



**Fall Meeting Dates:**

- December 13th

**Spring 2013 Meeting Dates:**

- January 17th & 31st
- February 14th & 28th
- March 14th & 28th
- April 11th & 25th
- May 9th & 23rd

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### A Christian Christmas For Families: Seven Simple Family Traditions

There are so many wonderful ways to celebrate your faith with your children during the Christmas season! These simple, but beautiful family traditions can help keep children focused on the true "reason for the season" amidst all the holiday frenzy. Try these 7 simple family traditions to help keep Christ at the center of your Christmas celebrations.

- 1. Read Christmas Stories Together:** Advent is a perfect time to introduce this simple family tradition. Read a story or two from Religious Christmas books or Children's Bibles at bedtime each night. It is a great way to reinforce the meaning of Christmas, and helps children prepare for the upcoming religious holiday. Religious books and bibles also make perfect Christmas gifts which can be enjoyed for years to come.
- 2. Hang an Advent Calendar:** Display an Advent Calendar in your home, and have children add an ornament each night at dinnertime. Advent Calendars with their religious ornaments make great teaching tools, and are a wonderful visual reminder of the Nativity story. This is an exciting way for children to countdown to Jesus' birthday.
- 3. Display a Children's Nativity Set:** Set up a child-friendly nativity set by your Christmas tree where it is easily accessible. There are many adorable Children's Nativity Sets available which are very durable. Playing with a Nativity set is an extremely wonderful tactile and visual learning experience which brings the birth of Jesus to life.
- 4. Light the Advent Wreath:** Set up an Advent Wreath in your home. Take a moment to light a candle at Sunday dinner for each of the four weeks during Advent. Many Advent wreaths include simple family prayers, blessings or hymns which can be sung during the wreath lighting. Sing a simple Advent or Christmas song together.
- 5. Encourage Good Deeds:** Encourage good deeds throughout the Advent & Christmas season in order to prepare our hearts for Jesus' coming. Construct a simple family manger (a shoe box will do) which can be filled with "good deeds hay" to make baby Jesus warm and cozy. To make "good deeds hay," cut small strips of paper and have family members write down any good deeds they have done during the day. As the season progresses, the manger fills up with "good deeds hay" until it is ready for the infant Jesus (a small doll or drawing) to be placed. What a precious family Christmas gift for Jesus!

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- 6. Display Religious Decorations:** As the saying goes, "Keep Christ in Christmas." When decorating your home, don't forget to display religious decorations along with your regular Christmas decorations. Christmas ornaments portraying the nativity scene, a nativity set, an outdoor or window nativity are visual reminders of the true meaning of Christmas. When decorating with lights, talk to children about the meaning of light, a beautiful symbol of our faith.
- 7. Plan Family Christmas Activities Together:** Take the time during the hustle and bustle of the season to enjoy some family time. A few suggestions for family activities include a family Christmas movie night complete with popcorn and a favorite children's Christmas DVDs; baking extra special Christmas cookies together by using religious cookie cutters; and singing along to the beautiful Christmas hymns and carols on the piano or with your favorite Christmas CDs. Whatever you choose to do, make it a special time together to celebrate your faith.

**A final word...**

Always remember that of the countless Christmas gifts we give our children, the time we spend nurturing their faith is priceless. It is the only gift that lasts a lifetime and beyond. Developing children's faith begins early, and religious holidays are the perfect opportunity to celebrate your faith together as a family. Reading together, praying together and preparing for Christmas together are wonderful ways to keep Jesus at the center of our Christmas festivities and our lives.

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## Announcements, Announcements, Announcements!



**Happy Birthday to our December Moms:**

- Gerri Holbrook: 17th
- Kerri Metzger: 21st
- Maureen Widroe: 25th

**New Baby!**

Lindsey Hume, her husband, Chris, and



daughter, Alison, welcomed a new baby girl, Felicity, on October 23rd at 4:34pm. Felicity weighed 8lbs, 2oz. and was 20" long.

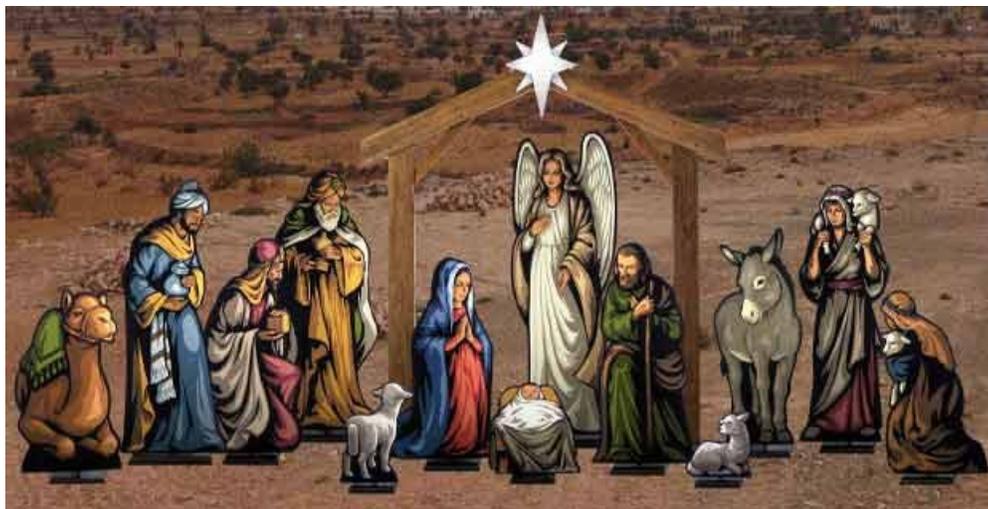
If you would like to announce a pregnancy, birth, anniversary, birthday, or anything important to you and your family, please contact Christina Whippo at [symopsnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:symopsnewsletter@gmail.com) or at 701-1596.

## Local Sunday church services for December:

- **Santa Ynez Presbyterian Church:** 9:00am, 10:30am.  
Christmas Eve: 4:00pm, family; 9:00pm candlelight
- **Valley Christian Fellowship:** 8:30am, 10:30am.  
Christmas Eve: 4:00pm
- **Crossroads:** 9:00am Sunday School, 10:00am service.  
Christmas Eve: 6:00pm
- **St. Mark's Episcopal:** 10:00am.  
Christmas Eve: 10:00
- **Trinity Baptist:** Sunday School 9:00am, 10:00am service.  
Christmas eve: combined with Community church (there), 6:00pm.
- **Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran:** Sunday school 9:00am, 10:00am service.  
Christmas Eve: 9:00am
- **The Ranch Church:** 8:30am, 10:30am.  
Christmas Eve: 4:00pm

\*All the above churches have child care or children's program during the services.

- **Old Mission Santa Ines:** 8:00am, 9:30am, 11:00am, and 5:00pm (youth mass)  
Christmas Eve: 4:00pm Children's Mass, 6:00pm, 11:30pm Christmas Carols, 12:00am Midnight Mass  
Christmas Day: 9:00am, 11am



## In the Craft Room...

### Christmas Clay Ornaments (Cornstarch & Baking Soda)



Prep time: 15 minutes  
Design time: an hour?  
Dry time: 2-36 hours  
Difficulty: Easy

These are great for the kids to decorate for Christmas. If you want to make colored clay just add food coloring to the water before you mix it with the cornstarch and baking soda. The clay can be sealed in an airtight container and kept in the fridge for a couple of weeks. Just bring it to room temperature before you use it. This recipe can also be doubled to make a larger batch of decorations. You can leave them sparkly white, or paint them with acrylic paints and a finishing glaze for a festive look.

#### What you need:

- 1 1/2 cup comstarch
- 1 cup baking soda
- 3/4 cup water
- Craft paints
- Paint brushes
- Newspaper for easy cleanup
- Rolling pin
- Cookie Cutters
- Stamps (optional)
- Straw (to make holes)
- Parchment paper

Making Clay: In a medium sized pot combine the comstarch, baking soda, and water. With an adults help the kids can stir this mixture over medium-low heat. After a couple of minutes, the mixture will begin to thicken. When it looks like smooth, mashed potatoes, remove the pot from the heat. Spoon the ball of dough into a bowl and cover it with a damp cloth until it's cool. When it's cool, knead it on a smooth surface, adding a little more comstarch if it feels sticky.

Rolling, cutting, and baking: Preheat oven to 175 degrees. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. Roll out clay to 1/4 inch thick on a surface lightly dusted with comstarch. Use cookie cutters to cut out shapes. Use stamps to emboss designs. Transfer shapes to the prepared baking sheet. Use a straw to poke a hole in the center top of each decoration, then get the kids to blow out the small piece of clay. They love this task! Place them in the oven at 175 degrees for about an hour, turning them over halfway through cooking. You can also let the ornaments air dry overnight (or a few days) instead to keep a whiter white finish.

Decorating and Finish: Paint or decorate them and thread a piece of ribbon, twine or yarn through the holes. If you would like, finish them with an acrylic glaze medium or a clear spray paint to preserve.

### Salt Dough Ornaments



Prep time: 15-30 minutes  
Design time: an hour?  
Dry time: 2-36 hours  
Difficulty: Easy

With this easy Salt Dough Recipe you can make tons of really neat crafts like sculptures and ornaments, the sky's the limit! The best part is that it can go right in the oven to dry!

#### Ingredients:

- 1 cup salt
- 2 cups all Purpose flour
- 1 cup luke warm water

1. In a large bowl mix salt and flour.

2. Gradually stir in water. Mix well until it forms a doughy consistency.

3. With your hands form a ball with your dough and kneed it for at least 5-10 minutes. The longer you kneed your dough the smoother it will be.

Store your salt dough in a air tight container and you will be able to use it for days. You can paint your creations with acrylic paints and seal with varnish or polyurethane spray. You can let your salt dough creations air dry, however salt dough can also be dried in the oven. Bake at 200 F until your creation is dry. The amount of time needed to bake your creations depends on size and thickness; thin flat ornaments may only take 45-60 minutes, thicker creations can take 2-3 hours or more. You can increase your oven temperature to 350 F, your dough will dry faster but it may also brown, which won't matter if you are painting your entire creation (you can also cover your dough in the oven before it turns brown). There are a few options to color your salt dough: 1. Add powdered tempera paint to your flour, 2. add food coloring or paint to the water before you mix it with the salt/flour, or 3. add natural coloring like instant coffee, cocoa, or curry powder.

## Christmas Crafts & Keepsake Ideas from Pinterest



## **Christmas Events in the Santa Ynez Valley:**

### **Saturday, December 1, 2012**

#### **Olde Fashioned Christmas in Los Olivos**

Celebrate Olde Fashioned Christmas as the streets are adorned with luminaries and the smell of popcorn and roasted walnuts. Local merchants will welcome guests during this romantic return to small town holiday celebration. Experience musical performances and a tree lighting ceremony by our "Little Angel." 4:30pm-7pm. [www.losolivosca.com](http://www.losolivosca.com)

### **Sunday, December 2, 2012**

#### **Buellton Winter Fest**

9am-Noon: Breakfast with Santa at the Buellton Rec. Center. Photos and Breakfast with Santa. \$12 adults/kids free

4-6pm: Concert, Cookies and Cocoa at the Rec Center. Free admission.

4-8pm: "Holiday Village" on Avenue of the Flags. Includes music, vendors, and 10 tons of snow!

6pm: Light Parade and Caroling Cruise throughout Buellton

7pm: Christmas Tree Lighting on the Avenue of Flags. For more information visit [www.visitbuellton.com](http://www.visitbuellton.com)

### **Friday, December 7, 2012**

#### **Julefest Tree Lighting Ceremony**

Julefest "opens" with the annual Tree-Lighting Ceremony of the city's tall evergreen in Solvang Park (Mission Drive & First Street). Starting at 5pm, enjoy free live entertainment with ballerinas, bands, caroling and the arrival of Santa

Claus. [www.solvangusa.com](http://www.solvangusa.com)

### **Saturday, December 8, 2012**

#### **Julefest Parade**

The annual Julefest Parade begins at 11am. Entries include Danish dancers, musical groups, vintage vehicles, horses, carriages and animals. The parade originates at Old Mission Santa Ines (1760 Mission Drive), travels west on Mission Drive (Highway 246), turns left on Fourth Place, turns left on Copenhagen Drive, and ends on Alisal Road at Mission Drive. Santa Claus will be available for visits and photos in Solvang Park post-parade. The Grand Marshals of this year's parade is Ken Palmer. [www.solvangusa.com](http://www.solvangusa.com)

#### **Santa Ynez Valley Presbyterian Church Advent Dinner and Workshop**

4pm-7pm. Spaghetti Dinner, Games, and Crafts for the entire Family. Located in the SYVPC Family Center.

#### **Los Alamos Christmas Open House**

5:30pm-7:30pm. Tree lighting, caroling, music, special offerings from local shops, tasting rooms and restaurants throughout the community. More details will be posted on [www.losalamosvalley.org](http://www.losalamosvalley.org).

### **Saturday, December 15, 2012**

#### **Nativity Pageant in Solvang**

The "Christmas Story" comes to life in the Nativity Pageant at the outdoor Solvang Festival Theater (420 Second Street). Enjoy a choir, actors in traditional costumes, and live animals on stage. There are two FREE performances at 5pm and 7pm, with seating on a first come, first entertained basis. (In the unlikely event of rain, performances will be held at an alternate location to be announced).

### **Thursday, December 20, 2012**

#### **Cookie Decorating Playdate with MOPS**

4-6pm. Cookie decorating with the kids, Christmas Punch, and Fun! Located in the SYVPC Family Center

# December 2012

## Future Events

### Spring 2013

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Olde Fashioned Christmas
2 Buellton Winter Fest	3	4	5	6	7 Solvang Christmas Tree Lighting	8 Julefest Parade & Advent Dinner
9	10	11	12	13 MOPS Christmas Party	14	15 Nativity Pageant
16	17	18	19	20 Cookie Decorating Playdate	21	22
23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29
30	31 New Year's Eve				4 Christmas Tree Burn	



## Friday-Sunday, December 14-16, 2012

### Santa Ynez Valley Chorale Concert

Concerts: Friday, December 14th at 7:30pm. Saturday, December 15th at 6pm. Sunday, December 16th at 3pm. Located at Church at the Crossroads in Buellton. \$15 general admission/\$12 for seniors and children

## Friday, January 4, 2012

### Solvang Annual Christmas Tree Burn

Old Mission Santa Inés, 1760 Mission Drive, Solvang, CA 6pm

The Solvang Annual Christmas Tree Burn is supervised by the Santa Barbara County Fire Department as one of the largest fire safety demonstrations and community gatherings on California's Central Coast. All area residents are invited to bring their tree (stands & ornaments must be removed) to the burn pile between January 1-3, 2011; and then join together to see this powerful spectacle ignite the New Year and herald the beginning of Solvang's Centennial Celebration year.

[www.solangusa.com](http://www.solangusa.com)

## Leadership Directory

### Coordinator

Shellee Castillo 245-3875

### Assistant Coordinators

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Robyn Caplan 405-2223

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### Hospitality Leader

Lindsey Ammann 688-6851

### Creative Activities

Jennifer Mlodzik 693-5192

### Care & Celebrations

Charisse Spry 325-1826

### Social Coordinator

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### Publicity/Newsletter

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Kim Stevens 344-6050

Meggan Johnson 621-2859

Misty Sedehi 949-677-8617

Tracy Angel 450-8060

April Trieger 448-5040

### Mentors

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Anne Lautensack 686-1328

Paula Albrecht 688-8131

Gerri Eberly 688-2265

Cindy Long 688-5338

Cindy Fredette 688-3553

Chris Elmerick 686-1599

### MOPPETS Coordinator

Amy Tagles 216-4030

### SYVPC Staff Liaison

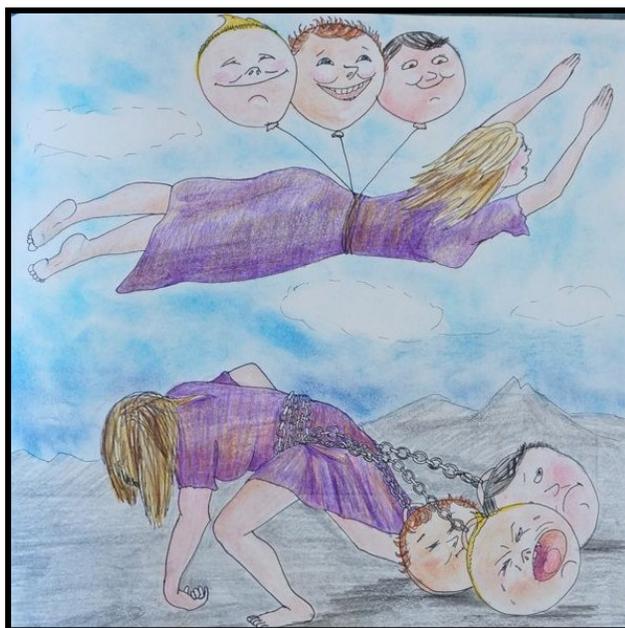
Lis Wilson 688-6323



**Santa Ynez Valley MOPS  
is sponsored by:**

**Santa Ynez Valley Presbyterian Church  
1825 Alamo Pintado Road, Solvang, CA  
805-688-6323**

[www.syvpc.org](http://www.syvpc.org)



“Mom’s up and down” by Irina Malkmus