

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

November 2004

Consecration Sunday Is Coming Sunday, November 21st

Our congregation's Stewardship team has selected the *New Consecration Sunday Stewardship Program* as a way to teach our congregation the biblical and spiritual principles of generous giving. We haven't focused on a specific stewardship emphasis in several years, so this will be an exciting endeavor for all of us!

Consecration Sunday Program is based on the biblical philosophy that giving is a result of spiritual development, and is also a discipline in spiritual development. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the Hebrew peoples brought their first fruits—the first produce of the harvest, to the temple as an offering to God. (Exodus 23:16) In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul talks about the joy of the churches in Macedonia in giving, as a result of their love of God and the work they recognized was being done in themselves and others in God's name. (2 Corinthians 8:1-4)

We are sure you've probably been through some "financial campaigns" that present a budget, tell the you how much money the church needs, and lay out how much you need to increase your gift so that the church can fund its programs. These programs, while sound financial

management, aren't much different than your membership in the YMCA or Scouts.

Over the next few weeks, instead of telling how much the church needs, we want to invite you to be in study and prayer to discern how much you need to give. Jesus calls us to discipleship: a part of discipleship is our financial support of the Church of Jesus Christ. The Program encourages us toward proportionate and systematic giving—solid biblical principles—by asking the question "what percentage of my income am I called to give?"

During morning worship on Consecration Sunday, November 21, we will ask our attendees and members to make their financial commitments to our church's work in the world—our mission and ministry, by completing an Estimate of Giving Card.



Every attendee and member who completes a card does so voluntarily. Even if you are unsure that completing a card is something you can do, or if you are opposed to completing one, please come and attend on November 21. No one need feel embarrassed or put on the defensive for choosing

Continued on Page 4

Pastor's Letter

Dear Friends,

During October, I was privileged to attend the California-Nevada Annual Conference's Spiritual Leaders Summit held at Mt. Hermon in the Santa Cruz mountains. Amazing keynote speakers, great music, fellowship and time in the redwoods.



Adam Hamilton, one of our keynote speakers, is the senior pastor of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas. This congregation has grown from a new-start church meeting in a mortuary chapel to its new home on multiple acres with new buildings, multiple services and multi-pastor staff in less than 15 years. He is bright, articulate, and full of passion to help other churches and pastors across the theological spectrum "become vital, alive and dynamic forces in service to Christ."

Adam's messages talked to the clergy and lay people attending Spiritual Leaders Summit about quality: quality of our outreach in the community, of our communication to and with visitors and members, of every aspect of worship and church events. Especially the quality of our service to Christ in each of those activities and events. Like many books and speakers on church vitality, Adam included his own church's techniques and practices, which are exciting and intriguing. But what struck me are the foundational questions that his congregation wrestled with before they launched their very first worship service. Questions, I believe, that each of us need to answer for ourselves and for our congregation.

1. Why do people need Christ?
2. Why do people need the church?
3. Why do people need *this particular* church?

Our understanding of these questions and their answers differentiate the church from other not-for-profit organizations that provide meeting rooms, do mission projects, educate children, have music programs, teach classes, etc.

Over the next few months, several activities will help us think about these questions. The first is the adult study that I am leading, *Becoming a Thinking Christian*. This study challenges us to think about our faith, why we believe what we do, and what that belief means to our daily life. Articulating our own faith puts us closer to a personal statement of why others need Christ in their lives. Come and join us on Sunday mornings after worship, 11:00 a.m. to 12 noon. I invite you to begin your own prayerful consideration of all three questions.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Shirley



November Calendar Notes

WRAP (Administrative Council)

*Saturday, November 6th
Snacks and coffee at 9:00 a.m.
Meeting starts at 9:30 a.m.*

Tentative agenda includes:

- ☑ Children's Ministries: children's Christmas program,
- ☑ Adult Ministries: Adult Study, Update on Consecration Sunday Stewardship program
- ☑ Other programs: Carol sing, caroling to shut-ins and soup supper
- ☑ Administrative: church financial status
- ☑ Update from Trustees on building repair alternatives and recommendations

Consecration Sunday And Celebration Luncheon

Sunday, November 21st

Support our congregation's mission and ministry. Please see story on page 1.

Community Breakfast

Sunday, November 7th, 7:00 a.m.

Hosted by Milpitas Unified School District

Join community leaders and interested citizens at the Sunnyhills Community Breakfast. Everyone is welcome. Milpitas Unified School District will lead the discussion and provide the scrumptious breakfast. Free (goodwill offering).

CRANBERRY SAUCE

*Sunnyhills UMC has promised **100** 14-1/2 oz. cans of cranberry sauce to the Milpitas Food Pantry for Thanksgiving Dinner baskets. The baskets will go to hungry families in our local area. We will be collecting until November 21st. If you don't have time to shop, cash donations are also appreciated and will be used to purchase cans.*

**A Very
Happy Birthday!
To**

- 11/2 Juanita Westover
- 11/3 Ann Zeise
- 11/6 Rebecca Balarbar
- 11/10 Jun Cruz
- 11/12 Rueben Marcos
Valderrama
- 11/14 Margaret Scott
- 11/20 Kristel Tanciango
- 11/25 Mitchell Westover

**Best Wishes for
a Wonderful
Anniversary!**

Remember our old friends!

11/26 Sharon & Bob Fall



Consecration Sunday

Continued from Page 1

not to fill out a card. We do want *everyone* to be part of our celebration.

During morning worship on November 21, our guest leader will conduct a brief period of instruction and inspiration, followed by members making their commitments as confidential acts of worship. After worship, our celebration will continue with lunch in Jones Hall.

There will be no home solicitation to ask people to complete cards. We will encourage participation in Consecration Sunday events through the Consecration Sunday



team and Church Council (WRAP) members. You will hear from us over the next few weeks as we make every effort to inform, inspire and commit everyone to attend Consecration Sunday Worship.

Thank you in advance for your enthusiastic participation in Consecration Sunday.

Grace and peace,

Shirley Macemon
Pastor

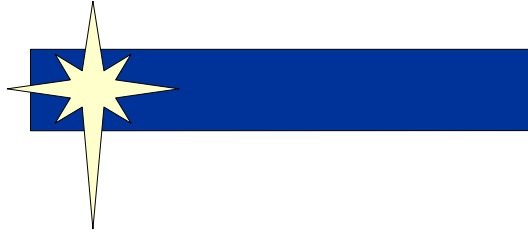
Erik Larsen
Chair, Stewardship Team

Income and Expenses

	July 04	August 04	September 04	Total
INCOME:				
Offerings	\$3,403	\$5,740	\$2,539	\$11,682
Bldg. Use & Others	2,775	4,314	4,411	11,500
Special Giving	468	201	233	903
TOTAL	\$6,646	\$10,255	\$7,183	\$24,085
EXPENSES:				
Mission & Outreach	\$ 739	- 0 -	\$2,739	\$ 3,478
Operating Expenses	2,134	2,226	2,111	6,471
Pastor & Staff Support	4,826	3,047	3,232	11,104
TOTAL	\$7,699	\$5,273	\$8,081	\$21,053

Cash on Hand:	\$37,785
Designated Funds:	36,683
Cash Available:	\$1,102





If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, you are more blessed than the million who won't survive the week.

If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture or the pangs of starvation, you are ahead of 20 million people around the world.

If you attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death, you are more blessed than almost three billion people in the world.

If you have food in your refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof over your head and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of this world.

Blessed

*Daislyn Pease brought this message to share
(author unknown)*

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful, you are blessed because the majority can, but most do not.

If you can hold someone's hand, hug them, or even touch them on the shoulder, you are blessed because you can offer God's healing touch.

If you can read this message, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world who cannot read anything at all.

You are so blessed in ways you may never even know.

Polling Place Faith

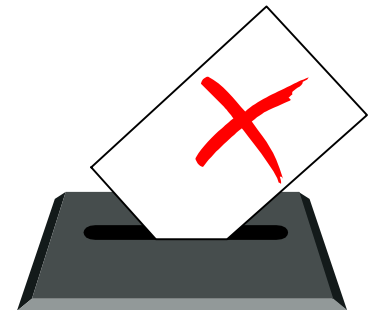
Op-Ed Piece, 11 October 2004

John Auer, Pastor, First United Methodist Church, Reno NV

A visitor from Mars might wonder from the rhetoric if our choices for president are God and the devil! I am convinced that God-fearing, scripture-believing, worship-attending folks of all faiths can vote for either major candidate without risk of personal damnation or global destruction. I am also convinced that peoples of faith come to discern and to vote as an offering of witness and service in this difficult, dangerous time. I want to vote a biblical faith that is democratic, forgiving, and hopeful. Here's how one preacher sees it.

First, biblical faith is democratic, not theocratic. The "word of God" is meant for us. God as creator, redeemer and sustainer of life is God of all peoples everywhere. Spirit is given equally for the vision and voice of all – male and female, young and old, slave and free, Greek and Jew, gay and straight. Biblical faith is anti-imperial. Both Jews and Christians define themselves

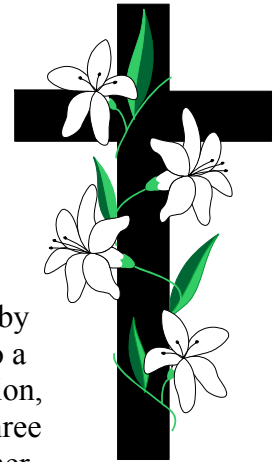
Continued on Page 6



Continued from Page 5

over against the Roman invasion and occupation of biblical times. Jesus is given the death penalty as one who threatens imperial control and local collaboration.

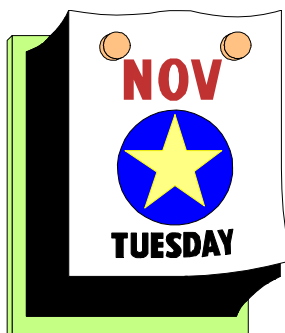
Scripture affirms the goodness of government and the necessity of law. But both exist “under God.” They are ideals, not idols. Prophets who follow from Abraham – Jewish, Christian, Islamic – witness against concentrations of power by nations or leaders who no longer even pretend to be amenable and accountable to a larger community of nations and peoples and to the earth. The vision of Revelation, last book of the Jewish-Christian Bible, sees a “new Jerusalem,” holiest city to three global faith traditions, where we no longer find any one place of worship but rather resources needed to heal all the nations!



Second, biblical faith is essentially forgiving, not avenging. Forgiveness is material and spiritual, body and soul, debts and sins. A faith of fresh starts and chances derives from God’s covenant promise always to be our God no matter what. Our relations in faith, following God, are meant to be infinitely (seventy times seven times, Jesus puts it) forgivable, reversible, debatable, negotiable, repairable, even, in God’s time, perfectible. God in relation to us, and we in relation to others, never give up! We never take lives of others optionally or arbitrarily. We do not avenge ourselves for the taking of life. Vengeance is God’s. Jesus bears witness to that, even from the cross of his own execution.

What is the meaning of resurrection but God’s refusal to take violent revenge, even upon the murder of the one called God’s “only begotten?” Judgment in biblical faith, like God’s own rain/reign “from above,” falls equally on us all. Jesus warns us not to call him or anyone “good” but God. It is a form of idolatry, even self-worship, to proclaim some peoples inherently “evil” (though some behaviors may be) while others call themselves inherently “good.” We are all painfully, equally human – created, redeemed, sustained – if only we will let ourselves be!

Third, biblical faith is hopeful, not fearful. Hope is not optimism, not cheap or easy. Hope often defies the evidence, then watches the evidence change. We may come to our collective senses and seek our collective well-being. Biblical faith insists, as does Dr. King, “The time is always right to do right!” The “end time” is always at hand. Jesus says we do not cause it or even see it coming. God is here, God is now, God is with us. Every “crisis” is also a “kairos.” Moments of testing, even of terror, also bring choices and chances to start again. “Under God” we are never excused from response-ability for the full promise of our life, our faith, our work, our right relation with every other.



Biblical faith is messianic. We cannot live without hope! Jesus embodies the “Jubilee” promise, the cosmic potential for “new life” right in the midst of all our “old lives.” All godly, life-loving things are possible to us in all times and places. By Spirit, by “power from on high,” we are given the earthly powers to make God’s potential present, to re-present God to one another, to re-member and rebuild in new and different ways that which has been dismembered and torn apart. Each one of us is gifted and called, with God, to save and set free, to heal and make whole. Elections are one time, one place to start.