



# Cordata Beacon

A Publication of **Cordata** Presbyterian Church

December, 2025



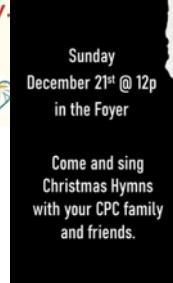
## Message from Pastor Greg: *The Beginning of a New Season*

Did you know that the church year, in contrast to the calendar year, ended on November 23rd (Christ the King Sunday) and began a new year on November 30th (the First Sunday of Advent)? Cordata is choosing to mark the close of one year and start of the next with both thanks-giving and commitment. That's one reason we collected both Thanks-giving prayers and 2026 pledges on the same Sunday. (See the Word Cloud above composed of all the prayers that folks submitted during worship on Sunday, November 23rd, and the article on the following page for more interesting details about pledges.)

Thanks-giving is about recognizing God's hand in our lives both past and present. Financial pledges and other commitments are ways that we trust God will be at work in the future. And Advent is the season of waiting...on the Lord to show up—in God's own unexpected timing, rather than our own, but always bringing goodness, wholeness, provision, strength, peace and many other gifts that God provides in Christ Jesus.

May we be patient and prepared for His arrival.

## In His Advent, Pastor Greg



## A Word about Pledges

Your CPC Generosity Team is so grateful for the response so far to Growing Generosity 2026. November 23rd marked the formal conclusion of this year's annual emphasis on financial giving, which encourages CPCers to give generously in response to God's gracious generosity to us. We are encouraged by early results. Thank you to all who have pledged so far! We also noticed several questions emerging during the campaign. Here are a few of the most common questions (and our answers):



**Are pledges required?** No. CPC givers are not required to submit a pledge. Nothing in the Bible or our congregation's policy or practices forces anyone to communicate their intended financial support of the congregation's mission and ministries in advance. Only about 70% of CPC's tithe & offering income is pledged in advance. We welcome any and all financial support of our congregation's mission and ministries, regardless of whether it is connected to a pledge.

**So then, why should I submit a pledge card for 2026?** Because Session receives valuable input (a grand total of all pledged income) to help develop the annual Budget for the upcoming year. Also, many find that submitting a pledge to the church helps their giving stay on track in the year ahead.

**Have I missed the deadline to submit my pledge?** No! Pledges are enthusiastically welcomed any time you are able to submit them. They are most useful to Session's budget-making if received within the first 2 weeks of December. But again, any time is okay. Many folks who submit pledges submit in December (rather than November) because getting closer to the end of the year might bring a clearer picture of anticipated giving in the year ahead. Pledges may be submitted by filling out a pledge card and placing it in the weekly Sunday offering bags, or delivery by hand to the church office or by regular mail to the church (attn: Amber Bernardy), or digitally via the CPC website at <https://cordatachurch.org/growing-generosity-2026> (click on the green text where it says "Make your 2026 pledge here").

**How will I know whether I am meeting my pledge?** Of course, each person is expected to keep track of their own giving throughout the year. CPC's bookkeeper / executive treasurer, Amber Bernardy, also regularly records each individual's financial contributions throughout the year and then periodically sends a report indicating amount given vs. amount pledged.

Gratefully in Christ,

Phyllis Macleod (Elder for Generosity/Chair)  
 Julie Farrow (Elder for Discipleship)  
 Ken Gasper  
 Greg Ellis (Teaching Elder/Pastor)



### ***Waiting in Hope***

**By Carol Lawrence**

Here we are at Advent, the season of waiting. For most of us waiting doesn't come easily, but it is part of God's plan for us. Remember that two thousand years elapsed between God's promise to Abraham and the arrival of the Messiah. Eight centuries elapsed before the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy:

*Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)*

You may wonder why I'm showing you an eagle. Eagle imagery appears frequently in Scripture (Exodus 19:4, Deuteronomy 32:11, Proverbs 23:5, Ezekiel 1:10). True, the eagle is not a traditional Christmas symbol, but I'm suggesting perhaps it could be. Their wingspans are certainly large enough to shelter us. Those massive muscles that drive the wings are certainly powerful enough to carry us to safety. Their eyesight can spot prey as small as a rabbit from as far away as three miles. Our God's vision can clearly see deep into our hearts. Eagles have remarkable endurance, known to fly as far as 225 miles per day. We know our God's love will endure forever.

Of course, our patience will not endure forever. Because God understands that, and because He is kind and loving, He provides comfort, encouragement, and hope for our time of waiting:

*Those who wait on the Lord  
Shall renew their strength  
They shall mount up with wings like eagles. (Isaiah 40:31)*

As we wait through Advent, we know there is still yet more hope to come. The prophet Daniel explains:

*I was watching the night visions,  
And behold, One like the Son of Man,  
Coming with the clouds of heaven!...  
His dominion is an everlasting dominion,  
Which shall not pass away. (Daniel 7:13,14)*

Amen.

**We at CPC met our goal  
to donate and deliver  
Thanksgiving meals  
to 10 families in our area.  
We are thankful  
for God's many gifts to us!**





## CPC Kids Clubhouse Catch Up

**CPC Kids Clubhouse** - We are taking a break from our usual Bible study to focus on all things Christmas! Beginning the first day of Advent, November 30th, and continuing through the Epiphany, kids will be learning the true meaning of Christmas while making lovely keepsake-ornament crafts and having a lot of fun. Weekly lessons will include Advent candle lighting (battery operated), a Bible lesson, crafts, games, holiday songs and carols.

**Family Advent Packets** - Beginning November 30th, be sure to pick up your Family Advent Devotion Guide and Activity Kit. These packets include many suggestions for creating meaningful memories that will grow your family's faith during the Advent season. They are available at the Welcome Desk and at The Cordata Food Pantry on Fridays.

**Clubs 4 Kids (C4K)** - It's getting darker early, but that hasn't stopped the kids from coming! In fact, our numbers have been increasing! We've had new kids plus some children of the English Language Learner students come while their parents are in class. If you've been wondering how to make a difference in the life of a child, this is the place to be. We could use some extra volunteers to help serve snacks, play table games, and generally hang out with the kids. December Club times will be filled with fun Christmas crafts and helping kids know the real reason for the season!

**Christmas Eve Ornament 2025** - A simple yet lovely wooden bead wreath ornament with a bow-and-heart-embellishment design has been chosen this year. These ornaments are gifted to those who attend our Christmas Eve service on December 24th. They are fairly easy to make so if you are feeling crafty and would like to help make some, please contact Bonnie Hollingsworth at [BonnieH@cordatachurch.org](mailto:BonnieH@cordatachurch.org).

We have tentatively scheduled an Ornament Making time following the Sunday service on December 14th.



**C4K Making Beaded, Indian Corn-like Crafts**

### C4K Decorating Thanksgiving Meal Boxes



**Kids Clubhouse Lesson - Israel wanted a human king. Game: one person is king commanding others.**

## Adult Education -

Starting November 30th, we began an Advent study based on the prophesies of the birth of the Messiah in the Old Testament. Join us at 9a in person in the Chapel or on Zoom for this Advent study.

On December 28th, Mike Kuhn will teach a class on *Jesus, the Son of God*. This class will follow our Advent study well as we see the gift of Christmas come into His own as He lives among us and takes his journey to the cross as our savior.

In the new year, you will have an opportunity to understand the sweep and content of the Old Testament as it moves toward the coming of Jesus! The Old

Testament is a mystery to many Christians, but in 2026 we will have an opportunity to explore it in depth and discover how it moves toward Jesus in the New Testament!

On January 4th, we will begin with a discussion led by Gordon Terpstra titled *Common Conceptions and Misconceptions of the Old Testament*. On the following Sundays, the class will continue the study of the Old Testament with a series, called *CASKET EMPTY*, that examines the Old Testament as a redemption story closely tied to Jesus's birth, crucifixion, and resurrection.

The CASKET part of the series title is an acronym that highlights major segments of the Old Testament: Creation, Abraham, Sinai, Kings, Exile, and Temple. The second part of the material, which we may use next fall, uses the acronym EMPTY to remind us of Jesus's empty tomb. Each class session includes a brief video, an Old Testament timeline and maps, and a discussion led by Gordon Terpstra and Carol Lawrence.

Join us for these classes that will prepare us to celebrate Christ's birth and will begin the New Year with an indepth study of God's plan of redemption as foretold in the Old Testament.

## Carol Sing - December 21st

Let your joy resound as we join together AFTER WORSHIP ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21ST (just after we get a cuppa and a crumpet). Bob and Sandy Hiorns have lined up our talented musicians to help lift our voices in the Christmas carols we enjoy every Christmas season.

Come be with your Cordata family and friends as we praise God for sending his Son to redeem us.

**THANK YOU!!**



A huge "thank you" to the volunteers who raked leaves on November 8th, which turned out to be the perfect day for outdoor work with dry weather. Those participating were: Joel and Suzanne Rautiola, Jim Zander, Roger DeSpain, Doug Cowgill, Dan Moore, Gary Buma, Julie Farrow, and David Tan. The church grounds looked 100% cleaner with the removal of a huge portion of fallen leaves. Thanks again.



More photos on page 6.

## Hope of the Pokomchi to Visit CPC December 14th

On December 14th our church will enjoy a visit by the Hope of the Pokomchi leadership team including the founding member, Linda Brierly. As Cordata gears up to send a strong mission group to Guatemala in March, the timing for this conversation with some of these ministry leaders couldn't be better. (Our group now has 14 people signed up to go, according to organizers Nina and Gary Buma.)

Besides our visitors being with us in Worship, we are inviting the congregation to a short reception for them in the Chapel during the Coffee Fellowship time after the service.

The Pokomchi ministry is regularly supported financially by CPC as part of the missions budget (10% of our total income from offerings). The Pokomchi are an indigenous people living in a mountainous region of central Guatemala near the municipality of San Cristobal Verapaz. Over the last 20 years our church has sent many mission teams to visit and share in village projects, such as building water cisterns, latrines, etc.

Besides Linda Brierly, other visitors coming to us include: Glenda Mo Coy, administrator; Sebastian Suram Cal, coordinator of construction; and Rebekah Welsh, assisting with the Health and Community Education Program. This group will be meeting with our own Guatemala delegation the Saturday before Sunday worship.

Many thanks to John and Brenda Risser who are serving as hosts for the group from Guatemala.

Dan Sanford  
Elder for Missions and Outreach

### Cordata Scene



November Outdoor Work Party



Trumpeter Don Shire Joins Worship Team to Lead Singing



At a Together Tuesday dinner, Don Shire not only serenades us with music, but also introduces CPC to the work of DSM International (Don Shire Ministries International).

## Save the Date

**Friday, December 5th, 5p, CCF Talk Time, Family Life Center**

**Sunday, December 7th, 3p, Family Friendly Movie, Family Life Center - See page 2.**

**Sunday, December 14th, After Worship, Visit of Hope of the Pokomchi Leaders, Chapel - See page 6.**

**After Worship, Ornament Making - See page 4**

**Sunday, December 21st, After Worship, Old Fashioned Hymn Sing, Foyer - See page 5.**

**Wednesday, December 24th, 4:30p, Christmas Eve Fellowship, Foyer**

**5:00p, Christmas Eve Service, Worship Center**

**Sunday, January 11th, After Worship, Table Game Day, Foyer - No Table Game Day in December.**

### Regularly Occurring Events

**Sundays -** 9a, Adult Education Class, Chapel  
 10:30a, Worship, Worship Center  
 10:45a, CPC Kids Clubhouse/Sunday School - See page 4.

**Mondays -** After Worship, Coffee Fellowship, Foyer  
**Tuesdays -** 2p, Tai Chi Exercise Class, Chapel

**4:30p, Clubs 4 Kids, Church Foyer - See page 4.**  
 5p, English as a Second Language

**Wednesdays -** 7p, The Chosen Series, Chapel  
 9a, Weekly Prayer Group, Zoom -  
 Contact Admin@cordatachurch.org for link.

**2p, Tai Chi Exercise Class, Chapel**  
**5:30p, Youth Group (5th to 8th Grade)**

**7p, Choir Rehearsal, Chapel**  
**4:30p, Clubs 4 Kids, Church Foyer - See page 4.**

**Fridays -** 2:30p, Free Groceries - Miracle Food Network, Foyer

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### Cocoa, Candy Canes, Caroling, and Tree Lighting - Advent Begins at CPC

