

The Beacon

Sunnyhills United Methodist Church
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Visit us on the Web!

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Jan/Feb 2002

Should Sunnyhills UMC Close?

Meeting with D.S. on February 10th

Church Meeting After Sunday Worship Service

San Jose District Superintendent Ardith Allread has called a meeting of Sunnyhills United Methodist Church to further discuss recommendations of the District Assessment Team. These include closing, "nesting" with another congregation, or merging with another church. In addition, while recognizing the real problems which must be overcome, some church members have expressed a strong desire to continue as an active local church.

Last February the District Superintendent expressed a growing concern with issues of finance and congregational life at Sunnyhills UMC. Our membership has been declining for a number of years. As the community around us has changed greatly, SUMC has not successfully made the necessary transition to new ways of serving that community.

Is God Calling Us to New Life?

If Sunnyhills UMC is to remain a viable congregation, we must discern God's call to our community. Does the Lord have work for this congregation in this place? Are we about more than being "just" a landlord or "just" a fellowship of friends? Do we have the will and the commitment to make the necessary changes to serve God's purposes in our area?



Congregation Meetings in January

Church members and friends will meet after church during January to discuss these issues. Everyone's voice is important. Please continue to pray daily for Sunnyhills UMC and God's plan for our church life.

Apportionments

Paid in Full

Askings Not Paid

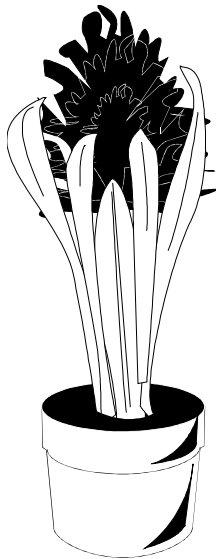
After several years of partial payments, SUMC has paid 100% of its 2001 apportionments.

Apportionments are those funds paid by the local church to support UMC conference and general programs. These funds pay for the ministry and administration of the United Methodist Church. The amount each church is expected to give is based on that church's annual expenditures. Thus, large churches with greater expenditures pay a larger apportionment than smaller churches.

Askings are funds paid to support the local district program.

Although during the 1980s and early 1990s SUMC consistently paid full apportionments, in recent years we have not met all our obligations to

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Big Things Come in Small Packages

January 2002

Now that we have put another year behind us, we can thank our Lord for the gift of life and the hope that is life's companion. In some ways this appointment has been difficult and even painful as we struggle together to answer difficult life or death questions about the future of this congregation. Small churches are constantly called upon to assess their viability. A small church is always faced with viability questions: How many disciples must it make to justify its existence? Or, in our capitalistic society, how much wealth must a church accumulate in order to be a viable asset? Or, what is God's work and how much must one church do to be pleasing to God?

Small churches require much more personal commitment on the part of each member than a large church.

In a small church everyone must attend services each Sunday or they will leave a void. Everyone must give sacrificially, or the expenses won't be met. Everyone must support the church with their gifts and sometimes sweat, or the work won't get done. It is not easy being a small church family, but the returns are too great to ignore.

In a small church, everyone knows your name and your children and your grandchildren even if they haven't met them in person. In a small church everyone shares your joys and your concerns as if they were their own. And indeed they are.

In a small church you are missed when you are away.

In a small church you are needed.

In a small church you are loved, and acceptance and forgiveness are daily survival practices.

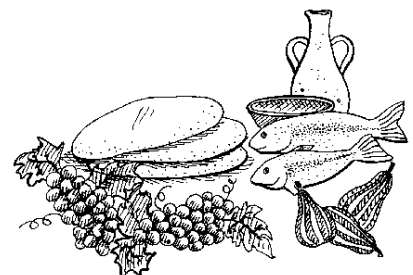
As for me, I have enjoyed serving as your pastor. I feel like I have come to know each of you in special ways and I look forward to becoming even more familiar with you as we continue to grow in Christ together in 2002.

Stay in prayer and you will grow in faith.

Adrionne Beasley, Pastor

SUMC Special Giving

Giving for Special Offerings in 2001 totaled \$1,542. These monies were given to support world and local ministries, including the Milpitas Food Pantry, 9/11 relief efforts, Council of Churches, WATCH (battered women's housing), Native American ministries, etc. An additional \$752 was given by our congregation for the San Jose Family Shelter and '363' Fund (food for the homeless).



Calendar Items

Discussion and Prayer Meetings

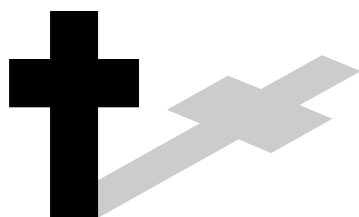
Sundays in January—11:00 a.m.

If we are to continue as a church, we must plan how that can best be accomplished. If we are to close, we must make decisions about the distribution of property. Please continue to hold Sunnyhills UMC in your daily prayers as we seek to discern God's will for our community. Everyone's presence is important!

Congregational Meeting

February 10th—11:00 a.m.

Ardith Allread, our District Superintendent, has called a meeting of Sunnyhills UMC to discuss the District recommendations that SUMC nest, merge, or close. Other options may also be presented by the Administrative Council or church members. This is an extremely important decision. Please plan to attend.



Ash Wednesday Service

February 13th—7:00 p.m.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent and our sacrificial journey with Christ toward Jerusalem, the cross, and the tomb. Lent is a time to reflect on our relationship with God and our hope in Jesus Christ. We ponder the scriptures and search our hearts as we open ourselves to God's spirit guiding us into the future. Pastor Adrionne will lead us in a short worship service. Friends and neighbors are always very welcome!

Adult Lenten Study

February 17-March 17—11:00 a.m.

During the first five Sundays in Lent, Pastor Adrionne will lead an adult Lenten Study after church. Childcare will be provided. Please plan to stay after the social time and participate as we explore the themes of Lent, Good Friday, and Easter.

Apportionments

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the larger church.

This year, however, Sunnyhills UMC has once again paid the entire sum requested. In 2001 we paid \$12,359 to support the administration and ministry of the California-Nevada Conference and the general church. (Askings of \$1,630 for the San Jose District administration and program were not paid due to lack of funds.)

Apportionments are used to support world ministries, including United Methodist missionaries, evangelism efforts, college and graduate education, interfaith dialogue, ministries of peace, and the United Methodist presence in the mass media. Other areas include the Africa University Fund, Black College Fund, Ministerial Educational Fund, One Great Hour of Sharing, World Communion Sunday, and many, many other ministries. Not the least important is the General Administration Fund, which maintains leadership and coordination for the work of the denomination.



Income and Expenses Summary

October-December 2001

Income	Oct-01	Nov-01	Dec-01	Total
Offerings	\$2,226	\$2,510	\$3,539	\$ 8,274
Building Use & Others	2,053	5,754	3,389	11,196
Special Giving	326	255	317	898
Total	\$4,605	\$8,519	\$7,245	\$20,368

Expenses	Oct-01	Nov-01	Dec-01	Total
Mission & Outreach	\$1,724	\$4,495	\$1,877	\$8,096
Operating Expenses	2,152	919	3,160	6,230
Pastor & Staff Support	3,404	1,721	1,684	6,809
Total	\$7,280	\$7,135	\$6,720	\$21,135

Fund Balances	Oct-01	Nov-01	Dec-01
San Jose Family Shelter	\$ 1	\$ 11	\$ 81
'363' Fund	94	103	144
Cash on Hand	\$3,660	\$4,883	\$5,568

Milpitas Parents' Preschool

The following letter was received in December by the Administrative Council:

Holiday greetings from the members of the Milpitas Parents' Preschool. With this token [*a beautiful poinsettia plant placed in the sanctuary*] of our appreciation we would like to express our gratitude to your congregation for its ongoing support of our preschool. We believe that together we offer a great service to this community



We are pleased to report that the 2001-02 school year is off to a good start. We have increased our membership beyond our goal for the year. As a result, we were happily able to offer you an increase in our donation to your organization.

We do realize that there have been times when we have left a door unlocked or not cleaned up after ourselves in a timely fashion. We apologize for any inconvenience or concern this causes and hope to minimize these incidences in the future. We sincerely want to be good tenants.

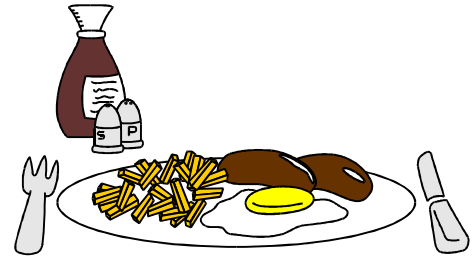
We hope, this Christmas especially, that the members of your congregation find comfort in the message of the angels: Peace on Earth, Goodwill toward Men. May the coming year indeed be more peaceful. We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Allysson McDonald, President
Milpitas Parents' Preschool

Milpitas Community Breakfast

January 6, 2002

This report was originally written for the Milpitas Post.



“Forget Erin Brockovitch,” Cliveden Chew Haas declared. “We have the material for a Hollywood extravaganza right here.” The Sunnyhills area of Milpitas was the first truly planned integrated housing development in the United States, but its history was not simple. “This story has everything,” Haas continued. “Heroes, villains, high drama . . . The story of Sunnyhills is the story of ordinary people overcoming extraordinary obstacles to build something new in America.”

Approximately 40 persons attended an early-morning Community Breakfast on January 6th to discuss the background and various possibilities for the future use of the land at 355 Dixon Road. The Milpitas Community Breakfast is sponsored by the Sunnyhills Neighborhood Association. It is usually held at 7:00 a.m. on the first Sunday of the month in Jones Hall at the Sunnyhills United Methodist Church. The public is invited to the free breakfast and presentation. Topics center around issues of interest to the Milpitas area. Each month a different local organization hosts the breakfast and presents the program or discussion.

Sunnyhills UMC, owner of the property and buildings under discussion, prepared the January breakfast. Cliveden Chew Haas and Bob Roll presented the program on the “Past, Present, and Future” of the local church and moderated the lively discussion which followed.

“Sunnyhills United Methodist Church holds a unique place in a unique community,” explained Haas. When the Ford Motor Company announced plans in 1954 for the construction of a 50 million dollar assembly plant to replace one then located in Richmond, Santa Clara County had few African-Americans and hence no established area for black residents. This was a decade before the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and housing discrimination was still an accepted way of life. About 250 black members of the United Auto Workers Local 560, which

served the Ford plant, were expected to transfer to the new location in Milpitas. Housing was a serious issue for these workers and their families.

In the end, it took two years of determined effort by individuals, the UAW local, the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers), several builders, numerous financial institutions, and concerned citizens in the area to build a housing development which would be open to all buyers, regardless of race. Many potential lenders flatly refused to cooperate with buyers in an “Open Occupancy” subdivision. Twice builders found their funds had evaporated while permit approval processes dragged on for many months. A sewer hookup previously set at \$5500 was suddenly assessed at \$60,000 after a hastily-called meeting of the Sanitation Board. A neighboring developer (whose tract was all-white) asked an exorbitant price for the new construction to enter shared drainage, even though the ditch in question had been previously deeded to the County Board of Supervisors.

Lawsuits were filed and accusations exchanged on all sides. Only after a public hearing, which included support by the AFSC, local civic and church groups, the Council of Churches, the League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women, union organizations, and the AFL Building Trades Council, did the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors finally (and unanimously) approve the interracial building plan, subject to compliance with ordinary technical requirements.

At the same time that the Sunnyhills subdivision was developing, Sunnyhills Methodist Church was founded by new residents in the area. “The story of the church’s founding and early years is The Sunnyhills Epic: Part II,” according to Haas. The full story of the building of Sunnyhills and the early history of the church

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Community Breakfast

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is told in Sunnyhills United Methodist Church: A History 1957-1982, available at the Milpitas Library and on-line at the church's website, (www.gbmg-umc.org/sunnyhills).

SUMC has been active in the local community from its beginning. Members of the church Men's Club founded the Sunnyhills Community Breakfast in the 1960s, which became the Milpitas Community Breakfast of today. In 1968, eleven church families organized the Milpitas Parents' Preschool, a nonprofit accredited parent participation preschool which continues to serve the area from its classrooms at Sunnyhills UMC.

In 1977 Louise Stroud, an SUMC member, proposed the Sunnyhills Community Center and was instrumental in obtaining federal funding for the project. The church sold the rear portion of the church property for use as a site, foundations were laid, and a building was moved in to serve as a community center and preschool. (Tri-City Children's Centers, the current owner and pre-school operator, has recently notified the church that this property is up for sale.)

Throughout the years, the church's buildings have been widely used by local groups. For many years Head Start ran a children's program there, and later the Milpitas Community School (an alternative public high school) was in residence. Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and other twelve-step programs have met at the church for decades. More recently, church members founded Success!

Learning Center, a non-profit tutoring and educational center which works after school with children in fourth through twelfth grades.

During the last ten years, as Milpitas itself has undergone rapid change, church membership has dropped. Clearly the church must change if it is to remain viable. Some officials of the denomination have suggested that Sunnyhills UMC should close and deed its property to another church. The land might then be used to house another United Methodist Church or sold for other purposes. Most members of SUMC do not want to close the church if another solution can be found.

A lively discussion of the issues ensued, embracing many points of view. Attendees included local homeowners and community members, politicians, and representatives of the various organizations involved. "In some ways, the church campus serves as a de facto community center," explained Haas. Groups currently using space at Sunnyhills UMC include the Milpitas Community Breakfast, Milpitas Parents' Preschool, Success! Learning Center, St. Joseph Episcopal Church, Boy Scout Troop 92, and three twelve-step programs.

It is apparent that throughout its history SUMC has seen its mission as education and care of children and extending hospitality to the community. These we believe are cornerstones of ministry of Jesus Christ.

SUMC Budget Income

Total Income for 2001 was \$74,320, which included \$7,137 for special giving and designated funds. The remaining \$67,183 supported the 2001 SUMC Budget. Our budget income sources were:

<i>Donations</i>	<i>\$36,827</i>	<i>55%</i>
<i>Building Use</i>	<i>26,313</i>	<i>39%</i>
<i>Fund Raisers & Misc.</i>	<i>4,043</i>	<i>6%</i>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>\$67,183</i>	<i>100%</i>



SUMC Budgeted Expenditures

Budgeted Expenditures for 2001 totaled \$67,628. (This figure does not include credits such as reimbursements from insurance, etc.) The breakdown of expenditures is:

<i>Pastor Support</i>	<i>\$22,194</i>	<i>33%</i>
<i>Staff Support & Admin.</i>	7,996	16%
<i>Program</i>	3,044	5%
<i>Trustees & Property</i>	18,874	28%
<i>Apportionments</i>	<u>12,359</u>	<u>18%</u>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>\$67,628</i>	<i>100%</i>



Administrative Council News

As the New Year gets under way, we are faced with many choices and non-choices. The Cal-Nevada Conference and the San Jose District appear to be anxious to acquire our property for the purpose of supporting a larger United Methodist congregation. The options presented to us by the district are to close, merge, or nest.

There are some who want to stay and fight closure, and others who are tired and ready to give up. We fear for the loss to our community. What will happen to the Milpitas Parents' Preschool, the Twelve-Step groups, the Community Breakfast, the Success! Learning Center? What about our community of worship, our traditional Sunday morning service, our history?

Through all of the many, many discussions held both in open meetings and private conversation during the last ten or twelve months, no easy answer has come. We struggle financially and in attendance at worship. In our meetings and leadership, too few people wear too many hats.



What is your vision for SUMC? What is your wish list? Time is running out for you to participate in this discussion.

Preliminarily, we have talked about a multipurpose open-space style sanctuary with windows, restrooms, social and fellowship capabilities, capacity for 150-200 people, office space, and parking.

Gwen Freeman
Administrative Council Chair

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