

THE STONE NEWS

STONE CHURCH OF WILLOW GLEN, PRESBYTERIAN USA DECEMBER 2015



On Nov. 24, Stone Church hosted the First Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service. Participants included the Center for Spiritual Enlightenment, Islamic Networks Group, St. Martin of Tours Catholic parish, Sanatan Dharma Kendra (Hindu), San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin, Sathya Sai Baba Center of Central San Jose, Temple Emanuel-El (Reform Judaism), and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Afterward, we shared pie and hot cider in the Social Hall.

Advent & Christmas at Stone Church

- 12/1, 8, 15, 22; 6:45 pm, Advent Taizé Services [pg 2]
- 12/12, 10 am - 2 pm, Deacons' Parents Day Out [pg 2]
- 12/13, 1:30 pm, Stepping Stones & Chancel Choirs present *The Reluctant Dragon*, by John Rutter [pg 2]
- 12/18, 7 pm, Youth Group Christmas Party [pg 5]
- 12/20, 11:15 am, Blue Christmas Service [pg 2]
- 12/24 Christmas Eve Services:
 - ✦ 5:30 pm - For Families and Children
 - ✦ 11 pm - With the Chancel Choir and a Christmas Sermon

MARY'S MAGNIFICAT: A SERMON SERIES

by Rev. Ken Henry



"And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior' ..."

Every Advent and Christmas season, we hear the words of Luke 1:46-55. Through song, chant, and melodic verse, the *Magnificat* announces the coming of Christ:

From Renaissance canticles singing glory to God, to portraits of Mary displayed in cathedrals and churches, the *Magnificat* tells us what Jesus' birth meant for people long ago and what it means for us today. And yet, in years past, if we happened to attend worship on the fourth Sunday of Advent, we would have heard only one sermon on this particular text - and, most often, that sermon would have only grazed the surface.

Thus, in 2015, for the first three Sundays of Advent, Irene and I will preach three different sermons on *Mary's Song*:

- ✦ 1st Sunday of Advent: Luke 1:47-49 (Nov. 29)
- ✦ 2nd Sunday of Advent: Luke 1:50-53 (Dec. 6)
- ✦ 3rd Sunday of Advent: Luke 1:54-56 (Dec. 13)

I have never preached a sermon series on *Mary's Song of Praise*, but I can already see sermons being written on the nature of joy, mercy, and remembering God's promises.

To prepare for these sermons, I invite you to read these scripture passages before coming to worship. Even dare to study these texts with others and discuss the enduring implications of *Mary's Magnificat*.

May God grant us wisdom and insight into this ancient announcement of God's child coming into the world.

And in the aftermath, after meditating on the birth of Christ, may our souls magnify the Lord and our spirits rejoice.

Blessings,
Ken

MESSAGES IN MUSIC: "THE RELUCTANT DRAGON" BY JOHN RUTTER

by Nancy Wait Kromm,
Chancel Choir Director

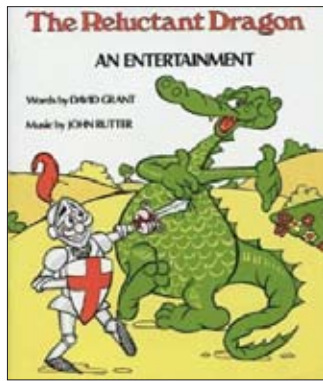
Hello, everyone:

As I hope you already know, the Stepping Stones Children's Choir and the Chancel Choir are preparing a Christmas treat, a performance of John Rutter's, *The Reluctant Dragon*, on Sunday, Dec. 13, at 1:30 pm.

This is the legendary story of St. George and the Dragon, but with a wry twist – the dragon turns out to be not only kind and gentle, and reluctant to participate in any violence, but a poet as well! Through the wisdom and clever schemes of the children, who really get to know the dragon, the villagers eventually learn to "let bygones be bygones" and to welcome the dragon into their midst.

How often music teaches us important lessons in humanity and morality. How often have we learned that what we have feared the most is actually a great blessing to us? Life's great teachers, it is said, are those people and circumstances who challenge us the most. And music is often able to communicate lessons from these teachers in a direct and inspiring way.

Through this simple, tuneful, amusing, and touching piece of music, we receive the important



message of the value of allowing a new perspective. I can't help but observe how timely this message is in light of the Syrian refugee crisis and our own disagreements at home. If we are willing to listen to the message of this simple story, it can be a great teacher to us.

The message to learn is delivered beautifully at the end of the work, as in the final text we hear:

So let's begin again, try another way.
So let's begin again, there's a better way.
Rule a line and start once more,
Learning from what's gone before.
So let's begin again.
So can we get it right this time, possibly?
Another chance in sight – let's step carefully.
Make new friends together; walk hand in hand.
And never run and hide,
The paths that we must tread lie side by side,
THE PATHS THAT WE MUST TREAD LIE SIDE BY SIDE."

*May it be so.
Wishing all of us the ears to hear the messages in the music we share this Christmas. With love, Nancy*

SAVE THE DATE!!!

18th Annual Parents' Day Out

Saturday, December 12th

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

Sign up after church in the Social Hall!

Let the Deacons and Youth group of Stone Church watch your kids (12 and under) for a few hours so you have time for shopping, lunch or just relaxing while your children enjoy crafts, games, movies, lunch, AND the last half hour will feature a special visit with Santa and a photo session!

Questions or to volunteer: dianeodb@comcast.net 408-691-1291

Diane and Olivia VanDenBosch, Lawrence Summers

***A Christmas gift to you from the Deacons*
2015**

EXPERIENCE ADVENT IN DEPTH



As a counterpoint to the frenetic activity of Advent, Stone Church offers a meditation service modeled after those held in the community of Taizé, France.

A framework for stillness is provided by the candlelit sanctuary, and by chants, silence, and scripture.

Participants often come with concerns about health or about relationships. Or participants may simply want the experience of going deep into prayer.

Advent Taizé services begin on Tuesday, Dec. 1, and continue Dec. 8, 15, and 22. Music begins at 6:30 pm, with the service time from 6:45 to 7:30 pm.

- Alice Thorn



BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Blue Christmas is an intimate time and service of worship, acknowledging that the season of joy is not always joyful for everyone.

It's designed for anyone who might be holding grief, pain, loss, or loneliness, alongside the joy of the season. It's a place to hold light to the grief and allow space for those feelings.

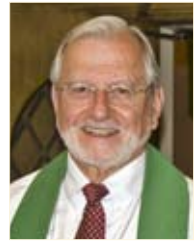
On Dec. 20, at 11:15 am, following the regular worship service, join us in the Fire-side Room. All are welcome.

- Rev. Irene Pak,
Associate Pastor

ADULT STUDY LOOKS AT "MESSIAH," WELCOMES REDWOODS LIM AND THORN

Adult Study classes are offered on Sundays, beginning at 11:15 am. Childcare is provided.

There is no Adult Study on Jan. 3, 2016. For more information about any of these classes, please contact Pat Magee, Adult Education Chair.



Dec. 6-27: "Messiah," An Advent Study with the Rev. David McCreath

Isaiah 9:2-7 is a familiar passage that uses four royal titles: *Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Our study with the Rev. David McCreath will consider how Handel used each title in his famous music, whether Jesus fulfilled the title,

and how Christians interpret Jesus as representative of the titles.

- ✿ Dec. 6: "Mighty God" asks, "What is the king's sacred mandate?"
- ✿ Dec. 13: "Everlasting Father" gives attention to widows, orphans, and immigrants.
- ✿ Dec. 27: "Prince of Peace" reflects the constant hope and promise of Christmas.



Diana Lim

Jan. 10, 2016: The "Redwoods" of Stone Church: Women of History

Go back in time to learn the history of Stone Church and the PCUSA from those who were there.

Moderator Stephen Stock and members of Stone's congregation and youth are invited to sit down with the *Redwoods* of Stone Church - members who have become legends as they have lived their faith and creed - and changed the world in the process.



Alice Thorn

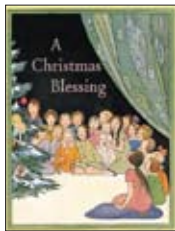
Our *Redwoods* will talk about their faith and their experiences, and how we can learn from those same experiences today.

On Jan. 10, join *Redwoods* Diana Lim and Alice Thorn as they answer the questions, "How were women treated by society and the PCUSA in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s? How did we get to where we are today?"

CHURCH LIBRARY OFFERS BOOKS OF THE SEASON FOR YOUNG AND OLD

Remember our Calendar Exchange. Feel free to give or take or trade. We'll donate extras to Sacred Heart clients. Meanwhile, enjoy these new books!

- Sue Williams, Library Coordinator

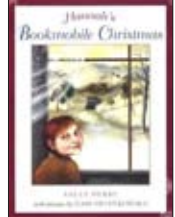


For our younger ones
A Christmas Blessing by Welleran Poltarnees (Read-Aloud 390 Pol)

Angelina's Christmas by Katharine

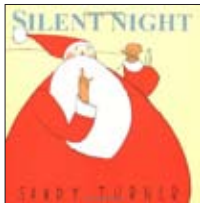


Holabird (1st Bks Hol)



Hannah's Bookmobile Christmas by Sally Derby (J Der)

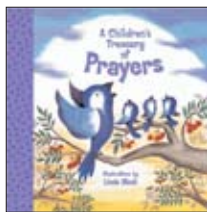
Silent Night by Sandy Turner (J Tur)



A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens (J Dic)



The Christmas Story: The Brick Bible for Kids by Brendan Smith (J 232 Smi)



A Child's Treasury of Prayers illust. by Linda Bleck (J 291.4 Ble), given by Charlotte Dickson

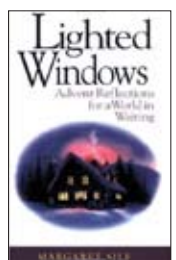
Medieval Feasts and Banquets by Tehmina Bhote (J 394 Bho)



The Book of Giving: Poems of Thanks, Praise and Celebration ed. by Kay Chorao (J 808.81 Cho)

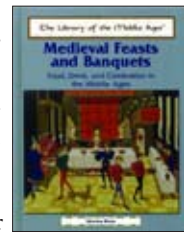
Additions in Lincoln House

Christmas in the Big House, Christmas in the Quarters by Patricia & Fredrick McKissack (J-LH 975 McK), given by Rosaleen Zisch



Lighted Windows: Advent Reflections for a World in Waiting by Margaret Silf (242 Sil)

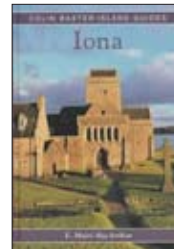
With Open Hands by Henri Nouwen (243 Nou), given by Charlotte Dickson



Food & Faith in Christian Culture ed. by Ken Albana & Trudy Eden (248.4 Alb)

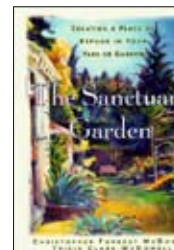
A Christian Walks in the Footsteps of the Buddha by John Mabry (291.4 Mab), given by Pat Magee

Iona by E. Mairi MacArthur (941 Mac), given by Gail Chaid

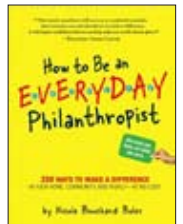
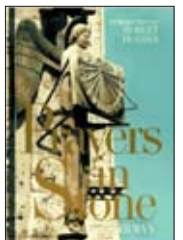
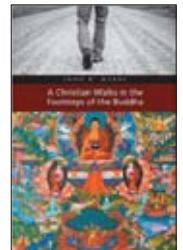


Prayers in Stone by Alexander Liberman (TALL 709 Lib), given by John Leih

The Sanctuary Garden: Creating a Place of Refuge in Your Yard by Christopher & Tricia McDowell (Ecol 712 McD)



How to Be an Everyday Philanthropist: 330 Ways to Make a Difference by Nicole Boles (Soc.Iss. 361.7 Bol)



REV. IRENE PAK & MR. MARION LEE TO WED AT STONE CHURCH

You are all invited to attend the wedding ceremony of Irene Pak & Marion Lee on Sunday, Jan. 17, at 2:30 pm.

A reception in the Social Hall will follow the service, and all are welcome to celebrate!

Although Irene and Marion would love for everyone from the ceremony to join them, they hope you will understand that the evening reception is for family and close friends on an invitation-only basis.

*More fun facts and information about the wedding can be found at:
www.theknot.com/us/marion-and-irene*



A GOOD RUN

by Rev. Irene Pak

After eleven years as editor of *The Stone News*, Emily Meacham will retire from this position. In fact, this will be her final newsletter as the editor.

Some of you may have known this, and some of you may be surprised, but either way, I wanted to make sure we took a moment to recognize our awesome editor who gave of her time and served Stone Church in this way for so many years.

Emily joined Stone Church 26 years ago, along with her husband Jody and son Gordon. Many of you know they hail from North Carolina. Alongside her service as editor, Emily has served as an elder and deacon several times, sings in the choir, and is currently serving again as moderator of Deacons. Some fun facts include that she used to run marathons and do triathlons, and if you have been lucky enough to taste it, you know that she bakes a mean coconut cake.

Emily's time as editor all began because Rev. Rebecca Kuiken (former associate pastor) asked Emily to take on

the task. It was her "yes" that continued a series of wonderful newsletters over the past eleven years. During that time, Emily told me that although there are many things that she enjoyed about the role, if she had to pick one, it would be working with a great group of contributors and editors. She mentioned in particular our 94-year-old columnist June Tablak as the *Church Mouse*, who keeps us connected with the ins and outs of members of our community. Emily also mentioned how much she appreciated all of the pictures from all of our great photographers.

When asked what she loves in particular about Stone Church, Emily responded, that "Stone Church folks are the most caring and giving group of people that I know. I have been so proud of our openness and welcoming of the LGBT community over the years." She continued on to challenge us and see our growing edges as leaning more into issues like hunger, homelessness, and other forms of discrimination.

Her love for this community of faith has been evident through her words and actions. Personally, I will always appreciate the highlights and thought-

ful hymn verses that Emily would select as she sent the newsletter out to the community, interweaving her love of music and writing. She always extended grace on deadlines (those of us who contributed articles or announcements know how gracious she was to us!) and did this work faithfully.

In closing, I asked Emily if she had anything she would like to say to us as she wraps up this time. She stated, "I have been honored to be your editor for these past eleven years. I have such mixed feelings. On one hand, I feel it's definitely time for some new blood ... on the other hand, I have loved this role very, very much. It really gave me a creative outlet for writing and editing that was a nice contrast to my more conventional technical writing career. Thank you for this opportunity, and thank you for all of your kindness over the years."

I know Emily has felt a tremendous amount of gratitude from Stone Church for her hard work and hours of service in this particular way, but please join me again in thanking Emily.

Thanks be to God for your service and for your gift, Emily!

STONE WORKS KICKS OFF THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Stone Works has partnered with the Bill Wilson Center once again to bring Christmas joy to twenty families in the area. Our giving tree is already up and waiting for you to pick a gift to help someone feel the love and joy that we are so blessed to have during Christmas. If you have any questions about the tree, please contact Jodi Leibowitz.

As we've mentioned the past few months, we are working with the Willow Glen Cares program at Willow Glen High School to help provide needy students at WGHS with the necessities and niceties they need to make their high school experience as fun and fulfilling as possible. We're excited to announce that we are now ready for your help! Willow Glen Cares is asking for support ranging from small personal toiletries and gift cards (for food or clothing) to sponsoring a student's school year for all the extras that so many of us take for granted as an essential part of the high school experience. If you're willing to help, please contact Nicholas Hurley, or find a committee member in the Social Hall after Worship.

Finally, we're continuing our tradition of supporting worthy causes with donations to Sunday Friends, Heritage Home, Habitat for Humanity, and six PCUSA mission co-workers.

If you would like to know more about these, or any of the many Stone Works activities, please reach out and talk to us.

- Nicholas Hurley,
Stone Works Moderator

SESSION FINALIZES NURSERY HIRE, STARTS 2016 BUDGET PLANNING

Session finalized the hiring of Willow Glen resident Kimberly Moore as nursery supervisor on a trial basis at its November meeting. She will fill the position for the month of December with her status to be reviewed in January.

Moore agreed to take the position and was tentatively approved by Session at its October meeting pending the completion of background checks. Session also approved raising the pay for the position from \$15 to \$20 an hour with a three-hour minimum each Sunday. The position has gone unfilled for more than a year. [See also the article at right.]

In other Session business:

✿ Rhonda Lakatos was appointed leadership liaison with the ASL/Deaf Ministry Program. Ruling Elder Bill Raby-Brown told Session that work on the deaf ministry weekend in February is well under way.

✿ The Budget Review Committee, comprised of the chairs of all standing committees, will begin work on the 2016 Stone Church budget either Dec. 9 or 10. Session approves the annual budget at its January meeting.

✿ Ruling Elder Julia Roberts of the Stewardship Committee reported early results of this year's pledge campaign. Pledges received totaled \$466,972 with an expected final total of \$507,544, based on last year's value of outstanding pledges. The expected final total is an increase of 1.8 percent over last year.

✿ At the Health Committee's request, the Red Cross blood drive original scheduled for Nov. 21 was rescheduled for Dec. 29.

- Jody Meacham, Elder

HOW DO STEPHEN MINISTRY REFERRALS ACTUALLY WORK?

You may have wondered - how does the Stephen Ministry Referral Process actually work?

A person - either you, a relative, or a friend - is hurting and in need of Christian care.

The Stephen Minister Referrals Coordinator, Joan Peckham, learns about this need for care - from the pastor, the person, or a friend, always with the person's permission.

The Referrals Coordinator meets with the person to talk about Stephen Ministry.

With the person's permission, the Referrals Coordinator assigns a Stephen Minister to meet on a weekly basis with the person.

The Stephen Minister continues to provide care for the person with strict confidentiality.

The process is straightforward and caring.

If you are interested, please contact Joan Peckham or Judith Mohr.

WELCOME, KIM MOORE, NURSERY SUPERVISOR

Please welcome Kim Moore as Stone's new Nursery Supervisor.

Already hard at work, her presence has made all the difference to the children and their parents.

Volunteer parents are still needed, of course, and to help that along, so that the volunteers don't miss the sermon, a wireless speaker connection has been set up in the nursery.

- Bob Cole, Christian Education Chair

DECEMBER YOUTH GROUP: "THE RELUCTANT DRAGON," HOT COCOA, CHRISTMAS PARTY, MOVIES AND PJS - SOUNDS LIKE FUN!

December Youth Group activities will look a little bit different, but will still be a lot of fun!

Sunday, Dec. 13, we'll meet at 1:30 pm to enjoy *The Reluctant Dragon*, with the children's and adult choirs. Afterward, we'll walk to Starbucks for hot cocoa!



Friday, Dec. 18, will be our annual Youth Christmas Party at the home of Rosaleen Zisch, at 7 pm.

Sunday, Dec. 27, will be a pajama and movie night with popcorn and cider from 5-7 pm in the Social Hall.

And of course, we hope to see you at Worship during the season of Advent and at one of the Christmas Eve services (5:30 pm and/or 11 pm)!

If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Irene.

WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES AT STONE CHURCH

Advent season is the time of giving hope to others through charitable donations and/or volunteering.

Mission Gathering a Great Success

We had a great turnout for the Mission Gathering. It was nice to meet and talk with the leaders of the local charities that Stone Church supports. Your own individual donations and volunteer time supports our local missions. Thanks to all who contributed to the Thank Offering. Thanks also to J. Lohr for the festive wines.



PW's Many Deserving Recipients

Stone Church PW donated monies to Freedom House, "The Nest," Planned Parenthood's *Teen Success Program*, The Women's Gathering Place, Immanuel House, Boys and Girls Clubs of Silicon Valley, Front Door Ministries, and Emmaus House.

Donations Needed for Next Door Solutions to Domestic Violence

Help make the holidays brighter for the women and children of Next Door Solutions by donating \$25 Target gift cards. They also appreciate multilingual or multicultural books, personal hygiene products, blankets and throws, kids' jackets, and wrapping paper and tape. Claudia Hamm will take your gifts by Dec. 11 (or see nextdoor.org, or call 408.501.7571).

Remember Mission Co-workers

Don't forget our Mission Co-workers (see pcusa.org/donate/):

- ♥ Brian and Sandi Thompson-Roger - serving Guatemala (E200334ID)
- ♥ Dong Ho and Sook Nim Choi - serving Indonesia (E200523ID)
- ♥ Kate Taber - serving Israel/Palestine (E200516ID)

Save These Dates

Jan. 10, 2016: Winter Gathering/Epiphany Tea, "Come to the Waters of Faith," 2-4 pm, Stone Church

Jan. 11, 2016: Human Trafficking Awareness Day

Box Tops for Education

Whether you're baking or cleaning up, remember to bring in your **BOXTOPS4EDUCATION**.



PW Calendar for December

Presbyterian Women Giving, Dec. 1
Amethyst Bible Circle, Dec. 2, noon, Jan Keifer's home

Emerald Bible Circle, Dec. 3, 11 am, Alice Thorn's home

Lunch Bunch, 11:30 am, Dec. 8, Taiwan Restaurant, 1306 Lincoln Ave. Contact Ida Raby.

Coordinating Team, Dec. 10, 9:30 am, Social Hall

Fair Trade Coffee & Chocolate Sales, Coffee Fellowship, Dec. 13

Sapphire Bible Circle, Dec. 14, 6:30 pm, Jeanette Rapp's home.

Book Group III, 7:15 pm, Dec. 16, Church Library, discussing *Station Eleven*, by Emily St. John Mandel

Drop-in Bible Study, Dec. 17, 9:30 am, Church Library

Book Group II, 2:30 pm, Dec. 21, Claudia Hamm's home, discussing *Deep Down Dark*, by Héctor Tobar

Prayer Shawl Ministry, Dec. 26, 1-3 pm, Linda Hagan's home

Book Group I, 1 pm, Dec. 28, Hazel James' home.

- Joyce Summers



Men's Mission & Ministry at Stone Church includes a mission work team, a book group, a flying group, and wine- and beer-making groups. For more information about any of these activities, please contact the Rev. Dr. David McCreath, Parish Associate.

Men's Book Group, Dec. 21

The Men's Book Group will meet on Dec. 21, beginning at 7 pm. David McCreath will be the host. The book for discussion is *The Road to Character*, by David Brooks. "Looking to some of the world's greatest thinkers and inspiring leaders, Brooks explains how ... they have built strong inner character." All men of the church are welcome to join the conversation.



Seven members of Men's Mission & Ministry recently went on a Mission Worktrip to Westminster Woods. Pictured above are the "sheetrock crew" of Phil Curtis, Leland Wong, Steve Nelson, and Gabriel Faber. Also on the trip were Art Holtz, Lawrence Summers, and Rod Thorn (who took this picture). Look for more of these great photos on the following page.



Men's Worktrip to Westminster Woods

more photos courtesy of Rod Thorn

Top row, left to right: The playground that Stone's men, along with 200 other volunteers, helped build in October 2007; Beautiful fall at Westminster Woods; the Sherwood Forest outdoor theatre that Stone's men and other volunteers helped build about 2004.

Middle row, left to right: Lawrence Summers and Art Holtz with a light fixture that they installed; Leland Wong and Steve Nelson working on sheetrock; The whole group putting sheetrock on the ceiling of the shop (the double layer makes a firewall, protecting the apartment upstairs).

Bottom row, left to right: Outside view of Westminster Woods shop; Inside view of shop; A tree so close to an eroding cliff that some of its roots are now exposed.



Stone welcomed new members Jean & Bill Holsinger, Renee Pavlovich, Nina Mundi, Michele Smith, Betty Stearns, and Beth Lococo, on Nov. 22, during Worship.

PRAYER FOR FRIENDSHIP

O God,
Our Healer,
Our Sustainer,
The One-We-Call-Upon-in-the-
Middle-of-the-Night-
Our Friend,
Come Now
And listen to us.

Listen to the prayers of our
yearning hearts:
We pray for the world around us.
We pray for peace and
understanding among
neighbors and friends.
We are in many ways different
from one another and in many
ways the same.

Help us to listen-
even when listening is difficult,
and we are tempted to interrupt.

Encourage us to act-
even when acting is inconvenient
or inaction would be much easier.

Set us free to give-
and in giving discover our
humanity and our Faith in
Christ Jesus.

O God, we give you thanks for
our friends.

We thank you for those who have
stood by us through thick and thin;
For those who have no reason to
love us, but love us anyway.

We are thankful that we can be this
kind of friend to someone else.
Teach us to weep and rejoice with
our friends rather than compete
and compare.

Teach us what friendship means:
with our spouse, with our children,
with strangers,
With someone we love, with You.

And remind us daily that how we
treat our friends
reflects on who *we are* and
who *we are becoming*.

“No one has greater love than this,
to lay down one’s life for one’s
friends,”

Jesus tells us.

No one has greater love than this.
Thank You for being our Friend.

- Ken Henry



*The Stone Church Trailwalkers
had a great hike at Rancho
Cañada del Oro Open Space
Preserve this past month.
The group is taking a break in
December, but will be back in
the New Year!*



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