

March 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.gb-gm-umc.org/sunnyhills

SUMC Work Project

Volunteers in Mission

March 10-13, 2004

Roll out the red carpet and polish up those welcoming smiles—the San Jose District chapter of VIM (volunteers in mission) arrives at Sunnyhills UMC in March. This group of (mostly) retired folks heads out to lend a hand when local UMC congregations need help with property maintenance and repairs.



Number one priority is painting the outside of the church buildings. Light cream walls and mallard green trim will really spruce up our presence on the street! Extending the sidewalk between Jones Hall and the Butterfly Garden will get rid of soggy mud when it rains and give people more room to move around at large events. Another project is a new shed to shelter yard and maintenance equipment and free up badly-needed storage space for other purposes. Interior painting plans include the pastor's and front offices, which are looking sadly drab. Window frames in Jones Hall and the upper building need to be scraped down and refinished. Two trees need to come down. There are still some potholes in the upper parking lot to be filled. And, another idea—well, let's just say that we have plenty of items for all the willing hands we can muster!

The caravaners are hard at work getting ready. Notices have gone out to churches and volunteers. An article has been published in the District Newsletter. At least three RVs are planning to camp over in our upper lot. Volunteers from up and down the district are signing up. A design is ready for the shed. The cement job is calculated. Pruning saws and clean rags are laid out ready to go, and the paint sprayer has been cleaned.



And what about Sunnyhills UMC? Are we ready to go too? We need help of all kinds, young and old, experienced and just learning. We'll be providing snacks and beverages each day, and aiding in the many tasks. Please mark your calendars for Wednesday through Saturday, March 10-13, and plan to help out as much as you can.

Remember, many hands make light work.

Come join the fun--See ya' at the work party!

Pastor's Letter

Lent is upon us, the 40 days plus Sundays before Easter. If you were to look in a Bible dictionary, you wouldn't find an entry for Lent, because it isn't a Biblical season. The observance of a penitential preparation for Easter began in the early Church long before it was called Lent. The word itself is the Anglo-Saxon word for spring. Some time in the very early church, the custom arose to fast for 40 days (or perhaps 40 hours—there is some controversy over this), in imitation of Christ's fasting in the wilderness, as a spiritual preparation for the feast of Easter. Over the first centuries of the early church, the practice of Lent settled into a time of fasting and penance; sometimes more severe, sometimes less, whose nature varied from one area and one period to another. Often those getting ready for baptism and confirmation used this time for special preparation for those sacraments and rites.



In the contemporary Protestant church, we've pretty much turned away from the fasting and penance traditions of Lent. You may have friends who give up something for Lent, or perhaps this is a custom that you observe. In the past, I never quite made sense of giving something up for Lent: Somehow I couldn't make the connection between denying myself chocolate, or soda, or coffee, and having a better relationship with God. It always seemed so . . . well . . . so artificial.

This year in my reading, however, I came across an article by Barbara Brown Taylor¹, an author and preacher whose work I admire. She puts the idea of giving up something for Lent in a light that does make sense to me: that simply giving up a favorite thing is only the beginning. The real work begins when our mind goes to that thing we have given up. We go there and find an empty place. We reach for the coffee, the candy bar, the TV remote, even as we remember that we've given it up. For a split second we panic: what now? What will fill that hole? We can—as we have done so many times—fill that hole with another “thing”: We've given up candy, but not an apple. We've given up TV, but not reading. We've given up coffee, but not water. OR, we can simply sit with that empty place and realize that maybe—just maybe—that place belongs to God. And we can give that place to God. God will be with us in our silence, sit with us in our emptiness, and listen to the needs and desires of our souls.

I invite you to sit with God during this Lenten season. I'm giving up chocolate: I think I get it now.

Grace and Peace,

Shirley

¹ Settling for Less, Barbara Brown Taylor, *Christian Century*, Feb. 18, 1998, pg 169

MARCH

WRAP (Administrative Council)

Saturday, March 6th

5:00 p.m. Potluck

6:00 p.m. Meeting

Everyone in the church community is encouraged to attend. 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 March 10-13

Help us paint, cement, build a shed, take out 2 trees, and more! We need help of all

Calendar Notes

kinds—making lunches, cleaning walls, wielding brushes and saws—there are tasks for all willing hands. Please mark your calendars and plan to help spruce up our buildings (see story on page 1).

Looking Ahead

Mexico Mission Trip

April 17-24

WRAP

Saturday, April 3rd

Saturday, May 8th

Community Breakfast

Sunday, May 2nd

Hosted by Sunnyhills UMC

Holy Week Worship Services

Set your clocks ahead on Saturday, April 3rd!

Palm Sunday, April 4th: Worship Celebration, 9:30 a.m.

Good Friday, April 9th: Walk the Way of the Cross
Alum Rock UMC and other area churches will gather in the Rusticlands parking lot of Alum Rock Park and walk together

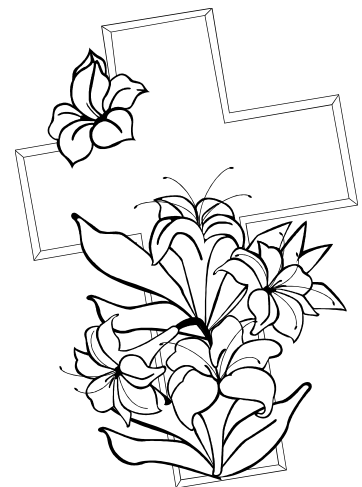
Easter Sunday, April 11th

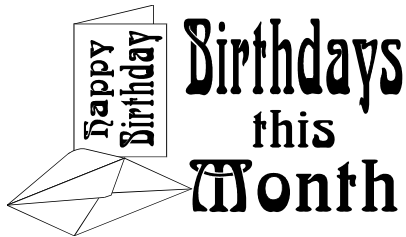
Easter Sunrise Service: 6:30 a.m. on the lawn between Jones Hall and Church Office

Finger Food Potluck Breakfast in Jones Hall follows

Easter Celebration! 9:30 a.m.
Special Music, Children's Readings
Bible Presentations, New Members

Children's Easter Egg Hunt on the lawn, immediately following the Benediction





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

3/6 Daislyn Pease

3/6 Kyler Tanciango

3/14 Ealasaid Haas

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

3/9 David Johnson

3/14 Sonya Chow

Happy Anniversary to Gwen and Jack Freeman (3/5)!

Income and Expenses

INCOME:

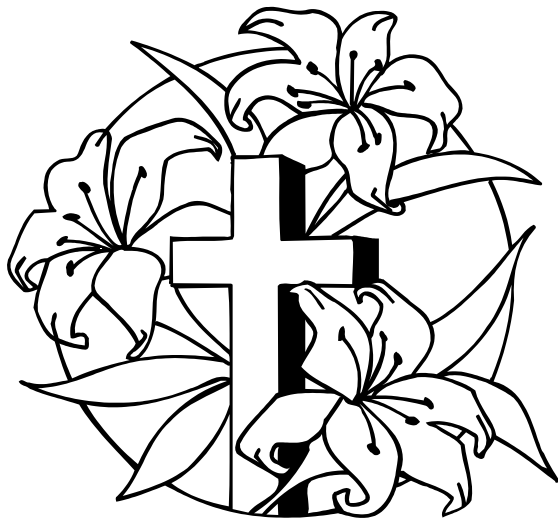
	January 2004
Offerings	\$ 2,804
Building Use & Other	3,489
Special Giving	505
Income Total	\$ 6,798

EXPENSES:

Mission & Outreach	\$ 827
Operating Expenses	2,197
Pastor & Staff Support	3,806
Expense Totals	\$ 6,829

Fund Balances

San Jose Family Shelter	\$ 20
'363' Fund	\$ 24
Cash on Hand	\$41,629
Designated funds	36,867
Cash Available	\$ 4,762



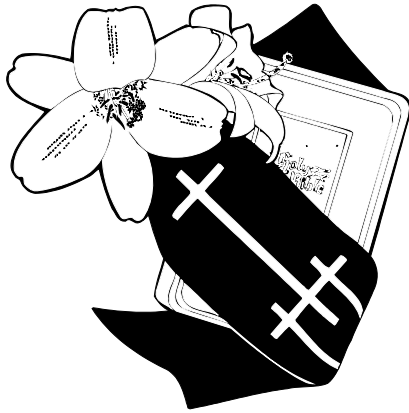
Let the Sanctuary Bloom Flowers for Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday morning our Sanctuary will be decorated with flowering plants in many colors. We need your help for this. Bring a flowering plant in the color of your choice on Easter morning. Jo Roll and Thelma Wilber will direct their placement in the chancel area. Take your plant home after worship to adorn your home during the Easter Season.

Who Is Jesus in Our Life?

Lenten Study

Sundays in March—11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.



Each Sunday in March, an Adult Study session after our Social time will discuss “Who Is Jesus in Our Life?” The discussion will start with questions and issues raised in Pastor Shirley’s morning message, and continue by looking at specific Gospel scriptures and other materials, both supporting and critical. The message titles and scripture references are listed below. Read ahead if you like, and if you have favorite study materials on these topics, be sure to let Pastor Shirley know! She’ll be using (among other resources) *Jesus, a New Vision* by Marcus Borg.

March 7	Jesus’ Radical Mission	Luke 4:14-21
March 14	Jesus’ Radical Message	Luke 6:27-38
March 21	Jesus’ Radical Love	Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32
March 28	Jesus’ Radical Life	John 12:1-8

Reaching Out, Reaching In

Pastor Shirley Leads Extension Ministries Prayer Retreat

Sunday, March 28th—12:00 noon-6:00 p.m.—Los Altos UMC

During January and February, Rev. Emil Sazon led us in a series of workshops on the basics of Extension Ministries. Briefly, extension ministries are a way we can share the love of God in the community around us.

On Sunday, March 28th, I want to invite everyone who attended the workshops and anyone else interested in this ministry to join me in a prayer retreat. We will be off-campus at the Los Altos United Methodist Church from 12:00 noon until 6:00 p.m. During this time, in addition to fellowship and learning to tell our own stories, we will spend time in prayer and reflection to discern the next steps for this ministry at Sunnyhills UMC.

