



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

The Christian faith is about neighborliness. There can be no separation from Jesus teaching and caring for other people. Service, and sacrifice for the common good is our cornerstone of faith in heart and practice. The Lordship of Jesus proclaims "love one another as I have loved you."

I read weekly meditations from Richard Rohr as part of my prayer practice. This week he lifted words from Desmond Tutu, reminding me of the concept of *Ubuntu*. Desmond Tutu explained *Ubuntu* as, "My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours." The concept, *Ubuntu*, comes from a Zulu phrase, *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, which literally means that a person is a person through other people. Just as Jesus taught service and sacrifice for the common good, the Southern African philosophy of *Ubuntu* places a similar value.

The opposite of *Ubuntu* is *Wetiko*. *Wetiko* is an Algonquin word for a cannibalistic spirit that is driven by greed, excess and selfish consumption. It is selfish consumption that is more than about money but also about demeaning someone else's spirit. It is putting someone's emotional, spiritual and physical needs down, for another person's to be met. Every day we see and feel it all around us as we see others suffer and struggle. Sometimes we have to confess that we act selfishly and forget the well-being of our neighbor because we are just too tired.

The apostle Paul speaks of division in the church and the need for unity. Paul writes about hurts and pain and shame and harm done between people and the need for love. Paul experiences the worst of others and pulls himself back to Jesus. I am inspired by Paul's struggle in the hardest of times and his return to faith. "The Body is not a single part, but many," Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:14. Paul taught the connection between people in community and how it can build you up or tear you down.

Illness is more than a sneeze and running a temperature. A body can be sick in spirit or heart after being exposed to cruelty and hate. The illness of spirit is contagious and does damage in communities. I believe we are living through a cruelty pandemic and suffering in the wilderness of hopelessness. One person is unkind to another; maybe thoughtless or insensitive. The unkindness gets passed on from one person to another. Each person hearing words that shame or demean. And rather than taking the time to heal emotional wounds, anger is passed along.

Unfortunately, there is no vaccine for the spirit. It is always a choice to love and forgive. It is always a choice to resist unkindness. It is always for each of us to choose being neighborly or tribal. Jesus, the savior of our faith, calls us to love one another. He didn't call us to love one another as victims, but as ambassadors of grace. Jesus calls us to transform the world one person at a time, one generous kindness at a time. A pandemic takes a long time to heal. We know this too well, but healing this world must include every one of us.

Christian mystic, Julian of Norwich writes, "By myself I am nothing at all; but in general I am, I hope, in the oneing of love . . . for it is in this oneing that the life of all people consists." Be one person going out into the world and sharing Godly love with one other person today. As Desmond Tutu knew, our humanity is interconnected. As Martin Luther King Jr. wrote, "we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality."

Go in peace, Amen.

Rev. Dr. Leigh Ann Shaw

John 13:34-35, NRSV

Desmund Tutu, "The Quest for Peace," address, Johannesburg, August 1986, quoted in Michael Battle, *Ubuntu: I in You and You in Me* (New York: Seabury Books, 2009), 83.

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. To date we have received 79 pledges to support the 2022 Church budget. Our current total expected income for 2022 is more than \$73,000 short of our expected expenditures for 2022. 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 2022, 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 2022, you may still do so by sending a note or an email to the Church office. We are happy to announce that during this first quarter of the year that we are meeting all our Church financial obligations in the 2022 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

Carol Pence's Challenge

Our church is very important to me! Jim and I have been a part of this congregation for over 40 years! It is of great concern to me that our 2022 budget is not fully funded. As reported at Church Council on Feb. 5, we are short \$72,119.96. The last two years have been difficult for all churches. Although we have been faithful, these are challenging financial times. I celebrate the financial gift we got many years ago that means we have not had to put a penny toward our new building but yet our ministry budget that funds programs, staff and facility care is struggling. As I've prayed on this... and thought about our church, our children and the future, I want to challenge each of you. This is a time to dig deeper. Even an extra \$10 or \$20 per month or an extra lump sum of \$500 put toward our ministry will help. We can do it! Our church is worth it! I'm adding an extra gift in my offering and hope you will join me!

-Carol Pence

Join the "Carol Pence Challenge!" Write "Carol Pence" in the memo line of your check or make a special dedicated gift toward the "Carol Pence Challenge" to support the mission and ministry of your church. Thank you!!

-The Finance Committee

Happy "March" Birthdays

David Hendron (3)
Marilyn Mathias (6)
Sandy Riser (6)
Ruth Rockwell (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)
Roger Martinsen (27)
Sandy Harvey (29)
Barbara Lange (29)
Dottie Nelson (29)
Kathleen Vought Mejia (30)
Roan Pierce (31)
Sophie Pierce (31)

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

Flame Editor
Barbara Mitchell
Flame Production
Paula Amaro
WEB Master
Jim McGlocklin
Next deadline is Wednesday, March 16, 2022
Comments or suggestions, please let us know.

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

Lent begins on March 2, 2022

Ash Wednesday worship is available online at 5:00 p.m. on March 2 and after. A worship link will be emailed on Wednesday with the worship bulletin. Watch your inbox.

Imposition of Ashes “Drive-thru” available in-person by reservation in advance at 7 a.m., noon and 4 p.m. in the church parking lot. A pastor will be near the mailbox for you to drive-thru and share in this holy tradition to remember and share in Jesus’ journey to the cross. See Paula on Sunday to sign up or email her during the week. Pastors will be wearing a face mask to support public health precautions and your health.

Lent is a season of spiritual discipline, fasting and prayer. **Lenten Devotional and Call to Spiritual Practice** is available at the church with a tea candle to light during your prayer practice.

Lenten and Easter

April 10

Palm Sunday Worship at 10:00 a.m.

April 15

Good Friday Worship at 7:00 p.m.

April 17

Easter Worship at 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.

April 24

Spring Concert Celebration
in Worship at 10:00 a.m.

Heartfelt Thanks

The family of Donald Lee Wirth would like to thank the congregation for their prayers, concerns, flowers, phone call and cards.

Lovingly,

Rae Ann Wirth and sons - Lee, Tom and Alan

Thank you for your prayers and cards during my recent surgery.

Nancy Winters

Welcome new staff member

We welcome John Giard to our Ministry Staff! John will be stepping into the role of “Youth Ministry Coordinator” at our church. He and his wife, Melissa, are members of our congregation, have four children in their blended family and live in Fallbrook. They both sing in the choir. John brings to this role a conviction of faith, a love of music and theater and a passion for mission projects such as the Fuller Center Housing Project. One reason John says he felt called to this ministry work is that he remembers how his youth ministry experience shaped his life, and he still has life-long friends from that time. John will be directly supervised by Pastor Leigh Ann, and Dakota Koenig will be his SPRC liaison.

Please take time to welcome John and offer your encouragement and support for him and our young people.

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.

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

SPRC, March 16, 6:00 p.m.
Meeting ID: 968 9336 2856
Passcode: 490490

Congregational Care Meeting, March. 3, 1:30 p.m.
Meeting ID: 921 7026 9939

Education/Discipleship, March 9, 6 p.m.
Meeting ID: 983 3122 0500
Passcode: 490490

Trustees, March 15, 6:30 p.m.
Meeting ID: 949 2569 3986
Passcode: 490490

Church Council, March 19, 9:00 a.m.
Meeting ID: 959 0726 4821

Finance, March 23, 7:00 p.m.
Meeting ID: 963 4459 7468

UMW 2021 Special Mission Recognition

United Methodist Women Special Recognition is a gift to missions in honor of an individual who has dedicated time and effort to service. Honorees are chosen by the local organization, then a monetary gift is sent to the national UMW office in his or her name to be used for missions. Since the start of the COVID pandemic our two recipients for 2021 have played a huge role in keeping our congregation connected with each other and providing spiritual nourishment.

Paula Amaro, as office manager, has many church jobs while also being an active member of the congregation. Over the 30 years she has worked in the office we have experienced her caring and hospitable spirit on the phone and in the building.

During COVID she has been part of the Congregational Calling Team helping to keep us connected. One of her longtime passions is Scouting and she has served many years with that community while representing our church. Her children and grandchildren give her great joy and she loves to spend time with them.

Pastor Leigh Ann Shaw has introduced ways for the congregation to stay connected, stay safe, and to continue to worship with virtual services. Working with staff, she has led us in worship on You Tube and in-person on Sunday mornings by incorporating sermons, music and prayer time. Under her supervision the congregation has continued to reach out to each other and into the community. The past two years have also included her active building committee participation, plus service and responsibilities with the district and the conference. Pastor Leigh Ann's leadership and strength has helped many of us keep our faith in these tough times.

UMW gives thanks for these women for sharing their gifts and being a blessing to God and to us all.

-Jacque Howard, President, UMW

Never too old to learn

This past month of February was Black History Month. Black History month celebrated first in the U.S., now has official government recognition with the U.S. government, as well as in Canada. More recently it's been observed in Ireland and the United Kingdom. Yet the issues of racism, economic instability and insecurity is an everyday, 365-days-a-year problem! These problems have been around for a long time and there are differing opinions on how to solve them.

In these pandemic times, on the one hand there has been so much caring, encouragement and support shown and experienced; on the other hand there have been many more incidents of outright racism as evidenced by the uptick in violence against Asians, Blacks, Jewish, Hispanics, LGBTQIA people, other ethnic people, domestic abuse and gun violence.

At age 75, I have learned, just this year, much more about some truly horrifying events in our history surrounding the hatred being expressed anew in this country, exacerbated in no little part by isolation of the pandemic and politics. America, on its' face, has always proudly considered itself a "melting pot" of people. And yet these problems persist.

These are justice issues, and justice issues are truly hard work. As Methodists, justice work is part of our DNA thanks to our founder, John Wesley. As a local, as well as a global, congregation, we are dedicated to helping solve justice issues. And make no mistake, there is no shortcut to solving justice issues. It's important that we continue to do what we can, when we can—even at 75; as well as continue to teach our children the importance of God's commandment to "Love your neighbor" through our broken, but not yet done, history, as it is they that will be taking up this mantle of justice.

-Barbara Mitchell

Just a reminder...

There have already been some items left behind following services! We have a Lost and Found Box in the narthex (near the Scrip table) in the lower cabinet (it is labeled). Please look for your items there.

-Barbara Mitchell

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...

Traci Wheeler, Rae Ann Wirth, Karen Veysada, Suzanne McMurchie, Nancy Koski, Ko and Rosalynn Kim, Charlotte Chappell, Olive Harris, Beverly Thomason, Stan Hamilton, Margo and Jim Rogers, Joan Brainerd

Memorial Service

A Celebration of Life for Don Wirth will be held on Saturday, March 26 at 2:00 pm in the Sanctuary.

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!

Return Service Requested

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