

Happy
NEW YEAR

Days of Grace

January February 2023

What To Do in Retirement? Go Back to What You Love.

by Linda M. Kelly

After 4 years of "retirement," I unexpectedly find myself back in Friendship Park at Loaves & Fishes in Sacramento. I was invited (or was it a call from God?) to restart the Side-by-Side listening ministry I began some 21 years ago as a Conference Missionary. After ten years absence, most of the staff have changed, a few of the guests are the same, many more are new to me, but the spirit of the place remains the same. It is the spirit of Christ's love.

As I reflect upon the conditions that Jesus was born into, I realize he was essentially homeless too. The radiant love of God shone through the dismal surroundings of a stable and a bed of hay. It seems important to the gospel writers that the son of God be born in humble circumstances. The simple start attracted both poor shepherds and rich men from another country and another religion. The ruler of the land was not one of those who came seeking him. The leader of the local synagogue did not come seeking him. The powerful were unaware that their power would soon be overthrown by the power of love that was meant for everybody.

What I find among the homeless guests of Loaves and Fishes is life pared down to the basic reality we all live in. We need food, clothing, a safe place to be, and, perhaps most important of all is to know that we matter. In Friendship Park, our guests are treated with the utmost respect and care. Here they feel love. Here they know they matter, even when they act out. Isn't that the greatest gift we can give to another?

One small man, recently released from prison, graying hair and beard, wearing a black ski jump suit and three jackets to stay warm, sobbed when he was reminded that God loves him no matter what. Things he said or did in the past haunt him. Though he believes in God and Christ, it's difficult for him, like many of us, to believe that he is forgiven and loved. Unashamed, he wept in front of other men in the Side-by-Side chapel during a time of open prayer and sharing. Here, the feelings and harsh circumstances leave nothing to the imagination, they are right there on the edge. The men share the most intimate details that would normally not be voiced in "polite" society. I like the realness of it all. No pretense. They present themselves just as they are. No topic is off limits: drugs, sex, fantasies, delusions, dirty feet, blisters, adult diapers. You never know what may come up.

And God blesses each one. Light shining in homeless tents and in the lives of everyday people. Emmanuel, God with us.

(Looking for something to do? Become a listening companion with Side-by-Side. Contact Linda @ revlinda@sacloaves.org)
(Donations of Bibles and religious trinkets/crosses are needed.)





The echo in the church rang out when one said, "when I was hanging out my laundry....."

PRESIDENTIAL PONDERING

As I sit here one week into Advent I am thinking about all the Christmases that have come and gone. Some were with great joy and others have faded from my memory. My family was not very traditional. My father being Jewish we did a version of Hanukkah for a couple nights then put up the Christmas tree.

One of my favorite memories is having our church organist for my music appreciation teacher at Van Nuys High School. He taught a lesson on Handel's Messiah that has stayed with me over the years. He told us a story about the final line in the Hallelujah chorus. There were two women who came to hear the oratorio being performed in a large cathedral in England. During the Hallelujah chorus they started talking. As the singing got louder their voices got louder until the final break just before the final hallelujah. The echo in the church rang out when one said, "when I was hanging out my laundry...". Everyone in the church heard them. I laughed and every time I hear the final Hallelujah I think of those two women.

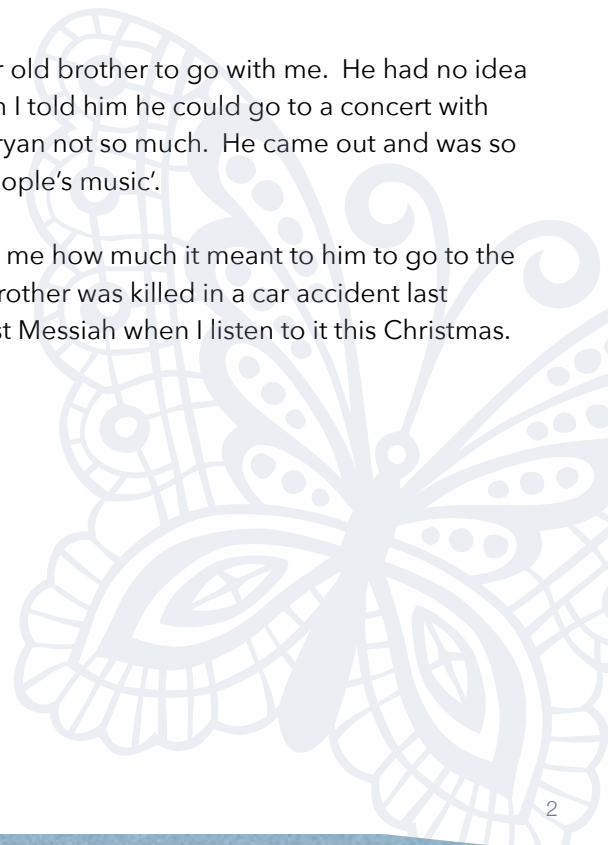
I was intrigued when he announced it would be performed at our church on Sunday afternoon. As I recall it was also the first time I noticed Frank. He sang in the choir and we laughed about our first encounter years later. Never thinking we would some day get married.

I didn't want to go alone so I invited my 13 year old brother to go with me. He had no idea what was coming. He loved rock music so when I told him he could go to a concert with me he was really excited. I loved every note...Bryan not so much. He came out and was so mad at me for not letting him know it was 'old people's music'.

Years later he came to me one Christmas and told me how much it meant to him to go to the concert and how much he learned to love it. My brother was killed in a car accident last Christmas and I know I will think of him and that first Messiah when I listen to it this Christmas.

Hallelujah,

Sandy Roberts





Who is OLLI?

Perhaps you have never heard of OLLI. It stands for Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (aka OLLI) and there are 125 programs attached to universities all over the United States.

Every day OLLI at the University of the Pacific is helping older adults remain active, social, healthy, and intellectually stimulated. The campus-based program offers adults a variety of courses, events, and travel options to explore, while providing ongoing social engagement with other adults.

Some of the classes available are Health and Wellness, Computer and Technology, Visual Arts, Arts and Culture, EdVentures that are day trips in the local area. You don't have to live in Stockton to join in the activities. There are in person lectures and Zoom classes available. Please see the attached catalogue of classes from the Fall of 2022. There will be a new catalogue for the Spring of 2023 coming out shortly.

I had never heard of OLLI until Dave and Patty Thompson invited me to go to Ireland with them in 2019. It was a wonderful trip and our every need was met while we enjoyed the countryside, the culture and the wonderful warm Irish hospitality. There are three trips planned for the next year.

OLLI AT PACIFIC

Spectacular
Scandinavia
Sept 14-27,
2023

book by 3/15/23

[https://
gateway.gocollette.com/
link/1115743](https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1115743)

Spotlight on San Antonio-Holiday Nov 30-Dec 4,
2023

Book by 5/30/2023

<https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1139158>

I encourage you to visit the websites above and invite your friends to join you.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sandy Roberts

rose4sandy@att.net

559-871-0632

I would love to share my OLLI adventures with you.





FALL 2022
OLLI
at Pacific
LEARNING ADVENTURES DESIGNED
FOR ADULTS 50 OR OLDER



NEW Office Location:
University of the Pacific
Benerd College | 3441 Kensington Way
At the corner of N. Kensington Way and
Dave Brubeck Way
For more information visit our website:
OLLI.PACIFIC.EDU





Christmas Memories from the Is-beens

Compiled by Sue Angove

In this Advent Season as we await the coming birth of the Christ child, five of our retired clergy families all within the Los Rios District are sharing their thoughts of memorable, (maybe best) Christmastimes.

SHIBER, CHRIS in Sacramento writes, "Sometimes it seemed as though Christmas Eve at San Ramon Valley in Alamo spoiled me for the rest of my Christmas Eves at smaller churches. In Alamo during four services and later five, there were about 1000 plus people in worship. That seemed about right on Christmas Eve for me. It was during my 9th - 16th years in ministry and had a huge impact on me and our family. The kids were age birth, two through seven, and nine. They always participated in the early service(s). There were so many families with kids the same ages as ours. They were really part of a worship leadership tribe all making significant contributions to the celebration. I have always loved being in worship when it is dark outside. It seems so sparkly and warm inside. The candles shine/shone brightly, the organ in that sanctuary was excellent then and continues to be so. And being in the chancel meant we could feel the bass

notes up through our feet because LaVonne brought out some of her favorite festive and loud music. In those years of my ministry, I was especially cranky about Christmas; the way our culture is so glitzy and materialistic about it, not at all like the season of Advent, my favorite liturgical season. How could we wait and ponder in silence and stillness when all around us were bright lights and loud music...even before we rejoiced in Christ's birth? This IS a glorious part of my Christmas memories."

SCHWARZENTRAUB, BETSY and KEN in Elk Grove write, "One of our most memorable Christmas celebrations was our first Christmas together as a new family; husband, wife, and three teens, in 1983. There have been many times since then, including the year 2020 when our great granddaughter, Hayes, celebrated her very first Christmas with us."

HORIKOSHI-FIREBAUGH, BARBARA in Elk Grove titled her message "A Christmas Long Ago" writing, "First some background information: I was adopted as an infant into a Buddhist family in Honolulu, Hawaii. They sent me to a

Christian preschool when I was four years old (must have been God's doing). Even though we were Buddhist, we celebrated a secular kind of Christmas with a decorated tree, presents, etc. Come now with me to my story. I remember like it was yesterday, engrained in my vision and engrained in who I am. The living room lights were off. The glowing lights of the Christmas tree shone brightly with all the presents beneath it. I was seven or eight at the time and remember staring at the tree. The lights in the kitchen shone where my parents were talking. As I looked at the tree, I became sad; I knew what I really wanted for Christmas was NOT under the tree. What I REALLY wanted was to feel LOVED. As I looked around the room, I saw the Christmas cards placed on top of the piano. As I looked at the various designs on them, one particularly caught my eye. It had a beautiful Nativity scene with the Baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and the animals all in the manger. I then knew what I was looking for was in the baby Jesus (another revelation from God). From then on, God was ALWAYS with me growing up."

DELAND, TERRY from Knights Landing writes, "When my



daughter was a little over two, we had a bitterly cold Christmas. We were living in northeast Georgia where the temp was five below zero. I had loaded up the car with all of her presents and those for my wife and me too. We were driving to my in-laws in Atlanta. The car would not start. We had to wait, with our grumpy, disappointed child until after one in the afternoon before the car finally started. When we got there, I quickly put her hot wheels gift together, she rode it all over the house, and we had the best Christmas EVER, laughing, sharing stories, and thanking Jesus."

ANGOVE, JERRY and SUE from Sacramento share, " Jerry remembers flying on an airplane for the first time from

Boston to San Francisco. He was coming home, most importantly, to celebrate Christmas with Sue and her family. Additionally the two were announcing their engagement to both sets of parents at dinner together and to the whole world!! Sue has a very early memory beginning at probably four years of age. Her mother's side of the family walked to Grandma's church in the falling snow for the Christmas Eve midnight service. This ritual happened each Christmas Eve in hometown, Duluth, Minnesota up until Sue's immediate family moved to California when she was just about thirteen. Lastly, together Jerry and Sue get teary-eyed remembering the ride to San Jose from El Camino Hospital Christmas Eve

day bringing newborn daughter, Heather Marie home in time for Daddy to lead the Christmas Eve service at church.

Thanks to those contributing to these shared memories.

Bless one and all during this Holy time as we celebrate Advent, Christmas, and Christmastide, rejoicing in the Twelve Days of Christmas. Let us NOT forget, JESUS is the REASON for the SEASON. May the New Year, 2023 bring Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love to each of us, to all whom we love, and to the entire World. In the name of Christ we pray, AMEN.



Photo by Tyler Delgado on Unsplash



Shetland Mist:

A Shetland Family in the Methodist Movement

By Heather Leslie Hammer

Retirement has brought time to travel and write my first historical novel, a story that had been in my mind a long time. It is the story of my great-great-grandmother, Ann Leslie, who lived in the Shetland Islands in the 1800s. Two Robert Leslies are featured in the book: Ann's husband and her son, who eventually emigrates to America. His grandson and my father, another Robert Leslie, took our family to Shetland in 1967 to meet our second and third cousins. His records of the birth-and-death dates of Ann and Robert's nine children created my plot.

My husband and I returned to Shetland in 2018 and saw the original "crofthouse" where Ann had raised her family, knit, grew meager crops, and tended a cow and sheep. As a child, the hardship of this family gripped me, and in ministry I found myself hypothesizing about what sustained them. I believe it was the Methodist Movement that came by way of "meal roads" orchestrated by Methodist missionaries, who had arrived by sailing ship from England. Pony-drawn carts brought oats and barley to the starving "crofters," and lay preachers organized class meetings and built chapels.

The theme is hardship, faith, and resilience. It is the Good Friday-to-Easter journey that happens to all of us in life. I have written the book from Ann's point of view. Her prayers are in the first person and reveal her faith quandaries: Why does God allow such suffering? Can God calm

the storm and sustain hope?

Included are portions of chapel services with Wesleyan hymns and scripture from the King James Bible. (By the way, I had to pay £ 300 to the Crown to publish quotes from the

Authorized Version and The Book of Common Prayer in the United Kingdom!)

I hope Shetland Mist will be an interesting read, both for secular readers and Methodist history buffs. I have included a study guide on my website that offers discussion questions for each chapter (6-7 weeks). A few churches are already planning to use it in Epiphany or Lent. My hope is that Ann's story will speak to both personal and societal suffering. The Christian question is always, "Where do we find hope?" Sometimes it's there but hard to see through the mist.

See <https://www.heatherlesliehammer.com/> for the study guide, photos of Shetland, and how to get the book.

Email Heather to invite her to speak at your church: heather.hammer@cnumc.org.





Word has been heard from.....

The Blaneys!

These past two years have been especially challenging due to the Covid pandemic but also have included celebrations with our family and travel.

We celebrated Bob's 90th birthday a year ago with the whole family in Yosemite staying in Wawona and had lunch at the Ahwahnee and a gourmet dinner at a French Restaurant in Oakdale. In May of last year, we traveled to Kauai for 5 days with our daughter Martha and in October with our granddaughter Elizabeth for 10 days in Maine and New Hampshire. In May of next year, we will travel to Kauai with Martha and her daughter.

We are both in relatively good health. However, Bob has fallen several times. The worst was in July when he injured his left shin and was in the hospital for six days with a UTI. Our daughter Joy stayed with Laurel and was very supportive. Recuperation was very difficult but with excellent OT and PT at home for a month followed by PT twice a week at a facility specializing in balance and strength, Bob's strength and balance have increased exponentially. He tries to exercise twice a week. He was hospitalized once again on November 29th for 4 days and was diagnosed with Sepsis, Aspirational Pneumonia, and a UTI. He now walks with a walker and is getting better every day. Laurel has been a wonderful care giver. Our

daughter Martha came for five days and was a great help.

We are still active at Aptos United Methodist Church. Laurel sings in the choir, chairs the Pastoral Care Team and is a member of the Staff Parish Committee. Bob serves on the Church & Society and COPA Teams. COPA is a group of 27 religious' communities, labor unions, and schoolboards, promoting justice in Santa Cruz, San Monterey, and San Benito Counties. We co-facilitate a Sunday book study currently discussing A History of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam by Kathryn Parker. Laurel keeps active in two book groups and a knitting group.

We all spent last Christmas together. Martha Blaney, last year was appointed a Regent of Loyola Marymount College and is a Medical Project Leader at Abbie Pharmaceutical company, and Jaime is a professor of neurology at Stanford School of Medicine. Isabella, their daughter, is a Senior at Loyola Marymount University majoring in pre-med and ballet. Joy, our daughter, teaches Biology, Anatomy & Physiology, and AP Biology at Westmount High in San Jose and her husband John recently retired from AT&T. Our granddaughter Elizabeth is Executive Aide to the Speaker of the House in Colorado and David our grandson, is a software engineer with Salesforce in San Francisco.

We are looking forward to another good year living here in Santa Cruz and continue to hope for peace and reconciliation in this coming year.



January

RUTH BALL
RICHARD BASTEAR
IONE BERGER
MARK BOLLWINKEL
THOMAS BRACKNEY
PAT CLARK
DON CUNNINGHAM
NORM DALEY
NANCY DANSON
KAREN DARLING
KAREN DARLING
DON DeNOON
JOHN DODSON
ANITA DUTT
LOIS EDDE
INITA ESCAMILLA
ANGELO FAZIO
MARGARET FONG
FRANK GOMEZ
ALPHA GOTO
HAE SOON HAN
VERNON HILL JR.
CAROL IMAIZUMI
BILL JEFFERIES
DIANE JOHNSON
BILL JOHNSON
SARAH KIM
OK-WHAN KIM
YOUNG SOOK KIM
CONNIE KIMBALL
ROSEMARY KIMBER
JoANN LAWSON
JEAN LAWTON
CAROL LAYTON
JINSIK LEE
MARGE MARTIN
DOUG McCOY
SHEENA McKENDRICK
VINCENT MIXIE
CEDAR MOSS
JANET MUELLER

NEAL NEUENBURG
JEFF NORDLANDER
OSCAR OCHOA
HANKYU PARK
HARRIET PECOT
MONIQUE-CHERI PIERRE
DALLAS RICHES
LORI SAWDON
KEN SCHWARZENTRAUB
MICK SMITH
MARY SPENCE
ROGER SPENCE

February

SUE ANGOVE
CHARLES ANKER
ADRIONNE BEASLEY
BILL BECK
LAUREL BLANEY
BONNIE BOLLWINKEL
CRAIG BROWN
CARIETA CAIN-GRIZZELL
SAMUT CHHENG SREY
ESTAN CUETO
GERHARD DRUMM
LOIS EDWARDS
MADI ELSEA
BARBARA ERNST
MINERVA FONG
CLIFF GASSOWAY
MARTIN GRIZZELL
AYAKO HANAOKA
LINDA HOLBROOK
SUSAN KEMPER
COLIN KERR-CARPENTER
GUSSIE KIDD
DALE KURUHARA
GEORGE LAYTON
STEVEN MC COLLOM
JOHN McCORKELL
TANA McDONALD
SHAN McSPADDEN
JACQUIE MEADOWS
ROSENDA MIZUNO
ROGER MORIMOTO
YOONHYEH PARK
WENDY POMEROY
FLOYD QUENZER
MATI RAHMAN
KATHLEEN SMITH
KIEN SREY
B.J. STILES
DANTE TANGONAN
SHEILA VAUGHN
NORA YAMASHIRO



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RICHARD STINSON
CINDY STORRS
RICHARD TAYLOR
DOLORES WAGER
LINDY WEST
MARY LOU WHITE
RUTH MARIE WOLF
DAVID WOLF



January

TINA & BILL BALLAGH
NOBUAKI & AYAKO HANAOKA
KIEN SREY & SAMUT CHHENG SREY
STEVEN THOMPSON & KAREN PETERSON
CLYDE & SHEILA VAUGHN

February

RICHARD & MARILYN BASTEAR
BOB & CHERYL COLLINS
SAMUEL & CAROLINA FABILA
JERRY & KATHY FOX
DANNY & PEGGY HUANG
HEE-SOO & MIKYUNG KANG KIM
PAT & CAROL LEAMY
SHIRLEY MACEMON & JON MARCUS
JUAN & JANETTE SAAVEDRA
STANLEY & NANCY SIMPSON
TONY & CAROL UBALDE

Keep In Touch.....

Choose Your Own Adventure

Days of Grace is published six times per year (January, March, May, July, September, November). It is automatically delivered to your mailbox. If you prefer to opt into a paperless version, please visit the RCA Website at <https://www.ca-nv-rca.org> and sign up on the front page on the lower right.

It is important that you keep the RCA up to date on your contact information. Not only do we use it to send Days of Grace, but also for all our gatherings and events. We don't want to lose you! Just drop a note in the mail or email your updated information.

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www.ca-nv-rca.org

www.facebook.com/groups/RetiredClergyAssociation

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United Methodist Church
Retired Clergy Association
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring Fling

April 18-20, 2023

>Christ The King
Citrus Heights

Annual Conference Session

June 15-18.2023

> Sacramento Convention
Center

Annual Luncheon

June 15, 2023

>Sheraton Hotel