



April 2005

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

United Methodist Children's Day of Action

Wednesday—April 20th—9:00 a.m.—Sacramento State Capitol

Ride the Bus from Calvary UMC in San Jose!

- ❖ 18% of California's children live in poverty
- ❖ 42% live in low-income households
- ❖ 18% of our children have no health insurance
- ❖ California ranks 21st in the nation for overall child well-being

(Poverty: Income below \$18,400 for family of 4)

(Low-income: Income below \$36,800 for 4)

Data from Kids Count, National Center for Children in Poverty, California Department of Education, and Children's Defense Fund for 2001, 2002, and 2003

Please join our own Bishop Shamana at A **Children's Day of Action** at the California State Capitol in Sacramento on **April 20th**.



The United Methodist churches in our conference are coming together, teenagers and toddlers, parents and concerned citizens, to draw attention to the plight of the homelessness and specifically to those whose voices are too small to be heard on the subject—children. The march to the Capitol, rally and legislative visits are sponsored by the California task force of the United Methodist Bishop's Initiative on Children and Poverty. On April 20th we—our children and ourselves—will ask our governor and our legislators to make sure that all of California's children have access to affordable healthcare.

Our concern is for the children and the poor, and legislation that directly affects the well-being of children, families, and individuals at risk. We have a VOICE and can make a statement about our INTENT to work for change on behalf of all God's children. Bishop Beverly J. Shamana will speak to the crowd about why the needs facing California and the country's homeless children must be important to Christians. "There's a spiritual from my culture that we sing that says, 'All God's children got shoes.' . . . We must also be willing to demand that All God's Children need homes—safe homes. And it's not about waiting for the sweet by and by. God wants our children to have homes in the here and now, and we can make that happen."

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Pastor's Letter

I found out something fairly startling this week. I've been a Methodist all my life, but I realized that I was never "confirmed." Maybe that isn't so startling. I've been a member of the church since I attended a membership class when I was twelve or so, but it wasn't until 1964 (after I was 12) when the word "confirmation" even appeared in the *Book of Discipline*.



You may be asking yourself, "Why is Pastor Shirley rattling on about this? What in the world is she talking about?"

You see, we've started a Confirmation Class for the young people 6th grade and older who are interested in learning more about their faith and church and deciding if it is time to profess that faith to become professing members of the United Methodist Church. In the back of my mind, I've been realizing that my own membership class had little to do with the things we're doing and going to be doing, even after I account for the differences in educational style over the last 40 years. So, a little research has turned up why. Back in the day, we learned polity (the structure and rules of the church), we learned church history (the Wesley family, the Methodist Church in the US, that sort of thing), and one Sunday we were ushered into membership of the First Methodist Church of Hendersonville, North Carolina.

Since that time, our (that is, the United Methodist Church's) understanding of what it means to be a member of the church has changed. To understand church membership, we have to start with baptism.

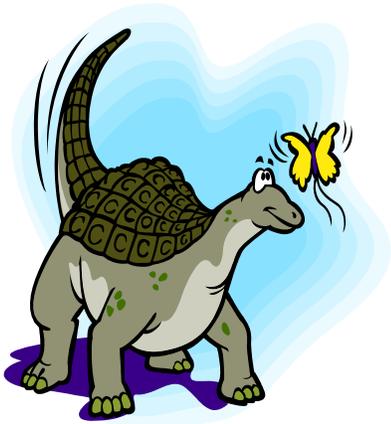
Baptism is a sacrament. A sacrament is an act in which God does something—more than a sign or symbol and at some level a holy mystery—the working of God in ways we can only partially understand. Through baptism, our liturgy says,

We are initiated into Christ's holy church.
We are incorporated into God's mighty acts of Salvation
And given new birth through water and the spirit.
All this is god's gift, offered to us without price. (*United Methodist Hymnal*, pg 33)

So, in fact, these young people of ours are already "members" of the church by right of their baptism: they are preparatory members.

The United Methodist Church has struggled with the language and structure of this understanding for years. The issues are not only language, but theological issues and administrative/legal issues. It is not practical for infants and children to hold voting rights at church meetings, yet they are clearly cherished members of the body of Christ. At their baptism, we, the local church, have pledged to be part of their upbringing in the faith. Baptized adults, on the other hand, can and should

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APRIL

Calendar Notes

Mexico Mission Trip

April 16-23

Pastor Shirley, Daislyn Pease, and Robert Pascual travel to Mexico to build housing for needy families. Hold them in your thoughts and prayers.

Community Breakfast

Sunday, May 1st

7:00 a.m.

Santa Maria Virgen Episcopal Church provides the delicious breakfast and program this month. Join community leaders and concerned citizens in discussion.

Board of Trustees

Saturday, May 14th

9:00 a.m.

Held in Jones Hall. Please keep our Trustees in your thoughts and prayers as we strive to craft a plan to repair our damaged buildings.

WRAP

(Administrative Council)

Saturday, May 14th

10:00 a.m.

Please note change in time! Held in Jones Hall. Coffee/tea/juice and light repast provided. Everyone is welcome to help as we craft the program and mission for Sunnyhills UMC.

Looking Ahead . . .

Pastor Shirley will be ordained at Annual Conference in Sacramento on Friday, June 17th in the evening. Mark your calendar and plan to join the group from Sunnyhills UMC to witness this special event in the life of our pastor.

On Sunday, June 19th, we will celebrate Pastor's Shirley's ministry and welcome her back for another year.

Children's Day of Action

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There is a bus going to A Children's Day of Action, leaving from Calvary UMC (729 Morse Street, San Jose 95126) at 6:30 on the morning of the 20th. Please be at Calvary UMC no later than 6:15 a.m. with your picnic lunch, water bottle, and, if you'd like, blankets to sit on and your church banner. The bus will leave Sacramento at 1:30 that afternoon to return to Calvary. If you are able, please donate \$20 per family or carload to help cover costs. The bus has a bathroom on it—bring your coffee! **YOU MUST RESERVE A SEAT BY PHONING** Pastor Marylee Sheffer at 408/834-6724. **LEAVE A MESSAGE** telling name and how many in your group. You may also e-mail her at marylee@yourcalvary.org to reserve your seat!!

A Very
Happy Birthday!
To



Best Wishes for
a Wonderful
Anniversary!

4/10 Janyce Singleton 4/27 Leola Saterwhite
4/22 Marcia Crawford 4/27 Jon Marcus

(Have we missed anyone?)

Pastor's Letter

(Continued from page 2)

make their own decisions for their own reasons. Their membership records should be (or not be) where they choose, not necessarily where they attend.

So, beginning this year, in accordance with the rulings of General Conference, our church records will account for our preparatory members—those baptized young people under the age of 18 who have not confirmed through their own act their desire to be professing members of the church. Adults and confirmed youth whom we have previously thought of as “members” are now “professing” members.

And now, perhaps, this gives us a better understanding of Confirmation: Confirmation—whether by our young people who confirm their faith for the first time, or by others who may be confirming their faith again—is a personal response to God’s grace. It is a time to affirm faith and to affirm the intention to live in faithful discipleship. Confirmation ties together God’s act in Christ, the faith and faithfulness of the church, and the personal response of the individual into a rite that becomes a means of grace.

Just so you know, I’ve confirmed my faith on several occasions. Unlike baptism, confirmation of our faith is a repeatable rite: It is a way of celebrating growth in faith and understanding and celebrating the presence of God’s spirit in our lives. Our young people will celebrate their Confirmation on May 15th. If any of you would like to celebrate your own confirmation of faith on the same day, call me and we’ll talk. It will be a grand celebration!

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Shirley

April Fool’s Day

The origin of April Fool’s Day involves changes in the calendar. At one time, the New Year celebration began on March 25 and ended on April 1. However, in 1582 King Charles IX adopted the Gregorian calendar and January 1 became the beginning of the New Year. Those who forgot or ignored the new date received foolish gifts and invitations to nonexistent parties. The victim of such a prank was known as a “poisson d’avril” or “April fish.”

Income and Expenses

February 2005

INCOME:

Offerings	\$3,305
Bldg. Use & Others	4,216
Special Giving	102
Total	\$7,623

EXPENSES:

Mission & Outreach	\$1,528
Operating Expenses	2,213
Pastor & Staff Support	3,756
Total	\$7,498

Cash on hand \$40,907

Designated funds \$36,927

Cash available \$3,980



Summer Camps!!!

Visit the New CA-NV Conference Camping and Retreat Ministries Website

The 2005 California-Nevada camping opportunities for the summer are announced on the new camping ministries website:
<http://www.calnevcamps.org/>

There are many opportunities for youth, children, adults, and families. Volunteers are also needed to help staff the summer program. Please refer to the volunteer page on the website for more information.

Join the Conversation!

God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It

Written by Jim Wallis, a progressive evangelical Christian who founded and edits *Sojourners* magazine, *God's Politics* challenges us to revive the spirit of 19th century evangelical Christianity that was a driving force of child labor laws, women's right to vote, founding schools, colleges, and hospitals, and many other efforts to elevate and minister to the sick, impoverished, and marginalized people of that time.

Advocating "bridges not wedges," Mr. Wallis speaks to and for an ever-growing segment of the Christian church who feel their faith has been hijacked for political and ideological purposes, and who do not want to see Christian values reduced to the two hot-button issues of abortion and homosexuality.

For more information on discussion meetups and a study guide (PDF), visit:

<http://go.sojo.net/ct/71aieE61ZXMi/>



SUGGESTED READING