



*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**

"Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise God, my Savior." Psalm 42:11

A humorist wrote, "When I was feeling down, someone told me, 'Cheer up, things could get worse.'" Wishing someone a shallow "cheer up" seldom helps. Telling someone to "smile," rarely makes them happy. Directing someone to "have a good day," doesn't cause someone's day to be pleasant. How does a person of faith, put our hope in God and shake off a disturbed spirit?

November is here. I have been counting down the months and days until this November. This month brings Thanksgiving and the season of gratitude. It is difficult to overstate the importance of gratitude as a spiritual practice that can counteract a disturbed spirit. Gratitude is the feeling that opens everything else up and is completely focused on the present moment. Gratitude is not a feeling that lands on you or that you win in the lotto. Gratitude is a practice you have to cultivate. Plant the seeds of gratitude and watch them grow and bloom.

In truth, there is no shortage of books and articles and blogs and information about the value and importance of gratitude. If you want a professional's thoughts on it, jump on over to Google and look up "gratitude," being thankful, abundance or appreciation. What you will discover is when you practice gratitude, everything turns around. Being thankful as a lifestyle is a game changer, and Thanksgiving is almost here.

When I was a child, Thanksgiving was about a big dinner, making a construction paper headband with a pretend feather stapled to it, and watching a Charlie Brown Thanksgiving. Between childhood and now, Thanksgiving has become a day I look forward to, to be with my family of biology and of choice and to give thanks for every moment of joy. When God came to humanity, to share love, God did it through a family. God entered the world through Jesus, who called Mary and Joseph, Mama and Papa. Mary and Joseph protected Jesus when he was a baby. They guarded his life with their own. Even when Jesus was killed by the government, Mary remained a faithful mother loving her son.

This year, with the pandemic on its eighth or ninth and more than 220,000 people dead in our nation, I am planning work-at-home time for two weeks before Thanksgiving, so I can be with my parents on that day. The public health community is warning us that it is going to be a difficult flu season and the general resistance to wearing masks is continuing to encourage spread of the COVID-19 infection. Loving God and serving the church include wearing a mask, practicing social distancing and caring for your neighbor like they are your grandchild or best friend. When this is behind us, and we've returned to in-person worship, we will be grateful for each and every person who gathers! Every beloved member of this church and our neighborhood is precious in God's sight.

I hope you are able to practice gratitude at the end of the year and that it helps you get through this "groundhog day" of a year. My prayers and love are with you. Thank you for your prayers and support of the ministries of our church as we serve God together!

Grace and peace,  
Rev Dr. Leigh Ann Shaw

## Finance Focus

Thank you for your generosity towards our Church Ministry Action Plan by supporting the 2021 budget through your pledges and support by returning your 2021 pledge card. God's spirit is clearly at work here at UMC Vista! Currently we do not have the total amount of dollars pledged toward the 2021 budget for the November Flame deadline, we will share that information with you as soon as it is available. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PLEDGES! If you have not taken the opportunity to turn in your pledge or estimate of giving for 2021, please prayerfully consider doing so by completing your pledge card, or estimate of giving and returning or mailing it to the Church office. You may also consider giving online by going through your bank, or through our Church website. We are making an impact in our community and the world by spreading the love of Jesus Christ to all people. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Rollin Grider, Finance/Stewardship Chair.

-Rollin Grider, Finance/Stewardship Chair

## From our Reconciling Ministries Committee...

I don't know what you folks think about in free moments these days, but sometimes when I want to think about anything *but* COVID-19, this is really one of the things I think about. At the last Cal-Pac Conference this past June, the question of full inclusion for our LGBTQ community was to be considered. Then COVID-19 happened and through different events and happenings, racial discrimination which has never been fully resolved, along with Black Lives Matter, took precedence, and rightly so. But in October 2020, on the Cal-Pac website, a new campaign for the Western Jurisdiction of the UMC General Conference, of which our church in Vista is a member, put forth a new year-long campaign called "Where Love Lives". It includes a short video. Just go online and type in [calpacumc.org](http://calpacumc.org), then click on the video "Where Love Lives". Pastor Leigh Ann shared it with us at the October 11th online church service. The video is lovely and caring for all of God's children. It encompasses being strongly committed to radical inclusion of all people, keeping scripture primary, grounded in social action, and to ordain and consecrate LGBTQ people. These are all things to definitely think and pray about.

-Kathy Johnson, Chairperson,  
Reconciling Ministries Committee

## Communion Offering for November

The communion offering for November will go to support our annual Christmas Caring and Sharing Program which provides us the opportunity to share in the joy of Christmas giving with families who are struggling. Through Caring and Sharing we are able to give gifts to children including one article of clothing, a pair of shoes or a jacket, and a special wish gift (usually a toy). Our Church and Society Committee be working closely with North County Lifeline in North County to select Vista families in need. Please call the church office for more information.

-Sue Humphrey, World Missions Committee

## Thanksgiving In A Box... Benefiting Families

Solutions for Change is inviting the UMC of Vista to partner with them in their Thanksgiving Box Drive.

### To create a Thanksgiving Box...

\$25 grocery store gift card for turkey

(you can call Tom Humphrey to purchase gift card)

Stuffing box (1 box)

Instant Potatoes (1 box)

Cranberry Sauce (1 can)

Gravy (1 jar or package)

Vegetables (2 cans)

Dessert mix (1 box)

Include a card or note of encouragement (optional)

Drop off your completed box(es) to Solutions for Change between November 1-17 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 422 W. California Avenue in Vista or call Vic Johnston, 760.201.7868 for pick up.

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Next deadline is Wednesday, November 18, 2020  
Comments or suggestions, please let us know.

**The Flame (monthly newsletter)**  
**United Methodist Church of Vista**  
490 S. Melrose Drive  
Vista, CA 92081

## from UMCOR

For only the second time in history, the 2020 Atlantic hurricane season is so intense that the U.S. National Hurricane Center may resort to naming new storms using letters from the Greek alphabet. With it being only September, names are nearly through the alphabet!

And even as millions on the Gulf coasts are deluged with wind, rain, and flooding, as of this writing millions more out West flee massive wildfires. Across the globe, 2020 has seen massive monsoon flooding in South and Central Asia and torrential rains and catastrophic flooding throughout the African continent. Along with all this, it coincides with a historic pandemic and a coronavirus-fueled global recession. COVID-19 is complicating rescue and recovery efforts.

Survivors need HOPE to recover...UMCOR helps folks not to lose their hope. If you can, whatever you can, you can donate to UMCOR US Disaster Response or to UMCOR International Disaster Response. Help provide Hope.

### *Heartfelt Thanks*

As most of you know our church has been involved in a food drive every month during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Brenda and I have been picking up the food at the church and the homes of those members who can't get it to the church.

Every month when we arrive at the church to pick up the food, we are just amazed of how generous everyone is in donating. We fill the SUV up from front to back. This is done anonymously by each of you, by just setting the food on the bench in front of the office. We don't know you by name, but we do know that our church has some of the most caring people in North County.

Thank you so much for your giving and caring about people in need in North County.

-Mike and Brenda Walker

## Blankets, jacket donations

As winter approaches, our homeless population has a real need for BLANKETS AND JACKETS. Our need continues for men's clothing. Please drop off the above items on THURSDAYS in lower parking lot between 1 and 5 p.m., during our soup kitchen preparation.

If these hours aren't convenient for you, we will have a container available for these items on Wednesday, Nov. 18th between 9:00 a.m. to 12 p.m., which is when we will pick up items for our food bank drive. Questions: please call Brenda Walker at 760.505.1702. Many thanks for your continued support of our less fortunate.

## Happy "November" Birthdays

Alice Leclair (1)  
Colleen Guffey (3), Hector Hernandez (3)  
Pam Montoya (3), Grace Wheeler (5)  
Stacy Hansen (6), Louise Clarke (8)  
Janet Ahrens (9), Leonidas Clarke (9)  
Nancy Montgomery (10)  
Kathe Enright (11)  
Josh Clarke (12), Miriam Tivar (12)  
Jane Arrowsmith (13), Barbara Baldrige (13)  
Norman Corwin (13), Beverly Duncan (13)  
Tim Frazier (13), Susan Lenker (13)  
Charlotte Chappel (14)  
Greg Rye (15), Teresa Flanagan (16)  
Emma Hernandez-Jackson (17)  
Martha Phillips (17), Kathy Johnson (19)  
Beth Schmeiser (21), Kenn Bing (22)  
Al Amaro (23), Suzanne McMurchie (25)  
Abbie Bowlin (26)

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

## Zoom Gatherings and Meetings

Zoom meetings are one way we are working on keeping connected. All you need is a computer or smartphone with a built-in microphone and a camera and you can join in. Click on the link and follow the prompts to join the gathering.

**Coffee Chat after Worship, Sundays at 10:30 a.m.**

<https://zoom.us/j/116335354>

Passcode: 490490

**Weekly Coffee Chat with Pastor Leigh Ann, Wednesdays at 10 a.m.**

<https://zoom.us/j/613081197>

Passcode: 490490

**Frank's Music Chat, Mondays at 11:00 a.m.**

<https://zoom.us/j/91071681567>

Meeting ID: 910 7168 1567

**Church Council, November 7, 9:00 a.m.**

<https://zoom.us/j/99145670196>

Meeting ID: 991 4567 0196

**Congregational Care Meeting, November 12, 1:30 p.m.**

<https://zoom.us/j/94698174382>

Meeting ID: 946 9817 4382

Passcode: 490490

**Trustees, November 17, 6:00 pm**

<https://zoom.us/j/94925693986>

Meeting ID: 949 2569 3986

Passcode: 490490

**Finance, November 25, 7:00 p.m.**

<https://zoom.us/j/96344597468>

Meeting ID: 963 4459 7468

**Charge Conference, December 1, 7:00 p.m.**

<https://zoom.us/j/96406481883>

Meeting ID: 964 0648 1883

## End-of-year Membership review

The end of the year always brings at a lot of paperwork that I submit to our annual conference. Because the United Methodist Church is a connectional church, meaning that all churches, which are “United Methodist,” share a common order, structure and leadership. Rather than being burdensome, our common relationship is a resource for ministry, fellowship and mission that none of us could accomplish on our own. Our denomination stands for both faithfulness to God, and outreach and care of neighbor. Our heritage and current vision should make you proud, even as we always have room to grow.

At the end of year, we always take time to review our membership records. It is a part of our commitment to care and support the congregation. If we haven’t seen someone for a year, we send a letter/email or make a phone call to try and check in to see if you’ve moved or something in your life prevents you from getting to church. There have been times folks quit driving and needed help with transportation. When people have moved, we can send a letter of transfer and introduction. When your health has suffered, it is a time to offer prayers. There are many reasons we might not see someone, or hear from members during the year.

Our efforts to stay connected with a membership audit at the end of the year, and through phone calls, cards, newsletters, emails and worship are only half of the relationship. Rev. Dr. Jim Mahin used to tell membership classes, “you get out of church and worship, what you put into it.” He went on to say, “I encourage you to participate in worship, study, prayer, financial giving and service.” Dr. Jim (as people called him) used to go on to explain each way of participating in church. Pick and choose how you want to be involved, but get involved.

What happens when we don’t hear from someone and can’t get a hold of them, or they stop participating in the life of the church through worship, study, prayer, financial giving or service? At this point, people are recommended for removal from the membership rolls, which is shared in a report at charge conference. Membership in our church is a relationship, but when we remove people from the membership rolls, it doesn’t mean we are removing them from the Kingdom of God, or God’s grace. Baptism is the recognition that you are a child of God; membership is a commitment to a relationship to grow in faith and discipleship.

If you haven’t seen or heard from someone lately, make a phone call or set up a Zoom meeting or make a socially-distanced coffee date to stand in the parking lot together. Don’t let the pandemic stop you from connecting safely. Even though we aren’t having in-person worship yet (for our safety and health), there are still ways to be engaged. No one can live your faith for you, or grow your relationship with God on your behalf. Membership at a church is a privilege, an opportunity for you to engage in those relationships and connections.

It has been an amazing year, of learning new skills to connect our church family together. It has been exhausting and frustrating, but also opens up new ways of being faithful! Nothing has been shut down, everything has been opened to new possibilities. The Christian family isn’t closed, we are deployed to the world to share God’s love in new ways!

*\*\*Remember to stay connected and participating through your prayers, presence, financial giving, service and witness if you want to stay in membership at the church. Let us hear from you so that we know you are still a part of our church family.*

-Pastor Leigh Ann

## Alternative, Alternative Christmas 2020

Although we are living through a pandemic that has changed the way we do everything, we are still committed to outreach and caring for our city and community all year, and especially at Christmas time! This year, rather than having tables set up in the narthex on one Sunday, for you to “shop”, we will share “spotlight community partner” videos beginning in mid-November, with opportunities for you to drop items at the church on special days or give gift cards or money or even buy some special boutique items to support a wonderful animal rescue organization. Each worship segment will tell you how you can support that week’s “spotlight partner.” Some of the featured organizations may include: and Two Fishes, Caring and Sharing, Casa de Amparo, Operation Hope North County, Christ Ministry Center and Frosted Faces Foundation.

Special thanks to Brenda Walker, for her many years of leadership given to this work of Alternative Christmas. This year she will focus on “and Two Fishes” and supporting our feeding ministry on campus. Thanks also to Beth Brainerd Hallock, Rollin Grider, Heather Clarke, Kathy Johnson and Loretta Pierce for taking the time and taking a leap to try a new thing! We will not be deterred from making a difference and getting the word out about great ministry!

Watch for more information to come and in the weekly Spark!

-Pastor Leigh Ann



## **Food donations for North County Food Bank and Interfaith Community Services**

We are collecting food donations to take to the North County Food Bank and Interfaith Community Services.

How can you help? Either drop off food items or schedule a pick-up on Wednesday, November 18. To drop off: leave at the church office on the bench outside the front office door between 9 a.m. and noon. For Pick-Up: please email Brenda and Mike Walker at [Brendakwalker@cox.net](mailto:Brendakwalker@cox.net) and plan to leave your items on your porch or curb by 9 a.m.

For more information call Brenda and Mike Walker at .760.505.1702.

NO expired or open food, glass jars or homemade items.

## **Pray together for...**

Tom Humprey, Luene Corwin, Marie Mounts, Stan Hamilton, Ko and Rosalynn Kim, Lilia Victa, JaDene Dugas, Karen and Larry Veysada, Alline Piercy, Marlene and Marvin Philippi, Raub and Marilyn Mathias, Nancy Koski, Mary Jane Bode, Carol Yunt, Barbara Baldrige, Jane Fischer, Harold MacDermot, Joan Brainerd

## **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!

Return Service Requested

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