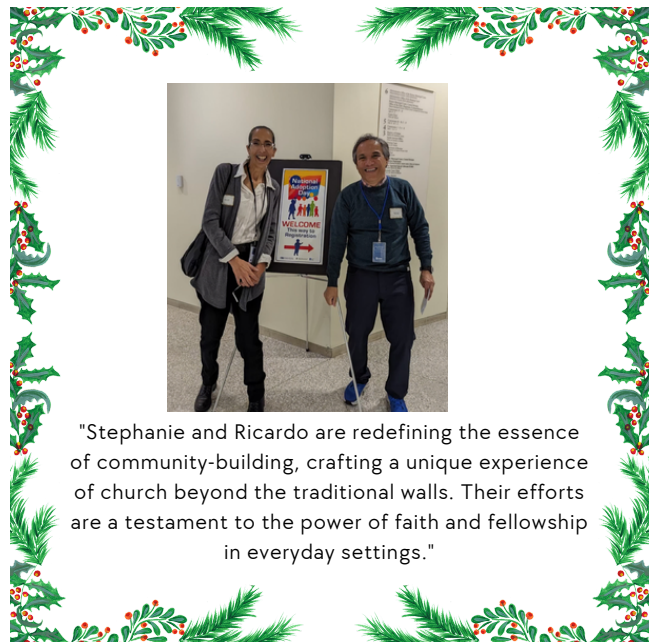
DECEMBER 3RD..... TRUSTEES MEETING
(AFTER CHURCH)

DECEMBER 3RD..... 6 P.M. SPRC (ZOOM)

DECEMBER 3RD..... 7:00 P.M. CHURCH
CONFERENCE

DECEMBER 17TH.....12 PM CHRISTMAS
CAROLING (IMMEDIATELY AFTER SUNDAY SERVICE)

DECEMBER 24TH10:30A.M CHRISTMAS
SERVICE AND
11P.M. CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE (CANDLELIGHT SERVICE)



"Stephanie and Ricardo are redefining the essence of community-building, crafting a unique experience of church beyond the traditional walls. Their efforts are a testament to the power of faith and fellowship in everyday settings."

