



*Greetings of Comfort and Joy  
from Fern Lodge*

Fern Lodge Focus

Winter 2022

### “His name shall be called Wonderful!”

Christ is the source of genuine wonder in human lives.

That wonder is the grace of God, the always-present influence that, through love, heals sickness, overcomes sin, and delivers mankind

from the fear of death. “Wonderful” is the name of a child, a child “borne to earth,” come to our everyday experience to bless,

teach and heal. In her “Cry of Christmas-tide,” Mary Baker Eddy

names Christian healing as “the babe we are to cherish.”

Here is a plain statement of the role of Christian Science nursing

and the purpose of Fern Lodge.



# Annual Meeting 2022

REPORT FROM GEORGE STRONG, ADMINISTRATOR

This has been a busy year for us, and I'd like to share with you some of the recent changes at Fern Lodge. Brian Stock, our Operations Manager for 12 years, along with his wife, Jamie, who had tended to our IT functions and services, have moved to New Jersey and now are serving at our sister facility, Tenacre, in the Princeton area. We miss them. And perhaps most of all, we miss watching their dear son, Evan, growing up in the Fern Lodge family.



We are deeply grateful to Tiffani Hale, a member of the Hayward Christian Science church, who has stepped in and taken on the responsibilities of Operations Manager. Tiffani is a blessing to us all at Fern Lodge, and a joy to work with.

Our dear friend, Clovese Hughes, the Fern Lodge bookkeeper and office manager for many years, has retired. We will miss Clovese so very much, but her strong sense of organization, and her thorough communications have made it possible for us to have an easy transition to our newly hired bookkeeper, Sousha Wexler, who is a dear friend of ours and who works from her home in the St. Louis, MO, area.

I can't adequately express our gratitude to Allison Cook, who has been steadfast in her work in the Fern Lodge office, helping graciously wherever we need it most, and easing all the transitions we are going through in the Fern Lodge office and operations.

Deborah Messmer, our dear friend and Director of Christian Science Nursing, has moved to Southern California. This progressive step for her and her family led us to consider how we might find a new model of organization for our Christian Science Nursing Department, and we are happy to report that we have hired an experienced Christian Science nurse, Marjorie Dala, to serve as Assistant Director, working closely with Sharon Strong, who once again has so lovingly and capably stepped in to fulfill the responsibilities of Director in our time of need. We look forward to working with Marjorie.

And through all these changes, our dear family of friends, Rosa Leal, Head of Housekeeping, Anna Berk, Head of Food Service, and Ben Cahill, Head of Maintenance have been steady rocks for us all to depend on to have the facility running smoothly, well-maintained, and with the gracious family feeling we all cherish and for which we are grateful.

Well, as you can see, it has been a busy year, full of progressive steps for Fern Lodge. Yes, we have the changes in staff, but we always remember that these steps are evidence of progress, for the individuals and for Fern Lodge, and so we are grateful.

No matter what else is happening at Fern Lodge, we maintain our purpose, dedication, and devotion to the daily expression of divine Love. We offer a haven of Soul. We provide a place where Christian Science healing is practiced and demonstrated, and where those who may need care as they pray for healing will have full support for their reliance of God to meet every daily need. ■

# Christian Science Nursing and Training at Fern Lodge

REPORT FROM SHARON STRONG, DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSING

What a fun-filled, busy year it has been, both with training online and in person here at Fern Lodge! I've been thinking a lot about a simple passage from 1 Peter. In a number of translations, a phrase here and there sweetly amplified the meaning, so I began combining them, which resulted in this new translation:



*Here's my concern: that you care for God's flock among you, that God has entrusted to you, exercising oversight willingly, with all the diligence of a shepherd. See that your "flock of God" is properly fed and cared for. Not because you have to, as a duty, but willingly under God's direction. Not calculating what you can get out of it, but because you are really concerned for their well-being and because you are happy to serve. Not bossily telling others what to do, but tenderly showing them the way. 1 Peter 5:2*

What a perfect description of Christian Science nursing in all its manifestations, from instruction in skillful care and ethical considerations, to ministering in supervisory and mentoring capacities!

Through the last year we have trained 15 students, and 7 of them now work at Fern Lodge. This included classes and experience in different levels of training, including supervision, mentoring, instructing, along with thorough reviews of skills and ethics, and also a bit of public speaking. We hope to help Christian Science nurses share the blessings, the joy, and the needs for nursing care in our communities everywhere. I was invited to work at Crystal Lake Camp in Pennsylvania for two weeks. What a beautiful and healing environment! Two of our students and two students from two other facilities joined me to gain experience working outside a Christian Science nursing facility

We are so grateful for our Christian Science practitioners, those who pray for their patients as well as our monthly house practitioners, who embrace us and the harmonious operations at Fern Lodge.

As you might imagine, having an average patient count of 18 throughout the year, there are numerous healings to report. Several patients were admitted who were temporarily unable to use the limbs on one side of their bodies. In a few weeks' time, all returned to home—two healed and one able to continue the healing at home with minimal assistance from neighbors and friends.

Our dedicated staff continues learning and growing in observation skills—our ability to see and love more deeply the perfect man when assisting patients who seem challenged with mental needs such as confusion or even angry outbursts. I call these "burning bushes." This careful observation and intuitive listening for what the patients are really needing is what Mrs. Eddy counsels us about: *Observe mind instead of body, lest aught unfit for development enter thought. Think less of material conditions and more of spiritual.* (Science and Health 419:16)

Watching what we think is a demand to accept spiritual reality, right where material conditions appear to human thought. This statement made by Mrs. Eddy to her household certainly applies to Christian Science nursing: "This work is not hum-drum, it is growth. It is repeating and defeating, repeating and defeating, repeating and defeating." (We Knew Mary Baker Eddy, p. 263).

The ministry of Christian Science nursing IS the embodiment of strong, scientific witnessing while tenderly caring for our fellow man. ■

## *I am grateful . . .*

I'm grateful the same love, care and kindness shown to our guests are equally shown towards the staff.

~ Stephen Appleby

I am so grateful every day for all the big and little things the kitchen staff does. From offering a hand in times of need, to covering shifts unexpectedly, for preparing their coworkers for the next day, to pouring their love into their creations, to helping pick up their teammates during stressful times, to fully having our patients' wellbeing and care always at the front of their thoughts.

~ Anna Berk

I am so very grateful to work in a place where people are actively working to keep their thoughts uplifted. It is a blessing to be a part of this place where we all benefit from the atmosphere of love.

~ Allison Cook

I am just so grateful to be a part of the Christian Science Nursing Movement. It is the activity of Christ that heals. The only way in this ministry is through humility to overcome the sense of self and the key to recognize the Divine providence that sustains. It's a gift for all mankind that continues to impart.

~ Marjorie Dala

I thank God for guiding me to this wonderful place. I am constantly humbled by the way in which every nurse and staff member goes about their day with unfailing love and kindness, noticing needs and meeting them lovingly.

~ Dianne Emery

I'm grateful for the warmth and support I experience and witness daily from everyone here.

~ Kathryn Harvey

I'm grateful for the opportunity to hear some amazing stories and experiences from the Fern Lodge patients and also for the friendships I've made.

~ Evelyn Hernandez

I am grateful for the opportunity to work at Fern Lodge where, as a Christian Science Nurse, I get to practice Science all through my working hours. I appreciate George Strong for being at shift change every morning where he shares his deep knowledge of Christian Science and over 40 years of experience.

~ Sam Kolakaluri

I am thankful to have an administrator like George who has allowed me to have a flexible schedule, and thankful that he has also given me the opportunity to have my grandkids be present during their summer break here at Fern Lodge.

~ Rosa Leal

I want to say thank you for everything. Fern Lodge made me happy and I feel peace when I am here.

~ Leticia Leon

I am so grateful for Fern Lodge. It has been a family, a support system, a continuing educator, a refuge and a place to continue to grow in my practice of Christian Science and my ministry as a Christian Science Nurse. I am forever grateful for this place of healing!

~ Pam Litwiller

I am really grateful. Fern Lodge is a blessing to me and my family. Moreover, I would like to say that Fern Lodge is a family to me, full of love.

~ Jared Onsabwa

I hear gratitude when a patient tells me, "Hilda, Thanks for the breakfast, it was good!" I see gentleness when someone is having a challenge and a nurse comes to comfort them and assure her/him all is well. I love Fern Lodge. I am a witness of all the good it does and gives not only to its patients, but to everyone who enters here.

~ Hilda Palomares

I am just very thankful to be a part of Fern Lodge. I feel like Fern Lodge is a family and my second home, so I never feel like I am at a job. I enjoy being here and I am thankful to have kept my job throughout all these crazy times!

~ Dylan Pejic

I am so deeply grateful to God, to Christian Science and to Fern Lodge for all the blessings that we receive each day. We work as a team here at Fern Lodge and I love how it goes.

~ Mina Soriano

It is nice to know that we are appreciated for all the different qualities we each bring to Fern Lodge. I'm grateful just to be a part of it all.

~ Wanda Taylor

Being here – it brought me back to life, to love, to be loved, to do His divine, humble work and to nurture a heart filled with the joyful gift of sharing it with others and embracing the same. I am so incredibly grateful and now have many more beautiful blessings to count than ever before.

~ Kathleen Torres

I'm thankful for my coworkers and my supervisor for creating such a great environment to work in. I'm also grateful for everyone at Fern Lodge for being so loving and working hard to take care of our patients, making sure they have everything they need every day!

~ Tawny Vogt



## Marjorie Dala

The word “expand” kept coming to me and I felt in my heart that I was being called to respond. I tried to understand what that meant and why it was hard to dismiss the thought. While trying to figure this out to the best of my ability, I received a call from home informing me of my mom’s illness. Serving as a Christian Science Nurse at the time and understanding that God is the source of comfort and care, I couldn’t help but worry, my heart was troubled. There was an immediate thought to go home and take care of my mom. While contemplating the idea, I was led to listen to the Annual Meeting held by Fern Lodge in 2021.

The theme of the talk was **Rise Up and Walk** by Doris Geoff, after listening to the talk I felt uplifted and comforted. Three days after listening to the talk, my sister called and said Mom was well.

Mrs. Eddy writes: *“In the dark hours, wise Christian Scientists stand firmer than ever in their allegiance to God. Wisdom is wedded to their love, and their hearts are not troubled.”* (Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896, Mary Baker Eddy, p. 276:31)

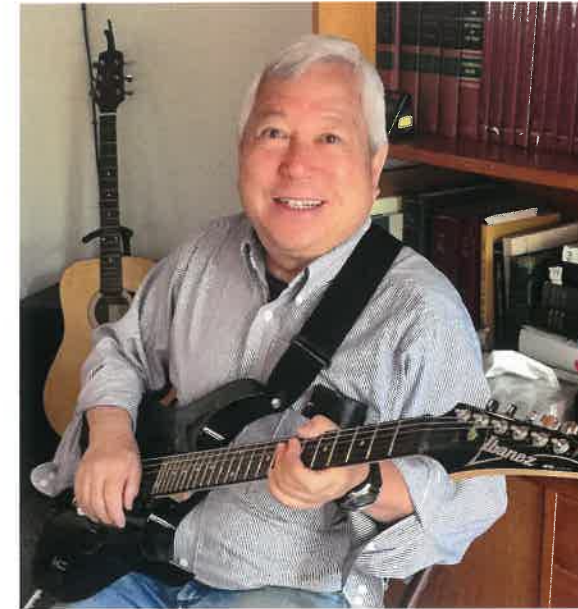
I needed these words for my own mental housekeeping and to overcome my sense of self and the false responsibility of providing care. God is the source of provision and is accessible and available to everyone. Realizing that the only enemy is allowing worries in my own thought.

*“The ‘still, small voice’ of scientific thought reaches over continent and ocean to the globe’s remotest bound.”* (Science and Health, p. 559:8–10) These words from our leader’s writings gave me comfort.

While browsing through advertisements from Christian Science Nursing Network, I read about Fern Lodge having a need. Moving to another state was not a thought I had considered. One Sunday morning, the word expand came very strongly once again as I was practicing and reading the Bible lesson for that week. The message I heard was “there is no perfect time to respond but now.” I reached out to the administrator that morning, he sent me an application and scheduled an interview through Zoom. The Zoom call was more like a conversation about the love for serving our fellow man through Christian Science Nursing, that the work is more felt than seen.

Shortly after, I joined the family and group of Christian Science Nurses at Fern Lodge on October 12, 2022 under God’s guidance. I’m continuing to learn how to trust fully and knowing the timing of things like the Director of Christian Science Nursing, Sharon Strong, said while engaging in each day’s work.

I continue to cherish a statement from George Strong, “We don’t care for people who only try to look good instead of doing the actual good.” While hearing those words, I quietly thought to myself, “Yes, Lord, I am all in for this model of thought.” Trusting the Divine Wisdom instead of navigating it humanly expands fully and it starts from within our hearts. ■



## Music with Kirby

When one of our employees found out we were going to spotlight Kirby in an article, she said, “Kirby is one of the treasures of Castro Valley.” That’s exactly our sentiment when we think of Kirby and the 35-plus years he has been coming to Fern Lodge. He shows up with his guitar (or one of the many other musical instruments he plays) and comes with his deep love of sharing everything musical. It’s wonderful to see him share his lifelong knowledge, experiences, and his deep appreciation of music history with our patients and staff.

Kirby always knows everyone’s name, but he clarified that, “It’s not just the name I know. I get to know the people who come and sit with me for an hour or two each week. It’s very important for me to have a rapport

with everyone, and I work hard to really know them. That’s who I am, and that’s what I want to bring to everyone.”

We feel that rapport whenever Kirby shares his appreciation of music. We feel that he has befriended our patients at the deepest level and that he is reminding them of their kinship with, not only music, but with life. Recently, one patient who arrived at Fern Lodge was unable to move her legs, but during Kirby’s activity she was tapping her toes in perfect beat to the music he was playing. Another patient who was slow to answer any of our questions was always the first to shout out the names of the songs Kirby was asking the group to name. Usually, she spoke so quietly we could barely hear her.

Kirby has been part of the music scene since his early years, and not just as an instructor and substitute teacher. He played at Davies Hall with the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra and many other orchestras. “I was the guy way in the back that you didn’t see,” he said, “but I got to play with a lot of very good musicians.” He was in musicals in the pit band, accompanied church choirs, and played the electric bass in some pop music groups and a country music band. One could sit down with Kirby and get a firsthand account of the music scene in the Bay Area through the years.

He has played the double bass, guitar, and the viola de gamba with others, including jazz groups. Back in the 70’s, he played rock and roll in local bands at the Shadowbrook and Edgewater, both which are still there today. This just touches the surface of his cherished experiences of the music culture in our area.

His list of accomplishments and the musical instruments he has played could go on and on. Kirby has a great love of music, and of talking about musicians’ lives and how their music came to be. This comes from his deep relationship to the soul of music. Kirby just simply loves music in all its expressions, and people seem to meet him in that divine place quite naturally.

Kirby still loves going to concerts and experiencing the life-giving spirit of whatever music he is listening. He told us, “Whatever I’m playing I really enjoy. In college I majored in classical guitar but the older I get, the more I just keep learning from everything.” ■



*Fern Lodge.*

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## Redwood Community

About 80 miles north of here is a small home with a generous front yard garden full of California native flowering plants. In this home, known as **Redwood Community**, quiet prayerful work is being done as Christian Science Nursing care is provided to patients in need. A treasured employee, Uche Thomas, is the only permanent Christian Science Nurse on staff. The rest of the 24-hour schedule is covered by traveling CSNs who have heeded the call for staffing assistance. Redwood is looking for Christian Science Nurses who want to settle in the local community and work in their facility. In particular, there is a need for a CSN with organizational skills who can play a leading role at Redwood Community. It is a special opportunity for the right person. There is housing available and the North Bay Area, as the region is known, is a great place to live.



Fern Lodge helps sustain Redwood Community by providing them with administrative assistance and has been doing so for 3 years. It is largely my role to provide that support from my home base at Fern Lodge. As I understand it, Fern Lodge continues to assist this facility because of their desire to help keep Christian Science Nursing care available in the north bay and because they support the model of small home care. I know patients want this type of care. I occasionally receive correspondence from residents there, expressing overwhelming gratitude. Redwood Community feels like a "right idea" to me. As the bookkeeper, I can tell you they need the support. There is fertile ground at Redwood. It is a place for growth, healing, and flowering. If you are a supporter of this right idea, please consider giving today. Labor, prayer, and financial support will all help forward this worthy cause.

Checks made payable to REDWOOD COMMUNITY can be sent to Fern Lodge or visit the website to donate online at [www.redwoodcommunity.org](http://www.redwoodcommunity.org). ■

~ Allison Cook