Special Sunday Epiphany Event

Sunday, January 5, 9:00 a.m.

Join us for worship and a creative workshop program on Sunday, January 5, beginning at the worship hour at 9:00 a.m. Nationally known songwriter and dramatist Sam Kaufman is going to be presenting a drama during worship entitled "Ariella's Journey to Bethlehem". She tells the story of a handicapped daughter of one of the Magi, who finds a way to go on a journey of a lifetime with her father and uncles, to bring gifts to the baby Jesus. It is a story of hope, discovery and love. You will enjoy the weaving of story and song as Ariella faces her fears and encounters God's love.

Everyone is invited to the Fellowship Hall or "The Inn at Bethlehem", as worship concludes to enjoy refreshments and participate in a music and storytelling program for kids of all ages. There will be crafts which are simple: things created to decorate the Hall for Epiphany, and something to take home to help spread the love of the Christ Child.

Sam Kaufman has traveled extensively throughout the United States doing programs, offering workshops and helping develop ministries that use drama and music to tell the stories of faith. She was here many years ago and did a wonderful musical drama interpretation of the woman healed by the touching of Jesus garment. Come and enjoy worship and stay after for a time of fellowship, creativity, story and song.

Asbury Articles
Centered in Jesus Christ, we Grow in faith, Celebrate community and Serve others with love.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE
Chuck Chats  Page 2
Celebrate Community  Pages 4
Youth Happenings  Page 7
Children's Ministry  Page 7
Serve Others With Love  Page 6
Anniversaries and Birthdays  Page 8
Calendar  Page 9

Asbury United Methodist Church • 4743 East Ave., Livermore, CA 94550 • 925-447-1950 • www.AsburyLive.org
About 29 years ago, Lou and I became members of Los Altos United Methodist Church. I had grown up in the Church of the Nazarene, attended a Nazarene College and got my M.Div. (Master of Divinity) from the Nazarene Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri. So it wasn’t a huge shift to become a UM but it required some rethinking.

It all started when Lou and I began attending Los Altos UMC. Walking into worship that first Sunday in October 1984, I was in a crowd of about 400 worshipers but I felt welcomed and affirmed. The people around us were gracious and pleasant during the Passing of the Peace, the music was dynamic and moving, the Pastor was articulate and engaging. So we kept going back.

In a church of nearly 2,000 members, it wasn’t until we found our way to an orientation class that we developed some connection between names and faces of new attendees, and made acquaintance with the pastors and some of the staff. That helped tremendously. We started to attend an adult evening class which was a small group discussing current movies. Movies! I knew I was home!

Surprisingly, the thing that convinced me to make a move from being a lifelong Nazarene, and a minister in the Nazarene Church, was a careful reading of the UMC’s "Book of Discipline". It was so refreshing, so well written, so engaging that I felt I’d come home.

Not the parts about committees and conference boundaries and the boring stuff!

It was the parts about our "Theological Task" as UMs, and the Social Principles which tackled so many relevant issues, each one inviting those in the UMC (laypersons, pastors, Bishops) to think critically, to be prayerful, to engage the world and not shy away from difficult issues.

Having grown up in the denomination where anything controversial was either swept under the rug or anathema to bring up in polite company, it was like the breath of the Spirit blowing through my mind and heart. Finally, I was in a place where differences of opinion weren’t brushed aside. Finally, I was in a church where people of deep faith could co-exist and agree to disagree. John Wesley’s emphasis on a commonality of the heart—"if your heart be as mine, give me your hand"—was a possibility, not just a utopian unattainable ideal.

In the intervening years a bit of the bloom has come off the rose of course. The UMC, like all denominations, has challenges confronting it which give rise to anxiety, anger, defiance and ill tempered aspersions. Issues around farm worker’s rights, nuclear proliferation, poverty, the environment, marriage equality, and ordination of member's of the LGBT community, have swirled around the church locally, within Conferences and the larger Church.

While there are still wide ranging opinions on most subjects, progress has been made here and there. Some issues continue to fester and probably will for some time.

However, the freedom to discuss these things, to present perspectives from the pulpit and the pew, the varied discussions in formal settings and small groups, permit us to continue dialogue with respect and obeying our consciences without demanding rigidity or creating litmus tests theological or ecclesiastical. Wesley’s dictum I continue to embrace heartily states, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things charity."

In light of my reflecting on my journey within United Methodism I am going to take opportunity to preach on two Sundays, January 12 and 19, on the subject "Why I am a United Methodist". I hope you will join me for worship.

I will welcome your feedback and hope that I can articulate some of the things I treasure about our denomination and also some of the ways I see the UMC not living up to its stated ideals. Come and find out more about why we have a history and spirit of inclusion and what is meant by the UMC’s statement about "the ministry of all Christians", meaning we are each a minister of the Gospel.

What does that mean for you and me? What does that mean for our standards about ordination and service in the church? What kind of a church is it intending to create? I invite you to join me.

I look forward to the New Year. I trust that God will bring grace and blessings upon you and those you love.

Pastor Chuck
Our Two Cents

Two quick updates from Finance Committee

The Fellowship Hall debt is now under $200,000! Through your generous giving throughout 2013, we have paid off $95,000 in the last year. Please continue to be faithful to your pledges in 2014.

Please return your 2014 pledge cards as soon as possible. The 2014 budget needs to be approved in early January and we need to know what our expected income will be.

Financial Peace University

Asbury is proud to announce that Financial Peace University will be coming to our congregation. Beginning February 9 at 3:00 p.m. (class is approx 2 hours long) and continuing for nine Sunday afternoon classes, we will study the fundamentals of budgeting and debt repayment.

Ron Logan, Bill Warren and Glenda Warren will lead the class to financial independence and the ability to live like NO one else - with financial health for the NEW YEAR. Dave Ramsey developed Financial Peace University years ago when he found himself bankrupt and out of work, and since then it has helped literally millions of Americans out of the debt nightmare. Learn the tools needed to take you from being broke every month—with little or no help in sight—to changing your life and gaining freedom from debt.

All three of the leaders have taken FPU recently and have changed their own ways of thinking about debt and budgeting and can’t wait to bring this education to Asbury.

The cost of the nine weeks of classes is $99.00 per couple, but there may be some opportunities for scholarships for those needing assistance. Contact Pastor Chuck for further information on the scholarships. At the first class, students will be given a large packet of information from FPU, including CDs, a workbook, and other very useful information. We look forward to beginning the nine week journey of evaluating debt and developing budgets and starting towards the goal of financial independence. What a great opportunity to start 2014 in the best financial shape of your lives. Join us soon!

Giving Thanks

My deepest thanks to Pastors Kim and Chuck and all the Asbury family. After my surgery, you held me in your prayers and hearts and showered me with cards and love. I am grateful to the skill of surgeons and medical engineers for making this hip replacement possible. I am even more grateful to God and to all of you for making my recovery so smooth.

Love,
Margot Platt

What a surprise I received December 8 at the conclusion of Asbury’s annual Christmas Concert...the quilt and cards filled with good wishes and thanks bowled me over. I know the calendar indicates 50 years have passed since I first played here, but it seems as if almost no time has passed, and it has always been a joy!

Many years ago when we had a dead piano and a dying organ in the Chapel, someone asked why I continued at Asbury with such inadequate instruments to play. I didn't hesitate even a split second, replying that Asbury is a wonderful congregation of great people, and there is no place that I would rather be; I still feel the same about all of you. Thank you for your constant support, and for allowing me to be of service to you, then and now.

Allen Schell
Celebrate Community

Senior/Retiree Luncheon
Thursday, January 2, 12:00 noon
Join us on Thursday, January 2 for the monthly senior/retiree luncheon. The cost is $5. You may sign up in the Fellowship Hall after worship or contact the office.

John McCutcheon Concert
January 12, 4:00 p.m.
Asbury is proud to have one of America’s premier folk singers, song writers and story tellers, John McCutcheon. If it has strings, John can play it. With a fantastic repertoire of music written over three decades of performing and recording, John’s performances are known for their passion, honesty, humor and humanity.
Join us Sunday afternoon, January 12 at 4:00 p.m.
Tickets are $15 for students, seniors and in advance on www.asburylivepresents.com. They will be $20 at the door.

Women’s Retreat 2014
March 7-9, 2014
The Women’s Retreat will be March 7-9, at the Westminister Retreat Center in Alamo, CA. From Friday night through Sunday morning, we will explore our faith, deepen our friendships, and be well taken care of by the staff at Westminster. Pastor Kim Risedorph will lead the retreat, and we’ll focus on the Gifts of Imperfection (Really!).
If you can help with sign ups, please contact Pastor Kim.

Ladies’ Night Out
Monday, January 20, 6:30 p.m.
Women of Asbury get together once each month for a time of fellowship and conversation at a local restaurant. All women are welcome. This month, they’ll be going to Demitri’s Taverna at 2235 1st Street in downtown Livermore.
RSVP to Nancy Grover or Joanne Petty so they have an idea of how many people are coming and can let the restaurant know ahead of time.

Interfaith Music Concert
January 26, 7:00 p.m.
The 2014 Interfaith Concert will be held at First Presbyterian Church, 2020 Fifth Street in Livermore. The music begins at 7:00 p.m., followed by refreshments.
Growing In Faith

Spiritual Growth Group Ministry

Saint Paul United Methodist Church of Fremont is a diverse congregation that believes in living together in community and deeply sharing in authentic relationships of encouragement and accountability. They have learned that 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)

Pastor Sun Hee Kim is the pastor of Ministry and Leadership Development for St. Paul. In support of Asbury’s Spiritual Growth Group (SGG) Ministry, Rev. Sun Hee Kim has worked with us to share the experiences of St. Paul and to introduce all of Asbury to a small group ministry and to emphasize the importance of regular and ongoing training and support for small group leaders so that they are always equipped and never burnt out.

It is in small groups that people’s lives are being touched and transformed. St. Paul utilizes 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.

St. Paul has 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. 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.

On Sunday September 15, Sun Hee preached during worship and then afterward presented an Introduction to Small Groups attended by over 35 people.

In November, Sun Hee led two training workshops for SGG leaders. After prayer and listening to calls, 8-10 members participated in two half-day training sessions.

The first session focused on key principles of small groups, characteristics of small group leaders, and reviewing sample formats for a small group meeting agenda.

The second session focused on leadership skill building tools—facilitation skills, self-awareness that leads to dealing with various expectations, leadership styles, and the discipleship process. Part of the second session was devoted to an initial meeting of the Shepherds Group (leaders, co-leaders, and GIFT members). This group will be on-going, structured as a SGG, and with the objectives of supporting SGG leaders and providing resources (such as researching curriculum material).

Some key points from the sessions include:

- Key elements of a SGG are: prayer, Biblical, faith sharing, and accountability.
- Characteristics of small group leaders: following a calling, faithful, inspires and empowers others, communicates well, and proactive.
- Biblical guidance, Methodist tradition, and experience support the small group approach to growing in faith.
- Each SGG will decide its own logistics (when, where to meet), curriculum to use, and member expectations.
- Confidentiality is extremely important.
- The Shepherds Group will provide on-going support.

We have recorded the two training sessions and they are available on DVDs. For those who were unable to attend November’s training workshops we anticipate that they will be offered again next year.

GIFT (Val Pace, Tina Morris, Cory Coll, and Doug Webb)
Serve Others with Love

Tri-Valley Haven Thrift Store Remodel

Tri-Valley Haven recently took over the thrift store previously owned by Buenas Vidas Youth Ranch (near downtown Livermore). It is hoped that the store will become an important source of revenue for the Haven’s domestic violence and homeless programs. Some other sources of funding have been eliminated or reduced.

The store could really use a facelift to make it a more inviting retail space. A project team lead by Asbury UMC will be doing the work to remodel the facility. We will begin work on Monday, January 6 and continue most of that week (January 7, 9, 10 and 11). We will work the following week on January 16-18. The work will include renovating the retail displays, repairs, painting and installing new flooring.

All volunteers are welcome. No special skills are required, just a willingness to help. Take a day off and join us! For more information or to sign up, contact Steve Elliott, Roger Everett, Bob Hoffman or the church office.

Return to Haiti, January 2014

A team from Asbury UMC and San Ramon Valley UMC will be returning to Haiti on January 22 to continue work on deploying solar energy, clean water and computers to schools there. We will also be implementing a lunch program at a new school.

This trip will focus on reviewing existing schools, evaluating new sites, working with teachers to integrate computers into the classroom and the start up of lunch at an additional rural school. We will an assemble additional school cart for future deployment. We will be taking additional water purifiers, educational supplies and other materials with us.

Steve Elliott and Phil Bryson will be going from Asbury along with two team members from San Ramon Valley UMC. We will be stationed at the school in Thomas, Haiti and be working in the nearby area.

We welcome the support of the church in helping to fund this mission. We appreciate your prayers and words of support.

Hospitality

Have you noticed all the ushers assisting our head ushers each Sunday? These ushers wear a badge and are happy to help you find a seat, especially when the Sanctuary is full. Don’t hesitate to seek out an usher if you need assistance with seating or have other needs.

Thank you for complying if the ushers ask you to move in if they are trying to seat others, especially visitors. We all have our favorite spots, but being a welcoming congregation, we know we must go above and beyond to make visitors feel at home at Asbury. Thank you.

A big thank you goes out to Everett and Lily White as they have agreed to take a leadership role in the visitor welcome table. Please encourage any visitors you see to stop by the table for a gift. We like to get contact information so we can include interested people on email lists and send them the newsletters.

It is a joy to work alongside all of you.

Peace,

Tina

Thank You From the Scouts

Boy Scout Troop 900 would like to say, “Thank you for your awesome support of the Christmas Tree Lot this year.” It was great to see so many familiar faces stopping in to purchase trees. The Scouts from Asbury (Austin, Joey, Nik, and Ralph) enjoyed serving you and hope to see you again next Christmas.
Youth Happenings

What’s happening in January?

- January 5 - Youth Mission fundraiser! Youth will act as servers during the special Epiphany event during worship. Tips will go toward youth missions.
- January 12 - Youth Mission fundraiser! Selling snacks at intermission of John McCutcheon Concert.

What’s coming up?

- February 9 - Youth Mission fundraiser! UMW Luncheon & Fashion Show. Young ladies are needed to model "vintage" clothing and young men are needed as servers.
- June 29 - July 5 - High School SSP trip to Stockton, CA.
- July 6-11 - Toyon Kids grades 3-6 / Toyon LIT is for 14 and 15 year olds.
- July 13-18 - Camp Quest grades 7-9 / Impact LIT is for 16 - 19 year olds.

How can I help?

When youth groups start-up again in January, we will need volunteers to prepare and serve dinner for about 25 youth and adults in the Fellowship Hall at 6:30 on Sundays. Look for an email with more details.

We are also looking for volunteers to host Home Group dinners in February and May 2014. Thank you to the Gully, Cano, and Campos family for already offering to host in 2014!

Please contact Tony Gnecco if you would like to help out in any way.

Children’s Ministry

A big THANK YOU goes out to Rebecca Bernstein for directing a marvelous Christmas pageant. It was especially an honor to have JERIAH WARREN star as baby Jesus this year. Also thanks to the dozens of people who assisted: choral directors of all choirs, lights, settings, programs, food, costumes, and so much more. Your love of and support for our kids is greatly appreciated.

Don’t miss worship on January 5—the beginning of epiphany. You will be blessed with a very special story presented in a unique manner. CAITLYN BIERMANN will play baby Jesus during worship and will bestow a gift on a lucky child. You will enjoy delectable food and meaningful activities, too. I hope to see you all.

Club 45 meets every Sunday 5:30-7:00 starting January 5. Come and bring a friend. Let’s see what fun Gabe has planned for us next.

Happy New Year to all of you.
Peace and Joy,

Tina Morris
Anniversaries and Birthdays

Anniversaries
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
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
Kathy Molvik
Louise Nelson
Pat Pane
Fiona Pomykal
Katherine Riley
Kim Risedorph
Zach Siebers
Scott Smith
Carl Sorem
Dayna Taylor
Alan Teruya
Karlie Teruya
Parker Turk
Ruth Vince

Amanda Wagoner
Chris Weiss
Beckie Wiley
Jenna Wiley
January 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. GIFT, Fireside Room
- 10:45 a.m. Children and Youth Choirs
- 5:30 p.m. Youth Group
- 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
- 3:30 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 Study, Room 11
- 10:00 a.m. Bible Study, Heritage Estates
- 10:30 a.m. Women of the Spirit
- 7:00 p.m. SGG, Room 6
- 7:00 p.m. Asbury Band, Sanctuary
- 7:00 p.m. AA, Rooms 11-12

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

January 2, 2013 (Thursday)
- 12:00 p.m. Senior/Retiree Luncheon, Fellowship Hall

January 12, 2013 (Sunday)
- 10:30 a.m. SPRC, Room 13
- 4:00 p.m. John McCutcheon Concert, Sanctuary

January 13, 2013 (Monday)
- 9:30 a.m. UMW Morning Glories Circle, Fireside Room

January 14, 2013 (Tuesday)
- 11:00 a.m. The Long Good-bye, Fireside Room

January 20, 2013 (Monday)
- 6:30 p.m. Ladies’ Night Out, Demitri’s Taverna, 2235 1st Street

January 24, 2013 (Friday)
- 1-7:00 p.m. Livermore Community Blood Drive, FH

January 25, 2013 (Saturday)
- 9-2:00 p.m. CPR/First Aid Training, Conference Room

January 28, 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, January 23, 2014.