

April 2004

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

Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

Raise a Joyful Noise to the Lord and Join the Celebration

Palm Sunday, April 4th: Worship Celebration, 9:30 a.m.
Jesus enters Jerusalem in joyful procession

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

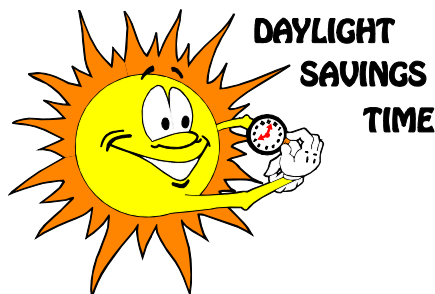
Easter Sunday, April 11th

Easter Sunrise Service: 6:30 a.m. on the lawn
As the early morning light gilds the hills, we follow the women on their journey to a friend's tomb

Finger Food Potluck Breakfast in Jones Hall follows
Bring breakfast goodies to share and enjoy a delicious breakfast with friends

Easter Celebration! 9:30 a.m.
Special Music, Children's Readings
Bible Presentations, New Members
(Please see articles on flowers for Easter and Easter Membership Sunday on pages 3 and 5)

Children's Easter Egg Hunt: Just after our Easter Celebration, when the last bars of the Hallelujah Chorus have faded, our children are invited to the annual Sunnyhills Easter Egg Extravaganza, on the lawn between Jones Hall and the Church Office. Each child should bring a basket to carry those wonderful finds.



Remember to set your clocks ahead!

Saturday evening, April 3rd

Time to spring ahead—longer days are here!

Pastor's Letter

A year ago, in the April 2003 Beacon, I wrote these words in response to the beginning of the war in Iraq:

“We proclaim that God is the God of all creation. That God is God of all humanity, that God cries when we cry, that God mourns when we mourn, and that God treasures the life of each and every one of the children of the earth.”



As we enter Holy Week, the time from Palm Sunday to the Easter Celebration, I find these same words an appropriate place to begin to talk about our God. Jesus, Emmanuel, God-with-us, lived and walked among us and taught among us. Jesus, with his very life, death and resurrection demonstrated that we can never be separated from God's love, and that with God's love separation and brokenness hold no power over us.

Jesus gathered around himself the outcast and marginalized of his time—those whom the “strict-scripture-readers” of his time would have put out of society, run out of town, or yes, even stoned. Jesus taught the Law: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself,* and that any action that is not grounded in love does not honor God.

As you may have heard on the news, the United Methodist Church continues to be of mixed opinion as to how to live out the Love of God in our time. When the Mayor of San Francisco began issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples, the Rev. Karen Oliveto, pastor of the Bethany UMC in San Francisco, performed marriage ceremonies for several of her parishioners and others with whom she had long-term pastoral relationships. Rev. Oliveto has been brought up on charges for violating the Disciplinary restriction prohibiting UM Clergy from performing “holy unions.” In the Pacific Northwest, The Rev. Karen Dammann, a lesbian living in a long-term committed relationship, recently was acquitted of charges in a church trial. The jury, in effect, declared that the Discipline does not use “language of declaration” when it refers to “homosexuality being outside the scope of Christian teaching”. Needless to say, this verdict has been joyously received in some circles, and others have accused the presiding Bishop of shirking his duties.

Our Bishop Shamana's letter concerning these issues is here in the Beacon (see page 4). This Easter, join me in prayer that hearts all over United Methodism might be resurrected into the power of God's love—wherever that love takes us. We may never be of one mind, but we are all of one God—may our hearts, minds, and doors continue to be open.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Shirley

*Luke 10:27



Calendar Notes

WRAP (Administrative Council)

*Saturday, May 8th
Note Our New Schedule!!
Meeting begins at 5:00 p.m.*

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.

Mexico Mission Trip April 17-24

Pastor Shirley and several SUMC members will be building homes in Mexico with members of Los Altos UMC and other churches in the area. Amor Ministries responds to physical and spiritual poverty

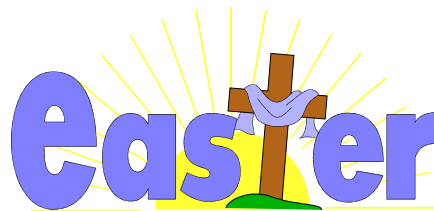
throughout the world, and volunteers experience the “other world” of poverty and hope through immersion. Pray for our friends as they work to make a real difference in God’s world.

Save the Date!

Community Breakfast

*Sunday, May 2nd
Hosted by Sunnyhills UMC*

Gwen and Jack Freeman are coordinating the breakfast (yum!). Daislyn Pease, a volunteer reading tutor with Vision Literacy (administered by the Milpitas Public Library) is coordinating the program. Plan to help out, enjoy a great breakfast, and learn more about a vital community service.



Easter Sunday Is Membership Sunday

Any individual over the age of 13, who has been previously baptized, may become a member of this United Methodist church by answering affirmatively two questions:

1. Will you be loyal to the United Methodist Church?
2. Will you pledge to uphold Sunnyhills UMC by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service?

If this is the time for you to seek membership in Sunnyhills United Methodist Church, call the church office (408/262-1486) and talk to Pastor Shirley. We look forward to welcoming you!



Bishop Beverly Shamana
A Pastoral Letter—Lent 2004

Beloved in Christ,

As we walk with Jesus and his disciples during this Lenten season of deepening reflection, I want you to know that I pray for the revelation of God's reconciling power more fully among us in these days. We are in a time of extraordinary conversation and debate around significant matters of sexuality, particularly same gender marriage and the blessing of same sex unions. Thoughtful and caring persons hold deeply divergent convictions on what is God's desire in the midst of our life together.

As your Bishop and chief pastor of the church, it is my desire that we move through this time with grace. I am called to provide Episcopal oversight and pastoral care for all persons in this annual conference, no matter their perspective on this issue or the current situation related to Bethany UMC and Rev. Karen Oliveto. Each person must be treated with respect and care for the sake of our unity in Christ Jesus.

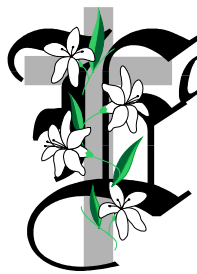
It is important to remember that the California-Nevada Annual Conference has a more than 30-year history of ministry for and with gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, and transgendered persons. This significant history is a hallmark of faith that must be continued. It would be a sin to drive persons away from our churches where they have found a spiritual home because of the way we conduct our debate or our loss of hope that God's Holy Spirit is still working in our midst.

It is our Book of Discipline that calls us into relationships of reverence with all persons. "We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn their lesbian and gay members and friends." Let us remember that the life and leadership of our denomination, our conference, and each local congregation needs the gifts and graces of all persons for the sake of Christ's evangelistic mission to make disciples in His name.

We do not know where this current discussion will take us or how the Book of Discipline will be changed at the General Conference. Nevertheless, we do know that even in difficult and uncertain times the mandate of Jesus is the sacred tie that binds us together - "Love one another as I have loved you."

May God grant us wisdom, courage and Christ's resurrection presence and power at this critical time in our Church and the world.

Your sister in the love of Christ,



Easter Flowers for the Sanctuary

Easter Sunday, our Sanctuary will be decorated with flowers and flowering plants in many colors. Laine Sazon has generously offered to assist in purchasing flowers, so you have some choices:

Bring cut flowers arranged in a vase or a flowering plant in the color of your choice on Easter morning, OR send or bring a check for \$15 to the church office before April 7th attached to the form below.

Jo Roll and Thelma Wilber will direct the decoration of the chancel area on Easter morning.

Your name: _____ Phone: _____

My check for \$15.00 is enclosed. Please purchase (*circle one*) cut flowers flowering plant

If a flowering plant, check one:

I will take my plant home after worship.

I would like my plant (a calla lily) to become part of the sanctuary garden.

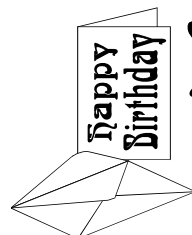
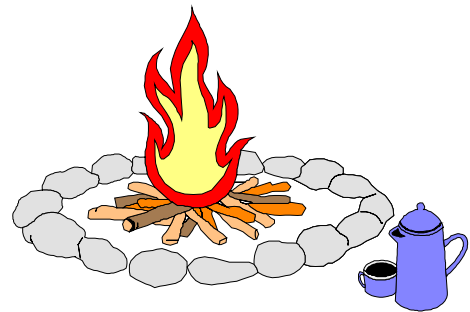
Please take cut flowers and all non-garden plants home after worship. *Thank you!!*

Questions? Call Pastor Shirley at 408/262-1486.

Summer Camp Time is Now!

Check out the brochure on the bulletin board in the church office. Come on in and make a copy, or check out the website: <http://www.cnumccamp.org/>

Conference camps aren't just for kids! There are camping experiences for all ages in the brochure and on the website. Financial aid is available—ask Pastor Shirley for details.



**Birthdays
this
Month**

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

4/22 Marcia Crawford
4/27 Jon Marcus

4/27 Leola Saterwhite

Income and Expenses

INCOME:	February 2004	EXPENSES:	
Offerings	\$ 4,153	Mission & Outreach	\$ 981
Building Use & Other	6,825	Operating Expenses	2,390
Special Giving	177	Pastor & Staff Support	4,393
Income Total	\$11,155	Expense Totals	\$ 7,764
Cash on Hand	\$45,021		
Designated funds	36,915		
Cash Available	\$ 8,105		

A Mission to Consider



The San Jose District Chapter of Volunteers in Mission is sponsoring a work project in Jamaica August 2-14, 2004. Team leaders District Superintendent Nymphas Edwards, and Rev. Greg Bergquist have both had extensive travel and mission experiences in Jamaica.

The project will include a Vacation Bible School, painting and light repairs on the parsonage and church, and a cultural tour of Jamaica. According to Pastor Bergquist, Vacation Bible School in Jamaica is an experience not to be missed! This experience would be great for someone new to hands-on mission. Some of you may remember that Pastor Bergquist attended Sunnyhills for a year or so 12 years ago, before he was appointed to the Los Altos UMC, where he is now the Executive Pastor.

An organizational and information meeting for this mission will be held on April 3rd at 10:00 at the Calvary UMC, 729 Morse St, San Jose, CA 95126, or talk to Pastor Shirley for more information.

SUMC Work Project

Over the course of my life, as a lay person and now as clergy, I've participated in a lot of mission projects. I've made sandwiches for homeless persons. I've run Vacation Bible Schools. I've built homes in Mexico. But March of this year was the first time I've been on the receiving end of a Mission project. I have to confess, I was not sure how I would react, having always been a better giver than receiver.

On March 9th, two couples rolled into our upper parking lot and set up housekeeping for the week. Wednesday morning, March 10th, Cliveden Chew Haas met them and the rest of the San Jose District Volunteers in Mission, ably led by retired pastor Dave Wolf, as the work began. This team of dedicated volunteers came to us from the newly formed District VIM Committee, but are no strangers to hands-on mission.

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Several are Conference Care-A-Vaners, a group of retired (but not retiring!) RV'ers who travel the conference working on churches and camps, some have participated in international VIM projects, and others are from San Jose district churches with hands-on teams that do work in their own neighborhoods, and across international borders.

As Wednesday progressed, changes in the campus became obvious. Windows were taped and covered to protect them from paint spray. Peeling paint was scraped away. Targeted trees became just so much firewood and limbs. The patch of dirt in front of Jones Hall became a respectable foundation for a concrete slab.

When the paint started, things began to fly! Some of you remember the last time the buildings were painted, but that was long before I arrived. I marveled at the way sprayed paint goes on. Once the sanctuary was covered in its main color, the trim could begin. Trim on all three buildings will eventually be the same dark green. For now, the sanctuary is complete, as are a few additional door frames. Thursday and Friday flew by: the dying redwood by the upper parking lot was removed, and some of the junipers between the office and sanctuary were taken out for better visibility. As an added bonus, we'll eventually have a "Sanctuary Garden" in that location.

Friday evening we feasted: Jo Roll and Thelma Wilbur brought a much-appreciated dinner for the crew.

By Saturday, we had teams completing the exterior of the three buildings, finishing the



interior of the church office, MY office, and the front of Jones Hall. Pastor Sione Halafa'u brought a team from his Tongan church in Seaside who understood the fine points of finishing the concrete slab, safely removing the large tree in front of the sign adjacent to the upper parking lot entrance,

and removing two very large limbs, one of which was dangerously close to the Jones Hall roof. They also applied a fresh coat of paint to our cross. Saturday lunch was thoughtfully provided by Jun, Eric and Erin Cruz, who made adobo chicken and rice, and Rolf and Laurie Haas, purveyors of sandwiches and all the trimmings. No one went away hungry!

I can't begin to say Thank You enough to all those who worked on this project. To Dave Wolf and the entire VIM crew; to Pastor Sione and his amazing workers; to Dick Roy and Douglas Roberts (who are VIM team, but also my long-time friends from Mexico builds). And, of course, all the Sunnyhills folks who worked during the week: Cliveden Chew Haas, who coordinated so much of the project; Bob Roll, who was there almost every hour of every day; Jack Freeman spent his afternoon off to mask and prepare for painting; and painters Karen Schreifels (who also brought bagels), Daislyn Pease, James Ogg, Bob and Shasha Tempero. In addition to lunch, Jun Cruz and

his children Erin and Erik painted the curb in front of Jones Hall bright red. With their help, Laine Sazon and her children Mark and Jessie assembled a new bench for the Sanctuary Garden, and began painting trim on the church office. Rolf and Laurie Haas

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brought lunch on Saturday and Rolf made sure that everyone on the job had appropriate supplies all day. Guy Haas worked on many aspects of the project and with Luke, a Boy Scout needing service work, moved loads of mulch into the new Sanctuary Garden.



The project didn't stop when the painting stopped. Ralph Nikolaus, assisted by Jack Freeman, prepared the tree debris for fireplaces and the dump, and Bob Roll, Gwen Freeman, Karen Schreifels and I took the last of the limbs to the recyclery.

Our fix-up projects have not yet finished. Still in the works is a shed that will house Trustee gear, which in turn will turn the current Trustee closet into clean storage space. Trim on the Office and Jones Hall is still to be completed. The next step in the plan, however, will see all our exterior lights replaced with new fixtures, wiring and

photoelectric controls that will turn lights on when darkness comes. VIM has offered to continue to help with painting and construction. Emil Sazon, of our own congregation is overseeing the installation of the lights. And a great portion of the cost of the new lighting system is

being underwritten by a generous grant from the Santa Maria Episcopal Church, whom we think of as part of the St. Joseph Episcopal Church. I am humbled by the generosity of this small, sister congregation led by Father Efren Garcia.

I started out admitting I wasn't sure how to react to being the object of mission. I have to say, it is just as exciting, just as satisfying, just as fulfilling as when I have worked on the "other side". As I worked with so many folks during the week, I found Jesus in each and every one, working together, building the Kingdom. Praise God!

Recycling at Sunnyhills

We now have not one but two dumpsters gracing our premises. The blue one is for garbage, no change there. The white one, however, is our new bin for recycling. But, because the container is large and looks an awful lot like a dumpster, we all need to be sure that garbage goes into the garbage dumpster and recycling goes into the recycling dumpster.

When you are on campus at Sunnyhills, put these sort of things in the recycling bin:

- Clean cardboard, clean paper (no food boxes or wrappers!): newspapers, magazines, etc.
- Plastic bags, bread bags, and clean frozen food bags (no black plastic, no food in containers!)
- Plastic containers marked 1-7, aluminum and bi-metal cans, glass bottles and jars
- Packaging materials (shrink wrap and Styrofoam)

NOT RECYCLABLE in the Milpitas business program:

- All foods and food waste left in containers, including fast food bags, waxed cups, pizza boxes, paper cups, Starbucks coffee cups. (Did I say pizza boxes and fast food bags?)
- Diapers and restroom waste, Styrofoam peanuts, bubble wrap
- Window glass, dishes, light bulbs of all sorts, anything wrapped in black plastic bags