

# The Chimes

## CHRIST IS BORN IN BEDLAM

Madison Avenue's rendering of Christmas is about happiness, health, and wealth. Unfortunately many people's lives reflect the antithesis of such promises. Churchgoing people are not exempt from this topsy-turvy world.

The Rev. Carl Scovel contrasts the ideal and real Christmas in his book, *Never Far From Home: Stories from the Radio Pulpit* (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2004), 74-75. In a selection titled, "Mayhem and the Manger," Scovel muses about a Christmas letter from a former assistant. At the end of her otherwise upbeat epistle, the young pastor writes, "P.S. Why didn't you warn me about Christmas pageants?"

"What can you say about these pageants?" Scovel inquires. "Is it fair to warn a fledgling minister? [Should I have told her the truth—that pageants] are like war, childbirth, and one micro-second of a holy visitation [all rolled into one]?"

"Planning a pageant is pleasant enough...Then comes the first rehearsal. Chaos. Confusion. Misery. The children arrive late, hungry, tired, and distracted. The parents are cross, the choir director exasperated, the janitor furious. The wisemen get into a fight with the shepherds...Mary slips on the chancel steps... Joseph forgets to turn on the tape recorder in the cradle. And may God help you if you choose live animals to be at the crèche.

"If the first rehearsal was chaos, the second is mayhem...You strive but realize that what you've been through is closer to the Battle of Borodino than the mythical calm at the manger. Or is that right? Perhaps the stable was bedlam. (Bedlam is the Cockney nickname for a mental hospital in London whose official name is Bethlehem.)

"In the days of Caesar Augustus there was chaos in Israel: a new census, people on the move, the inns full, townfolk tense, an occupation army in the streets, and guerrillas in the hills. Rehearsals remind us of reality. [They] remind us that God comes not on a Technicolor screen but in the midst of madness."

Rehearsals, pageants, even Christmas services remind us that God comes—not in the form of Hallmark cards, Martha Stewart parties, fancy gift wrap, perfectly sung anthems, or erudite homilies—but in the midst of our madness. Christ enters into our bedlam, helps us find our center, and empowers us to right what is wrong in the world. This is what Christmas is ultimately about.

Merry Christmas to all,  
~Arlene



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*December 2008*

*Late Edition*

Eden UCC has been an Open and Affirming Church since 1995. We believe that all people are children of God; that persons of all ages, races, and sexual orientations are part of our increasingly diverse culture; and we welcome all persons into the full life and ministry of this church.

**Tel:** 510-582-9533

**Sunday Worship:**  
10:00 a.m.

**Church Office Hours:**  
Monday to Friday:  
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
Saturday: Closed

**Visit our church website:**  
[www.edenucc.com](http://www.edenucc.com)

### Welcome to Eden!

Eden is a diverse and growing church. At Eden, people of all ages and backgrounds join together to grow spiritually, do good in the world, and develop healing and nurturing relationships.

At our church, you will not be told what to believe. We feel that the way we treat one another is more important than holding uniform beliefs. And, while the Bible is important to our faith, it is not the last word. We believe that **God is Still Speaking** through science, nature, personal experience, other faith traditions and more.

On Sunday mornings, our church services and kids' programs are open, friendly and innovative. Every week at Eden, you'll find all kinds of activities—retreats, yoga classes, service projects, music programs, labyrinth walks, study groups—to nurture mind, body, and spirit.

At Eden, we are on a journey together to understand and live God's truth for our lives. Come and join us on the journey. Check out our website. Give us a call. Come by and see us. We look forward to welcoming you!

*Candlelight Carols 2008:  
Listening for Hope*

Hope shined forth this past Sunday evening at Eden as harmonies rang out from the choir, as words from the lips of wonderful narrators embraced those gathered, and as Eden's hospitality once again shown through the arms of the Board of Community Ministries, the Board of Church Ministries, and the ever faithful fellowship folk! Joined with these offerings were those contributions from the wider community which gave \$1,200 that was donated to Hope 4 the Heart. Hope 4 the Heart, through the vision of Victoria Popejoy and her mother Vivian Vargas, desires to "feed anyone and everyone in need." Each month, this organization feeds over 7,000 families and distributes food and toiletries to over 100 organizations. Especially since a fire consumed their warehouse this summer, they have been determined to get in the donations and send them right back into the community! We are truly blessed and honored to be able to offer our gifts in support of the wonderful ministry that is Hope 4 the Heart! If you would like to contribute to Hope 4 the Heart in the future, they are located at 22035 Meekland, and can be reached at (510) 581-HOPE.



**Mark Unbehagen, Vivian Vargas,  
Pastor Jean, Victoria Popejoy**



**My Soul Gives Glory**



**Enjoying Christmas Cookies**



**Tori and Monte**



**Closing Hymn**

*Cookies for Christmas Eve*

As children, we baked cookies for Santa and left them out with a glass of milk. Now that we're older, we bake them for persons who attend Christmas Eve services at Eden Church. Please see Suzie Hasselkuss or sign up in the church office if you are able to donate your time for setup or cleanup after our Christmas Eve Reception following worship on **December 24**. You may also help by donating Christmas cookies, apple juice or cider, hot cups, paper plates, and napkins. These contributions may be dropped off in Oliver Hall on Sunday, December 21, during regular office hours Monday, and Tuesday, December 22-23, or any time after 9 a.m. and before the start of our Christmas Eve worship December 24. Thanks in advance to the many church elves for helping.



**Upcoming Advent &  
Christmas Services**

- **December 14**, Third Sunday in Advent, Contemporary Worship, Christmas Pageant; Souper Sunday; "Happy Birthday Jesus"
- **December 21**, Fourth Sunday in Advent, Traditional Lessons & Carols, Sacrament of Baptism and Reception of New Members
- **December 24**, Contemporary Christmas Eve Service, 7 p.m. with Homemade Cookies & Hot Mulled Cider, 8 p.m.
- **December 28**, First Sunday after Christmas



**Spirit  
In Action**

*Happy Birthday Jesus!*

On Sunday, **December 14** we will be celebrating the birth of Christ a bit early by collecting new, unwrapped items for families involved in programs sponsored by FESCO (Family Emergency Shelter Coalition). Generally FESCO receives lots of gifts for younger children, so they ask that you consider purchasing something for teens or adults. Gift cards to places like Target and Safeway are especially appreciated. Join us in sharing the holiday cheer!

*Chimes* is a semi-monthly publication of Eden United Church of Christ. Proposed submissions should be sent to office@edenucc.com, or mailed or delivered to the church, by the third Sunday of each month. We reserve the right to edit all materials submitted. Publisher: the Rev. Dr. Arlene K. Nehring, Senior Minister. Editor: Liz McKay, ESLO Coordinator.

### Christmas Offering

The Eden Church Christmas Offering will be received **December 14-24**. Letters of invitation were mailed this past week. Your support of Eden's ongoing mission and ministries is especially appreciated in these challenging times.

### Middle School Students: You're Invited to Mid-Winter Camp

Middle School students get ready for Mid-Winter camp! Happening this year from **January 17-19** at Camp Tuolumne Trails near Yosemite, the Northern California-Nevada conference invites you to "Find Your Rhythm!" The camp will use biblical stories to help you find your gifts and learn how to put them into action. Camp cost is \$150 by January 2. Scholarship money is available by talking to Pastor Arlene. For more information about camp or to register, contact Liz McKay, liz@edenucc.com.

### Updating Your Church Emergency Card

Do you have a health form on file at Eden? Would you like to? When is the last time this important information was updated? If you would like the church to assist you in an emergency, please take a moment today and in the next few weeks to either see one of our health ministry volunteers at Fellowship Hour, or stop by the church office to review and update your form that's on file. To balance personal privacy with potential need, Eden's health records are kept in a discrete location known to our staff, ushers and office volunteers, but it is not readily available to others.

### Second Quarter Budget Update

Scott Swanson, Eden's treasurer, will host a budget update session for the membership on Sunday, **January 4, 2009**, beginning at 11:30 a.m. in the Norberg Room. Grab a cup of coffee from Oliver Hall, and join Scott for a quick review and Q&A on Eden's 2008-2009 operating budget and a preliminary mid-year picture of our balance sheet.

### Thank you, Thank you

To all who support Eden Church with time, talent, and treasure, we offer our heartfelt thanks this holiday season. Despite the challenging financial circumstances that many are facing in our congregation and world today, it's heartening to see that week after week Eden's members and friends continue to meet and even exceed their pledges, and come forward to staff the numerous volunteer roles that ensure the vitality of our mission and ministry. Bless you all!

### In Thanks for Eden's Generosity, Creativity, Dedication, Hospitality

**Generosity:** I hold in my heart the amazing generosity that I have witnessed at Eden. Candlelight Carols, Coffee Houses, Spirit in Action events, Music Making at Midweek, and everyday pitching in around the campus, are just a few examples of the constant outpouring of time and energy that seem to define this community.

**Creativity:** Eden's Open House Art Show was one event that displayed the amazing and varied creativity that resides in all of the generations that comprise Eden.

**Dedication:** The members of the Chancel Choir are for me a personification of dedication, as they serve the Eden congregation with enthusiasm. Week after week, they come together to rehearse, to offer their gifts in a singing community, and to humor their director (even when his jokes need better scripting!).

**Hospitality:** Take one room the size of Oliver Hall, spread out two 8-foot tables, stir in some e-mails and phone calls, and hospitality is once again 'cooked up' at Eden.

A spiritual writer that I will never forget – whose name now escapes me – spoke of relationships using the metaphor of alchemy. She – or he – wrote that in each relationship we discover a part of ourselves that we would not have known without that specific relationship. It is in the 'chemical reaction' present in the relationship that we learn new things about our-

selves. I know this to be true, and rejoice in the many things that I have learned about myself through serving here at Eden. In January, I will be moving into a new phase of my ministry which combines writing/composing, elementary music teaching at Madison Elementary, and serving as music minister at Bethel Presbyterian. I have thoroughly enjoyed serving the Eden Community, and pray that God will continue to move through your generosity, creativity, dedication and hospitality! Peace, Mark.



Mark Unbehagen



### Eden's Shopping List

#### December Needs:

- Washable tempera paint
- Glitter glue
- Fruit snacks (for the nursery)
- Quart and gallon Ziploc freezer bags
- Sturdy paper plates (6-7/8" & 8-1/2" & 10-1/2")
- Thermal coffee cups (8 oz.) (Costco San Ramon has them)
- Birthday and anniversary cards with their envelopes
- Costco gift cards ("Cash" cards)

Please no Styrofoam anything (cups, plates, etc). See anyone who helped Save the Bay September 20 for an explanation.

### A Musical Interlude

We often refer to the special music that is played during transition times in worship as a "Musical Interlude." This music is beautiful and moving in and of itself and serves the practical purpose of creating a transition from one worship movement to another. Sometimes we need interludes in our personal and corporate lives as well.

Mark Unbehagen's recent announcement that he will be leaving Eden Church at the end of this month prompts the need for a musical interlude in our congregational life. Mark has shared that he plans to pursue a path of ministry that affords him more time for writing, composing, and theatre.

These plans resonate with our experience of Mark's gifts exhibited at Eden, and his request (granted last year) to work a reduced schedule. Yet because we love him so much it's hard to fully accept his decision to move on. So we need a musical interlude. We need to celebrate the ways that Mark has enriched our life at Eden as Minister of Music and Music Outreach, and as a colleague and companion on the journey.

We need to celebrate the gifts that Mark has shared with us: gifts that have fostered spiritual and musical growth in our choir, the development of Music Making at Midweek, and the truly inspired vision and leadership he has provided for Candlelight Carols, and for the Jazz Fest, Hues of Blues, and Fountains of Love events.

We will celebrate and say thanks to Mark as a congregation, staff, and choir through the coming weeks. Please contact Herb Graw or Arlene Nehring if you are able to help with these occasions.

We will also attend to our grief about Mark's leaving, and begin to plan for the short- and long-term future of our music and music outreach ministries.

Our Moderator, Herb Graw, and Senior Minister, Arlene Nehring, will be meeting before Christmas with Eden's musicians and representatives of the Boards of Community Ministries and Church Ministries, to begin to develop a short-term plan for covering the core functions

of the Minister of Music's portfolio, and to offers suggestions for Cabinet's consideration about how we approach our staffing and music outreach ministries longer-term.

The congregation's prayers, encouragement, and contributions to these processes are encouraged. Please speak with Herb, Arlene, a member of Cabinet, or a member of the Boards of Church or Community Ministries to offer support and input during this time.

### Church Administrator Search Update

Cabinet authorized a search for Eden's next Church Administrator last month, following Kyle Lovett's acceptance of employment as Interim Associate Minister at First Congregational Church of Santa Cruz.

A search committee comprised of key stakeholders was recruited and elected by Cabinet, including Mary Haro, Board of Church Ministries; Marilyn Sundberg, Board of Trustees; Pepper Swanson, Board of Community Ministries; Michael Foster, resident technology expert; and Arlene Nehring, Senior Minister.

Nearly 200 applications have been received for the opening thus far and more are received daily. The search committee is narrowing the

field, scheduling the first round of interviews before Christmas, and anticipates nominating a finalist by the February 3 Cabinet meeting.

### Thank you, Dan!

Trustee Dan Apperson has been dedicating most of his Monday mornings this past year to cleaning up the church grounds, trimming ALL of our hedges, and helping out with a variety of maintenance jobs around the campus. Thank you to Dan and all of our hardworking Trustees, including Steve Ryken, Marilyn Sundberg, Bob Turner, and Dave Wallace. You all are awesome.



Dan Hard At Work



### Birthday & Anniversaries

#### Mid-December—Mid-January Birthdays:

- 12/17 **Ruth Schaap**; 12/18 **Ron Madaras**; 12/19 **Betsy Lauchstedt**;
- 12/22 **Tim Nicholas**; 12/23 **Hayden Payne & Katelyn Phillips**;
- 12/24 **Angelina Crans**; 12/26 **Izzi Newey**; 12/27 **Abby Miller**;
- 12/29 **Peggy Barber**; 12/31 **Gil Gordan**; 1/1 **Jessie Stoddard-Nunez**;
- 1/2 **Vivian Faingainuku & Sue Hakanson**; 1/5 **Aidan Daft & Tom Tyler**;
- 1/6 **Dianne Fletcher**; 1/7 **Mary Graw**; 1/9 **Stephanie Andrade**;
- 1/15 **Patricia Payne**

#### Mid-November—Mid-December Anniversaries:

- 12/19/1971 **Barbara and Steve Ryken**
- 12/20/1966 **Sandy and Clyde Nachand**
- 1/12/2007 **Vai & George Day**

**Wash Your Hands and Wash Them Well!**

Information provided by Advocate Health Care in Chicago

Proper and frequent hand washing is one of the easiest ways to avoid getting sick or infecting others. The common cold, flu, and infectious diarrhea are commonly spread through hand-to-hand contact. The flu can be serious (especially for older adults and those with chronic medical problems). The flu combined with pneumonia is the eighth leading cause of death in the U.S.

When should you wash your hands?

- After a trip to the bathroom or after changing a diaper
- After touching animals or animal waste
- Before, after, and even during food preparation
- Before eating
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Before and after treating wounds or touching a sick person
- After handling garbage
- Before touching contact lenses
- After being in public places.

A 2005 study showed that hand-washing cut in half children's risk of pneumonia and diarrhea, so teach children good hand-washing techniques by your example.

**The ABCs of Hand-Washing**

**Warm water is just right.** Hot water's hard on the skin. Cold won't make suds.

**Lather up.** You don't need to kill germs with pricey antibacterial soap. Just dislodge them with a good lather.

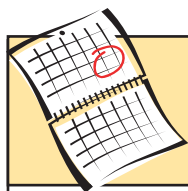
**Soap it all.** Get the thumbs, backs of hands, under nails.

**Sing "Happy Birthday" twice.** That's 15 seconds of scrubbing.

**Don't skimp on rinse water.** Flush away suds and germs.

**In a public washroom, use a paper towel** to turn off the faucet and open the exit door.

**Prayer:** Thank you, gracious God, for the many simple ways you have given us to stay healthy. Help me do my part in staying well this winter. Amen.



**Coming Attractions—  
Mark Your Calendars!**

**December 14,** Christmas Pageant; Souper Sunday; "Happy Birthday Jesus"

**December 21,** Lessons and Carols in worship; Baptism & New Members; Photo Op

**December 24,** Contemporary Christmas Eve Service (7 pm)

**January 4,** Budget Update (11:30 am)

**January 11,** Potluck Sunday

**January 17,** Choir Mini-Retreat

**January 27,** Stewardship Committee Meeting

**February 1,** Souper Sunday

**February 4—March 25,** Music Making at Midweek (Wednesdays)

**February 7,** Spirit-In-Action: Convalescent Home

**February 11,** Valentine Luncheon

**February 21,** Eden Family Outing

**February 22,** Spirit-In-Action Worship Service

**February 24,** Stewardship Committee Meeting

**February 25,** Ash Wednesday Service

**March 21,** Dinner & Auction

**March 22,** Inquirers' Gathering

**March 29,** Potluck Sunday

**March 31,** Stewardship Committee Meeting

**April 4,** All-Church Work Day

**April 5,** Palm Sunday; Baptism & New Members

**April 9,** Maundy Thursday Service

**April 10,** Good Friday Service

**April 12,** Easter

**May 3,** Souper Sunday

**May 9,** Spirit-In-Action: Shelter Shuffle

**May 16,** Youth Outing

**May 28-31,** NCNC-UCC Annual Meeting @ Asilomar

**June 7,** Finale Sunday

**June 14,** Summer Celebration Begins

**June 14,** Inquirers' Gathering

**June 28,** Baptism & New Members

**July 18,** Spirit In Action Event

**August 2-16,** FESCO Backpacks collection

**August 22,** Choir Retreat

**September 7,** Labor Day

**September 13,** Parent-Teacher Gathering

**September 19,** Spirit in Action Event

**September 20,** Open House Sunday; Church School Begins; Souper Sunday

**October 7—November 18,** Music Making at Midweek (Wednesdays)

**October 18,** Souper Sunday

**October 24,** Family Outing

**November 15,** Souper Sunday

**December 6,** Candlelight Carols

**December 9,** FESCO Luncheon

**December 13,** Christmas Pageant & Happy Birthday Jesus

**December 24,** Christmas Eve Service



## *Joys*

**Candlelight Carols** was a big success. Many thanks to our wonderful musicians, to the Boards of Community Ministries and Church Ministries, and to all who supported this event and Hope 4 the Heart.

For the **newcomers** we have in worship every Sunday, and for family and friends of our members who are visiting this holiday season. May God grant traveling mercies to all.

For **our many wonderful volunteers** who have stepped forward to help staff the church office while our search for a new Church Administrator commences, and for those who continue to assist with church mailings.

For the **friends**, old and new, from Eden Church who have stepped forward to help Allen Gardiner cope with the exigencies of a deep brain stroke.

## *Prayer Requests*

Please let Arlene know of any updates or new concerns.

For the **family of Nichole Ambrose**, whose four-year old niece was burned during hurricane Ike, and who is being treated at Shriners' Hospital in Sacramento.

For **Allison Bascom**, Susan DuPree's step-daughter, who is living with chronic health problems.

For **Todd Bove**, who is in the midst of a job search.

For **Carl Bleeker**, Ruth Schaap's son-in-law, who is home from the hospital recovering from a heart attack.

For **George Bowers**, Holly Guier's father, who has had a recurrence of lung cancer.

For **Jay Christensen** and family.

For **Dan Downing**, who was diagnosed with liver cancer, and who is awaiting a transplant. Dan is a friend of the Smith-Bove family.

For **Curtis Fuller**, who is being treated for a recurrence of cancer.

For **Allen Gardiner**, who is in rehab at Laurel Gove recovering from a stroke. Cards and visits are especially encouraged. Phone calls require some coordination with staff or friends.

For **Margaret and Jan Gardiner**, Allen Gardiner's mother and sister, as they cope with life transitions.

For **John Gonzales** and all who are living with cancer.

For **Lucille Hood**, Cliff Sherwood's cousin, who is recovering from her sixth hip replacement surgery.

For **Phyllis Anderson**, who is recovering from hip replacement surgery.

For **Karen Madaras**, who recently completed treatment for leukemia. Ron and Karen returned to California last week, after living and working for more than a year in Switzerland and France.

For **Toni Maldonado**, Heather Maldonado's mother and Sally D'Anjou's sister.

For **Barbara Perry**, who is having surgery in January to remove a nonmalignant brain tumor.

For members and friends who are experiencing infertility and for those in the early stages of pregnancy.

For **Pam Reuling**, who is recovering at home from shoulder surgery.

For **Noel and Robin Salter**, who are experiencing some challenges at this time.

For **Lee Sorensen**, Bob's brother, who was transferred to Valley Point in Castro Valley, last week.

Continued prayers for **Mary Babikoff; Liston Bascom; Mary Bernstein; Keith Boyer; Jim Burgess; Rindie Chase; Juanita Chavez; Connie; Ann Dodd; Regina Fischer; Susan Fivelstad; Clyde Howell; Gayle Kreutzfeld; Nancy Wallace; and Joy Youngs.**