



First United Methodist Church

At this time, in this place, let us be the hands and heart of Jesus Christ for the world.

July 12, 2010

The Visitor

Volume 52, Issue 13

Staging A Miracle Says Thanks — Twice!



Thank you to the congregation for designation of the July communion offering to *Staging A Miracle* shoes. The \$402 received will go a long way toward buying 60 pairs of shoes for all SAM children and youth (babies through

high-schoolers, in on-stage and off-stage programs). These shoes will cost \$1,200 with significant discount from Payless Shoe Source, and will in many cases be the back-to-school shoes for kids whose families may not be able to buy them.

In the fall of 2009, *Staging A Miracle* received a \$2000 grant from the *Sacramento Bee's* Book of Dreams to purchase art equipment. Sandy Adams and Cathy Cook had a wonderful time purchasing items to expand SAM programs in visual art and photography and also to add clay. It was a lot of items, stacked and poked throughout the building because there was no single space that could hold it all. The Trustees grappled with the dilemma, and soon the Men's Club stepped forward to fund and build a closet in Room 215 to house and organize everything! Construction has been going on for a month, and has just been completed in time for *Staging A Miracle* 2010. Great thanks to project manager Glenn Tilton and the entire team of men and youth that built and installed this dream come true!

The Miracle Begins

At 5:00 PM on Tuesday, July 13, the doors of First United Methodist Church will swing open to another summer of *Staging A Miracle*. Sixty children and youth accompanied by

their parents, grandparents and guardians will tumble into FUMC and begin a five-week journey like no other. Along the way they will meet over 100 volunteers who will meet and greet, feed and clothe, and share their time, gifts and talents in ways that will be life-changing both for the givers and the recipients. This year's theme, *CREATE!*, is what happens everywhere in *Staging A Miracle*—the creation of friendships, of trust, of a new awareness of self and the power of community. The creation of skills and the opportunity to try new things in a safe and supportive environment. The creation of "ah-ha" moments when something newly learned becomes something that can be shared with someone else. Creation as a new beginning, as something forgotten and found, the entire spectrum of possibilities that come from being loved, cared for, and supported by the people of the FUMC faith community, and other congregations, organizations, and individuals who have stepped forward.



Please know that everyone is invited to come visit *Staging A Miracle* on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, July 13-August 12, AND mark your calendar to attend a *Staging A Miracle* performance on Saturday, August 14 (6:00, 7:00, and 8:00 PM), and Sunday, August 15, during worship in our courtyard.

On behalf of the Leadership Team of *Staging A Miracle*, the participating families, and the multitude of volunteers, thank you to FUMC for hosting *Staging A Miracle* 2010. And to the leaders, families, and volunteers: Thank you for making this miracle hap-

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CAT's Pause

Goodbyes to Kevin and Linda

The last two weeks in June saw the congregation bidding “farewell” to two of our staff members. The change included remarks in the worship service and a reception following at the coffee hour. I want to comment on this closed chapter in our leadership because these two have been at the forefront of good development for our parish.

Kevin Manz came to us when Tom Orr needed to step down suddenly because of paramount health issues. He moved into our needy situation with skill and grace and lifted our spirits each Sunday as he treated us to organ music the like of which we had not heard before. Coming from a family of church musicians Kevin had distinguished himself already in the United Church of Christ (his home denomination) as a national leader who has helped shape where that body has decided to go for the near future.

Kevin became quite pleased with the congregation here and the kind of ministry it was shaping for the Midtown area; he decided to apply for the permanent position that was beginning to take form. Subsequently coming on staff, Kevin threw himself completely into the complicated task of rebuilding our historic pipe organ, assisting at every moment the building firm we have always employed. The result was an organ that has been expanded and greatly enhanced by his efforts. Time and time again he has demonstrated the capacity and versatility of our “new” installation in the sanctuary. Kevin’s last Sunday with us was no exception; he once more brought out the full potential of what has become a major music asset in Sacramento. All of this simply would not have been possible without his keen interest, high skill and dedication. Thank you, Kevin.

Linda Kelly-Baker began relating to our congregation through the generous initial donation from a parishioner who believed deeply that we should be serving the people who need us in the Midtown area. Her Side-By-Side ministry has grown both in importance to the community in these economically “down” times and in the awareness of all of us. We have learned from Linda and have become more attuned to what ministry we can provide. Linda has been on staff in this local mission ministry serving very effectively to connect parish life with community mission. Early this year she decided that the

future of Side-By-Side meant that she had to devote full time to her work there. While we will miss her on staff, Linda will not be a stranger in our congregation; we look forward to augmenting her work in Midtown ministry and are proud to have helped in its forming itself into the major force for good it has become under her careful administration.

Our ministry here goes forward, naturally. At this point in our life together changes in leadership are coming up, as happens in all parishes. We will make a good and significant mark with our ministry because of the witness and work of these two leaders. We pray for them wherever their calling takes them.



“CAT’s Pause” uses Carl’s initials coupled with the other spelling of the second word to signal a moment of reflection.

About Our Folks

♥ Our prayers and sympathy are with **Tanis Toland**, her father **Jim**, and all their family. **Jean Toland** passed away July 9. She will be greatly missed by all her First Church and Community Breakfast friends. ♥ Congratulations to **Dick Baxter** and his family on the July 2 birth of Dick’s new great-grandson **Patrick Blake Baxter**. ♥

Updates on *The Visitor*

If you looked at the upcoming *Visitor* deadlines on the back page and said, “Hey! What’s the deal with September?”—here’s your answer. *The Visitor* will take a break for Labor Day and publish just one September issue, submission deadline September 17, including the October calendar.

Also, please note the changes to submission guidelines. Email and fax directly to the editor remain the preferred methods of submitting items for publication. Items on paper may also be left in *The Visitor*’s church office mailbox, but please plan plenty of lead time, as that box may not be checked regularly, especially during the summer. Staff will fax hard-copy items to the editor when possible, but submitters are responsible for letting staff know that items are there to be faxed.

Thanks for helping the publication process run smoothly!

Twenty-first Families

It's **SUMMER** at First Church!

July Schedule

Staging A Miracle Tuesdays and Thursdays

- 5:00 PM dinner
- 6:00-8:00 PM rehearsal

9:15 AM Sundays

- Nursery and toddler care (0-4 years) in downstairs nursery
- Age 4 through Middle School, *Heroes and Legends* series in Room 202B

10:30 AM Sundays

- Nursery and toddler care (0-4 years) in downstairs nursery
- Age 4 through Middle School, *Learning the Bible* centers in Room 201

August Schedule

Staging A Miracle Tuesdays and Thursdays (through August 12)

- 5:00 PM dinner
- 6:00-8:00 PM rehearsal

Saturday, August 7 — 1:00-4:00 PM rehearsal

Performances August 14 and 15

9:15 AM Sundays — No children's programs at this time in August

10:30 AM Sundays

- Nursery and toddler care (0-4 years) in downstairs nursery
- Age 4 through Middle School, *Learning the Bible* centers in Room 201

September — Mark Your Calendar

Sunday on Labor Day Weekend: No 9:15 AM children's programs. Children remain in worship at 10:30 AM. Nursery and toddler care in downstairs nursery during worship.

Sunday, September 12 — All fall programs begin for babies, toddlers, children and youth at 9:15 AM and 10:30 AM.

—Cathy Cook, Director of Children's Ministries, (916) 446-5025 X106, children@firstumcsac.org

Our Help Is Needed — Now

Danny Price, of our Middle School Youth leaders, reports that Ashley, one of our youth, just last week suffered the loss of her home. Her mother, Laura Lagge, reports that the house and its contents were almost a total loss in a morning fire that engulfed their home quickly. The good news is that the home was insured, and immediate needs are being cared for by school families (Danny had Ashley in his fifth-grade class a couple of years ago). But the long-term picture includes necessary replacement of home supplies, household items, clothes, etc. After the first good wave of support from neighbors and friends is exhausted more will have to be done. That's where we might be able to help. Ashley, her young brother and her mom could really use gift cards (in any denomination) to fill out all the little necessities that mount up quickly when you don't have any at all. We'll be collecting cards here at the office to give to the family as they put their lives back together.

More good news: though several in the family, including grandparents, were asleep when the fire broke out, no one was injured; all were led to safety in time.

Let's help this family of one of our own youth. Ask Danny Price if you want more details; he'll also have updates from time to time and is in regular contact with the family.

A Big "Thank You"

A big "thank you" to all those folks who helped us host our Family Promise guests re-

cently. Fifteen family members stayed at First Church, June 27 through July 3. We appreciate everyone's help with food preparation, activities, and staying overnight as hosts. This is a big job and made so much easier by many willing hands.

Our next Family Promise visit occurs Sunday, September 12 through September 18. Again we will need help so that our guests are fed and welcomed to enjoy our radical hospitality. If you'd like to help, please sign up on the board in the Terrace Room, or contact Brian or Jeannette Hite at (916) 470-9586 or bhite71@yahoo.com.



**Instrumental Music
for July 18 and July 25**

On Sunday, July 18, the organ prelude to the morning service will be *Chorale Prelude "Jesus, You Are My Life."* This piece by Andreas L. Loewe (1760-1826) is based on the chorale *Jesu, Priceless Treasure*.

The offertory selections for this Sunday and the next will be provided by our guest musicians.

The postlude for the 18th is a great running piece. I've chosen *Laudation* by Gilbert M. Martin.

On Sunday, July 25, my daughter Virginia Fowler and I will be playing two pieces for an extended prelude. We will be starting early so that the 10:30 service will begin on time. We have chosen two contrasting pieces: *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*, a duet arrangement by Lani Smith based on "Nettleton," an early American folk hymn; and *Sicilienne* by French composer Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924), arranged for piano and organ by Louis Hollingsworth.

At the conclusion of the service you'll hear the organ postlude *A Joyous Acclamation* by Lani Smith. This selection must have been inspired by the phrase, "On your mark...get set... go!"

Happy listening,

Tom

Carl's sermon series continues

July 18 Luke 18:19
Why Do You Call Me Good?

July 25 Mark 10:35, 36
What Do You Want Me to Do for You?

August 1 Matthew 21:23
By What Authority Are You Doing These Things?

August 8 I Corinthians 12:29
Are All Apostles?

LT (Leadership Team) Meets July 21

Mike McDoniels will open our first meeting at 7:00 PM on the 21st. Talk among team leaders so far is exciting to me because all are committed to working with the whole church and its ministry together. The hope is that all our decisions will be better ones for First Church people merely because we will be developing a clearer understanding among ourselves of priorities for our congregation. And that clarity will be communicated broadly. Whether it's a new mission, or a ripe idea for implementation among our own people, we'll all know about it and how the idea is developing. Come to the meetings yourself; hear what's going on, how the team members see their roles, add a comment or ask a question. Then watch for publicity of the results.

We intend to publish an agenda before gathering so that you'll know what's about to be discussed. Included in this first two-hour gathering are the following:

- Initial proposal for a facility master plan
- Current facility use: contracts coming up for renewal
- A new "ministry team" proposal, *Angels on Call*
- Children's Ministry follow-up from the May 29 *Hopes for Our Children and Youth*
- The Big Picture – a review of what's been working and where we'd like to see development (from each of our areas). We'll begin a listing (not discussion on this item for the first go-round).
- Supporting the Church's Ministry 2011 – budget development and initial ideas for campaign (with calendar items).
- Adult Education this fall and beyond.
- Additions to the Agenda – these can be presented as too late to be included here, but they may be deferred to a future meeting if adequate time is not available on the 21st.

Come help us launch this leadership idea.

—Carl, acting pastor

Matching funds for religious freedom

California Council of Churches IMPACT is a long-time supporter of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF, www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org). MRFF's work is to protect the precious civil rights of our men and women in all

(Continued from page 4)

branches of service to worship, speak, think, and act in accordance with their own religious and spiritual views.

Over several decades, ultra-conservative Christians have abused this right to secure dominance of their fundamentalist views of Christianity not on their own behalf alone but to impose on our troops. Protestants, Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jews, Muslims, and many other faiths, as well as nonbelievers, have been coerced and even brutalized into attending ultra-conservative services and forced to accept "Christian" theology, symbols and purposes as part of their military obligation. This is a fight for all of us—not just those in the military.

MRFF, twice nominated for the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize as champions of religious freedom and of our Constitution, has received the promise from very generous donors of \$7,500 in matching funds. That means your contribution is instantly doubled in impact. Contributions are fully tax-deductible and may be made at www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/support-mrff.

MRFF has more than 18,000 clients—96% of them Christians—in all branches of our Armed Services. MRFF works tirelessly to protect them from physical and emotional intimidation, abuse, and even death threats for abiding by their own convictions on religion and spirituality. Visit MRFF's website to learn more, and consider IMPACT's encouragement to donate funds if you are able.

A Staging A Miracle Support Opportunity

On July 29, the *Staging A Miracle* parent-participation preschool-kindergarten program has been invited to attend ArtBeast for a discounted cost for the 30 people in that program. The total cost is \$150 (usually \$220) which will allow all of the children, parents and volunteers to attend for two hours. A donation to FUMC, with a notation of "SAM/ArtBeast trip" can be put in the offering plate or left in the Children's Ministries box in the office.

ArtBeast is a drop-in arts exploration space for children featuring an open studio, arts classes, and arts exploration rooms. Though all children are welcome to visit ArtBeast, special focus is given to creating an environment for children under six.

The **open studio** features tables, easels, and clay mounds where young artists can work. Surrounding shelves are stocked with paint, papers, objects from nature, recycled tidbits, glues, crayons, glitter, scissors, an array of brushes, and an even wider offering of objects from which to make art. Children develop confidence in expressing and messing as they create art pieces that convey their sense of the world.

Arts exploration rooms include rooms to explore dramatic arts, music, and movement. **Dramatic play spaces** change monthly so children can explore the creation of story lines with ever changing scenery, props, costumes, and puppets. **A music exploration space** offers instruments from around the world so that budding musicians can strum, form drum circles, or form a band.



"My Ocean Planet"

By Connie Herrell, UMW, Education & Interpretation

Thank you to Elaine Jacobsen for calling to my attention this article by Mary Crowley in the May 2010 issue of *Response* magazine. The article tells us how scientists are working to address the global plastic pollution problem.

You might be interested in knowing that there is an organization called Project Kaisei, part of Ocean Voyages Institute, that has done oceanographic trawls, and they have found huge plastic deposits just 400 miles off the coast of San Francisco. Further out, they encountered "ghost nets," in

which derelict fishing gear causes nets to roll over each other and trap all kinds of sea life—along with hundreds of pieces of plastic.

They found every kind of plastic imaginable: toys, toothbrushes, garden chairs, water bottles and detergent bottles. Plastic is with us forever; it doesn't dissolve. I wondered along with the researchers just how much plastic is out there! It is affecting our marine life because some of the fish are ingesting the toxic plastic.

Now scientists and teams from the U.S. and other countries are determining the best ways to recycle the plastic after it has been collected.

Please read "My Ocean Planet" for more intriguing information about the plastic problem.

Find *Response* at <http://new.gb-gm-umc.org/umw/response/>. "My Ocean Planet" is at <http://new.gb-gm-umc.org/umw/response/articles/item/index.cfm?id=198>.

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***The Visitor* Deadline and Submission Info**

The Visitor is published twice monthly; a list of publication dates is available in the brochure racks or in the church office. **The deadline to submit items is the Friday before publication.** Items may be submitted by e-mail (best), fax, or hard copy:

- **E-mail** to *Visitor* editor Cindy Haug-West at theVisitor@firstumcsac.org, or **fax** to her at (916) 428-2645, **by 6:00 PM Friday**. Be sure Dianne Smith (dianne@firstumcsac.org) in the church office receives a copy of your item.
- **Hard copy** submissions may be delivered to the church office, or to Cindy by prior arrangement. When delivering to the church office, plan enough lead time for staff to fax items to Cindy.

Upcoming deadlines for *The Visitor* are:

- **July 23 (including August calendar)**
- **August 6**
- **August 27 (including September calendar)**
- **September 17 (including October calendar)**
- **October 1**
- **October 15 (including November calendar)**

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