



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

"Then the Lord answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it."
Habakkuk 2:2 NRSV

As we wait on the return of the Christ light to the world this Christmas, I'm already dreaming about the new year. What will 2024 hold for our church ministry?

I want to extend a welcome to all those who've joined us in 2023 both in person and online. Your presence is welcome and we are a community excited to work together. During 2023 we completed a building process that began before the pandemic. Although we are still working with lawyers on close-out documents, our congregation has been eagerly presenting ministry in and at our newly built space. The social hall, with the three beautiful accordion doors, has an amazing restaurant quality kitchen and plenty of space for gathering. The calendar is already filling up for next year.

Over the last few years and prior to the decision to build, we developed a vision plan called a ministry action plan (or MAP for short). Our ministry action plan focused on areas of justice, worship and faith to assess our need for additional space and what ministry you would be able to include in that space. With the completion of the building, it is a good time to both review our previous work and begin again. As the prophet Habakkuk said, we need to write the vision and make it plain.

It is clear the mission and vision of God is to be love in the world. God shows love through the grace of Jesus, sacrificing for the good of all. God shows love by redeeming all through forgiveness and inviting all to the ultimate banquet. God is love says the scriptures. Love is our baseline and beginning point for all we do as people of the Christian faith in the Wesleyan, United Methodist tradition.

I'm so excited about the future of United Methodist Church of Vista but 2024 is still a few weeks away and it is time for Advent and Christmas. We will spend the remainder of the year reading the story of waiting for God's arrival as Jesus, and how Mary and Joseph, the Shepherds and Magi received the glory of God's blessing. Bring a piece of the story, a piece of the nativity and add to the beauty of the season. Look for the basket in the narthex or drop it off during the week.

On December 24 we will celebrate the last Sunday of Advent at 10:00 a.m. and then celebrate Christmas Eve at 5:00 p.m. Please join us for the beautiful message of light and love coming to the world. We will share the regular hymns over the season and a wonderful concert. On Sunday, December 31, worship will be shared online only on our YouTube channel as our leadership and staff gather with family and have some time to rest. Join us at 10:00 a.m. or anytime after for the celebration of what happens after Jesus is born.

There is so much that God is doing in the community of Vista and at the United Methodist Church of Vista! See you soon and I look forward to all that is unfolding in our future.

Sincerely,
Rev. Dr. Leigh Ann Shaw

Hanging of the Greens! It's that time again! Come, help us decorate the sanctuary for the holidays, Saturday, Dec. 2 at 9 a.m. There is something for everyone to do.

Annual Charge Conference is Sunday, Dec. 3 at 2:30 p.m. in the upper social hall.

The Flame

Finance Focus

The Finance/Stewardship Committee wishes to thank the congregation members turning in their pledge cards this week. As of November 26, we have received 59 pledge cards for a total giving pledged amount of \$176,759. Pennies for Heaven update as of November 26, we have received \$2,020.08. This entire congregation gives with a joyful heart and demonstrates a commitment to walking in faith and supporting broader missions. During the recent Thanksgiving Food Drive that benefited the Deaf Community Services and Vista Teen Outreach, 20 boxes of food were collected through your donations! This mission makes it possible for people to be able to have nourishment and sustenance they wouldn't have otherwise. The food drive is just one example of our outreach into the community in the name of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you all.

-Sara Baldwin, Chairperson,
Finance/Stewardship Committee

Christmas Concert, "Rejoice Greatly"

Plan now to attend the Music Ministries presentation of our Christmas concert, "Rejoice Greatly" on Sunday, December 17, 4:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. We are happy to announce that the Chancel Choir will be combining with members of the San Luis Rey Chorale, and friends from the Greater San Deigo Music Coterie. We will also feature our Chamber Orchestra, Anderson Handbells and guest artists, Jimmy Patton and Enrique Platas and Naomi Alter, harpist.

The concert will open with an exciting and varied program of original music from our cadre of local composers including, Adam Ferrara, Frank Hallock, David Lewis, director of the San Luis Rey Chorale, Christoph Rayburn, Jimmy Patton with Enrique Platas and Naomi Alter. We will present newly composed music and new and beautiful arrangements of well known carols and songs of the season. The second part of the concert is a presentation of the Christmas portions of Handel's Messiah. We are pleased to welcome guest tenor, Johanthan Cebreros, and guest soprano, Hope Carleson Chen to this special presentation. Alto, Beth Hallock, and bass, Frank Hallock, will be featured soloists as well. The orchestra is featured in this performance, and the concert will conclude with the Hallelujah Chorus, and the audience is invited to sing-a-long! Music will be provided.

Come and join us for this wonderful and uplifting concert! Admission is free, and a free-will offering will be taken during intermission.

Happy "December" Birthdays

Chris Amaro (1)
Susan Hernandez (7)
Nayeli Cargill (8)
Robert Myers (8)
Alan Mathias (10)
Bob Graham (11)
Carl Treutle (16)
Lucas Choque-Jimenez (17)
Trudy McClure (17)
Valerie Balun (18)
Nancy Domenichetti (19)
Beverly Thomason (19)
Martha Treutle (20)
Jeff Montgomery (21)
Kent Richard (21)
Jeannie Jackson (22)
Juna Spitz (24)
Kaye Van Nevel (24)
Jim Balardeta (25)
Darryl Wood (25)
Beth Brainerd Hallock (28)
Megan Burdick (31)

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

Peace Vigil, Dec. 3, 4 p.m.

Please plan to attend our fifth annual Peace Vigil at 4 p.m. Sunday, December 3. You will hear speakers and see performers and musicians from different faiths, as well as readings by our youth. Love in Motion Signing Choir and Vista Buddhist Temple Taiko drummers also will participate. You don't want to miss it.

There will be a reception in the upper social hall following the Peace Vigil. We welcome our church congregation and our community friends.

-Lyn Berry

Flame Editor
Barbara Mitchell
Flame Production
Paula Amaro
WEB Master
Jim McGlocklin
Next deadline is Wednesday, December 20, 2023
Comments or suggestions, please let us know.

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

Christmas gifts for our staff

As we prepare our Christmas gift list, let us remember our staff. This is an opportunity for us to say, “thank you” for all the support they provide our church throughout the year. We invite your gifts of cash donations or checks (made out to UMC Vista; write in the memo, “Staff Gift”) and place your gift in the Present Box at the end of the service, which will be available in the Narthex, Dec. 3, 10 and 17, or you may place it in the offering plate. We will present your gifts to the staff on Dec. 19. If you have any questions, please see Melissa Giard, Staff-Parish Chair.

Christmas Caroling, December 10

Join us on Sunday, Dec. 10 at 2:00 p.m. for Christmas caroling. Please plan to participate in this wonderful holiday tradition. This heartwarming and fun event is filled with Christmas spirit for the home bound and for us, the carolers. If you have questions, please call Kathy Johnson at 760.560.7150.

Appreciation Luncheon for congregation

The Finance/Stewardship Committee wishes to invite the congregation to a pizza and ice cream luncheon on Saturday, Dec. 30, from 12 noon to 2:00 p.m. There is no charge for the luncheon. There will be a free will offering available for anyone who wishes to contribute to the Pennies For Heaven end-of-year campaign.

Our committee wishes to show our appreciation to our caring congregation for supporting UMC Vista this year. We felt, that by the end of December, you would all have had your fill of turkey, ham and prime rib. We thought pizza and ice cream would appeal to you all. A sign-up sheet will be available in the Narthex to sign up until Dec. 17 (last day). God bless you and hope to see you all on Dec. 30.

-Sara Baldwin, Chairperson,
Finance/Stewardship Committee

Mark your calendar!

Game Night is coming on January 19 at 6:00 p.m. in the upper social hall. Bring your enthusiasm, snacks, and a new game, if you like. We have had some suggestions for Saturday evenings, so we will talk more about that at our first gathering. Any questions, call Loretta Pierce.

Thank you

Many thanks to our congregation for the donations of food items that were contributed to Deaf Community Services as well as Vista Teen Outreach, we were able to provide 20 boxes of food items for Thanksgiving to make other peoples lives just a little bit less stressful.

Thank you again for your generosity.

-Suzanne McMurchie

Missionary Coffee Break

On November 16, our convent missionary in Spain, Rev. Krista Givens, hosted a Zoom coffee break. Her guest was our District Superintendent, Rev. Sandy Olewine.

The subject was the question, “How do we engage in the work of the global church in the world? Is local mission more important than global mission?” Have you struggled with those questions? Many of us have.

The global mission imperative comes with the words of John Wesley, “The world is our parish.” Sandy Olewine expressed that whether the need is local or global, the most meaningful goal is to build relationships with the recipients. Admittedly, not everybody can have personal contact with the recipients. When we can’t go, we can support the missionaries that do, by subscribing to their newsletters, and following their activities on social media. Both Sandy and Krista expressed what it meant to them as missionaries to have greetings from fellow UMC members.

If you have an interest in how to be in contact with our missionaries, please call or email me, Jacque Howard.

Preparing for Advent and Christmas

Pastor Leigh Ann is inviting members of the congregation to donate one piece of the Nativity scene for use during worship in December. The piece you donate will not be returned to you and so should not be out of your family heirloom set or of high sentimental value. These pieces will be gathered together to tell the messy story of God bringing new life to creation. God puts the unexpected together and so will we. Drop your piece off at church anytime during November and be sure to include your name with the piece.

Thanks from our Community Partner...

We cannot thank you enough for your support. It is a huge encouragement & blessing. Currently, we are averaging around 20 inquiries for housing per month, sometimes more. With all five beds in Grace House currently being occupied, we are busy with finding alternative housing options and providing referral services and case management. We could not serve survivors without your ongoing support, prayers and encouragement. Alabaster Jar Project is a a community project. Thank you so much for what you do for all the survivors of trafficking served in our community. We appreciate you! I hope that blessings you pour out of your Alabaster Jar are multiplied back to you in this holiday season.

In gratitude, Susan Johnson, Director & Co-founder
(Please see complete letter on bulletin board in the narthex.)

Interpreter for the Deaf

An interpreter for the Deaf/and hard-of-hearing will be here on Dec. 3 (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.

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 our Video Team 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

Website: www.umcvista.org

Facebook: United Methodist Church of Vista

Be sure to check us out on Yelp!

Pray together for...

Family of Terry Peters, Paul Lange, Sheryl Lyons, Janice Myers, Stu Gibson, Jeanette Marusak, Dolores Sasway, Norm and Luene Corwin, Evelyn Lawson, 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 Marilyn Gardner Mathias. She passed November 12. Marilyn is preceded in death by her loving husband, Raub Mathias. Sympathy cards may be sent to the Family of Marilyn Gardner Mathias, c/o: Richard Gardner, 16661 Crepe Myrtle Lane, Whittier CA 90603; or to Al and Ranae Mathias, 3437 Don Alberto Drive, Carlsbad, CA 92010.

South District Prayer Session, Tuesday, Dec. 5, 7 p.m.

South District Lay Leader, Michael Mitchell, hosts an on-going monthly prayer Zoom meeting the first Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. This is open to everyone from regular church folks, leaders and pastors.

Zoom Meeting ID: 842 2413 4406

Passcode: 786330

Return Service Requested

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