



# Valley Messenger

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

**DECEMBER 2019**

## *Pastor's Pulse ~*

## **Making Room: An Advent Devotional**

I invite you this Advent to make room. Make room in your busy schedule for moments of peace. Make room in your expectations to be surprised. Make room in your attention for sudden joys, and make room for unresolved griefs you'd prefer to ignore. Make room for darkness within you; let the play of shadows give your light angle and texture. Make room in your righteousness to consider what's loveable in someone you dislike, quiet your self-chatter, and listen to what is true in their hearts. Make room in your own heart to love what you have neglected.

Make room for patience, for waiting on the Lord. Hollow out a place in your certitude for mystery. Sweep out the habits that limit you, and push to the side your resentments and fears. Make room to be called by the purposes in need of you.

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***Next Issue: January 2020***

*Have something you'd like included in next month's Messenger? Please submit your articles to: Lisa Jancarik [newsletter@srvumc.org](mailto:newsletter@srvumc.org) by **December 8, 2019.***

This Advent we offer you 25 days' worth of devotions to enjoy and wrestle with. They are meant to come at this season's tradition of preparation, anticipation, joy and gratitude from a perspective that may take some getting used to. Some of the reflections are gritty, some are about pain. Some, I hope, are funny, and some may feel like a punch in the gut. More than a few are touching and personal. All but seven are written by Sarah Stribling, who has belonged to SRVUMC since childhood. Like everyone whose faith I most admire, Sarah's journey has followed a stony road, her relationship to God has often been contentious, and the questions she asks are brave. They issue from an intelligence that encompasses much more than her brain and is as fierce as it is tender.

The questions she asks and the topics she explores I encouraged (and edited) because they touch, often in an oblique way, the traditional concerns Advent invites us to address: How do we prepare for the birth of the Christ Child in each of our lives? How do we confront the darkness that always precedes the dawn of something? How do we maintain hope in a world that often seems more savage than good?

**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**

[www.srvumc.org](http://www.srvumc.org)

**Ministers**

EVERYONE

**Lead Pastor**

Kim Risedorph (ext. 107)

**Associate Pastor**

Dan Sturdivant (ext. 108)

**Director of Family Ministries**

Laura Roy (ext. 106)

**Youth Director**

Rebecca Bernstein (ext. 109)

**Office/HR Manager**

Susan Dowling (ext 104)

**Accountant**

Larry Bieber

**Assistant Accountant**

Theresa Omar

**Office Assistant**

Patsy Kyles

**Facilities & Purchasing  
Manager**

Marilyn Clarke (ext 102)

**Music Director**

Bruce Koliha

**Organist**

Nadia Blank-Koliha

**U.M. Preschool Director**

Paulette Ove (ext 113)

**AV Director**

Linda Green

**Messenger Editor**

Lisa Jancarik

[newsletter@srvumc.org](mailto:newsletter@srvumc.org)

**Communications Manager**

Shana Carroll

**Director of Recreational  
Ministries**

Joey Fuca

(925) 837-2011

Each day's devotion is accompanied by a Scripture reading as well as follow-up questions to guide your personal reflections and group discussion, both of which we encourage you to have. The Sunday entries are written by Pastor Kim or me and are tied to traditional readings for the four Sundays of Advent and to our preaching.

In the beginning, God made room. In the midst of chaos, God cleared an opening for Creation to come into being. May God in Christ clear such an opening for you to come into greater fullness of being who God created you to be.

***Pastor Dan***

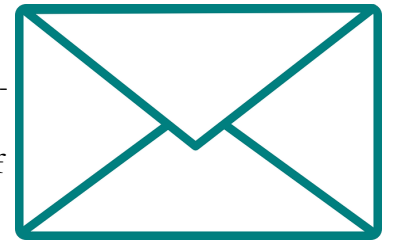
Regarding your becoming a reconciling congregation, I would like to give you all heartfelt encouragement. This will be nothing but positive for your community. By opening up your hearts and minds to welcome in people of all gender identities and sexual orientation into your house of worship says you are all about "Love."

At Los Altos United Methodist, I have been fortunate to have seen our church progress into a glorious, faith-driven congregation that will not allow fear and prejudices mandate how we worship. I never would have returned if it had not been for the very fact LAUMC is a reconciling Church. This very fact has made me ever so proud to be a member and to call myself a Christian. The diversity of backgrounds, experiences and ethnicity says everyone is loved and accepted here.

My very best to you all in this enormous progressive move to becoming a reconciling church. You will not regret it. You all should feel so proud. Now, if the rest of the world would only follow your lead.

With love,

**Leslie Poniatowski**

***O Come All Ye Faithful!*****Christmas Eve Services**

**5 p.m.**—Family Service led by the Youth and Living Water musicians.

*(It's time to sign up your kids to participate in the pageant that will be celebrated at this service! See Page 11 of this newsletter for details.)*

**8 p.m.**—Traditional Service

**11 p.m.**—Candlelight Service With Communion



## Good Stewardship and Mailed Newsletters

We want to be sure you receive our monthly church newsletter, and we want to be good stewards of our resources. Starting in **January 2020**, we will have copies of the *Messenger* newsletter available in the office, in the Sanctuary and in Wesley Fellowship Hall.

Many of you have let us know that starting next year, you will be able to pick up a copy at church rather than having a copy mailed to you. A few people in our congregation have asked that we continue to mail them a copy. And many of you have asked that we start emailing you a copy instead of mailing one.

*If you have not let us know which method is best for you, please contact Patsy Kyles at the church office to ensure that you get the newsletter in the way that works best for you. Call 837-5243 or email [pkyles@srvumc.org](mailto:pkyles@srvumc.org).*

Thank you for helping us with this project. Our new delivery system will start with January issue of the *Messenger*.

## Did You Know?

In Germany, Poland and Ukraine, finding a spider or web on your Christmas tree is believed to portend good luck! *(This German girl is not buying it...Ugh!—Editor)*

## Methodist Men Present Their Annual All-Church Friends and Children Christmas Brunch

**December 21, 8:30 a.m.  
Wesley Center**

Great Christmas fare and activities including

- Fellowship and caroling
- Photos with Santa (we emphasize that children are welcome)
- Ukelele music medley

Tickets: \$15 adults, \$5 ages 6 to 12, Children under six FREE. **Keep your ticket for your server.**

Proceeds benefit our church ministries!



## Nurturing the Seeds of Compassion

### A Special Opportunity!

### Final Interfaith Retreat on Compassion

By the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa and SRVUMC

**Sunday, December 1, 2 to 8 p.m.**

(double session includes dinner)

San Damiano Retreat Center

- **11th Step: Seeing Yourself in the Needs of Others**
- **12th Step: Love Your Enemies**

Spend an afternoon learning, sharing in good conversation, and being “opened” by practices of compassion in of the **Christianities** guided by **Rev. Will McGarvey** (Executive Director, Interfaith Council of Contra Costa), **Rev. Kristin Powell** and **Father Tom Bonacci** (one of our favorite spiritual guides). An extraordinary experience! Karen Armstrong's book, *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life* is our guide.

Contact **Bill Rust**, [wrusjrab@aol.com](mailto:wrusjrab@aol.com) to register or for a program brochure. Fee \$40-60 (includes dinner).





# December Communion Offering

Our December Communion recipient will be **The Trinity Center**. This month's offering coincides with Trinity Center's move to the newly built St Paul's Commons, scheduled to open in November. St. Paul's Commons is a mixed-use development with community-serving spaces operated by St. Paul's Episcopal Church and Trinity Center.

The four-story building will house 30 studios and 14 one-bedroom apartments designated as low-income. St. Paul's Episcopal Church of Walnut Creek leased the land adjacent to the church to nonprofit developer Resources for Community Development for construction of the facility. The building cost about \$23 million to construct and was paid for through a combination of city, county and federal funds.

See <https://rcdhousing.org/st-pauls-commons> for more information. Additional content for this article was drawn from <https://www.timesheraldonline.com/2019/06/17/bay-area-churches-building-housing-in-gods-backyard/>

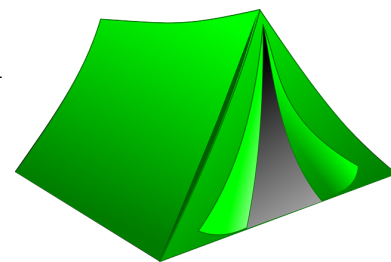


## Christmas Offering



### Winter Nights

Many SRVUMC members are already very familiar with this project. Organized by the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County, Winter Nights supports the local homeless population. Guests are screened and have dependent children. Each participating congregation hosts for two weeks, providing bedding, meals and other services (watch for more information about how you can help this year!). Two thirds of this project's budget comes from the contributions of individuals and congregations in Contra Costa County. **SRVUMC will host Winter Nights in 2020 from May 4 through May 18. Watch for more information about how you can participate as the dates approach!**



### Global Missions: Nepal/Zimbabwe

**Larry and Jane Kies** continue their mission work in Mutare, Zimbabwe. Larry is a technical advisor to the Africa University Farm, while Jane teaches intensive English to students at Africa University.

**Katherine Parker** serves as a missionary in Nepal, focusing on health, hygiene and sanitation. A local to Mill Valley, Katherine visited SRVUMC back in May 2016 to update us on her work (*photo next page*). SRVUMC's partnership with Katherine is much more than a financial commitment. It is a dynamic relationship in which the church and missionary pray for one another and communicate regularly. When a church covenants with one missionary, it is supporting the entire United Methodist missionary community on their behalf. You can learn more about Katherine and her work at <https://advance.umcmision.org/p-1547-parker-katherine.aspx>.

### Fred Finch

Established as an orphanage in 1891 by Duncan and Eunice C. Finch, the Fred Finch Youth Center has evolved to serve area children and adolescents with a range of personal challenges. This organization has centers in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo and San Diego Counties. The children, youth and young adults impacted by Fred Finch face mental, develop-

mental or emotional challenges; trauma or abuse; and substance exposure. These hurdles are made higher by poverty, stigma or discrimination. Fred Finch assists with residential care for some children and adolescents, but many receive services through their public schools or through the Fred Finch non-public school special education. The organization's [website](#) offers insight into its programs like Passport to Life in cooperation with the juvenile court system and a carnival for its residents to share with loved ones.



## Bay Area Rescue Mission

The Bay Area Rescue Mission and Shelter has assisted the homeless and hungry in the region for over fifty years. BARM ministers to men, women and children. Since their founding in 1965, they have served over 20,000,000 meals and offered 4,000,000 bed-nights of shelter. These essentials must be available to protect health and state of mind, and addressing these immediate needs allows BARM guests “to begin addressing their problems,” according to [the group’s website](#).



To this end, the organization’s efforts have a much broader scope, not least of which includes adult education. GED preparation, skills for employment and life, as well as Bible studies assist the population BARM serves.

BARM’s long-term discipleship program encourages their guests to stay while they work on developing job skills, attending counseling for substance abuse, or dealing with outstanding financial issues. At the organization’s Center for Women and Children, 165 of the 195 beds are designated for the long-term program.

Because a basic level of trust may need to be built with the area’s chronic homeless, BARM’s mobile outreach team comes to homeless people in parks and encampments. It brings food packs, water bottles and hygiene kits, along with other essentials and maps to the Rescue Mission itself.



*Missionary Katherine Parker visits SRVUMC in May 2016.*

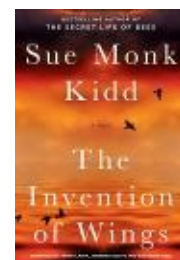
## Afternoon Book Group

**Monday, January 27, 1 p.m.**

**Rm. 202 Wesley Center**

*The Invention of Wings* by Sue Monk Kidd

*Note that this is the January book.  
There is no December book!*



## Church Council Meeting

**December 17, 7 p.m.**

**Fireside Room**

Ever wonder how the wheels turn at SRVUMC? You can find out because the church council meetings are open to members and constituents.

## Christmas for Everyone

**Annual Charity Fundraiser Recital**

**Saturday, December 7, 5 p.m.**

**San Ramon Valley UMC**



## **As New 2020 Restrictions Loom, Western Jurisdiction Bishops Pledge Safe Harbor for LGBTQ+ United Methodist Clergy, Seek Support**

(Reprinted from [calnev-email.brtapp.com](mailto:calnev-email.brtapp.com). A link to the article also appears on the SRVUMC Facebook page)

***Western Jurisdiction United Methodist bishops intend to set aside complaints against clergy accused of being gay or performing LGBTQ+ weddings; urge others to join them.***

LAKE JUNALUSKA, N.C., November 6 – As new restrictions loom against LGBTQ+ persons in The United Methodist Church, the five active bishops in the Western Jurisdiction (region of the United States) are offering a Safe Harbor to LGBTQ+ clergy and are urging bishops and other United Methodists to join them.

The bishops have asked their colleagues on the denomination's Council of Bishops to sign their declaration and urged other clergy and laypersons across the church to join them in supporting full inclusion of LGBTQ+ people in all parts of the life of the church. They made their request during the Council's meeting at Lake Junaluska, N.C.

Their action comes as a series of new restrictions tightening the denomination's prohibition barring LGBTQ+ persons from ordination as clergy goes into effect on January 1.

"We intend to provide safe harbor for clergy under our care who may be at risk under the new provisions, prohibitions, and punishments," the bishops said.

"We do not believe that The United Methodist Church has the authority or the power to impose limits on the movement of God's Holy Spirit in the lives of God's beloved LGBTQ+ children.

"We intend to exercise our authority as bishops of The United Methodist Church to encourage and protect the full participation of LGBTQ+ persons as beloved children of God, embraced in God's reign of grace."

Understanding that it is impossible to accomplish this without recognizing how God calls people of all sexual orientations to ministry, they write, "We do not intend to withhold or challenge ordination based solely on a person's gender identity or sexual orientation. We are unwilling to punish clergy who celebrate the marriage of two adults of any gender or sexual orientation seeking the blessing of God and the Church for their covenanted life together."

The new restrictions will make it easier to file complaints against LGBTQ+ persons seeking to enter into ministry and provide for mandatory punishments against clergy convicted of presiding over same-sex weddings. There is no other place in church law that requires mandatory punishments.

To sign and show support for the bishops' declaration, click [here](#). Read the [full text of their declaration](#) here.

### **Media Contact:**

Stephen Drachler

Communications Consultant to the Western Jurisdiction College of Bishops

717.926.7240 cell

[sedrachler@gmail.com](mailto:sedrachler@gmail.com)

# New Members Welcomed to SRVUMC in 2019!

*Some professed their faith, some came from elsewhere, and others were Confirmed.  
We're glad you're here!*

## *Joined in February:*

Carol Arabian

Mike Carroll

Shana Carroll

Jean Crane

Sherrie Fraser

Krystelle Frederick

Phil Herrington

Gordon Huffacker

Lucinda Huffacker

Paulette Ove

Annette Patch

Gordon Pierce

Peggy Pierce

Christine Ritter

Kelly Ritter

## *Joined in October:*

Emily Corey

Lee Corey

Leslie Gross

Michael Gross

William Hartman

Melinda Love

Marlys Siegel

Frances Stephenson

## *Confirmed in 2019:*

Julia Farhang

Dana Jancarik

Gabi Kirby

Spencer Lang

Jackson Ludlam

WELCOME

*May God help you find the  
Peace among the parties; Joy  
among the jingles; and Wonder  
among the wreaths. Merry  
Christmas, Everyone!*

## Did We Miss You?

Our office is currently reviewing its membership records, and the **Celebrants page (Page 15)** relies on this information, together with just plain remembering if we've seen you around lately. *If you've been overlooked or know someone else who has, please let us know at [newsletter@srvumc.org](mailto:newsletter@srvumc.org).*

## *From your Endowment Committee:*

### How To Maximize Your Investments

Do you own highly appreciated stock or other investments that, if sold, would result in a high tax bill? Are your CDs or other investments producing a lower return or less income than desired? If you are looking for ways to manage your investments, maximize their worth and minimize taxes there are a number of charitable strategies that can help you achieve your goals. Here are three options to consider.

1. **Outright Gift:** One of the easiest way to lower taxes on an investment is to make a tax deductible gift of the asset to your church.
2. **Charitable Gift Annuity:** CDs or other investments that produce little or no income can be exchanged for a "Charitable Gift Annuity" that makes fixed payment for life.
3. **Charitable Remainder Trust:** Investments that have appreciated can be used to fund a "Charitable Remainder Trust" that will generate income and tax savings.

If you wish to discuss any of these options please contact your tax preparer and/or your Endowment Committee chairman.



# Upcoming Mission Opportunities

## Assisting with the Recovery in Puerto Rico

Hurricane Maria destroyed the Island of Puerto Rico in the fall of 2017. It will be a long and challenging recovery, and we would like to continue helping! We will be returning for our third trip to assist with rebuilding damaged homes.

Last year, we worked in small towns along the coast. Our team will stay at a retreat camp or a local church, depending on our assignment. Our specific location will be decided closer to the time of the trip.

While conditions have improved significantly, you should assume limited electricity, hot water and air conditioning. Drinking water and meals will be provided. The team will be led by Leslie Carmichael of Los Altos UMC and Steve Elliott from San Ramon Valley UMC, both very experienced team leaders and co-leaders of the California Nevada Conference Team to Puerto Rico the last two years.

***You are invited to join our mission trip, February 14 to 22, 2020. The estimated cost of the trip is \$500 for individual participant expenses like housing, meals, insurance and other in-country costs, plus \$600 to \$800 for airfare.***



*Roofing in Puerto Rico, 2019.*

## FLOWERS FOR CHRISTMAS 2019

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. 16, in the Church office)***

Donor's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

***All flowers purchased this year will go to shut-ins. Any funds not specifically needed for Christmas will be placed in the Flower Fund.***

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



# Grief During the Holidays

When someone we love dies, the span between Thanksgiving and the New Year may feel like a terrible emotional gauntlet to run. Watching others laugh and enjoy themselves at parties and other traditional gatherings can make us feel disconnected and deepen the loneliness we may already be carrying. Traditions may feel less meaningful—or *too* meaningful. What's more, the family and friends around us may also be grieving, but in ways that feel out of step with our own process.

"If the grief is fresh, holiday cheer can seem like an affront. Celebrations may underscore how alone people feel," says Dr. Michael Miller in an article posted to the [Harvard Health Blog](#).

In the chaos of emotions that may be swirling during the holidays, be ready to go with your internal flow. However, there are some important considerations that may ease your bereavement during this period.

## Traditions

Embrace the traditions that matter to you, but be ready to dump the ones you don't have the energy for or that have too many associations. Cherish the ones that you can find meaning in, but consider taking a different direction if some part of a tradition is too painful.

You may have to negotiate a little bit with some of your family, so be ready to explain what you would or would not like or

might find difficult. For example, if you can't bear the idea of looking at your spouse's empty chair at Christmas dinner, then suggest going out for your meal this year or making it a buffet where you all snack in the family room instead of the dining room. Chances are that others in the group are grieving, too, so there may need to be some compromises to accommodate everyone's bereavement.

## Pace Yourself

You don't have to do it all. Maybe you won't pull out all the decorations or put lights up outside this year. Maybe the Christmas cards won't go out this year. People will understand if you just bag the cookie-baking frenzy in favor of making a single favorite...or nothing. Whatever you decide to do, don't have guilt about what you elect *not* to do.

Also, you don't have to attend every event. You may have people insisting that it would be "good for you" to go to the party/brunch/dinner/et cetera, but that isn't necessarily true. Don't let yourself be bullied into taking on a social obligation that you're going to dread.

## The Escape Hatch

You may not really know how you're going to feel about a holiday event until you're in it. If you don't want to entirely miss out on a holiday party, then ask in advance if there will be a quiet place where you can take a break with a magazine or some TV if you start to feel overwhelmed. Plan in advance how you're going to get home if you decide to leave (consider

## Widows/Widowers Grief Recovery of the East Bay

Have you (or someone you know) experienced the death of a spouse recently or within the last few years? Sharing our experiences during this 10-week class is extremely helpful to our healing process. Find hope, support and successful ways to process this significant life event. Course is open to all widows and widowers. Enrollments are now being accepted. Please call the contact listed for a given class if you would like to attend or to learn more about the group. Preregistration is required. The workbook is \$15.

**January 17 through March 20, 2020, 1 to 3:30 p.m.**—Fridays, First Presbyterian Church of San Leandro, 180 Estudillo Ave., San Leandro. *Contact Merrilee Mitchell at 510-482-5296 or email [merrileehm@sbcglobal.net](mailto:merrileehm@sbcglobal.net)*

**January 18 through March 21, 2020, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.**—Saturdays, Valley Community Church, 4455 Del Valle Pkwy, Pleasanton. *Contact Linda Husted at 925-833-9013 or email [lihusted@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lihusted@sbcglobal.net)*

**January 19 through March 22, 2020, 1 to 3:30 p.m.**—Sundays, First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, 2407 Dana St., Berkeley. *Contact Merrilee Mitchell at 510-482-5296 or email [merrileehm@sbcglobal.net](mailto:merrileehm@sbcglobal.net)*

**March 17 through May 19, 2020, 3 to 5 p.m.**—Tuesdays, Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Dr., Lafayette. *Contact Bev Fellows at 925-949-7628 or email [beverlyfellows@comcast.net](mailto:beverlyfellows@comcast.net)*

**July 11 through September 12, 2020, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.**—Saturdays, Valley Community Church, 4455 Del Valle Pkwy, Pleasanton. *Contact Linda Husted at 925-833-9013 or email [lihusted@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lihusted@sbcglobal.net)*

learning to use Uber or Lyft if you haven't already). Feeling like you have a measure of control over the situation may assuage some of the dread people sometimes feel in them.

### **Honor Your Memories**

Consider making a new tradition or altering an existing one to remember your loved one. Print and frame a holiday photo of him or her to display, or light a candle. Donate in your loved one's name to or volunteer with a charity he or she would have endorsed. Take some time to look at the old photos of previous holidays if you haven't already. However you make time for your memories, it's important that you give your feelings space and acknowledge them.

### **Take Care of Yourself**

With the ready access to alcohol and favorite foods, it's even easier to turn to them for comfort during an especially emotional time. Don't neglect nutrition or lapse into unhealthy behaviors you might otherwise have gotten away from. Plan out your quiet time and do whatever brings you a measure of peace—a hobby, exercise, reading, etc.

### **Ask for Help**

Don't be afraid to admit that you are struggling with the season and all the emotions that have come with it, even if your loss isn't particularly recent. You don't have to be alone in the process. If reminding the people in your life that you're in a rough time of year isn't enough, there are resources available, like support groups, Stephen ministers or even professional counselors.

*Resources for this article included articles from [Psychology Today](#), [WhatsYourGrief.com](#), and [Harvard Health Blog](#).*

## **Mission Memories...**

### **Volunteering at Monument Crisis Center Senior Moments Program**

On September 20, ten volunteers from SRVUMC helped out with the bimonthly Monument Crisis Center, Senior Moments program. The Senior Moments program provides low-income seniors with breakfast, health screenings and social activities. The volunteers were as follows: **Greg Koos, Debbie Koos, Bill Van Bezey, Lee Rust, Floy Blair, Susan Gest, Donna Bain, Bruce and Marianne Templeton and Trudy Pasquale**. We served more than 100 Seniors and helped with the decorations and entertainment (bingo, raffle, dancing in the aisles, et cetera). Everyone enjoyed the mission and would like to go back.

Once MCC has their 2020 calendar ready, we plan on signing up for a couple Fridays.

*Please contact Debbie or Greg Koos at [glkoos@comcast.net](mailto:glkoos@comcast.net) if you are interested in joining us for this fun and rewarding mission.*



# PRIME TIME *Players*

Don't miss our one event in December! No Prime Time Potluck and Presentation, just our annual Prime Time Christmas Lunch!

**Tuesday, December 10,  
Noon, Wesley Center**

Chef John Sanders will cook up his **amazing traditional**

**Christmas meal.** That man cooks for 80 better than most of us cook for eight! Roasted turkey, traditional stuffing, mashed potatoes and all the fixin's. And wait till you try the praline pumpkin pie! Our very own Pastor Dan will be our singing entertainment! Absolutely the best \$5-10 Christmas Lunch in The Valley!



**December 7, 1 to 3 p.m.  
Wesley Center**

One of our most special intergenerational events! Mothers and daughters, grandmothers and grandchildren, and maybe even a few three-generation tables! All guests bring a dish to share. Devotional by Pastor Kim Risedorph, and music from the John Muir Chorus is followed by a Christmas carol singalong!

**Host a Table:** Kay Jones at [Kaydee5702@gmail.com](mailto:Kaydee5702@gmail.com)

**Tea Food:** Nancy Benvenuto at [nancybenvenuto@gmail.com](mailto:nancybenvenuto@gmail.com)

**Entertainment:** Gemma Seppull at [Gemmaheddle@alum.mit.edu](mailto:Gemmaheddle@alum.mit.edu)

## Children's Christmas Pageant!

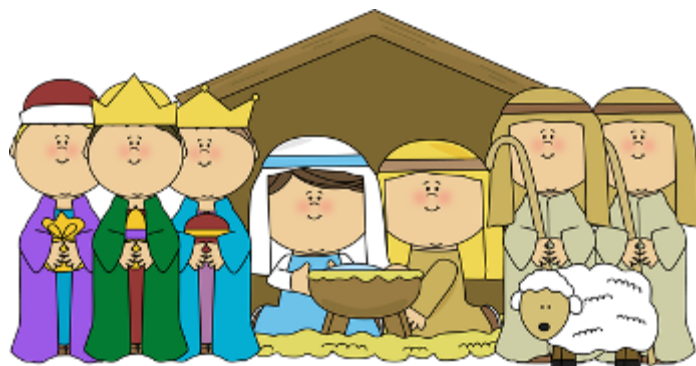
**Monday, December 24 at 5 p.m.**

**(Walkthrough at 4 p.m. before the service)**

We'd love your family to be involved in this simple retelling of the Christmas Story. Your children will carry this wonderful tradition with them throughout their lives!

The parts include:

- 2 Narrators (5th grade students)
- Mary, Joseph, and Angel Gabriel
- Three Wise People
- Inn Keepers
- Angels (the children's choir)
- Shepherds and Sheep (the little ones)



***Simple rehearsal on Sunday, December 22 at 10:30 a.m. (following Agape choir rehearsal)***

We would send home a script for practice and then do a walkthrough at 4 p.m., before the service. Would your children like to participate? It would be so fun to be the storytellers for our church family this year. Please email me as soon as possible: [loy@srvumc.org](mailto:loy@srvumc.org). Thank you for responding! I'm looking forward to a blessed Christmas season with your families.





# Between the Bookends

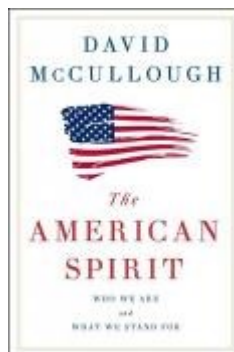


By The Library Committee

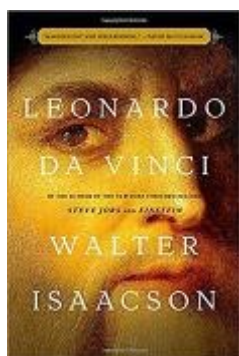


*For relaxation in this busy season, try one of our delightful Christmas books by such authors as Debbie Macomber, James Patterson, Livia J. Washburn, and Jan Karon.*

—The Library Committee



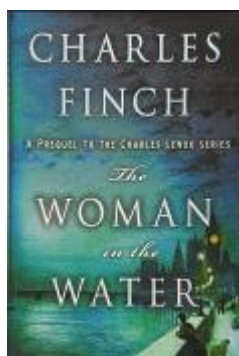
McCullough, David, *The American Spirit: Who We Are and What We Stand For*. This slim volume is a delightful, uplifting, and educational collection of speeches given between 1989 and 2016 in which McCullough sets out his belief in our fundamental American principles. While tailoring his speeches to each audience, he also makes his



Isaacson, Walter, *Leonardo da Vinci*.

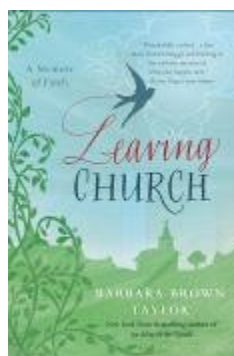
The book not only tells the story of Leonardo's life; it also has illustrations of his paintings and pages from his notebooks with clear explanations of his methodology in each one. Throughout the book it is emphasized that everything he did was based on his explorations of the physical world. He was as much a scientist as he

was an artist. But while Isaacson extolls him for his great accomplishments, he also tells of his weakness in often failing to finish projects that he started. Reading the story of this towering figure is like taking a class in Renaissance art.



Finch, Charles, *The Woman in the Water*. When the son of a member of Parliament completes his education, it is rather assumed that he will follow in his father's footsteps. Not so with Lenox, who along with his valet, Graham, is intrigued with solving crimes, especially murders. They enthusiastically spend their mornings searching through the early newspapers and clipping articles

that tell about the latest findings in such crimes. He becomes intrigued by a murder dubbed "the woman in the water." Thinking he might have some solutions to this crime, he scurries to Scotland Yard, where surprisingly enough, he is welcomed, considering he is a novice as a detective. Will he continue in his endeavors as a sleuth? Read and decide for yourself.



Taylor, Barbara Brown, *Leaving Church*. Ms. Taylor's "memoir of faith" book follows her from youth, through college and seminary. As one of several ministers at a large Atlanta Episcopal church, she yearns for a small church of her own in a more rural setting, without the hustle and bustle of a large city. She accepts the pastoral post in Clarksville, Georgia, 75 miles north of Atlanta, at

Grace-Calvary Episcopal Church. Her story explains the demands, joys, sorrows and reality of ministers in small churches. We learn that Episcopal priests are also very human as she discloses many of her shortcomings. This story will awaken your empathy for all pastors serving their congregations. Beautifully written book with much food for thought!

**"You can never get a cup of tea large enough or a book long enough to suit me."**

—C.S. Lewis





## Calendar

**December 1—Christmas Craft (Creating) Fair, Advent Preparation and Brunch, 10:30 a.m., Wesley Hall.** We will celebrate the beginning of the Christmas season. Our busy fair will have craft stations for all ages that will focus on preparing our hearts for Christmas. Please RSVP to

[lroy@srvumc.org](mailto:lroy@srvumc.org)

**December 22—Pageant Rehearsal, 5 p.m.**

**December 24—Family Service, Christmas Pageant, 5 p.m., Sanctuary**

**Save the date! Sunday, February 23, Chili and Bingo Night, Wesley Hall**



**2nd Sunday of the Month  
December 8, 4 to 6 p.m.,  
Fireside Hall**

Dinner, monthly discussion and other activities. Childcare available in Tot Spot. **Email Laura Roy to sign-up for childcare at [lroy@srvumc.org](mailto:lroy@srvumc.org).**

## Contact Us!

**Laura Roy**

Children's and Family Ministries  
(Children through Grade 5)

[lroy@srvumc.org](mailto:lroy@srvumc.org)

(925)837-5243 ext 106

**Rebecca Bernstein**

Youth Ministries (Grades 6-12)

[rbernstein@srvumc.org](mailto:rbernstein@srvumc.org)

(925)837-5243 ext.109

## Sunday School Topics

### WEEK ONE

ISAIAH 9:6-7, ISAIAH 53:8, MICAH 5:2: Jesus Is Promised

SAY THIS: You can have joy because God keeps His promises.

### WEEK TWO

LUKE 1:5-25; 57-80: The Coming Birth of John the Baptist

SAY THIS: You can have joy because anything is possible with God.

### WEEK THREE

LUKE 1:26-56: The Coming Birth of Jesus

SAY THIS: You can have joy because God is with you.

### WEEK FOUR

LUKE 2:1-20: Jesus Is Born

SAY THIS: You can have joy because God sent His Son.

### WEEK FIVE

MATTHEW 2:1-12: The Wise Men Visit

SAY THIS: You can find joy when you search for God.

### REMEMBER THIS:

"Always be joyful because you belong to the Lord. I will say it again. Be joyful!" PHILIPPIANS 4:4, NIrV

**JOY:** Finding a way to be happy, even when things don't go your way.

## 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 Tot Spot, either service.**

## Weekly Programming

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

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

## Music

**Children's Choir**—Sundays, 10 to 10:30 a.m., TK through grade 5, meets upstairs in Judson. The choir will sing the second Sunday of the month. Also perform for the Christmas concert, Christmas Eve, Palm Sunday, and the May Music Concert. Beth McClelland directs.

**Youth Choir**—Grades 6 to 12, Sundays 3 to 4 p.m. in Judson, 2nd floor. Teri Hawk directs.

**Bros and Belles Choir**—Grades 6 to 12, Practice Sundays from 4 to 5 p.m. Winnie Stribling directs.

## Participate in This Year's Christmas Pageant!

More information on Page 11 this newsletter. Email [lroy@srvumc.org](mailto:lroy@srvumc.org) as soon as possible to get your kids involved in this charming tradition!

**The 5 p.m. service on Christmas Eve features the Pageant.**

# Among Ourselves

## Health Concerns...

Shana Carroll	Marsha Perkins
Leslie Gross	David Scott
Sheila McClelland	Caroline Walsh
Susie McKnight	

## Continued Prayers For...

All those who live with long-term illness, unemployment, life decisions, and sickness in their families: Barbara Brick, Horace Crawford, Doug Domergue, Felicia Hillard, Cary Johnson, Johnny Johnston, Lea Patteson, Lillian Scherer; Ann Schroeder, Joan Webb, Jeannine Woolery

## Our Christian Sympathy...

Our condolences to **Lisa Chapman** following the death of her mother.

## Name Tags

Please contact **Patsy Kyles** in the church office if you need a new name tag (\$8/ea.)

## Newsletter Submission Deadlines...

Each month, a dedicated of volunteers folds and mails the print version of the newsletter that Patsy has dutifully printed out for us. This year, the calendar at the office will require some changes to the submission deadlines for the newsletter, so please make a note:

- **December 8** for the January edition
- **Back to January 15** for the February edition!

# December Celebrations

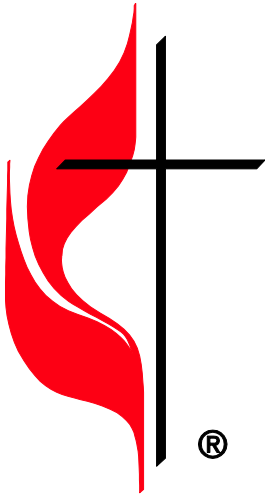


## Birthdays

1 Chuck Desmond David Hagebush Liz Hirsch Victoria Longstreet	9 Kirsten Choy Sandy Clark Ali Kuelz Epi Vazquez	19 Teresa Stroin 20 Kathleen Isbell 21 Luke Ham Susan Pickering-Gest Kate Steffy Kerri Wakefield
2 Sunny Ahn Aimee Knese Madison More' Anita Weir-Ball	10 Wendi Cerda Karen Steffy 11 Gabi Kirby 12 Laura Brown Dewey Reikofoki Joan Webb	22 Kevin Isbell HollyAnn Melton Flo Spanier <b>(98)</b> 23 Gayle Jackson Angela Norton 24 Suzanne Shea 25 Quentin Alexander 26 Sherry Moré 27 Evelyn Evans 28 Jane Knox <b>(93)</b> 29 George Hawk Kevin Keen 30 Phyllis Meyer Elise Doyle 31 Warren McGuffin Phyllis Wood
3 Marissa Clarke Greg Koos Jane Roath	13 Amanda Lang Harrison Pavel Robbie Rigolfi, Jr. Deborah Robinson	
4 Lois Hammond Ray Shea	14 Lillian Baker Holleman Ivan Kerr Annette Whiting	
5 Aly Kelly Emma Willman	15 Jim Braden Horace Crawford	
6 Kathleen Saghafi 7 Niles Bybel Connie Erickson Sketch Sketchley Bailee Smallwood Don Weis	17 Patrick Dowling Teresa Fimby- Christensen Helen Sinclair	
8 Emily Baker Cary Johnson <b>(101)</b>	18 Anne Kuelz	

## Wedding Anniversaries

1 Pam & Bob Dominici <b>(53)</b> 9 Renée & Doug Beck 15 Rosemarie & John Place <b>(57)</b> 16 Aubrie & Jeff Flores 21 Shelley & Bill Lettis	22 Gerry & Jim Aude 27 Barbara & Tom Valdriz 28 Sheryl & Ivan Kerr <b>(57)</b> Laurel & Geoff Portman 29 Eleanor & Fred Toney <b>(58)</b>
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# DECEMBER 2019

## Worship Schedule

Traditional Worship, 9:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

Living Water Worship, 10:30 a.m., in the Sanctuary

Child Care for birth-kindergarten is available during the morning services in Tot Spot

December 2019

Time-valued material — Deliver promptly

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