



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.gbkm-umc.org/sunnyhills

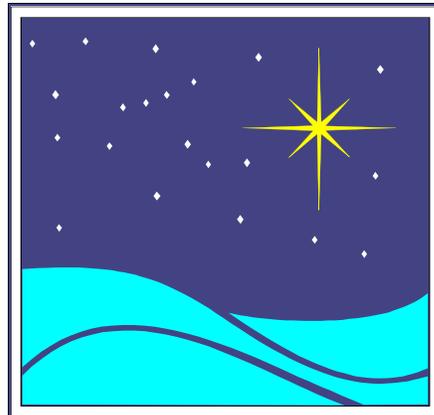
December 2003

Carol Fest and Dessert Extravaganza

Bring a Friend!

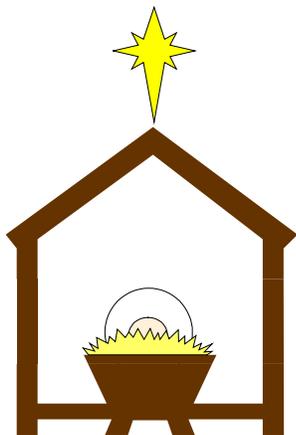
Sunday—December 14th—6:30-8:30 p.m.

Back by popular demand! Sunday evening, December 14th, is Carol Fest and Dessert Extravaganza at Sunnyhills United Methodist Church! So grab your forks, tune up your voice, and bring a friend. In the words of Saint Nick, “A jolly good time will be had by all,” as we eat our favorite holiday goodies and sing our favorite Christmas carols.



We'll start at 6:30 p.m. with desserts, cookies, fresh breads, pies, ice cream, coffee, cider, eggnog, and more. The sanctuary hall will be decked with boughs of holly. Tables will be set for four. You'll have a chance to talk with friends old and new. Who needs an Alpha Dinner, when we've got Omega Desserts?

Be sure you don't forget to make your list of favorite Christmas carols, and please check your list twice. In the coming days and weeks Pastor Shirley and Erik Larsen will be collecting YOUR favorite carols. They've put on the list *Silent Night*, *O Come All Ye Faithful*, *Jingle Bells*, *Joy to the World*, *O Little Town of Bethlehem*, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, *Away in the Manger*, *Oh Tannenbaum*, and *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*. But, Shirley and Erik need about twenty songs to fill out the Evening's Carol Fest.



Why walk outside in the cold singing Christmas Carols? Invite your neighbors and friends to the warmth of the Sunnyhills UMC Sanctuary! Our congregation bakers will be cooking their hearts out, and their specialties are just too good to be missed. Bring an appetite and a spirit-filled voice.

We want YOU here. We hope you will invite a friend. In fact, an invitation is enclosed with the newsletter for you to invite at least one friend. Child care is provided. If you don't drive in the evenings, call the Church office and we'll arrange a ride. This evening is just too good to miss!

Pastor's Letter

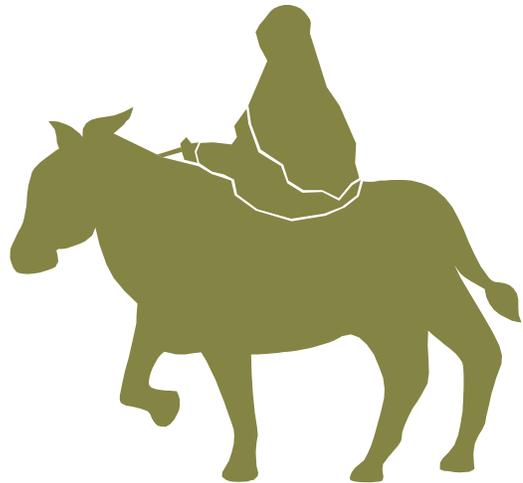
As we approach Advent, there is always a part of me that can't quite figure out what happened to the last several months. How could we possibly be in these last four weeks before Christmas?

Of course, the secular world has pulled us toward Christmas for months, urging new decorations, sales, new clothes, electronics, toys, with all the trappings of commercialism. It is easy to buy into the thought that unless we have exactly the right gift for each and every person on our list, our holiday will be somehow less than perfect.

Advent can be an antidote to that commercial pull. Advent can help us put on the brakes, turn from the throne of the shopping mall and prepare our hearts for Christmas.

The Gospel lectionary scriptures center on the theme of preparation, meeting John the Baptist and Mary in the Gospel of Luke. I invite you to read the lectionary passages during these weeks of Advent. These passages are listed below.

Don't let the commercial holiday get in the way of the real reason we celebrate: Jesus, Lord and Christ is born. God comes to us as a baby, in a way and with a message we can understand. Praise God!



Grace and peace,

Shirley



November 30, 2003

First Sunday of Advent

Jeremiah 33:14-16; Psalm 25:1-10

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36

December 7, 2003

Second Sunday of Advent

Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79

Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

December 14, 2003

Third Sunday of Advent

Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6

Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

December 21, 2003

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:46b-55

Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45



Calendar Notes



WRAP (Administrative Council)

Saturday, December 6th

5:00 p.m. Potluck

6:00 p.m. Meeting

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.

Business items for December include winter programming, 2004 budget and officers, and the Annual Church Conference.

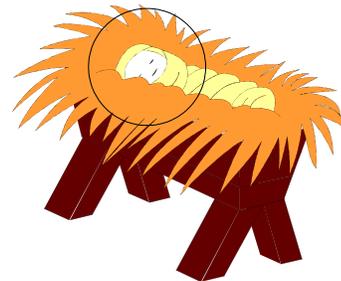
Please bring a dish to share and enjoy table fellowship at the potluck, then help us organize our life as a Christian fellowship at the planning meeting.

O Come, All Ye Faithful Joyful and Triumphant Christmas Eve Worship

Wednesday—December 24th—7:00 p.m.

Luminaria light the way to the manger and carols welcome the new-born king as we celebrate a special night in an old stable long, long ago.

Scripture reading, singing, praise, and worship bring Christmas alive. Welcome Christ into your Christmas!

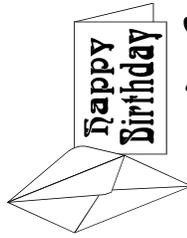


Share Your Family Crèche in Worship

On December 7th, the second Sunday in Advent, you are invited to bring your favorite Nativity or Crèche scene to worship. Several tables will be set up in the rear of the Sanctuary to display these depictions of the first Christmas. Come a little early so that you can set yours up and arrange it in your special way.

We'll all have a chance to admire the display during the Social time and then take our Nativities home that same day.





Birthdays this Month

*Be sure to wish our Birthday guys and gals
Many Happy Returns!*

12/5 Kay Twite	12/17 Miles Crawford
12/9 Alex Walker	12/25 Jack Freeman
12/11 Juanita Whetstone	12/30 Billy Jefferson

And don't forget our old friends who will enjoy a birthday card:

12/2 Pat Griffin	12/22 Malacha Martin	12/27 Robert Pease
12/17 Tony Lin	12/27 Simon Chow	

Happy Anniversary to Margaret & Warren Scott (12/16)

Income and Expenses

INCOME:

	October 2003
Offerings	\$ 2,897
Building Use & Other	3,984
Special Giving	597
Income Total	\$ 7,478

Fund Balances

San Jose Family Shelter	\$ 20
'363' Fund	\$ 24
Cash on Hand	\$42,103

EXPENSES:

Mission & Outreach	\$ 1,010
Operating Expenses	2,210
Pastor & Staff Support	3,095
Expense Totals	\$ 6,315



Jello! Jello! Jello!

SUMC Helps Fill Thanksgiving Baskets

Members and friends of Sunnyhills UMC easily redeemed their pledge of 150 Jello boxes for the Milpitas Food Pantry's Thanksgiving Dinner baskets. Overall, we have collected 186 boxes of Jello and 20 boxes of instant pudding as our contribution to the baskets.

Our local food pantry prepares more than 300 family food baskets for homeless, unemployed, and needy families and individuals in our area, distributing food supplies during the holidays and all through the year. The Milpitas Food Pantry has been lending a helping hand to hungry families in Milpitas and Alviso since the mid-1950s. At one time it was housed in our own Sunnyhills UMC.





Ring-A-Ding-Ding

SUMC Rings the Bell for the Salvation Army

Saturday—December 13th

Our local Salvation Army raises money during the holiday season to help needy families and individuals in the Milpitas area all year long. Two main areas the money is used for are food vouchers and back-to-school clothing for more than one hundred children whose families cannot afford new shoes, backpacks, and clothing at the beginning of the school year.

Members and friends of Sunnyhills UMC will be ringing the bell for donations on Saturday, December 13th, in front of Borders Books and Music at McCarthy Ranch. We are ringing for the entire day—from 10:00 a.m. right through until 9:00 p.m. We need volunteers to fill all those one-hour shifts. Families and groups are very welcome—Ring with a friend! Please sign up on the clipboard at church or phone Cliveden Chew Haas (408/262-5250) to reserve your time.

Many hands make light work! Please help up support this very worthwhile campaign.

This is the 20th year of Salvation Army Bell Ringing in Milpitas, and SUMC has been a part of the action from early days. Ringers are needed every day. If you'd like to volunteer to swing the handbell at other times, please call Ken Bocchini at 408/263-1989. He'll be glad to organize a time that works for you. Sign up early and often!

Fiesta Time!

Join the Dia De Guadalupe Celebration

Sunday—December 14th



Santa Maria Virgen Episcopal Church invites us to their Dia de Guadalupe Celebration on Sunday, December 14th, to be held on the front lawn of our own Sunnyhills UMC. The Celebration begins at 12:30 p.m. with a worship service and continues at 2:00 p.m. with a theatrical performance of the story of Guadalupe and celebratory dancing. Tamales, posale (soup), and other yummy things to eat and drink will be available during the afternoon. For more information, talk to Citi Pascual, our Sunnyhills UMC accompanist.

SUMC Charge Conference

Sunday—January 11, 2004—11:00 a.m.

Please mark your calendar and plan to attend this important annual business meeting and election of officers. We will also set the pastor's salary and approve mission goals for 2004.



New Year's Resolutions

Before we know it, 2004 will be here. It's time to start thinking about those New Year's Resolutions.. Here's a suggestion for a good one:

Support your church through SCRIP!

Yeah, it's that fundraiser that doesn't cost you anything extra. You already buy groceries every week, you already go to the movies, or to restaurants. Just buy the scrip for those

grocery stores,
AMC theaters,
local restaurants,
Starbucks for coffee, and
a WHOLE LOT MORE!

Ask me if you like a particular place but don't know if there's SCRIP for it!

You know, Shirley has found out that we are a very giving congregation for our size, exceeding the average by a good bit. But, how about just one more way to help out?

It doesn't hurt you, and it doesn't cost more. Okay, you do have to remember to take the SCRIP to the store with you.

Dollar for dollar, SCRIP costs you just the same, and the church makes a percentage of your purchase.

Are you like me? All of a sudden the first of the year is here and I haven't made any resolutions yet! Now make those resolutions early this year for 2004 and commit to purchasing SCRIP. Share your bounty with God's church!

Thank you, and Peace be with all of you at this blessed time of year,

Daislyn Pease, Scrip Coordinator

Help Others Learn to Read

Daislyn's Second Recommendation

Okay, here's another idea for a New Year's Resolution and a Church Outreach program for you. Vision Literacy, a program of the Milpitas Public Library, teaches people how to teach other adults to read!

It's a bit of a commitment, but I am going to tackle it. I feel strongly that people should be able to read. It can open up doors which were very tightly locked before. Is it spreading God's word? I'll leave it to you to answer that question. I think doing anything so beneficial is doing God's work, but then that's just my opinion.

I would like about five other people to join with me in doing this. Consider it my

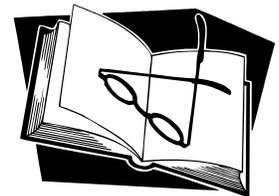
challenge to you, and my recommendation for a New Year's resolution.

Tutors must attend a 60-minute orientation and 15 hours of training sessions. Tutors are matched with students and meet at least two hours per week.

Is this a commitment of your time and energy? Definitely! Is it worth it? I say yes—a resounding yes! What a difference you can make in someone's life.

Think about it, and if you are up to my challenge, call me.

Daislyn Pease, (408)262-4236



Simple Night, Holy Night

Scaled-Down Plans Help Elevate the Holy

(Adapted from the November-December Interpreter)



Finding fewer blessings amid the holiday bustle? This year, slow down, spend less money, and devote more time to prayer, personal time, and projects that matter.

Keep your priorities in view. Pull out your calendar early in the season. Sit with whoever is important in your decision-making process: your family, your significant other, your social group. Together decide the priorities of the season. How will you honor your faith traditions? How will you stay in touch with each other in this crazy time? Which events are important to you and which can you skip? What are the financial implications of the season? How will you honor your faith tradition in your spending?

Make spiritual life central. Schedule time for a special service project or allot a special financial gift to your church/favorite charity. Set aside time every day for prayer, Advent reading, or quiet time with friends or family. Fit your other holiday events around these priorities.

Give to those in need. Decide on an amount and set it aside each day. It could be twenty five cents, five dollars, or whatever is right between you and God. Donate the total to mission. Ask children to pick one item from their own Christmas list to give to children at domestic violence or homeless shelters. Work with local agencies to shop for individuals and families in need during the holidays.

Exchange homemade gifts or gifts of time. Exchange jars of your best homemade soup or soup mix at your Christmas parties. Bake cookies and host a swap for your prayer group. Donate yard work to an elderly friend or baby sit for a single parent or couple who need a getaway.

Several resources are available for more ideas. Look for *The Treasury of Celebrations: Create Celebrations that Reflect Your Values and Don't Cost the Earth*, edited by Carolyn Pogue, available from Alternatives, 800-821-6152, or www.SimpleLiving.org. For ideas on giving to those in need, check out *101 Ways To Help People In Need*, by Steve and Janie Sjogren, NavPress, 800-955-4432, www.navpress.com.

SUMC Elves Help Stock Christmas Shoppe

December Mission Project

We will be supporting the work of the San Jose Family Shelter this season by helping to stock the shelves of their Christmas Shoppe, a room where parents can “shop” for their children’s presents, and where children can choose their parents’ gifts. Bring your gifts of **new, unwrapped items** such as scarves, mittens, wallets, art supplies, gift certificates, books, stuffed animals, dolls, and toys to church through December 21st. If you wish to make a monetary donation, one of our happy shoppers will be glad to shop for you.

Our Special offering on Christmas Eve will go to the work of the Family Shelter as well.