

The

Valley Messenger

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

Helping People Navigate Life When It Matters Most

Lent, our current liturgical season, literally means springtime. It is our preparation for Easter. In some ways we have been living in an extended Lenten season, as we have been anticipating for a return to being together in person—a springtime that feels so long in coming. I am so thankful for all the teams who have been wondering what our resurrection/return as a Church might look like when it is safe. Among the groups of dedicated people, one group has come together with a particular focus.

Over the last few months, a group of six quietly dedicated people have been meeting via Zoom with the goal of helping our faith community become a vibrant and healthy place where all can be transformed by God's grace. Our goal has been to create a big picture of a process of discipleship, helping people navigate their faith lives when it matters most. This process is neither a new departure nor something that would necessarily change us dramatically. It is rather an effort to intentionally care for people—helping them to care for each other, actually!—and to meet people where they are within the life of our faith community and beyond. We are still in the middle of this journey of discovery. The end goal, perhaps before the summer, is a simple metaphor and a map of an intentional discipleship pathway that works for everyone, regardless of where they are on their journey of faith.

Our team's exploration over the past weeks has included prayer, Scripture, laughter, discussion, studying the founder of Methodism, John Wesley (even chuckling over old 1950s biopics surveying Wesley's life films), examining models of discipleship, and a great deal of reflection around our small groups and adult education activities. We are working with the support of Dr. Phil Maynard, who is a guru of creating discipleship pathways as a free service gifted to us by the Annual Conference.

March 2021

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Next Issue: April 2021

Have something you'd like included in next month's *Messenger*?

Please submit your articles to: Lisa Jancarik at newsletter@srvumc.org by **March 15, 2021**.

Announcements

An all-star team assembled with intentionality, including people who could reach bring their own gifts and spiritual hungers in a way that contributed to the whole. **Sarah Stribling**, my coleader, brings both an understanding of twenty-first century issues and a great capacity to lead group processes. **Larry Stone** brings bountiful understanding of small group ministries in larger church contexts, and he has a sincere calling to reach out into our community in invitational ways. **Phyllis Meyers** was asked to join the team to bring her theological chops and her ability to see systems of thought clearly. **Sandy Gsand** was specifically invited for her experience with the Christ Care model, which includes a balanced and comprehensive approach to small groups life. Her pragmatic leadership and the success of LIFT groups was something we wanted to investigate. **Bill Rust** was asked as a deep thinker with a heartfelt institutional memory of the church.

Our goal has been to create a big picture of a process of discipleship, helping people navigate their faith lives when it matters most.

We are at the point of our work where we need your support and input. How can SRVUMC best support your faith journey? Who are the people we need to reach/support? What would you recommend? Please email me and I'll share with the group (mjoshi@srvumc.org).

May our resurrections be blessed, and may God give us wisdom to enthusiastically return to in-person church with great enthusiasm when the time is right.

Peace,

Pastor Mantu

If You Had Three Wishes for Our Church Community, What Would They Be?



We are hoping to hear from as many people as possible, and we want to hear from you. Many of us have answered this question in small group or other meetings. However, if you have not yet had the chance to share your vision for our future, please email to Pastor Kim at krisedorph@srvumc.org. She's always happy to hear from you.

We Need Your Help To Provide Outdoor Services

We need trained worship assistants. If you are available for half-hour Zoom Training, and are comfortable setting up tables and chairs and signs around campus, please contact Pastor Kim at krisedorph@srvumc.org. Thank you!



Announcements



Holy Week and Easter Services

Maundy Thursday, April 1

7 p.m. Streamed live on Facebook.

Good Friday, April 2

7 p.m. Streamed live on Facebook. Ponder the “Anatomy of a Tear” with Pastor Mantu.
(See below for more information.)

Easter Sunday, April 4

All services in the Courtyard

6:30 a.m. Sunrise Service

9 a.m. Traditional Service

11 a.m. Traditional Service

Good Friday Service

“Anatomy of a Tear”

April 2, 7 to 8 p.m.

Good Friday this year will be streamed via Facebook and available later on YouTube, led by Pastor Mantu. Process the pain of the last year by pondering the “anatomy of a tear.” Acknowledge our sorrow through soulful and pensive music even as we look to the hope of the cross. You are invited to reflect and ponder through drawing. ***Please keep a blank sheet of paper and a pen handy. You don't need to be an artist!***

Women's Retreat Postponed to 2022

After careful consideration, the Women's Retreat Committee has reluctantly concluded that we need to cancel the retreat this year.

We had planned for a scaled down, one-day event at San Damiano in April, but due to safety considerations from the ongoing pandemic, we cannot proceed. We look forward to our annual weekend retreat next year at beautiful Villa Maria del Mar in Santa Cruz, **February 4 through 6, 2022**, and hope you can join us there! —***Your SRVUMC Women's Retreat Planning Team***

Can You Volunteer as a Handyperson?

Please email [Marilyn Clark](#) with the types of projects you would be willing to do around the church campus, i.e., electrical, plumbing, painting, etc.

Announcements

Reconciling Ministries Network

Rooted and Rising

Evolving our Advocacy to Include All Marginalized Groups

The Reconciling Ministries Network has initiated a new chapter in its history called Rooted & Rising. As part of this new phase, the RMN acknowledges that LGBTQ justice requires intersectional justice. An inclusive gospel demands that ALL people are welcomed and embraced — and that includes every marginalized community.

To formalize the commitment, RMN has adopted a new faith statement and encourages all reconciling communities to revisit their reconciling statements to confirm they are fully inclusive or change them to reflect full inclusivity. Here is their statement:

"We celebrate God's gift of diversity and value the wholeness made possible in community equally shared and shepherded by all. We welcome and affirm people of every gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation, who are also of every age, race, ethnicity, physical and mental ability, level of education, and family structure, and of every economic, immigration, marital, and social status, and so much more. We acknowledge that we live in a world of profound social, economic, and political inequities. As followers of Jesus, we commit ourselves to the pursuit of justice and pledge to stand in solidarity with all who are marginalized and oppressed."

As SRVUMC continues to explore how to make a positive impact inside and outside of our community, this is a timely reminder that all people are deserving of love and grace. To honor and acknowledge the RMN request, we will create events that allow for seeing the difficult issues of the world through an intersectional lens. Watch for us to coordinate an event with Dialogue for Change when it restarts this summer.

The SRVUMC Welcome Team would love to hear your ideas regarding the LGBTQ experience within our church, our community and social issues in general. **Please contact Kathleen Saghafi at kathleensaghafi@gmail.com with your thoughts!**

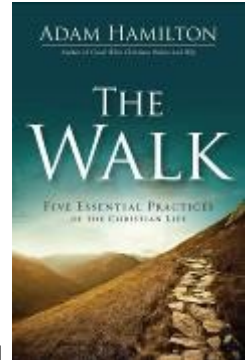


Spiritual Growth

You Can Still Join a Lenten Study Group!

This Lent our church will be following Adam Hamilton's *The Walk: Five Essential Practices of the Christian Life*.

There are a number of regular groups using Hamilton's book as well as several new groups continuing for the five to six weeks leading us into Easter. Some groups may choose to use the DVD format that is also available. If you are unable to find a group that works for you, please let us know. **Contact Larry Stone or email Pastor Mantu at mjoshi@srvumc.org, and we will do our best to help you connect.**



- **Pastor Mantu, Sundays, 11 a.m.** A Zoom group discussion that will closely parallel the teachings with the sermons of each week.
- **Bill Rust, Tuesdays, 7 to 8 p.m.** A new Zoom group designed for working professionals trying to maintain life balance/well-being.
- **Larry and Linda Stone** will be arranging a group that has a heart for people who may feel they would like to reconnect to church life (meeting information will be provided soon).
- **Our women's LIFT groups** will also welcome new participants during Lent and offer meetings on
 - Sundays, 5 to 6:30 p.m. (**Debbie Kelly**)
 - Thursdays, 9:45 to 11:15 a.m. (**Sandy Gsand**)
- **Women of Wisdom, Wednesdays, 10:30 to noon.** Contact **Marilyn Milam** if you are interested in joining this group for this Lenten reading discussion.
- **Lent over Lunch, Tuesdays, 12 to 1:30 p.m.** A new Zoom Lenten small group! Our first meeting was February 23, but you can still jump in. For more information, contact **Sarah Stribling** at sarah_stribling@msn.com.
- **Taking the Sermon Into the World, Sundays at 10 a.m.** We welcome all to join us via Zoom. We began our study of *The Walk* by Adam Hamilton on February 21, along with our discussion of the worship service, but you can still join us. Facilitated by **Laura Sanchez** and others.
- **New to San Ramon Valley UMC? Wednesdays, 7 to 8 p.m.** Want to meet more people, ask questions about our church, and participate in a Lenten Small Group? We have just what you need! Pastor Kim will lead a four-week Lenten Study starting on **Wednesday, March 10**. This group is for folks who are new to the church, and are considering joining. Contact Pastor Kim at krisedorph@srvumc.org with any questions, or to register for the class.

Spiritual Growth

Great Decisions 2021

Begins Sunday, April 11, 10 a.m.

Zoom

What are the great global policy decisions facing the US and how should Christians respond? Our church will hold a series of eight weekly discussions on critical global issues on Zoom using a guide prepared by the Foreign Affairs Association (FAA). This program is part of an annual, nationwide program, whereby groups of concerned citizens throughout the US will discuss why the issues are important and why we should be concerned.

A twenty-minute video prepared by the FAA, will be shown on each topic followed by a facilitated discussion. The discussion series guidebooks are available from the [FPA website](#) for \$32 plus postage. Coordinated by [Lyn Arscott](#).



The following topics are scheduled:

April 11—Global Supply Chains and US National Security. What are some of the lasting effects that the pandemic could have on global supply chains and trade? How would this affect national security?

April 18—The Future of Persian Gulf Security. What are the historical influences that have led to these tensions? What role, if any, should the United States play? Is using military force a viable foreign policy option for 2021 and beyond?

April 25—Brexit: Taking Stock and Looking Ahead. What does the future of Europe and the UK look like after BREXIT?

May 2—The Coldest War: Toward a Return to Great Power Competition in the Arctic? What is the changing opinion within the US government toward engagement with the Arctic region. Because of climate change, large sheets of Arctic ice are melting, exposing vast stores of natural gas and oil. With Russia and China already miles ahead with their Arctic strategies, can the US catch up?

May 9—China and Africa. As Chinese President Xi Jinping's centerpiece "Belt and Road initiative" continues to expand Chinese power, the response to the spread of COVID-19, as well as the African government's growing debt to China, has seen pushback. What are some of the growing economic and political issues between China and Africa?

May 16—The Two Koreas. As the rift between the US and China grows further, South Korea may end up in the middle of the two superpowers. What does the future hold for the US relationship with the ROK?

Spiritual Growth

May 23—The World Health Organization's Response to COVID-19. What is the WHO's role in responding to international pandemics? What can be done to improve the WHO's response to future global health crises?

May 30—The End of Globalization? What is globalization and how will it be affected by protectionist trade policies? How will the United States and the world be affected by such policies?

Afternoon Book Group March 15, 1 p.m. Zoom

Rules for Visiting by Jessica Francis Kane with discussion led by Jenny Swanson.

Contact [Debbie Koos](#) for more information about the meeting.



Community Thank Yous

Discovery Center Thanks Congregation. The Discovery Counseling Center thanked our congregation for the recent donation of \$1570. The monies will subsidize more than 30 sessions of mental health care for families that would not otherwise be able to afford their therapy.

"Your church's support of Discovery Counseling Center over the years has been so very meaningful to us, but I am especially grateful for your kindness and generosity in this age of COVID-19," said executive director Kathy Chiverton in her February 8, 2021 letter.

Currently, the organization's [website](#) says that the center is accepting new clients for telehealth services. The remote services are not a hotline. ***If you need immediate mental health support, the center directs you to call 211 or text "HOPE" to 20121 for the Contra Costa Crisis Hotline instead.***



Putnam House Unsung Hero Award to Robert Baker. Like many other committed volunteers, Bob has been very involved with this program as it evolved from Meals With Grace. They surprised him with the honor in celebration of their Thirteenth Annual Birthday Celebration.



Spiritual Growth



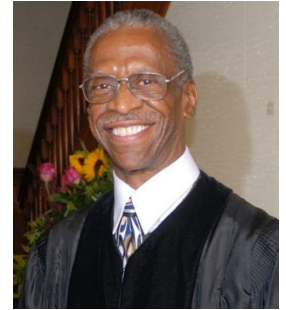
Nurturing the Beloved Community

Monthly Afternoon Interfaith Retreat

Interfaith Council of Contra Costa and SRVUMC

March 7, 3 to 6 p.m.

Led by Rev. Dr. Dorsey Blake



Dr. Blake is the lead minister for the Church of Fellowship of All Peoples in San Francisco, where Dr. Howard Thurman served. Spend an afternoon learning, sharing, in good conversation, and being “opened” by the ways of seeing and practicing faith in a different faith tradition. Fee of \$20 to \$40 (sliding scale) includes handouts. *Contact Bill Rust at wrustjrarb@aol.com, chair, SRVUMC Faith Development Committee, to register or for a program brochure. All are welcome!*

“Breathing Free Together” Community Art Project for Racial Equity

The Dialogue for Change committee is calling for art and publicizing the exhibit itself. We are partnering with the [San Ramon Social Justice Collective](#) and others to offer the show this spring. Public art is an expression of our shared humanity and a form of discourse for the community. All members of the San Ramon Valley community are invited to submit art in the spirit of this project’s theme, “Breathing Free Together.” The theme is meant to encompass racial equity, harmony, healing, and justice.

SRVUMC members (including our youth!), friends and family should submit their work by 5 p.m. on March 7. For more details about this initiative or submitting art, please read the [Project Flyer and Call for Art](#). You can also email questions to Sylvia Benzler at skbenz@mac.com or Deborah Robinson at debltr92@gmail.com.

Action Matters!

March 9, 3:30 to 5 p.m.

Now there is a monthly meeting for people seeking a way to act for racial equity in our community. On the second Tuesday of each month, we share information about antiracism organizations we know about or are participating in, meetings or workshops to try out, upcoming speakers, and who from our church is already connected with them. Join us! It’s a time and place for information and mutual support in Christian community. *Contact Lucinda Huffaker at lucinda.huffaker@gmail.com for more information.*

Out Into the World

Trinity Center Emergency Winter Shelter Help Provide Dinner for 15 People Through April 8, Daily

Seven nights per week, Trinity Center operates its annual overnight winter shelter for its most vulnerable unhoused members.

Each night begins with dinner at Trinity Center before members are transported to the Walnut Creek National Guard Armory. In keeping with COVID-19 protocol, overnight accommodations this year include one-person tents, physically distanced, on the Armory drill floor.

In past years, volunteers could be on-site to help with meals, but COVID-19 protocols make this approach impossible. Thankfully, there are three easy ways to help!

1. **Support a local restaurant!** [Sign up](#) to provide a meal, explore local restaurant options and make arrangements to have meals ready for pickup.
2. **Donate money to sponsor a meal.** Click [here](#) to visit Trinity Center's Donation Information page.
3. **Sponsor multiple meals** by making a group effort.

Since we cannot be together to share a meal at Trinity Center this year, we encourage you to sponsor a meal for our members and consider hosting a virtual gathering with family and friends on the night it is served.



Trinity Center's 7th Annual Night of Hope Gala goes virtual this year, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on June 11. You can watch for Trinity Center to post more information on their [website](#).

Out Into the World



Ellen Kocins, Nancy Banisch and Theresa Omar making sun catchers for distribution through Project Valentine, a February event.

Project Valentine

Volunteers assembled goodie bags for church members at home or in acute care facilities as a gesture reminder that our congregation cares about them.

Goodie bags include a postcard with a prayer, lip balm, a vinyl sticker, a beaded bookmark made by **Shana Carroll** and **Nancy Banisch**, and a note "from your friends at SRVUMC." Where dietary restrictions allowed, snacks were sometimes included. Thanks also the many dedicated **Christ-Care** volunteers, for their ongoing efforts to bring some cheer within the community.

February's Beep Beep Bingo Calls Out Fun

Tom and Laura Roy called numbers for last month's bingo in the church parking lot. Players remained in their cars and listened to Tom on their vehicle's FM stereo. The event offered some family fun and modest prizes geared toward younger players. *Watch for more ways the Family Ministry breaks up the sense of late-pandemic isolation many of us have been feeling.*



Tom and Laura Roy run bingo from the tent, but everyone else plays from inside their cars.



Did You Know?

You can access Contra Costa County's Online Vaccine Appointment-Request Form through the church website. Check it out on our [homepage](#).

Out Into the World

Interfaith Collaboration Potentially Saves 147 Lives

Proving COVID can't keep local residents from working together to save lives, two Danville-area congregations from two different faith traditions hosted a successful Red Cross blood drive on February 13. The congregations together registered 55 donors who donated a combined 49 units of blood, which can potentially save up to 147 lives.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) of Danville and San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church (SRVUMC) teamed up to sponsor the all-day blood drive at a time when blood donations are low but the need for blood is high. The Red Cross provided the donation equipment and phlebotomist staff. The Danville LDS provided their gymnasium at 655 Old Orchard Drive in Danville for the donation event space, which allowed maximum social distancing. Volunteers from both churches worked together in this interfaith collaboration to recruit local blood donors and provide volunteer support on site for both donors and the Red Cross. Social distancing, mask, and sanitation rules were followed.

"We're so glad to be in another service venture with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," said SRVUMC's lead pastor, Kim Risedorph.

The two congregations share a strong commitment to mission and service. This blood drive is the second collaboration between the two congregations in recent months. Last November, members of both churches worked together to prepare hygiene supply kits to donate to local residents and homeless in need of personal hygiene supplies.



All photos by Cassidy Clark, local photographer and videographer.

Communion

What Is UMCOR?

UMCOR stands for United Methodist Committee on Relief and will be the focal point of a Special Sunday Service in March. This year, the official date for UMCOR Sunday is March 14, 2021. *We will celebrate it on our usual Communion Sunday, March 7.*



When watching disaster unfold around the globe, many of us feel the call to help but are at a loss as to what we can actually do. UMCOR Sunday is the day for congregations around the globe to help.

Locally, UMCOR supports the efforts of churches and conferences with their funding. In California, UMCOR has given thousands of dollars in grants for wildfire and earthquake relief.

“They are integral to such work by providing expertise and funding,” said Steve Elliot, who has been central in SRVUMC’s own efforts with wildfires. He points out that they have supplied the hygiene kits and cleaning buckets for our own 2019 and 2020 wildfire efforts.

UMCOR Sunday was previously known as “One Great Hour of Sharing.” We still share with more than 80 countries worldwide.

Scope of UMCOR

We are among 12.5 million United Methodists in 136 countries who participate. This Sunday offering underwrites the UMCOR administrative costs so that all designated gifts for a particular project will go to those who need it most.

UMCOR’s stated mission is “to be a voice of conscience on behalf of the people called United Methodist...to alleviate human suffering and advance hope and healing.”

This transformative work is categorized into three areas:

- Humanitarian relief/disaster response
- Sustainable development
- Global health

UMCOR in 2020

During a year when one disaster seemed to follow another, UMCOR’s long experience in training and supporting responders in the US and globally has allowed massive mobilization. Since November 2020, UMCOR has offered 38 active grants of \$19 million in the US and has supported responses to 99 unique emergencies. *Learn more in the www.umcmmission.org article titled “For UMCOR, 2020 Is One Long Emergency.”*

Family Ministry

Calendar



Kid's Kindness Klub—Sundays, Through March 28, 4 to 5 p.m. For Lent in children's ministries we will be focusing on giving to our communities. Participate in Zoom-led activities that will support our community including Meals on Wheels, Warm Winter Nights, Alamo Residence Home, our church family and our neighbors. **Contact Laura Roy if you wish to participate.**

Easter: Action Eggs Family Adventure! Delivering a special family Easter surprise that will include a fun egg hunt that will lead families through the Resurrection story!

Save the Date! Vacation Bible School – Discovery on Adventure Island, July 26 through 30, 9 to 11:30 a.m. For ages 3 years through grade 5. We will wait a while longer to see if we will be on campus or virtual!

Please take the [Parent Survey](#): *Easter Sunday and Children's Ministries questions.*



Sunday School Topics (TK-5)

Week One

Luke 2:25-35 - Simeon Waits for the Messiah

SAY THIS: When you have to wait, remember God is with you.

Week Two

Exodus 32:1-35 - Golden Calf

SAY THIS: When you have to wait, remember what's true.

Week Three

Genesis 25:24-34 - Esau's Impatience

SAY THIS: If you don't wait, it could cost you.

Week Four

Matthew 21:1-11 - Palm Sunday

SAY THIS: You can celebrate even when you're waiting.

**"Wait for the Lord. Be strong and don't lose hope. Wait for the Lord."
Psalm 27:14, NIrV**

Patience is waiting until later for what you want now.

Contact Us!

Laura Roy

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

lroy@srvumc.org

(925)837-5243 ext 106

Rebecca Bernstein

Youth Ministries (Grades 6-12)

rbernstein@srvumc.org

(925)837-5243 ext.109

Celebrations

Birthdays

1 Bart Jacobi	Gene Ives	Chris Shiber
2 Al Tiedemann	Abby Lang	Judy Slinger
3 Debra Carter	16 Corinne Pavel	25 Marcus Durrenberger
Stephanie Fenoglio	Susan Stevenson	Marianne Templeton
Steve Roath	Justin Walz	26 Kyle Knapp
4 Mike Scalzi	17 Rebecca Bernstein	Carl Ogden
Cole Donaldson	Jack Gordon	27 Dianne Anderson
Miles Murdough	18 Grace Willman	Elizabeth Beck McDaniel
6 Ed Keller	19 Jim Burk	29 Katie Hawk
7 Cindy Rudow	Gavin Helms	30 Corin Drake
9 Terry Sherman	Grady Milligan	Sam Hoff
Paige Steffy	Lori Pavel	Kevin Peters
Roger Ten Elshof	20 Bill Van Bezey	31 Candice Newburn
11 Carrie Doyle	22 Joan Arscott	Greg Warwick
Karen Sanson	Liz Field	
13 Ellen Kocins	Sandra Willman	
15 Betty Jo Bennett (92)	23 Brad Kobsar	
Cathy Colman	Karen Scalzi	
Brian Doyle	24 Katie Buckley	



Anniversaries

5 Kirsten & Langley Choy	22 JoAnne & Jess Erickson (64)
6 Amy & John Riedel	Erin & Rich Lowther
8 Cindy & Tony Leonard	25 Sherry & Sanjiv More'
Andrea Bourgeois McWilliams & Dave McWilliams	26 Dianne & Roger Ehlers
Lori & John Pavel	27 Carrelyn & John Orr
Susie & Peter Ruotsi (52)	29 Marilyn & Berry Scott (63)

Among Ourselves

Health Concerns

Margo Cefalo
Joann Hirsch

Jane Knox
Amy Parnes

Marsha Perkins
Laura Sanchez

Our Christian Sympathy...

To the Peters family on the death of **Belle Peters**.

Rebecca Bernstein and her family in the passing of Rebecca's grandfather, **Tom Favero**.

To the family of **Aksel Schmidt** on his passing.

Continued Prayers For

All those who live with long-term illness, unemployment, life decisions, and sickness in their families, Alina Begley (Kraus), Shana Carroll, Bob De Chene, Connie Erickson, Felicia Hillard, Joan Lee, Dean McWilliams, Ann Schroeder

Please Send Notes and Cards...

To Eleanor Toney, who has moved to a memory care unit in San Ramon. She loves hearing from her church community. Her address:

The Watermark Retirement Community at San Ramon, Suite #155, 12720 Alcosta Blvd., San Ramon, CA 94583.

You might also consider reaching out to Fred, too, during this time of adjustment.

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

Ministers EVERYONE • Lead Pastor Kim Risedorph (ext. 107) • Associate Pastor Mantu Joshi (ext. 108)

Director of Family Ministries

Laura Roy (ext. 106)

Youth Director

Rebecca Bernstein (ext. 109)

Office/HR Manager

Susan Dowling (ext 104)

Accountant

Kim Anderson

Accounting Assistant

Theresa Omar

Office Assistant

Patsy Kyles

Facilities & Purchasing

Manager

Marilyn Clarke (ext 102)

Music Director

Bruce Koliha

Organist

Nadia Blank-Koliha

AV Director

Linda Green

Messenger Editor

Lisa Jancarik

newsletter@srvumc.org

Communications Manager

Shana Carroll

Director of Recreational Ministries

Joey Fuca (925) 837-2011