

Our Bishop  
District Superintendent

***The Church Staff is here to serve you:***

Ministers  
Senior Pastor  
Associate Pastor  
Co-Lay Leaders  
Secretary

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 8:30 am to 3:30 pm  
Wednesday 12:30 pm to 2:30 pm

Visit us on our website at: [www.morenovalleyumc.com](http://www.morenovalleyumc.com)



**Moreno Valley United Methodist Church**

Moreno Valley, California  
**THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

10271 Heacock Street  
Moreno Valley, CA 92557-2200  
(951) 924-6990  
[morenovalleyumc@gmail.com](mailto:morenovalleyumc@gmail.com)

*Change Service Requested*

**Hello  
December**

The Rev. Dr. Grant Hagiya  
Rev. Dr. Siosaia Tu'itahi

The Members of this Church  
The Rev. Dr. Martin Niponi Finau  
Pastor Xavier Torres  
Len Johnson and Ruth Pemble  
Jacqueline M. Wosczyk

# *The Burro Bulletin*

**DECEMBER, 2021** Moreno Valley United Methodist Church



## **WISHING YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

This Christmas Season may you and your loved ones  
experience the gift of eternal  
Happiness, Joy, Peace and Love.

From your Pastoral Team and Staff



## December Birthdays

December 1st ~ Moana Paea  
December 2nd ~ Toka Paea  
December 3rd ~ Pastor Finau  
December 4th ~ David Finau  
December 10th ~ Pastor Xavier  
December 10th ~ Lucy Stewart  
December 16th ~ Angella Thompson-Shaw  
December 17th ~ Alma Mendoza  
December 18th ~ Rubi Ha-Hernandez  
December 19th ~ Rene Bender  
December 22nd ~ Triza Samuel  
December 26th ~ Salesi Paea  
December 30th ~ Kathy Maefau  
December 31st ~ Pava Paea, Sr.

## December Anniversaries

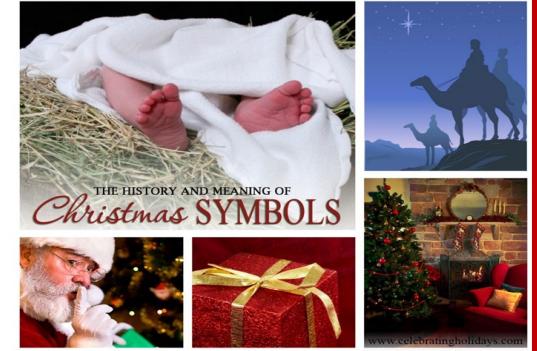
December 20th ~ Chuck & Jeanne Gahagan  
December 31st ~ Brian & Desiree Wagner



## Christmas Symbols

Many familiar Christmas symbols are full of biblical meaning and Christian history. Help fill in the rest of their meaning.

- ◊ Star – the new star in Bethlehem.
- ◊ Stocking....
- ◊ Candy Cane – red represents the blood Jesus spilt and white represents purity.
- ◊ Poinsettia....
- ◊ Wreath – wreath represents eternal life.
- ◊ Evergreen Tree.....
- ◊ Angels.....
- ◊ Dove – peace on Earth that comes through Jesus Christ.
- ◊ Jesus ...



## Chrismon Tree Invite



Be sure to join us this SUNDAY (December 12) at 10 am for our Sunday School Children - Christmas pageant. This year the children will be performing the Chrismon tree story. It is a beautiful reminder of the Christmas story, but also how we each play a role in sharing Jesus' story with the world. We can't wait to see you!

## Order Your Poinsettia Today

We just observed the first Sunday of Advent. We would love to fill the Sanctuary with these beautiful poinsettias to celebrate the Advent Season. The cost for each poinsettia is \$14.00. If you would like to purchase one, please click on the link below to fill out the form. Your order must be placed no later than Tuesday, December 14th. The poinsettias will be displayed in the Sanctuary on Sunday, December 19th. For those of you who purchased a poinsettia, you may take it home with you on Sunday, December 26th following the service. Thank you so much and wishing everyone a blessed Advent Season!

<https://forms.gle/MXCHy1kueLB1udX67>



#### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

Please join us for worship each Sunday on YouTube @ Box Springs Cooperative Parish - UMC or please join us for our In-Person Worship Services for the month as follows:



#### **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2021:**

Please join us as we celebrate the 2nd Sunday of Advent with Rev. Dr. M. Niponi Finau at 10:00 AM. This Sunday, we celebrate the 1st Sunday in December with Holy Communion. Beginning this week we will have coffee available before the start of today's service. Please arrive early.

#### **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2021:**

Please join us for worship as we celebrate the 3rd Sunday of Advent with our special guests Milika Finau and the return of our Children's Pageant at 10:00 AM. Please join us for coffee before the start of today's service.

#### **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2021:**

Please join us for worship as we celebrate the 4th Sunday of Advent with Rev. Dr. M. Niponi Finau and our choir's presentation of a Christmas Cantata at 10:00 AM. Please join us for coffee before the start of today's service

#### **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2021:**

Please join us for worship as we celebrate Christmas Eve with our Candlelight Service with Rev. Dr. M. Niponi Finau at 7:00 PM. Tonight we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let this night be magical and full of peace in all of our hearts.



#### **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2021:**

Please join us for worship as we celebrate the 1st Sunday after Christmas with Rev. Dr. M. Niponi Finau at 10:00 AM. This Sunday we also celebrate the 36th Anniversary of Moreno Valley UMC.

## Pastor's Corner

Beloved Church,

Merry Christmas! May you discover the hope, peace, joy and love of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ this holiday season.



The prophets foretold a Messiah figure is to come. The prophets give descriptive characteristics of the Lord's Messiah. They said the Lord's Messiah would be a just and righteous descendant of David, a messenger who purifies his people, a king and warrior who will be victorious and a shepherd of peace. In their time, the prophets prophesied, and the people waited. Time went by, kings came, and kings died. Rulers rose up and rulers had fallen. Seasons came and seasons changed. God made a promise, but who could fit the description prophesied? Who could claim to be just and righteous, a purifier, king and warrior, and shepherd of peace? There is one who lives up to prophecies foretold. Jesus is the Lord's Messiah; He fits the prophetic word of God! You see, the promises of God are sure to happen. As sure as we have the sun and moon, day and light, the promises of God are certain.

We celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior this Christmas, a birth foretold, a birth expected, a birth of a promise fulfilled. It is my prayer for you this season that you make Jesus your promise. Make Him your just and righteous ruler, a purifier of your soul, king and warrior of all our enemies and a shepherd of peace for all your troubles. Hope, peace, joy and love obtain a higher level of meaning when Jesus is the focus and heart of this holiday season. Joy to the world, the savior has come!

Grace and Peace be with you always,  
Xavier Torres

## Moreno Valley Bible Study

#### **Women's and Men's Monday Night Bible Studies hosted by Miki and Tim Lawler:**

Women's Bible Study @ 5:30 PM. Men's Bible Study @ 6:45 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2571533164?pwd=U3ZUNi9wb3hxYmlkMCT1SVdhemtWQT09>

Meeting ID: 257 153 3164

Passcode: 4qfkL

If you wish to join by phone, please contact Miki Lawler for information.

**Wednesday Night Bible Study:** Join us Wednesday, December 1, 2021 at 6:30 PM on Zoom with Rev. Dr. M. Niponi Finau as we begin our Advent Series "Christmas Gifts That Won't Break" ~ Zoom invite will be sent out by email.

## Cantata de Natal

Glorious Light of Christmas  
From

"Word Music and Resources."

This year's Christmas Cantata, *Glorious Light of Christmas*, is a "near-perfect expression of joyful and celebratory songs about the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. The soul-stirring music in the Cantata is artfully enhanced by powerfully moving narrations, leading to a memorable and meaningful Christmas worship experience for the congregation. The Cantata shares the hope and promise that came down to earth in the form of a Baby on that first Christmas night so long ago."

The songs were composed by Jason Cox, Lee Black, Marty Hamby, Dale Mathews and others and arranged by Marty Hamby.

Please join us on Sunday, December 19th at 10:00 AM to experience the beauty of the Cantata.

Alegria

### The History of the Advent Wreath

The Catholic church adopted this tradition during the [Middle Ages](#), as a way to prepare the hearts and minds for Christmas. The word advent itself comes from the Latin word "adventus" meaning "arrival." We prepare for the arrival of Christ. The wreath itself represents eternity and everlasting life, a circle that never ends ([John 3:16](#)).



### The 1<sup>st</sup> Advent Candle of Hope

Like the prophets in the O.T., we hope for a Messiah to save us from the sin in the world ([Isaiah 9:6-7](#)). We anticipate our Savior's arrival. Also known as the "[prophecy candle](#)," this candle assures us we can have hope that God will fulfill the [prophecies](#) declared in the Old Testament about Jesus. Hope doesn't disappoint us ([Romans 5:5](#)). In this day and age, where evil abounds and all seems lost, we can also hope that the prophecies about Jesus' second arrival to earth will also be fulfilled. The somber purple color on the candle represents repentance and fasting as we anticipate the Lord's coming. Purple doubles as a color for royalty throughout the Bible, symbolizing God's kingship and reign.

### Biblical Hope

Christians can often confuse the word hope for wishful thinking. If we hope something will happen, we have no control over whether or not it will take place. But the [biblical sense of hope](#) is very different. Hope, in the Bible, exists as a secure assurance, a trust placed in a trustworthy God. God has not failed us in the past, and therefore, if he claims he will do something in the future, we can have a hope that he will fulfill that claim. Hope waits and endures. It isn't flimsy or merely wishful thinking. It can withstand fire, trials, and despair.

### What Is the Candle of Peace?

One of the hallmarks of the Christmas story is when the angels appear to the shepherds and proclaim, "Peace on earth," in [Luke 2:14](#). Jesus brought about peace, in the most unexpected ways, when he arrived. The Jews, particularly the zealots, wanted a rebellion. They wanted their Savior to overturn the oppressive rule of the Romans and bring about peace in a violent way. But Jesus had something else in mind. As mentioned in [this article](#), Jesus brings us peace in a number of ways. First, he gives us inner peace. Because of his work on [the cross](#), we have a chance to receive salvation and be indwelled by the Holy Spirit. This grants us an inner peace ([John 14:27](#)). Not only do we have the peace that comes from our assurance of salvation, but we also have the peace of mind knowing God will heal this broken world and will come again. Second, as mentioned in the article above, we have peace with others. We put aside our differences ([Galatians 3:28](#)), especially with other believers, because we belong to the same family. We have the same purpose: to let others know about the peace of Christ. The Hebrew word for peace: Shalom, goes far beyond not fighting with others or peace as we know it. As pointed out in the book [Not the Way It's Supposed to Be](#), shalom is, in essence, how things are meant to be: a slice of heaven. The peace of God allows us to look at others through heaven's eyes and help guide the world to see God's here and not-yet here kingdom.



Peace from God, biblical peace, allows us to [trust in God's promises](#) ([Proverbs 3:5](#)), through restful, tranquil faith, despite the dark, scary world around us.

### What Is the Candle of Joy?



Otherwise known as the Shepherd Candle, this candle reflects the joy that comes through Jesus' arrival, and through the salvation he has gifted us. Christians may wonder why the church decided to make this particular candle a different color than the others. Although Christians have presented several reasons for the pinkish nature of the candle, from a tradition where priests would wear pink vestments to parents eagerly awaiting the joy of a child's arrival by painting the room pink, the rosy candle has its roots in something known as [Gaudete Sunday](#).

During this third week of advent, this Sunday celebrates the passage [Philippians 4:4-5](#), its verses extolling readers to "rejoice" for "indeed the Lord is near." In other words, this week celebrates the joy of Christ's coming to earth. We should also note that not every church uses a pink candle to represent this day. Some will use a violet one, just like all the others. Violet tends to have a somber nature, and it also reflects royalty, acknowledging Jesus' kingship. No matter what color of candle a church displays on that third Sunday, churches want to highlight the importance of joy in advent season. During a time where depression is at an all-time high and people seem to be in the most despair, this candle offers a bright light during a dark time.

It is also known as the Shepherd Candle to highlight the joy the shepherds experienced when they received the good news about Christ's birth ([Luke 2:8-20](#)). During the middle of the night, the darkest time, the shepherds encountered angels.

### What Is the Candle of Love?



Before we dive into this, we should keep in mind, some church traditions vary on which candle goes on which Sunday. Some may light the "love candle" on the second Sunday of Advent instead of the fourth. Others have lit the candle of Peace on the fourth week of Advent instead of the candle of love. Or, as stated in [this article](#), some churches will light a candle of faith on the second Sunday instead of a candle of peace. No matter what the church tradition, we can assuredly know that virtues such as love, hope, peace, joy, and faith are important in the Christmas story as well as in our daily walk with Christ. Whichever we celebrate on whatever Sunday of Advent, we know all of them are important hallmarks of the Christian faith and journey.

With that being said, let's dive into the symbolism of the love candle. Otherwise known as the Angel candle, this candle can represent purity. We see the other candles representing a part of the Christmas story in addition to virtues.

Week One - The [prophecies](#) about the coming Messiah

Week Two - Bethlehem, Jesus' birthplace

Week Three - The shepherds who came to see Jesus

Week Four - The angels who proclaimed the good news of Jesus' birth to the Shepherds

Love, as [stated in this article](#), plays a vital role in the Christmas story. Because of Joseph's love for Mary, he didn't stone her when he found out she was pregnant with what he thought was a child out of wedlock with another man ([Matthew 1:18-19](#)). Mary has a natural motherly love for Jesus, and ultimately, we see God's love for everyone by sending his son for us ([John 3:16](#)). Jesus focused on preaching love throughout his ministry. Two of his greatest commands involve love: Love God, love your neighbor ([Matthew 22:36-40](#)). Love is the greatest of all the virtues on the Advent wreath and encompasses Jesus' entire purpose for being on earth ([1 Corinthians 13:13](#)).