



First United Methodist Church

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

December 1, 2011

The Visitor

Volume 53, Issue 12

ADVENT-CHRISTMAS-EPIPHANY



BLESSINGS!



- Sunday, November 27th:
First Sunday of Advent - 10:30 am
- Friday, December 2nd
Friday Family Friendly Worship & Meal - 6 pm
- Sunday, December 4th:
Second Sunday of Advent & Holy Communion - 10:30 am
- Friday, December 9th
Friday Family Friendly Worship & Meal - 6 pm
- Sunday, December 11th:
Third Sunday of Advent - 10:30 am
Journey to Bethlehem - 5 PM
- Friday, December 16th
Friday Family Friendly Worship & Meal - 6 pm
- Sunday, December 18th:
Fourth Sunday of Advent - 10:30 am
- Saturday, December 24th:
Family Christmas Eve Candlelight Service - 5 pm
Traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service - 8 pm
Jazz Christmas Eve Candlelight Service - 11 pm
- Sunday, December 25th:
Christmas Worship Celebration - 10:30 am
- Saturday, December 31st: Watch Night
Karaoke Fun New Years Eve
- Sunday, January 1st:
Epiphany Worship Celebration - 10:30 am

The 30th Annual "Journey to Bethlehem"
Sunday, December 11, 2011 5:00 - 7:00 pm



Take the journey of Joseph and Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Follow the light and experience the birth of Jesus.

5:00: Crafts & activities ~ 6:00 Dinner, caroling, & storytelling

Cost of Admission: Willingness to experience the journey. You may also pay the tax collector by donating an item (i.e., blankets, diapers, baby food and formula, toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, and canned food.)

Come dressed in period attire!

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

2100 J Street (916) 446-5025

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....and much more, inside & at www.firstumcsac.org

Sermon Topics: Advent through Epiphany

When?

Nov 27 **1st Sunday of Advent**

WHEN Life Needs a Miracle

Luke 1.8-25

The story of Elizabeth and Zechariah helps us to reflect on times when hope may be buried deeply away, times when we really feel like we need a miracle. Remembering the promises of God and the ways God has been active in our lives helps to create a new miracle.

Dec 4 **2nd Sunday of Advent** - Holy Communion

WHEN the Unexpected Shifts Life's Direction

Matthew 1.18-25

Mary is pregnant; Joseph is dismayed. What to do? So many times we may have had to ask, "What am I to do now?" This story helps us to see the big picture in life and to put current problems into a redemptive picture.

Dec 11 **3rd Sunday of Advent**

WHEN We Feel Shut Out

Luke 2.1-7

A long journey; no room at the inn; a cattle cave full of animals, dung, hay, and traveling family. The story of the manger is the ultimate "shutout" story and one that can help us to see where God is working even when we feel disconnected from others.

Dec 18 **4th Sunday of Advent**

Young People's Musical

Dec 25 **Christmas Sunday**

WHEN a New Day Dawns

Luke 2.8-20

The birth of Jesus clearly marks the beginning of a new day humanity. The angels sing, the heavens open, the star shines. When dawn breaks, the world begins a marvelous and transformation.

Jan 1 **WHEN We are Threatened**

Matthew 2.1-15

The birth story of Jesus is incomplete without the Magi who visit the babe with their gifts. But they also are politically wise and foil Herod's attempts to turn good news into bad. Then an angel speaks to Joseph to flee, for Herod's anger grows toxic and the results are all too human.

Christmas Decorations? Already??

Our decorative theme for this Advent-Christmas season is *Trees! Trees! Trees!* We plan to 'forest' the church with trees—big ones, little ones, real ones, not-so-real ones, any color, form or composition you can imagine. But we need your help. Do you have an extra tree you can lend us for the holidays? Whether it stands on the floor or on a table—we can use it and we will welcome it! Put your name on your tree and bring it to the church between Sunday, December 18, and Sunday, December 25.



After we've enjoyed the wonderful display, you may pick up your tree the first week in January 2012. If you have questions or wish to help decorate the church, please contact **Terry Haug** at 635-6081, or email to thaug2246@yahoo.com. — **Terry Haug**

Oh Come, Angel Band!

There's a new sound in town! At the Charge Conference on November 13, our newly-formed worship band debuted their considerable skills and delighted their audience. **Rod Ellenberger** leads the band and plays guitar; also on guitar are **Jacob Hite** and **Bill Errecart**. **Nate Price**, **Joseph Silmaro** and **Pastor Don Lee** contribute their expertise on piano and keyboards, and **Pastor Don** also adds percussion through the magic of technology. Last but not least, **Mykaela Hite** adds sweet vocal sounds.

We look forward to more great band sounds throughout the season at the Friday night Advent Services and other events to e throughout the coming year.

PASTOR DON'S DABBLINGS

When? When, O Lord?

'When' is a word we use when we are waiting, sometimes for something to end, sometimes for something to begin, sometimes to mark a journey. Children will often ask on a long trip, "When will we get there?" How can our spiritual practices help us work through the waiting of 'when?'

Many of us get burned out at this time of year. Perhaps it is a good time to evaluate our pace and slow down in order to appreciate the small, hidden joys of the season. "When will I get to rest?" When I make a spiritual practice of repose and prayer.

Many of us are sad and grieving at this time of year. As we reflect on our losses, we can also remember the love and life we shared with those we now mourn. "When will I not feel so alone?" When the time comes to build new relationships...and that time will come on its own. For now we can make a spiritual practice of giving thanks for life and the possibilities of tomorrow's dreams that prayer can bring.

Many of us are over-consumptive at this time of year. "When will all this shopping and spending end?" When we make a spiritual practice of channeling more of our resources to helping those in real need which is where prayer leads.

Spiritual practice, then, is not something we just do on Sunday morning at worship. It really is the daily exercise of what is truly important - our relationship with God through Christ.

'When' is a good word for our Advent and Christmas reflections. We'll explore the meaning of this word in the context of the birth of Christ during our Sunday worship services and throughout our Advent and Christmas activities. The stories from the gospels of Matthew and Luke tell of families who are thrust into difficult circumstances, who are in need miracles, and who need shelter from the storm...probably, much like you and me in these days of turmoil and uncertainty.

Unlike these waiting-'when' families of the gospels, we already know the rest of the story regarding the birth of Christ. Yet, we long to hear it again and again. We sing the songs that highlight the waiting and the celebration. We reflect quietly in the night about the sacredness of such a time. We share with gratitude with those around us. In doing so, we become part of the Christmas story...filled with hope and joy and peace.

Advent blessings to you and yours,

Pastor Don



YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN DECEMBER

Youth & Children's Christmas Play: Sunday, December 18: "When Christmas Becomes Real"

Don't miss this opportunity to see the youth and children present their message of "The Christmas Gift," a fun play along with song and musical instruments to give meaning to Christmas.

Youth Christmas Caroling: Watch for upcoming announcements for day and time!



"SEARCHING FOR SAFEGROUND"

A Film Festival

Each winter, our church hosts homeless guests in our facility for overnight stays. During the cold, wet months, this is a life-saving mission in which many faith communities participate. This year we are told that there will be no homeless shelter in Sacramento, making *Safeground* more important than ever.

Costa Mantis, a filmmaker and formerly homeless individual, has produced a compelling film series called *Searching for Safeground*. This film series will continue on December 10th at 5 pm. Each segment is 40 minutes long and will be followed by a Question/Response time with the filmmaker. The film will be screened in our Chapel and many local faith communities and *Safeground* supporters will be in attendance. This is a free event, although a suggested donation of \$5 is requested which will be donated to *Safeground* after expenses. In addition, you can purchase DVD's of Mr. Mantis' film at the event.

Please Help us Host Safe Ground at FUMC This Winter

Friday night, December 16, FUMC Homeless Task Force will begin host a Safe Ground Winter Pilgrimage Overnight. We will feed and house 75 homeless men and women that night. They will sleep on the floor of the terrace Room and the Library. The Safe Ground Elders and our Volunteer ministers and missionaries will be in charge of food and shelter, safety, security and compassion that night. We need donations of cash or food to feed them a hearty supper of soup and bread. The next morning we will provide a continental breakfast of coffee, fruit and rolls. Please make your donation in the Sunday offering plate, marked 'Safe Ground,' or send it to the church office. If you can turn out and help us cook and/or serve the soup on Friday afternoon call Patty Coleman, 916-440-6008. Or if you come in at 7 AM, and help us make coffee and serve breakfast, call Glenn Tilton, 916-393-6479.

We worked with Safe Ground last year to host 75 homeless people overnight at FUMC. Safe Ground is a self-governing consortium of homeless persons that requires their members to sign a pledge to abstain for the use of alcohol, drugs or violence in their locations. They elect elders weekly to manage the space provided to them by FUMC and others. —Glenn Tilton

Praying for Each Other

Our United Methodist Connection

We pray for the people of Riverside United Methodist Church and their pastor, Rev. Ernest Kan.

Members of First United Methodist Church

Audrey McMillon	Barbara Beoddy
Carin Martin	Houston Keehner
Jim Corson	Nell Alford
Ruth Shively	

Members Living in Skilled Nursing Facilities

Jackie Thompson	E.G. Pomeroy
Tilda Redway	Jesse Martin
Delight Trotter	Marie Steppan
Bonnie Churchill	Bill Faught

Friends and Family

George Roehr, son of Tom Roehr
Nola Agha, daughter of Irene and Marvin Brown
Vera Wright, Evelyn Wright's sister-in-law
Arlene Sanchez, daughter of Adore Crame
Two friends of Lyle Seeband



Dear Friends & Church Members,

My family and I want to thank all of you so much for your sympathies, prayers and caring support. The outpouring of your Christian love gave us strength in our time of grief. You were there in our hour of need. To Pastor Lee, Dianne Smith, Terry Haug, Gary Varney, Bob & Pat Peck, MOMS, ushers and others, thank you so very much for everything.

May the blessings of the Lord be with you. — Mahalo nui loa,

*The Ralph M. Pedersen Family
Haweia, Erik & Carol*

DECEMBER

Sundays At FUMC Legend:

9:15 Wired Word
 9:15 Children's
 Activities
 10:30 Worship
 11:30 Fellowship

NFY = Not Fin-
 ished Yet
 Chancel Choir =
 Choir Rehearsal
 FAP = Family Ad-
 vent Program

1

8:30 am Staff Mtg.
 2 pm "A Thrill of
 Hope"
 7:15 Chancel Choir
 Rehearsal

2

5:30 pm Family
 Advent Program
 8 pm Gay Men's
 Chorus Concert

3

8:45 am—1 pm
 UMW Gen'l Mtg.
 8 pm Gay Men's
 Chorus Concert

4

3 pm Gay Men's
 Chorus Concert
 4:30 pm Family
 Promise families
 arrive

5

6

6 pm Leadership
 Team Meeting

7

8

2 pm "A Thrill of
 Hope"
 5:30 NFY
 7:15 Chancel Choir

9

5:30 FAP

10

5 pm: Film Festival
 "Searching for Safe
 Ground"

Family Promise families in residence

11

8:30 Missions
 Committee
 1pm "Journey to
 Bethlehem" setup
 5 pm "Journey"
 program

12

13

6:30 Trustees Mtg.
 (Off-site)

14

15

8:30 am Staff Mtg.
 9:45 UMW Circ. 3
 2 pm "A Thrill of
 Hope"
 12:30 UMW Circ. 2
 7:15 Chancel Choir

16

5:30 pm FAP
 6 pm Safeground
 Community in resi-
 dence

17

10 am Children's
 Pageant Rehearsal

18

8:30 am Communi-
 ty Breakfast
 10:30 Children's
 Pageant
 1 pm SABEEL Mtg.

19

20

21

22

7:15 Chancel Choir
 Rehearsal

23

24

Christmas Eve:
 5pm Children's
 Svc.
 8 pm Trad. Svc. w/
 Choir
 11 pm Jazz Svc.

25

Christmas Day:
 8:30 Community
 Bkfst-hand out gifts
 10:30 Worship
 11:30 Fellowship

26

Church Office & Building Closed

27

28

29

30

31

5 pm New Year's
 Eve Karaoke Party!

A Thrill of Hope: The Christmas Story in Word and Art

Dear Friends,

Join us for a special Advent class, *A Thrill of Hope: The Christmas Story in Word and Art*. We'll meet on Thursdays, December 1, 8 and 15 from 2 pm to 3:30 pm in the Friendship

Library. These three sessions will re-examine the familiar Advent and Christmas texts from Matthew and Luke.

These stories are brought to life in finely detailed, brilliantly colored paintings and original prints by famous contemporary artist John August Swanson. The series features world-renowned biblical scholars and an internationally known professor of preaching from Candler School of Theology, Emory University.

On December 1st, we will consider the Annunciation and the Nativity. December 8th we will consider the Shepherds and the Epiphany. Finally, on December 15th we will consider the Presentation in the Temple and the Flight into Egypt. There will be time for discussion after each section.

The estimated cost for materials will be \$13.00 payable at our first class session. We would love to have you join us to experience a new way of looking at these stories of Advent and Christmas. The text for the first session will be Luke 1:26–38 and Luke 2:1–7.

We'd love to have you join us! Please contact either of us for more information and to indicate your interest in attending.

Terry Haug – 635-6081 – thaug2246@yahoo.com

Joan Haug-west – 428-6622 – joan@womenofwords.net



Senior Luncheon ~ November 2011

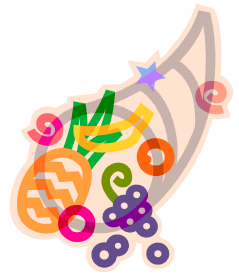
Thirty-seven church members and friends gathered together on Thursday, November 17th, to celebrate an early Thanksgiving meal together at the home of **Mike and Cathy Cook**. Seventeen generous and helpful people prepared a delicious traditional turkey dinner with all the trimmings. Eighteen guests enjoyed the meal and visiting with one another. Some hadn't seen each other in years. Favorite photographs were shared. Another highlight included history of the Cook's home, home to Governor Goodwin Knight and his family in the mid-1950s. Many remembered him fondly.

Our senior friends who are unable to attend church regularly were delighted to meet **Pastor Don** and to meet and hear our new Music Director, **Joseph Silmaro**, sing and play the guitar. **Joseph** sang several hymns, and everyone joined in on *We Gather Together*. It was an amazing day, in a beautiful setting, served by a wonderful group of Methodist chefs and kind-hearted folk. Thanks to everyone for making it a memorable day!

Patricia Weedon
Faith Community Nurse

UMW Thanks You!

Whether you bought something we made, donated food or materials for our projects, shared a meal we served, brought jars for jelly – or bought the finished product – the members of United Methodist Women thank you for helping to make this year's International Bazaar a success.



UMW is the largest denominational organization for women, with about 800,000 members and is open to all women, whether church members or not. It is funded by its members through their pledges and mission giving rather than by apportionments. UMW supports 97 National Mission Institutions in the U.S. as well as mission programs in 100 countries around the world. —*Harriet Kallemeyn*

UMW General Meeting in December

Saturday, December 3rd

9:45 Executive Meeting

10:45 Biz Meeting

11:45 Potluck Lunch

12:15 Christmas Program by Joan Rice

Circle 7 will setup and decorate

Everyone will serve and cleanup



Board of Trustees News

The Board of Trustees has continued work on church projects in November. Old signage-- where letters were peeling-- will soon be replaced by new signage in both parking lots. The new signage will better define use in the large parking lot on Twenty-second and J Streets where parking is rented to the public Monday through Friday **but is available to church members when needed**. Efforts to enhance the patio include a new planter area at the base of the stairs. Other work is under way to repair and protect windows in room 201 and eventual replacement of the patio doors. The Board of Trustees continues to think creatively to address long term solutions of handicapped accessibility for the church and make the church available for participation in the Safe Ground Program for the homeless in upcoming cold winter months.

Congratulations!...to **Richard Michael Pervorse**, who recently graduated from ClayM, the UMC's program for the certification of Lay Ministers. Richard attended two seminars at Red Bluff UMC and completed special assignments and projects to complete his certification. He is grateful to UMW, MOMS and the FUMC Leadership Team for their financial support, and extends his thanks to all those who supported him spiritually through their encouragement and prayers!

ADVENT GIVING

First United Methodist has a rich history of sharing Advent gifts with our neighbors. This year, because Christmas Day falls on a Community Breakfast Sunday, the FUMC Missions Committee decided that we would like to combine our Advent Gift Giving and our Community Breakfast together into one special Christmas Gift! We will gather the following Advent Gifts and place them in 100 gift boxes to hand out on Christmas morning to our regular Community Breakfast guests in lieu of serving breakfast on Christmas morning.

Each gift box will contain:

Tooth brush and tooth paste

Chapstick

\$5 gift card to McDonalds

A pair of warm socks

A knit hat and gloves

Christmas candy

Soft protein bars

A hand-written Christmas card



We will collect all of these items all 4 weeks in Advent, beginning November 29, 2011. The Missions Committee will put together Christmas packages and place them under the trees in the church. How special it will be to share the gift of gift giving with Community Breakfast guests! Maybe you would like to adopt a Community Breakfast guest! If so, please simply place all of the items listed above in a wrapped Christmas box and place it under the tree in the Sanctuary. Please don't forget your Christmas Card!

A special note: The children of FUMC will help write some special Christmas Cards for these gift boxes. If you have a stash of unused Christmas cards, please bring them to the Church office.



Poinsettias for Christmas

It is time to plan for the greening and "redding" of our sanctuary for Christmas! Use this form to order a poinsettia plant which will adorn the sanctuary through Christmas Eve. You may take your plant home after the 8:00 p.m. service or the 11:00 p.m. service, if you wish. Each plant is \$10, and orders need to be in the church office by December 12.

Please include this form with payment for your plant(s).

Please order _____ poinsettia plant(s). Your phone # _____

Name _____ Address _____ zip _____

For the Christmas worship bulletin: In honor / memory (circle one) of:

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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 (cfanos@hotmail.com) & Lynette Fazio (lynnfazio@comcast.net) **by 6:00 PM WEDNESDAY**. Be sure Dianne Smith (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

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Faith Community Nurse **Patricia Weedon**: Ext. 105; patricia@firstumcsac.org

Choir Director and accompanist **Joseph Silmaro** Ext. 108; joseph@firstumcsac.org

Webmaster **Lisa Evans**: webmaster@firstumcsac.org

Bookkeeper **Virginia Beebe**: ginny@firstumcsac.org

Maintenance/Grounds/Security: **Johnny Morales; Johnny Morales, Jr.; Richard Pervorse**