



# First United Methodist Church

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

January 2012

## The Visitor

Volume 54, Issue 1

### PASTOR DON'S DABBLINGS

Greetings in the name of Christ!

Is it really the New Year?

If we go by the current civic calendar used around the world, yes, January 1<sup>st</sup> marks the beginning of 2012.

Religious calendars are different, though.

For instance, we are in year 5,772 using the Hebrew calendar. The year number represents the number of years since creation, calculated by adding up the ages of people in the Bible back to the time of creation. This does not mean the world began exactly 5,772 years ago, as the seven days of creation in Genesis are not considered 24-hour days—they point to a process not a time restricted week as we know it. The first month of the new year for Jews is Nisan.

With the Islamic calendar, we are in the year 1432. This is based on the year that Mohammed emigrated from Mecca to Medina. The first day of the new year for Muslims is in the month of Muharram.

Furthermore, Christians use a different calendar for religious purposes. The beginning of the Christian

year is the first Sunday of Advent, followed by the season of Christmas beginning on Christmas Day, then Epiphany, Lent, and Pentecost. Although many Protestants were reluctant to use our current calendar developed in 1545 by Pope Gregory XIII, by the 1700's the Gregorian calendar became the standard civil calendar in use today.

Of course, the development of calendars has a long and rather arduous history. One thing is clear, though...we really need calendars. They remind us of what has passed, providing a reference point for history and the human project of remembering the past. They also point to the future as we look forward to a future date such as a birthday or holiday.

Most importantly, calendars remind us that today is *today*. The Psalmist sings, "This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!" This is the most important contribution calendars make to our lives, that today is today and there will never be another quite like it.

Today is God's day and we are invited to make the most we can of it, bringing our faith to bear on whatever the day brings. A bad-hair day can be experienced as a day of wonder and gratitude if we can remember that today is God's day, made just for you and me...and all of creation. Consequently, the most difficult, trying day we could face is still God's day, holding out the promise of grace, even if this is the only promise that we cling to when life turns sour.

While we enjoy the changing of the year from 2011 to 2012 [or whatever year it is!], we would do well to remember that this year is God's year, this day is God's day. This day provides the opportunity to live by faith and let today be the best it can be. Start the day with prayer and let prayer lead you to joy. Then meet the world with rejoicing for being blessed with God's day today!

Happy New Year!

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....and *much more*, inside & at [www.firstumcsac.org](http://www.firstumcsac.org)

## Worship Celebrations: Looking Forward

Jan 8 1st Sunday after the Epiphany

naked - Wine, Wind, Wellsprings

John 4.7 - 26

What does it mean to say, "I am spiritual, but not religious?" Maybe we are trying to make an important distinction between re-ligion and de-ligion!

Jan 15 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany

naked - Simplicity Redux

Psalms 29

1 John 1.5; 4.7-8, 16, 29-21

"Tis a gift to be simple"...it's not about intelligence, it's about using our inner intelligence to open ourselves to what really matters: staying in the present, appreciating life, and practicing jubilation.

Paul Simon Cecilia jubilation get down on my knees

Jan 22 3rd Sunday after the Epiphany

naked - Confronting Complexity

Psalms 139.1-6, 13-18

Mark 2.1-12

We live in an immensely complicated world, don't we?

My computing world got simpler with the cloud! Think, though, how complex our relationships are! Three words help us to confront our relational complexities: sorry, help, and please.

Jan 29 4th Sunday after the Epiphany

naked - Power in Perplexity

Psalms 65, 5-12

You've wondered when...when will all the negativity stop.

You've said no...angry with God. You've asked why...coming up with zero. Can there be power in all this? The answer may just be "Yes!"

Feb 5 5th Sunday after the Epiphany

naked - Harmony's Song

Psalms 111

John 15.1-17

One way to deepen our faith experience is to seek harmony in ourselves, in our relationships, with nature...pretty much across the board! Pay attention to the harmony around you. Learn to say, "Yes!" Listen to the silence.

Feb 12 6th Sunday after the Epiphany

Scouting Ministries Sunday

1 Corinthians 9.24-27 ??

Our Scouting Ministries will take center chancel this Sunday with a visit from Boy Scout Troop One - the oldest troop in California!

Feb 19 Last Sunday after the Epiphany

Five Wishes

Isaiah 40.21-31

What are your plans for the rest of your life? How do you want your life to be when it draws to a close? Five Wishes do not make for wishful thinking, but comforting resolve.

## Dateline Bethlehem

Seventy-plus 'travelers' met December 10 for the 30th annual Journey to Bethlehem. Thanks to Julie and Mark Rodriguez and their team of costumed helpers who transformed the Terrace Room into Bethlehem town square; to those who cooked the meal and cleaned up afterward; to our fabulous building staff who worked early and late with great willingness and good cheer to make it happen; and finally, thanks to the children who reenacted the miraculous story that never grows old. It was a night to remember.



## January Visitor: UMW Meeting Schedule

UMW General Meeting, Thursday, January 5, 2012

9:45 am Executive Committee Meeting

10:45 am Business Meeting

11:45 am Lunch

Setup and Decorate: Open Circle

Cook: Circle 2

Serve and Clean-Up: Everyone

12:15 pm Program: FUMC Music Director Joseph Silmaro

**ALL WOMEN ARE WELCOME!**

Monday, Jan 9, 2012 @ 7pm - Living the Legacy of Dr. King and Nelson Mandela: *A Conversation with Palestinian and Civil Rights Activists*. Centennial United Methodist Church, 5401 Freeport Blvd. Sacramento.

Palestinian activist Dr. Omar Barghouti speaks with civil rights movement veteran Rev. Phil Lawson and Gerald Lenoir of the Black Alliance for Just Immigration. For more information: 916. 451.1512 [SabeelSacramento@gmail.com](mailto:SabeelSacramento@gmail.com)

## A Message from Bishop Warner H. Brown, Jr.

At this time of year we are busily closing out our affairs for the year and anticipating the joyful festivities of Christmas.

But in the Christian tradition, the Advent season is a time of beginning. It begins with hope as we anticipate the coming of the Savior, incarnate in our lives and in our world. It is a time of joy as we recognize the blessings that surround us and the promise of the New Year that is about to unfold.

For some of us, those blessings may seem masked from view by the painful reality of personal or economic loss. There is "a lot of that going around" – yet for the first time in a long time, a lot of people out there are choosing to identify themselves with those folks, and standing up for people in need.

The last three months have seen people all over the country – and internationally – crying out against social and economic inequality, unemployment, and other societal ills. The Occupy movement resonates with many United Methodists, invested as we are in the concept of social justice.

But what I believe resonates even more strongly with us are the concepts of compassion, reconciliation, and healing. Recently one of our campus pastors demonstrated that commitment when she returned to campus to escort the chancellor past student protesters, shortly after an ugly scene in which campus police pepper-sprayed demonstrating students.

The following day, the Rev. Kristin Stoneking wrote the following in her blog: "Why did I walk the Chancellor to her car? Because I believe in the humanity of all persons. Because I believe that people should be assisted when they are afraid. Because I believe that in showing compassion we embrace a nonviolent way of life that emanates to those whom we refuse to see as enemies and in turn leads to the change that we all seek."

Compassion, reconciliation, and healing. The message brought by angels to the 99 percent, in the days of Caesar Augustus, pointing shepherds to a babe in a manger.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we pray for peace on earth and are hopefully seeking ways to bring it about. At the same time, we recognize that while we must live and work amid the gritty problems of the here and now, we look with anticipation for the dawning of God's reign on this earth.

May the season be a time of blessing for all of us. May we enter a new year with new energy and new commitment to be the people God has called us to be, and to see the things that we *have* as an opportunity to be – and to do – what is important to God.

### **A Special Thanks**

The congregation would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to Amy Price who has been our lay leader for lo, these many years! Her dedication, loyalty and genuine caring for all who have sought her help has been the hallmark of her reign.

We thank you, Amy, and we are grateful to your entire family for sharing you for so long.

**SUNDAY**

# January 2012



**Mon                      Tue                      Wed                      Thu                      Fri                      Sat**

<p><b>1</b> See Sundays at FUMC 10:30 Worship Service— Communion Sunday 11:30 a.m.Fellowship Time 3:00 p.m.Imani sets up for Kwanzaa Festivities 5:30 p.m.Imani Medita- tion 7:30pm.Imani Cty Church Service Kwanzaa</p>	<p><b>2</b> 6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts and Parents  7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts</p>	<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>4</b> 7:00 p.m.NA- 12 Steps 7:00 p.m. Imani Bi- ble Study</p>	<p><b>5</b> 9:00 am Staff Meeting 9:45 UMW 5:00 p.m.SAM Board Meeting 7:15p.m.Chance l Choir Re- hearsal</p>	<p><b>6</b> 10:00 a.m. Gospel of Matthew</p>	<p><b>7</b> 9:00 a.m. “Caring for the Caregiver”</p>
<p><b>8</b> See Sundays at FUMC 10:30 Worship Service— 8:30 a.m. Missions Com- mittee Meeting 9:15 a.m.“In the News” 9:15 a.m.Children’s Ac- tivities 12:00 Second Sunday Luncheon 1:00 p.m.Sanctuary Reno- vation Task Force</p>	<p><b>9</b> 7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts</p>	<p><b>10</b> 6:30 Lead- ership Team Meeting</p>	<p><b>11</b> 7:00 p.m.NA- 12 Steps 7:00 p.m. Imani Bible Study</p>	<p><b>12</b> 5:30 p.m.“Not Finished Yet” – Women’s 6:30 p.m.“n a k e d” small group study 7:15 p.m. Chan- cel Choir Re- hearsal</p>	<p><b>13</b> 10:00 a.m. Gospel of Matthew</p>	<p><b>14</b> <b>Second Saturday in Midtown</b>  6:00 pm Film Fes- tival</p>
<p><b>15</b> See Sundays at FUMC 9:15 a.m. “In the News” 9:15 a.m. Children’s Activities 10:30 a.m. Worship Ser- vices</p>	<p> <b>17</b> 7:00 p.m. Board of Trustees  <i>Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Birthday— Office Closed</i></p>	<p><b>18</b> 7:00 p.m. 12 Steps-NA 7:00 p.m. Imani Bible Study</p>	<p><b>19</b> 8:30 a.m. Staff Meeting 9:45 a.m. UMW Circle 3 12:30 p.m.UMW Circle 2 6:30 naked Group Study</p>	<p><b>20</b> 10:00 a.m. “The Gospel of Matthew”  6:00 pm Safe- ground Over- night</p>	<p><b>21</b></p>	
<p><b>22</b> See Sundays at FUMC 8:30 a.m. Community Breakfast 9:15 a.m.“In the News”</p>	<p><b>23</b> 7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts</p>		<p><b>25</b> 7:00 p.m. 12 Steps-NA 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>26</b> 5:30 p.m. “Not Fin-</p>	<p><b>27</b> 10:00 a.m. Gospel of Matthew</p>	<p><b>28</b> 9:00 a.m. Leadership Team Retreat</p>
<p><b>29</b> See Sundays at FUMC 8:30 a.m Community Break- fast</p>	<p><b>30</b> 7:00 p.m.Boy Scouts .</p>	<p><b>31</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sundays at FUMC</b>  <b>9:15 AM Wired Word Study</b>  <b>9:15-11:30 AM Infant/toddler care,</b>  <b>Children’s Enrichment programs, Adult Edcation</b>  <b>10:30 AM Worship; Sunday school programs for children and</b>  <b>youth; Infant/toddler care</b>  <b>11:30 AM Fellowship</b>  <b>12:00-2:00 PM Youth Group</b>  <b>5:30 p.m. Imani Meditation</b>  <b>6:00 p.m. mani Community Church</b></p>			

## Providing Congregational Care and Support

If you have been the caregiver for someone during their season of illness and death then you know and may agree that this is one, if not the most, difficult role you have had in your life. Caring for a terminal parent, sibling or spouse may last weeks or years. It is physically and emotionally exhausting for many of those involved with the patient's care. It is a huge transition between where the family was and now is. There is much to accomplish each day, meeting the needs of the person who can no longer help themselves. There is very little time or energy for past activities and relationships. Many caregivers feel a strong desire and need to be with their loved one every possible moment. It is a tremendous opportunity to love. Observers wonder how they find the strength to go on.

Do you ever wonder what you could do to help someone you know, or you would like to know, and their family during a time of illness? For nearly five years I have watched the parishioners at First United Methodist Church love and support one another in the sanctuary and the fellowship hall every Sunday. I have witnessed a growing maturity in our caring and support for one another and for the missions of this congregation. It is visible, it can be felt.

One of the main goals of a church is to help keep members connected with their faith community. The journey may start at birth with baptism or anywhere along the cycles of life: youth, adulthood, marriage, or even after retirement. We watch over each other throughout life's stages, sharing major events. At the end of life, when it becomes more difficult for people to be in church on a regular basis, we can look for ways to stay connected in significant and meaningful ways.

Many at this church do help others and they provide care and support in various ways. If you are looking for ways to build upon the concept of developing an **Unbroken Circle of Care** within your church the following may provide some effective ideas:

- Support one another throughout all stages of the illness – beyond diagnosis and days following death. Sit with the patient or the caregiver and listen to their stories. You may hear them express an unmet need. Most people need to share their stories repeatedly.
- Respond to the practical, emotional and social needs people face. Do something, make a casserole and deliver it, go to your favorite restaurant and buy them soup and sandwiches for dinner. Rarely will anyone tell you what you can do. If they say they are getting along fine then just do something. Anything you do will express your

interest and concern.

Nurture the members' sense of belonging to the faith community. For some, the loss of being a couple, makes it more difficult to feel they still belong. Offer to take them with you to meetings and church as soon as they are willing. Help them feel welcome and once again become a vital part of the community.

To prepare for the possibility that you may one day become a caregiver for someone you love or to help those who are currently caregivers there will be two resources available in January, 2012. If you are interested and would like to participate or know someone who would, please let me know .

Saturday, January 7, 2012, 9:00 – 12:00 noon, Christine Pobanz-Stelter, Chaplain, will lead a workshop on Caring for the Caregivers. Room 206 is planned.

Starting January 17, 2012, 10:00 to 11:30 A.M., Patricia Weedon, Faith Community Nurse and Christine Pobanz-Stelter, offer a five week group "Caring for the Caregivers." Room 206 is planned.

Patricia Weedon, Faith Community Nurse

### Youth and Children

December was a wonderfully busy month for the children and youth at FUMC. We decorated and signed Christmas cards which were placed in bags that were handed out on Christmas Day for Community Breakfast and we had an enjoyable Journey to Bethlehem with crafts, dinner, and fun for all.

The youth and children also gave the Christmas story message with our pageant where all ages shared their talents through singing, playing instruments, and a very fun telling of the real meaning of Christmas.

Several Youth and Children also made Christmas cookies with Family Promise families.

Thank you to all who helped make each of the above happen!

A look ahead to the new year for the youth involves a couple of service trips to UMC of the Joyful Healer in Humboldt County and Glide Memorial UMC in San Francisco. We also plan to raise awareness of hunger by doing a "24 hour Famine".

We are looking forward to a fabulous New Year in 2012. What a blessing it is to be part of First UMC Sacramento!

\*DVDs of the Youth and Children Christmas Pageant from December 18th, 2011 are available at \$2 each. Contact Karla, or Dianne in the church office, for more information.

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**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH VISITOR**

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**PERIODICALS**

**DATED MATERIAL—DO NOT DELAY**



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

*The Visitor* is published monthly. Each issue includes the following month's calendar. **The deadline to submit items is the Wednesday before publication.** Items may be submitted by e-mail (best) or hard copy:

- **E-mail** to *The Visitor* editors **Connie Fanos** at [cfanos@hotmail.com](mailto:cfanos@hotmail.com) and **Lynette Fazio** at [lynnfazio@comcast.net](mailto:lynnfazio@comcast.net) **by 5:00 PM Wednesday**. Be sure Dianne Smith ([dianne@firstumcsac.org](mailto:dianne@firstumcsac.org)) in the church office receives a copy of your item via e-mail cc.
- **Hard copy** submissions may be delivered to the church office, or to the editors by prior arrangement. When delivering to the church office, plan enough lead time for staff to transmit items to the editors.

**Upcoming deadlines for *The Visitor* are:**

- **January 25**
- **February 22**

**First United Methodist Church**  
2100 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95816  
**(916) 446-5025** — fax (916) 446-3463  
[www.firstumcsac.org](http://www.firstumcsac.org)

Reverend Pastor **Don Lee**: phone extension 104

Church Building and Office Administrator **Dianne Smith**: ext. 101; [dianne@firstumcsac.org](mailto:dianne@firstumcsac.org)

Director of Youth and Children's Ministries  
**Karla Lundin** ext. 106 [karla@firstumcsac.org](mailto:karla@firstumcsac.org)

Faith Community Nurse **Patricia Weedon**: ext. 105;  
[patricia@firstumcsac.org](mailto:patricia@firstumcsac.org)

Choir Director and Organist **Joseph Silmaro**: ext. 116; [joseph@firstumcsac.org](mailto:joseph@firstumcsac.org)

Webmaster **Sarah Clem**: [webmaster@firstumcsac.org](mailto:webmaster@firstumcsac.org)

Bookkeeper **Virginia Beebe**: [ginny@firstumcsac.org](mailto:ginny@firstumcsac.org)

Maintenance/Grounds/Security: **Johnny Morales**;  
**Richard Pervorse**