



*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

What **ARE** you waiting for? What are **YOU** waiting for? **WHAT** are you waiting for?

I love written words significantly more than spoken words. Written words allow themselves to be considered slowly and with intention. Written words can be spoken aloud if needed but do not have to be. Written words are an invitation to consider but spoken words can sometimes just be noise in an already noisy world. Thanks for reading this pastoral reflection about waiting and Advent and the Word.

If you feel like it, go back and read the top line again. Read the question about you and waiting, and then come back HERE. How do you answer that question? Do you have the patience to wait or is it too much to ask? As we look into December and the season before Christmas, God is calling us to the spiritual practice of waiting. Advent is the waiting time for Jesus to come into the world. (On Christmas, we will proclaim the Light has arrived, but right now, we wait.)

Where is Jesus and why hasn't God straightened out all that is wrong with the world yet? The world seems too dark and mean and difficult. I find the world rather hard-hearted these days. It can be rather discouraging. The truth is that Jesus comes again and again to our heart and demands that we use our life to straighten things out. Jesus floods us with love and compassion to soften our heart. Jesus said, "Go, love your neighbor." Jesus said, "Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the broken and hurting." Jesus gave us instructions and in small and not so small ways, we do our service. The service we do of caring for others is like Jesus pouring some Downey fabric softener on us as we spin in a drier.

The world keeps on spinning with us hanging on for life. Do you get tired of waiting for the world to change? Do you ever feel like your contribution and service doesn't mean enough? Do you ever wonder why God trusted you and me and that strange person who annoys you so much? I do. I want people I love to be cared for and my neighbors to quit yelling and the people in Africa to have enough food and water. I have a long list of things that I believe would make the world better. My list gets longer every day and sometimes it is tough to hold on to hope. Sometimes it's difficult to trust I'm making a difference but then I remember you. I remember YOU are out there doing stuff too. And then I remember all the churches and all the people who are doing a little to change things.

Waiting is not glamorous. Waiting is a pause between here and there. Waiting DEMANDS faith. Waiting is a muscle that God challenges us to use. Wait in the darkness with HOPE. The Light is coming to the World. Wait in the darkness and have peace in your heart. The Prince, our brother, is coming to set us right. Wait in the darkness and let joy leap within you, even when you aren't sure that everything will turn out okay. Wait in the darkness and listen for God to say, "I love you dearly." God whispers and so you will need to really listen.

Last year our waiting was lonely. That was 365 days ago and we've changed since then. I pray you let the sadness of last year fall away from your heart in time for Christmas. When we step into faith, God changes our heart to the Good. The twinkle lights will lead you and hint for the brighter days to come. This year the spoken Word of God is coming and with that Holy Word, a fresh light that brings us a new path.

May you be blessed in the Waiting. May you be encouraged by the lights and music and spirit of hope. May you find renewal and comfort through the waiting.

In the waiting,

Rev. Dr. Leigh Ann Shaw

## Season of Gratitude: For Our Staff

These have not been ordinary times, yet let us continue to be so grateful for our extraordinary staff. They have reached out in new ways to continue worship and to keep us connected with each other as a church family. Our ministry continues because they have used new knowledge and resources to bring us an uplifting service both in person and on line. We never saw their fatigue, but always felt their love.

Thank you for your generosity in so many ways to our church. During this Advent Season of Hope, Peace and Love, may I invite you to consider a gift for our staff. Let's show them our love with a gift at Christmas!

Our Staff Parish Relations Committee is collecting money that will be given to all staff on December 21st. If you'd like to show your appreciation for their dedicated work this year, Staff Parish will have a "Gift Present Box in the Narthex" each Sunday beginning Dec 5-19. You may also mail in your gift or leave it in the office marked for Staff Gifts. Please also know that your words of appreciation to each of them will warm their hearts as well.

If you have any questions, please see Melissa Giard, Staff-Parish Chair.

## Advent: HOME for the Holidays

A weekly online devotional from our church during Advent. Each week there will be a special message, scripture, prayer and special music. Get out a candle to light. We hope you are blessed by this time together. Found on our YouTube channel, and listed in the Spark each week.

### November 28:

A message of HOPE from Dakota Koenig. Scriptures: Hebrews 11:1 and Isaiah 40:31

### December 5:

A message of PEACE from Barbara Mitchell. Scriptures: John 16:33 and 2 Corinthians 13:11

### December 12:

A message of JOY from Tim Smith. Scriptures: John 15:11 and Nehemiah 8:10

### December 19:

A message of LOVE from Kathy Johnson. Scripture: 1 John 4:16

### December 25:

A message of NEW LIFE from Pastor Leigh Ann. Scripture: Luke 2:11-12

## Peace Vigil, December 5, 4 p.m.

Reconciling Ministries is sponsoring the third annual Community Peace Vigil at 4 p.m. on Sunday, December 5th in the church sanctuary. The varied program will see several churches as well as members of our church family participating, concluding with a candlelight service at the Peace Pole. Come and join us at this fun and meaningful family event!

## Happy "December" Birthdays

Chris Amaro (1)  
Donna Richard (2)  
Merry Nickerson (4)  
Susan Hernandez (7)  
Nayeli Cargill (8)  
Robert Myers (8)  
Alan Mathias (10)  
Bob Graham (11)  
Janet Hughes (13)  
Katie Pierce (14)  
Keira Pierce (14)  
Carl Treutle (16)  
Lucas Choque-Jimenez (17)  
Valerie Balun (18)  
Beverly Thomason (19)  
Martha Treutle (20)  
Jeff Montgomery (21)  
Richard Kent (21)  
Jeannie Jackson (22)  
Juna Spitz (24)  
Kaye Van Nevel (24)  
Jim Balardeta (25)  
Beth Brainerd Hallock (28)  
Andrea Maniti (28)  
Megan Burdick (31)

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

## All Church/Charge Conference, Dec. 5, 1:00 p.m. on Zoom

It is a review of our annual ministry, and to affirm our outreach ministry budget for 2022, to affirm the pastors' salary packages, to affirm our slate of leadership, including renewing our support for our lay servant ministers and certified lay minister. **Zoom Meeting ID: 999 8933 1522**

Flame Editor  
Barbara Mitchell  
Flame Production  
Paula Amaro  
WEB Master  
Jim McGlocklin

Next deadline is Wednesday, December 15, 2021  
Comments or suggestions, please let us know.

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

## **Music Ministry Announces Christmas Concert**

Clear your calendar for Sunday, December 19th at 4:00 p.m. The Music Ministry will be offering an in-person concert for the Christmas Season. We are excited to come together for this presentation and we will be following all the current guidelines for large gatherings. Masks are necessary for all participants and attendees.

This year we are offering beautiful seasonal music and the opportunity for you to sing several carols accompanied by the orchestra! We will be welcoming a new young composer, Mr. Christoph Rayburn who will share with Rev. Frank Hallock in the creation of orchestral accompaniments for the event. Our Praise Band, Anderson Handbells, Chancel Choir, organist/accompanist Adam Ferrara, and Jimmy and Enrique will also be featured.

A Director's Conversation will be offered at 3:15 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

There is no charge for the concert but a free-will offering will be taken to offset concert expenses and in support of the ministry of the church. We hope to see you there!

## **Welcome New Members**

We are always happy to have new members, and we welcome both these ladies to our church family.

**Kaye Van Nevel** was born in Hibbing, Minnesota where she grew up. Her husband of 55 years is Gary, whom she met through Gary's sister, Sandy! They have two adult children, Bob and Lindsey, as well as two adult grandchildren, Tyler and Emily. Kaye is now retired, but was a mammography X-ray tech. She is very active in Soroptimist International Vista as Human Trafficking committee chair. She also enjoys tennis, walking, being with family and friends, reading historical fiction, poetry, photography and music.

**Margaret Woodman** was born in Wales, United Kingdom! She was raised in the Methodist Church in Newport, Wales. Margaret, who has been a widow for the past four years, was married to her husband, Raife, for 54 years. Margaret also has two adult children Christopher and Ceri, and five grandchildren: Brecon, Lewis, Morgan, Garrett and Jaiden. Her daughter and family live in New Zealand! Margaret is a receptionist. She enjoys watching the Padres, walking, knitting, spending time with her family and, of course, travelling to New Zealand!

## **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.  
Meeting ID: 261 442 6112  
Passcode: 490490

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

Congregational Care Meeting, Dec. 2, 1:30 p.m.  
Meeting ID: 921 7026 9939

All Church/Charge Conference, Dec. 5, 1:00 p.m.  
Meeting ID: 999 8933 1522

Finance, December 15, 7:00 p.m.  
Meeting ID: 963 4459 7468

## *Heartfelt Thanks*

On behalf of the Education Committee, we would like to thank everyone who helped make Trunk or Treat a success. It was so good to see children and parents having fun together. We had parents telling us that they appreciated our church having an event for the community. Having events like this is a way to reach out into the community and to show God's love in a very meaningful way.

-Margene Haase and Colleen Guffey, Co-chairs

Thank you for all your many kindnesses during Stuart's surgeries and hospitalizations. The cards, phone calls, visits and flowers were very welcomed and much appreciated. May you be blessed for the kindness you've shown us.

-Stuart and Judy Gibson

We are filled with gratitude for the \$630 donated in Wayne Knight's memory to the And Two Fishes outreach. We purchased sleeping bags, tarps, and blankets. God bless all of you for your generosity. Our condolences to all on his passing.

-Loretta Pierce

My sister, Lillian, wants to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, calls and special gifts. Her fracture is healing, and her spirits are lifted, thanks to God and all of you.

-Loretta Pierce

## **Christmas Eve Services – Friday, Dec. 24**

5:00 p.m. – Family Candlelight Service

7:00 p.m. – Traditional Worship with Choir  
and Candlelighting

## **1st Sunday after Christmas**

**Sunday, Dec. 26**

Online worship service at 10:00 a.m.

## **Did you Know....?**

The United Methodist Church of Vista has been serving homeless and families in need since the late 1990's? It started at Lado de Loma with a lady by the name of Janet Sucro who felt compelled to help those in need. Our own Rev. Don Diegelman was part of the group that worked along with many other caring UMC Vistans. "and Two Fishes" was incorporated in 1999.

When we moved to our temporary quarters at Breeze Hill Elementary, crew and food moved to, and was served out of, All Saints Episcopal on Eucalyptus and Civic Center Drive. Once we moved to our new location here at Melrose Drive, serving these folks in need started up again in 2014.

The Thursday Night Soup Kitchen was incorporated in 1999 and applied for their own 501(c)(3) with its own Board of Directors. The name was "and Two Fishes" and they continued to serve warm meals and a take-away lunch. In 2020, it was decided that "and Two Fishes" would once again come under the umbrella of UMC Vista and "and Two Fishes" By-Laws were changed to meet requirements of UMC Vista so they could come under the church's insurance.

Even through the pandemic, although there were safety changes, folks were still able to receive two meals per visit. Through all this time caring UMC Vistans have been important to this ministry outreach. And in 2018, Congregational Care added another element to the picture through "Helping Hands" which was developed to meet health and hygiene, clothing, and even some animal needs of our clients.

This wonderful and important ministry, over the years, has met the needs of many folks in Vista both on a temporary and long-term basis. We can thank Congregational Care and the community folk that continue to help us meet the needs of THIS community we call home, Vista, California.

## **Christmas Caroling, December 12**

Join us on Sunday, Dec. 12 at 2:00 p.m. for Christmas caroling. Please plan to participate in this wonderful holiday tradition. It is heartwarming and fun-filled with Christmas spirit for the home bound we visit and for us, the carolers. If you have questions, please call Kathy Johnson at 760.560.7150.

## **UMW Bake Sale, Dec. 12**

"Wrapped" Home-baked Christmas goodies for you, your neighbor or your co-workers coming Dec. 12. No time for all that baking at your house, no ingredients for Christmas baking or the skill to make them look delectable? UMW will fill your need with Christmassy goodies available, ready to be gifted or immediately enjoyed, in the Narthex on Dec. 12. All proceeds go toward UMW missions. Contact Jacque Howard for more information.

## **Finance Focus**

Thank you for your generous support of the Ministry Action Plan of our Church with your pledges and support of the Stewardship Campaign for the 2022 budget. **Pledges are still coming in.** To date, we've received 73 pledge cards from families investing in our service to God, totaling \$199,920.00. Our total projected ministry budget for 2022 is \$576,974.13. If you are behind in your 2021 giving you may still mail in your contributions or drop them off at the Church locked mailbox at the office or give online. With our Thanksgiving and Christmas Offerings we hope to raise the necessary funds to balance the budget for 2021 to complete the year with all financial obligations met. 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, please free to contact Rollin Grider.

-Rollin Grider, Finance/Stewardship Chair,  
Lay Leader



## **From Staff-Parish**

Christmas reminds us to pause and reflect on the love and selflessness of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We find joy in our most cherished holiday traditions, celebrated uniquely by each person, family, and community around the world. In the spirit love, hope and shared joy for this holiday season, Staff-Parish asked the UMC Vista staff to kindly share a few of their favorite things and special memories with you. Here's what they had to say.

### **Share with us your favorite holiday treat?**

- Freshly baked homemade cookies – Michael Beu (Tech)
- Pumpkin Pie – Pastor Frank Hallock (Associate Pastor)
- Peppermint Schnapps and Hot Chocolate – Greg Rye (Praise Band)
- Anything with Pecans – Jimmie Patton (Praise Band)
- Quiet time at the end of the day with Peppermint tea – Pastor Leigh Ann (Senior Pastor)
- Peanut Brittle, Starbucks' Peppermint Mocha – Paula Amaro (Office Manager)
- Christmas cookies and homemade fudge – Joann Balardeta (Bookkeeper)
- Any form of Gingerbread cookie – Joseph Smith (Tech Asst)
- Candy/Food – Bonnie Berumen (Finance)
- Gingerbread houses, Peppermint Bark, Peppermint Ice Cream – Adam (Organist/Worship Leader)

### **Tell us about your favorite tradition of this holiday season?**

- Attending Christmas Eve service and bringing all the presents down at 2 or 3 in the morning to place them around the Christmas tree. – Paula
- Watching Charlie Brown and listening to Christmas music – Adam
- Spending Christmas Eve and Day with the family, also adding a new ornament to the tree every year – Joann
- My family always does a secret Santa gift exchange, no more than \$20, and one gift for my niece. I enjoy seeing everyone's reaction and finding out who purchased the gift once revealed. – Joseph
- Making gingerbread houses with family and friends (37 years so far) – Greg
- Driving through the neighborhood to check out lights and praying for the children of the community – Pastor Leigh Ann
- Watching holiday movies with my family – Jimmy

- Just being with family and friends – Bonnie
- Late night filling of stocking after everyone else is asleep (shh, don't tell anyone) – Pastor Frank
- Spending Christmas Eve with my parents and waking up early the next morning to open presents and spend the rest of the day together as a family. – Michael

### **What was your most memorable holiday as a child?**

- Traveling to see my brother's family in a tiny logging town, Dorris, CA. We cut our own tree and it snowed on Christmas Eve. I remember how wonderful it was seeing the reflection of the lights on the fallen snow. – Pastor Frank
- Being a shepherd in a church Christmas play – Adam
- I spent a lot time in foster homes as a child, so I don't remember much from my youth in California and Connecticut. Now, I try to make Christmas special for my family and friends. – Paula
- In a Hungarian household, Christmas is celebrated on Christmas Eve with presents and dinner with family. Christmas Day was Santa gifts and leftovers. We always had coconut covered ice cream snowballs that were big enough to fit candles on top of them. – Joann
- Hard to choose, but if I had to pick one it would be when I got my own electric guitar that I still play today. I always try to get gifts for others that have an impact on them or people in need. That gift helped me understand the true power of giving to others. – Joseph
- My mother was very ill when I was a child. I will always cherish the year she came home from the hospital - Bonnie
- Driving 10 hours to my grandmother's house for Christmas with the extended family. Every year was different depending on whether my dad was overseas with the Navy or at home. – Pastor Leigh Ann
- Having snowball fights with my brothers when we lived in Ohio. – Jimmy
- Seeing and hearing my parents bring a drum set into the house when I was 11 years old. – Greg
- Going to spend Christmas with extended family on the Oregon coast. There's something about being with family, with a backdrop of winter storms, roaring waves, pouring rain, and crackling fire, that made for some wonderful memories. – Michael

-Melissa Giard, Chair, Staff-Parish

## **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.

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

Louise Clarke, Suzanne McMurchie, Nancy Winters, Nancy Koski, Ko and Rosalynn Kim, Charlotte Chappell, Olive Harris, Beverly Thomason, Stan Hamilton, Margo and Jim Rogers, Joan Brainerd, Larry and Karen Veysada

## **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!

United Methodist Church of Vista  
490 S. Melrose Drive  
Vista, CA 92081  
Phone: (760) 726-0442  
Web: [www.umcvista.org](http://www.umcvista.org)  
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