

February 2004

The Beacon

Sunnyhills United Methodist Church
355 Dixon Road, Milpitas CA 95035

Pastor Shirley Macemon

Church Office

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Visit us on the Web!

www.gbmg-umc.org/sunnyhills

Building the Body of Christ, Part II

Learn, Renew, Share, and Grow

February 28, 2004—8:15 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Salinas First UMC, 404 Lincoln Ave., Salinas

The San Jose District Spiritual Gifts Training Team is again offering a wide range of workshops at the district training day, February 28th, 2004. Dr. Richard Southern and Mr. Robert Norton, senior consultants for Church Development systems and authors of *Cracking Your Congregation's Code: Identifying Spiritual DNA* (many of us will remember this resource from our time with Pastor Adrienne Beasley), will be the keynote speakers. The workshops include:

Trustees, Finance, and Staff Parish Relations—each will help participants learn the work and responsibilities of their work area.

Church Growth and Development—led by Dr. Richard Southern and Mr. Robert Norton

God's gift of Sex—Educational and Biblical resources for grades 4-6 and 7-12—Mary Parker-Eves and Paul Henshaw from the Conference committee on Dialogue on Human Sexuality.

Children's Ministries—Susan Smith

United Methodist Women—Patricia Madsen

Websites: Benita Kimball

Finance for the Finance Committee

Sharing Spaces—a panel (Richard Thompson, Maggie McNaught, and Sandra Hammett) discuss the ups and downs of sharing facilities.

Communication—Benita Kimball

Jubilee Campaign to Cancel the Debt of HIPC—Church and Society.

Keeping Organization From getting In the Way of Ministry—Jerry Strak will help you get the spark you need to find 21st century answers to some of the ministry questions bothering faithful leaders.

Getting more laity involvement without burning out the faithful few.

Igniting Ministries—Jeneane Jones

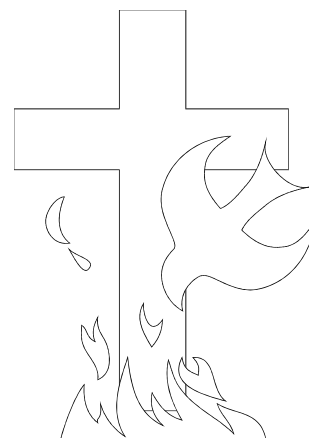
Stewardship—Betsy Schwarzentraub

Registration fees include lunch and all workshop materials.

\$22/person for fees received by Feb. 20, groups of 3 or more \$20/person.

After Feb. 20, \$25 and \$22 per person.

Registration forms are available in the church office.

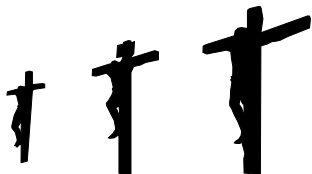


Pastor's Letter

The Passion of the Christ:

If you haven't already seen the previews, posters, or read something about this movie which has been written, produced and directed by Mel Gibson, chances are very good that you will. Bible movies come and go. Some are great; some artistic. Some force us to stop and think, support or challenge our preconceived notions and ideas. Some lead us further in our faith. I cannot predict how you might respond to Gibson's *Passion of Christ*.

The Passion of the Christ, which will be released in theaters on Ash Wednesday, February 25th, portrays the last hours of Jesus' life from his arrest at Gethsemane to his death on the cross at Golgotha. Gibson has been faithful to scripture in his writing of the script. You may hear descriptions such as "factually accurate", or "historically truthful". *The Passion of the Christ* is an artistic expression, not a biblical commentary or documentary.



Material from each of the four Gospel Passion stories has been woven together, expressing the director's point of view of the events at the end of Jesus' life. What is portrayed in graphic, historically truthful detail is the brutality under which Jesus suffered during those last hours.

According to Blake Busik, pastor of St. Paul's UMC in Freemont (who went to a preliminary screening in January), the gore in this film is on a par with *Saving Private Ryan*. And, like *Private Ryan*, it is not gratuitous violence, but essential to the

film's integrity. Gibson's viewpoint—artistic and theological—is that Jesus' suffering cannot be overlooked or denied. The film will probably be rated R.



The Passion of the Christ is a dark, heavy movie. As your pastor, I certainly won't recommend it to all of you. The images of Jesus' final hours, presented in graphic detail, are images that will last for a very long time. If you are uneasy about violence and gore on the big screen, don't go.

But there is another side: Jesus chose to live a life that led down the path to his death. He chose to live a life that changed people's lives, changed their perceptions of who they were in the eyes of God. Jesus' teachings and life demonstrated what is important in our relationship with ourselves, our neighbors, and God. Jesus challenged the ruling rich. He turned the Temple class on their ear. He demonstrated over and over that the marginalized and poor, the under classes, women and children, that all those who are invisible in society are important in God's sight; that the Kingdom of Heaven isn't just "out there", but something that we glimpse every time we are doing God's work. And that nothing—not even his horrible, brutal, tortuous death on the cross—nothing—separates us from God's love.

The Passion of the Christ doesn't tell Jesus' back story, who Jesus is, what his ministry is about or even why Jesus was crucified. When our friends and neighbors,

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FEBRUARY

Calendar Notes

Lunch Bunch

Sunday, February 15th

Everyone who enjoys good food and good conversation is part of the Lunch Bunch! Join us in February for lunch at Omega Restaurant (reasonably priced diner cuisine) on South Park Victoria (just below Calaveras Blvd.). Everyone is welcome. Bring family and friends, order what you like, and settle your own bill. We'll look forward to seeing YOU there!

Film Discussion

*Sunday, February 22nd
After Worship*

Discussion of the new film *The Passion of the Christ* directed by Mel Gibson. See article on page 2.

San Jose District Training Day

*Saturday, February 28th
8:15 a.m.-3:00 p.m.
Salinas First UMC*

Check out some of the useful and engaging workshops, enjoy social and worship time with others around the District, and polish up your church leadership skills. Registration forms in the church office. Pastor Shirley has all the details.

WRAP

(Administrative Council)

*Saturday, March 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.

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.

Church Painting and Repair

Volunteers In Mission Arrive March 9-13

Save these dates! March 9-13, 2004, the San Jose District VIM, a group of (mostly) retired folks who head out to churches to paint and repair when local congregations need help, arrives here at Sunnyhills. With the help of sturdy volunteers from our own congregation, our combined group will paint the building exteriors, the sanctuary and office interiors, replace rotten fascia boards, etc. We'll need assistance of all kinds, so please mark your calendars and plan to help spruce up our buildings.

Looking Ahead

Stewardship

March 27-28

Mexico Mission Trip

April 17-24

WRAP

*Saturday, April 3rd
Saturday, May 8th*

Community Breakfast

*Sunday, May 2nd
Hosted by Sunnyhills UMC*

Pastor's Letter

Continued from Page 2

or even acquaintances, come away from seeing the movie, they will have questions of all kinds. We need to be credible witnesses to our faith as we enter into discussions raised by this movie.

In preparation for the film's opening, we'll have a short discussion after worship on February 22. We will watch the film's trailer (preview) and an interview with Mel Gibson and Jim Caviezel, who portrays Jesus in the film, and discuss any questions raised from those resources. During March we'll schedule a discussion to debrief for those who have seen the film.

Think and pray about whether viewing this film is right for you. Come and talk with me about it if you wish. Whether or not you decide to see the movie, take some time during the upcoming weeks to think and pray about how you will answer the question a friend or neighbor might ask: "What does Jesus' life mean?" "Why did he die?"

Don't worry—we'll be continuing this conversation together.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Shirley

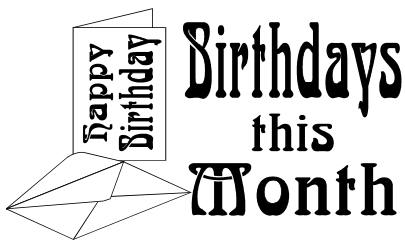
Income and Expenses Summary

INCOME: January-December 2003

Offerings	\$36,842
Building Use & Other	44,590
Special Giving	3,223
Income Total	\$84,655
Cash on hand	\$41,660
Designated funds	36,334
Cash available	\$ 5,327

EXPENSES:

Mission & Outreach	\$11,773
Operating Expenses	26,854
Pastor & Staff Support	42,676
Expense Totals	\$81,303



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

- 2/1 Jeremy Mark Westover
- 2/21 Robert Roll
- 2/23 Robert Wilber

Anniversary:

- 2/14 Jo and Bob Roll
- 2/16 Shirley Macemon & Jon Marcus



The Road to Progress

Milpitas and the African-American Experience

Community Breakfast—Sunday—February 1st—7:00 a.m.

As the February host of the Community Breakfast that takes place at our own Jones Hall, Community Arts and History Support/The Community Museums will present “The Road to Progress: Milpitas and the African-American Experience” on Sunday, February 1st from 7:00 to 8:30 a.m. The breakfast is co-sponsored by the APPN Northeast Region Workshop group, whose objective is to educate and reduce at-risk behavior among youth, and the Milpitas NAACP Branch Committee. Last year’s attendees will be pleased to know that Joyce Woods has agreed to again share her culinary talents. All are invited to attend. For more information, call 942-1776.

Africa University February Mission Emphasis

Africa University in Mutare, Zimbabwe, is 10 years old, and in its young life has positioned itself as a center of excellence in higher education in Africa. Since opening in 1992, the university has developed a reputation for its relevant, practical, African-focused curricula.

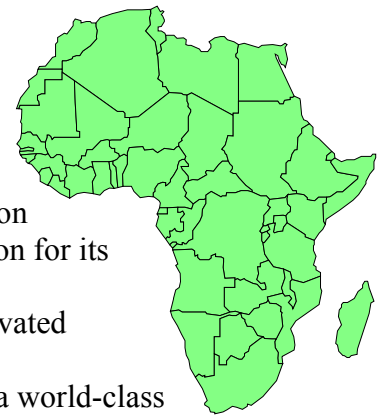
The school was born in a scrub field with 40 students meeting in renovated farmhouses for classes in theology, agriculture, and natural resources.

The university today is described as a “cosmopolitan endeavor” with a world-class campus and a diverse community of 1,500 people. It is the first United Methodist-related, degree-granting university in sub-Saharan Africa.

More than 1,100 students from 23 countries are enrolled, and 899 graduates work and provide leadership around the continent and the world. Africa University has become one of the most active in Africa, emphasizing research and community outreach. It seeks to mitigate suffering, alleviate poverty, and equip people to improve their quality of life.

Beginning with two academic disciplines, the university now has schools of education, management and administration, humanities, and social sciences, and will open a sixth discipline—health science, including programs in nursing, environmental and public health, and health sciences—this year.

For more information, check out their website: www.africau.edu
(Adapted from April 2003 *Interpreter*)



Jesus and the Kingdom

Jesus Seminar on the Road

March 26 & 27, 2004--\$45 (before 3/5)—Palo Alto

Jesus Seminar



On The Road

The Jesus Seminar and the Quest for the Historical Jesus: Historical figure vs. religious icon
What Jesus Was and the Kingdom Is: Exploring Jesus’ vision of the Kingdom of God
What Jesus Wasn’t and the Kingdom Isn’t: The institutional church replaces the Kingdom
More information: www.westarinstitute.org/Events/PaloAlto2004/paloalto2004.html