**Pastors’ Ponderings**

**Celebrate Community**

**Serve Others With Love**

**Anniversaries and Birthdays**

**Calendar**

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**Asbury Articles**

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

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**Summer Sermon Series: Parables of Disney**

**July 12: The Lion King, Hakuna Matata.** Hakuna Matata means no worries, but what happens when we take this philosophy a little too far and hurt others? We will explore the Lion King through the lens of the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32.

**July 19: The Lion King, Remember Who You Are.** In the Lion King, Simba forgets and feels separated from who he is: his father’s son and the true lion king. Sometimes we forget who we are: beloved children of God made in the image of God. Sometimes we forget Paul’s words in Romans 8:35-39 that nothing can separate us from God’s love. So what does it mean for Simba and for us to remember who we are?

**July 26: Finding Nemo, Just Keep Swimming.** Sometimes life gets tough. Dory’s advice to Marlin in Finding Nemo is that when you are going through something scary and difficult “just keep swimming.” Often times that is easier when we, like Marlin, have someone to swim alongside us. Ruth’s words to her grieving mother-in-law, Naomi, in Ruth 1:16-18 show just how important companionship is when swimming through dark waters.

**August 2: Finding Nemo, Living with Uncertainty.** In Finding Nemo, Marlin must learn how to live with the knowledge that he cannot keep his son safe at all times and ensure that nothing ever happens to him. After losing his children, in Job 43:12-17 Job chooses to have more children and must also live with the knowledge that life is full of uncertainty and risk. Sometimes those uncertainties can be crippling, but like Job and Marlin we must find a way to live in the midst of uncertainty.

**August 9: Youth Mission Sunday.** Hear the youth share their experiences serving other with love, growing in faith, and celebrating community at Sierra Service Project this summer!
"Never underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit."

That phrase was repeated often at the Northern California-Nevada Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

"Never underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit."

That phrase offered me a lifeline as we heard the news from South Carolina: a man shot nine people in a church. Gunning people down as they pray is a horrible act, and yet it happened. It happened in our country. And something has to change.

I believe we are to be part of that change, that transformation.

How? I recommend we start by holding on to this phrase so that it becomes a prayer, a prayer guides us into action: "Never underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit."

The power of the Holy Spirit can move us beyond hopelessness and anger.

Pastor Chelsea is starting a book club where we will read and discuss, Pre-Post-Racial America: Spiritual Stories from the Front Lines by Sandhya Rani Jha. Email Pastor Chelsea if you want to join that group.

A blog post by Jeremy Adam Smith, "Racism is not a mental illness" is well worth reading. And in his final paragraphs, Smith offers us a way to be part of the change:

"The first step, and only the first, is to cultivate a high level of self awareness, particularly of the psychological biases that can lead us to discriminate against others and to avoid responsibility for what happens in the world around us.

"But it can't stop with inner change. Racism does not appear to be a mental illness, and you cannot treat it with talk therapy and pills. However, both racism and mental illness thrive in silence and isolation. The next step is to talk, openly and frankly...and have the guts to actually listen to each other.

We can take steps to limit the ability of a man like Roof to get ahold of weapons that turn private ideology into mass murder. We can work to eliminate bias in policing. The list is long, but Charleston reveals the alternative to inaction. I don’t want to live in Dylann Roof’s world, do you?”

May we be known as a people who never underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit, a people who listen and take action. Where are you being led by the Spirit? I’d like to hear from you, as together we build the beloved community.

Pastor Kim

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Thank You Asbury!

Dearest Church Family, we wish to offer our appreciation for the many well wishes we received for our recent celebration of our 56th Wedding Anniversary as well as the visits, cards, phone calls and prayers during some of our prior and continuing health "conditions".

Marlys & Hal Miller
Building an Inclusive Church

What does a Reconciling Methodist Church look like? Is it different from Asbury? To answer these two questions, Margot Platt and Bill Groth traveled to Walnut Creek on Sunday, June 7, to attend worship at Walnut Creek United Methodist Church. On this Sunday WCUMC, one of four Methodist Churches in Walnut Creek, was celebrating its twenty-first anniversary of being a Reconciling Church. We arrived about 30 minutes early but wondered if perhaps we were wrong about the time that service began, for the parking lot was almost full. As we approached the entrance to the sanctuary, we were greeted by two very friendly members who immediately recognized us as visitors. They warmly introduced themselves, asked our names and when they learned we were from Asbury began telling us all about their church. Following this welcome we entered the sanctuary, a beautiful space with many stained glass windows and numerous carved wooden objects including a large cross. Within a few minutes a member of the congregation sat down in the pew in front of us and began talking with us. Within a few more minutes the church’s pastor, Eileen Lindsay, came over and introduced herself.

There are many similarities between WCUMC and Asbury. The announcements running on the screens and printed in the bulletin were about UMW gatherings, church summer camps, upcoming mission trips, going to the A’s baseball games, Stephen’s Ministry, and Bible studies, to name a few. The music on this Sunday was played on an organ and piano and sung by a relatively large choir wearing red robes and white sashes. There was a passing of the peace but no children’s time. We took communion and it was identical to communion at Asbury. The scripture, Mark 3:20-35, included Jesus’ statement that “Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother,” a startling redefinition of family. Rev. Lindsay’s sermon contained much that related to their being a Reconciling Church, including reference to her own daughter’s recent wedding to her female partner, but her focus largely had to do with June 7th being the anniversary of having become a Reconciling Congregation. The membership of WCUMC has declined over the past two decades, paralleling a decline seen in most mainline Protestant churches in the US. Pastor Lindsay says WCUMC draws members from Contra Costa, Solano, and Alameda counties who want a more inclusive approach to worship and who cannot find it at Methodist churches closer to home. (The woman who first sat near us and engaged us in conversation drives with her husband to Walnut Creek every Sunday from Hayward.) Rev. Lindsay believes their membership would be even less were they not a Reconciling church and to her knowledge no one has left their church because it voted to become a Reconciling Church. We were told that one member who voted no 21 years ago has since changed his mind and is glad to be part of a Reconciling Church.

The church has a Reconciling Congregation Affirmation that states that no one will be excluded, that acceptance for all can be a reality, that they will pledge their efforts to advocate and address the concerns of all, that they will share the responsibility of moving forward to affirm the integrity and worth of all. They advocate for the right for everyone to have the freedom to marry the person of their choice, they affirm that discrimination and intolerance are incompatible with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and they invite all to join with them in their gatherings. The church does not fly a "rainbow flag" inside or out, but there is a small emblem on the wooden street sign out in front.

Following worship we joined many members of the congregation in their fellowship hall for coffee. The feel of this time was very much like fellowship time in our church. We spoke with one couple who have been members there for more than 40 years, who have witnessed many changes, and who obviously love their church a great deal. We explained who we were and why we were there. They seemed pleased that we had chosen to attend their church. They in turn introduced us to several other people including a gay man who spoke very warmly of this church, the people there and about it being easy for him to be himself in this place. Later we spoke to an enthusiastic lesbian couple who are about to get married. During our conversation they laughingly told about their first time attending this church ten years ago and which also happened to be an anniversary of becoming a Reconciling Congregation. They described themselves as being "horrified" with all the "gay stuff that was being thrown at the congregation" not realizing it was not typical but in recognition of the anniversary. They said that while there were certainly people from the LGBT community within the congregation (approximately 7% of the membership is LGBT or Q), they were definitely not in the majority nor would they want to be. They specifically said that they do not want to be members of a "gay church"

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Senior/Retiree Luncheon
Thursday, July 2, 12:00 p.m.
If you’re a senior or a retiree, please come join us in the Fellowship Hall to have a delicious lunch and enjoy some fellowship. This month it will be a picnic lunch with fried chicken, potato salad, chips and lemonade. Then we’ll have our first Seniors Cornhole Tournament, which is a bean bag toss game. Cost is $5 per person.

Ladies’ Night Out
Tuesday July 7, 6:30 p.m.
Ladies of Asbury, let’s get together for an evening out at a local restaurant. This month, we’ll be going to Applebees at 4301 First Street (www.applebees.com). If you plan to attend, please let Nancy Grover know so she can tell them how many to expect.

Dine and Dawdle Schedule
Thursdays This Summer, Starting June 18, 6:00 p.m.
Join us starting June 18, at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall, every Thursday night through August 6 (except for July 2).
If you don’t want to cook or clean dishes, come and enjoy comfort food in the company of your Asbury friends for only $5 each or $20 per family! We have several fun activities planned along with the yummy dinner.

- July 2 — No Dine and Dawdle, Happy Independence Day!
- July 9 — Lion King shown after dinner, fun for all ages.
- July 16 — Dessert Bake-off, bake your favorite dessert! Prizes!
- July 23 — Snow White shown after dinner.
- July 30 — Chili Cook-off! Hot dogs will also be served.
- August 6 — Readers Theater presentation, dinner and a show!

Free Staged Reading
Thursday, August 6
After Dine and Dawdle on Thursday, August 6, at 6:00 p.m., please join Asbury Players for a free staged reading of the classic comedy, "Hay Fever" by Noël Coward. The New York Post called this play, "light, luminous, and charming, and hilariously funny." We know you’ll agree!
For more information, contact Barbara David at home.
And don’t forget to like the Asbury Players Community Theater on Facebook!
www.facebook.com/AsburyPlayers
Building on Faith at Habitat for Humanity

Each month, Asbury provides a team to help build affordable housing with Habitat for Humanity. We join other faith communities at the new development in Martinez. Everyone is welcome, regardless of skills or experience. It is a wonderful way to make a difference. We often work with the families who will own the new homes.

Our next two Saturday workdays are July 18 and August 15. The on-the-job training is great. Youth, 16 and older, can work on this construction and are encouraged to participate.

The first 10 houses of the 20 house project have been framed and are ready for the remaining effort that will make them into homes. Work at the site starts at 8:30 a.m. and ends by 4:00 p.m. We carpool from Asbury, leaving at 7:40 a.m. from the parking lot by the office building. For information or to sign up come to the Serve Others with Love Table after worship, or contact Bob Hoffman.

Join Us, Family Workday at Tri-Valley Haven

We have a long standing commitment to support Tri-Valley Haven. They now need our help with processing and organizing the many donations they receive at their Thrift Store. Perfect for all ages, we will be going on Saturday, July 11, 9:00 a.m.-noon, to sort and process clothes and other donations. It will be like organizing a garage sale! Fun and helpful! For more information or to signup stop by the Serve Others Table after worship or see Steve Elliott.

Interfaith Backpacking Project for 2015

Livermore’s Interfaith Backpack Project is now in its third decade of providing school backpacks filled with educational supplies to children from families who struggle to fund school expenses. The recipients are chosen based on teacher recommendations and needs identified by others, such as pastors.

Asbury, a founding member of this project, is one of thirteen congregations that will distribute over 800 backpacks this year to Livermore school children. We will provide 100 middle/high-school backpacks, at a cost $50 each (including a $20 shoe certificate). Please consider helping with this worthy benevolence. Checks should be made out to Asbury with “Backpack Project” on the memo line.

Also join us to stuff this year’s backpacks after Dine and Dawdle on Thursday, July 30 and consider helping with the distribution on Saturday, August 15. See Larry Suter for more details.

Tri Valley Poverty Awareness Collaborative

Pastor Kim is an active member of a new group that exists reduce poverty in the tri valley. As part of the Tri Valley Poverty Awareness Collaborative, I’m surrounded by public school officials, leaders of agencies, health care providers, local government officials, faith leaders and business people—all deeply committed to raising awareness of poverty, and reducing poverty. We represent a broad coalition and are deeply committed. Together, I am confident we can do this!

At the end of our last meeting, we went around and offered a one word summary of what we were feeling about our work together. Folks said things like: inspired, hopeful, grateful, optimistic.

We are moving ahead to respond to needs, help shape policy, and reduce poverty. Ask me how you can be involved.

Fertile GroundWorks Annual Fundraiser

July 22, 6:00 p.m.

Please also mark your calendars for our annual fundraiser, this year being held at the beautiful Rios-Lovell Winery (www.rioslovellwinery.com) July 22. Please visit the FGW website for details (www.fertilegroundworks.org) and to order tickets.
Children’s Ministry

ASBURY kids
Steve Elliott Receives Bishop’s Award

Steve Elliott was presented with a 2015 Bishop’s award at the California-Nevada Annual Conference session held in Burlingame on June 19. Steve’s award was in recognition of his tireless effort in coordinating his own and other’s volunteer activities not only locally but also nationally and internationally. Of special note was his continuing work with schools in Thomas, Haiti.

Each year Bishop Warner H. Brown, Jr. awards a Bishop's Award to a layperson, or laypersons, that have demonstrated outstanding service both in their local church and beyond the local church. Service beyond the local church may be in the annual conference, the general church, the local community or beyond. He invites lay and clergy of the California-Nevada Conference to lift up people deserving this recognition.

Previous recipients of this prestigious award from our Circuit include Dick Crawford in 2011 and Warren McGuffin of San Ramon Valley UMC in 2014.
Pastor Chelsea Commissioned

At our Annual Conference, a gathering of church leaders and clergy, Pastor Chelsea was commissioned as a resident in ministry. She is one step closer to ordination in the United Methodist Church. Please send your congratulations and prayers her way, as she continues her ministry at Asbury!

Race and Justice Book Study

We will continue the conversation around race and justice with a book study on Sandhya Jha’s book Pre-Post-Racial America: Spiritual Stories from the Front Lines. The study will meet on Wednesday nights at 7:00 p.m. starting July 15 through August 5. Please email Pastor Chelsea to sign up.

Inclusive Church (cont’d)

(Continued from page 3)

but members of a diverse, tolerant, and accepting one. In a very similar vein, Michelle Brown, the director of youth services and an outgoing and enthusiastic lesbian, told us that when she looks at the congregation she doesn’t want to see herself but a diverse group of people who love and accept her. Carol Morris, director of Arts and Music, along with her husband, has been a member of the WC Church since 1990, before it became a Reconciling Church, and acknowledges that her position has changed. She initially was wary of their becoming a Reconciling Church but now believes that they are a much stronger church as a result. Knowing members of the LGBTQ community makes a big difference in one’s comfort in accepting gays and lesbians and removes much of the fear of the unknown. She added that parents of LGBTQ children played a big part in their church becoming a Reconciling Church because they did not want their children to be shunned and excluded but to be welcome and accepted. She very much appreciates the talents and gifts members of the LGBTQ community have brought to the church.

Second Corinthians 5:16-21 are extremely important verses to the members of WCUMC, for in these verses we learn that Christians are brand-new people on the inside and there is a new covenant, a new perspective, a new body, a new church that requires a new way of looking at all people and of all creation. These verses also tell us that through His Son God has blotted out our sins and reconciled us with Him.

While being a Reconciling Church is obviously an important aspect of the Walnut Creek UMC, it is not the only important part of their identity. Like Asbury, the church is involved in many other activities that could easily be seen as Growing in Faith, Celebrating Community, and Serving Others With Love.

We continue to work on our one-to-one conversations, and we recently welcomed Carol Perry as the newest member of our committee. As always, we ask for your prayers. Leila Epperson, Larry Wiley, Dale Boercker, Bill Groth, Val Pace, Margot Platt, Carol Perry, and Chloe Molvik
June 26, 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Mark 12:31 says, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these."

Throughout the history of the United States, the Supreme Court has been called on to ensure equality, liberty, and justice for all people. This can be seen in the abolition of slavery, the women’s movement, the civil rights movement of the 60s, and now in the fight for marriage equality.

Today, in a 5 to 4 decision, the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of marriage equality for all people.

For decades, the United Methodist Church has debated this issue. Next year when General Conference gathers in Portland, Oregon, the decision to change, or reaffirm the church’s historic position will be considered. Pastors and congregations within our annual conference hold opinions across the spectrum of this decision. But, throughout the years, the California-Nevada Conference has consistently stood for full inclusion, and equal rights, for all people in our denomination, and secular society.

In our Social Principles, United Methodists have stated our common belief around this value:

We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self.

This Supreme Court decision calls attention to the difference between the laws of the United States, and the policy of our church. The law does not require anyone to violate their conscience of what God has called them to do, or their theological understanding. But, if we seek to be an inclusive church that serves all of our parishioners, and all of our neighbors, we will have to consider how we treat all people equally. The heart of our call to ministry is to be pastor to the people of the congregation, and the community, we serve. May we continue to be a people of prayer, and hope, as we work towards a day of equality and inclusion for all people created in the image of God.

Alice Stokes Paul, women’s rights activist and leader in getting women the right to vote says, "I never doubted that equal rights was the right direction. Most reforms, most problems are complicated. But to me there is nothing complicated about ordinary equality."

Grace and Peace,

Bishop Warner H. Brown, Jr.
Resident Bishop
Anniversaries and Birthdays

Anniversaries

Joe and Pat Baker
Henry and Maureen Bell
Kenneth and Jennifer Bernstein
Tim and Megan Buckley
Brett and Christy Gibson
Tony and Keri Gnecco
Vamsee and Robyn Lakamsani
Fred and Susan Mitilitsky Bothwell
John and Martie Muldoon
Keith and Carole Nakanishi
Bill and Mary Ouellette
Glenn and Glynice Pomykal
Rob and Michele Rudd
Ron and Pat Saltgaver
Ron and Evelynne Schwartz
Larry and Joyce Suter

Birthdays

Nancy Ackerman
Steven Bettencourt
Dee Bing
Gail Bryan
Mary Burnham
Lauren Cano
Jim Culpepper
Brian Defenbaugh
Zack Edgar
Karen Faraldo
Steve Fedder
Julian Galicia-Thomas
Ken Giannotti
Brett Gibson
Carissa Grisham
Mitchell Haugen
Bob Howe
Jean Howe
Terry Hubner
Bob Johnson
Mike Lambaren, Jr.
John Linden
Mark Linden
Joyce Logan
Jewels McCafferty
Kayla McClendon
Eleanor North
Brandon Norton
Michael Norton
Todd Schrader
Dave Seberger
Erin Senge
Dottie Sherman
Grant Siebers
Bobb Smith
Clay Smith
Julia Sveen
Steve Taber
Robbie Teruya
Thomas Thournir
Karen Ullrich
Susan Wagoner
Bob Whiteside
Debbie Whiteside
Cal Wood
Gloria Yano
July 2015 Calendar

Please visit the Asbury website calendar for the latest updates: http://www.asburylive.org/events

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. Small Groups
- 10:30 a.m. Bible Study, Room 15
- 5:00 p.m. Stephen Ministry, Fireside Room

Mondays
- 9:00 a.m. Crafting for a Cause, Room 10

Tuesdays
- 11:00 a.m. Loose Canons
- 12:00 p.m. Open Heart Kitchen, Fellowship Hall
- 7:00 p.m. Alanon/Alateen, Rooms 13-15
- 7:00 p.m. Band Rehearsal, Sanctuary

Wednesdays
- 12:00 p.m. Open Heart Kitchen, Fellowship Hall
- 7:30 p.m. Faith Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

Thursdays
- 7:45 a.m. Men’s Group, Fireside Room
- 10:30 a.m. Women of the Spirit
- 7:00 p.m. AA, Rooms 11-12

Fridays
- 10:30 a.m. Bible Study, Room 15

Saturdays
- 8:00 a.m. Lawn Crew
- 9:00 a.m. AA, Rooms 11-12
- 10:30 a.m. Bible Study, Room 15

July 2, 2015 (Thursday)
- 12:00 p.m. Senior/Retiree Luncheon, FH

July 7, 2015 (Tuesday)
- 6:30 p.m. Ladies’ Night Out, Applebees, 4301 First Street

July 10, 2015 (Friday)
- 1-7:00 p.m. Livermore Community Blood Drive, FH

July 12, 2015 (Sunday)
- 10:30 a.m. Finance, Conference Room
- 10:30 a.m. SPRC, Room 10

July 13, 2015 (Monday)
- 9:30 a.m. UMW Morning Glories, Fireside Room

July 14, 2015 (Tuesday)
- 11:00 a.m. The Long Good-bye, Fireside Room

July 19, 2015 (Sunday)
- 10:30 a.m. Trustees, Conference Room

July 20-24, 2015 (Monday-Friday)
- 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon Vacation Bible School

July 21, 2015 (Tuesday)
- 7:00 p.m. Fellowship Team, Room 11/12

July 26, 2015 (Sunday)
- 10:30 a.m. Church Council, Conference Room

July 28, 2015 (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
Chelsea Constant
Pastor
Kim Risedorph
Children's Ministry Director
Tina Morris
Youth Director
Chelsea Constant
Secretary
Terri Gamble
Facilities Use Manager
Mitchie McCammon
Music Director
G. Allen Schell
Choir Coordinator
Jean Braun
Nursery Coordinator
Pam Tegge

Livermore Community Blood Drive
Friday, July 10, 1:00-7:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall
We need you! If you’re 17 or older and in good health (or 16 with parental consent). The summertime is always a slow time for blood donation, so please call Tom Petty at home for more information about donating blood, or sign up at redcrossblood.org and use sponsor Code: ASBURY925. Thank you for helping to save a life by giving blood!

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, June 23, 2015.