



*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

Happy New Year, beloved church family! We stand at the threshold of 2024, our hearts are full of a multitude of emotions. Excitement for fresh beginnings mingles with the lingering echoes of the past year's joys and challenges. In this liminal space, we step into the new year with open hearts, embracing both the light and the shadows.

The hope of the season of Advent and Christmas is not simply a fleeting wish, but something that accompanies us into the new year. We can trust our faith and God to guide our footsteps and draw us forward. God is our compass through times unknown and uncharted.

As people of faith, we know that hope is not merely human optimism, but a lasting gift from God. Winter brings the solitude of darkness, and spring brings the energy of light. This cycle of our calendar and our days echos the message of our faith and our scriptures. Our spirit is resilient as we lean on God's Spirit.

This New Year is a good time to lean in to hope. Let us nourish it with acts of kindness, with moments of gratitude, and with the unwavering belief in the power of love and compassion. Let us be beacons of hope for one another, sharing our light with those who may be struggling to find their own.

Here are a few ways we can cultivate hope in the coming year:

- Reach out to someone in need:  
Volunteer your time, offer a listening ear, or simply extend a helping hand. Remember, even the smallest act of kindness can make a world of difference.
- Practice gratitude:  
Take time each day to appreciate the blessings in your life, big and small. Keeping a gratitude journal can be a powerful way to cultivate an attitude of thankfulness.
- Connect with your faith:  
Immerse yourself in the practices that bring you closer to God. Whether it's prayer, meditation, or simply spending time in nature, allow your faith to be a source of strength and renewal.
- Forgive yourself and others:  
Holding onto grudges only weighs us down. Let go of past hurts and embrace the possibility of new beginnings.
- Set meaningful goals:  
Don't let the new year's resolutions become another burden. Instead, set goals that inspire you and align with your values. Remember, progress, not perfection, is the key.

As we take this journey together, remember that we are not alone. We are part of a vibrant community of faith, bound by love, hope, and the promise of a brighter tomorrow. May this New Year be filled with blessings, and may we, in turn, be a blessing to the world around us.

With grace and peace,  
Pastor Leigh Ann

## Finance Focus

The Finance/Stewardship Committee wish the congregation a happy, healthy 2024. Our prayers and wishes are with our beloved congregation and we look forward to seeing you and working with you in the coming New Year. Blessings and prayers to you all. Your Finance/Stewardship Committee of United Methodist Church of Vista.

-Sara Baldwin, Chairperson,  
Finance/Stewardship Committee

## UWIF meets Jan. 9

United Women In Faith will meet Tuesday, January 9 at 11:00 a.m. in the upper social hall. Bring your own lunch. Dessert will be provided.

## “Rejoice Greatly” music concert, Jan. 14

Our music concert, “Rejoice Greatly” is now scheduled for January 14 at 4:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Our Chancel Choir will be combining with members of the San Luis Rey Chorale, and friends from the Greater San Diego Music Coterie. We will also feature our Chamber Orchestra, Anderson Handbells and guest artists, Jimmy Patton and Enrique Platas and Naomi Alter, harpist.

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

## Game Night, Jan. 19

Game Night is coming on Friday, 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.

See you there! Any questions, call Loretta Pierce.

## Interpreter for the Deaf

An interpreter for the Deaf/and hard-of-hearing will be here on January 7 (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.

## Happy “January” Birthdays

Phyllis Buvel (1)  
Shirley Barr (2)  
Ray Coast (2)  
Sean Flanagan (3)  
Jordyn Fraser (4)  
Sheridan Blakeslee (7)  
Sabrinarose Mejia (7)  
Dan Gubaton (9)  
Cassandra Levardo (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)  
Stu Gibson (24)  
Victor Avila (25)  
Leila Fernandez (25)  
Jalyn Phillips (25)  
Taylor Hansen (26)  
Ben Selinger (26)  
Nancy Feder (28)  
Judy Gibson (29)

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, January 17, 2024  
Comments or suggestions, please let us know.

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

## **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.

Finance, January 10, 6:30 p.m.  
Meeting ID: 963 4459 7468

Education/Discipleship, January 10, 6 p.m.  
Meeting ID: 983 3122 0500

Trustees, January 16, 6:00 p.m.  
Meeting ID: 949 2569 3986  
Passcode: 490490

Reconciling Ministries, Jan. 23, 6:30 p.m.  
Meeting ID: 995 8164 7395  
Passcode: Welcome

Congregational Care, Feb. 1, 1:30 p.m.  
Meeting ID: 921 7026 9939  
Passcode: 490490

### **In-person...**

SPRC, Sunday, January 7 (following worship service), Conference Room

## **Christmas Caroling**

On December 10, 11 people from age 10 to 80+ went Christmas caroling to eight of our home-bound church folk as well as singing to large gatherings at Aegis and Ocean Hills senior care facilities. The wonderful carolers were Marie Jackson, age 10, Jeannine Huffman, Marilyn Elliott, Jeannie Jackson, Rollin Grider, Karen and Gary Felien, Tom and Sue Humphrey and their friend, Patty. These folks volunteered their afternoon, and their presence made a huge difference to each person to whom we sang. Not only that, but many of our United Women in Faith ladies made cookies so that we had a big plate with a variety of cookies for each group. The Christmas spirit was really there for all of us. This is a fun activity where we make a joyful noise. It's one afternoon once a year and helps everyone get into the true Christmas spirit. We are looking forward to next year's Christmas Caroling event!

-Kathy Johnson

## **Annual Human Trafficking Walk**

Soroptimist International Vista and North County Inland and Soroptimist International Oceanside and Carlsbad will host their 18th Annual Human Trafficking Awareness Walk, Saturday, January 27th! We will meet on the patio outside the upper social hall or indoors, if necessary, at 10:00 a.m. till 12:00 p.m. There will be information booths from many groups representing the county-wide efforts to educate and raise awareness about human trafficking.

The one-mile voluntary walk begins at 10:45 - 11:00 a.m. to Sunrise and back.

United Methodist Church created a terrific and boisterous venue last year. Join us. Let's do it again.

-Kay Van Nevel

## **Heartfelt Thanks...**

“and Two Fishes” - wants to thank all who have donated the Winter items that we asked for, for men and women. Your caring generosity is such a blessing and our hearts are full of gratitude for you. Our clients can feel God's love through your kindness and caring.

Our Reconciling Ministries team would like to thank each of you who came to our fifth annual Community Peace Vigil on December 3. Lyn Berry gathered a diverse group who all embraced the idea and practice of peace in our world and in our relationships. The program included some of our youth, as well as our youth director, John Giard, and his wife, Melissa. Our community partners from the Buddhist and Islamic centers, the Taiko drummers, Canine Companions, the Love in Motion “signing” choir, hula dance group, and Tim Smith from Ramona UMC, all contributed to the program. We also thank Pastor Leigh Ann Shaw and Rev. Frank Hallock for their participation. A reception followed, and Alan and Nancy Feder provided delicious baked goods and lemonade. We also thank all those volunteers who decorated and helped to clean up afterwards. Next year, we anticipate having the peace vigil in September to celebrate the International Day of Peace. We hope that even more people from our congregation and our community will be able to come and enjoy it with us. Much appreciation to Lyn Berry for her devotion to this special event for the last five years.

-Loretta Pierce

## Hopes for 2024

Happy 2024! Each New Year it seems we're asked to come up with New Year's Resolutions...since it usually takes less than a week for me to break them, I've given up on making any! This year I thought it might be interesting to see what members, former members, and youth of our congregation might hope for in 2024!

- Lyn: Good health and peace for loved ones.
- Gayla: What I wish for in 2024 is to amp up the kindness and lower the temperature on the hate. We are all children of God and He would surely appreciate more Love and Kindness and Less Hate.
- Suzanne: More meaningful relations at a deeper level with a few good friends.
- Gary: I would hope for more civility in our world. Most folks have become so politically divided that they think they are entitled individuals and deserve what they want now. What happened to the days when we were all civil to one another and could agree to disagree no matter your political interest? I hope we as humanity can go back to being kind to one another, showing compassion and love for our fellow man.
- Diane: Good health.
- Dick: My hope is for all who wish to vote are able to do so without being restricted by voter suppression.
- Emily: I'm hoping for people to slow down, enjoy the fresh air, sunshine, and nature; to stop speeding and running stop signs and to be more kind to each other.
- Tracy: I believe that we are a giving and loving community that wants to help others who are less fortunate.
- Paula: I am wishing for good health and no water leaks in the home.

Amen! These are thoughts and ideas we can all pray for in 2024. Please send us your wish for 2024. We can help you pray—more voices beating at heaven's doors can make a difference in our world. Send your wish to Paula or Barbara (bjmitchell5122@yahoo.com). It's important to not only hear, but to listen and pray for each other in this tumultuous time. Happy New Year all!

## **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](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...**

Norm and Luene Corwin, Paul Lange, Sheryl Lyons, Janice Myers, Stu Gibson, Jeanette Marusak, Dolores Sasway, Evelyn Lawson, Traci Wheeler, Erin Fraser, Ko and Rosalynn Kim, Charlotte Chappell, Beverly Thomason, Stan Hamilton, Jim Rogers (hospice care), Joan Brainerd

## **South District Prayer Session, Tuesday, January 2, 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

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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