

# The Beacon

Sunnyhills United Methodist Church  
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Visit us on the Web!

[www.gbgm-umc.org/sunnyhills](http://www.gbgm-umc.org/sunnyhills)

March 2002

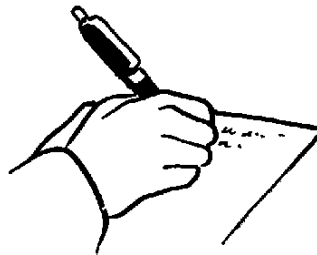
## Visions and Dreams February 2002

Since May of last year, Sunnyhills United Methodist church has held many conversations discussing our present and our future. Who are we? What is our mission? What is God calling us to be and to do? Where should we go? How should we get there?

During the series of congregational meetings in January these topics were discussed in some depth. At the end of the month, participants were asked to write down some of their thoughts and feelings concerning our future and to share them with others. Following is a selection of the comments received. A full transcript is available in the church office.



Just wanted to share this Feb. 7th meditation for people of color (from Acts of Faith) with you: "One of the best-kept secrets in life is when children of God make up their minds, when they bring their minds into harmony with the desires in their hearts, when they pray for and follow intuitive guidance; then no one and nothing can stop them . . ."



*and welcoming of all. I hear people say that we are a closed community; they need to take a closer look with an open mind and heart. I believe God has a purpose for the ministry we have here at Sunnyhills.*

*My desire is that Sunnyhills United Methodist Church remain open. I feel that there is potential for growth. I have a sense of renewed energy for our congregation and prayer for guidance.*



*I am not one to live in the past, but it is important for me to realize the significant impact that our history has had on our family of faith and the community. For forty-plus years our church has recognized needs within the community and been involved in making changes that have made a difference in the lives of people and continue to make a difference. We are a Christian community that cares for others and ourselves. We are open*



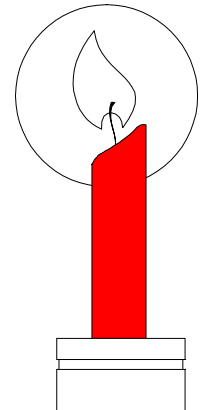
I have only three words to say: "SAVE OUR CHURCH!" I'd like to be more eloquent or profound, but nothing I could say would convey what I have in my heart any more than these three simple words. . . .

I am aware of the fact that the membership itself has a responsibility also [for  
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## We Walk by Faith, Not by Sight

**March 2002**

Congratulations for keeping your prayer vigil that God would shine a holy light unto this church and this family. Walking by faith can be difficult and we all sometimes falter, particularly when the time seems long before we see God's blessings. We grow impatient, and for that we ask God's indulgence. When we walk by faith, we ask God for a blessing and we believe in God's promises and, although we have not yet seen or heard God's response, we are assured that we have received the perfect response, so we live accordingly. We do not wait for our eyes to catch up with the swift, sometimes incomprehensible, actions of God.



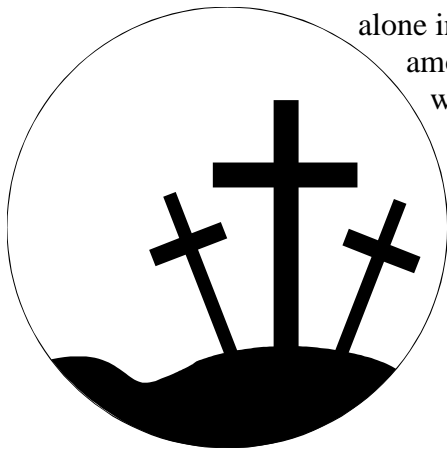
### **WHEN YOU WALK BY FAITH, SIGHT COMES!**

These months we have experienced new spiritual growth in our congregation. Our worship services are filled with the Holy Spirit and we have celebrated with the assurance of God's grace. Now we see new families coming to share our love of Jesus and our faith in the one true God. We have also celebrated new membership and we have welcomed back some who had drifted apart from us and have returned home.

We had a class of about 15 eighth graders and some of their friends come to worship with us on a Sunday this month. What makes this such a great blessing is that these students initiated, planned, and implemented this event. I am certain that God placed this in their heart and they responded to God's call and our congregation received a blessing that day. It is a blessing we must not forget or minimize.

### **NOW FAITH, THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN.**

We began the Lenten season with a warm and heartfelt Ash Wednesday ceremony. We are now walking with Jesus through this Lenten season by reading scripture and meditating on the Word, then coming together after worship service and sharing our stories as we deepen our faith that we are not alone in our troubled times; we are not alone in our confusion; we are not alone in the wilderness when temptation abounds; our Lord has walked among us in the flesh and understands all that we face. In gratitude we share the burden of the cross with Jesus by walking in faith that he paid our sin debt and we are forgiven, saved, and free.



Stay in prayer, study the Word, and you will grow in faith.

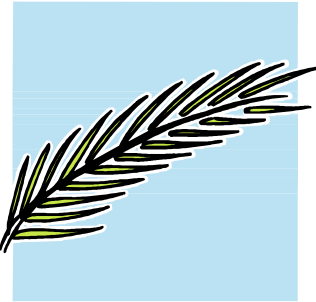
*Adrienne Beasley, Pastor*

## Calendar Items

### Lenten Bible Study

*Sunday March 10th and March 17th  
11:00 a.m.*

Sharing our Great Stories of Faith is the title of our Lenten Bible Study, led by Pastor Adrionne. Everyone is welcome as we discuss relevant Bible passages and our personal faith journeys. Sharing and caring is always an important part of our life together. Please join us for this short class. Look for the discipleship circle about 11:00 a.m. (after the social time) on the next two Sundays in March.



### Palm Sunday

*March 24th, 9:30 a.m.*

*Hosanna to the Son of David!  
Blessed is the one who comes in  
the name of the Lord!  
Hosanna in the highest!*

Palm Sunday marks the traditional celebration of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, riding on a donkey over the cloaks and branches spread on the road by excited crowds. Yet, only a few days later, the crowds are dispersed and Jesus way leads inexorably to the Upper Room, Gethsemane, betrayal, trial, and death.

### Easter Sunday

*March 31st, 9:30 a.m.*

*Why do you look for the living among the dead?  
He is not here; he has risen!*

Our Easter journey moves from uncertainty and doubt to hope and joy. Hear the Good News. Christ is risen! God is surely our rock and our refuge. Don't just stand there! See God's Spirit poured out for all. Come, celebrate with the whole people of God. There is no Sunday School today as we join in a special worship service and share our social time afterwards. Children should bring an empty basket for an Easter Egg Hunt after worship service.

### Sunrise Service

*Sunday March 31st  
6:15 a.m.*

*Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.*

Are you ready to journey to the empty tomb? A Sunrise Service is planned, but **RESERVATIONS** are required. Pastor Adrionne needs to know how many parishioners and friends are committed to early morning worship so that she can plan the service.

Please call Pastor Adrionne or fill out the slip from your bulletin during worship on March 10-17 and place it in the offering plate.

Following the service, a delicious Finger Foods Breakfast will be served. Bring your favorite breakfast treat to share!

## Visions and Dreams

(Continued from page 1)

dwindling attendance]. It is aging and unable to go from sun-up to sun-down as we once did, but with some encouragement, guidance, and suggestions, I feel we could hold our own.

I also fail to see how the "size" of a church makes it a candidate for closure. If I'm not mistaken, it matters not how many or few gather in His name, for where they are HE is also. Did Christianity get lost somewhere in favor of numbers?



*What the church means: More than a family, more stable, a foundation, the stone to build life upon.*

*What I would want to see: Expansion of church involvement in existing programs, Learning Center, Preschool, maybe after-school hangout program, maybe a young adult group.*



We also discovered [as new members] that this church stood for more than friendliness. It was very much involved with social issues, the grape picket strike, and in ensuring years, the settlement of immigrants, the feeling of the homeless, and providing a meeting place for numerous organizations, AA, NA, Preschool, Head-start, tutoring, neighborhood organization, to name but a few, as well as 3 or 4 churches of various denominations which all became a part of the kaleidoscope of who we are.

We are not ready to put all this behind us, have great hope that the future will continue to be as worthwhile as our past.

I don't know any concrete solutions, but it seems as I look around the church is still viable, even tho our attendance has fallen and the paint is peeling.



*I would like to see Sunnyhills remain open because I don't want to go to another congregation at a different location. It is not that I can't accept change but know that many of the friendships and acquaintances will be gone forever. The church has been a big source of support for families. What happens when it goes away? Then, I wonder how we can increase our membership. We don't offer programs to interest new members and coming together only on Sunday morning is not very fulfilling. It has been said many times we need to work harder. I ask myself just what does this mean and just how much energy does each of us yet have to do this. It is still my church that I care very much about and am willing to do what I can to help it to continue.*



This church has ministered to all children who came, there's always a teacher, caregiver. We always have rich sermons from any preacher who stands in the pulpit to highlight our Sunday life and the whole week.



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## Visions and Dreams

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*I think Sunnyhills UMC is able to stay open under the present conditions, with a part-time Pastor and renting out space, for quite a while. I am willing to stay and support it anyway that I can. We can't seem to grow and expand our ministry, though, and I can only wonder why. Perhaps we have gotten so small that we just cannot attract new, younger families. Those of us that are still here have to work harder to keep things going. I just feel that we are slowly going downhill. We need a big transfusion. These last six months have shown a lot of improvement in our outlook and new energy has been injected into the Church School and Worship. But . . . I question whether it will bear the fruit that will turn us around. I still see the empty chairs and the same faces. I think we should think about putting all this vacant space to use as a new beginning with Genesis or some other UM Church that is willing to invest in and support this neighborhood.*



SUMC has a big heart. We try to be God's hands in the world, helping to create a better world and to be of practical use to others.

We are deeply hospitable. Our hospitality defines us as a group and a member of the local and world community. It shapes our relationships with others.

We believe that God's love is bigger than any one group and that the many may hold different views and still reflect the one God. We are more concerned to include than to exclude.

Diversity is a positive reflection of God's world. We treasure our differences as well as our similarities. . . .

I think our strongest quality is our sincere attempt to follow Jesus' actions and teachings in our lives today.



### SUMC WRAP (Administrative Council)

**Saturday-March 9th**

*Potluck at 5:00 p.m.*

*Business Mtg. at 6:00 p.m.*

Everyone in the church community is welcome. Your comments, your ideas, your presence, and your energy will help craft the program and mission best suited to SUMC.

We get a new perspective and a new attitude when we soar with God.

Adrienne Beasley

2/24/02



## Renewal of Vows

*“With this ring I thee wed . . .”*

Come share in the celebration of the 25th Wedding Anniversary and Renewal of Vows with Gwen and Jack Freeman at our 9:30 a.m. worship service on Sunday, March 3rd.



### Income and Expenses Summary

*January 2002*

Income	Jan-02
Offerings	\$2,830
Building Use & Others	5,593
Special Giving	97
Total	\$8,519

Expenses	Jan-02
Mission & Outreach	\$1,301
Operating Expenses	2,932
Pastor & Staff Support	3,039
Total	\$7,272

Fund Balances	Jan-02
San Jose Family Shelter	\$ 11
‘363’ Fund	106
Cash on Hand	\$6,815

We can't see the light at the end of the tunnel if we're always staring back into the darkness.

Adrionne Beasley  
2/24/02

John says to prepare the way of the L ord, not for the L ord. We don't have to do anything to allow the L ord to come. The L ord is is coming.

Adrionne Beasley  
12/9/01