



*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**

**Love doesn't back down or give up. Christmas is the truth that love wins.**

I love pistachios, and my cats and Sunday afternoon naps, but loving people can be tricky. People can go sideways and fall apart and make mistakes and let us down. People can be unreliable in the best of times. And yet, love is what defines our faith, and love is what God made us for.

The choice to love is brave and optimistic. I've shared this message at many weddings. The scriptures (thank you, Paul) say that love is patient and kind, never boastful, envious or rude. Love bears all things, endures all things and love never ends. It is the 13th chapter of a letter to the Corinthians. The words of Paul that define love are very clear, but may be so because of the many ways Paul says love go wrong.

As we breach a new year and dare to imagine what it might hold, I'm thinking about love. Of course love is more than a feeling between two people who commit their lives together. Love is friendship and family. Love can last a moment, a minute or a lifetime. Love is justice in action. Love is messy and demands relentless forgiveness. "Love" works hard while "like" takes a vacation.

The last few years have been like climbing one giant mountain after another. We've built some endurance along the way. We've grown some new skills and found strength we didn't know we had. Now is the time to take all that we've gained and lean into love. Not love that breaks apart when stressed, but love that expects the best and sees the best. Love is the tie that binds us.

The season of Christmas reminds us that God brings new life when all hope seems lost. Mary was unwed and should have been ashamed. Joseph may have been humiliated but stood up for family. Mary and Joseph became parents and raised a baby faithfully. Anything could have gone wrong but God made a path before them and they persisted. Christmas casts light in the darkness and that light reveals God's heart for us. Despite the ways people can go wrong, God's love endures.

Some churches end the story here but we NEVER do. God's love at Christmas is never the end of our faith, it is just our beginning. Because God loved us we go out into the world and share love with others. We share love, not because anyone does something to earn it, but because that's what God models for us to do. Love one another as God has loved us.

May the page turn on your calendar be a blessing, and may you feel loved just as you are in 2023.  
Amen.

Rev. Dr. Leigh Ann Shaw

The Flame

## 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 2023 budget. Pledges are still coming in supporting the 2023 budget. As of the end of December, we have 63 pledges returned for over \$197,828 pledged for the 2023 budget. If you still wish to make a pledge or estimate of giving for 2023, pledge cards are available from the Church office, and you may mail or return them to the Church office. If you are behind in your 2022 giving you may still mail your contributions or drop them off at the Church locked mailbox at the office, give online or at the Scrip table with your credit card. Many thanks to all those who gave extra funds at the end of year to help us meet our budgetary needs. 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

## Interpreter for the Deaf

An interpreter for the Deaf/and hard-of-hearing here on January 1, the first Sunday of the month. We are striving to ensure that God's Word is accessible to all. Please invite anyone you feel could benefit from this service.

## United Women In Faith

- Kenworthy and Ruth Circle meets on Tuesday, January 10, 11:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.  
-Jacque Howard, President, UWIF

## United Women In Faith Sunday, Jan. 29

The mission theme of the United Women in Faith Sunday, January 29th, will feature a video presentation delivered by Rev. Dr. Krista Givens. Rev. Givens is currently serving in Alicante Spain. She has a long and interesting history of mission and pastoral service. You can find her assignments described in a Google search on the internet. Also, on January 29th, United Women in Faith will announce two recipients for a 2022 Special Mission Recognition to celebrate mission service in the life of the church.

## Send off celebration

Taylor Lyons is leaving for school in Arizona. Scott and Tracy invites you to say good-bye on Sunday, January 1 in the Narthex following the worship service.

## Happy "January" Birthdays

Phyllis Buvel (1)  
Jane Fischer (1)  
Shirley Barr (2)  
Ray Coast (2)  
Sean Flanagan (3)  
Jordyn Fraser (4)  
Sheridan Blakeslee (7)  
Sabrinrose Mejia (7)  
Dan Gubaton (9)  
Cassandra Levarado (9)  
Elizabeth Choque-Jimenez (10)  
Marilyn Butterstein (12)  
Shawn Johnson (13)  
Frank Hallock (15)  
Stephanie May (15)  
Alan Feder (18)  
Gracie Morgan (18)  
Betty MacDermot (19)  
Roy Good (20)  
Kai Graziano (21)  
Jim Pence (21)  
Bonnie Berumen (22)  
Karen Felien (22)  
Karen Veysada (23)  
Stu Gibson (24)  
Victor Avila (25)  
Leila Fernandez (25)  
Jalyn Phillips (25)  
Taylor Hansen (26)  
Ben Selinger (26)  
Nancy Feder (28)  
Judy Gibson (29)  
Andres Maniti (29)

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

**Note:** Church office closed Monday, January 2.

Flame Editor Barbara Mitchell Flame Production Paula Amaro WEB Master Jim McGlocklin Next deadline is Wednesday, January 18, 2023 Comments or suggestions, please let us know.
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<b>The Flame (monthly newsletter)</b> <b>United Methodist Church of Vista</b> 490 S. Melrose Drive Vista, CA 92081
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## **Christmas Caroling update**

I would like to thank all who contributed to a wonderful afternoon of caroling to our home-bound church family. It was a heartwarming afternoon and fun-filled with Christmas spirit for the folks we visited as well as the carolers who provided the singing. I also wanted to thank the youth and Beth Hallock for putting together the goody bags filled with useful and fun items. Also thanks to Dakota Koenig, Heidi Kendall and the Congregational Care team for providing the poinsettias that were delivered to our homebound folk. Also many thanks to carolers Martha and Chico Treutle, Rollin Grider, Karen and Gary Felien, Grace Hernandez Jackson and youth Roan Jackson and Sophia Jackson. We had a great time and so did the people we sang to, many of whom joined in singing carols! It definitely made Christmas real!

–Kathy Johnson

## **Call for Volunteers**

The request for volunteers to be part of a mission team to help share information about mission, to local congregations, was recently sent from the Cal-Pac Conference. They are creating a team of laity and clergy that would help connect local churches in our Conference with missionaries throughout the world.

The team would help facilitate itineration of missionaries that come to Cal-Pac churches to share their experience and to raise support. The group would meet virtually.

If you are interested in being part of this team or have questions, contact Deanna Daniel, Conference Secretary for Global Ministries at [dannydee@att.net](mailto:dannydee@att.net).

## **Social Justice**

We are considering becoming a fully Reconciling Church Congregation by adopting the Reconciling Ministries Network affirmation statement of acceptance of all people. It reads as follows: “We celebrate God’s gift of diversity and value the wholeness made possible in community equally shared and shepherded by all. We welcome and affirm people of every gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation, who are also of every age, race, ethnicity, physical and mental ability, level of education, and family structure, and of every economic, immigration, marital, and social status, and so much more. We acknowledge that we live in a world of profound social, economic, and political inequities. As followers of Jesus, we commit ourselves to the pursuit of justice and pledge to stand in solidarity with all who are marginalized and oppressed.” If you have any questions or comments, please contact Kathy Johnson.

## **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.

SPRC, January 4, 6:00 p.m.  
Meeting ID: 968 9336 2856  
Passcode: 490490

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

Education/Discipleship, January 11, 6 p.m.  
Meeting ID: 983 3122 0500  
Passcode: 490490

Trustees, January 17, 6:00 p.m.  
Meeting ID: 949 2569 3986  
Passcode: 490490

Finance, January 11, 7:00 p.m.  
Meeting ID: 963 4459 7468

Reconciling Ministries, Jan. 24, 6:00 p.m.  
Meeting ID: 995 8164 7395  
Passcode: Welcome

## **Heartfelt Thanks**

The Reconciling Ministries team would like to thank all the people who helped put on the best Peace Vigil ever that was held on December 4th. What a great example of community spirit in people coming together from different faiths, beliefs and ages. The speakers, songs, hula dance, our own youth group, taiko drummers, choir using sign language to sing, followed by candlelight at the Peace Pole, provided a most meaningful and lovely evening. Thanks especially to Lyn Berry who organized the entire event and Pastor Frank for adding so much to the program.

–Kathy Johnson

On behalf of the staff, we want to say “thank you” to our congregation for your prayers, support and your Christmas gifts. Also, we are so thankful for our Staff-Parish Relations Committee for their support during the year. Wishing you all a blessed New Year!

–Paula, Pastors Leigh Ann and Frank, Joann,  
John, Adam, Michael, Joseph, Alden, Amanda,  
Jimmy, Greg and Roy

## **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.

### **Please...**

Do not drop off your donation of clothes, etc. when the church office is closed. The church office is open Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 12 noon.

### **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!

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

Marilyn Mathias, Traci Wheeler, Erin Fraser, Ko and Rosalynn Kim, Charlotte Chappell, Beverly Thomason, Stan Hamilton, Jim Rogers (hospice care), Joan Brainerd

Prayers for the family of Andrea Shaw. She passed away December 15. Cards can be sent to her daughter and son-in-law:

Kathy and Tim Ford

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Return Service Requested

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