

The Methodist Messenger

In the Spirit of John Wesley

*“Bringing faith into life by loving God
and all people as God loves us”*



First United Methodist Church
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Coming in The Advent & Christmas Season:

Mark your Calendars Now!



Sunday, November 29: First Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 1: Last Day to Order Poinsettias (pg. 3)

Tuesday, December 8: 10:00 am- Noon A Christmas Tea for the Women and Children of Hannah's House (pg. 12)

Sunday, December 13th: Last Day to Bring Angel Tree Gifts (pg. 5)

Thursday, December 17: 3:00 pm - 8:00 pm Laundry Love

Friday, December 18: Salvation Army Food Distribution 8:00 am-noon

Monday, December 21: 7:00 pm Longest Night Service (pg. 3)

Thursday, December 24:

6:00 pm Community Christmas Eve Dinner (pg. 6)

7:30 pm Christmas Eve Service



Friday, December 25: 8:00 am-10:00 am Christmas Morning

Breakfast (pg. 3)

Poinsettia



Support Laundry Love by purchasing a poinsettia now through December 1st.

\$12.00 per plant

Order forms available in bulletins or through Church Office. The last day to order is December 1st.

Each poinsettia is grown in a 6 inch pot, averages 16 inches tall, and are all red. The plants will add to our sanctuary decorations beginning December 13.

Poinsettia Dedications

Plan now to dedicate a poinsettia in memory or honor of a loved one.

You can let the office know of your dedication through the blue sign-in sheets or by phoning the church office at 584-4075.

You can purchase the plants yourself and bring to the sanctuary beginning December 13th or order a poinsettia in support of Laundry Love and it will be delivered to the sanctuary.

Longest Night Service

Monday,
December 21
7:00 pm



On the longest night we invite you to experience a quiet, meditative worship service that makes time for remembering, sharing our hurting places with God, and preparing our hearts for the coming of Christ.

This service is especially for those who might be grieving - for whatever reason during this season.

Christmas Morning Opportunity



Christmas Morning a group will be preparing breakfast for anyone who is in need.

You are invited to be a part of this mission outreach with a gift of food or money for food.

Breakfast will be served 8:00 am - 10:00 am.

Contact Chris Payne (639-8401) if you are interested.

Notes For The Journey

Advent is the period leading into Christmas. It begins this year on November 29, and covers four Sundays. The word advent, from Latin, means "the coming." It is the season during which we may focus our hearts, minds, prayers and personal commitments in anticipation of not only the Nativity, on Christmas Day, but also the coming of God's Kingdom, in its fullness, to all life. Advent not only points backward to the first coming, but also forward to the second, thus providing Christians with a vision of the future and toward the future.

Advent, then, is a time of expectation and active waiting. It is the acknowledgment of the fact that, although God has acted decisively on our behalf in Jesus' birth, there is still much outstanding. It is predominantly toward this future completion that the Advent season directs us. The Advent season calls us to anticipate the fulfillment of God's Kingdom which has been begun by Jesus, and which continues to be a work in progress in our individual lives, and the life of our church, our community and the world.

We are waiting for the kingdom of God, but the kind of waiting that the Advent season calls for is characterized by activity not passivity. The kingdom of God will be a kingdom of peace and justice. The call to anticipate that in our lives means to love and seek out others. The kingdom is not one of exclusion, but of inclusion; not one of revenge, but compassion; not one of justice alone, but justice tempered with mercy.

This also applies to our political and economic worlds. The justice of the kingdom which Advent calls us to anticipate takes on democratic characteristics when it is applied to the political world. It demands a striving for human and civil rights based on the idea of divinely-ordained human dignity. It means a socialization of the economy, not in the sense of nationalization and centralization, but an accounting of the human costs of any economy. It means a just distribution of opportunities for work and profits.

Continued on page 5

Understood as the call to anticipate the kingdom of God, Advent calls us to recognize that the kingdom extends to all of creation. The kingdom of God is often interpreted as referring to the ultimate redemption of the human world and its history alone. However, the kingdom of God includes all of nature, which today is groaning under severe ecological stress. During the Advent season, we are called to anticipate our work for the ecological health of God's whole creation.

Finally, the Advent season calls us to anticipate the role that First UMC will have in the fulfillment of God's Kingdom. I encourage you to read, think, pray and about what you understand to be God's vision for humanity and Christ's mission on earth, and from there, give consideration to what you anticipate the role of First UMC to be in the fulfillment of God's Kingdom.

In all, Advent is a time for taking stock of our lives and actions in light of the kingdom of God which entered human history with Christ, but still awaits completion. Our expectation of the coming Lord demands that we anticipate in our actions the kingdom with which He has identified Himself and will bring to us.

Blessings,
Pastor Cynthia Stateman

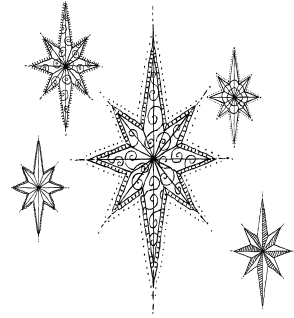
P.S. I WILL BE ON VACATION FROM DEC 26 - JAN 9.

Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree - Angels Still Available

When parents go to prison, their children also partake of their punishment, often struggling with poverty, shame, anger, abandonment, and loneliness. Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program delivers Christmas gifts, the Gospel, and a personal message of love to children on behalf of the Mom or Dad behind bars.

Each child will be given an article of clothing and a toy. Gift tags listing age, size and gift suggestion will be available on our Angel Tree. The gifts need to be wrapped and at the church by Dec 13th. We also have Santa's helpers who will shop and wrap if you just want to give a donation. If you have any questions, or want to help with deliveries or contacting families, please call Andrea McDonald 559-360-4477.

Make Your Plans
and Mark your Calendars for
Christmas Eve



CHRISTMAS EVE DINNER - 6:00 pm

A Christmas Eve Dinner is to be served at 6:00 p.m. in Founders Hall. This is open to the public with reservations required by December 21, but paid at the door. A modest fee of **\$5.00** will be charged to cover the basic parts of the meal (turkey, ham, stuffing, potatoes, green beans, yams, rolls and beverages).

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE – 7:30 p.m.

Plan to stay for this annual tradition of story, carols and candlelight!

Here is what we are asking of church members:

- **Spread the word** in the community. This is open to all.
- Anyone feeling festive is invited to **decorate** Founders Hall
- **Adopt a table to decorate.** We have red table cloths and flatware for the round tables and those who like to decorate would be invited to decorate and show off their favorite Christmas centerpiece and even their dishes if desired.
- **Help clean up after dinner.** Each year Bob Peden has been cooking all day and then has been cleaning up the kitchen after dinner. As we did last year, we are committed to having Bob sit down with his family for dinner and not going back into the kitchen. We need a few more folks to help right after dinner and to finish up after the church service.
- Help set up and light the **luminary bags** before dinner

This is a time to visit with new people or those we may only see once a year, and make them feel they have a home here and a family to return to or to join.



**Call or email the church office or visit the church website
www.fumchanford.org to RSVP for dinner and tell us if you would
like to help in some way.**



**NEW CLASS BEGINS
TUESDAYS,
JANUARY 12TH**

I listened to the part of Children’s Moment recently where Jan Franke talked about taking your troubles to somebody at church who is a good listener.

I remembered that I never was a good listener. I didn’t look for body language, or think about why someone may be telling me something. I just took the words at face value. I just answered the words by themselves.

So I missed the rest of what she said.

But there is hope. If you recognize that the kids deserve a good listener at church, then you may also recognize that most of us who are no longer kids do, too.

Being a good listener is central to the office of a Stephen Minister.

Our church is participating in the next Stephen Ministry training. It begins JANUARY 12th over at the Central Valley General Hospital on Douty Street, and will continue on Tuesday nights. Graduates of the course will not only be good listeners, but also will rejoice in their new skills as listeners.

Please call me if you have any questions, or you would like to nominate somebody to take this Stephen Minister training. Self-applications will be accepted, too.

It is so good to give the gift of being a good listener.

- David Beeman, Stephen Leader 584-2911

The JANUARY NEWSLETTER
will be mailed January 14th.
Please come help with the
folding at 10 am, Wednesday,
January 14th.
The deadline for articles is
December 30th.

Peden’s Family Cookbook
For Sale \$20

Makes a great gift this holiday season! Books can be purchased through church office.



LIEUTENANT AZUETA VISITS FUMC, HANFORD

UMM monthly dinner in November provided a chance to get to know Salvation Army Lieutenant Edgar Azueta. He has been in Hanford four months now, and is complying with his training to not rock the boat and impose changes right away. Besides that, he is second in command here in Hanford to Lieutenant Luke Betti.

He may join us for our church's Christmas Eve dinner! HE LIKED FINDING OUT THAT WE HAVE THE CHRISTMAS DAY BREAKFAST PLANNED. In Hanford, the Salvation Army serves breakfast six days a week. Lt Azueta mentioned that attendance at their daily breakfasts has increased from about 30 to about 80 lately.

They buy the food from the Food Bank in Fresno County with money from donations plus a grant. But they will be closed Christmas morning, so now he can let people know about our breakfast.

I think he liked finding out one of the details of the communion service here at FUMC, Hanford. When we come forward to receive the communion meal, we remember those who have no meal by placing an offering in a special plate. That amount, averaging \$20 to \$30, is sent to the Salvation Army every month for its food program.

In return we liked finding out that if you respond to an appeal in the mail for the Salvation Army, you can designate your gift to the Hanford service center, and even to specific programs here - like help with rent, or utilities, or food.

In answer to a question, he told us his personal story, how he was first connected with Salvation Army as a child, and then how he got involved, and then how he became an officer.

He also answered questions about volunteer opportunities in November and December. On Thanksgiving Day, from 11:30 to about 1:30, they will serve a Thanksgiving dinner. He can use volunteers for preparing the food, for serving the food, for cleaning up afterward, and for delivering some of the meals.

He could also use a volunteer one day a week to help serve the daily breakfast.

If you are going to be a regular volunteer, there is a form to fill out, and you will probably get training.

So, thank you to Lt Azueta for joining us in November, and to those present for asking great questions!

UMM DECEMBER PLANS

Monday, December 14th we are having our annual UMM Christmas party. Bob Peden has planned the formal decorations/settings, the music and the meal. To make reservations, please call David Beeman.

UMM JANUARY PLANS

We will meet on the 11th for dinner in Mary Lane Hall.

- David Beeman, President
584-2911



We held our annual Bazaar on Friday, the 13th of November. A few changes from previous years – all the crafts, baked goods, and white elephant sales were all in Mary Lane Hall with just the

lunch in Founders Hall. We also had a new cook (thank you Larry). I believe we had a good turn-out, definitely lots of sales taking place in Mary Lane Hall. Lots of people to thank – in addition to Larry in the kitchen, also helping were: John Meadows, Penny Meadows, David Beeman, Verne Adams, Bob Junell. Helping in Mary Lane Hall were: Carole Hester, Janice Madruga, Candy Bertaina, Patty Ferrell, Sue Hensel, Jetta Lennox (and her daughter), and Andrea McDonald. Helping in Founders Hall: Jan Junell, Mary Jane Gozun, Delfa Randles, Chris Payne. Furnishing cakes for the dessert table at lunch: Andrea McDonald, Candy Bertaina, Carole Hester (2 cakes), Jetta Lennox, Peggy Gregory (2 cakes), Sue Hensel, Stacie Brockie, Debbie Headrick, Delfa Randles, Bonnie Butterway. Thanks to all who helped set-up on Thursday the 12th (which includes John Meadows and Jim Shoemaker, who helped carry tables from Founders Hall to Mary Lane Hall).

Special thanks to Peggy Gregory for taking home after the lunch all the tablecloths and washing them. Thank you to all who made crafts and baked goods for the sale. I do apologize if I left anyone's name of the list for having helped. All the help, whether mentioned by name, was greatly appreciated.

Also in November, was our first UMW Sunday. It was talked by Pastor Susan about doing one, but was not planned before she moved. Pastor Cynthia heartily agreed to doing the special service. Much thanks to Patty Ferrell, with help from Candy Bertaina in planning the order of service. The women of the church did the service, with some additional information on United Methodist Women.

It was mentioned last month that there will be some changes in meeting schedules for 2016. We will only have General Meetings in February, June, October. The Board meetings will be in January, March, May, September. There may be additional Board meetings when necessary. We also discussed the possibility of moving the Spring Luncheon from May (to allow possible visits out of town, or just spent with family for the Mother's Day weekend) to April.

Feel free to contact me, any of our UMW board, or the church office if you have any questions about any of the meetings.

----- Vicki Beeman (584-2911)

I'm sure I can't be the only one who likes the proverbial fruitcake! So if you are interested, I'm taking orders now to make some. I can't seem to find it anywhere and besides that I frankly think that homemade is better anyway! Just let me know and we'll enjoy it together this season. This is my gift to my new church home. Peace, CAT BARCLAY



A CHRISTMAS TEA FOR
THE WOMEN AND
CHILDREN OF
HANNAH'S HOUSE

Tuesday, December 8th

10:00 am - Noon

Please call Jetta 584-5926 if you can help with food or if you are planning

I just wanted to remind you about the ongoing canned food drive at our church. This is one of the opportunities to serve others by helping the needy in our community. No one should ever go hungry. So please, if you have any spare canned goods or imperishable items, donate to this collection that will go directly to the Episcopal Church



Soup Kitchen. We thank those who have already given to the food drive and to those who plan on giving. Please feel free to donate more cans even if you have given already. This will not be possible without your support, so please join our church in this battle against hunger. There's a container in the main entrance where you may drop off your donations. Thanks again and God bless!
Mary Jane Gozun

Salvation Army Bell Ringing Monday, December 14th

The United Methodist Men are looking for volunteers to help with manning the Christmas Kettle at the Hanford Post Office on December 14th.

Please contact
David Beeman 584-2911
to schedule your time!



Ministry Support Team (MST)

MST is the leadership group in our church that is tasked with caring for our resources; money, staff and building.

Next Meeting:
Thursday, Dec. 10th at 5:00 pm

Check out our Church Website

It now contains the monthly newsletter, the monthly calendar, information on the church and upcoming events. There is also a place to submit questions and comments. Suggestions for content you would like to see are welcome.

The URL is <http://fumchanford.org>

Shower Ministry

The response to the needs of the Shower Ministry for the Homeless at The Hanford Pentecostal Church has been wonderful. It has been great to see the pile grow from week to week and to realize what this means for people in our community.

Thank You to everyone who has donated.

We will continue to collect in the coming months. Let's keep filling up the basket on the altar.

Needs:

Tooth Brushes, Toothpaste, Talc or Baby Powder, Terry Bathmats



Mission Service Opportunity

**Friday, Dec. 18th,
8 am - 12 noon**

Salvation Army 380 East Ivy Street

Join us in helping distribute fresh food to those in need in our community.

Volunteers are needed!

Many hands make light work!



Want to use your handyman skills around the church?

MST has a list of smallish projects that need to be done.

Please see Pastor Susan to help.



Helping Hands Ministry

Our church would like to develop a culture of pre-emptive awareness of helping support each other.

Be on the lookout for ways in which we can be of service to one another. When you find a way, offer help or let the Church office know.

Need help with a project or situation? Your church family wants to help. Please ask.

Want to help? We are building a data-base of people willing to help. Perhaps you would be willing to help out with meals, rides, and other tasks as they arise? Or maybe you would like to coordinate help and make sure those who need help and those who are offering are connected?

At FUMC Hanford, we take the vows of membership very seriously. We have promised to uphold the United Methodist Church through our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness.

Please keep the following in your prayers this month:

Prayers of Health Concern

Jim & Karen Shoemaker, Delfa Randles, Pollie Geissler, Marilyn Peden, Andrea McDonald, Penny Meadows, Pepper Ramsey's son Hunter, Pastor Susan's mother Helen, Kathleen Wilson, Ellie Wagner, Carol Collar's Mother - Francy Angstman (assisted living), Pastor Susan's parents Helen and John Foster, Larry McDonald, Andrea McDonald, Marilyn Peden, Gloria Brown, Peri Neos, Pat George, Alison Klein, June Kruger, Louise Card (West Gate Garden Care, 4525 W. Tulare. Visalia), Marie Wiles (Kingsburg Center 1101 Stroud Ave. Kingsburg, CA 93631), Polly Adams now lives at Valley Christian Home

Other Prayer Requests

- Family and friends of Betty Mizner grieving her passing
- Patricia George, family and friends grieving the death of Millie Dodge
- Firefighters, Police Officers, and other first responders
- Diana Boone and family
- Cat Barclay's family
- Myrtle Deaver (Jeanette Keith's mother) living at Valley Christian Home
- Laundry Love ministry, Salvation Army Food Giveaway, Shower Ministry, and our food offerings to the Soup Kitchen
- 1st Christian's Rev. Tom Warren & family
- Those in the midst of crisis, tragedies, disasters, accidents and conflicts
- For caregivers and those caring for their parents
- The Noonan, Castanon & Wilson Families
- Ministry Support Team & Board of Discipleship
- Thanksgiving for all the church volunteers who give so graciously of their time and talents. We are the church!

"More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."
Alfred Lord Tennyson

WORSHIP CONNECTIONS

ADVENT

11/30 - **JOY**
Isaiah 40:3-9
Mark 1:1-8

12/6 - **HOPE**
Isaiah 64:1-5, 9
Luke 21:27-28

12/13 - **PEACE**
Isaiah 2:2-5
Isaiah 9:6-7

12/20 - **LOVE**
Isaiah 61:1-2, 8-9
Luke 4:16-19

January Schedule

Dec 26- Jan 9: Pastor Away For Vacation

Jan 10: Installation of Church
 Officers
 Sunday School Teacher
 Orientation

Jan 19-21 Pastor Away for Gathering
 of the Orders

Saturday, January 30, 9:30 am – 3 pm
All Church Gathering
***“Living Out The Impossible
Dream”***

Worship Coordinator

Dec. 6: Peggy Gregory
Dec. 13: Cat Barclay
Dec. 20: Chris Payne
Dec. 27: Andrea McDonald

Lay Worship Leaders

Dec. 6: Sage Wyman
Dec. 13: David Beeman
Dec. 20: Vicki Beeman
Dec. 27: Stacy Brockie

Greeters

Dec. 6:
Dec. 13: Bonnie Peters
Dec. 20: Lily & Diana Boone
Dec. 27: Larry & Andrea McDonald

Ushers

Dec. 6 : Mike Bertaina & Mary Durham
Dec. 13: Mike Bertaina & Mary Durham
Dec. 20: Mike Bertaina & Mary Durham
Dec. 27: David Beeman &
Mike Bertaina & Mary Durham

Counting Team

Dec. 6: Andrea McDonald & Sue Hensel
Dec. 13: Vicki Beeman & Patty Ferrell
Dec. 20: Sue Hensel & Karen Shoemaker
Dec. 27: David Beeman & Jim Gregory

Morning Worship Coffee Hour

Dec. 6: Bob & Pollie Geissler
Dec. 13: Jim & Karen Shoemaker
Dec. 20: Andrea & Larry McDonald
Dec. 27: Diana & Lily Boone

All Church Gathering
“Living Out The Impossible Dream”

Saturday, January 30, 9:30am – 3pm

Jesus Christ entered into the world to fulfill a mission and to realize a vision that is considered by many, and perhaps most people in the world, to be an impossible dream. It is, nevertheless, the one dream that almost all of us, in our heart of hearts, yearn to see come true.

On Saturday, January 23, we will gather for our first congregational retreat of the year. Our time together will consist of small group exercises, table fellowship, discussion, celebration and prayer. Our purpose together will be to turn our hearts and minds to how God is calling our church to participate in the fulfillment of Christ's mission and vision for our church within the context of today's realities.

Come One And All! Christ Is Counting On YOU!