



May 2003

The Beacon

Sunnyhills United Methodist Church
355 Dixon Road, Milpitas CA 95035
Pastor Shirley Macemon

Church Office

(408) 262-1486

Visit us on the Web!

www.gb-gm-umc.org/sunnyhills

Volunteers Needed for Parking Lot Upkeep

**Help Repair Potholes, Paint New Lines,
and Clean Up Our Grounds**

Saturday, May 3rd—9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon



Over the last few years, potholes in our upper parking lot have been growing and g-r-o-w-i-n-g. It's time to fill in the holes and repair the surface before someone falls in and can't climb out again!

The parking space markings have become fainter and f-a-i-n-t-e-r over the years as the paint has faded. Newcomers using the lots at night often miss them entirely! The signs marking our office parking spaces are so dim that even Pastor Shirley and A³ (Alex the Administrative Assistant) have trouble reading them, let alone the many campus visitors who use our lots.

Our fearless band of stalwart Trustees is preparing to tackle these problems. Rolf Haas, our Chair of Trustees, has arranged to borrow the appropriate equipment to repaint the lines and freshen up our parking stalls.

Saturday, May 3rd, is the BIG DAY! Helpers are needed to wield shovels, lug materials, stomp filler, and level the surface. The repainting crew will need help preparing the area and applying the paint. We're even planning to redo the lettering on our "Pastor" and "Secretary" signs so that Shirley and Alex can actually find their parking spaces when they come in to work.



Jobs big and small are available for all ages and abilities. Besides the asphalt patching and painting, there are general clean-up chores crying for attention: baseboard dusting, window washing, spider web takedowns. If we have enough people, we'll tackle some of the trimming and weeding needs around the grounds.

Many hands make light work. Please come help us keep our property in order.

Pastor's Letter

Christ has risen! Christ has risen indeed!

The calendar tells us it is springtime, but the weather doesn't seem to have gotten the message! We weren't quite able to see the sun rise at our Easter Sunrise service, but it was a joyous service anyway. The 9:30 a.m. Easter morning celebration included special music from our children and adult choirs, Bible presentations, new church members, and congregational singing of Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus*. We were blessed with visitors from near and far—some joined us in the choir! All in all, a wonderful celebration of new life.



I had hoped to bring you a report of the homes that Daislyn Pease and I worked on and completed for our families in Mexico. Our mission trip started so well. The drive to San Diego was uneventful. Worshipping with University Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) on Palm Sunday prepared us spiritually for the next phases of the mission. Crossing the border and setting up camp in the quarry came off without a hitch. Monday dawned clear and cool—perfect working conditions. All five teams met their families and began leveling sites, planning foundations, building wall segments. All of the teams started mixing and pouring cement for the foundation/floor and were at various stages of completion of that phase when it began to sprinkle. Within 45 minutes the sprinkles became a downpour and we were packed up from our worksites heading back to camp. By the time we returned to the campsite, rain was coming down horizontally and wind was gusting mightily.

Our camp did not fare well. Set up on the edge of a bluff and subject to the winds coming up the canyon, four or five of our tents were completely flat and many were flapping dangerously in the wind. Almost everyone had some water in their tents; many individuals and families had more wet clothes and bedding than dry. Our miraculous cooking teams created a hot meal and beverages for us, and after the rain subsided it looked briefly as though we had enough dry clothes and bedding among the group to share for the night. Unfortunately, the unaccompanied teenagers hadn't checked in yet, and their tent was completely flooded.

Over the next 18 hours the mission leadership team made hard, prayerful decisions. Monday night the entire team, 88 of us, crossed the border and squeezed into 25 motel rooms. Tuesday, though again clear and cool, brought the news that our worksites were inaccessible: the roads leading to them were adobe clay, now adobe mud. Another cold, wet storm front was due in 24-36 hours. Sadly, but wisely, we returned to our campsite to pack up and return to San Diego for a motel overnight before driving back to the Bay Area on Wednesday.

As disappointing as this particular trip was, our Mexican families were not left in the lurch with partial foundations and wall segments. The following week (the week

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Calendar Notes



Special Offering

Sunday, May 4th

Our special offering will benefit Pacific School of Religion. PSR has trained most of Sunnyhills UMC's pastors. Originally founded by Congregationalists in 1866, PSR includes students from many Protestant denominations large and small. Visit their website at www.psr.edu.

WRAP

Saturday, May 17th

5:00 p.m. Potluck

6:00 p.m. Meeting

Everyone is welcome as we plan for our present and our future! Help us craft the program and outreach best suited to SUMC. Please bring a dish to share and enjoy table fellowship with good friends. Grace the business meeting with your attendance and help our mission grow!

Beacon Deadline

Thursday, May 22nd

News to share? Please send it our way! Contact Cliveden Chew Haas (408/262-5250).

Broaden Your Horizons! Summer Education Opportunities

California-Nevada Annual Conference United Methodist Women announces the 2003 Schools of Christian Mission. UMW Schools of Mission are open to all men and women ages 14 and up, and are an excellent connectional education program. Participants choose one of the three study areas to concentrate on. Classes for this year's schools are: (1) *Exodus: An African-American Methodist Journey*, (2) *Creating Interfaith Communities*, and (3) *Mexico, Our Neighbors Today*. The schools are held in the following locations and dates. Registration forms and more information are available from Pastor Shirley in the church office. Scholarships are available.

One Day Schools: Walnut Creek UMC, July 19, 2003
Visalia UMC, July 26, 2003

Weekend Schools: Reno, NV: University Inn, August 15-17, 2003
Santa Nella, CA: Ramada Inn, September 12-14, 2003

Pastor's Letter

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after Easter) almost 250 more building teams assembled in Tijuana. Any homes remaining unfinished from the previous week become first priority, so "our" families will get their homes. The Homecoming baskets that Sunnyhills and the Los Altos churches prepared for our families were delivered on Tuesday while we packed up our campsite. One brave driver and two helpers with a four-wheel drive vehicle and snow-tires got as close to the sites as they could and walked in with the baskets and food. They explained the situation and left our gifts. Tears and greetings were exchanged.

Tuesday evening in the San Diego hotel, as we had a final gathering before our long trip home, we shared words of hope. As I celebrated communion with this amazing group, I saw these folks—many first-time builders, many first-time risk-takers, many who were strangers only four days earlier—planning for "next time." The kindergartener who wants to know more Spanish, the third-grader from New Jersey who hopes she and her dad can bring her younger brother, the senior who wants to bring his grown children, the teen reaching beyond her social group. We built community among this disparate group of workers and with our Mexican families. This is the mission of hope that doesn't get rained out. This is the mission that you helped make possible. Thank you!

Grace and Peace,

Shirley



Income and Expenses

March 2003

| INCOME | | Fund Balances | |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------|
| Offerings | \$ 3,514 | San Jose Family Shelter | \$45 |
| Building Use & Other | 7,252 | '363' Fund | \$70 |
| Special Giving | 413 | Cash on Hand | \$39,695 |
| TOTAL | \$11,179 | | |
| EXPENSES | | | |
| Mission & Outreach | \$ 839 | | |
| Operating Expenses | 2,070 | | |
| Pastor & Staff Support | 3,828 | | |
| TOTAL | \$ 6,737 | | |



Pastor's Bookshelf

As a recent seminary graduate, previous English major and fairly avid reader, I find my bookshelves full of interesting (at least, I think so!), sometimes eclectic, sometimes challenging, sometimes comforting books. I know many of you are readers, too.

This is what I propose: I've designated the bookshelf outside my office door as a **Lending Library**. By the time you get this *Beacon*, there will be books and a card file on the shelf. If you find a book of interest you'd like to read, fill out the card, put the card in the box, and take the book home to read. When you are done with the book, bring it back and pull the card out of the box. That's all there is to it. I'm keeping my eyes open for a set of rolling shelves so we can move the "library" to the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings.



Every month, I hope to write about a couple of books on the shelf, whether old favorites or a new find. If you have recommendations, please let me know. This month:

Abraham, Bruce Feiler, HarperCollins, 2002. From the author of *Walking the Bible*. Feiler sets out to explore Abraham, the patriarch of three major religions: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Traveling through war zones, across deserts, interviewing locals and religious leaders, Feiler follows the story of Abraham, a story that shapes the origins of relationships between our people and our God. Thought-provoking and challenging, a good and accessible read.

The Mitford Years, Jan Karon, Penguin Books, New York, 1994. These four novels, *At Home in Mitford*, *A Light in the Window*, *These High Green Hills*, and *Out to Canaan*, follow Father Tim, an Episcopal priest to a small town in the mountains of Western North Carolina.



How Did We Get the Bible?

New Adult Sunday School Class Begins May 18th

Ever wonder how our Holy Bible became the Holy Bible? Why it includes certain books and not others? Which translation is "best"? Why we often use the New Revised Standard Version in worship?

The Bible comes to us neatly printed in book form, in our language, organized into books, chapters, verses, neatly arranged for our reference. How did it get here? It was composed over a long period of time in languages most of us do not understand. We don't have the original manuscripts—we have only copies of copies that often disagree with one another. Different branches of the Christian church include different sets of books and in different orders. Who decided what to include and what to set aside?

These and other fascinating questions about the creation and history of our scriptures will be the topic of a three-week study May 18-June 1. Pastor Shirley and Guy Haas will lead our discussion after Worship and Social, 11:00-11:45 a.m.