



*A Monthly Newsletter of the United Methodist Church of Vista*

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We are called to be an authentic, accessible and inclusive community  
in Christ, celebrating and extending God's love into the world.

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### **Pastor's Ponderings**

2020 is fast upon us. I remember thinking about this year as a child. It seemed so far away, and yet, it is here.

I've begun making a list of 50 things to do in 2020. They include attending a writing retreat and setting a writing goal for the year, visiting the LA Zoo, visit LACMA, take a trip on the train up the coast, spend 15 minutes dreaming every week. Sometimes things in life don't happen, because we are so busy being busy. I'm guilty of this most of the time. So rather than making a "resolution" for 2020, I'm making a list of things to do, see, and imagine.

Jesus says, "I have come that you might have life, and have it abundantly." What does abundant life look like? What does abundant life smell like? What does abundant life sound and feel like? Jesus never said, "I came so you can live a mediocre life." He never said, "I came for you to have an easy life." Jesus said, "I came that you might have life, and have it abundantly." To me abundant life smells like the beach, and sounds like the ocean waves, and feels like space to write and imagine and people to share all of this with. What about you? What does Jesus' gift of abundant life mean to you?

During 2019 we said, "good bye" to some people we love. I know for sure that 2020 will include the same. Some people will move away and some will pass away and go on to the journey of the afterlife. Our friends and family will struggle and maybe even get sick. It is difficult to sit with this truth. I truly wish I could shelter you from the pain of grief and loss. I truly wish there were a prayer that could harbor your heart from this hurt. I don't want to dwell on this, but I hear some of you and know you wake up with a variety of grief every day. You are in my prayers constantly.

David Whyte, a contemporary poet, writes "anything or anyone that does not bring you alive is too small for you." These are the concluding words to his poem, *Sweet Darkness*. It is a rather glum poem about drawing into oneself to consider life. While the language is simple and beautiful, it clearly comes from a place of pause and even sadness, but the conclusion is beautiful in their resolution. These words echo the words of Jesus on abundant living. "Anything or anyone that does not bring you ALIVE is too small for you."

The joy of our faith is that it is always leading us forward and inviting us into the next awareness. God always leads us and all of creation from death to life, from the end to a new beginning, from despair to hope and from grief to love again. God's timing is not our timing, but God's work is constant. Life is God's ultimate aim.

The calendar is ready to turn over again. February 29, 2020 will be on our calendar this year! It is a leap year! It is an election year! The Summer Olympics will be in July and August! At the end of the year there will be a solar eclipse visible to the south-western hemisphere. The ExoMars Rover will launch from Earth! Liberia will become the first nation of the world to completely stop cutting down its trees in return for development aid – Norway will pay the country \$150 million to stop deforestation. (And if you've read this far you should know... February 2, 2020 will be 02/02/2020!)

May God bless you abundantly in 2020!  
Rev. Dr. Leigh Ann Shaw

The Flame

## Finance Focus

The Finance/Stewardship update as we start the New Year in 2020, we want to thank everyone for their generosity in 2019. We are a committed and faithful congregation as evidenced by your giving to many important causes in 2019, including the regular budget, missionary giving, special giving to outreach projects to help people around the world and your support for local projects. Our pledges for 2020 include several brand-new pledged investments in our church and many have increased their pledged amounts. If you have not yet taken the opportunity to complete a pledge card toward our ministry efforts for 2020, it is not too late to do so. We are eager to fully fund our ministry plans for 2020 and hope after prayerful consideration you will join in funding the great ministry of this congregation! It is a pleasure to serve God alongside you!

-Rollin Grider, Finance/Stewardship Chair

## Around the World in 80 Minutes - 2020

Sharing our world experiences...

On January 24, 2020 Vista United Methodist Church members will again share their experiences in different locations as part of "Around the World in 80 Minutes". Anyone who has 10 photos of places they have traveled or lived may submit photos on CDs or flash drives. They can be left in the church office. Please include your name so your photos can be returned.

Please share those great memories you have had with others in our congregation. Phil Biggs has volunteered to assemble the slide show again this year. Please let Luene Corwin know your choice of location. If you have questions, please call Luene, 760.704.1242 or Phil at 760.598-8022 or e-mail to [lhcwin@cox.net](mailto:lhcwin@cox.net) or [pebiggs@gmail.com](mailto:pebiggs@gmail.com).

All church members and friends are invited to attend the event. A potluck will start at 6:00 p.m. Persons whose last name starts with A-F bring dessert; G-M bring a main dish, and N-Z bring a side dish. Please be kind to the earth and bring your own tableware (but paper plates and plastic tableware will be available.) At 7:00 p.m. we will start our trip around the world and it will end 80 minutes later. (Not the 80 days that it took in Jules Verne's novel!)

## Education/Discipleship

- The Education/Discipleship program is collaborating with Breeze Hill Elementary to start a reading buddy program. Six adult volunteers have signed up. Program to launch in January. If you feel the call to do this, you can contact Margene Haase at [m.haase46@icloud.com](mailto:m.haase46@icloud.com). You will need to fill out an application, get a T.B. test and provide a photo I.D.

## UMW Sunday, January 19

United Methodist Women are excited for the opportunity to shine the light on the Organization at the worship services on Sunday, January 19. The speaker for the morning will be Dakota Koenig. As a Certified Lay Minister, she has received training from the Conference in theological and practical foundations for ministry in the UMC. For the past three years, she has served UMCV as the chairperson of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. A valued part of her church activity is visitation and serving on the Congregational Care Committee.

Each year, UMW looks forward to honoring individuals of the congregation for their service to the church. The names of the honorees are kept secret until UMW Sunday when they are announced and given a pin and certificate. Be sure to be present on January 19 for the reveal. To show support for the mission work of UMW for women and children, wear red on the 19th.

-Jacque Howard, President, UMW

Flame Editor Barbara Mitchell Flame Production Paula Amaro WEB Master Jim McGlocklin Next deadline is Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020 Comments or suggestions, please let us know.
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## **X-tra Mile Ministry Giving for January**

Veterans Association of North County (VANC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization created by Veterans for Veterans and active duty service people and their families to help them navigate life during and after service. They serve as a one-stop resource center for all active-duty military, Veterans, and their families. They centralize services from diverse agencies to assist with jobs, education, benefits, health, and wellness. VANC also supports our local community by providing an exceptional space perfect for meetings, banquets, workshops, presentations and more.

Our X-tra Giving for January will go to VANC. They continue to hold a variety of classes, and at this time, they can use bottled water, black 1” binders, 3-hole college-lined notebook paper, 8-tab dividers and 2 GB flash drives (which are used for classes and then re-used). Thank you for your help!

-Barbara Mitchell

## **Communion Sunday, January 5**

Communion offering for Sunday, January 5 will help Calexico Neighborhood House continue their 80 years of serving the people of Calexico and surrounding areas. Last year they helped 4,786 people. We would like to support their center for homeless women and children. Calexico Neighborhood House also has an early literacy program for children and a Micro Service Center for adults to improve their technical skills. With these resources, Neighborhood House can help adults and children improve their lives.

-Sue Humphrey, World Missions Committee

## **Family Game Night, January 10**

Join us for Family Game Night, Friday, January 10, 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. For questions or for more information, please see Margene or John Haase.

## **Meet a member of the staff**

Meet our Church Bookkeeper, Joann Balardeta. She comes with a wealth of experience in bookkeeping and working well with people. She worked as office manager and bookkeeper for Kmart in Vista for 20 years, and before that a window company for 20 years as their accountant. I had such an enjoyable time meeting with Joann and learning about her interests over lunch.

Joann came on board in June, 2019, when our former bookkeeper Susan Kronoff moved up to northern California with her daughter who had accepted a job promotion. In addition to being our church's bookkeeper, Joann is a member of the Disciple/Education Committee, Hospitality Committee, an usher and also volunteers at the Scrip Table,

Joann said that she likes figuring things out and attention to detail – a valuable asset in a bookkeeper! Other things I learned about Joann are (in no particular order) that she loves movies, especially if they are on the “edgy” side! She is very knowledgeable about politics. She has written novels. She loves spending time with her family. She and her husband Jim, who have their home in San Marcos, have four grandchildren and all live in the North County area. She also has two parrots, Sonny and Roxy, and they are quite the talkers!

We are so fortunate to have a bookkeeper on staff of Joann's caliber.

-Kathy Johnson, Staff-Parish Relations  
Committee

## **Mark your calendar:**

- Jan. 14 6 p.m. Building Committee
- Jan. 15 7 p.m. Church Council
- Jan. 19 UMW Sunday
- Jan. 21 7 p.m. Trustees
- Jan. 22 2 p.m. Grief Support
- 6 p.m. Reconciling Ministries
- 7 p.m. Finance
- Jan. 24 6 p.m. Around the World in 80 Min.

## Happy “January” Birthdays

Jane Fischer (1)  
Marvin Philippi (1) *(90th birthday!)*  
Ray Coast (2)  
Sean Flanagan (3)  
Jordyn Fraser (4)  
Sheridan Blakeslee (7)  
Sabrinarose Mejia (7)  
Carol Yunt (8)  
Dan Gubaton (9)  
Cassandra Levardo (9)  
Elizabeth Choque-Jimenez (10)  
Cheryl Gustafson (10)  
Mary Jane Bode (11)  
Marilyn Butterstein (12)  
Shawn Johnson (13)  
Frank Hallock (15)  
Stephanie May (15)  
Stephen Preston (17)  
Alan Feder (18)  
Steven Youell (18)  
Betty MacDermot (19)  
Kai Graziano (21)  
Jerry Cox (21)  
Jim Pence (21)  
Bonnie Berumen (22)  
Karen Felien (22)  
Karen Veysada (23)  
Stu Gibson (24)  
Alline Piercy (24)  
Victor Avila (25)  
Leila Fernandez (25)  
Jalyn Phillips (25)  
Taylor Hansen (26)  
Ben Selinger (26)  
Nancy Feder (28)  
Janice Frate (29)  
Judy Gibson (29)  
Andres Maniti (29)

Note: If your birthday is not listed, please call Paula at the church office.

## Centering Prayer

Would you like to learn how to give all your burdens and concerns to the Lord? Join us for Centering Prayer every Monday at 9:30 a.m. in the Chapel. Call Martha Treutle with any questions about this life-changing ministry, 760.726.0442.

## Hearfelt Thanks...

Hello Friends!

Thank you for the notification of the generous \$15,000 grant award for Leap to Success for our Leap to Confidence program in 2020! We are thrilled and beyond grateful to receive the generous support from the congregation. We deeply appreciate all of the ways that we partner and serve people in need in our community. Thank you on behalf of the women we will serve during 2020.

Dana Bristol-Smith, Leap to Success

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for your prayers, cards and messages of encouragement during my spinal surgery. It's such a blessing to be a part of this caring community!

Carol Pence

Many, many thanks to all the church folk who gladly volunteered to go Christmas caroling on Sunday afternoon on December 15. We sang lots of Christmas carols to 14 people in our church family and everyone had a wonderful time whether we were singing or being sung to. Also, many thanks for all the wonderful bakers for delicious homemade Christmas cookies that we delivered to our home-bound friends. This is a lovely Christmas tradition of many years in our church. Special thanks to carolers (in no particular order) Tom and Sue Humphrey, Debbie de la Cruz, Rollin and Linda Grider, Karen Felien, Bev Hopkins, Andrea Shaw, Carol and Bob Graham, Nancy and Alan Feder, Jeannie Jackson, Emma Jackson, Jennifer Jackson and twins Sophia and Roan Pierce. And many thanks to our cookie bakers Dakota Koenig, Susan Delaney, Carol Graham, Diane Biggs, Jacque Howard, Linda Grider and Sue Humphrey. And I apologize if I have left any names off.

Kathy Johnson

Thank you carolers - Bob and Carol Graham, Carol, Debbie de la Cruz (my neighbor), Tom and Sue Humphrey and Nancy and Alan. You made my Christmas! The singing and the “goodies” were wonderful!

Louise Foster

## United Methodist Women's Corner

- UMW Circles meet January 7: **Kenworthy Circle** will meet in the library at 2:00 p.m. **Ruth Circle** will at Coco's Restaurant in Vista at 9:30 a.m.
- The UMW leadership meeting is Jan. 21 at the library table at 10:00 a.m.

## Pray together for...

Linda Grider, Jim Rogers, Jeanette Marusak, Carol Pence, Alline Piercy, Jean Vought, Patrick O'Connor, Larry Veysada, Raub and Marilyn Mathias, Mary Jane Bode, JaDene Dugas, Thelma Koda, Skip Harvey, Jan Simpson, Tom Johnston, Ko Kim, Carol Yunt, Barbara Baldrige, Louise Foster, Bill Peaker, Jane Fischer, Harold MacDermot, Joan Brainerd, Nancy Koski

Prayers for the family of Betty Beck. She passed away on December 19. In 2014, Betty moved to live with her daughter in Washington.

## Stay connected

E-mail: [umcvista@umcvista.org](mailto:umcvista@umcvista.org)

Website: [www.umcvista.org](http://www.umcvista.org)

Facebook: United Methodist Church of Vista

Be sure to check us out on Yelp!

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