



Valley Messenger

A publication of San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church. Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

FEBRUARY 2017

A Parsonal Point of View ~

The Importance of Being TC

I'm not exactly sure when the term became a fixture in our culture's vocabulary, but the idea of being "politically correct" has been with us long enough to generate its share of controversy. In our current culture, it has provided fuel for the fire of anger and outrage that seeks to counter the emphasis on the importance of using inclusive language—that is, language that is sensitive to the reality of the diversity that surrounds us. In the minds of some, the idea of being "PC" or "politically correct," is one that is no longer viable and needs to be discarded.

As I recall, it was in my seminary experience in the 1970s that I first encountered the challenge to be more inclusive in the language that I chose to use about God, faith and others. I was confronted with the fact that by referring to God as a male or referencing humanity as "man," I was, in fact, using language that tended to limit the reality of God and exclude the experience of others. While I admit that I wasn't exactly a quick "convert" to the idea of using inclusive language, the importance of developing a new way of thinking and speaking was not lost upon me.

Don't Miss What's Inside

- 1 PPV: The Importance of Being TC
(Theologically Correct)
- 3 Church Council Report
- 7 Upcoming Mission News and Opportunities
- 9 February Communion Offering
- 10 Between the Bookends
- 12 Kindness Matters
- 13 Family Ministries
- 14 Among Ourselves
- 15 Birthdays & Anniversaries

Next Issue: March 2017

Have something you'd like included in next month's Messenger? Please submit your articles to: Lisa Jancarik newsletter@srvumc.org by February 15, 2017.

If, in fact, I believed that God was beyond gender, then I felt that my language should reflect that understanding, even though it was initially awkward for me to let go of the male pronoun in reference to God.

If, in fact, I believed that women and men were equal in the eyes of God, then I felt that my language should reflect that equality by being as inclusive as possible, even though it was initially awkward for me to learn to speak differently.

Slowly but surely, I learned to let go of some of my more chauvinistic ways—not because I was forced to, but because I felt that it was essential to align my thought and action with my belief. I wanted to be theologically consistent. This, of course, is a change that many of us have experienced, one that has helped to create a culture that is more sensitive to the language we use and the ways in which it either includes or excludes others. And that is, I believe, a good thing.

Unfortunately, we are currently witnessing something of cultural backlash against the idea of being "PC" or politically correct.

SRVUMC

**902 Danville Blvd
Alamo, CA 94507**

Office Hours:

8:30 a.m.-12, 1-4:30 p.m.

Phone

(925) 837-5243

Fax

(925) 837-7263

Web site

www.srvumc.org

Ministers

EVERYONE

Senior Pastor

Ron Dunn (ext. 107)

Associate Pastor

Luke Ham (ext. 108)

Director of Youth Ministries

Tawfick Fayed

Director of Children's Ministries

Stephanie Ham (ext 106)

Office Administrator,

Membership,

Accounts Receivable

Shannon Dever (ext 105)

Finance Administrator

Accounts Payable

Coreen Janes (ext 104)

Facilities & Purchasing Manager

Marilyn Clarke (ext 102)

Music Director

Bruce Koliha

Organist

Nadia Blank-Koliha

U.M. Preschool Director

Paulette Ove (ext 113)

Communications Director

Linda Green

Director Membership & Mission

Kathleen Saghafi (ext 110)

Messenger Editor

These days, it seems that the term itself is often used derisively and cited as an example of what is wrong with our society. The implication, at least in part, seems to be that we need to jettison the idea of being inclusive in the language that we use and get back to "the way it used to be."

While I understand the frustration of those who resent the idea of "cultural police" trying to define and limit the language that they use, I don't believe that the answer is to be found in going back to "what was." From my perspective, a better solution can be found in our choice not to concern ourselves not so much with the idea of being "PC," but with the ideas of being "TC," or "theologically correct."

How does our thinking, our speaking and our action reflect our fundamental theological understanding of who God is and how God has called us to respond to the needs of others? These are the questions, I believe, that should inform and inspire our action. These are the questions that should give shape to our desire to be as inclusive and respectful of others as we can possibly be. It's not about following the latest social trends or political dictates. It's about being faithful to the One who calls us to value, respect and love the other—no matter how different they might be.

The undeniable fact is that how we treat one another and the language we use to include or exclude one another does matter. It matters not so much because of whether or not it is politically correct—whatever that term has come to mean. It matters as to whether or not it is theologically correct, whether or not it reflects the kindness, the compassion and love of God for all people, regardless of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

Grace and Peace,

Ron

Help Your Church Endowment Fund with A Gift That Will Not Affect Your Cash Flow

Gifts of appreciated assets such as

- **Securities**
- **Real estate**

are an excellent way for you to help your church, and yourself at the same time. These gifts provide the following tax benefits for you:

1. Generate an **immediate income tax deduction** and tax savings
2. Avoid federal and state **capital gains** taxes
3. Avoid the tax on **net investment** income



Church Council Report

(Covering December 2016 and January 2017 Meetings)

Stewardship and Finance

As of January 17, total pledges are **\$839,602** toward the proposed budget of **\$1,010,000**. A **potential \$85,000-90,000 shortfall is projected**. Approval of the 2017 budget was deferred to the **February 21 Council meeting**. In the meantime, Church leadership will consider available options and identify expenses to cut to reduce the deficit.

Trustees. Member **Bill Sabin** has graciously donated funds to remodel the south wall of the sanctuary by installing windows overlooking the meditation garden. A rendering showing the sanctuary windows will be presented to the congregation in February.

ARC construction continues to progress. **Parking lot trenching has begun, further reducing available parking.** Efforts to accommodate parking are ongoing.

Work for the new Tot Spot is complete and **Tot Spot is open.**

The 2017 contract for continued cleaning service by longtime and appreciated janitor Ed has been completed.

ARC Operations

The Council approved a rate structure for use of the ARC as recommended by **Jim Burk, chair of the ARC Operations Committee**. Once the ARC is operational, later rate changes will be the responsibility of the ARC Commission.

An ARC recreational ministry team has been formed to create curriculum and will meet weekly as the opening of the ARC nears. Emphasis will center on a set of core values. For example, the value of recreation will center not on wins/loses, but on teamwork, dedication, support, etc.

An ARC dedication committee is considering a June 4, 2017 date for a dedication ceremony.

The Council approved the creation of an ARC Commission to provide general oversight, guidance, and administrative support for the operation of the ARC. The Commission will report to the Church Council. Members of the Commission: Chair, Vice-Chair, ARC Director (operational responsibility), a representative from SRVUMC Committees (Finance, SPRC, Trustees), Spiritual Development (Minister), and one to three at-large members.

Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC)

Annual pastor performance reviews were conducted during December and submitted to the District Superintendent.

SPRC recommended and the Council approved the revised Safe Sanctuary Policy. The purpose of the Policy is to make the Church a safe place for children and youth.

Updated job descriptions for staff personnel have been completed and are ready for review by an ad hoc committee. SPRC is also developing a proposed multi-level salary table for staff.

Laity Appointments

The **Nominations and Leadership Development Committee's** recommendations for Church Council and Committee positions were approved by the Church Conference in November.



Thanks!

Thanked and acknowledged were those whose leadership service has ended: **Nancy Garnick** (Interim Council Secretary), **Brad Tolstedt** (Finance Chair), **Dave McWilliams** (Endowment Chair), **Carole and Don Johnson** (Annual Conference delegates), and **Winnie Stribling** (Preschool Commission Chair), and welcomed were their replacements: **John Green** (Council Secretary), **Rhonda Poole** (Finance Chair), **Dick Lam** (Endowment Chair), **Kathleen Saghafi** (Annual Conference delegate), and **Anne Kuelz** (Preschool Commission Chair).

Strategic Plan

The Council approved a procedure for approval and funding of Strategic Plan projects. The Council is in the process of establishing its 2017 goals and objectives.

Risk Taking Mission and Service

SRVUMC is a participant in welcoming a **Refugee Resettlement family from Afghanistan**. We and Danville's Church of Latter-Day Saints join Catholic Charities to aid this family of seven who will eventually settle in the Antioch area. The father worked with the US military, which allowed the family to resettle under a Special Immigrant Visa. The family consists of Mom, Dad, and five boys, all eight or younger. As a service opportunity, the congregation will be requested to provide supplies and services to support the family.



Diversity

Co-Lay Leaders Debra Carter and Lea Hickman are arranging diversity training in the near future for Church leadership. Training will be led by **David Vasquez-Levy, President of the Pacific School of Religion**.

Peace and Justice

The **10th Annual Martin Luther King Jr Interfaith Celebration** held on January 16 in Wesley Center was a success. **Reverend Staci Current**, our District Superintendent and keynote speaker, gave the gathering of 90 a moving speech, entitled **"The Audacity of Hope."** Pastor Ron emphasized the importance of our ability, facility, and devotion to offering such activities within our community. He thanked the Peace and Justice Committee members and the others who supported this celebration.

Pastor Ron plans to spend a week in Haiti on mission with **Warren McGuffin** (February 28 through March 6). **A special Lenten focus in the Church will be to raise \$15,000 for a solar oven for Haiti.**

The minutes of the December and January Church Council meetings, written committee reports, and other documents mentioned above are posted on the Church website.

The next Church Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 21, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the Fireside Room. All members are welcome to attend.

Terry Sherman

Chair, SRVUMC Church Council



Solar ovens of the kind used in Haiti.

Mark Your Calendars!

10th Annual Crab Feed

Saturday, February 25 at 6 p.m.

Crab and all the fixin's!

Door prizes for **Fine Dining, Golf, Entertainment, Vacations and More!**

Eat Crab!

Adults \$45 each, Youth 12-18 \$25 each, Kids 6-11 \$5 each

Landlubber Chicken

Adults \$25 each, Youth 12-18 \$15 each, Kids 6-11 \$5 each

Kids Under 6 eat free!



Men's Breakfast

The Methodist Men's Group at our church holds a breakfast meeting on the **third Saturday of each month at 8:00 a.m. in Wesley Center.** We enjoy Christian fellowship and listen to interesting speakers. We also raise money from our monthly contributions, from proceeds from the annual Christmas breakfast with carols, and from our annual crab feast. These funds go to supporting our church youth programs, various other church programs, and selected charitable causes.

Upcoming Speakers

March 18—Dr. Jeff Rideout. Jeff is a member of our church and an expert on healthcare programs. He was senior medical advisor for Covered California. Jeff will talk about the various options for the future for state and federal healthcare programs. This is a complex subject and one that will be in the news for many months to come.

April 15—The Honorable Catharine Baker. Catharine is a member of our church and was recently elected for a second term as our local representative to the California State Assembly. She will cover some of the challenges facing our state and offer some solutions.



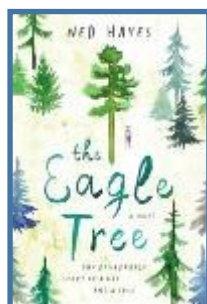
Christ Care Book Group

**Wednesday, February 22,
10 a.m.**

Church Library

Meeting to review and discuss

***The Eagle Tree* by Ned Hayes**



Afternoon Book Group

**Monday, February 27, 1 p.m.
Room 202, Wesley Center**

***The Lake House* by Kate Morton**
(Caroline leading)





Scenes from Summer 2016. Top Left: ARC in July...this project has come a long way! Top Right: Grillin' and Chillin' on a July evening. Bottom: Rev. Michael Yoshii (Chair of Friends of Wadi Foquin) and Ata Manassra visited in August. Ata spoke about life on the West Bank in the village of Wadi Foquin.

The Right Envelope Does Matter!

A Brief Tutorial on Filling Out Giving Envelopes

There are several envelopes in the pew pockets, and occasionally there will be an envelope inserted into the Sunday bulletin, such as a Communion envelope or an Endowment Mothers'/Fathers' Day envelope. There are always general giving envelopes in the pew pockets for your convenience, which has an "Other" line where you can write in a special purpose gift such as "Wheelchair" or "Haiti".

Our collection counters use the envelope, or what is written on the envelope, as an aid in posting donations to the correct account. If you put your pledge into a Communion envelope, that money will be sent to the agency designated for that month's Communion offering *and it isn't possible to get it back.* The Endowment envelopes are specifically for donations to the Endowment Fund and not for general fund donations.

I try to apply logic when posting donations, and occasionally I'll send you an email if the sum you've put in a Communion envelope matches the amount of your pledge, but it's not possible to catch every error.

It's important to give clear instructions as to how you'd like your donation allocated. Notes are very helpful. ***Include a comment on the memo line of a check or check a specific box on the general giving envelope.*** A little extra care will ensure that your donation is allocated exactly as you intend.



Remember: your donation goes where the envelope tells us to put it!

—Shannon Dever, Finance Secretary

Upcoming Mission News and Opportunities

LOCAL

Future Dates for Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano County—If you missed the January 24 event, then plan on volunteering **April 1, July 1 and September 23**. Each occurs on a **Saturday from 11:30 to 1:30 p.m.** Contact **Lee Rust** at chijocol@aol.com for information.



Habitat for Humanity East Bay/Silicon Valley—Muir Ridge. Things are winding down in Martinez, at the Muir Ridge site of 20 new homes. Volunteer crews are doing indoor, phase two work, meaning work is being done rain or shine. Electrical teams are installing lights (all LED to minimize electric bills), and interior trim and painting is underway. Things should be wrapped up by the end of April, with dedication of the final ten homes scheduled for **May 20**.



WORLD

Baton Rouge Flood Recovery Mission Trip—April 1 through 8 to assist with rebuilding. We will be flying into New Orleans and driving to Baton Rouge. We will stay at a United Methodist Church, which has sleeping rooms, a kitchen, gathering areas and showers. The cost of the trip: \$200, plus airfare. Contact **Paul Kuelz** at paulkuelz@sbcglobal.net or **831-3128** for more info or to register. Registrations are due by **Sunday, March 5**.

Refugee Relocation update: We have good news! Our second refugee family is arriving, and plans are being made to have them settle in. As of this print date, they were scheduled to arrive on **January 24**. They will ultimately reside in the Antioch area, but until a suitable home can be found, they will be living in the Danville/Alamo area. The family is from Afghanistan (mother, father and five boys, ages 17 months to 8 years old). Besides Asbury UMC, Lynnewood UMC and Castro Valley UMC, we will also be working with the Church of Latter Day Saints in Danville to aid in the relocation and resettlement of the family. At this time, the most urgent need is for **furniture, kitchenware, and household goods** to provide to the family. Please go to the church website to find a spreadsheet of goods needed. If you have any questions, please contact **Liz Bayat** at lbayat@aol.com.

Mission Memories



Left: Volunteering at GLIDE in September 2015.

Right: Sorting foodstuffs for Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano County in January 2016.

Mission News and Opportunities, Continued

Mission Volunteers & Communion Giving

Special Offerings

- Wheelchair \$2,397
- Refugee Resettlement 5,035

November Volunteers

- 14 Coffee Hour Volunteers.
- 20 Sodbusters
- 20 Volunteers for "Food For Thought"
- 4 Volunteers at The Souper Center
- 18 Sunshine Singers at the Sunrise Retirement Center
- All the Angel Tree Angels

Month	Entity	Amt
Jan	Haiti	\$2,415
Feb	P.E. Transportation Limb Restoration	470 470
Mar	One Great Hour of Sharing	1,342
Easter	Stop Hunger Now Habitat for Humanity Interfaith Council Richmond Interfaith	3,309 3,309 3,200 1,000
April	Trinity Center	1,668
May	Local Youth Mission	1,847
Jun	Weed Ca Fire Recovery	1,779
Jul	Monument Crisis Center STAND	879.50 879.50
Aug	Fred Finch Capernaum	825.50 825.50
Sep	Stop Hunger Now Habitat Playhouses	1,750.00 4,350.00
Oct	World Communion Sunday UMCOR - Lower Lake Fire & - Louisiana Flooding	200.00 1,049.00 1,049.00
Nov	Trinity Winter Shelter	2,735.00
Dec	UMCOR World Aids Day Youth Homes BAAYFS	200.00 1,091.00 1,091.00
Christmas	Winter Nights Global Missions UMCOR Other	3,000.00 3,500.00 2,000.00 5,366.00
Totals		\$50,520

55+ News

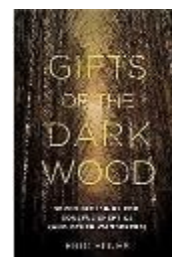
Adventuresome Seniors Potluck—Tues., February 7 @ Noon—Speaker Jan Oldenburg

Get organized and de-clutter for the new year! Please bring a dish to share, or stop at the deli or bakery. Or if you can't do any of that, just show up, we always have plenty of food, and your company is what really matters!

Lunch with Friends Restaurant-style Meal—Tues., February 21 @ Noon

Chef John Sanders will be making from scratch his savory rigatoni with sausage, Caesar salad, homemade garlic toast with his luscious red velvet cake for dessert. The best \$5 meal you'll find in the Valley, and the company is **FABULOUS!!** Over 55? Please join us!

55+ Faith Sharing Book Club will begin March 7 with the book *Gifts of the Dark Wood: Seven Blessings for Soulful Skeptics* by Erik Elmes. This is also the book that is being recommended for an all-church Lenten experience. Pastor Ron Dunn will lead our drop-in study. Purchase or download the book on your own.



February Communion Offering

Limb Restoration Fund

Brad and Louise Farrow had been members at SRVUMC, and as a Church we have funded part of their good work in Mexico as part of the Limb Restoration Fund. Together with a group of dedicated volunteer professionals, the Farrows have held clinics in Mexico twice a year for more than ten years. The group—which hails from U.S., Mexico and Guatemala—fabricates and delivers braces and artificial limbs. The devices provided through the clinics range from recycled and off-the-shelf braces for ankles, feet or knees to custom-made prosthetic devices and plastic jackets to support the spine. To date, the volunteers have made more than 500 artificial limbs and braces. These prosthetics offer their recipients better mobility than crutches and wheelchairs, meaning that the people who use them can maneuver more easily in their homes or in public. In some cases, they can even return to work.

During their most recent two-week La Balalandra clinic in La Paz, Mexico, the Limb Restoration Fund completed more than 200 patient visits, with patients traveling from Baja Sur, Sinaloa and even the mainland of Mexico. According to Louise, last year the group added 29 new legs, but she stresses that follow-up adjustments and repairs are equally important for existing patients. Presently, the Farrows and the other volunteers are preparing for the spring 2017 clinic, which will run from February 27 through March 10. They already know some challenges await them: fewer volunteers and some complicated patients, like a hip disarticulation patient. It promises to be a busy two weeks. In the U.S., a patient may have several fittings over three or four weeks, but volunteers like the Farrows speed the process up as much as they can to maximize the number of people they can serve.

The Limb Restoration Fund and its partners, **Mobilize Mankind** (an Oregon-based nonprofit) and the **Rotary Club Balandra of La Paz, Mexico** keep costs down by recycling every possible component of prostheses (artificial limbs) and orthoses (braces). These include leather straps, plastic corsets and exoskeletal components. Louise tells us that the project would not be possible without reusable parts. However, each clinic requires up to \$3500 USD for supplies and materials which are not recyclable. These supplies include resins for molding custom parts, carbon fiber and plastics, pigments and glues, rivets, leather, fabric and more.



Above and below: Clients for Limb Restoration Fund's clinic in La Paz, Mexico. The Fund and its partners has improved mobility for hundreds of people in over ten years of service.



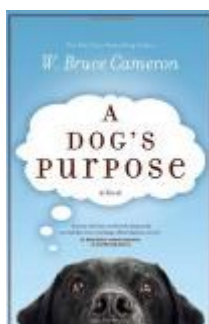


Between the Bookends



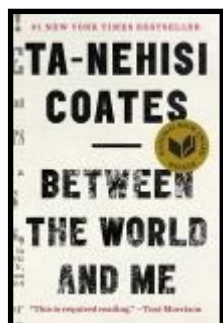
By Sally Christopherson, Librarian

February is short in days—only 28—but there is a lot going on! The entire month celebrates Black History Month and we have two new books that reflect that—one of them is now out as a wonderful new movie. Valentine's Day comes along on February 14 and we have an intriguing story, full of romance and “inside information” that is perfect for that date.

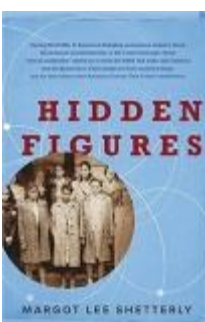


Cameron, W. Bruce. *A Dog's Purpose; A Novel for Humans*. This isn't the first novel that has a dog telling the story (remember *The Art of Racing in the Rain*?) In this one, the dog lives several lives with several different names and even as different breeds. He remembers his many owners and how much he loved each of them, and was loved in return. It's irresistible, heart-clenching, funny, and will have you reaching for the Kleenex more than once.

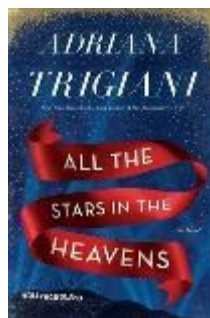
And it's now out as a new movie! Read it first, then treat yourself to an evening out to make sure the producers did it justice!



Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*. Coates wrote this memoir as a series of essays to his fifteen-year-old son. It has won several awards, including the National Book Award, and been on the *New York Times* Book Review as one of the ten best books of 2015. Profound and uncomfortable to read, the author pulls no punches as he relates injustices and seeks to warn and forearm his son as he is becoming a Black man in a white, American world.

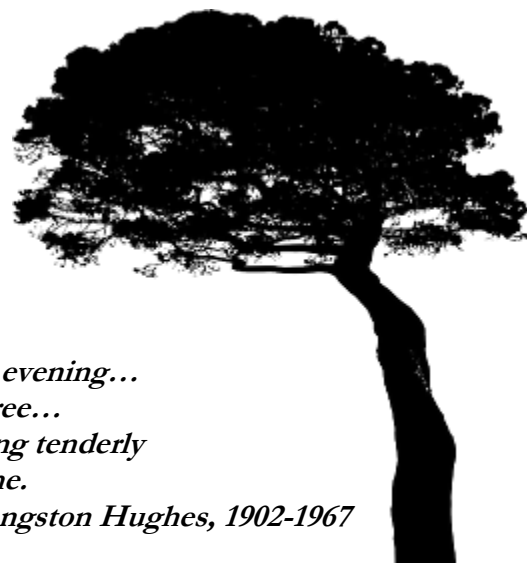
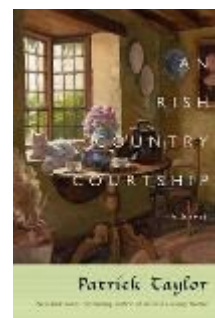
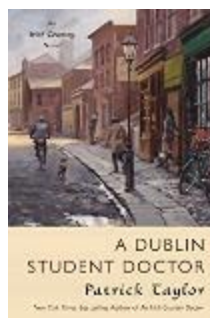


Shetterly, Margot Lee. *Hidden Figures; The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race*. The title really tells it all, and it's heartening to see film bring to life a chapter in history that has been unknown for too long. While the book highlights four women, the movie features three of them—one of whom was Katherine Goble Johnson, a math wizard whom John Glenn insisted double-check the final tabulations before his space orbiting flight. These scientists were women, and they were Black, two almost impossible handicaps in 1961. An unforgettable book, an unforgettable movie—don't miss either one!



Trigiani, Adriana. *All the Stars in the Heavens*. Do the names Loretta Young, Clark Gable and Spencer Tracy mean anything to you? If so, you'll love Trigiani's historical fiction all about them and other stars and their lives and loves in early Hollywood. Amazingly, Loretta Young's secretary was a young sister in a convent whom the Mother Superior decided would do better in the secular world. A kindly and understanding priest sent Alda Ducci to Loretta Young where she found friendship and a bird's-eye view of a world that she had no idea existed.

N. B. Here's an update on the Irish country doctor series—we've added three more titles in this charming and addictive series! Check the Book Cart for *An Irish Country Girl*, *An Irish Country Courtship*, and *A Dublin Student Doctor*!



*Rest at pale evening...
A tall slim tree...
Night coming tenderly
Black like me.*

—Langston Hughes, 1902-1967

Cleaning and Sorting Yet? ***2017 Church Rummage***

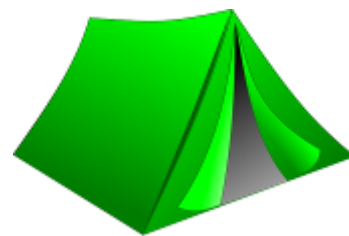


Sale

**Drop-off Dates
for Donations
March 21 and 22**

WINTER NIGHTS 2017

We have the privilege to host Winter Nights 2017 from **January 30** through **February 13**.



During our two-week period, we will split our time with St. Isidore's Parrish to provide for the daily requirements for the program. If you would like to volunteer to help or to donate to this effort, please contact **Susan Dowling** at sue_dowling@comcast.net or 925-648-5184.

Donations needed:

- Diapers (size 4) and baby wipes
- Bath towels and twin-size fitted sheets
- Gas cards, Wal-Mart or Target gift cards
- Deodorant
- Lysol or Clorox wipes
- Socks of all sizes
- Flashlights and extra batteries of all sizes

The Winter Nights organization is also collecting monetary donations to purchase a new van. ***Donations need to be labeled for Winter Nights and they may be dropped off in the church office.***

WE CAN HELP TO PROVIDE HOMES FOR ALL!

DONATE TO THE CONTRA COSTA HOUSING SECURITY FUND!

Recommended by SRVUMC's MLK Peace and Justice Committee

This Fund has been set up by our County's **Homeless Services Department** with ongoing support by the **Multi-Faith ACTION Coalition of Contra Costa County**, to assist both new renters and landlords. It will be disbursed by the **Contra Costa Crisis Center**, which will qualify the recipients before providing the funds to them.

WHAT YOUR DONATION CAN DO:

\$ 25	One credit check
\$ 50	One housing application fee
\$ 100	One utility deposit
\$ 500	Rental assistance for one month
\$ 1000	Eviction prevention for a veteran
\$ 2500	Security deposit for a family of four.
<i>Also...</i>	Help with repairs for a landlord
<i>And...</i>	Assistance with an eviction for a landlord
<i>Plus...</i>	Communication between landlord and renter

You may donate by sending your check with **"Housing Security Fund"** on the memo line to **Richmond Community Foundation**, which is the County's fiduciary custodian of the funds and disburses them only to the Contra Costa County Crisis Center. The address is **1014 Florida Ave., #200, Richmond, CA 94804**. Or you may donate online at <http://bit.ly/1ScFnLN>, with Contra Costa Housing Security Fund on the drop-down menu.

Kindness Matters Corner



To all readers: Where do you think all of these kindness stories come from? The Internet? Nope! YouTube, newspapers, magazines? Nope! Try again. You are thinking way too big. Every story is homegrown! Every one is the story from our SRVUMC family. Each is a kindness given, a kindness received, or a kindness observed in our Tri-Valley area!

You may directly share your stories of kindness to the website in this way: Send your story to kindness@srvumc.org. Your story will be posted to the church website within a few days.

To All Readers: Christmas. Newspaper issues place a spotlight on various charities, some charities are new to readers, others are long-standing and well-known. One does not have to be exceptionally observant to listen, watch, and wonder at the one-on-one kindnesses that surround us. No recognized exchanges. No spotlight. Open hearts and compassion for others are all around us, contagious. Here are a couple of quiet kindnesses observed in our Tri-Valley in December.

Cold Hands, Warm Heart. Our church family member, Bill, left the grocery store, purchase in hand. The Salvation Army volunteer bell-ringer was nearby; his companion, a black Labrador, gently moved toward Bill, sniffing Bill's bag. Roger, the ringer, said with a laugh, "That's Rocky. He's not begging. He's just interested in the various items people purchase." Thus began a friendly conversation on a frigid and windy evening.

Roger, probably in his 30s, is blind. He wore no glasses or eye coverings, and answered willingly to Bill's question of Roger's sight. As a five-year-old, he had lost his sight as a result of glaucoma. He told Bill his was a condition that would have been reversed with current advanced medical procedures. As they continued talking, Bill noticed Roger's worn and thin Dodge's jacket. Roger wore not much more to ward off the cold wind than gloves, a cap, and maybe a couple layers of shirts. Bill made a deposit, and both men told the other of their happiness while talking during this short period of time.

As Bill drove the short trip home, he did a "V-8," on his forehead, but the words accompanying the slap were, "I shoulda bought Roger a cup of hot coffee!" A quick U-turn brought Bill back to the store, and five minutes later, out the same door as before, came Bill with a steaming cup of coffee, along with a back-up supply. He walked back to Roger. Bill, returned Roger's greeting, causing Roger to say, "Bill, back so soon?!"

A hardy, "Merry Christmas," accompanied the steaming coffee from Bill, and as they parted, both men lingered a moment as they held the arms of the other, truly grateful for each other.

Love Is Every Kindness. I hear the same remark as I listen to the stories of kindnesses. It goes something like this: "While I am (cooking, driving, writing, etc.), I am thinking of the person who will receive. I think of our times together, the times we've shared a laugh, the times when we have cared for one another, our common interests."

It's so easy to be kind! Isn't that what we are, what we are meant to be, as we use our God-given gifts?





Calendar

February 17 to 20: Youth Disneyland trip

No Youth Group on February 19.

Sunday School

Week 1

Bottom Line: Love others because Jesus loves you.

Week 2

Bottom Line: Comfort others who are hurting.

Week 3

Bottom Line: Give to others who are in need.

Week 4

Bottom Line: Love others because they matter to God.

Youth Worship Series

Road Trip. Road trips are awesome. Whether you're heading to the mountains with your family or driving to the beach with your friends, the idea of packing up, grabbing your favorite snacks, planning the perfect playlist, and hitting the road just sounds like an adventure. And it is! Maybe that's because new places are always exciting, or maybe it's just that, more than anywhere else, the unexpected seems to happen on the road. Flat tires. Detours. Surprisingly great lunch stops. Disappointingly awful gas stations. The unexpected is just part of the trip.

Life works a lot like that, too. We start with a plan in mind, but things happen along the way that change our plans, change our minds, or even change our relationships. That's when we have to decide to stick to the plan or change course. This was especially true for the apostle Paul. Long before GPS or interstates, Paul set out on a series of road trips, and just like us, he experienced some surprising, even life-changing moments on the road. As we take a look at some key turning points on Paul's road trips, we discover that maybe the best thing that can happen on our journey is a change of direction.



Every Sunday

9 a.m. Traditional Worship

Sunday school meets

K to Grade 5: Lamm Hall

Grades 6 to 12: Room 202

10:30 a.m. Nontraditional Worship

Confirmation meets in room 201 until 11:45 a.m.

Childcare for all ages in children's building, downstairs, either service.

Contact Us!

Stephanie Ham

Children and Family Ministries
(Children through Grade 5)

sham@srvumc.org

(925)837-5243 ext 106

Tawfick Fayed

Youth Director

tfayed@srvumc.org

(925)837-5243 ext.109

Music

These choirs are free and open to everyone to participate.

Cherub Choir (Preschool through Grade 1) and Archangel Choir (Grades 2 to 5)

Beth McClelland

Practice Wed from 3:15 to 4 p.m.

Performances the second and fourth Sundays of each month September through May

Youth Choir

Terri Hawk

Grades 6 to 12

Practice Sunday at 3 p.m.

Bros and Belles Choir

Winnie Stribling

Grades 6 to 12

Practice Wed from 5:15 to 6 p.m.

Weekly Programming

Middle School Youth Group (Grades 6 to 8) On Wednesday from 6 to 8 p.m.

High School Youth Group (Grades 9 to 12) On Sundays from 4 to 5:30 p.m.

High School Dinner Night Out (1st and 3rd Sundays) from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

See our weekly email newsletters for locations

Among Ourselves

Health Concerns...

Vilva Robinett
Byron Nygreen
Jada Koonce
Lea Patteson
Gene Brown
Lyn Bristow
Elizabeth De Chene
Edith Liggett

Our Christian Sympathy To...

The friends and family of **Dorothy Reed**. Dorothy died on December 31, and we celebrated her life on January 28.

Jane Lang and family on the death of her father, Joe Baker, on January 5.

Ted Wolfram and family on the death of his father, Ed, on January 21.

Marla Schleicher and family on the death of her mother, Marjorie, her cousin, Dick, and her cat, Shasta.

Congratulations To...

Danni and Dan Sherman, on the birth of two new grandchildren: **Cass James**, on **December 15**, to Larry and Amy Sherman; and **Rhett Caden**, on **December 17**, to Kim and Garrett Porteous. Daphne Kimbell is the proud great-grandmother.

Continued Prayers For...

All those who continue to live with long-term illness, unemployment, life decisions, and sickness in their families: Bill Andrew; Lyn Bristow; Gene Brown; Lenore Cooper; Jeni Evans; John Evans; Brigitte Greene; Dick Greeno; Ann Hatfield; Dave & Lillian Holleman; Cary Johnson; Johnny Johnston; Daphne Kimbell; Jada Koonce; Alleen Landstrom; Edith Liggett; Margaret Matteson; Alex Maddux; Mary Ogden; Mike Robinett; Lillian Scherer; Ann Schroeder; Pat Shoner; Jean Spencer; Carol Webb Samford; Joan Webb; Jeannine Woolery.

Name Tags

Please contact Shannon Dever in the church office if you need a new name tag (\$7/ea.)

February Celebrations

Birthdays



1 Renée Beck	Debbie Kelly	Charles Stephenson	
Amy Sidhom	Katy Mannell	Eleanor Toney	
2 Sandy Bennion	8 Ryan Christian	Katie Ward	25 Andrea Bourgeois
Harry Knapp	Marilyn Hansen	15 Kelly Benjamson	McWilliams
Edith Liggett (95)	Connie Lowe	Debbie Hammond	Joan Pierce
Stephanie Lowe	Laura Macomber Weeks	Teri Hawk	26 Suzanne Stephens
Ted Nguyen	Mandy Whiting	Jim Ludlam	Trevor Willis
Dawn Smallwood	9 Jarrett Krumrei	16 Anne Burk	27 Elaine Borge (99)
Cindy Stephenson	Laurie Stocking	Matthew Byrom	28 John Corson
3 Le Anne Jacobi	10 John Johnston (97)	Linnea Winter	Elaine Hagebush
Linda Jimerson	Emily Malin	17 Phil Bandy	Laura Sanchez
George Swallow (92)	Dean McWilliams	Lauren Longstreet	29 Mike Alfrey
Kim Wolfram	Dave Pierce	18 Nick Item	Patti Ongman
4 Joanne Durrenberger	11 Bob Dominici	19 John Pavel	
Sue Hardy	Beverly McAdams	20 Laura Altamirano	
Dan Hawkley	Doug Merritt	21 Heather Clay	
Pat Shoner	12 Rebecca Byrom	22 Lindsay Koos	
5 Kendall Andres	Joanne Knapp	David Shin	
Doug Beck	Millie Loper	Harriot Siegrist (95)	
Melanie Hasik	13 Lisa Jancarik	23 Kal Peters	
Stephanie Leontini	Maggie Stienstra	24 Elisa Ericson	
6 Jackie Ceragioli	Nick Weeks	Maddy Preece	
Steve Foster	14 Kari Dimler	Dorothy Ruby (95)	
7 Justin Hill	Chuck Lindquist		

Wedding Anniversaries

3 Anne & Jim Burk (54th)	Betty & Irv Skeoch	16 Kal & Kevin Peters
4 Nancy & Cliff Campbell	(50th)	20 Ann & Jim Johnson
Candice & Steve Newburn	6 Donna & Chuck Lindquist	
Gay & David Scott	7 Joyce & Burt Rodgers	
(52nd)	8 Jacque & Steve Foster	