

FERN LODGE FOCUS — DECEMBER 2013

Fern Lodge • 18457 Madison Avenue • Castro Valley, CA 94546 • 510.886.2448 • fern lodge.org

Christmas 2013

Dear Friends,

The San Francisco Bay Area doesn't often see snow, but on those rare mornings that come every few years, the hills near Fern Lodge are blanketed and frosted with the crystalline beauty familiar to our friends in cooler climates. The photos on this page were taken on such a morning. The stillness, grace, and beauty of the morning reminded me of so many Christmas scenes that have been shared through the years. Although the snowy images of winter are unusual where we live, the spirit of Christmas lives in our hearts through every day of each year.

Christmas has precious meaning for Fern Lodge. Christian Science nursing cherishes the coming of Christ to human consciousness. The role of Christian Science nurses is to witness this appearing in themselves, in each patient, each fellow worker, every day. Christmas is a healing idea. It announces to mankind the spiritual origin and status of mankind, overcoming and destroying the sins and diseases of a mortal, material sense of men and women.

In her article, "The Significance of Christmas" (My. 260:3), Mrs. Eddy wrote the following: "An eternal Christmas would make matter an alien save as phenomenon, and matter would reverentially withdraw itself before Mind. The despotism of material sense or the flesh would flee before such reality, to make room for substance, and the shadow of frivolity and the inaccuracy of material sense would disappear."

Christian Science nursing is a healing practice, a daily celebration of man's freedom from material conditions or limitations. In this celebration, Christian Science nurses bring to their work their unique gifts, such as practical affection, the accuracy of a pure spiritual sense, and clear receptivity to Life, Truth, and Love.

In this **FOCUS** you will find articles from the recent Fern Lodge Annual Meeting, focused on the services offered by Fern Lodge and Christian Science nurses. Our underlying theme was, and continues to be, the importance of being faithful and obedient in the expression of Christian qualities and in the healing practice of Christian Science.

With gratitude and affection,



George Strong
Administrator



DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSING — ROZANNE ZWICK

I'm grateful for the dedicated Fern Lodge staff. They reflect the divine qualities of cheerfulness, faithfulness, persistence, spiritual intuition, and conviction in the Truth! I'd also like to thank the volunteers who support Fern Lodge by reading at our testimony meetings and Sunday services, and serving at Rainbow's End, the thrift shop whose income benefits Fern Lodge. And I'd like to thank the Christian Science practitioners and teachers, and *everyone* whose prayers for healing include Christian Science nursing and our nursing facilities.

Christian Science nurses stand firm with those seeking Christian Science healing. Do not hesitate to call upon us! This year occupancy has averaged over 20 patients each day. We've also provided outpatient nursing services for individuals who were able to return to their homes after receiving nursing care at our facility. Our Christian Science nurses also make visits to deliver supplies and care for people in their homes.

It's been a year of spiritual growth for patients and staff. Patients receiving care at Fern Lodge have returned to their homes free from challenges of labored breathing, depression, and what appeared to be a stroke. Others have been receiving Christian Science treatment and nursing care for some time, and the idea of returning to an independent living situation may not appear possible. Recently I read the following in an article about Christian Science nursing, "The Theology of Care," by Geraldine Schiering, *The Christian Science Journal*, July 1982:

"In a situation where extended care is needed, it does not necessarily follow that such care is supporting an unprogressive experience. Only the mortal misconception of life claims that certain circumstances are nothing more than a perpetual care situation or that nursing aid is not sufficiently spiritual to support progress and healing. Until the human family advances beyond extensive care situations, we will need to master them. Each stage of the human situation must be brought under divine authority."

There is rarely a day that Robin, our activities director, isn't sharing a healing experience. She summed this up with a quote from Mary Baker Eddy (*SC&H* 246:27): "Life is eternal. We should find this out, and begin the demonstration thereof. Life and goodness are immortal. Let us then shape our views of existence into loveliness, freshness, and continuity, rather than into age and blight."

One patient was struggling with daily activities and said that she didn't see the value of making the effort. Through gentle encouragement to change that view, this has been turned around to the realization that life comes to us in ideas, which we follow and which bring us joy, companionship, love, and friendship. Another patient explained that her thought had moved from "Why am I here?" to "I'm here to change my thinking. I have a purpose." For a period of time, a patient has been diligently studying and praying with others and seeing healing results. There was progress from limited mobility to walking with a walker. Not satisfied to stop there, this individual is now walking with only slight assistance.

I like what Paul writes in his second letter to the Christians at Corinth (10:2, from *The New Testament in Modern English* by JB Phillips):

"For I am afraid otherwise that I think I shall have to do some plain speaking to those of you who will persist in reckoning that our activities are on the purely human level. The truth is that, although we lead normal human lives, the battle we are fighting is on the spiritual level. The very weapons we use are not human but powerful in God's warfare for the destruction of the enemy's strongholds. Our battle is to break down every deceptive argument and every imposing defense that men erect against the true knowledge of God. We fight to capture every thought until it acknowledges the authority of Christ."

With divine authority Christian Science nurses witness the victories of Christian Science healing.

Fern Lodge offers comprehensive instruction and supervised practice in the ethics, skills and comforting arts that help individuals to represent themselves as Christian Science nurses. Our program is fully accredited and reaches out to Christian Scientists around the world; it currently includes individuals from Brazil, Peru, Kenya, as well as a young mother who just moved to Castro Valley.

In *Science and Health* Mrs. Eddy instructs us, “Academics of the right sort are requisite. Observation, invention, study, and original thought are expansive and should promote the growth of mortal mind out of itself, out of all that is mortal.” We are continually praying to practice Christian Science, asking how our academics can promote the growth of mortal mind out of itself, and all that is mortal.

Education at Fern Lodge includes all of the subjects and skills taught at other Christian Science nursing training sites, and Fern Lodge’s program has some unique aspects. Individuals may stay in their home areas and learn at their own pace. Class hours can be adjusted to accommodate a learner, which is helpful to mothers with school age children. Learning takes place in a homelike setting, using furniture one would find in a home as well as in a facility. Small classes promote a more intimate learning environment, and enable more individualized attention and supervision. Individuals may advance to the next level as they demonstrate spiritual growth and mastery of skills and qualities.

Those who live in Spanish-speaking countries have opportunities to learn Christian Science nursing, at our facility or in their own countries. We have a bilingual staff, including Christian Science nurses, to help when learners come here. We are grateful to the Albert Baker Fund for their financial assistance with our facility, home, and international programs.

Essential qualities for a nurse are found in *Science and Health*. “The nurse should be cheerful, orderly, punctual, patient, full of faith,—receptive to Truth and Love.” In that passage Mrs. Eddy first

gives examples of what the nurse should not be: “ill-tempered, complaining, or deceitful.” In our classroom work, we gain a greater breadth, depth, and amplification of our understanding of those traits. So one of the ways to restate those qualities might sound something like this: “An irritable, whining, or untrustworthy person should not be a nurse. The nurse should be optimistic, organized, prompt, able to wait without becoming annoyed or anxious, have confidence in the Providence of God,—be responsive to reality and divine Love.”

Those basic tender qualities are so important in caring for human needs. And there are many woven into Mrs. Eddy’s writings, a few of which are common sense and common humanity, gentleness, perception, discernment, alertness, fidelity to metaphysics, Christian encouragement, pitiful patience with fears and the ability to remove them, a Christianly scientific blend of the Michael and Gabriel qualities, etc.

Proper care for another is recognizing that God is the ever-present nurse, nurturer, Christianly scientific care giver, and that we and God do our jobs together, our hands firmly held in God’s hand. When I acknowledge divine Love’s care for man, the patient and I bear witness to Love’s care throughout the day. Through prayer, we do not mistake our personal presence as THE healing presence. We witness the ever-present Christ in consciousness, and all within the embrace of our atmosphere of thought can feel it and be blessed. Affirming Christ in consciousness brings a calm stillness and quiet confidence in Christ’s ministering, nursing presence, appropriate and sufficient to meet every need.

Thank you for your own tender expression of the loving, nurturing qualities that are so needed to nurse our church and its members, as well as our world that is in need of comfort every day. If expression of God’s nurturing, nursing qualities strikes a chord with you, we encourage you to look into becoming a Christian Science nurse. We’d love to cherish you in your growth and progress!

SCENES AROUND FERN LODGE



Tree of Life / 12 Major 7th chords is the title of the series of paintings pictured here. Nancy says, "My work...investigates musical concepts and theories, the relationships between color, form, texture, proportion and pitch, harmony, timbre, and rhythm...The work also speaks of the universal and infinite nature and language of color, music, measurement and pattern and of the possibility of using this language to find and communicate qualities which bring people and ideas together and give us a glimpse of a larger, all inclusive order."



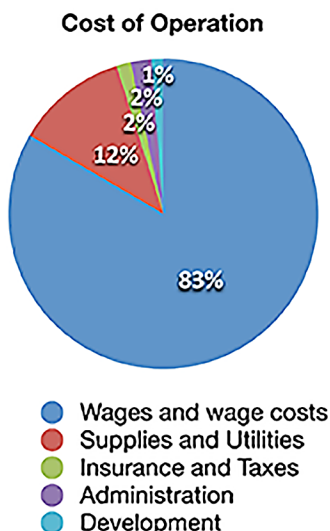
Nancy Mooslin is dear friend of Christian Science nursing and an extraordinary artist, whose works have been displayed in a broad range of galleries and public places. A friend recently purchased one of Nancy's paintings as a gift to Fern Lodge, and Nancy donated to Fern Lodge two additional paintings in the same series. These three works now grace one of the hallways at Fern Lodge. You can see more on her website: nancymooslin.com. We are deeply grateful for Nancy's generosity.



TREASURER'S REPORT

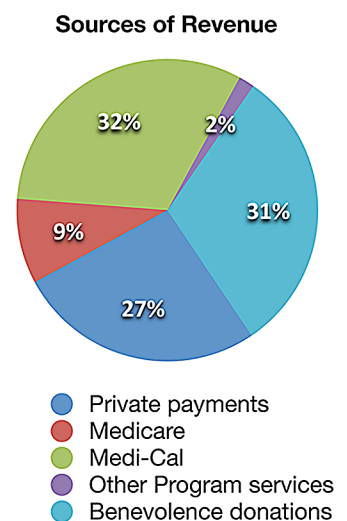
During 2013 Fern Lodge has been operating near full capacity. Most of those we serve do not have funds to pay the full cost, so income from sources other than patient services is needed each year. We have established a Benevolence Fund, and we are seeking contributions to grow this fund so that in the future it will supplement patient payments and provide funds for benevolence.

The cost of operation for 2013 is projected to be over \$2.2 million.



As you can see on the chart on the left, the largest portion of our expenses go to provide fair compensation for the Fern Lodge staff, whose loving care in all departments maintains our healing mental environment.

The chart on the right shows where the funds come from to pay the cost of operating Fern Lodge. Donations, grants, and bequests will be needed this year to supply over \$680,000 in financial aid that is being given as benevolence for those who need it.



SCENES AROUND FERN LODGE

Winter brings out the Christmas decorations! The photo on the left shows the view of the patio from one of the patient breakfast areas. We are grateful for the mild winter weather that allows patients to use the patio through all seasons of the year.



Petunias, a dogwood, and a flowering cherry bring joyous color to the patio in the spring. As the days warm, many patients begin to eat their meals here.



Last summer the Fern Lodge Board of Directors, pictured at left, served an ice cream social for our dedicated staff. From left to right: George Strong, Anna Lisa Kronman, Lisa Jasper, Jennifer Babcock, Dennis Gerlt, Elizabeth Schwartz, and Tom Port.



A Chinese Pistache tree brings vibrant fall color to Fern Lodge, along with the bright blooms of a red hydrangea. Throughout the year deer, racoons, and a variety of birds visit our gardens. Every season reminds us of God's loving care for mankind and all creation.



BEING FAITHFUL AND OBEDIENT —

At the Fern Lodge Annual Meeting last October, Don Christensen, C.S., gave an inspiring talk on the topic, “Being Faithful and Obedient.” Rather than having us reprint the talk, Mr. Christensen encouraged us to make the ideas from the talk our own and then share with others our understanding of the necessity for each of us to be a faithful and obedient Christian Scientist, a diligent disciple of Christ Jesus and follower of Mary Baker Eddy. This article was compiled from thoughts shared by Fern Lodge board and staff members.



Our mission is to heal. We strive to demonstrate the love of God in the Christian Science nursing we provide. We watch, work, and pray to play our role in “healing and saving the world from sin and death” (see the *Church Manual*, p. 19). We take comfort and inspiration from Mrs. Eddy’s assurance, “All God’s servants are minute men and women. As of old, I stand with sandals on and staff in hand, waiting for the watchword and the revelation of what, how, whither. Let us be faithful and obedient, and God will do the rest” (Mis. 158:19).

“Be strong, be obedient!” I can because God made me able to. I can stand firm in the truth!

“Choose ye this day whom ye will serve,” Moses required of his sometimes unruly flock. He didn’t say, Choose *if* you will serve, but *whom* ye will serve. He followed this with a strong encouragement to choose good, life, and abundance, a God-directed life. Seems like an easy choice, doesn’t it? Trouble is, we usually wish choosing good to be an undemanding and convenient effort on our part. Often, however, it requires something a bit harder: faithfulness and obedience.

The decision to be obedient and faithful to God, good, is between each one and his God. The actions that naturally follow are consistent with this desire to be and do good, in other words, to love. Obedience includes compliance, conformity,

acceptance, yielding, abiding. It includes meekness, willingness, and teachableness. Faithfulness includes being true-hearted, conscientious, thorough, reliable, dependable, trustworthy. A pattern of being obedient and faithful to God is a strength and protection, as it allies one with omnipotent good. This rousing demand from *Science and Health* by Mary Baker Eddy, page 393, underscores this:

Rise in the strength of Spirit to resist all that is unlike good. God has made man capable of this, and nothing can vitiate the ability and power divinely bestowed on man.

Be firm in your understanding that the divine Mind governs, and that in Science man reflects God’s government.

To me, this says, “Be strong, be obedient!” I can, because God made me able to. I can stand firm in the truth! And I can choose this day to serve God, and trust that She will keep guiding me, step by step.

In Mrs. Eddy’s article, “Obedience,” she states, “Obeying the divine Principle which you profess to understand and love, demonstrates Truth.” One way

to think of this statement is that Truth must be demonstrated, its effect seen, because Truth is power. Therefore, we have no choice but to obey the divine

Principle. Any actions outside Principle would not be allowed in the kingdom of Truth,—the only kingdom. Such apparent actions would be powerless and therefore would be eradicated by Truth. Mrs. Eddy continues in the article on obedience, “Never absent from your post, never off guard, never ill-humored, never unready to work for God, — is obedience...” (*Miscellaneous Writings* 116). These actions ask in a positive way for us to be always at our post, always on guard, always good-humored, always ready to work for God. These are the only actions that exist in the kingdom of Truth, the kingdom of heaven. These actions describe us and are our very being. These actions bring fruits and multiply them.

INSPIRATION FROM THE TOPIC OF THE FERN LODGE ANNUAL MEETING

Being faithful and obedient is nearly always a no-fanfare decision. It's not showy. It is a pattern of putting God first, as much as one sees to do it, and as this happens in the quiet of thought, one's actions follow. To me, this gets to what Jesus alerted us to in Matthew 6, as translated by JB Phillips: "Beware of doing your good deeds conspicuously to catch men's eyes or you will miss the reward of your Heavenly Father. So, when you do good to other people, don't hire a trumpeter to go in front of you like those play-actors in the synagogues and streets who make sure that men admire them. Believe me, they have had all the reward they are going to get! No, when you give to charity, don't even let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be secret. Your Father who knows all secrets will reward you."

Inspired faithfulness and obedience come with the humility that says, with Christ Jesus, "I can of mine

own self do nothing," and "the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." Within this thought is the complete surrender of the human to the divine, surrender of the heaviness of personal sense for the joy, lightness and uplifting power of spiritual sense that discerns and meets all human needs.

We must have patient perseverance. "Love is not hasty to deliver us from temptation, for Love means that we shall be tried and purified" (S&H 22:20). The "not hasty" part calls on our faithfulness, and to be "tried and purified" requires obedience.

Obedience is a willingness to put aside our personal sense of right in order to follow Truth.

There is an act of self-surrender and humility that comes with obedience. It's a willingness to put aside our personal sense of right—our strongly held opinions—in order to follow Truth. Obedience moves us from the wandering wilderness into a straight and narrow way. Obedience binds up the disheartened, while disobedience passes the wounded stranger by. Obedience reveals God's purpose for each of us, while disobedience sails for Nineveh. As Paul puts it, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." We all serve and obey something. So let's serve God and enter faithfully into his household.

It is as simple as faithfully leaving the false for the true, being willing again and again to lay everything on the altar, to feel the fullness of Spirit and to move with it step by step as Love leavens the heart, and to love everyone as the sunlight that breaks through the clouds loves the whole earth! Neither the unworthiness of shame, nor the self-righteousness of pride can resist or thwart the movement of Truth and Love. God is revealing us as the innocent, fearless, and joyfully obedient children of one Mind!



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR — GEORGE STRONG

Fern Lodge's mission is to heal. Thank you for your encouragement and support. Thank you for your ongoing prayers. Thank you for your own reflection and expression of God's healing, nurturing, nursing qualities.

The Christian Science nursing ministry at Fern Lodge

- Highest quality nursing care is given for those who rely on Christian Science for healing.
- Education is available in all aspects of Christian Science nursing.
- We offer a model of nursing from a scientific and spiritual Christian standpoint.

A full spectrum of Christian Science nursing services

- We understand Christian Science nursing to be a seamless garment of God's care for man. Fern Lodge offers all levels of nursing care.
- Care needs are met in whatever ways are appropriate for each individual.

Visiting Christian Science nurse services

- Christian Science nurses on our staff visit those who need Christian Science nursing in their homes to assist with Christian Science nursing needs, assess appropriate care, and offer simple nursing instruction to the family and/or friends of those who need care.

Length of stay

- Christian Scientists may stay at Fern Lodge for as long as they have a need for some Christian Science nursing services.
- We encourage independent living for all. Each individual should have a full experience of daily living and make a contribution, through prayer and practice in Christian Science, to Church and to mankind.

Independent living and sheltered care expansion

- We are looking into the feasibility of providing a house that would be appropriate for those whose care needs do not require the resources of the Fern Lodge facility.

Benevolence

- The Treasurer's report on page 6 shows the amount of benevolence Fern Lodge gives each year. We hope you will consider contributions to help grow the Fern Lodge Benevolence Fund, so it will supply a significant portion of the annual benevolence needs of patients at Fern Lodge.

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**18457 Madison Avenue
Castro Valley, CA 94546**

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