

Published December 4th, 2013

Tree Lighting Rings in the Season

By Sophie Braccini



Photo Andy Scheck

for Johnson to showcase the relatively new church and all the improvements the Refuge community has made to the property.

Johnson started Refuge renting a space at the Veterans Memorial Building in Lafayette almost four years ago (see article at <http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0324/Planting-a-New-Church-in-Lafayette.html>). As the community grew, he looked for a new location and found that the church at 155 Moraga Road was unoccupied. Johnson leased the property and began interior and exterior renovations with the help of the parishioners and friends of the church.

This past October Refuge parishioners dug 200 holes and planted new plants in front of the church on Moraga Road. "We feel blessed that everything moved forward so nicely for us and we are very grateful for all the support we got," said the pastor. Victor Ghavamzadeh of East Bay Tree Services removed the juniper for one third of the cost, donated \$400 worth of plants toward the Refuge re-landscaping project through Moraga Garden Center and coordinated a \$1,200 donation of mulch from EcoMulch in Martinez. Kevin Montgomery of Cresco Equipment Rentals in Lafayette donated the double boom lift that was used to install the lights on the tree and local landscaping, and contractor Jim Minder donated and designed the newly landscaped area and helped oversee the planting and installation of the drip irrigation system.

"This December first was a first for us," added Johnson. "Christmas, and the holiday season, is a great opportunity to connect with people."

On Dec. 20, Refuge Community Church will hold a candlelight service from 7 to 8:30 p.m. that will include worship, scripture reading, biblical message and a dessert banquet. For more information, visit www.refugecommunity.org.



There is nothing quite like seeing a large triangle of colorful lights glimmering on a hilltop to get you in the holiday spirit. Whether adorning window sills, rooftops, lampposts or tree branches, the pinpricks of purple, red, green and blue can capture the imagination of both young and old.

Last Sunday members of the Refuge Community Church gathered to celebrate the magic of the season at their new Moraga Road location, joining in a sing-along of traditional Christmas carols, serving hot cocoa, cider and appetizers alongside a 25-foot-high blue spruce tree that sparkled merrily in the cool, clear night. The tree will serve as a beacon to all who travel between Moraga and Lafayette throughout December; the event was the first of many holiday celebrations scheduled this month in Lamorinda (see the Holiday Events listing on pages B8-B9).

For Pastor Ron Johnson, who started the church four years ago, the tree lighting ceremony served as a celebration of a community embracing his project and getting together to honor the gift of Christmas. A new cross stands where 3,000 square feet of juniper once grew and an old cross used to wobble. The event was a great opportunity

From left: Pastor Ron Johnson with children Madelyn, Micah, Emma, and wife Kimberly. Photo Henry Jai

Reach the reporter at: sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA