



the Valley Messenger

A publication of San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

DECEMBER 2014

A Parsonal Point of View~

The Advent Virus

As we prepare for our annual Advent journey, we are mindful that this is a season that invites our preparation and anticipation of the Christ, who comes to us in a baby born in a cattle stall. Along with Pastor Sunny and Pastor Luke, I will be using the lectionary readings of Advent to provide, "A Traveler's Guide to Bethlehem" for each of the Sunday's of Advent. As we travel together, we will be reflecting upon the scriptural admonition to 1) Wake Up! 2) Get Ready! 3) Go, Do It! and 4) Let It Be. We are looking forward to sharing with you in the experience of Advent worship and conversation.

As a prelude to this sermon series, I would like to share a fun and yet, informative piece that playfully invites us to take the scriptural witness and invitation of Advent to heart. It is entitled, "The Advent Virus" and I share it with you in the hope that you might just find yourself succumbing to it.

WARNING: Advent Virus

Be on the alert for symptoms of inner Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. The hearts of a great many have already been exposed to this virus, and it is possible that people everywhere could come down with it in epidemic proportions. This could pose a serious threat to what has, up to now, been a fairly stable condition of conflict in the world.



Some signs and symptoms of The Advent Virus:

- A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than on fears based on past experiences.
- An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
- A loss of interest in judging other people.
- A loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.
- A loss of interest in conflict.
- A loss of the ability to worry. (This is a very serious symptom.)
- Frequent, overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
- Contented feelings of connectedness with others and nature.
- Frequent attacks of smiling.
- An increasing tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.
- An increased susceptibility to the love extended by others as well as the uncontrollable urge to extend it.

May this indeed be the season in which the hope, peace, joy and love of God "breaks out" in epidemic ways—changing you and, in the process, changing our world.

*With Hope, Peace, Joy and Love,
Ron*

Don't Miss What's Inside

Page

- 2 [Can I Get a Witness? Part 2](#)
- 3 [Communion & Christmas Offering](#)
- 4 [Mission & Volunteer Opportunities](#)
- 5 [Winter Nights: Through the Eyes of a Volunteer](#)
- 6 [Kindness Matters](#)
- 7 [Special Advent & Christmas Events](#)
- 10 [Senior Scoop & Advent Events](#)
- 12 [Between the Bookends](#)
- 13 [Children & Family Ministry](#)
- 14 [Youth Ministry](#)
- 15 [Among Ourselves/Birthdays & Anniversaries](#)

Next Issue: January 7, 2014

Final day for submissions: December 19, 2014

Please submit articles to: syarmolich@srvumc.org

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This is the second edition where our members and friends give witness to the difference SRVUMC has made, and is making, in their lives. How has it made a difference in YOUR life?

Although I was raised in a church environment, I did not attend church for many years. During our early, married years, my husband and I led very busy lives with our three active children. It seemed that there was never enough time in my schedule to make church an important part of my life. In 1999, after my children were grown, my mother died. I then was given the diagnosis of a very serious health condition. I suddenly realized that I needed a spiritual component in my life. I needed some form of support system to help guide my way through these changes.

Bill and I started attending various churches in the valley when we came upon SRVUMC. After attending only a few services, I remember taking communion. The pastor offered me the bread and wine as she looked at me and called me by my name. I was stunned to tears that she cared enough to know my name, and I immediately knew that this was the church for my family and me.

Because of my love for music, I soon joined the chancel choir, which has given me a sense of fulfillment and joy. The music, under the direction of our wonderful conductor and pianist, make me feel happy and more connected with the church.

After a while, I became more conscious of this sense of community with people and friends who share the same values as I do. Since I have become a member of this church, I feel a strong sense of belonging, ownership, and ongoing support. This gives me much comfort just knowing that, not only are there people standing alongside me, but now I have the opportunity and incentive to help others.

I am more aware of the many opportunities to be of service to others. I have helped administer the program for feeding the needy at the Souper Center in Richmond and worked at the Contra Costa food bank.

As I travel about my spiritual journey, I find my church to be a place where I can hear the word of God and worship Him. I feel very fortunate and blessed.

Yes, this church is very important in my life.

—Julie Dastic

Our Young People Offer Their Own Testimony...

"The church taught me that even through rough times, ... Jesus is still there.

—Ella Altamarano

"Youth Group has given me the chance to build stronger relationships with my fellow youth as well as God."

—Abby Ten Elshof

"Church offers friendships that will last a life-time and fun ways to build your connection with God (through) Youth Group and mission trips."

—Bailee Smallwood

"To me, this church is a place you can go and just be 100% you and not be judged. It is a place to laugh, smile, and even cry."

—Grace Soderlund



December Communion Offering Benefits UMCOR's World AIDS Day & Programs for Local Youth



Your gracious and generous December Communion giving supports two organizations chartered with improving the lives of the people they serve. These organizations are the United Methodist Committee On Relief (UMCOR) World AIDS Day and the Bay Area Alliance for Youth & Family Services (BAAYFS).



The AIDS virus mostly affects women throughout the world—especially those of childbearing age. UMCOR's top priority is to eradicate the stigma of AIDS and eradicate the mother to child transmission. This work is being done in partnership with the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund (UMGAF), which is aligned with the United Nation AIDS (UNAIDS) strategies and World Health Organization (WHO) policies.

By focusing their work on maternal and child health through the funding of antiviral drugs and education, your communion giving supports prevention programs to halt the spread of AIDS from mother to child. This sets children up for a healthy, AIDS-free life.

The United Methodist Global AIDS Fund (UMGAF) is a special project that provides funding to AIDS-related initiatives around the world. Through the generous giving of United Methodists, our denomination has supported more than 200 HIV/AIDS programs in over 35 countries, and 25% of all contributions remain within our Annual Conference for AIDS-related ministries in the United States.

Learn more...

To read more about how the United Methodist Church is working to eradicate AIDS, visit: <http://www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Programs/Global-Health/HIV-AIDS>. To view a video about this UMCOR initiative: <http://vimeo.com/79302304>. To read the Advent Study for World AIDS Day, visit: <http://www.umcor.org/ArticleDocuments/352/adventstudyhiv aids.pdf.aspx?Embed=Y>

The BAAYFS organization serves adolescent girls who have been removed from their homes due to abuse and neglect, and offers foster family placement services for girls and boys in our communities. The goal of their program: provide a safe and stable residential environment and support the girls under their care with various support services and educational support. BAAYFS knows that children without a vision for the future are at risk - while those with a clear vision and growing in loving, supportive community are empowered to overcome life's obstacles to realize hopeful and successful lives.

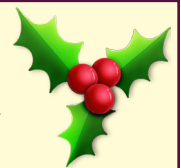
Your December Communion giving makes a difference in the lives of the girls living in the BAAYFS homes, which are located in the communities of Concord and Pittsburg. It also supports BAAYFS programs that help the girls under their care develop healthy life skills, self esteem and respect, support engagement in sports or community arts programs, maintain regular attendance at their local public schools, work experience through employment, spiritual formation and family unification if possible.

Learn more..

To read more about the work of BAAYFS, visit: <http://www.baayfs.org>



Christmas Offering



Your Christmas Offering supports the following local and international organizations, whose mission is to improve the lives of people under their care:

Winter Nights through CCIH,
Global Mission Partners (Zimbabwe)
UMCOR National Disaster Relief Fund (US)
UMCOR International Disaster Relief Fund

STAND (Families Free from Violence),
Open Heart Kitchen of Livermore
Food for Thought Program at Trinity Center, Concord
Thomas Food Project in Haiti

Thank you for your generous giving and helping those near and far this Christmas time and throughout the year.



MISSION & VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

*Start where you are
Use what you have.
Do what you can.
~ Arthur Ashe*



Thomas Food Project, Haiti *Will You Buy a Student in Haiti a Meal?*

For several years now, your giving has helped provide a hot lunch each day during the school year for the kids at the schools we support in Haiti, but funds are short this year. Can you help?

Can you imagine how hard it is for a child to learn on an empty stomach? But you can change that...buy them lunch! This may be their only meal of the day.

Please designate "Haiti Lunch Program" when making your donation. Thank you for your help!

Support the CCIH Ruby Slippers Fundraiser *There is No Place like Home*



Everyday in our own community, hundreds of families – including hundreds of children – go to sleep homeless. In fact, Contra Costa County has one of the highest rates of homelessness in the nation, despite also being home to some of the country's wealthiest individuals.

On January 31, 2015 at Roundhill Country Club, CCIH's will hold it's annual fundraising event, known as the Ruby Slippers Gala. This event generates a significant portion of CCIH's annual budget. The evening features dinner, live and silent auctions, and dancing to DJ Diamond Dave.

For more information, visit the CCIH website at: <https://ccinterfaithhousing.cjoinme.org/?tabid=556390>



Winter Nights Coming to SRVUMC

The Winter Nights homeless shelter is coming to SRVUMC on February 9. We will house, feed, and care for some 20-30 homeless people, mainly women and children, who would

be on the street without our shelter. Winter Nights is very successful at getting clients into permanent shelters by the end of the season.

Winter Nights one of the most rewarding charitable activities you will ever do. It is a great activity for families with kids. It gives your kids an opportunity to serve and shows them what the "real" world looks like to people less privileged than us.

We need volunteers to help with meal preparation, tutoring, child activities, overnight host, laundry, clean up, and set up /take down. The shelter runs from February 9 until Feb 23. Please contact the following people if you would like to join us.

Meals, overnight host, laundry, set up, clean up: Bob Baker RBaker3600@aol.com

Tutoring, child and adult activities: Jane Lang Janelang1@yahoo.com

Exact quote from one of our kids after working at the shelter. "Dad, that was really fun!"

Don't miss this terrific service opportunity

Flowers for Christmas 2014

Please designate: _____ In honor of _____ In memory of (check one)

Name of person/s designated _____

I/We attach a donation of \$10.00 for the purchase of a plant. _____

(Checks payable to SRVUMC are due by Monday, Dec. 15, in the Church office)

Donor's Name _____ Phone _____

All flowers purchased this year will go to shut-ins.

I can help deliver plants to shut-ins Dec. 26 _____

Any funds not specifically needed for Christmas will be placed in the Flower Fund.



Winter Nights: Through the Eyes of a Volunteer

by Bill Rust

Let's look at a Winter Nights day through the eyes of our many volunteers: hours at Wesley Center bringing play activities and after-school tutoring to Winter Nights children; 5:30 A.M. wake up and breakfast for our Winter Nights guests; 6:30 dinner for and with our guests; put out lunch foods so parents and children just like us can make bag lunches for work or school tomorrow; 8:30, lights out. The next day: we do it all again.

Our Church will again join other churches in the Winter Nights program to provide temporary shelter and meals to suddenly homeless families (most with young children) in our Wesley Center during the cold and rainy season. Each church will take a two-week turn feeding and sheltering these newly homeless. These families are particularly vulnerable because being homeless was unexpected, and they have had no experience coping or accessing public services. Getting more stable housing takes time, but in the meantime, parents and kids need food and shelter. That's where we help.

"We all celebrate when a family leaves the program for more permanent housing," says Bob Baker, our church's program leader, and the moving force in our participation. "But, another family usually is waiting for the vacant spot. We're just happy that we have the facilities and resources to help."

During the work week, the families arrive at our church at 5:00PM and stay until 7:00 AM the next morning. Before and after dinner, our volunteers provide tutoring and play activities for children with too much energy. Exhausted parents welcome the break from kids. Volunteers serve dinner at 6:30 PM and eat with the guests. After dinner, volunteers put out sandwich and lunch "fixins" and each parent and child makes a bag lunch for the next day. Lights go out at 8:30PM because everyone is tired. At 5:00AM the next day, volunteers put out breakfast foods and get the bag lunches out of the refrigerator (guests cannot go in the kitchen). Guest parents scramble to get themselves and their kids ready for the day, eat breakfast, and leave the church by 7:00AM. That's the deal: arrive at 5:00 PM; leave by 7:00AM the following morning.

During the day, guest families go about their usual daily activities: adults go to their regular jobs, kids to their regular schools. Mothers with very young children and adults looking for work can spend the day at the Winter Nights "oasis" adjacent to a St. Vincent

de Paul thrift store in Antioch. There, they have easy access to the Internet and services, such as doctors, a laundromat, and a nearby Walmart. The Winter Nights van provides transportation between work, school, and the Winter Nights oasis.

On Fridays, with the school and work week finished, some Winter Nights families travel to be with family or friends for the weekend. But, others stay at the church. For them, our volunteers provide three meals a day and lots of activities to keep children occupied.

It's 8:30AM on Sunday evening. Dinner is long over. Each guest has made a bag lunch for tomorrow. Lights out.

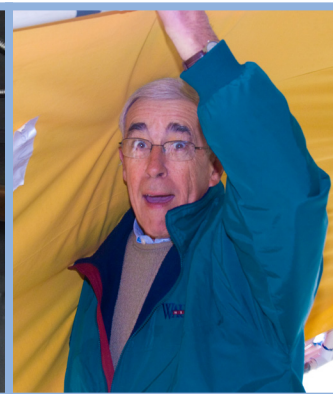
A volunteer's alarm rings at 5:00AM Monday morning. The morning ritual seems routine now. Before the 5:30AM wake up call for our guests, volunteers put out cold cereal, milk, fruit, bowls, plates and silverware, and start the coffee. Barely controlled chaos erupts as parents and children scurry to get ready for another day of work and school. Just imagine your home in the morning, multiplied several times over. All seems under control. Then a parent asks for something, and a kid can't find his lunch. Then, one of the small children spills milk all over the table...What a mess! Sound like your place?

At 6:55AM, kids grab their backpacks, stuff one more bite of food in their mouths, and dash to the van.

But, today is different. Before getting in, they turn to wave "good-bye". A few run back to give volunteers a hug.

You see, this is no ordinary day. The Winter Night families won't be coming back. Tonight, they will show up at another church at 5:00PM, and the ritual will repeat.

After two weeks and lots of hours together, our charges are on their way. Love has been given and received in both directions. They're out of sight now. We turn slowly, tired but content. We walk into a now empty Wesley Center... and we remember.





Kindness Matters Corner

by John Green

Here are a few of the many recent acts of kindness others have done, observed, or received:
Connected.

A very generous young woman in our church restored a surplus laptop she owned, installed new software, and gave it to a homeless woman at Trinity Center. This gift enabled the homeless woman to reconnect with family members. The gift also gave her the means to send out resumes as she continues searching for employment. This act of kindness was life-giving for this woman, and she is very grateful.

Grandpa is a WatchDOG?! Is that a good thing?!

A church member, whenever he visits his daughter and grandchildren, always takes one day and devotes all his energy to being one of the WatchDOGS at his grand-children's school.

Try not to picture him foaming at the mouth, sporting a thick spiked collar and barking at anything that moves (although he may act this way around the house!). Actually, Watch D.O.G.S. are shepherds for the students, with the "DOGS" part of their name standing for "Dads of Great Students." A day for WatchDOGS is a full



day—get a load of the items on the menu:

- Walking the school perimeter, looking for anything suspicious;
- Checking the locks the school's exterior doors multiple times;
- Making a guest appearance alongside his grandchildren on the school's morning news show;
- Assisting with fourth-grade math class, computer class, and in the library; enjoying the lunch break with his grandchildren;
- Helping supervise playground activities;
- Being a traffic cop before and after school;
- Reading out loud to two classes.

Whew! What an exhausting, but wonderful way to be a part of the lives of one's children and grandchildren. What a kind and loving example for others, and for his daughter, her wife and his grandchildren.

DOGS is a national organization to reinforce the male image in children's lives through their work in schools. Attaboy, Grandpa, here's a biscuit for you! Now, roll ov.....Nah, never mind!

These stories and examples are all around us. Please tell of those that especially move you—it matters. Tell others of the kindnesses you observe, offer, and accept. Share your stories of kindness by emailing your story to kindness@srvumc.org. We won't use names, just the example of kindness for others.

Save the Date! January 19, 2015

A Musical Celebration of Martin Luther King's Birthday

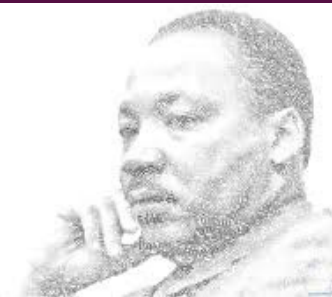
Once again, on January 19, 2015, from 4-5PM in Wesley Center, the Martin Luther King Peacemakers are inviting you to a musical celebration of Dr. King's life and legacy with songs and readings.

Bruce Koliha will be leading

us with songs such as "I've Got a Hammer," "This Land is Your Land," "Let There be Peace on Earth," and others.

Our children's choirs will be singing led by Aimee Knese and Teri Hawk.

The Living Water Band will



playing, and we will listen to Evelyn Evans and Jada Koonce do readings from King's speeches. Our voices will ring out joyously.

Be sure you are a part of this special celebration.



Flower Donations for Christmas

For as little as \$10 you can help decorate our altar for Christmas, and then bring a little Christmas joy to the life of local shut-in. Visit our website at www.srvumc.org to get the form.

Advent & Christmas Events at San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church

Special Christmas and Advent Insert

Travel to Bethlehem this Advent Season

It's only early December, but signs of Christmas already surround us. Holiday music is being piped through the local department store's sound system. Ads promoting Christmas gift giving are everywhere. Our pre-Christmas to-do lists get longer and longer, and Christmas shopping lists seem to have no end. Christmas can be so chaotic. But does it really need to be?

This year, we invite you to do something different. Take a deep breath and one or two steps back. Be still. And allow yourself to take a season-long journey to Bethlehem. Open your eyes and hearts to the good news that comes in the form of a precious baby. God moments are all around you. Be still, be alert and savor the quiet anticipation along the way.



Savor the season at one or several of our Advent events. This Advent and Christmas season, may God's love surround you. May you bathe in the peace and tranquility of this season and allow it to reshape you. May you experience God's love and grace simply by being in relationship with each other.



Christmas Eve Worship Services

Celebrate the joy of Christmas at one of our five Christmas Eve Worship Services.

Children & Family Service at 4pm

Features a presentation of the Children's Christmas Pageant, with the Children's Choirs.

Children's Choirs sing at 4 pm service

All children in attendance are invited to play angels or shepherds in the Pageant

Youth Service at 5:30pm

Special music at 5:30 pm service

Candlelight Services at 8 & 9:30pm

Chancel Choir sings at both services

Candlelight Communion Service at 11pm

Chancel Choir sings

All services on Dec. 24, 4, 5:30, 8, 9:30 & 11 pm in the Sanctuary

Come Early, Seating Fills Up Fast!



All Church Christmas Choir Concert

Dec. 7, 4 – 5 pm in the Sanctuary

Celebrate the season by basking in glorious music. The All Choirs Christmas Concert features traditional selections, and ensemble performances from all of our musical groups. It's a wonderful way to kick off the season! Arrive early – as pews fill up quickly.

Featured choirs and groups:

- Chancel Choir
- Living Water Ensemble
- Cherub, Archangel & Youth Choirs
- Carillon Handbell Choir





CenterPoint Worship

Centerpoint is held on the first Wednesday of each month as a time to be quiet and communicate with our Lord. It is a contemplative service and all are invited. This Advent, Centerpoint will be on Wednesday, December 3, 10 and 17, 2014 at 6:30pm (new time) in the sanctuary. All are welcome!



Donations Appreciated

What would our Christmas Eve services be without our choir filling the sanctuary with music? Or without our ministerial staff? They certainly wouldn't be the same. They spend hours preparing and rehearsing for the big night. How about showing how much we appreciate their devotion by donating fruit, cheese, light finger foods, juice, and other treats to help keep up their energy levels.



If you'd like to make a donation, please drop it by the Conference room by 9pm Christmas Eve. **Thank you!**



You're Invited to the United Methodist Women's

Annual Women's Christmas Tea

Saturday, December 13, 2014

Wesley Center from 1-3pm

Great musical performances
Please bring a plate of finger food to share



Come see the story and journey Mary and Joseph traveled come to life before your eyes. The drive-through Living Nativity: Follow the Star, retraces Mary and Joseph's journey as told through scenes around our parking lot, while the audio narration plays through your car radio. Beginning, Saturday, Dec. 20, our parking lot transforms into a room where Mary received a message from an angelic visitor, a small inn where there was no room, fields and deserts where a star drew curiosity and spread the good news, and finally a sweet resting place for a brand new baby.

Dec. 20-21, 6:30 – 8:30 pm nightly, in the church parking lot. Enter from the south parking lot entrance on Danville Blvd. lot!





All Church Christmas Breakfast

Saturday, December 20 at 9am, Wesley Center

Don't miss the hottest breakfast spot in town when the United Methodist Men's Group (UMM) hosts the All Church Christmas Breakfast. There will be music, fellowship and of course great food. Entertainment line up includes:

- Chancel Choir video presentation of their European Summer Tour
- Live music from the Cherub and Archangel Choirs
- Photos with a special visitor from the North Pole
- Group sing-a-long

Tickets are on sale NOW for only \$10, after worship in Wesley Center.

HOPE AND HEALING Monday of Hope & Healing

Monday, 12/22, 10am-2pm

Christmas is a bittersweet time of the year. SRVUMC offers a sacred space for you for remembering both persons and events that have been a part of our lives, but that are now changed or gone. It is a quiet moment engaging in a time of prayer. You may drop in and out at any time and linger in the Sanctuary as long or short as you desire during these hours. There will be candles for you to light along with the litany of remembrance to help your journey through grief in this season.

Memorials and Gifts Fund



Contributions may be given in memory of a loved one, or to honor a living person. Your contribution may or may not specify a particular purpose. For more information, please contact Linda Green (Chair), Alice Anthony, Betty Jo Bennett, Floy Blair, Gerry Carothers, John Green, Gay Scott.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT 2014

ON CHRISTMAS EVE, DECEMBER 24TH AT 4 PM

**THERE ARE TWO NARRATOR PARTS AND ALL OTHER PARTS
ARE NON SPEAKING; ALL AGES WELCOME**

**PRACTICES WILL BE HELD ON DECEMBER 14TH AND
DECEMBER 21ST AFTER CHURCH**

Report from Administrative Board

*Meeting of November 18, 2014,
by Terry Sherman*

The Administrative Board met Tuesday, November 18 at 7:00 PM in Wesley Center. Brad Stribling, the Chair of the Staff Parish Relations Committee, reported that SPRC had approved 2015 Pastors' Compensation packages for Pastors Ron Dunn, Sunny Ahn and Luke Ham, and moved that the Ad Board approve and recommend the Compensation Packages to the All Church Conference. The Ad Board approved the motion. The All Church Conference, at its meeting immediately following the Ad Board meeting, approved the following recommendation.

Ron Dunn

Cash Salary: Total of \$70,720.00 of which \$8,260.00 is designated as tax deferred; \$4,000.00 is designated for additional housing-related costs; and \$600.00 is designated for Health Care.

Housing Allowance: \$42,000.00

Utilities: \$4,000.00

Health Insurance Premiums: \$30,756.00

Pension & Benefit Expense: \$14,686.40

Total of Comp. plus Health Insurance and Pension:
\$162,162.40

Sunny Ahn

Cash Salary: Total of \$51,000.00 of which \$1,200.00 is designated as tax deferred pension costs; \$4,000.00 is designated for additional housing-related costs

Housing Allowance: \$31,726.00

Utilities: \$3,500.00

Health Insurance Premiums: \$6,000.00

Pension & Benefit Expense: \$12,551.82

Total of Comp. plus Health Insurance and Pension:
\$104,777.82

Luke Ham

Cash Salary: Total of \$40,500.00 of which \$2,400.00 is designated as tax deferred pension contribution; \$7,032.00 is designated for additional housing-related costs

Housing Allowance: \$25,000.00

Utilities: \$3,500.00

Health Insurance Premiums: \$19,069.00

Pension & Benefit Expense: \$11,346.00

Total of Comp. plus Health Insurance and Pension:
\$99,415.00

The minutes of the Administrative Board meeting and the All Church Conference minutes are posted on the Church website.

Senior Scoop

*All Seniors and their family, friends &
caregivers are invited!*

Holiday Luncheon Tuesday, December 9th Noon

This is a combined Lunch with Friends & Adventuresome Seniors. Chef John Sanders will serve a seasonal menu with all the trimmings. The Monte Vista Double Beauty Shop Quartet will provide holiday music and then join us for lunch.

Reservations are requested for this Holiday Luncheon: Call the Church Office at 837-5243 & ask to be added to the "Seniors Holiday Luncheon" reservation list.

Please Note:

The Afternoon Book Group

&

Christ Care Book Group

*will not meet in December. Watch the January
Messenger for more information.*



Ron Charles—Washington Post

Please join us:

January 27, 2015 @ 7:00 P.M.

**San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church
902 Danville Blvd.
Alamo, Ca 94507**

Faith in Fiction: Does the Contemporary Novel Have a Prayer?

On Jan. 27, Ron Charles, the editor of The Washington Post's book section, will talk about the portrayal of God and religion in literary fiction. Ron has worked as a book critic for many years. He has won the National Book Critics Circle award for best criticism, and he recently served as a juror for the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction.

Tickets: \$5 at the door
Rakestraw Books will be selling books at this event.

Save the Date! January 7, 2015

Race to Nowhere Showing

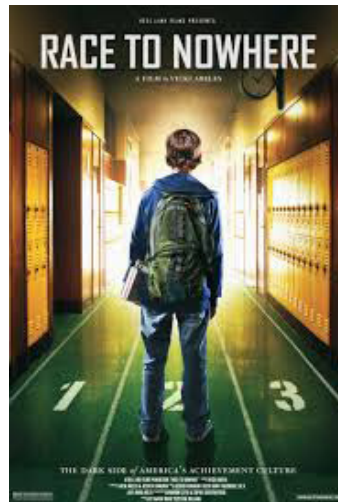
On Jan. 7, SRVUMC is pleased to host a showing of the Race to Nowhere documentary, at 7pm in Wesley Center. This documentary is being shown as the foundation for our Winter Learning in Community (LINC) series. You are invited to stay after the film for a short discussion and then select a small group to continue the discussion and explore new practices, over the next four consecutive Wednesday evenings.

This film has something to offer parents, and the grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends who love these youngsters—regardless of the child's age. Although there are some difficult to watch situations and themes, this film is appropriate for youth. The film calls us to rethink the ways we're educating and preparing our children for their future, and examines the ways our families are suffering along as well. View film trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTpj9Dlt4DU>

The genesis of the Race to Nowhere documentary began when Lafayette-based parent, turned filmmaker and advocate, Vicki Abeles, began noticing an alarming rise in school-related stress and burnout. Today's children are over-scheduled, stressed out, suffer from lack of sleep, are disengaged and often suffer from the symptoms of stress-related illnesses typically seen in adults. This motivated her to consult experts in the educational and mental health fields, and interview students, parent, teachers and administrators to create the Race to Nowhere documentary. Since its original release in 2009, the film has sparked grassroots education reform initiatives around the country.

It is our hope that by exploring the Race to Nowhere film and the companion BanBusy: Time to Thrive initiative, will help you reframe the way we honor downtime, the Sabbath and create an environment that produces healthier children and families. Come with us on a journey you'll be glad you took, one that fills your days with purpose and leaves a true legacy for those you love.



New LINC Small Groups Starting

*Wednesday evenings, Jan. 7 - Feb. 4, 7pm in
Wesley Center*



BanBusy Group

Group for adults with children and youth of all ages. Dig deeper into the themes from the Race to Nowhere film and the affiliated BanBusy: Time to Thrive campaign. This group will explore the ways we can influence and initiate new thinking and change in our local classrooms and schools, plus create an action plan identifying ways your family can create better school-life balance, free up your schedule, and start your new year off in a healthier direction.

Simplified Living Group

Can We Really Simplify Things? Exhausted. Overwhelmed. Over scheduled. Sound familiar? Is our breakneck pace beginning to feel normal and expected? What gets sacrificed when we spend our lives doing things that keep us busy but don't really matter?

What if your life could be different? If you crave a simpler life anchored by the priorities that matter most, roll up your sleeves: Simplified living requires more than just cleaning out your closets or reorganizing your desk. It requires uncluttering your soul. This small group will explore and examine ways to reframe and simplify our lives by using Bill Hybel's, "Simplify" book as our guide.



GOT BAGELS?

The Coffee Fellowship is looking for more good people to join the bagel brigade, the delivery service for the bagels getting to the Church for Sunday service. What is involved? A willingness to schedule a Saturday convenient for you to pick up the bagels at the Bagel St Café at the Livery, Danville. You need to be there by 2:55 pm to pick up the bagels which you deliver to Wesley Hall at Church before the Sunday 9am service. Please call/ email Carol Sayers, 743-1103, clsayers@comcast.net or Jacque Foster, 829-3747, jfgoldwing@comcast.net with questions, further information or to volunteer.



Between the Bookends

By Sally Christopherson, Librarian

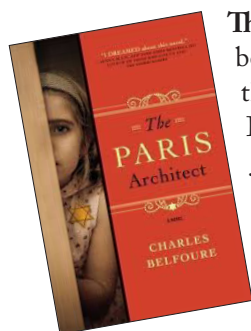


THE BOOK CART IS MOVING! We're having a problem—perhaps you've noticed—with the covers of our paperback books curling. It appears the cooler air of the vestibule has something to do with it, so we're trying a new location. From now on, look for the Cart in the large room where Sunday morning coffee and tea is served. The brown Book Return Box will be sitting right next to it. We hope this will be just as convenient and help solve the problem.

The Book Cart we're now using is double-sided, which is perfect for this holiday season. On one side, it's now time for our adult Christmas books, both secular and religious, including novels and pictorials. On the other side, we'll continue to feature the best in new books that will keep you turning the pages!

Sitting next to it will be the children's cart, featuring a spectacular array of beautiful children's Christmas books. There are also some wonderful Hanukkah books. Don't miss this once a year opportunity to check out some of the loveliest children's books available! **Remember that our check-out period is three weeks, and frequently others are waiting for the book you check out, so try to return all books in a timely manner. Other bibliophiles will thank you!**

On the adult cart:



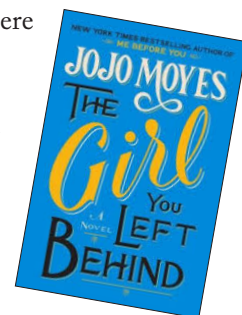
The Paris Architect, by Charles Belfoure. This book club favorite pits a top architect against the German Jewish hunters in World War II Paris. While he has no great love for Jews, he can't resist trying to build niches and places to hide Jews where they'll never be found, no matter how frantic or painstaking the Nazi search. In this poker game with the Germans, he had everything to lose—but he kept on playing.



Under the Wide and Starry Sky, by Nancy Horan. In this gripping biographical novel, we meet Fanny Osbourne, an American woman who smoked cigarettes, carried a pistol, and probably extended Robert Louis Stevenson's life for several years. Although physically frail, Stevenson crossed the Atlantic and the U. S. to get to her in California where she nursed him back to health. She was with him

as he wrote his greatest novels, and still there when he finally died at age 44 in Samoa.

The Girl You Left Behind, by Jojo Moyes. Here is another page-turner by Jojo Moyes, who also wrote the memorable *Me Before You*. This time her story moves between WWI in Nazi-controlled France and life today, when the portrait of a lovely woman is claimed by two different claimants. Should the heirs of the artist prevail—or the woman who was given it as a gift from her husband? And, in war, when does trying to survive cross the line into collaboration with the enemy? Full of compassion, hope, and puzzling choices, Moyes has done it again!



My Beloved World, by Sonia Sotomayor. The Supreme Court Associate Justice is a Latin American woman from humble roots. She was raised by a widowed mother in the Bronx projects in New York City, was her high school valedictorian, and attended Princeton on a scholarship. Readable and inspiring.



Once again, I would like to request that no donations be dropped in the library. Recently, we've been overwhelmed! Five bags of books were left by the library desk, several books were left on the book cart, and several were put in the book return box. If you cannot use these books, chances are the library can't either. Our space is limited! Please direct any unwanted books to the Soul Sisters Book Sale in Wesley Center Coffee Room or take them to the public library.

The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them.

—Samuel Clemens, 1835-1910

CHILDREN & FAMILY

MINISTRY

Stephanie Ham, Director of Children's Ministry

Be rich in doing good things.
Give freely. Be willing to share.
1 Timothy 6:18 NIV

The holidays are around the corner. How do I know? Relatives are asking for Christmas lists so they can get their shopping done. The commercials on TV are rolling out their latest toy temptations to get children

drooling. Even the shopping malls and discount stores are busy stocking Christmas decorations just in case you feel like getting a jump-start on your seasonal lawn ornaments and light displays.

With all this Christmas hoopla, it's easier than ever to lose focus on why we celebrate Christmas in the first place. That's why we want to spend this month talking about Generosity: making someone's day by giving something away.

We hope kids get wrapped up in others as they show them how much God has been so generous toward us. There's a danger in getting so wrapped up in ourselves or so wrapped up in our things that we miss the essence of this season. There's just something about giving that reflects the character of God to those around us. Every good thing we have is a gift from Him. But we also know that God's generosity has a purpose. God gives to us and expects us to do the same for others in return.



Generosity changes us when we learn how to give the way God gives. This month, we'll look at four great stories from the New Testament that helps us understand God's plan for generosity in our lives.

Session 2: Art Enrichment Sign-Ups



Where
love grows

Cityscapes & Superheroes

UM Preschool Enrichment Program

January 7, 14, 21, 28, February 4

This series of Art classes will explore what it takes to be a true Super Hero! We'll talk about the strengths and qualities that make us special and have fun creating our own unique Super identities! Students will work on developing their drawing skills to produce pictures of themselves and have fun creating some graphic "pop art". They will be painting and forming collages of cityscapes in both 2D and 3D mediums, playing with color, shape and size. Cost: \$150 per session and several different sessions will be available throughout the year.

Enrollment paperwork and the registration forms are available on the preschool's website: www.unitedmethodistpreschool.org.

Any further questions, please contact the Preschool Office preschool-office@srvumc.org or 925-837-2788



Our Bottom Lines for the Month of December

- Week 1:** Don't get wrapped up in your stuff.
- Week 2:** Get wrapped up in what matters most.
- Week 3:** Get wrapped up in Christmas.
- Week 4:** Get wrapped up in giving.

Childcare & Nursery we're hiring!

We are currently seeking to fill two part-time positions, both in childcare. We are looking for experienced childcare givers to provide loving care to our nursery kids on Sunday Mornings. The Childcare Manager will work cohesively with the Childcare Assistant to provide excellent care for our nursery. Both positions require consistent Sunday morning commitment and experience working with children. All hired persons must submit to a background check. If interested, please contact Stephanie Ham at sham@srvumc.org or Brad Stribling at brad_stribling@msn.com



Luke Ham, Youth Pastor

Youth Advent Activities!

The Advent season is here and that means lots of activity in the Youth Department! On November 30, the youth helped lead crafts at our annual Advent festival in Wesley center followed by our Hanging of the Greens service in the Sanctuary.

On Saturday December 6th, at 11:30 am, the middle school youth will meet at SRVUMC to shop for our adopted angel tree family. We will first grab lunch at In-N-Out and then go shopping at Target in San Ramon. After shopping, we will head back to church for cookies and wrap everything up (literally and figuratively)! We should be finished about 2pm. Parent drivers are needed! Bring money for lunch and a donation for the gifts. Permission slips are available from the Youth Office and can be turned in as we depart SRVUMC. December 4th is the first Thursday of the month so that means High School Dinner out! This month we will be heading to Panda Express in Danville for Dinner from 6:30-7:30pm. This is a great time to invite friends to meet the rest of your church family!

On December 17th we will be having our 3rd annual Poole Party in December (hosted by the Poole Family in Blackhawk). There will be food, games and our famous white elephant gift exchange! Please bring a fun gift (under \$10) that is wrapped up for the exchange. The party will begin at 6:15pm and wrap up around 8:00pm. Please contact the Youth office or church directory for the Rhonda and Brad Poole's home address.

December 20-21 marks our 4th annual Drive -through Living Nativity. This is always a community favorite! Join us as you get to see 5 scenes from the Christmas story from the comfort of your own car with narration played over the radio! There will be hot chocolate for the kids and even some LIVE animals! If you are a youth or older kid and would like to be one of the actors in this year's nativity, please contact Luke or the Youth office!



Among Ourselves

Health Concerns...

Steve Colman
Lyn Bristow
Marge Brower

Name Tags

Please contact Shannon Dever in the church office if you need a new name tag (\$6/ea.)

Continued Prayers For...

All those who continue to live with long-term illness, unemployment, life decisions, and sickness in their families:

Bill Andrew; Judy Branden; Lyn Bristow; Lenore Cooper; John Evans; Brigitte Greene; Dick Greeno; Ann Hatfield; Dave & Lillian Holleman; Cary Johnson; Johnny & Donna Johnston; Del Kennedy; Dale & Daphne Kimbell; Jada Koonce; Alleen Landstrom; Larry Liggett; Jen Lotz-Kush; Margaret Matteson; Alex Maddux; Ruth Meier; John Neary; Mary Ogden; Alice Reynolds; Ethel Ricker; Mike Robinett; Charlie & Phyllis Roth; Barbara Schneider; Ann Schroeder; Dick & Pat Shoner; Carol Webb; Joan Webb.

January Celebrations

Birthdays

- | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 Marilyn Clarke | Ruth Nelson | 25 Teri Armanini | 27 Tami Mitchell |
| Jim Kretsch | 14 Nancy Tiedemann | Dorothy Brose | 28 Bill Dever |
| 2 Paula Boswell | 15 Liz George | Roger Ehlers | Nancy Harrison |
| Steve Marohn | Shadaab Kanwal | Betty Pia | Karen Stepper |
| Adena Verdi | Dayna MacDannald | Taylor Smallwood | 30 Susan Schultz |
| 3 Val Miller | Dory Schramm | 26 Amanda Lee | Deirdree Walsh- |
| Jennifer Norrid | Jenna Turley | Katie Presnell | Krumrei |
| Brian Roberts | 16 Sam Sidhom | Jack Presnell | 31 Lisa Chapman |
| 4 Jennifer Shin | 17 Teresa Brown | Nick Toma | |
| Rebecca Ten Elshof | Gerry Carothers | Emily Wood | |
| 6 Nancy Amini | Jean Desmond | | |
| James Wakefield | Larry Sherman | | |
| Colleen Woolery | 18 Elaine Halliday | | |
| 7 Carrie Millinich | Mike Kelly | | |
| Daughters | Jeff Kuemmeler | | |
| 8 Jill Barry | Stephen Lee | | |
| Matthew Huff | Evan Schroeder | | |
| Tom Philbert | 19 Jennifer Lotz | | |
| 9 Terry Bailey | Anna Pasquale | | |
| Andrew Kocins | 20 Nancy Garnick | | |
| Betty Skeoch | Dave Johnson | | |
| 10 Michael Arata | 21 Dave Holleman | | |
| Linda Dew-Hiersoux | Kim Risedorph | | |
| Chris Hoff | 22 Donna Johnston | | |
| Isabelle McPherson | Bob Leyman | | |
| 11 Ann Schroeder | 24 Laura Dommes | | |
| 12 Scott Davis | Barb McWilliams | | |
| Belle Peters | Grant Norrid | | |
| Berry Scott | | | |
| 13 Bill Nelson | | | |

Wedding Anniversaries

- 1 Jennifer & Randy Helms
- 2 Melissa & Robert Ward
- 5 Judy & Bob Baker
- 7 **Betty & Frank Dorsey (59th)**
- Jo Ann & Vin Hirsch (54th)**
- 9 Linda & Alex Farhang
- 10 Layne & Mike Alfrey
- 11 Suzanne & Bob Korinke
- 12 Charlotte & Bob Garner
- 18 Jennifer & Dave Foster
- 19 **Vera & Al Robinson (52nd)**
- 20 Susan & Doug Hinzle
- 21 Wendi & Michael Cerda
- 22 Kathy & Scott MacLean
- 27 Shirley & Charles Stephenson
- 28 Alene & Bill Miskovetz
- 29 Danni & Dan Sherman



DECEMBER 2014

Worship Schedule

Traditional Worship, 9:00 am in the Sanctuary

Non-Traditional Worship, 10:30 am, in the Sanctuary

Centerpoint Worship Service, first Wednesday of each month, 6:30pm, in the Sanctuary

Child Care for birth-kindergarten is available during the morning services in the Children's Building

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12/3/2014

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