



December 2016

The Beacon

**Sunnyhills United Methodist Church
355 Dixon Road, Milpitas CA 95035**

Pastor Emil Sazon

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Visit us on the Web! www.sunnyhillsumc.org*

A Season of Preparation

(What Do You Mean, Advent Isn't About Christmas?!?)

By Rose Taylor www.ministrymatters.com

Christians today (especially those who follow the liturgical calendar) observe the season of Advent as a time of expectation, preparation and celebration leading up to Christmas or Christmastide. Many may be surprised to know that the original observance of the Advent season had nothing to do with Christmas!



The word *Advent* means "coming" and is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, a translation of the Greek word *parousia*. In the fourth and fifth centuries Advent was a season of preparation — not for Christmas but for baptisms that would take place at Epiphany. It was a season (40 days) of fasting, prayer and penance. Roman Christians in the sixth century began to tie the season of Advent to the second coming of Christ. It was not until the Middle Ages that Advent was celebrated in anticipation of Christmas.

In the modern-church era, Advent is a memorial of Christ's first coming and an anticipation of the kingdom to come. In fact, the first two Sundays of Advent point to the return of Christ in judgment while the last two Sundays remember his first coming into the world.

Advent is intended to be a time of reflection, penance, fasting and praying. Ironically, the weeks leading up to Christmas are filled with parties, food and shopping. The secular commercialism of Christmas, which begins even before Thanksgiving, can distract the faithful from taking time to reflect during this holy season.

Amid the activities of the season, reflect on the Scriptures and the themes for each Sunday, hope, peace, joy and love.

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Pastor's Letter

Dear friends, brothers and sisters in Christ,

Sunday, November 27th, marks the beginning of our Christian calendar and we celebrate our new journey together by what we call Advent! In the Christian tradition, Advent means the coming of Jesus into the world. I referenced the following themes of our Advent sermons as suggested in our United Methodist lectionaries in the following order: "Watch," "Turn," "See," and "Dream."



I hope and pray that we are helping others to be prepared for the coming of Christ into their hearts. We are the body of Christ living in the middle of many challenges: poverty, divisions, fear, restlessness, murder, and many more However, none of these could separate us from the love of God! As we begin preparing for His coming, the Gospel of Matthew reminds us to be ready, to be awake, and to be watchful.

"Keep awake means keep praying."

"Keep praying means keep connected."

"Keep connected means keep your relationship with God."

"Keep in relationship with God is the key to be prepared for His coming."

This year, Christmas day falls on Sunday, December 25th, and we will have our Christmas celebration during our worship service time, 9:30 AM. We will also have a joint service with Holy Family Episcopal Church (St. Joseph and Holy Child) on Saturday, December 24th, in celebration of Christmas Eve at 7:00 p.m. in Jones Hall.

I ask everyone to pray with me about the coming year 2017! Let us pray for the leaders of our nation. I also encourage everyone to *be still and be ready* to be a part of promoting peace, justice, and equality for all. Always remember God is with us—Emmanuel!

Have a wonderful and meaningful Christmas! Remember, God's love is for everyone! There are no boundaries in God's love!

God bless,

Pastor Emil



December Community Breakfast

Saturday, December 3, 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

The Sunnyhills Neighborhood Association and Sunnyhills United Methodist Church will co-sponsor a free community breakfast on Saturday, December 3, 2016, at 8:00 a.m.

The Milpitas Police Department will present information about how they are working to prevent the distrust of officers that we see happening around the country - from community involvement, to the diversity of the force, to the use of body cameras, etc. They will also share what kinds of crime they are seeing in our neighborhoods and what we can do to prevent it. The breakfast will take place at Jones Hall, Sunnyhills UMC, 355 Dixon Road, Milpitas. Donations are gratefully accepted.



Sunnyhills Neighborhood Association formed for these purposes:

- 1) to provide instruction in civic responsibility and community service;
- 2) to enhance and support education to local residents in art, music, and science;
- 3) to sponsor activities and public performances which enhance the quality of life for all residents in the area;
- 4) to sponsor special events and public gatherings to promote a sense of community well-being and cohesion;
- 5) to sponsor and conduct activities and social gatherings which bridge cultural gaps between different ethnic and cultural segments of the community.

Sunnyhills United Methodist Church strives to build a community of faith welcoming to all, as we journey together with Christ for the transformation of the world.

A Season of Preparation

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Reflection often prompts one to action, and many wonderful gifts of kindness and compassion are expressed during the season of Advent. After all, during the first Advent, God gifted the world with a Savior and Jesus gifted the world with salvation. The second Advent promises eternity with Christ for those who receive his gift of salvation.

Focal scriptures: Isaiah 9:6-7; Matthew 1:20-25; Luke 1:41-45



A MOMENT FOR MISSION

*United Methodist Student Day Special Offering
December 4th-Special Offering*

*“Restore us, O God! Make your face shine
so that we can be saved!”
– Psalm 80:3, CEB*

I was introduced to The United Methodist Church in 2001 when I was married and had a child on the way. In 2007, I began walking a path to answer my call to ordination as an elder in The United Methodist Church. The following year, we sold our home and my family moved to Delaware, Ohio, where I began my seminary work at Methodist Theological School in Ohio.

The school was a perfect fit for my family and me. My husband and I decided I would not have a full-time job and would only work on-campus jobs. We focused on completion of my Master of Divinity degree.

We were taking a huge financial leap. I no longer owned a business. My husband had to start all over in banking. Through a United Methodist Scholarship and other financial aid, I was able to graduate – still in debt, but not to the extent that many of my seminary friends experienced. While attending school, I still had time to be a mother and care for my family, even though seminary was some of the hardest work I have ever done. It was all a huge blessing because now I have a job as pastor of three churches.

I pray you will give on United Methodist Student Day so that another family or individual can receive the blessing of answering the call to ministry.

– Adapted from holston.org, by the Rev. Shannon Berry



Happy Birthday wishes to:

12/02	Virginia Mathiesen
12/09	Alex Walker
12/11	Juanita Whetstone
12/25	Jack Freeman
12/25	Mark Pereyra
12/27	Robert Pease
12/31	Helen Phan
12/31	Huy Phan



Happy Anniversary!!

12/16	Margaret & Warren Scott
12/24	Winnie & Vilma Ware
12/31	Myra & Ralph Nikolaus



**Cookie Exchange
& Help Decorate the Sanctuary**

Friday, December 2nd
7:00 p.m.

Bring some cookies to share,
or just come enjoy the goodies
as we prepare our worship space

Christmas Eve Worship Celebration

Joint Service: Sunnyhills UMC &
Holy Family Episcopal Church
Saturday, December 24th,
7:00 p.m. @ Jones Hall

Invite your family, friends, and neighbors
for a meaningful service of
carols, candles, and lessons



Christmas Day Celebration

Sunday, December 25th
9:30 a.m. @ Sanctuary

Wonderful acts of God in our life
as we encounter
the **REASON** for the **SEASON**

**Installation of New Officers
Commitment Sunday
January 1, 2017**

9:30 a.m. during our Worship Service

Hope for the future
With God's help we recognize and
dedicate those who serve
our congregation





CALENDAR

Fri., 12/2	7:00 p.m.	Cookie exchange and help decorate the Sanctuary
Sun., 12/4	7:00 p.m.	Special offering: United Methodist Student Day
Mon., 12/5	11:00 a.m.	Centering Prayer in the Sanctuary
Fri., 12/9	6:30 p.m.	<i>Make a joyful noise!</i> Choir rehearsal in Sanctuary
Mon., 12/12	11:00 a.m.	Centering Prayer in the Sanctuary
Mon., 12/19	11:00 a.m.	Centering Prayer in the Sanctuary
Sat., 12/24	7:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Worship Celebration Joint Service Sunnyhills UMC & Holy Family Episcopal Church
Sun., 12/25	9:30 a.m.	<i>Celebrate Christmas!</i> Christmas Day Worship Celebration Special offering: Villa (homeless family shelter in SJ) Changeover Sunday <i>Your change helps the hungry and homeless</i>
Tues., 12/26	Beacon deadline!! cliveden@cliveden.com	
Sun. 1/1	9:30 a.m.	<i>Celebrate the New Year!</i> Commitment Sunday Installation of New Officers (during our Worship Service)

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Milpitas CA 95035

first class



LIGHT FOR LIVING AND GROWING