



*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**

Who is Jesus? "I am the Good Shepherd." This is a statement of Jesus in the Gospel of John. He also says, "I am the True Vine," and "I Am the Bread of Life." All these years later, we still struggle to understand what Jesus meant with these statements. We tend to read these "I am" statements as metaphor, and not as literal fact.

Jesus' statement about being a "Good Shepherd" helps us understand his role and his connection to our heritage. The image and role of a good shepherd occurs throughout the Bible. Many of the patriarchs of the early scriptures were shepherds including: Abraham, Jacob, the twelve tribes, Moses, King David, and the prophet, Amos. The Ancient Israelites were a pastoral people. Being a "shepherd" is part of the earliest human work to care for the land and provide for people.

Shepherding is a lonely and isolated profession. Shepherds were employed to keep sheep from straying too far, to keep the sheep healthy and fed and to prevent predators from attacking the flock. Shepherding isn't a glamorous or well-paid job, but shepherds were definitely essential workers of their day.

I confess I'm already dreaming about our Advent season and celebrating the birth of Jesus. It is among the most beautiful times of year, and also the most stressful. At its core, the end of the year brings us shorter days and longer darkness and God's promise of Hope. Hope is always what the end of the year is about. Hope that things will turn around. Hope that goodness wins. Hope that humanity will find its way back to grace. Hope buttons up our darker days.

Among those who were the first to hear that Jesus was born were the shepherds out tending their flocks. Luke 2:8-20 is the full story. Here are a few of the verses.

"In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!'"

It was Linus in Charlie Brown Christmas who delivers this message with sincerity and hope. Linus explains that this is what Christmas is all about. Linus teaches his friends that Christmas isn't about decorations and partying, but about Hope. Shepherds are at the front lines of hearing the message of Hope.

Jesus comes to the earth and tells us he is the "Good Shepherd." He cares for us just as those shepherds watched over the flocks at night. Jesus carried on a long tradition of people who tend and protect others. Jesus didn't build a giant empire to show how powerful or important he was. Jesus didn't stir people up or mock the people. Jesus didn't insult people but kept walking around bringing hope, healing and compassion.

The days we are living through demand compassion, hope and grace. It is easy to feel like you are falling through the cracks and overlooked. It is easy to wonder what next bad thing is going to happen. As people of faith, we know that even in the times of darkness, God brings hope. Even when everything is lousy, God doesn't leave us alone. God uses everything for good and leads us in the ways of Grace.

Psalm 23 reminds us, "The Lord is my shepherd." "He restores my soul." "I fear no evil; for you are with me."

Don't give up Hope! Jesus is tending to us even now. And soon, we will gather to witness the birth of new hope again! Have some faith and let's keep going.

Rev. Dr. Leigh Ann Shaw

## Finance Focus

As we head into the last months of the Church year, many important and exciting things continue to be happening in the life of our Church. We thank you for your generous continued financial support of our ministry plans. We will kick off our Stewardship Campaign for the 2022 budget on Sunday, October 3. The theme is "God's Promise Always Brings US Home!". You received your Stewardship letter and pledge card the last week of September, and you may fill it out anytime and return it to the Church office, by mail, or in person on Pledge Card Sunday, October 24, 2021.

Your support of our general fund budget is essential to keep your Church and ministry programs up and running. You are a caring and giving congregation. If you are behind in your giving or wish to make an additional gift to help your Church reduce our budget shortfall for 2021, please prayerfully consider doing so. During the month of October, you will hear more about stewardship opportunities each Sunday, with the conclusion of the Stewardship Campaign on Sunday, October 24, with the online or mailing of your pledge cards to support the 2022 budget.

Regular giving is essential and helps us do more intentional ministry. You may wish to consider on-line giving as a convenient way for you to make regular contributions to our Church budget. Go to our website at [www.umcvista.org](http://www.umcvista.org). Open the website and click on "giving" to register or log in and make your gift. Again, thank you for your generous financial support of the ministries of our Church.

-Rollin Grider, Finance/Stewardship Chair,  
Lay Leader

## UMC Vista Giving Update...

Our United Methodist Church of Vista watches for opportunities to give help to humanitarian crises around the world. This month we sent \$2,620.00 to UMCOR Disasters designating the Haiti Earthquake cleanup as the recipient. We also were able to send \$225.00 to Grace Children's Hospital in Haiti. These funds came from you, our very generous and caring congregation along with some extra Outreach funds that we had earmarked for just such a purpose. Thank you all!

-Joann Balardeta, Bookkeeper

## Happy "October" Birthdays

Randie Annin (4)  
Eric Johnson (4)  
Marie Bonner (10)  
Sharon Pease (10)  
Dominic "Nico" Chappell (12)  
Heather Clarke (12)  
Rae Ann Wirth (12)  
Lisa Gerwig (13)  
Patrick O'Connor (14)  
Lynda Mounts (15)  
Philip Biggs (16)  
Sarah Felien (18)  
Mike Bollinger (20)  
Scott Lyons (20)  
Brenda Merritt (20)  
Alice Robeson (20)  
Gerri Schoening (20)  
Virginia Purcell (22)  
Shelly Burns (24)  
Carol Pence (24)  
Patricia Avila (31)

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

## Conversation with Pastor Frank, new Sunday Zoom meeting

Pastor Frank would like to invite any who wish to join him in a Zoom conversation after Sunday services. This is especially for those who are not yet attending in-person worship, for those who are shut in, and for those who remain part of our church family from other towns and locations. We will begin on Sunday, Oct. 10 at 1:00 p.m. It will be similar to the Zoom conversations we did before we returned to in-person worship. Meeting ID is 261 442 6112, Passcode: 490490

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| Flame Editor<br>Barbara Mitchell<br>Flame Production<br>Paula Amaro<br>WEB Master<br>Jim McGlocklin<br>Next deadline is Wednesday, October 20, 2021<br>Comments or suggestions, please let us know. |
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| <b>The Flame (monthly newsletter)</b><br><b>United Methodist Church of Vista</b><br><b>490 S. Melrose Drive</b><br><b>Vista, CA 92081</b> |
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**All Church Work Day with Trustees**  
**Saturday, Oct. 2**  
**from 8 a.m. to 12 noon**

**Groundbreaking Ceremony, Sunday, Oct. 3**

Following the worship service this Sunday, October 3, please take a few minutes to celebrate in our groundbreaking ceremony for the completion of our building.

**Grief, Loss, Physical Pain...**

Emotional states bring with them physical components. When we lose someone, it hurts. The hurt can show up in the body. Maybe it's in our tummy or our shoulders. Could be headaches. Certainly, grief brings tears and insomnia.

There is no way to avoid this pain. Pretending it's not there or ignoring grief by being too busy are only ways to postpone it. Grief will find you. You will face it some day.

Talking about it helps. Sharing how you feel lets you know you are not alone. You are bereft, but you have not been abandoned.

-Susie Delaney

**Community Peace Vigil, December 5**

The Reconciling Ministries Committee is planning a Community Peace Vigil, for Sunday, Dec. 5th, at 4pm. All CDC protocols will be adhered to at that time. Our youth and pastors will be participating, along with the Vista Buddhist Temple, the Unitarian Church, St. Francis and St. Thomas More Roman Catholic churches. Our 2019 Peace Vigil was well attended and many individuals participated in the program presentations. We hope that you will set aside time to join us in the Sanctuary for this joyful and uplifting program. To anyone who would like to be part of the program, please contact Lyn Berry or Kathy Johnson. More details will follow. God bless our world.

-Loretta Pierce

**Flowers for Birthdays, Anniversaries  
and Special Events**

Is there someone or something you would like to recognize and celebrate? Let us know WHAT and WHEN you would like "Flowers" and Michael Beu will create a "Flower Slide" just for you. Please click on this link: <http://specialeventslides.umcvista.org/> to fill out a form in order to request the flowers.

**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.

**Conversation with Pastor Frank, Sundays, 1:00 p.m. beginning Sunday, October 10**  
**Meeting ID: 261 442 6112**  
**Passcode: 490490**

**No Host-Drop In Coffee Chat, Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m.**  
**Meeting ID: 613 081 197**

**Education Committee, October 5, 6:00 p.m.**  
**Meeting ID: 889 1248 9059**

**SPRC, October 6, 6:00 p.m.**  
**Meeting ID: 968 9336 2856**

**Congregational Care Meeting, Oct. 7, 1:30 p.m.**  
**Meeting ID: 921 7026 9939**

**Trustees, October 19, 6:30 pm**  
**Meeting ID: 949 2569 3986**

**Finance, October 20, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Meeting ID: 963 4459 7468**

*Heartfelt Thanks*

I want to thank everyone for the outpouring of warm condolences on the passing of my Dad. I am so grateful for all the years I've had my Dad in my life. So many beautiful cards, phone calls, emails and visits from our church family. Mike and I are truly blessed.

-Brenda Walker

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

Suzanne McMurchie, Stu Gibson, Adam Ferrara, Peggy Diaz, Dave Cowles, Nancy Koski, Marie Mounts, Ko and Rosalynn Kim, Sandy Riser, Charlotte Chappell, Olive Harris, Beverly Thomason, Stan Hamilton, Tommy Thomson, Margo and Jim Rogers, Joan Brainerd, Larry and Karen Veysada

Prayers for Madelyn Knight on the passing of her husband, Wayne.

**Member Joe Baird passed away** on Sept. 10, 2021. He's lived in Bakersfield for a number of years. He has been a member of our church since May 1998. His daughter said they will have a celebration of life in Bakersfield at her home and Hillcrest Memorial Park on Nov. 6. Address is Julie Loo, 9301 Laurel Oak Way, Bakersfield, CA 93311.

### **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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