

The

Valley Messenger

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

Holding the Holy

In Advent we turn towards the holy, a word that originally meant uninjured, sound, healthy, complete, happy. Who is ready for some holiness? This is the time, and now is the season, to hold the holy. Here are some practices that help us do that.

Advent Devotional ([click here](#))

These stories were written by community members who found the Holy Presence of God with them in everyday moments, challenging moments, and cherished traditions. This year, we're offering opportunities to share our faith stories and to hear others' stories as a way to build community. Each day of Advent, take in holy stories and learn more about fellow seekers. Join the Advent Devotional discussion group meeting (*details next page*).

Alternative Gift Catalog ([click here](#))

When you give a gift from this catalog, the gift benefits the organization you donate to and allows you to give in honor of others. As we grow and become wise givers, we learn that giving is not just about filling a box with more "stuff." The best gift is one that is treasured long after the occasion has passed. A gift to mission is a gift that lasts and makes a difference. A gift from this catalog is the perfect opportunity to give beyond the ordinary with alternative gifts—the practice of giving a donation in someone's honor rather than a physical gift. It really is two gifts in one!

Christmas Eve Services

5 p.m.—Family and Youth Service in Sanctuary. *Best Christmas Pageant ever!*

8 p.m.—Traditional Worship, In Person and Online

11 p.m.—Traditional Worship With Communion, In Person Only

December 2022

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Next Issue: January 2023

Have something you'd like included in next month's Messenger? Please submit your articles to: Lisa Jancarik at media@srvumc.org by **December 15, 2022.**

Announcements

Musical Celebrations

Join in the beauty of the season by attending one of these Christmas concerts and inviting a friend to join you.

Church Christmas Concert. Sunday, December 18, 4 p.m.

All of our musical groups will offer the joy of the season. All are welcome to attend this free concert and hear the angels sing. In-person only.

San Ramon Valley Chorale Concerts. Sunday, December 4, at 4 p.m. and Saturday, December 10, at 4 p.m. Tickets and information at <https://srvchorale.brownpapertickets.com/>, or access ticket sales through the SRVUMC website. See *Page 6 of this newsletter for the full announcement about this celebration.*

Advent Small Group With Pastor Kim. Wednesdays, November 30, December 7 and 14 at 7 p.m. in Fireside Room and Online. We'll be reading and pondering the Advent Devotional.

Christmas Services

Service of the Longest Night, Wednesday, December 21, 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary. We gather on the darkest night of the year, aware that sometimes this long, cold night matches how you are feeling this year. Perhaps the loss of a loved one makes this year different; perhaps the forced cheer of the season wears you down; perhaps you just need a quiet place to catch your breath. You are not alone. Step away for a half hour and enjoy this quiet, candlelit service.

Christmas Eve Services

5 p.m.—Family and Youth Service in Sanctuary. *Best Christmas Pageant ever!*

8 p.m.—Traditional Worship, In Person and Online

11 p.m.—Traditional Worship With Communion, In Person Only

Christmas Day

10 a.m.—Informal service with Pastor Andrew and Pastor Jong Kim in Wesley Center. Note that the service will be in-person only. Also, musicians and AV team will have this time at home with their families.

Poinsettias: Flowers for Christmas

Donate a poinsettia in honor of or in memory of a loved one with a \$10 donation for the purchase of a plant. Flowers will go to shut-ins. Funds not needed specifically for Christmas will be placed in the Flower Fund. [Click here](#) to reach the downloadable Flowers for Christmas donation form.





Announcements

Pastoral Letter From Bishop Sally Dyck: Interim Bishop Named

Dear Friends and Members of the California-Nevada Annual Conference:

"May the Lord of peace give you peace at all times in all ways." 2 Thessalonians 3:16

The Western Jurisdiction met November 2-5, 2022 in Salt Lake City, UT. Following the election of three bishops, all the bishops were assigned by the WJ Committee on Episcopacy to the various annual conferences.



As you know, Bishop Minerva Carcaño was reassigned to the California-Nevada Annual Conference, starting the new assignment year on January 1, 2023. However, Bishop Carcaño remains under suspension and so an interim bishop is needed to serve beginning January 1, 2023.

The WJ College of Bishops has requested that I continue as your interim bishop for the duration of Bishop Carcaño's suspension or until the summer of 2024 when the jurisdictional conference meets again. At that time a new resident bishop would be assigned due to the fact that Bishop Carcaño will meet the requirement for mandatory retirement.

Officially retired, and also the Ecumenical Officer of the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church, I was not anticipating the resumption of the position of interim. However, I agreed to serve again as your interim bishop in an effort to provide continuity and stability in the conference.

After the first of the year, I will outline for you my priorities so that you have realistic expectations of my episcopal supervision in terms of time and involvement.

In the meantime, we enter a season of holidays. First there's Thanksgiving! Live with a grateful heart that spills over into a generosity of spirit toward others. Advent immediately follows as a season of faithfully waiting in hope for God's activity in our world and lives: "come, Lord Jesus, come into our world broken by conflict and fear." And then, Christmas is an opportunity to renew our trust in God who is always with us: Emmanuel! May these holidays restore your hope, faith and love toward yourselves, each other, and God!

Sincerely,
Sally Dyck



This article has been edited lightly for Messenger style.—Editor

Note: For those of us who are following this story, you can read more at the UM News article [here](#).

Announcements

A Message From Pastor Kim

Dear San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church Community,

In worship on Sunday, I announced my upcoming retirement effective June 2023. With much gratitude for this congregation and for every congregation I have served, I look forward to a new chapter. I retire from pastoral ministry in good health, in love with my job and curious as to how I will continue to follow the way of Christ Jesus. I will still be one of your pastors for the next eight months, and I look forward to all that we will share together during that time.

This will be a change for all of us. For now, I want to share how a new lead pastor for our church will be chosen. Our Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) will meet with our district superintendent, Rev. Samuel Hong, at our December 11 Annual Charge Conference, right after morning worship. In United Methodist Churches, pastors are appointed by the bishop—not hired by local churches. Pastor Andrew Davis will not be stepping into the role of lead pastor.

Our district superintendent will be working with our SPRC to discern who will be lead pastor. Bill Fulcher serves as chair of our SPRC and can be reached at his email address listed in the church directory.

This is a season of waiting. Christ Jesus had a few things to say about *how* to wait. In Gospel teachings the verb “wait” is often paired with other verbs: *watch* and wait or *stay awake*. I take this to mean that in our waiting we are to be attentive to God’s Presence. In our prayers, we can gratefully affirm that God will guide and strengthen and sustain us. Please keep the bishop and cabinet, as well as our wonderful SPRC members, in your faithful prayers.

Thank you for your kind and encouraging words following my announcement. Serving here at SRVUMC fills me with joy, and that’s because of you.

Grace and peace and well-being,

Pastor Kim Risedorph

Photos: Left, Pastor Kim and HollyAnn Melton at the February 2021 blood drive with LDS. Right, Pastor Kim celebrates July 4 as part of the annual parade.



Announcements

Annual Charge Conference

Sunday, December 11, Following Worship

Sanctuary

The place to be after worship! Our district superintendent, Rev. Samuel Hong, will join us as we gather to celebrate the year just passed; receive reports; vote on roster of church leaders for the year ahead; vote on pastor compensation packages; and adopt objectives and goals for going forward. All church members are eligible to vote. This annual gathering reminds us that we are a church community that makes a difference, and we can do even more in the year ahead.



Pull These Strings!

Ukulele or Guitar Groups Welcome Beginners

Mondays, 6:30 p.m. for Ukuleles, Saturdays 10:30 a.m. for Guitars

Fireside Room

Our church has an active group that enjoys playing ukuleles and singing songs, both pop songs and hymns. We are grateful for the talented musical leadership of Teri Hawk.

A few of us are thinking of starting a guitar group (with whatever other instruments we can find...base, percussion) to sing and play with Teri as our leader. ***If you are interested in either group, please contact Lyn Arscott at lynarscott@comcast.net.***

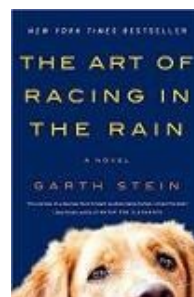
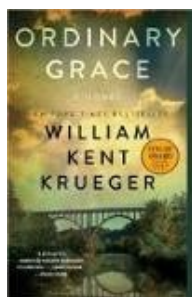
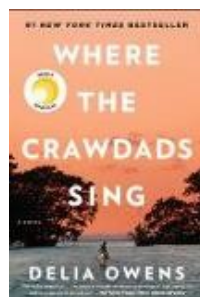


Merry Christmas From the Library Committee!

The library committee would like to extend a very happy holiday season to our avid readers.

—Joan Arscott, Sharon Ross, Caroline Walsh

Please continue to look for church library books: *Where the Crawdads Sing*, *Ordinary Grace*, *The Art Racing in the Rain*



Announcements



Students \$10, Adults \$25. Show time is 4 p.m. for each performance.

Chorale Reservations by QR Code!

Now it's possible to reserve and pay for your tickets with a QR code! To do it, aim your cell phone camera over the square design to the right until it comes into focus. You will see some yellow hash marks.

It's not necessary to take a photo of the QR code. A small yellow oblong shape will appear under the code instead. Tapping that shape will take you to <https://srvchorale.brownpapertickets.com/>, and specifically, the Christmas with the Chorale event. You'll complete your ticket order from that website. ***Don't worry: you can also get tickets through the above link using your computer.***





Spiritual Growth

Lunch With Friends Combined Thanksgiving/Christmas Holiday Feast Tuesday, December 20, Noon Wesley Center

Join us for the best \$5 to \$10 (donation) lunch in the valley! You'll be treated to a traditional Christmas lunch with roasted turkey, homemade stuffing, mashed potatoes, glazed carrots and something fabulous for dessert. We'll have lovely tables and entertainment! It will also be a time to thank our wonderful crew who always give so much to make this happen.

Back to a more familiar schedule in January 2023!

RSVP to nancy@nancybenvenuto.com or pkyles@srvumc.org.



Fall Fellowship Moment: Marla's Tree Photos With Friends

Thank you to Marla Schleicher, who met many of our in-person worshipers for impromptu photos by the bright red tree outside the church office. What an inspired way to celebrate God's fall glory! Thank you, Marla! *More photos like these on Pages 11 and 13 of this edition.*

Small groups plug: How many people do you recognize in Marla's photos? Church activities outside of worship are a great way to get to know more of the wonderful people who are a part of our congregation.



Out Into the World

Message From the Angel Tree Committee

Christmas Angels,

By now you have probably selected a gift, shopped and labeled the gift and hopefully brought it back to the church. A huge thank you to those who have already brought gifts to the church or made donations to support the Angel Tree service project! We welcome deliveries of gifts to the church on Sunday, December 4, at our worship service. ***Any last-minute purchases or deliveries need to be dropped off at the church office by 3 p.m. on Tuesday, December 6. If you need one of us to pick up your gift and deliver it to the church, please email or call one of us (personal information is in the directory).***



We have several "Angel Shoppers" ready to shop for you, should you decide to make a monetary donation. If you decide to mail a check, then please send it to:

SRVUMC

attn: Angel Tree Program

902 Danville Blvd.

Alamo, Ca. 94507

Be sure to write "Angel Tree donation" on the memo line of the check!

This year, our community is coming together to brighten the Christmas of many! We are providing gifts to ten young ladies from Bay Area Alliance for Youth and Family Services; fifteen children from Fred Finch Youth Center; fifty children from Bay Area Rescue Mission; eight families from Hope Solutions; Trinity Center homeless; clients at STAND! as well as families being assisted by Tri-Valley Haven. Our team is very grateful for all your support, contributions and kindness.

December 4: Last Sunday to drop off a gift at worship.

December 6, 3 p.m.: Very latest gifts can be accepted. Please bring them to the church office.

Wishing you all good health, peace, love and happiness during this Christmas Season,
Beth McClelland, Linda Green, Roni Item, Peggy Crawford, Nancy Banisch, Hollyann Melton
Angel Tree 2022





Out Into the World

Do You Like Kids?

Winter Nights Child Care and Tutoring December 12 Through December 18 Wesley Center

We are looking for volunteers to help during the time we host Winter Nights. We provide the kids who are housed with us

- Activity/craft/story time on weekdays from 5 to 8 p.m. (with a dinner break)
- Activity/craft/story time on weekends
- Tutors to help kids with their homework from 5 to 6:30 p.m.

Any day you may be available during those times would be wonderful. And, if you have a friend who can serve with you, even better! To serve, Winter Nights volunteers must be vaccinated, and masks are optional.

The number of kids who will be staying at the church varies. Currently there are eight kids, ranging from ten months to thirteen years. This count changes frequently, so flexibility is key! We have weekend use of the playground and youth game room, as long as we have enough supervision.

We hope you will consider joining us in spending time with children who really enjoy the attention.

We can also use any games or craft materials you might have that would be appropriate for the age group.

If interested, please contact Kal Peters at 925 519-4341 or Nancy Garnick at (925) 324-1517. Thank you!



The Winter Nights team expresses its gratitude to everyone who has volunteered to host overnight or prepare a meal—we don't need any more because you've all been so generous!

"I Can't Think of Anything To Do With Kids" Isn't an Excuse!

Stories, puzzles, coloring and games are the standbys. if you've gotten rid of your last copy of Monopoly and if your kids' favorite bedtime storybook is somewhere in the attic, here are some other suggestions from Googling key words "entertain kids no mess"...

1. Create a [marble run](#) with small, light obstacles.
2. Have a dance party for kids of all ages! You can even find premade playlists [like this one](#).
3. Teach a kid-friendly skill: a few signs in sign language or a couple of magic tricks, for example.

Communion

Communion Offering for Christmas

Discovery Counseling Center

Discovery Counseling Center offers affordable, high-quality, accessible and culturally appropriate counseling services to the San Ramon Valley. For fifty years, this nonprofit organization has been a leader in the community for mental wellness. It embraces goals of building mental health awareness in the community at large and the importance of mental wellness treatment, as well as training for future mental health professionals.

Discovery Counseling Center has a range of tools to address all manner of mental wellness concerns, ranging from play therapy and anti-bullying programs to stress management counseling for teens and programs geared to seniors. The center also supports the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Team (ADAPT), which focuses on prevention of substance abuse among minors.

Discovery Center also worked with our own Laura Roy to develop the popular parenting workshops our church has hosted in Wesley Center. These workshops, open to the public, have reflected SRVUMC's own mission of service in the community and partnership with area resources.

Winter Nights Safe Parking Program—Pittsburg, CA

Winter Nights is a much bigger program than you may have observed directly as a volunteer. The Winter Nights Safe Parking Program provides couples, families, or individuals living in their vehicles a safe parking lot to park in nightly. The program site offers restrooms, light meals and case management in a supportive and caring environment. Clients can access showers at the Oasis Day Program site in Pittsburg. Participants find a place to feel accepted and supported as they start rebuilding their lives. They settle into looking for employment and housing. The Safe Parking Program runs year-round and can accommodate up to fourteen cars per night. In 2021, Safe Parking assisted 49 adult individuals and four families with minors. During that time, six adults and one family found housing. What a different safer circumstances can make! Learn more at the [Winter Nights website](#).





Youth Disneyland Trip in February

Leave February 17 at 3:30 p.m. • Return February 20 Evening

It is with great joy that we are bringing back an annual SRVUMC youth Disneyland tradition! **All youth in grades 6 through 12 are invited to go.** Invite friends, too, but act fast! We have a reservation for Disneyland and Disney's California Adventure on February 18 and 19, giving us two full days in the park.

Tickets are \$270 per youth (2-day Park Hopper). Besides the Park Hopper tickets, plan additional money for food, souvenirs and merchandise. We will have items to make sack lunches for Saturday and Sunday, and we will provide breakfast. We also ask for donations to offset gas and possibly van rentals or charter and lodging. We are presently working with several local UMCs about staying at their facilities. We eagerly anticipate this time of fellowship, community building and fun.

A new ticketing reservation system at Disneyland means we need to have the money for the tickets in by December 15. Payments can be given to the church office or to Pastor Andrew by check made out to San Ramon Valley UMC with "Disneyland" in the memo.

We invite everyone to an information session from 3 to 4 p.m. on December 4 in the youth room on the second floor of Wesley Center. Pastor Andrew will answer your questions between now and December 15 at adavis@srvumc.org or 925-837-5243 x108.

Sierra Service Project

June 19 Through 23, 2023

Del Norte County

Anyone going into sixth grade and those who will graduate in June 2023 are encouraged to join in various service projects that week. Let Pastor Andrew know ASAP at adavis@srvumc.org. There will be an informational session for parents and youth in January.

More from Marla Schleicher. Do you know these folks yet?

Shutterbugs, The Valley Messenger welcomes photos of our church in action! Email photos from mission projects, church events, or your small group time anytime you have a good shot to media@srvumc.org.



Preschool

Happy December! I love all of the excitement and joy that this month brings, especially to our little ones at preschool. We were extremely fortunate to receive a donation of beautiful packages that were put together by a local Alamo resident for each of our children. These packages include a vintage bear, a children's book and an ornament that she has collected throughout her international travels over the years. We are excited to hand these out to our families this holiday season and are forever grateful for acts of pure kindness and generosity that so greatly benefit our preschool families.

Looking ahead, we are excited to host our Pre-K and three's families for a holiday music performance that is sure to be a hit! We will also welcome our two's families one morning before school to enjoy pancakes in their pajamas together in celebration of the holiday season. Meanwhile, in our classrooms, there will be lots of holiday fun and treats!

On another note, it is very bittersweet for me to announce that December will be my last month at UMP. My family and I will be moving to Phoenix as soon as we head off on our winter break at preschool on the December 23. To say I am sad to be leaving this community so unexpectedly would be an understatement, but my husband has accepted a promotion that was too hard for us to pass up. It seemed even more "meant to be" since most of our family still lives just down the street from where we will be located in Arizona. Our older two kids are just as thrilled to be down the street from Grandma as she is to have them close for the first time!

I have cherished every moment of my time with the staff, families and extended UMP support system. The interview team of Preschool Commission Members and UMP staff has been hard at work to find the perfect person to step in and continue everything good that is happening here.

From all of us at Preschool, we wish you and your family a warm, safe, healthy and happy holiday season!

—Katelyn Self, Preschool Director



Photos: Left, a generous holiday donation for our pre-schoolers! Right, a close-up of one gift bag.



Family Ministry

Advent Adventures!

Four Sundays in Advent, 11 a.m. to Noon

Jordan Room

Following Sunday School, come upstairs to Jordon across the breezeway from Otterbein. Invite a friend to come, too! Snacks will be involved, too!

During Week 1, we began illustrating a nativity set for a take-home project and created a Scripture chain.

Sunday, December 4, Week 2:

- Popsicle stick Nativity
- Advent wreath rip art

Sunday, December 11, Week 3:

- Paint wooden candles (thank you, Don Johnson!)
- Christmas tree tissue paper sun catcher

Sunday, December 18, Week 4:

- Birthday party
- Cookies
- Nativity bingo



More tree photos from Marla Schleicher! Marla shared many more photos from that morning than fit in this edition, so ask at the office for more. Then, send your own church photos to media@srvumc.org.



Calendar

Christmas Eve Family Service, 5 p.m., December 24. Join us for a special adaption of the Christmas Pageant! As the story is read from Luke, everyone can participate by acting out a scene on-stage. As they arrive, participants will pick up a mask from the nativity story. We will invite youth to be our lead characters. Lots of fun, laughter and music to celebrate Jesus' Birthday!



Sunday School: Classes begin at 10 a.m.

Tot Spot for infant to age four.

TK through second grades: Upstairs above preschool in Otterbein room (Laura Roy leads)

Grades 3 to 5: Upstairs in Wesley 203 (Tom Roy leads)

Christmas Is Celebrating Jesus, God's Greatest Gift

Week One

Jesus Is Promised

Isaiah 9:6-7: God always has a plan.

Week Two

Zechariah/Elizabeth and Gabriel/Mary

Luke 1:5-6: Anything is possible with God.

Week Three

Jesus is Born

Luke 2:1-7: Jesus is the greatest gift.

Week Four

Shepherds and Angels

Luke 2:8-20: The Good News is for everyone.

**"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord."
—Luke 2:11, NIV**



Celebrations

Birthdays

1 David Hagebush Liz Hirsch Victoria Longstreet	Marlys Siegel Epi Vazquez	Kate Steffy Kerri Wakefield
2 Wade Bickel Madison More Anita Weir-Ball	10 Wendi Cerda Karen Steffy	22 HollyAnn Melton Flo Spanier (101)
3 Greg Koos Jeff Lang Jane Roath	12 Dewey Reikofski 13 Olivia Bybel Amanda Lang Robbie Rigolfi, Jr. Deborah Robinson	23 Gayle Jackson Angela Norton 24 Gordon Pierce 25 Quentin Alexander 26 Sherry More' Katie Merchant
5 Aly Kelly Emma Willman	14 Ivan Kerr Annette Whiting	29 George Hawk Kevin Keen
6 Kathleen Saghafi 7 Niles Bybel Sketch Sketchley Bailee Smallwood Don Weis	15 Jim Braden 17 Teresa Fimby- Christensen Helen Sinclair 18 Carol Arabian Anne Kuelz	30 Phyllis Meyer Elise Doyle Susan Rideout
9 Kirsten Choy Ali Kuelz	19 Teresa Stroin 21 Melissa LeGuluche	31 Warren McGuffin

Anniversaries

1 Pam & Bob Dominici (56)
9 Renée & Doug Beck
21 Shelley & Bill Lettis
22 Gerry & Jim Aude
27 Barbara & Tom Valdriz
28 Sheryl & Ivan Kerr (60) Laurel & Geoff Portman
29 Eleanor & Fred Toney (61)



Among Ourselves

Loving Letter From the Bailey Family

I want to thank my wonderful church family for all your love during Bob's illness and then passing. Your cards, calls, visits, food, prayers and support were what makes this congregation such a great group of people. We really felt your caring arms wrapped around us during this difficult and sad time. Bob loved this church and made many friends here. It was so heartwarming to see that love reciprocated. I will always be grateful and blessed to be a part of the SRVUMC family. — Terry Bailey

Joy of Companionship

Our music director, Rosalind Neisinger, announces her engagement to Spencer Wentzel. Some of you already know Spencer, who has, among other things, operated the sound board for us on some Sunday mornings. We rejoice and pray that God continues to bless them in their partnership.

Welcome to Our Church Family!

Membership represents commitment, not only to God, but also to a particular church community. We rejoice in the opportunity to receive new members and their households. Please welcome:

Paul and Grace Cheong (*Photo 1*)

Rick and Jane McGuire (*Photo 2*)

Ginny Fereira and Lindsey Hiratska (*Photos 3 and 4, respectively*)

John and Sylvia Hemmerich (*Photo 5*)

One does not need to be a member of this church—or of any church—to worship with us, but we cherish the personal connections we make among ourselves as a church family. Welcome!



Photos by Carole Johnson. Thanks, Carole!



Among Ourselves

Health Concerns

Sharon (Susan Dowling's mother)

Bob Brown

Vin Hirsch

ClaudeC Johannessen

Kay Jones

Barb McWilliams

Mary Spediacci

Kate Steffy

Continued Prayers For

All those who live with long-term illness, those recovering from COVID-19, unemployment, life decisions, and sickness in their families, Joan Lee, Ann Schroeder.

Our Christian Sympathy

To Jeff Rideout and his family on the passing of Ken Rideout.

To Sherrie Weiss, after Don Weiss passed in October following a long journey with health challenges.

SRVUMC

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Director of Family Ministries

Laura Roy (ext. 106)

Preschool Director

Katelyn Self (ext. 113)

Office/HR Manager

Soledad Cuenco (ext 104)

Accountant

Pritya Gupta

Accounts Receivable Clerk

Susan Madden

Office Administrator

Patsy Kyles

Music Director

Rosalind Neisinger

Organist

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