



*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**

"For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation." Romans 5:10-11, NRSV

When I was a young person, learning about managing finances, I learned how to reconcile my bank account every month. I received a bank statement in the mail, which included my checks that had cleared. I sat down at the dining room table and began reviewing each check number and comparing it to the bank statement and my check book.

In relationships, reconciliation means restoring a friendly connection with someone. It also means finding compatibility between perspectives. At this moment in our national life, there are a lot of divisions and anger. In our denomination of the Christian faith, there is also a lot of division and disagreement. Over many topics, we are a divided and not a reconciled people. We struggle to find or name our common values, morals and beliefs.

In our Christian faith, we believe that Jesus' work in life and on the cross reconciled our human relationship with God. This is the meaning of the above passage from Paul's letter to the Romans. We believe that Jesus' teaching and love bridges a gap between our human failures and God's gracious compassion. One of Jesus many roles is the work of a mediator. Although humanity was created good at the beginning of creation, we struggle to care for one another and ourself.

The language of reconciliation has taken on a more specific justice issue over last decade. Reconciling ministries in our UM churches relates to lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and queer relationships. This group has worked in an effort to advocate for full inclusion and connection of LGBTQ persons. Since 1972, our UM rule book has said that "homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching." Not since the issues of ordaining women or civil rights have we seen such vehement disagreement.

On February 5, 2023, our congregation held an adjourned charge conference after worship. You voted on three motions. You approved the outreach grant budget for our community partners initiative. You approved dissolving the building committee after the final certificate of occupancy is achieved. And you approved joining the Reconciling Ministries Network. Each of these is very significant, and is a profound ministry. Each one of these motions is a bold statement about who this congregation has been and how you are called to move forward in faith.

Although this congregation is not of one mind, more than 75% of the people who voted approved joining an organization which advocates for LGBTQ+ justice and full inclusion in the United Methodist Church. (You can find more information on Reconciling Ministries Network at [www.rmnetwork.org](http://www.rmnetwork.org) ) The members of this congregation who advocated for this vote have worked for years to lift this issue, invite those who disagree into conversation and listen to different perspectives with dignity.

The word and work of reconciliation has many meanings, but the most important to a Christian is the act of Jesus reconciling humanity with God. Jesus taught and sacrificed his life that humanity might know God's grace. This love that Jesus demonstrated was and is for all people, not just those with a particular view point. Jesus acted with love for the least, the last, and the lonely. Jesus called us to love our neighbor, no matter who our neighbor is. Although our congregation may have differing view points on human sexuality, I pray we can continue a common mission for service, witness, compassion and justice in our community and world.

May God continue to keep us in connection and conversation.

Rev. Dr. Leigh Ann Shaw

The Flame

## Finance Focus

Finance/Stewardship Committee has met so far this year on January 11 and February 1, 2023. We set our calendar for meetings through June 2023, worked on the 2023 Church Budget and prepared a budget to present to Church Council on February 25, 2023. In February, we approved the furnishing of the Nursery up to \$2,500.00 and approved the purchase of a larger TV and more seating for the Youth expanded room not to exceed \$2,500.00. These purchases will be paid out of Scrip account. We have also worked on ideas for FUNdraisers.

-Sara Baldwin, Finance/Stewardship Chair

## Interpreter for the Deaf

An interpreter for the Deaf/and hard-of-hearing here on March 5, 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.

*Note: We will have an interpreter on Easter Sunday, April 9 at 10 a.m. instead of April 2.*

## American Sign Language (ASL)

If you're new to American Sign Language (ASL), there are some important facts you should know about signing. First of all, ASL goes beyond hand gestures alone – facial expressions and body language also play a critical role in communication. For example, use your eyebrows when asking a question. ASL beginners usually start with learning the alphabet. The 26 letters of the English alphabet can be conveyed through signs in ASL, and words can be spelled out through sequences of signs. This is called “fingerspelling.” Want to give it a try? Join us March 20 and 27 at 10:00 am. in the Fellowship Hall. Questions, please call Sandy Harvey at 916.698.6933.

## Lenten Study

A Lenten study, “The Walk” by Adam Hamilton began February 28. Not too late to participate. Join us on Tuesdays, March 7, 14, 21, and 28 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. The class is be taught in the new conference room by Beth B. Hallock and Barbara Mitchell. Please remember to purchase your book from Amazon. For questions, please see Beth or Barbara.

## Happy “March” Birthdays

David Hendron (3)  
Ed Simpson (4)  
Marilyn Mathias (6)  
Ruth Rockwell (6)  
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)  
Gracie Stempson (16)  
Joseph Smith (18)  
Dolores Sasway (19)  
Lance Bodnar (23)  
Ruben Choque-Jimenez (23)  
Madelyn Knight (24)  
Margene Haase (25)  
Sandy Harvey (29)  
Barbara Lange (29)  
Jeff Pickell (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.

## United Women In Faith

- Kenworthy and Ruth Circles will meet Tuesday, March 7 at 11 a.m. at church. We are having a “Stone Soup” luncheon. Anyone is welcome to join us. Any questions, call Jacque Howard.

Flame Editor  
Barbara Mitchell  
Flame Production  
Paula Amaro  
WEB Master  
Jim McGlocklin  
Next deadline is Wednesday, March 15, 2023  
Comments or suggestions, please let us know.

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

## March Lenten Project

Recently some 200 asylum migrants were bused into San Diego County, 69 of them to Oceanside, by Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Each entered the US seeking asylum, interviewed by DHS, and granted temporary admission as a reprieve from a threat to their lives, almost all with sponsor families waiting to receive them somewhere in the U.S.. They were transferred here through what is known as a “lateral move”, when normal government processing and release channels are beyond capacity. As a result the existing migrant shelters operating in San Diego County, run by Jewish Family Services and Catholic Charities, also ran out of capacity, sending them to Oceanside. Many were unaware of where they were, thinking they were still in Arizona. Each person was given strict reporting requirements and left to try to locate their sponsors for further travel.

When dropped off, many of the seekers had little more than what they were wearing on their backs and little to no warm clothing so were not prepared for storms. Additionally, many could not contact their sponsors for help as they were not allowed, by policy, to charge their phones at the Homeland Security Facility. Some of the seekers, also per policy, had been separated from their family, and with little to no English, had little idea of how to find them or how to get started on their journey forward.

There was great community response via several of our existing Community Partners. The seekers were housed and given the support needed to locate and transition to their sponsors who had housing waiting for them. Our Community Partners anticipate this situation reoccurring and as such have teamed together to form a Community Response Team. Everyone on the team is a volunteer and provide logistic, basic need and housing support as needed.

For Lent, to support the efforts of the Community Response team we have a list of needs available in the narthex along with a place to receive the items. Visa gift card purchases (\$25/\$50) can be left at the Scrip table. There is also a QR code on the <interfaithservices.org> web page if you wish to make a monetary donation. Thank you for your help with this important Lenten Mission Project.

-Barbara Mitchell, Beth Brainerd Hallock

## 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.

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

Education/Discipleship, March 8, 6 p.m.  
Meeting ID: 983 3122 0500  
Passcode: 490490

Trustees, March 21, 6:00 p.m.  
Meeting ID: 949 2569 3986  
Passcode: 490490

Finance, March 1, 7:00 p.m.  
Meeting ID: 963 4459 7468

Reconciling Ministries, March 28, 6:00 p.m.  
Meeting ID: 995 8164 7395  
Passcode: Welcome

NOTE: SPRC meets Sunday, March 12, 11:15 a.m. in the Conference Room.

## News from a community partner...

Leap to Success is one of the first 25 nonprofits in the country to be part of an initiative by Stand Together Foundation to cultivate the country’s most innovative organizations to create lasting change. Leap to Success was chosen to be part of the foundation’s Catalyst Impact Grant Program to break the cycle of poverty across the United States through innovative empowerment-based programming. The only organization in San Diego to receive the grant, Leap to Success will receive \$300,000 over three years to help more women in San Diego and across the country benefit from our proven, highly effective programming.

With this grant, Leap to Success will expand our services to reach more women across the country through a new Trainer Certification Program. Launched in 2022, the fee-for-service program trains other organizations to implement the licensed Leap to Confidence® program in their communities. New Leap to Confidence® cohorts are currently in place in Charlotte, NC and Nashville, TN, with the goal of expanding to 10 new areas in 2023.

Together we are changing the world one empowered woman at a time!

-Dana Bristol-Smith, Executive Director

## **Umbrella of Care**

The Umbrella of Care is the vision of the Congregational Care Committee. Their stated mission reads: To share God's love and grace by providing spiritual comfort, care, and support to all those in our congregation. The committee strives to bring God's love and support in a variety of ways, including home and hospital visits, cards for various occasions, Lift tickets for those who medically qualify, devotions and prayers, assistance with memorials, lending medical equipment from our church inventory, delivery of flowers for the passing of a spouse or partner, fellowship, delivery of seasonal items for various holidays, and a devoted calling team to keep our homebound connected, as well as those having other needs. And the committee is also very pleased to provide an interpreter for the Deaf the first Sunday of each month. In order to serve you faithfully, the Umbrella of Care strives to be connectional with the other ministries and services in our church. The Care Ministry Team includes: Pastor Leigh Ann, Pastor Frank, the Stephen Ministries Program with Mike Walker, Martha Treutle, Sara Baldwin, Beth B. Hallock, Kathy Johnson, Heidi Kendall, Bev Hopkins, Karen Felien, Rollin Grider, Paula Amaro, Tracy Lyons, Suzanne McMurchie and Dakota Koenig.

If you are interested in serving in any way, no specific amount of time, or day of the week is required. Anytime you have to help is welcomed. Galatians 6:2 says "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

-Dakota Koenig, Certified Lay Minister &  
Congregational Care Chair

## **Celebrations of Ministries Dec.-Feb.**

Successful Adjourned Church Conference; Christmas Concert was well received; Advent and Christmas celebrations were successful; SPRC celebrated receiving a "wealth" of gifts meant for the staff. New ministries beginning: Finance: Pennies for Heaven will be ongoing and at end of year, donations will be counted and a luncheon held; Rec. Min excited about becoming a Reconciling Church and are looking forward as well. Forty-six of us attended Shrove Tuesday at Denny's! Thanks to Sara Baldwin for organizing and to all who purchased \$430 in Denny's Scrip! BSA Troop 709 has two trips scheduled: Joshua Tree National Park and also Mammoth for skiing! They have a new Eagle Scout, with several more to come soon, AND they are welcoming about 15 new incoming scouts!

## **Academic Scholarships Available**

The UMC Vista Endowment Fund is offering 2023 academic scholarships to active members or family members of active UMC Vista members. Application packets, completed by the student, are due to the Endowment mailbox by May 31 (12 p.m.). Applications and more information can be found on [www.umcvista.org](http://www.umcvista.org). For questions, call Gary Lamb, President, 760.598.1915.

## **Welcome new members**

On February 26, we welcomed seven new members, Cathy and Mick Hilling, Ronn Kraner, Nancy and Leo Domenichetti, Linda Lavine-Hall and Suzy Mason;. We also recognized Shirley Barr, Marilyn Elliott and Jeff Pickell who joined November 2022. Next month we will share info about Leo Domenichetti and Suzy Mason.

Ronn Kraner was born in Bluffton, Indiana where he was raised Methodist. He is transferring from Murrieta UMC where he helped in a variety of areas. He has worked in food delivery services, and enjoys camping, hiking, game and movie nights and music. Welcome, Ronn!

Cathy Hilling, born in Richmond, VA, was raised Presbyterian, daughter of a Presbyterian Minister and granddaughter of missionaries. She is married to Mick Hilling (37 years). She is currently an Instructional Assistant at Vista High School. She enjoys tennis, golf, hiking, concerts, games and traveling and exploring new places.

Mick Hilling, born in Newport News, VA, was raised Catholic. He is retired, but works as a part time Noon Duty Assistant at Bobier Elementary School. Both the Hillings enjoy baseball. They have three adult children, Rebecca, Joseph and Michaela. They also have three grandchildren Andre, Fiona and Kai. They have both been active in past church activities.

Linda Lavine-Hall was born in New York. She was baptized into the Lutheran faith. She has been married to her wife Leonie for seven years. Their family is comprised of two small dogs, Yomie, a Yorkie (who often visits in church) and a Chihuahua by the name of Mollie!

Nancy Domenichetti was born in Minnesota. She was raised in the Catholic church, but as an adult found a home in the United Methodist Church liking the focus on social justice and friendliness. She has been actively involved in her previous churches, and enjoys walking, hiking, crochet and reading. Retired, she moved to California to be closer to her adult children and her grandchildren

## **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...**

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

Memorial service for Sharon Hall will be held on Saturday, March 18 at 2 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

Prayers for the family of Marlene Philippi (age 90). She was a former member. Marlene passed away Feb. 17. Cards may be sent to her daughter, Janet Haney, 36556 Fender Avenue, Madera, CA 93636

Return Service Requested

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