Chuck Chats

What does 2013 hold in store for you and us at Asbury?

Every new calendar – hanging on our walls, sitting on our desk, carried in our day timer – is uncluttered with appointments and tasks. It awaits our scheduling things meaningful and things frivolous.

Like those school supplies I had as a child, every first week of a new grade, everything seems fresh and new. Possibilities abound for new discoveries. Perhaps we’ll complete long-delayed tasks. The bare calendar stirs our hope that perhaps this year, those things that eluded us in the year gone by will be accomplished.

Among the things on which we might set our sights for the New Year is a renewal of our commitment to Jesus Christ and deepening our discipleship in meaningful ways. Over the past couple of months, approximately eight small groups have undertaken a study called “Serving from the Heart”. The 60+ people who have examined the gifts God give us through the Spirit have been inspired to reflect on those areas where God stirs our passion for making a difference in our world.

Because the material is so engaging, we hope to offer this study on a regular basis. We hope more and more people in our congregation will have the chance to reflect specifically on the ways God blesses each of us with gifts for service.

In light of that, I plan to focus on the three key Core Values of Asbury – growing in faith, celebrating community, serving others with love – during the first Sundays in the New Year.

For those who have gone through this study, the dimensions of serving God with our head, our heart and our hands have become more engaging. But we all enter the open landscape of a New Year with an opportunity to recommit ourselves to areas of learning, fellowship and service – or to explore new avenues for the Spirit to work in and through us.

So I invite you to start the New Year with a recommitment to worshiping each week and to open your spirit to God’s Spirit. These first three Sundays of worship and fellowship will get your New Year off right!

May your 2013 be filled with God’s blessings – fuller meaning, clarity of purpose, expansive love and impactful service. And may God bless us as a congregation – building closer relationships and commitment to Jesus Christ within, and touching the world beyond our walls with grace and peace.

In Christ, Pastor Chuck
Haiti Update and Special Offering

These are exciting times in Haiti! The California/Nevada Conference Haiti Program, in which Asbury has been participating, is taking on a new emphasis. We have shifted from earthquake reconstruction to investing our time and resources in a better future for the people of Haiti.

The pilot school food program is now expanding to two additional schools. What a difference these school lunches make! Kids are more motivated and attentive with a good meal available.

We have started addressing another critical need – clean water, by building water catch systems, installing water purification equipment and clean water storage tanks.

We are launching a pilot program of four community computer centers. These are school computer labs for classroom instruction during the day and local community use in the evening. Improved education is strategic to better jobs and a higher quality of life.

Because electrical power is so inconsistent and unaffordable, each center will be solar powered. These power systems will also be used to drive other facility improvements, like improved classroom lighting.

And last, the required facility upgrades are being made – modest kitchens, basic school furniture and fixtures and focused building repairs and improvements.

Special Offering: January 13, 2013

As your resources permit, consider donating to our Haiti efforts. The next Asbury staffed team will be in Haiti, January 24-31, 2013.

For more information about this program contact Steve Elliott at home.

Habitat Update and January 12 Workday

The Pleasant Creek Habitat for Humanity development in Walnut Creek is underway. Twenty volunteers from Asbury and other Methodist churches in our circuit were scheduled to work on site preparation on December 22 as part of the All Faiths effort.

Infrastructure work will be started in January, and, depending on weather, is expected to be completed by March. Construction volunteers for the All Faiths effort can then get going.

While we wait for construction to start in Walnut Creek, Asbury volunteers will work in Oakland. An Asbury group of ten volunteers will work at the 12-home Brookfield Development at 9507 Edes Avenue in Oakland on Saturday, January 12. We will probably continue the framing started in December.

The workday is from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. We will meet in the Asbury parking lot by the office at 7:45 to carpool. Sign up for the workday on-line at the Habitat website. Contact Bob Hoffman at home for information about the project and instructions on how to register for the workday.

Thank you, Joanne Petty

Our hearts are filled with gratitude for the exceptional work Joanne Petty did as our office administrator for the past 7+ years. Her skill, creativity, dedication, and love of church all made her the ideal colleague. In every area of church life, if Joanne saw a need, she then designed a solution. She continually improved our church publications such as the weekly bulletin and monthly newsletter. For those of us who worked in the office, having her there was a daily blessing. As she now focuses on health issues and getting well, we surround her with our prayers and deep gratitude. Thank you, Joanne!

Terri Gamble will continue working in our church office, and can be reached in the office.
Celebrate Community

Hospitality at Asbury

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ. This article is being presented to let you know about something new happening at Asbury. We will be taking a look at what it means to be a truly welcoming congregation.

This new group will try to see Asbury through the eyes of a guest, a first time visitor, a seeker. Please will you consider joining in this effort?

First, we will examine some of the current research on welcoming churches. This will take four meetings. Next, we will evaluate Asbury on the critical components necessary to be a leader in radical hospitality for the purpose of glorifying God. We will divide into groups and form action plans that will be implemented.

This is not busy work. This work has a mission, a purpose and a measurable outcome. Please let Tina know if you would like to serve or contact her if you have any questions. It would be so helpful to us to have a large and diverse group: younger and more experienced, new-to-church or long time members. Thank you for your prayerful consideration.

Tina

Retiree/Senior Luncheon

Are you retired or a senior? Then join us for our first Retiree/Senior Luncheon of 2013, Thursday, January 3, 2013 at noon. The cost is only $5 per person. The food is delicious, and the fellowship is wonderful. Signups will have started on the Sundays leading up to the luncheon, but if you missed signups at Coffee Fellowship you can call the church office (925-447-1950) and make a reservation. This Luncheon is open, so bring a guest and treat them to lunch!

The Long Goodbye Class

The Long Goodbye class and support group starts on Tuesday, January 8 at 11:00 a.m. in the Fireside Room. This is an open group for families and friends of those dealing with dementia. We plan to meet two times a month starting in January on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month.

Time together will include sharing, looking at important issues, resources for learning more about dementia, Alzheimer's and other conditions, and providing a safe, supportive atmosphere. Led by Pastor Chuck, who will be the facilitator, we will learn from one another and provide mutual support.

Sharing Our Music: An Interfaith Concert

Sunday, January 27, 2013, 7:00 p.m., Asbury UMC

Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Hindu musicians present an evening of sacred and cultural music. The concert will be followed by a reception in the Fellowship Hall, where you can mingle, exchange ideas, meet new people, and enjoy multicultural treats.

There is no charge, but seating is limited. Kindly register at interfaith-concert.eventbrite.com. If you find later that you can’t attend the concert, please un-register.

The concert is sponsored by Interfaith Interconnect. Their mission is to enrich, inform and educate ourselves and others about the great diversity of faiths and cultures in our valley.

Stephen Ministry Training

Begins January 13, 5-7:00 p.m.

We invite your prayers as our new class of Stephen Ministers begin their training. Over the next six months, they will receive 50 hours of training as they prepare to offer one-on-one Christian care to people who are hurting. Please keep all of our Stephen Ministers in your prayers.

Faith, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

In 2012, a team exploring our faith and sexual orientation and gender identity, presented a welcoming statement to Church Council: “Asbury UMC welcomes everyone to our campus and community of faith. We are committed to treating everyone with respect and consideration without regard to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, cultural background, disability or age.”

Church Council voted to approved this statement. Now we would like to have all in our community help edit, shape, and live into this statement. During 2013, we will host public gatherings to get your input on this statement, as well as your thoughts on how to welcome all people. Stay tuned.

Fertile GroundWorks’ Garden of Grace

Fertile GroundWorks invites you to visit our table in the Fellowship Hall after service January 13, 20 and 27, 2013. Drop by to talk with us about the recent developments at the Garden of Grace and find out how you can help us.

(Continued on Page 5)
What’s the best present you’ve ever gotten for Christmas?

We had a family tradition. Every year, my parents, three sisters and I would get into our Buick station wagon and drive to a local Christmas tree lot. Once there, the doors would fly open and the four of us would each scour the four corners of the lot for what we thought was the perfect tree. Once found, we would each wait for our parents to come by, and convince them why they need to buy “our” tree, and not the ones that the other siblings were standing by. It was great event that ended up in three very disappointed kids every year.

When I was seven, as we did every year, we all jumped in the Buick station wagon and headed off to buy a tree. Except this year, instead of heading to the Christmas tree lot, we went to a Christmas tree farm to buy a real, live, still planted in the ground tree, rather than one that had been cut for us. The stakes were much, much higher. The farm was huge, but in time we were all standing next to a different tree waiting for our chance to convince our parents to pick our tree.

My tree was chosen.

We paid for the tree, grabbed the saw, carefully cut the tree down, and had it wrapped and tied to the top of the Buick. Once home and put it’s proper place, more than any other tree that we had ever had, this year’s tree smelled nicer, had softer needles and, if I may say so myself, slightly sparkled before we had even decorated it.

Almost immediately, the tree started its slow process of dying.

First, the needles would start not being as soft as they once were. As time passed, the tree also changed colors from a vibrant light green to a darker green. And, no matter how diligently I added water to the bowl that the trunk was in, even the smell wasn’t like walking in a forest anymore. It was more like walking in a freshly cleaned bathroom. This distressed me. We had taken a perfectly happy tree that was minding its own business happily making oxygen and chopped it down, and killed it so that we could celebrate Christmas.

I asked my parents if we could replant the tree.

Troubled, my parents explained to me that once you chop down a tree, there’s no way that you can just plant it and have it re-grow. Despite my best efforts to keep this tree alive, as time passed, the tree became brown and cold.

Christmas came and went.

Even though other families had gotten rid of their tree, my parents decided that we would leave ours up for a little longer, probably because it would have make a little boy very sad to see it go.

I came home from school one day and the tree was gone.

I was so upset and frustrated and angry. It probably took a little while but my mom was finally able to calm me down. She asked me to follow her and I did. She led me through the house and to our back door. When she opened the back door, there, planted in our back yard, was the tree!

So, when I get asked, “What’s the best present you’ve ever gotten for Christmas,” my answer is, “A Christmas tree.”

Isn’t it wonderful that we believe in a God that resurrects! Things that were lost, can be found, relationships that were broken can be restored and even things that are dead can be alive again.

Merry Christmas!

Yosh

Side note 1: For some odd reason, my family switched to an artificial tree starting the next year.

Side note 2: In my teenage years, I did realize that my parents had actually bought another tree to plant in the back yard.

Save The Date!

April 27, 2013: Mission trip to San Francisco!
Children’s Ministry

“God can make the bad things in our lives into good if we love and serve him.”
This quote seems timely to me in the aftermath of the Newtown tragedy. It is hard to find any good in that situation, but I call on everyone to love and cherish a child, to pray for that child and to spend time with him/her. You can make a difference.
Thank you to everyone who participated and/or attended the Christmas pageant. Mackinna Hart did a fantastic job as our director. We had 50 people involved in the performance and around 170 in the soup and sandwich supper, which is a record. AUMC loves kids and teens! (and sharing meals)
As of the deadline for submitting this article, we are involved in planning the December 30th dedication of the Megan Whipple Memorial Play area. This will take place immediately following worship. I would like to thank Dick Crawford, Tim Evans, Roger Everett and Steve Wilson for tirelessly working to get the play structure repaired and installed and for making all the improvements to the play area. Once again, Asbury shows its dedication to our youngest.
Thank you for your generosity to the Tri-Valley Haven. Not only did AUMC staff the volunteer slots throughout the holidays, but you donated over 75 individual items to the “store.” Thank you. We will report in the next newsletter how much was donated to the American Red Cross fund with our giving project for November and December.
On January 20th the kids will have a special opportunity to spend time with Pastor Kim. During the Sunday School hour the kids will get to talk to her and ask her questions. I hope everyone will be present for this special time. We will do this again in June with Pastor Chuck.
Thanks for sharing your kids with us.
Peace and Joy and Happy New Year,

Tina Morris

Beginning in January we will offer kid/family worship on the last Sunday of each month. This will be held during worship/Sunday School in the chapel. Sara Schaff is leading this worship hour with an emphasis on worshipping with your kids. We will have all the elements of worship-scripture, prayer, music, reflection and some additional appropriate activities. Parents, please plan for at least one parent to attend this special worship service with your child(ren). Everyone is welcome.

Continued from “Celebrate…”

(Continued from Page 3)
raise funds while simply going about your routine shopping. We invite you to support the Garden efforts in two different ways.
  • Use a S.H.A.R.E.S. card when you shop at Lucky. Whenever you visit a local Lucky store, simply scan the card and 3% of your bill will be donated to Fertile Groundworks for the support of the Garden of Grace.
  • Sign up for the eScrip program. At no cost to you, eScrip is a program by which a percentage (2 to 5%) of your regular retail, online, and dining purchases are donated back to Fertile GroundWorks by the merchants that you use.
We hope to see you at our table following services. Thank you for your continued support.

Women’s Retreat
March 15-17, 2013
As we prepare for a weekend of inspiration, laughter, and time together, I need a team of 3-5 people to help me prepare. If you would like to be part of the Women’s Retreat Planning Team, please contact Pastor Kim at 925-447-1950, ext 102.
Anniversaries and Birthdays

Anniversaries

January 5

- Brian and Sharon Grant
- Louis and Pam Howell
- Virgil and Donna Koon
- Robert and Anna Lim
- Jim and Lois Lyle
- Otis and Sharon Walton

Birthdays

- Steve Arnold
- Melody Bluck
- Lily Boercker
- Chelsea Bohling
- Bob Buckley
- Rich Buckley
- Becky Cain
- Bob Cowgill
- Dave Crozier
- Alexia Dawes
- Dan Donovan
- Joanne Duncan
- Susan Edgar-Lee
- Jon Epperson
- Patrick Epperson
- Kirby Fong
- Tony Gnecco
- Brian Henderson
- Valerie Henderson
- Stephanie Hepner
- Jackie Hoffman
- Marsha Howard
- Duane Jantzen
- Kay Jeakins
- Paul Jensen
- Bobbie Johnson
- Taber Kohlmoos
- Robyn Lakamsani
- Christa Lamb
- Gary Lamb
- Connaught Lindberg
- Robbi Loomis
- Helen McKee
- Kathy Molvik
- Louise Nelson
- Pat Pane
- Stephen Piscotty
- Fiona Pomykal
- Katherine Riley
- Kim Risedorph
- Zach Siebers
- Scott Smith
- Carl Sorem
- Dayna Taylor

Anniversaries and Birthdays
January 2013 Calendar

Weekly Recurring Events

Sundays
- 9:00 a.m. Worship, Sunday School, Sanctuary
- 10:15 a.m. Butterfly Gardens is open
- 10:30 a.m. Coffee Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
- 10:30 a.m. Children and Youth Choirs, Rooms 6, 9, 10, and 12
- 4:30 p.m. Confirmation, Room 10
- 5:30 p.m. Club 56, Room 13
- 5:30 p.m. Youth Group, Room 15
- 7:00p.m. Asbury Ringers, Rooms 11-12

Mondays
- 6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall
- 7:00 p.m. Little League, Room 10

Tuesdays
- 11:00 a.m. Loose Canons
- 12:00 p.m. Open Heart Kitchen, Fellowship Hall
- 3:30 p.m. Worship Service, Rosewood Gardens
- 7:00 p.m. Disciple Bible Study, Conference Room
- 7:00 p.m. Alanon/Alateen, Rooms 13-15

Wednesdays
- 9:30 a.m. Mom’s Bible Study/ Fireside Room
- 12:00 p.m. Open Heart Kitchen, Fellowship Hall
- 2:00-6:00 p.m. Yosh’s office hours, Room 15
- 7:30 p.m. Choir, Sanctuary

Thursdays
- 7:45 a.m. Men’s Bible Study
- 7:00 p.m. Asbury Band, Sanctuary
- 7:00 p.m. AA, Rooms 11-12

Fridays
- 9:00 a.m. Exercise Class, Fellowship Hall

Sat(urdays
- 8:00 a.m. Lawn Crew
- 9:00 a.m. AA, Rooms 11-12

January 3, 2013 (Thursday)
- 12:00 p.m. Senior/Retiree Luncheon, Fellowship Hall

January 5, 2013 (Saturday)
- 8:30 a.m. DAR, Chapel

January 16, 2013 (Wednesday)
- 9:30 a.m. UMW, Chapel (Note Day Change)

January 11 & 25, 2013 (Friday)
- 8:30 a.m. Hiking, Meet in the church parking lot

January 13, 2013 (Sunday)
- 4:00 p.m. John McCutcheon Concert, Sanctuary

January 19, 2013 (Saturday)
- 11:00 a.m. Gardening Class, Room 11

January 27, 2013 (Sunday)
- 7:00 p.m. Interfaith Concert, Sanctuary & FH
Asbury United Methodist Church
4743 East Avenue
Livermore, CA 94550

Time Dated Material—Deliver Promptly

Address Service Requested

Asbury UMC Staff

Pastor
Chuck Johnstone
Pastor
Kim Risedorph
Music Director
G. Allen Schell
Choir Coordinator
Jean Braun
Children’s Ministry Director
Tina Morris
Youth Director
Yosh Nakajima
Secretary
Terri Gamble
Nursery Coordinator
Susan Danan

Tri-Valley Haven sent a thank you note to the Asbury Community:
“To Everyone at Asbury, You are amazing! What wonderful and special people you are. Thank you for all you do.”

This year, we hosted Tri-Valley Haven’s Thanksgiving Food Distribution and Holiday Gift Bazaar, providing food, gifts, and encouragement to over 800 families.
Thank you, Asbury!

www.AsburyLive.org

Church office hours are:
Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Closed for lunch.

The deadline for the next Asbury Articles is
Thursday, January 17.