An Acts 2 Model For Living Intentional Transformation

By Sun Hee Kim, Associate Pastor, St. Paul UMC of Fremont (Excerpted and edited from The CA-NV Annual Conference website: Vital Signs and Wonders.)

At SAINT PAUL United Methodist Church of Fremont we are a diverse group of people. We come from all walks of life and represent many different backgrounds, and yet, we have come to cross paths at this wonderful church. We share in real life and real faith, and we experience together the blessing of how the story of Jesus intersects with our lives for empowerment and transformation. We believe in living together in community and deeply sharing in authentic relationships of encouragement and accountability. And there is no better way to do this than in small groups that reflect the nature of the Acts 2 church where "All who believed were together and had all things in common..." (Acts 2:44)

At SAINT PAUL, our small group ministry is alive and}

(Continued on page 2)
This month Rev. Sun Hee Kim is offering us an article below about Spiritual Growth Groups, an important direction we are taking here at Asbury with the leadership of our G.I.F.T. (Growing in Faith Team). As one of Asbury's Core Values, “Centered in Jesus Christ We Grow in Faith,” deepening our relationship with God is essential. Not just for individual faith and assurance of God's love and grace, but Christians in “holy conference” (a Methodist idea) with one another, gathering in conversation and sharing and study, reveal the promise of Jesus that as we love one another. You and I and God are one. Please read Rev. Sun Hee’s article, and be in worship on Sunday, September 15, when she brings the message and then meets with those who sense God calling them to learn more about spiritual growth groups or may be gifted for leadership. Are you one of those to whom God is calling? Reflect, pray and come hear what God wishes to do among us.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Chuck

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Church growth seminars about how "we need to grow small in order to grow big" or how "small groups are the answer". Indeed, we have found that it is in small groups that people's lives are really being touched and transformed. We utilize a house church model where there is a holistic approach to growing disciples spiritually - studying scripture together, sharing in fellowship both within and beyond the actual small group meeting, forming deep and meaningful connections through mutual caring and prayer, and reaching out to the world by committing together to mission and service projects. When all of these aspects of discipleship are practiced, growth happens.

We have found that small groups are able to do far more than simply what worship can do on Sundays. Whereas worship can often become reduced to a "spectator event," small groups spur members to participate fully. There is an active engagement of all of the members, since the leaders have created an intentional place of both "comfort" and "challenge". And finding the balance between these two is critical to effective and fruitful small group ministry. At SAINT PAUL, we take accountability seriously, and just as the Acts 2 Church gathered together often with "glad and sincere hearts", we aim to do the same. Sincerity, or authenticity, is encouraged. People speak their minds, and people share their brokenness. Leaders offer support and, more importantly, a listening and receptive heart that embraces everyone's sharing that eventually gets fed back into how the community is ultimately defined.

Speaking of leaders, we are also intentional about offering regular and ongoing training and support so that they are always equipped and never burnt out. Once a month, I meet with an amazing team of dedicated shepherds who have been called to gather and guide, love and lead the people in their respective groups. I cannot say enough how important it is to have the right leaders in place. And I thank God for each and every one of them. They are absolutely dedicated to this vision of ministry through small groups. They pray and they prepare. Their passion is simply amazing!

Currently, we are participating in a church-wide study of Adam Hamilton's book, The Way. By having every single small group go through this study during the season of Lent, we are able to build unity in our congregation and create a meaningful and relevant connection to the Sunday worship experience where we are preaching through the same book. All this is to say, that at SAINT PAUL, our goal is way beyond just gathering people into smaller groupings. Our goal is intentional transformation. Our goal is growth and consistency.

I often hear from the people of SAINT PAUL how our small group ministry has touched and changed their lives. They share with me stories of how when they were struggling with some of life's greatest challenges, it was the support and prayers of the small group that made all of the difference. Others share with me how much they have grown in their faith and how much they have increased in their knowledge of the Bible. And still others testify how their small group is simply their "family". It is the place where they find belonging and acceptance. For me, every time I hear of such stories, all I can do is smile and think about the Acts 2 Church - that first century community that was so committed to Christ and committed to each other - and thank God that same spirit is alive and well at SAINT PAUL! We are "Living IT" and being transformed! Intentionally transformed! Praise God.

Rev. Sun Hee Kim currently serves as the Minister of Discipleship and Leadership Development for Saint Paul UMC, Fremont. Her work focuses primarily on the development of small groups and the training of its leaders.
Christmas in September?

Help Us Get Ready for Christmas

This year, when we get ready to celebrate Christmas, we will have a daily devotional, written by YOU! Each day of Advent, we'll read a Scripture, and read a related story from someone in our community.

Please take a moment to reflect on a favorite Christmas memory or experience: perhaps a time when you glimpsed the deeper meaning of Christmas; perhaps you'll remember a challenging time and how you cele-

brated Christmas that year; or you might describe a time when the joy and love of the season filled your heart.

Please write down your memory, and email it to Pastor Kim by October 1. Each entry can be 100-200 words. Thank you!

Our Two Cents

Two quick updates from Finance Committee

The special offering in early August for the Backpack Project raised $2948. This project makes a huge difference to hundreds of local students who can now start the school year off with a new backpack and school supplies. Thank you for your generosity!

In September there will be a special offering to help fund Stephen Ministry leader training, and in October there will be a special offering for World Communion Sunday. More details will be coming in the future.

What Is Enough?

"Enough" is our fall Stewardship focus - which invites everyone to discover the joy of simplicity and generosity. Inspired by the issues of uncertainty and financial challenges that rocked the US economy five years ago, "Enough" was a sermon series developed by Adam Hamilton, pastor of the largest UM church in the country. A gifted writer, practical theologian and preacher, Hamilton takes the upheaval caused by that economic collapse to explore issues of how Christians should live in light of financial uncertainty. Is our faith and assurance for life rooted in God or in the success of our 401K? How do we balance our needs for life's necessities with our wants for life's luxuries? What can make us content with what we have? What are the spiritual dimensions of being financially responsible, wise with our resources and also generous?

We'll be providing books for individual reading and offer several study groups at different times to discuss these ideas. The tumultuous economic downturn from 2008-09 isn't as urgent an issue for many of us five years later. But, the anxiety which comes with financial uncertainty isn't a feeling or reality that disappears just because the Dow Jones Industrial Average is at an all time high. Excess spending on non-essentials, buying on credit and running up debt, facing limited resources and struggling to set a reasonable budget, wondering how much we can afford to give for the work of the Church - all these are issues we'll be examining in sermons, study, conversations and workshops.

On September 29 we'll begin distributing books after worship - one per household - and inviting everyone interested to sign up with a study group. On October 13, we'll kick off our focus on "Enough" in worship and beginning our study groups. Whether you are comfortable with your economic condition or struggling with debt and anxious month in and month out, your participation in a study group or attending a workshop can provide enlightenment and mutual guidance. We'll be collectively a stronger congregation, and individually, better stewards of our resources when "Enough" is completed.

The Stewardship Committee
Celebrate Community

Fifteenth Annual Piano Recital
September 7, 2013, 7:30 p.m.

It’s hard to believe this is the fifteenth year that Asbury and the Alameda County East Branch of the Music Teachers’ Association of California (MTAC) have co-sponsored the September Piano Recital. Each summer at the MTAC convention, members of our local branch choose a talented young artist to perform at Asbury. This year’s recital will be held on Saturday evening, September 7, 2013, 7:30 p.m. and will last about 45 minutes. The entire congregation and residents of the Tri-Valley area and beyond are warmly invited to attend. Children and music students of any age, and their families, are especially welcome.

This year’s performer is Connie Chen of Pleasanton, CA. Miss Chen graduated from Amador Valley High School, and will be a freshman at UC Berkeley in the fall where she will major in civil engineering and minor in music. This summer she was inducted into the prestigious Young Artist Guild of the MTAC. Connie has won top prizes and given performances in California, Florida and Austria.

Miss Chen has chosen musical gems from the piano repertoire for her performance at Asbury. Among them are a prelude and fugue from Bach’s iconic Well-Tempered Clavier, and sonatas by Beethoven and Prokofiev. Also on her program is Chopin’s magnificent Andante Spianato et Grande Polonaise Brillante.

Do mark your calendar for this evening of unforgettable music performed by a gifted young musician. The recital is open to all at no charge. Refreshments will be served afterward. For more information, contact Anne Coll.

Senior/Retiree Lunch
Thursday, September 5, 2013, 12:00 p.m.

The theme will be “Salute America.” We will serve pizza, pasta and dessert. If you have something red, white or blue, feel free to wear it. Please sign up in the Fellowship Hall or contact the church office at 925-447-1950. Cost is $5.00/person.

Small Groups Perspective

From Joanne Abey

In the late 1990s, Ron Dunn, our pastor at the time, became interested in starting small groups at Asbury, in the tradition of John Wesley and early Methodism. He asked a few people to attend a retreat and learn about the power of small groups and then to commit to starting a group that interested them. Wesley's groups met every week and were committed to sharing their experience of God in their lives that week. Ron used a model from a church in Texas, I believe, in helping us understand what was involved.

I committed to starting a book group for women which would focus on women's experiences in spirituality. We started out learning about the early mystics, the desert mothers and fathers, and other important spiritual models in early Christianity. Since then, we have covered many topics having to do with religions and spirituality. Our group is called, "Women of the Spirit." We started as a small group, sometimes as few as four, sometimes as many as twelve, the most we can have and still call it a "small group." We still meet every Thursday morning, except during the summer when we meet monthly, and are totally committed to doing the reading for the week and participating in the discussions.

Not everyone in our group is a member of Asbury, which is another feature of the Wesley model. We include women from several other churches in the area. What we all share is the pleasure of a lively discussion, acceptance of many viewpoints, and a deepening relationship to God. I highly recommend small groups as a way to strengthen our faith.
Making Music Calms the Soul

Yet Another Good Reason to JOIN A CHOIR!
Swedish researchers have concluded that choir singers create a rewarding feeling of oneness because their breathing and heartbeats synchronize in time with the music. In fact, "songs with long phrases achieve the same effect as breathing exercises in yoga." The lungs and the heart communicate with the brain via the vagus nerve, which also helps regulate emotion. That link could explain why group singing strengthens solidarity, not just in choirs but among football fans and work crews. "When you’re singing together, you are synchronizing with other people, and harmonizing your hearts."

So come! Sing, play bells or play an instrument with one of Asbury’s musical groups.

Adults
- Asbury Ringers (Bell Choir), Sunday nights, 7-9:00 p.m. in rooms 11-12. Beginning handbell classes start Thursday, September 5 and 12, from 5:30-6:30 in room 11. Contact Beckie Wiley.

- First Watch - Wednesday evenings, 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Contact Christina Pomykal
- Faith Choir - Wednesday nights, 7:30-9:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Contact Jean Brown
- Asbury Band - Thursday nights, 7-9:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Contact Allen Schell

Children and Youth
All rehearsals are 10:30-11:30 a.m. Sunday mornings,
- Cherub Choir: Grades K-2, Room 6, Contact Ruth Hawley
- Rainbow Choir: Grades 3-5, Room 9, Contact Jean Braun
- Middle School Choir: Grades 6-8, Room 10, Contact Martie Muldoon
- High School Choir: Grades 9-12, Rooms 11-12, Contact Jessica Warren

You can also contact the church office or just come to a rehearsal!
Serve Others with Love

Fertile GroundWorks Update

We are thrilled to announce a very successful first annual Fundraising Event for Fertile GroundWorks /Garden of Grace. We are very grateful to Asbury UMC for their vital continued support as we partner with them and others in the Tri-Valley to feed the needy and provide educational, and volunteer opportunities to energize local food gardening.

The Garden of Grace summer harvest is ramping up and is expected to continue with heavy production through September. Over 300 pounds of tomatoes were harvested in the past three harvest days, and a large box of bell peppers is now being provided to the Open Heart Kitchen each Tuesday and Wednesday. A late planting of summer squash is coming on strong and providing ample romanesco, zucchini, straight and crook-neck varieties. Three varieties of cucumber are harvested and kale, collards and Swiss chard provide summer greens.

With summer harvest in full tilt, seedling trays for the fall/early-winter garden have already been planted and are growing in the garden greenhouse. Fertile GroundWorks also planted seedlings for the Big Heart Garden at St. Bart's and the Village High School Garden in Pleasanton as it helps grow community and school gardening in the Tri-Valley.

Asbury Mission team completed electrical hook-ups to both of the storage containers, providing lighting and electric service, and a new vermi-composting system is being assembled by garden volunteers. Dr. Mark Brunell, who helped co-found the Garden of Grace, gave a presentation on growing Asian greens August 17 and monthly garden learning lectures are being planned for every third Saturday of the month. Come and join us on volunteer and learning-lecture days.

Livermore Habitat for Humanity Project

Come join us as we start the makeover of this house in Livermore! We will be painting and doing yard cleanup of this house as the first step in a rehab process on behalf of Habitat for Humanity. Habitat has acquired this single family home to convert to affordable housing for a local family. Asbury will lead this initial work starting Saturday, September 7. Additional workdays are Wednesday, September 11 and Saturday, September 14.

Consider joining us. This is a local project, and no technical skills are required. Just bring your loving spirit willing to invest a few hours for the benefit of a deserving family. For more information or to register, contact Steve Elliott or the Church office.
Successful Roller Derby Blood Drive

Our partnership with the Undead Bettys roller derby team from Antioch was a rocking success! We had free pizza from Melo’s Pizza, and a TON of people showed up. We ended up collecting 64 units of blood total, 83% above our goal of 35 units. Kellie Campos gave blood for the first time in her life (here hammering it up with Teri Lambert, who is “comforting” her), and husband Chuk gave for the first time since, well, in a REALLY LONG time.

Thank you to all who came out and had fun! However, the summer has had a deep shortage of blood, can we hope you can come to the next drive, Friday, September 20.

Sign up at www.redcrossblood.org and use ASBURY925 as the sponsor code, or call Tom Petty.

Maybe you’ll be our next first time donor!

Bike and Build Visits Asbury

At the last Dine and Dawdle of the summer, we were blessed to be hosting a group of bicycle riders from Bike and Build, an organization where participants bicycle across the United States to raise money and awareness about the need for affordable housing.

We learned that our group of 30 riders started in South Carolina in late May and were on their way to Santa Cruz. By the time they reached Santa Cruz, they biked a total of 4,256 miles! Along the way, the group stopped at various affordable housing sites, such as Habitat for Humanity, and worked to build these houses.

The ages of most of the riders are 18 to 24 years old, with leaders’ ages up to 28. They were obviously tired, hungry, and very sun tanned, but their spirits were still so high. The passion the group had for the organization they were representing was inspiring. We hope the organization will contact us again so we can host another group of cyclists next year.

In addition to hosting the cyclists, we also worked on stuffing school backpacks for underprivileged students. This year, Asbury sponsored 75 high school backpacks and pledged money for an additional 75 elementary backpacks. What a sight to see the tired bicyclists working alongside our church members to fill the backpacks and support our mission. After all packs were filled, it became a game to see which cyclist could pick up the most packs and carry them to the car.

After listening to these young adults and seeing them work with us, I have much faith in the future of the next generation. Some of us can help with money and some of us can bicycle across the country, but all of us can do one small thing to make the world a better place. If you would like more information on the Bike and Build organization the website is www.BikeandBuild.org.
Youth Page

Upcoming Youth Events

- **September 8** - Kick-off Sunday. Sunday School classes start in the morning during worship. Youth Group will resume from 5:30-6:30 p.m. with dinner to follow from 6:30-7:00 p.m.

- **September 29** - UMC Youth Event: More details will be coming soon!

- **October** - Corn Maze! We will make our annual trip to the Corn Maze again in October. Date to be determined.

A Meaningful, and Fun, Way to Serve

Are you looking for a way to make a difference? Be part of the Youth Fellowship Team. What is more important than walking alongside our young people as they grow in faith?

As we continue our search for a new director of youth ministry, we need adult volunteers to help keep the Sunday evening youth fellowship program going. Teams of four will work together, so that no one person will be responsible for every Sunday event. One team will work with middle school youth, one team with high school youth. We will provide training (September 7, 9:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.) so that you have resources you need to plan activities and serve as a mentor to youth. To find out more, and to volunteer for this ministry, contact Tony Gnecco or Pastor Kim.

Thank you, congregation!

The 17 youth and 4 adults who made the SSP trip to Susanville in July are very grateful for the generous support from the congregation that funded most all of the trip. As a "thank you", the youth served root beer floats after worship on SSP Sunday on August 11. The amazing congregation responded by stuffing the "tip jar" with $247! Again, THANK YOU for your generous support!

You can read more about the busy summer of service provided through SSP by visiting the California-Nevada Conference website at:

www.cnumc.org/news/detail/3959
Greetings to all Asbury friends and families.

Thanks to everyone who helped during summer Sunday School. We studied the Ten Commandments, prayed, played, sang and grew our friendships. VBS was a summer highlight. Thank you to all the volunteers and to our capable and competent co-director, Dylan Spooner.

Labor Day weekend, we will have our last "large group" Sunday School time. We will kick off fall Sunday School on September 8. If you are interested in working with kids, please let me hear from you.

Please note the following events on September 8 for Asbury Kids and volunteers:

- 8:00—Training for Sunday School Teachers, Chapel
- 9:00—Commissioning of Volunteer Teachers, Presentation of Bibles to Third Graders. Fall Sunday School Begins
- 10:15—Sundae Sunday—Everyone is invited for ice cream sundaes, in the Fellowship Hall.

Parents, please remember that our Sunday School offering goes to support the Garden of Grace. We take time each Sunday to share joys and concerns, pray for others and share our offerings.

Peace and Joy,

Tina Morris
Anniversaries

September 2

Harry and Cordelia Bate
Steve and Anne Bettencourt
Dave and Dale Boercker
Larry and Elaine Clary
Dave and Terri Gamble
Dick and Diane Larder
John and Connaught Lindberg
Marvin and June Martin
Kent and Mitchie McCammon
Raj and Diana Nathan
John and Peg Pettis
Andy and Christina Pomykal
Dave and Cheryl Seberger
Jonathan and Erin Senge
Carl and Colleen Sorem
Dan and Hitomi Westfall
Cal and Dixie Wood

Birthdays

Kyle Beach
Emily Bennett
Kenneth Bernstein
Dale Boercker
Susan Bothwell
Chris Buckley
Jan Buckley
Tim Buckley
Gene Burke
Chuk Campos
Kellie Campos
Cathy Carter
Nancy Carter
Pat Carter
LaVerne Cave
Larry Chase
Sharmyn Crawford
Gary Deis
Deanna Frumenti
Joshua Hart
Patricia Holladay
Pamela Jeakins
Chuck Johnstone
Paul Jones
Edie Lamb
Dick Larder
Mark Lee
Linda Lego
Aaron Leonard
Robert Lim
Brad Lord
Taryn Lord
Louise Maloney
Dee Matusiewicz
Donald Meeker
Meera Nathan
Landon Paison
Evelynne Schwartz
Barbara Sharry
Mary Spang
Dylan Spooner
Pam Spooner
Nicole Stewart
Jean Swartwood

Diane Thompson
Jenna Webb
Ernestine West
John Wiley
Mark Wiley
September 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
- 10:45 a.m. Children and Youth Choirs
- 7:00 p.m. Asbury Ringers, Rooms 11-12

Mondays
- 6:00 p.m. Boy Scouts, Fellowship Hall

Tuesdays
- 11:00 a.m. Loose Canons
- 12:00 p.m. Open Heart Kitchen, Fellowship Hall
- 3:00 p.m. Exercise Class, Rooms 11-12
- 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
- 4:00 p.m. Arthritis/Chronic Pain Group, Room 10
- 7:30 p.m. Faith Choir, Sanctuary

Thursdays
- 7:45 a.m. Men’s Bible Stud/Advent class, Room 11
- 10:00 a.m. Bible Study, Heritage Estates
- 10:30 a.m. Women of the Spirit
- 7:00 p.m. Asbury Band, Sanctuary
- 7:00 p.m. AA, Rooms 11-12

Fridays
- 9:00 a.m. Exercise Class, Fellowship Hall
- 10:00 a.m. Modified Exercise, Rooms 11-12

Saturdays
- 8:00 a.m. Lawn Crew
- 9:00 a.m. Flower Team
- 9:00 a.m. AA, Rooms 11-12

September 2, 2013 (Monday)
- OFFICE CLOSED—Labor Day Holiday
- 5:30 p.m. UMW Potluck, Fellowship Hall

September 5, 2013 (Thursday)
- 12:00 p.m. Senior/Retiree Luncheon, Fellowship Hall

September 7, 2013 (Saturday)
- 8:30 a.m. DAR, Chapel
- 9:30-12:30 p.m. Youth Ministry Workshop, Room 13
- 7:30 p.m. Young Artist Piano Recital, Sanctuary

September 10, 2013 (Tuesday)
- 11:00 a.m. The Long Good-bye, Fireside Room

September 13, 2013 (Friday)
- OFFICE CLOSED

September 15, 2013 (Sunday)
- 5:00 p.m. Stephen Ministry, Fireside Room

September 20, 2013 (Friday)
- 1-7:00 p.m. Livermore Community Blood Drive, FH

September 24, 2013 (Tuesday)
- 11:00 a.m. The Long Good-bye, Fireside Room
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
Children’s Ministry Director
Tina Morris
Youth Director

Music Director
G. Allen Schell
Choir Coordinator
Jean Braun
Secretary
Terri Gamble
Nursery Coordinator
Susan Danan

www.AsburyLive.org

Church office hours are:
Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Closed for lunch.

The deadline for the next Asbury Articles is Thursday, September 19, 2013.