



A Monthly Newsletter of the United Methodist Church of Vista

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

Pastor's Ponderings

"From dust you have come, and to dust you shall return."

These are the traditional words you hear when your priest writes a cross in ash on your forehead on Ash Wednesday. The words come from Genesis 3:19 and the story where sin and death fracture God's "very good" creation. The events which get Adam and Eve evicted from the luscious garden aren't as menacing as they are self-centered. Many have blamed Eve for the re-homing situation the two found themselves in, but I believe her failure to obedience wasn't hers alone. The two are ultimately schooled through self-determination, and so the human experience has been since they met that snake and ate that taboo fruit.

The lesson of the Garden of Eden in Genesis became more interesting to me when I had a patio with a little room to plant something. A friend, who was into gardening succulents, gave me a lesson on proper soil and the importance of good soil drainage. One day I referred to the "dirt" where I planted things and she corrected me, "It's called soil." "What's the difference between dirt and soil?" I asked. She looked at me, shrugged a little and said, "It's a matter of respect." What gardeners know that other people don't know is about respecting soil and land and the delicate balance of water and sun.

God is the ultimate Gardener. In the beginning God created the proper balance between sun and water and soil, and all the creatures of the earth to keep the pollination and consumption cycle going. Adam, or in Hebrew, adamah, means dirt or dust. In this way, "Adam" is less a name and more a description of humanity and from where we came. Human beings, created by the ultimate Gardener, are created from the dust of the earth, the soil from which all life grows. So when we have the ashes imposed on our forehead, in the sign of a cross, it is to remind us of the cycle of life and death and life ever after.

The rituals and practices of the Lenten season engage our body, mind and spirit. They begin with putting soil/dust on our forehead and end with remembering Jesus bursting out of the soil of the earth where he was buried. Between the 40 days of Lent (minus Sundays) we are challenged to walk the walk of faith with intention. Lent is not about just letting faith happen in your life, but realizing God is the Gardener of your life, and inviting God to do the work of pruning you, watering you, feeding and nurturing you. Don't talk to snakes, and focus on the beauty of the soil of the earth.

It was during Lent 2020 that our regular living was hijacked by the corona virus. For many of us it seems like we've been in one long year of Lenten suffering. The idea of "giving something up" may not be bearable to you. We've already given up our time together, shared meals, supporting one another in times of health crisis and concern, hugs and smiles. We've given up friends and family members who've passed from this world, or passed from our life. We've given up peaceful sleep and some have given up hope. If you find yourself empty already, please give up the practice of "giving something up" for Lent.

Lent is an invitation to cultivate and be cultivated by our relationship with the ultimate Gardener. Maybe take this time to invite God to plant some new life in you. Maybe if your soul is thirsty, drink up the beauty of the sun coming up or going down and say, "Thanks God." Seriously, get back to napping when you are tired, because I know you are. Don't give up on Lent because you'd rather dust your home than get your hands dirty in some soil. You don't have to start Lent from the beginning, just start from where you are. God can work from your beginning and grow some amazing joy and fun.

Let's not "give up" for Lent. Let's look for the joy of life that comes with every journey of faith!

Amen!

Rev. Dr. Leigh Ann Shaw

The Flame

Finance Focus

We want to thank all of you for your continued financial support of our Church. Your continued regular giving in a variety of ways allows our Church to continue to minister in our community and around the world. We want to also thank you for your special Lenten Offering, and there is still time to return your Lenten Offering to the Church office if you have not yet done so. As we come to the end of the first quarter of the Church calendar year, the beginning of April you will be receiving your first quarter financial giving report. It will include the amount that you pledged for 2021, and the amount given at the end of the first quarter of the Church year. If you have not yet decided about your stewardship financial giving for 2021, you may still do so by sending a note or an email to the Church office. We are happy to announce that during the first quarter of the year that we are meeting all our Church financial obligations in the 2021 budget. The Committee on Finance/Stewardship is working hard and has plans for additional stewardship opportunities to close the budget gap during the year.

-Rollin Grider, Finance/Stewardship Chair,
Lay Leader

All Church Work Day - March 6

The Trustees will be hosting an all church work day from 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 6. Work will focus on cleaning up the exterior of our facilities in a COVID safe manner. Please bring your gloves and, of course, your masks. Work projects will be assigned as to not combine people from different households. Coffee and donuts provided. Question, please call the church office.

-Billy Stempson

2021 Academic Scholarships

The Endowment Fund Committee is offering 2021 academic scholarships to active members or family members of active UMC Vista members. Application packets, completed by the student, are due to the Endowment Fund mailbox by May 28 by 5:00 p.m. Applications are in the church office and on our website. To have an application mailed or emailed to you, please call the church office, 760.724.0442 or email umcvista@umcvista.org. For questions, call Gary Lamb.

Happy "March" Birthdays

David Hendron (3)
Marilyn Mathias (6)
Ruth Rockwell (6)
Ken Sheridan (6)
Donald Mackay (8)
Geneva Christensen (9)
Hope McGinn (9)
Melissa Giard (10)
Trent Hamlin (10)
Steve Lambert (10)
Diane Biggs (12)
Erin Fraser (12)
Indiana Escobar (13)
Greg Kim (13)
Rollin Grider (16)
Dolores Sasway (19)
Olive May Harris (22)
Lance Bodnar (23)
Ruben Choque-Jimenez (23)
Madelyn Knight (24)
Margene Haase (25)
Don Wirth (25)
Roger Martinsen (27)
Sandy Harvey (29)
Barbara Lange (29)
Dottie Nelson (29)
Kathleen Vought Mejia (30)
Sandy Riser (30)
Roan Pierce (31)
Sophie Pierce (31)

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

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Next deadline is Wednesday, March 17, 2021
Comments or suggestions, please let us know.

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

Reflections on Lent

Lent provides us with a time of reflection and invites us to be intentional about returning to God. Lent, which began with Ash Wednesday, February 17th, represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness resisting temptation. It is a time of preparation for the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is also a time of reminding ourselves that Christ took up the cross out of love for all of us.

During Lent we often eliminate something from our daily lives as a symbol of sacrifice. Certainly, this year, with the continued pandemic, we came face to face with personal sacrifice—financial, emotional, the loss of loved ones and connectedness. These losses have caused us grief and weigh heavily on our hearts.

But Lent is also a time of personal, spiritual renewal. As we reflect on our own practices, through self-examination, repentance, and through our daily scripture readings, let us be open to what God is asking us to do. Let us also recount our many blessings and express our gratitude to God. When we do so we can achieve a more sacred rhythm with Christ our Savior.

And most importantly, as we take our personal Lenten journey, let us be mindful that every day brings us closer to Easter and our risen Lord. This understanding helps temper our inner struggle during Lent, so that the spirit of Lent may be fully realized. Let us take heart that each day closer to Easter, brings us the assurance of Christ's love—that He died for our sins and gave us everlasting life.

Prayer for Lent

Thank you for knowing our hearts and our need for rhythms in our lives. Thank you for drawing us into a deeper communion with you for the coming 40 days. May we remember your gift of salvation. In Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

-Dakota Koenig, Lay Minister

Heartfelt Thanks

Thank you to those that showered my mom, Alline Piercy, with birthday cards! She received well over 100 cards and spent days opening them. She also had her first Zoom meeting with 20 relatives across five states and they all sang happy birthday to her. All in all, it was a special day for her. Note: I have been touring facilities for my mom to move to because her current living facility, New Dawn Eldercare, will be closing.

-Brenda Merritt

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. Download the Zoom app to your device, click on "join a meeting" and follow the prompts to join the gathering.

Leigh Ann's Sunday Coffee Chat, Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

Meeting ID: 116 335 354

No Host-Drop In Coffee Chat

Meeting ID: 613 081 197

SPRC, March 3, 6:00 p.m.

Meeting ID: 968 9336 2856

Congregational Care Meeting, March 4 & 18, 1:30 p.m.

Meeting ID: 946 9817 4382

Nominations: Leadership Review, March 9, 6:00 p.m.

Meeting ID: 983 4400 7635

Education Committee, March 10, 6:00 p.m.

Meeting ID: 974 1879 0097

Trustees, March 16, 6:30 pm

Meeting ID: 949 2569 3986

Finance, March 24, 7:00 p.m.

Meeting ID: 963 4459 7468

Church Council, March 27, 9:00 a.m.

Meeting ID: 986 7336 5130

Message from your Church Calling Team

During this past year our church Congregational Care Team has greatly enjoyed speaking with you, as well as emailing and texting you so that we may stay connected during this time. Your conversations and connections have been so meaningful to all 22 members of the team, and we hope that you have felt the same. The joy of getting to know so many of you has enriched us all.

In order for the Congregational Care Team to plan and provide the best ways of maintaining connection, as well as making it as effectual as possible, may we invite you to call or email Paula (760.726.0442; umcvista@umcvista.org) so that we may honor your preference of contact.

Please let Paula know the way or ways in which you prefer the Congregational Care Team to stay in contact with you:

1. Telephone Call
2. Email
3. Text
4. Thank you, but no contact is necessary at this time.

Also, in the next week or two, callers may ask you about your preference as well. We will compile all your requests and inform the callers for their future contacts with you. We appreciate your patience as we compile this information and forward it to all members of the team.

Staying connected as a church family during this time has been one of the highest priorities of Pastor Leigh Ann, Pastor Frank and the Congregational Care Team.

-Dakota Koenig, Lay Minister

Blankets needed

Our homeless population has a real need for BLANKETS. Please drop them off on THURSDAYS in lower parking lot between 1:00 and 4:00 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, March 17 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. Many thanks for your continued support of our less fortunate.

2021 Outreach organizations

Our 2021 Outreach ministry is supporting 23 organizations/projects. They are:

- Alabaster Jar Project
- and Two Fishes
- Boys and Girls Club of Vista, Inc.
- Calexico Neighborhoodhouse
- Canine Companions for Independence Southwest Regional Training Center,
- Christ Ministry Center
- Foundation for Senior Wellbeing
- Global Conservation Force,
- Interfaith Community Service, Inc.
- Leap to Success
- Lifewater International
- North Country Lifeline
- Operation HOPE-North County
- Survivors of Suicide Loss (SOSL)
- UMCV Missions Committee
- UMCV Annual Conference Missional Support
- UMCV COVID School Support
- UMCV Family Ministries
- UMCV Communications/Technology Outreach
- Vista Community Clinic
- Vista Teen Outreach (VTO)
- WEEMA
- Wounded Warrior Homes, Inc.

Thank you for your commitment to care and support our community partners.

BSA Troop 709 and Crew 709 update

Troop 709 and Crew 709 are continuing their growth within BSA. The Troop has met every single week virtually since the beginning of the pandemic, and have averaged between 30-40 participants (Scouts and Scouters) every week. Last week they had over 50 participants! The Scouts youth leadership has been amazing with their creativity and resolve. The Scouts continue in their advancement, with two Scouts having earned the rank of Eagle in December. In addition, the Troop has maintained membership levels and have been adding new Scouts as well. Suffice to say, however, that the momentum of meeting virtually can only last so long, and the Scouts are very anxious to start meeting in-person, following the Troop re-opening plan. The Scouts will start to meet in-person (outside) with their Patrols following the re-opening plan guidelines, but are very much looking forward to being able to meet at the Church for Troop meetings. The Troop and Crew thank the charter organization for their continued support, and look forward to sharing pancakes and sausage with the UMCV congregation at our next Pancake Breakfast when we can! For more information contact Dave Hendron or the church office.

-Dan Wilbers, Troop 709 Committee Chair

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, March 17. 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 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.

Stay connected

E-mail: umcvista@umcvista.org

Website: www.umcvista.org

Facebook: United Methodist Church of Vista

Be sure to check us out on Yelp!

Pray together for...

Marie Mounts, Ko Kim, Olive Harris, Lilia Victa, Beverly Thomason, Stan Hamilton, Tommy Thomson, Margo and Jim Rogers, Joan Brainerd, Stan Hamilton, Larry and Karen Veysada

Our prayers are extended to the families of:

- Marvin Philippi passed away on Feb. 18.
- JaDene Dugas passed away on Feb. 23.

Return Service Requested

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