



S.F. KOLPING Newsletter

JANUARY 2025

San Francisco Kolping turns 100!



It's incredible to think that our Kolping Family is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year! Did you know that the roots of the San Francisco Kolping go back even further, to 1887?

Like many early German societies, the original San Francisco Kolping began as a musical and theatrical club called the Musikalischer Dramatischer Kolping Verein. During those times—before phones, radio, or the internet—Germans loved to sing, perform skits, and gather for theater. Sadly, that group disbanded around the turn of the century.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, St. Boniface Church served as the heart of the German Catholic community in San Francisco. Many Catholic societies were formed through parish-based clubs, and in 1925, a group of men from St. Boniface revived the Kolping Society in San Francisco, holding its first meeting on July 25, 1925.

The Kolping Society was established with a mission to support young journeymen and apprentices, helping them find stability as they ventured to new cities and countries for work. Its purpose, “to promote the development of individuals and families through spiritual, educational, charitable, and social activities,” was vital for the many young men immigrating to the United States during that era (as it is now.)

To assist these newcomers, the Society purchased a large Victorian building at the corner of Oak and Fillmore, transforming it into a boarding house. As demand for rooms grew, they expanded, adding an annex, a social hall, and parking on adjoining lots to accommodate

approximately 35 residents. Remarkably, the Society paid off all mortgages within 20 years, becoming debt-free. For many of our members, this Kolping House was the first place their fathers called home in the U.S.

In 1957, the property was sold to fund plans for a larger community center, but those plans never materialized. Instead, in 1970, the Kolping Society purchased our current hall on Taraval Street, which has been our home ever since.

We are very proud our history and the enduring values of Father Kolping. It's unbelievable sometimes to know that throughout a century of change, transition, and sometimes upheaval, how the principles of family, community, education, work, and spirituality have stood the test of time.

Happy 100th to the San Francisco Kolping Society!

Stay tuned for future newsletters with details on how we'll celebrate this remarkable milestone!

Look who came to town!



Day of Thanks!



What a joyful time we had at our **Day of Thanks Bingo & Lunch!** Watching everyone enjoy the fun and friendships reminded us just how much we have to be grateful for. Guerra's Market came through with delicious turkey sandwiches, and Heidi Ehrich stole the show, winning the most points and the playful title of "the biggest turkey" for the day!

Our members showed amazing generosity, not just by donating wonderful raffle prizes but also by raising funds for the Martin de Porres House of Hospitality, which provides warm meals to those in need. A big shoutout to the San Francisco Kolping Society for their extra donation to help cover the much-needed cost of pies.

Many members won the raffle prizes, but truly, everyone was a winner. And your food donations? They made a big impact! Thanks to you, Father Paul was able to add to his parish's food drive in a meaningful way.

Thank you all for making this day so special—we couldn't have done it without you!



Christmas Mass and Brunch



The decorating elves worked their magic again this year! With the help of Makenzie (Bill and Christine McLoughlin's granddaughter), the hall looked absolutely fantastic. Kevin Cunnane, Arlene Bushner, Bill, and Gunther Ehrich brought the tree to life, while Muffy Friel, Christine McLoughlin, and Karen Cilia-Sante decked the hall. Cathy Vennemeyer was Santa's trusty "right-hand," and Lisa kept everything running smoothly behind the scenes.

We're so fortunate to have Father Paul and Deacon Bill preside over our very own Mass at the Kolping Hall. This intimate gathering felt especially meaningful, particularly with the busyness and consolidations happening at local parishes. It truly captured the spirit of Christmas in such a special way.

A big thank-you to Kevin Cunnane and Andy Egger for serving up the eggnog cocktails and to Lucy Chambers for keeping the coffee hot and ready! Lucy also deserves a shoutout for being our resident photographer, capturing all the wonderful moments we now get to treasure.

This year had a unique touch as the San Francisco Kolping was asked to manage the annual Kolping raffle, thanks to Lisa's role as National President. Collecting, depositing, and tracking hundreds of raffle tickets and checks was no small feat! The excitement of spinning the raffle drum reached a peak when one of our own members, Ute Wagner, won the second-place prize of \$1,000. Hip, hip, hurray! →

No one was in a rush to leave, especially when Santa (played by Jeri Driscoll) and his elf (Muffy Friel) began passing out gifts to all the members. A huge thank-you to everyone who donated wonderful Toys for Tots gifts, which Muffy and her son Liam delivered to their local fire station in Burlingame.



What a wonderful and heartwarming celebration. Here's to a wonderful 2025!



Happy Birthday(s)



Do we know your birthday? If not, send it our way. We'd like to acknowledge you in our newsletter!

JANUARY

Helen Thomas – 1/11

Bob Lazzaretto – 1/20

FEBRUARY

Terry O'Brien – 2/2

Don Mibach – 2/15

Gerry Costanzo – 2/6

Trudy Reinhard – 2/15

Anna Habelt – 2/11

Al Davila – 2/27

Tom Biesty – 2/13

MARCH

Teresa Deasy – 3/2

Irene Lambly – 3/19

Mike Cooney – 3/3

Heinz Beering – 3/26

Andy Rolfes – 3/9

Katrina Morgan – 3/31

Romy Scott – 3/14

Dues are Due!

It's that time again. Membership to the San Francisco Kolping is **\$50 per individual, \$100 per family**. If you haven't already, include your email address with the payment, so we can alert you to any "last minute" events.

Please make your check out to:

Kolping Society of America

c/o Cathy Vennemeyer

2733 Trousdale Dr., Burlingame, CA 94010

Note: If you are a new member as of October 1st, we will waive the fee for 2025.



Don't let the hat fool you.

Gunther Ehrich's heart has always been "3 sizes" too big!

Kolping going Virtual

Have you been hoping for a trip to Europe or some far-off land, knowing that your chance of getting there this year is slim to none?

There might be a way yet to see those long-awaited sites! The San Francisco Kolping will be partnering with YouthSF to bring you a Virtual evening in Italy. Kolping will provide a simple spaghetti dinner, music and company, while YouthSF will lend us their virtual reality viewers and let our members "take a trip" abroad.

This first event will be a trial, so come with excitement, an appetite and patience, as we test out these alternative activities. For this first immersion, you'll have the choice to take a virtual journey through the Vatican or experience an ancient chariot race of Rome's Circus Maximum.

YouthSF is a nonprofit whose mission is to prepare students (K-12) from underserved populations to more actively participate in the digital revolution that is transforming our world. What better way is there for our older adult population than to experience this digital revolution as well. Until then, arrivederci!

We welcome submissions for the newsletters and topics that might be of interest to all.

Warmly, Lisa Brinkmann and Kathy Biesty