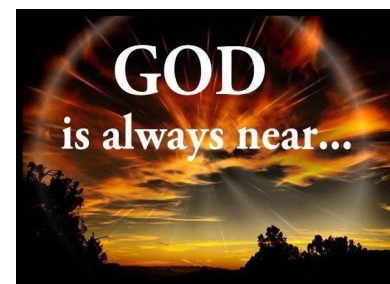




~ Walking in Faith ~ week by week ~

December 3, 2021
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Sierra Vista, Arizona
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Pastor Renée: 415-713-3047
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Homesick

A reflection by Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri
on our worship theme Close to Home

The famous Puerto Rican song, “*En mi Viejo San Juan*” has described the sentiments of many in the Puerto Rican diaspora. The song, written in 1943 by Noel Estrada for his brother stationed in Panamá, recounts memories of life in San Juan and the long-awaited return: “My heart remained at the seafront in Old San Juan.” Listening to this song sometimes makes me a little homesick, but, most of the time, it evokes warm, nostalgic feelings and brings forth memories of the cobblestone streets and blue seas of my hometown.

When hurricane María hit Puerto Rico in 2017, the news footage of the massive category 4 storm contrasted with the lovely memories of the island. The words of the song resonated; my heart was, indeed, at the seafront in Old San Juan. The storm passed, and we anxiously awaited news from our families on the island. Homesickness crept in as we were far away from loved ones and wished to be close to them in the moment of need. Days later, *el silencio de la espera* was finally broken by the buzz of a text message: “*Estamos bien*” (“We’re OK”). Those two words were hope in the midst of chaos. Those words were **home**.

Images of distress, confusion, and fear emerge in Luke 21. In many ways, the feelings that these words evoke mirror the past almost two years of pandemic crisis—a world in turmoil suffering from disasters, both natural and human-made—speaking to the realities and injustices of a chaotic world. Thankfully, Jesus enters this world offering words, not of foreboding, but of **hope** to a homesick people that felt far away from God and longed to be close to kin in the middle of the crisis. “Stand up and raise your heads,” Jesus said, “because your redemption is near . . . So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near” (v. 28-31). Even in *el silencio de la espera*, we are reassured that God’s kin-dom is near. Kin-dom, in Ada María Isasi-Díaz’s definition, is “interconnected community, seeing God’s movement emerge from *la familia*, the family God makes.” God is close. These are words of hope for a homesick world. These words are **home**.

Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri is an educator and a ruling elder. Ordained for 26 years, she has served in the Presbyterian Church (USA) at the Session, Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly levels. Vilmarie holds a B.A. in Education (ESL) and an M.Ed. in Curriculum and Teaching. She has taught English and English as a Second Language to teenage and adult students from all over the world. Along with the Rev. Cindy Kohlmann, she served as Co-Moderator of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the first Hispanic Latina and first Puerto Rican person to be elected to this office.





Other organizations are caring for the children on the traditional Angel Tree. Now Faith has a new Angel Tree opportunity!

Life Care Center of Sierra Vista is having an **Angel Tree** for their residents. Residents list items which they would like for Christmas.

Individuals then "shop" for their person, and put the items purchased in a gift bag with tissue paper. Please do not wrap. Put name tag on bag. If you are interested in providing a Christmas for a resident please contact Pam Winters at 419-707-2908. Michelle, the activities director at Life Care will then send a text with the resident's wish list.

Your gifts can be brought to the church and placed in the **Angel Tree** box in the Narthex. All gifts will be picked up and delivered on December 23.

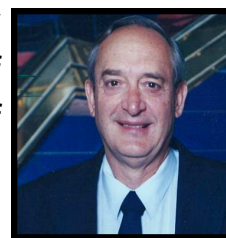
Thank you for making Christmas a little brighter for part of our senior community.

Faith Nursing Home Ministry Team/ Mission and Stewardship Committee



Condolences to Paul and Cindy Hay on the unexpected sudden passing of Paul's father, Marc R. Hay. Cards of sympathy may be sent to:

Paul and Cindy Hay
2810 Ridge Crest Street
Sierra Vista, AZ 85650



Reminder:

Adult Sunday School - 9:15 am in the Conference Room on Sunday morning.

Advent /Christmas 2021

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| <i>Sunday, December 05</i> | <i>- Caroling after church</i> |
| <i>Sunday, December 12</i> | <i>- Choir Cantata in worship</i> |
| <i>Saturday, December 18</i> | <i>- Blue Christmas - 3:00 pm</i> |
| <i>Sunday, December 19</i> | <i>- Communion - Children's Pageant Video</i> |
| <i>Friday, December 24</i> | <i>- Christmas Eve Candlelight Service - 7:00 pm</i> |
| <i>Sunday, December 26</i> | <i>- Caroling Service</i> |
| | <i>- Guest Speaker, Elder Kay Travis</i> |

~ HOLIDAY CELEBRATION ~



With the

Cochise College Music Department

Holiday Concert Featuring

Nuevo Mundo

Christmas Music from Baroque Europe and the Americas

Cochise College Orchestra

Douglas Campus Binational Chorus

Friday, December 10 - 7:00 pm

Cochise College Student Union Activity Room

901 Colombo Ave

Heather Carter, Jeff and Tina Durham are performing.



Join your Faith family on Sunday, December 5.
Gather in the office after worship to pick up your
Santa hats, bells, song sheets, and itinerary.

We plan to leave
around 12 noon.

We will go caroling to the homebound and share
our joy with those who are no longer able to at-
tend church.

This is a great once-a-year ministry that truly
brings smiles and sometimes tears to others!



~ BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE ~

Christmas can be a time of painful loneliness and emptiness for those who have suffered a tragic loss or are going through a difficult time.



The Stephen Ministry recognizes this and invites you to attend a special **Blue Christmas service on Saturday, December 18 at 3:00 pm** in Faith's sanctuary.

This will be a Candlelight Service of Remembrance for those whose hearts are aching with pain and loss this Christmas season.

Please join us and bring anyone who is struggling with these issues as we remember the gift of the One who came to bring light into our darkness.

The **Men's Group** will meet for lunch at 11:30 am on each Tuesday in December at Chili's. Questions? Call Tom Mathias 520-678-1626 or email medic523@hotmail.com.



Greeters and Ushers are needed each Sunday. Please sign up in the Narthex for this ministry of hospitality and welcome. Worship Leaders are also needed and asked to sign up. Thank you!

Sierra Vista Sings presents their Holiday Concerts:



"Sing for Joy" directed by Debi Godwin

Friday, December 10 and Saturday, December 11

Sierra Vista United Methodist Church

7:00 pm (Doors open at 6:30)

Tickets on sale now for \$5.00 each

Call Deb Koltveit 520-803-0915



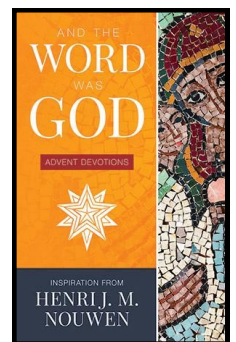
Advent Devotionals

"And the Word was God"

are available for you in the Narthex.

Please pick up a copy or let the office know if you need it by mail.

Be inspired by the daily devotionals during Advent.



Happy December Birthday to.....

Grace Davidson	01
Melissa Nerenberg	03
Lois Bloom	06
Heather Mayhew	10
Madeline Law	12
Brian Law	13
Joe Perry	14
Pam Steiger	14
Clara Beth Smith	16
Kathy Jones	18
Carol Cox	22
Kathy Richard	22
Abigail and Kennedy Law	24
Terry Whaley	24
George Wheat	27
Bill Akins	29
Phyllis Pfeifer	29
Nancy Whaley	30



Happy December Anniversary to.....

Rich & Janet Klucsarits	14
George & Sonja Vander Meulen	14
Joe & Yvonne Banducci	22
Mark & Ann Lorris	22
John & Pat Wettack	22
Clark & Lois Bloom	26
Terry & Nancy Whaley	27
Ron & Judy Mayhew	30





Pastor Renée Rico, Elder Joy Church, Rev. Brad Munroe

We are pleased to report that **Joy Church** has been elected to become the pastor of Fullerton Community Church in Fullerton, Nebraska. Joy preached to this congregation on Sunday, November 28th and the congregation elected her at a congregational meeting following worship. They are excited to welcome Joy into their midst! Fullerton Community Church is affiliated with both the Presbyterian Church, USA, and the United Methodist Church.

Joy plans to have her ordination service at Faith, probably in January, so stay tuned for more information. We will pray for her, her husband, Gary, and the church as they go through this exciting time!

~ Congratulations! ~