Magnolia Presbyterian Church
The UpLook

DECEMBER 2025

WORSHIP SERVICE - Sundays @ 10:00am - in person and online
COMMUNION & DEACON OFFERING - Dec. 7th - 1st Sunday of the mo.
TWO-CAN SUNDAY - Dec. 14th, Food Donations for LSS
CROSSWAYS BIBLE STUDY - Meeting online Thursdays 7pm-8:45pm
CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE - Wed. Dec. 24th at 5pm

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

"the Word became flesh and lived among us…" John 1:14

Luke's Gospel begins the story of Jesus with this opening line: "In the time of Herod…" This detail may seem minor to us modern readers, however, it reveals layers of information about the fearful world Jesus entered, one filled with rampant oppression, economic disparity, uncertainty, and instability. A world not so unlike our own. And yet, throughout the stories of Christ's birth,
the whispers of angels deliver a surprising message: "Do not fear." In our own time, we might ask: is it even possible to be fearless in a fearful world? When Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the magi are each called into God's redemptive story, they do not deny their fears—they move through them. They ask questions, hold fast to courage, trusting good news, and say, "Here I am, Lord." When we find ourselves in fearful times, can we acknowledge our fears while also insisting on hope?

Our Advent Sermon Series, "What do you Fear," takes seriously the angel's message and trusts that Christ's birth is truly good news of great joy for all people. We'll look closely and the fear and terror looming during the time of King Herod and invites us to consider the fears we hold now. Fear can divide and paralyze us, and even be used as a tool for oppression. But what if we formed a different relationship with fear? Can we acknowledge fear without letting it rule us? Can we catalyze our fears into love and action? What if naming our fears helps us to see more clearly how God is breaking in and where God is at work.

Every Advent, we light candles, sing carols, and pray for Christ's coming because we believe God entered a frightened world to bring good news. We hold onto hope because we believe that Christ did come—that's the promise of the season. Our hope is not flimsy or fleeting. It's gritty, resilient, and can endure—no matter what we fear or face. Let's insist on hope and trust that good news is greater than fear.

Your moving through fear into hope pastor,
Paul

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Jesus Christ,
the most perfect gift given
to us on Christmas day

We all get a sense of joy when we find that "perfect" gift for a loved one at Christmas. Through the tireless work of our 12 Elders on Session, our congregation has many opportunities to give and in giving one of these gifts, it may enhance your own and another's spiritual growth. If we only look for our spiritual needs as coming from someone else, we miss out on the chance to grow by giving…

~~ Write a letter, make a phone call or visit one of our elderly members
~~ Meet up with a Sunday school teacher…ask what the kids are learning
~~ Pick up a paint brush and rub elbows at a mission project or church work party
~~ Thank a Deacon for the untiring work they give to their flocks…
~~ Get to know our newest members
~~ Greet visitors
~~ Help out with the feeding program
~~ Participate in Family Promise events
~~ Answer the call, if asked, to serve as Elder or Deacon
~~ Join a small group Bible study or class…meet some new friends
~~ Attend the social events planned throughout the year
~~ Drive a church member, who doesn't drive, to the Christmas Eve Service
~~ Decorate for Halloween and watch our littlest followers light up
~~ Help out at VBS
~~ Teach a Sunday school class – or even be a special guest
~~ Join the choir, thank the choir for their musical offerings
~~ Serve on a committee
~~ Share a children's message
~~ Help out with the youth group
~~ Pray

"…and they bowed down and worshipped him and presented him with gifts". Matthew 2:11

Merry Christmas from your Session!!

Melanie Nelson
Clerk of Session

Deacons Desk

Reflecting on 2025: Finding Peace in a Changing World

Is it just me, or did 2025 fly by in the blink of an eye? When I was younger, people used to tell me that time moves faster as you get older — I never believed them, but now I understand what they meant.

As we look back over this past year, what comes to mind for you? Maybe it's the chaos and uncertainty we've seen in our nation. Or maybe your reflections hit closer to home — personal challenges, growth, or blessings. For me, it's a mixture of both. I've felt the weight of what's happening in the world, but I've also seen how my own perspective has shifted. One thing is certain: this fast-moving, ever-changing world has taught me to see things differently — and for that, I am truly grateful.

The Reason for the Season

As we come to the end of 2025 and prepare to celebrate Christmas, we're reminded of the one constant that never changes: the reason we celebrate in the first place — Jesus Christ.

No matter what is happening in our world, He remains faithful. We may not have control over our circumstances, but we can rest assured that *He* does. He knows what's going on. He sees us. He hears us. And He walks beside us every step of the way.

A Christmas Prayer for Peace

My Christmas wish for you is this: hold tightly to your Bible, meditate on His Word, and invite the Holy Spirit to reveal what He wants you to see. When you do, you'll find a peace that surpasses all understanding — a peace that will carry you into the new year with hope and confidence.

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." -- **Philippians 4:7**

May you find rest in His presence and joy in knowing that no matter what 2026 brings, you are never walking alone.

Merry Christmas MagPres Family!
From your Deacon, Robin Smith

MAGPRES ENDOWMENTS

This past month, MagPres received a letter from the Presbyterian Foundation. This letter is an annual notification of the amount of endowment monies avail-able for use in the following year. For the year 2026 we can expect to receive $16,017 in endowment funds, from the foundation, used to support the mission of the church beyond the scope of our budget.

The Presbyterian Foundation investments are just one facet of endowment funds invested for the church used to generate resources. The objective of all the investments is to provide support for both mission and ministry today and in the future. Interestingly, the oldest established account with the Presbyterian Foundation was created in 1821 and still distributes funds for mission today.

Magnolia also has monies invested with the New Covenant Trust Company, self-managed by the church in mutual funds or professionally managed by the trust company. Below are the amounts invested as of November 14th.

Endowment investments		Amount
Presbyterian Foundation	$	499,324
New covenant funds - self managed	$	564,887
New covenant funds - professionally managed	$	943,898
Total invested	$	2,008,109

If you are interested in establishing a new endowment fund to help establish a legcy, the church has three different investment vehicles listed above that can facilitate that desire. Giving before year end can have positive tax implications either as a tax-deductible contribution, or as a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD), from an indvidual retirement account.

If you have any questions, you can reach out to any endowment team member who can help you.

Endowment Team; Brian Nelson, Jaeson Robinson (Elder), Jan & Steve McKee, Laurie Ludwig (Elder/Chair), Jeff Ludwig (Treasurer), and Pastor Paul

NAMI WALK 2025

WE RAISED APPROXIMATELY $2,000 !!!

Thank you to all who came out to walk in the soggy weather to support this cause, and for all the support and donations from MagPres !!!

SUNDAY SCHOOL

for children in grades Kindergarten through 5th grade is offered In-Person and via Zoom during our 10:00 a.m. worship service. In-person children will meet in Rm 8 and Nursery in Rm 9 at 10:20 a.m. To join the fun via Zoom simply sign in to Zoom and use the Meeting ID: 259885602 and the Password 7200

Sunday School includes: Bible lessons, Songs, crafts, and play time.

DECEMBER MEMORY VERSE: ISAIAH 9:6

A child is born to us, a son is given to us, and authority will be on his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

SHORTENED PASSAGE:

A child is born to us.

Deacons' Holiday Outreach

This year the deacons will be doing things a little differently than in previous years for our Christmas Outreach.

- We will be providing a small number of food gift boxes tailored for specific families who have graduated from the Family Promise shelter to independent housing. Ms. Claire and Ms. Gabie have identified these families, and have provided us with needs for each family, based on the number and ages of children. What a blessing you have been in supporting Family Promise as they continue to impact so many lives!
- Lutheran Social Services is in need of your donations of food items. While there are specific items they collect and purchase for food pantry clients on a regular basis, you may also feel free to contribute non-perishable items to brighten up holiday meals.
- *For unhoused clients*: canned meat proteins such as tuna, sardines, Vienna sausages. Granola bars, individual cups of cereal, soup, ravioli type canned pasta, crackers and pretzels. Pop top cans recommended.
- *For families with housing*: canned chicken, tuna, canned fruit, boxed cereal, instant oatmeal packs, macaroni and cheese, spaghetti sauce and noodles, crackers, peanut butter, shelf stable milk & juices.

Please feel free to donate items to brighten up their holiday meals as well. Items like sweet potatoes, canned cranberries, boxes of mashed potatoes, gravy mix, stuffing, muffin and cake mixes, etc. are welcome. In the past we have donated between 500-600 food items at Christmas. It will be exciting to see if we can achieve that amount this year as well!

The deacons will be glad to do the food shopping for you! Please designate any monetary donations as Deacon Christmas Outreach funds on your check, and we will make sure they are utilized in that way. Again, thank you for your continued support for our brothers and sisters in our community who need to experience the love and support we can give as the hands and feet of Christ.

Blessings and Happy Holidays!
MagPres Deacons

REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH

CHILDREN / YOUTH PERMISSION FORMS
Do you have a child/youth? We are accepting updated Student Permission forms for the 2024-2025 school year. To download a form please visit www.magpres.com/permission
Contact Michelle Knopf or Jason Robinson if you have any questions

CHOIR PRACTICE: Meets Wednesdays at 7:00pm in the choir room

SCOUT TROOP 16: Meets Monday nights at 7:00pm in the Fireside Room. Our Charter Organization Rep is Tim Lewis (webelewis@gmail.com).

YOUTH GROUP: meets on Sunday from 11:30-1:30 in the Youth Room.

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Sunday School for children in grades Kindergarten thru 5th grade is offered during our 10am worship service in-person in Room 8 and via Zoom. Nursery is in Room 9. If you would like to connect on zoom, please use this link: **Meeting ID 559885602 Password:7200**

ACCESS WORSHIP ONLINE: You can participate in worship by going to magpres.com/watch or visiting our Facebook page (facebook.com/magpres). *Services are archived for you to watch later (or again!)*

STANDING ANNOUNCEMENTS

TWO-CAN SUNDAY: On every 2nd Sunday of the month, we bring 2 Cans or Boxes of food to be donated to Lutheran Social Services of Southern California to help feed hungry neighbors in our community. Keep up the good work as we continue loving our neighbors who are hungry!

STATER BROS. GIFT CARDS: Gift cards in the amounts of $25, $50, and $100 are available to purchase in the church office. Monday - Thursday, 9:00am - 3:00pm (closed 12-1pm). Whether you are buying as a gift or to do your weekly grocery shopping, the church receives 5% of every sale! How nice--give twice!

CHURCH DIRECTORIES: Instructions on downloading the app to our "Instant Church Directory" (great way to keep up with birthdays and anniversaries in our church family!)
As always - if your address, phone, or email changes, let us know at church@magpres.com

DEACONS OFFERING: The first Sunday of every month, we collect the DEACONS OFFERING. This is a dedicated offering to help friends and family of MagPres members experiencing hardship. Your gift, large or small, is a gift of kindness.

COMMUNION: First Sunday of every month, communion is served as a part of the worship service. For those worshipping via Zoom, feel free to gather your own "bread & cup" elements at home and join in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper with the whole congregation.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL: *Our Daily Bread* quarterly booklets are available in the Worship Center foyer (on the Welcome Table) and in the church office. Pick one up for yourself and for a friend or neighbor.

THANKFUL GIVING

TO THE CHURCH ARCHIVES

The holiday season always stirs up feelings of excitement and celebration, and those in turn remind us of all for which we have to be thankful. As both givers and receivers of gifts during this season, we find joy in sharing special moments of love and generosity with others.

The church history cupboards and files have received lots of your love this year! Several members, past and present, have donated some amazing photos, documents, and artifacts that contribute to our knowledge of our church's history. It's always most interesting to hear the stories behind the items.

Our Music Department has given us several cassette tapes of adult and youth choir performances, some dating as far back as 1956! One of the tapes from the early 1980's has the songs from "Antshillvania," a skit our youth (including some of our members who are now parents themselves) will remember, along with the black tights and "Vigil-ant-ees." We have also received many wonderful photos of choir members and their activities from over the years.

Other items we have received include: a program from our church's 80th anniversary celebration in November of 1959; a photo of the Presbyterian Leadership Training School from 1947 that includes Beverly Rounsaville and her mother, Eleanor Frank, and other members of our church; a program from our 75th anniversary that includes histories of many of the church social groups; and a list from 1979 of all the quilters and embroiderers who made the Centennial Quilt on the church's 100th anniversary.

We also received back one of the commemorative plates from our 90th anniversary. It had been found by a woman at a Thrift Shop in Davis, California, who saved it from Goodwill and sent it "home" to us. She had ancestors who were residents of Riverside during the early days of our church. After the plate arrived here, it was accidentally dropped and split in two pieces. It has been glued back together, and is now a reminder that, like some of us, it has been lost then found, broken then restored, and ultimately saved.

Many thanks to all who have donated these pieces of our history back to the church. They will be deeply treasured and enjoyed for many years to come.

By Jan McKee
"Unofficial" Church Historian

Magnolia presbyterian church

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
RIVERSIDE, CA
PERMIT NO. 490

...making fully formed followers of Jesus Christ

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED
7200 Magnolia Avenue
Riverside, CA 92504-3829
Phone: 951-684-7200
Email: church@magpres.com
Website: www.magpres.com
Worship Service 10am Sun.
Church Office Hours
Mon-Thurs 9:00am-3:00pm
Closed 12-1pm Lunch
Closed Friday

Magnolia Presbyterian Church Staff

The Rev. Paul Knopf
Pastor

Lisa Gulino
Administrative Assistant

John Wright
Choral Director

Cynthia Wright
Pianist/Accompanist

Allison Robinson
Nursery Attendant

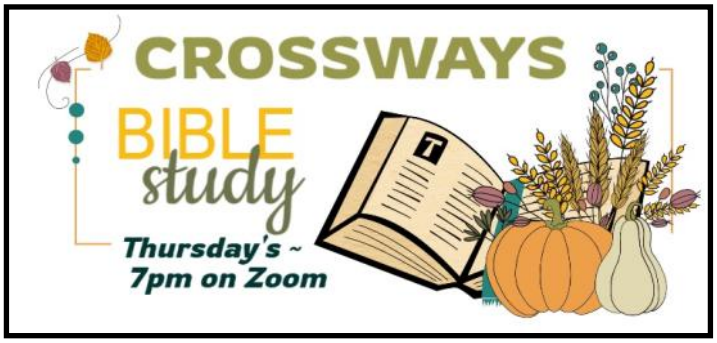
Jaeson Robinson
Youth Leader

Robbie Yates,
Audio-Video Tech

Nicholas French,
Musician

Anna Tran,
Musician

Michelle Knopf,
CE Leader



SUNDAY ~ DECEMBER 14th

Every 2nd Sunday of the month MagPres collects non-perishable food donations for Lutheran Social Services local food distribution.

We donated 461 items in November!
Thank you all for your generosity!

TWO CAN SUNDAY

Donations may be dropped off during Sunday Service or during the church office hours Mon-Thur.

MagPres December 2025 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	1 6:45pm - Scouts - Troop 16	2	3 7pm - Choir Rehearsal	4 7pm - Crossways Bible Study	5 Office Closed 5pm - EEEAC	6 9:30am - EEEAC
7 Gift Fair -1st United 10am - Communion Sunday 10am - Deacon Offering 10am - Worship Service 10:15am - Sunday School	8 6:45pm - Scouts - Troop 16	9 Committee Mtgs Potluck 6pm - CE / Worship Mtgs. 6:30pm - FOM Mtg. 7pm - Stew / BAG Mtgs.	10 7pm - Choir Rehearsal	11 7pm - Crossways Bible Study	12 Office Closed Redlands Bowl Beach Boys Session Mat'ls Due 9am 5pm - EEEAC	13 9:30am - EEEAC 4pm - Path of Life Meal Prep
14 10am - TWO-CAN Sunday 10am - Worship Service 10:15am - Sunday School	15 9am UpLook Mat'ls Due 6:45pm - Scouts - Troop 16	16 7pm - Session Meeting	17 7pm - Choir Rehearsal	18 7pm - Crossways Bible Study	19 Office Closed 5pm - EEEAC	20 9:30am - EEEAC
21 10am - Worship Service 10:15am - Sunday School	22 6:45pm - Scouts - Troop 16	23	24 Office Closed-Christmas Eve 5pm - Christmas Eve Service	25 Office Closed-Christmas	26 Office Closed 5pm - EEEAC	27 9:30am - EEEAC
28 10am - Worship Service 10:15am - Sunday School	29 6:45pm - Scouts - Troop 16	30	31 Office Closed-New Year's Eve	1 Office Closed-New Year's Day	2 Office Closed 5pm - EEEAC	3 9:30am - EEEAC

DECEMBER PRAYER CALENDAR

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
	1 Kathy & Neil Cohen	2 Sandy Cooper	3 Brad & Lori Copeland	4 Chris & Marge Cox	5 Donna Crossen	6 Kayla Crossen
7 Riverside Police Dept.	8 David & Margy Crowley	9 Sharon DeLeal	10 Anne Denham	11 Hannah Dickenson	12 Richard & Heather Dickenson	13 Becky Doshier
14 MagPres Deacons	15 Mike & Janet Doshier	16 The Duncan Family	17 Alice Ehlers	18 Joyce Ehlers	19 Carol Farmer	20 Bruce Ferrel
21 Calvary Presby. Church	22 Janet Field & Eleanor Miller	23 Jerry Fisher & Danielle Good	24 Brenda Flowers	25 The French Family	26 Catelyn Garcia	27 Christian Garcia
28 Family Promise	29 The Gettis Family	30 Stephanie Gibbs	31 The Gipson Family			

BIRTHDAYS

3rd: Eric Brandenberg
7th: The Rev. Claire Schlegel
12th: AJ Knopf
18th Travis French
19th AJ Belangeri
Chris Cox
22nd Brenda Flowers
24th Thomas Thornton
25th The Rev. Paul Knopf
28th Ann Brady

ANNIVERSARIES

13th Jeremy & Janelle Anderson
19th Dan & Karrie Brooks
Roger & Susan Simmons