The United Methodist pastors in our area sent a letter to local newspapers, and we wanted to share this with you.

This came about because Pastor Dan Sturdivant, who lives in Livermore, went to a birthday party for his next door neighbor’s one year old child. The family practices the Muslim faith. During the gathering, Dan heard how worried, and often frightened, they were. Comments, looks, media reports made them feel unsafe.

As pastors, we wanted to speak up, as a matter of conscience. We want to live in a community and nation, where faithful practitioners of all faiths, can live together in peace. Both Kim and Chelsea would welcome conversations around this topic.

“We stand with Muslim Americans for peace and for mutual respect.

As clergy of the East Bay, we speak out against fear of Islam and fear of Muslims. We rebel against hateful acts defaming mosques and disrespectful comments in the media maligning Muslims. We are pleased to be neighbors with peaceful people in our communities who practice Islam, and we stand in solidarity with them against terrorism and violence of any kind.

We defend the right to freedom of religion in this nation, and we welcome refugees and immigrants of any religion who come to this country seeking safety and peaceful existence. Our ancestors sought peace and opportunity in this nation, and we are proud to live as neighbors with others who come also seeking new life.

We believe that we can only achieve peace in the world by gaining understanding about the religions of the world. We therefore welcome interfaith dialogue and community projects that bring people together across religious differences.

May we find unity and appreciation in our diversity, as we long for a world that embraces the brotherhood and sisterhood of all humankind.”

Sunny Ahn, SRVUMC
Diana Bohn, Lynnewood UMC
Chelsea Constant, Asbury UMC
Ron Dunn, SRVUMC
Luke Ham, SRVUMC
Heather Leslie Hammer, Lynnewood UMC
Kim Risedorph, Asbury UMC
Dan Sturdivant, Grace UMC
Jonathan Tarman, Castro Valley UMC
Lent 2016

The season of Lent invites us to go deeper, to explore and live our faith in intentional ways.

This year, our small groups will be reading a book, *Gifts from the Dark Woods: Seven Blessings for Soulful Skeptics (and Other Wanderers)* by Eric Elnes.

Sign up to be part of a Lenten small group after worship in the Fellowship Hall, or in the church office during the week. Small groups offer the perfect opportunity to make our spiritual journey a priority during Lent.

Our worship on Sunday will follow the chapters in this book:

- **February 14:** The Gift of Uncertainty
- **February 21:** The Gift of Emptiness
- **February 28:** The Gift of Being Thunderstruck
- **March 6:** The Gift of Being Lost
- **March 13:** The Gift of Temptation (Daylight Savings Time begins)
- **March 20:** The Gift of Disappearing (Palm Sunday)

*Ash Wednesday Service:* February 10, 7-7:30 p.m. in the Chapel

Holy Week Services will be announced in March.

*Easter Sunday Service:* March 27. There will be three services: Sunrise Service, and worship services at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.

Celebrate Community

**Ladies’ Night Out**

Tuesday, February 2, 6:30 p.m.

This month we will be enjoying Taco Tuesday at the Riata Diner and Tavern located at 190 S. J Street. All ladies of Asbury are invited. Please let Nancy Grover know if you plan to attend so we can let the restaurant know how many to expect.

**Senior/Retiree Luncheon**

Thursday, February 4, 12:00 p.m.

All seniors and retirees are invited to attend the Valentine-themed luncheon on February 4 at noon in the Fellowship Hall. Wear red to celebrate Valentine’s Day and Heart Awareness Month. The cost is $5 per person. Sign-up after worship or call the church office. Please sign up after worship or call the church office at 925-447-1950. For more information, please contact Mitchie McCammon at home.
Growing In Faith

Interfaith Religion Chat

Wednesday, February 10, 5-6:00 p.m.

Each month, the Interfaith Interconnect group sponsors a religion chat, offering us an opportunity to learn more about others’ faith and practices.

On February 10, 5-6:00 p.m. (with a social time following), the topic, Perspectives on Afterlife, will be held at the Hindu Community Center, 1232 Arrowhead Ave., Livermore. Speakers will be John O’Neil (Baha’i perspective) and Sam Stone (personal non-faith based perspective.) All are welcome.

Young Adult Ministry

One of the concerns that I hear often is: “what are we doing to reach out to young adults?” It is a question that is near to my heart—both being a young adult myself and being passionate about young adult ministry. I am happy to report that for the past three months a young adult group has been meeting. We meet two Thursdays a month for a time of Bible study and fellowship. Our group consists of about eight people made up of both young adults from Asbury and from the Livermore community. Those in the group have expressed how meaningful that time and space is to connect with scripture, God and each other. I am so thankful to God for this meaningful new ministry as Asbury! How can you be supportive of this young adult ministry? With your prayers and with invitations to the local young adults in your life to join us!

Blessings,
Pastor Chelsea

New Small Groups!

Are you interested in making a deeper connection? Do you want to explore your faith in a new way? Three new small groups are starting up in Lent, this is a perfect opportunity to join one and try it out. Small groups are a powerful place to grow deeper in faith, explore our questions, and build deeper relationships. If you are interested in joining a small group please contact Pastor Chelsea.

Women’s Retreat

April 22-24, 2016

Our 2016 Women’s Retreat will be at beautiful San Dami-ano Retreat Center in Danville, CA, April 22-24.

The title for this year’s retreat is “God-Sighting: Looking for God in every crack of light, every petal of beauty, in unexpected places, even in the dark.”

Retreat Leader is Pastor Marylee Scheffer, from Lafayette UMC. Pastor Kim first met Marylee in seminary, and continues to appreciate the joy, authenticity and humor Marylee brings to the spiritual journey. We are in for a treat with Marylee as our retreat leader.

By way of introduction, Marylee wrote: “I live and pastor in Lafayette and before that was appointed to serve two little churches in Scott Valley, just below the Oregon border. I loved living in the country but I’m very happy to live in the Bay Area again. My husband and I and our dog, Zelda, love to explore parks and walking trails in our area. My favorite places to walk are near water. I also like knitting (although I’m not very skilled); cooking; and helping people find God in the midst of life.

Sign ups for the Retreat will start in February. There are single and double rooms available.
Sunday School News

Happy February! Preschool through 5th Grades, with their Sunday School Teachers, have been enjoying a journey through Jesus’ Parables. For the month of February we will be exploring the following parables: The Yeast, The Mustard Seed, The Tower Builder, and The Feast that the Invited Guests Refused to Attend.

Sharmyn Crawford continues to provide wonderful support for our curriculum as she gives us all a deeper look into each parable, develops thought-provoking conversation starters, and ways to practice what we have learned in our daily lives.

We are blessed by so many people who have been sharing their gifts with the children of our community in different ways. Thank you!

Along with a small group that I’m part of, I have been reading Speaking Christian: Why Christian Words Have Lost Their Meaning and Power - And How They Can Be Restored by Marcus J. Borg. As a Children’s Ministry Director and Sunday School Teacher I have found it to be a valuable insightful look into the meaning of the vocabulary we use. I highly recommend this book, especially for Sunday School Teachers.

Children’s Ministry will provide a copy of this book to any Sunday School Teacher interested in reading it. I would love to hear your thoughts on this book.

Children’s Ministry has purchased nine 2’x3’ Lenten coloring posters made by Pastor Adam Walker Cleveland. Be on the lookout for them during fellowship time after worship in the Fellowship Hall for us to all color together as a community during the lent season.

First Annual Spring Youth and Children Performing Arts Showcase and Old Fashion Church Potluck Dinner

Sunday, March 20, 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Sunday, March 20 from 5:30-7:00 p.m. is Asbury’s First Annual Spring Youth and Children’s Performing Arts Showcase and Old Fashion Church Potluck Dinner.

Let us ALL come together to celebrate the Easter Season. Youth and Children can sign up with Pastor Chelsea Constant or Children’s Ministry Director, Jackie Bennett to participate.

Preforming Art Acts need to be two minutes or less and will be performed in the Sanctuary.

The Showcase will be followed by a No Host Old Fashion Church Potluck Dinner in the Fellowship Hall, where you bring a dish to share. Please remember to bring a utensil for serving. Nursery care will be provided.

Vacation Bible School

July 25-29, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Vacation Bible School at Asbury will be Monday, July 25 through Friday, July 29 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Our theme this year is “Christmas in July”. This will be our second year creating our own VBS “outside of the box” experience.

Last year we had such a wonderful time creating curriculum guided by the Holy Spirit which radiated excitement throughout the entire week and built beautiful lifetime memories.

Registration forms will be available in the church office and online soon.

Please let Jackie Bennett know if you are interested in volunteering to help make this an amazing and meaningful experience for the children of our loving community. Nursery care will be provided for volunteers with children under the age of four.

United Methodist Summer Camps for Third grade and Up

- Lodestar - July 17-23: Super Kid, Lodestar L.I.T, Super Camp

Camp registration will open February 2016 at www.cnumc.org/youthministries

Blessings and Love,
Jackie Bennett
Director of Children’s Ministry

Wanted: Sunday School Assistant Teacher

Children’s Ministry is looking for an Assistant Sunday School Teacher to assist a lead teacher once a month in the grade 3-5 class located in room 4. Position begins March 20. Contact Jackie Bennett if you are interested.
Youth Ministries

Youth Events, February 2016

- February 7: No Youth Groups
- February 14: Youth Groups 5:30-7:00 p.m.
- February 21: Youth Groups 5:30-7:00 p.m.
- February 28: Youth Groups 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Winter Youth Retreat

Save the date for our youth winter retreat March 4-6! We will leave in the evening of Friday March 4 and head up to the Hornbeck’s cabin in Arnold. We will return Sunday afternoon. There will be opportunities to have fun, play in the snow, connect deeper with one another and with God. Please sign up with Chelsea by February 21.

Sierra Service Project 2016

All current students in grades 8-12 are invited to join our Sierra Service Project trip this summer to San Diego! We will leave July 31 and return August 6. This project will include an opportunity to visit Mexico for a few hours on a cultural exploration trip! Please contact Pastor Chelsea with any questions and make sure to sign up for the trip by February 21. The trip will cost $150 and scholarships are available as needed.
Interfaith Build Day at Habitat for Humanity

February 20, 2016

On Saturday, February 20, Asbury will join other faith communities at the new Habitat construction in Martinez. Everyone is welcome, regardless of skills or experience. We often work with the families who will own the homes.

Work at the site starts at 8:30 and ends by 4:00. We carpool from Asbury, leaving at 7:40 from the parking lot by the office building. To sign up, come by the Serve Others with Love Table after worship or contact Bob Hoffman.

Hospice Grief Support Groups

Wednesdays, February 3-March 23, 7-8:30 p.m.

You do not have to face your grief alone. Hope Hospice grief support groups offer the opportunity to join with others who have a similar experience to yours. The trained facilitators provide a safe place to share your thoughts and feelings, to learn about the grief process and discover effective coping strategies. Upcoming class:

Wednesdays, February 3-March 23, 7-8:30 p.m.

Prior to joining a Hospice support group, please call 829-8770, so that you can be matched with the right group for you. There is no fee for grief support services. However, they gratefully accept donations so that they can continue to offer grief support to others at not cost. See www.HopeHospice.com.

Family Workday at Tri-Valley Haven

February 27, 2016

We have a long-standing commitment to support Tri-Valley Haven. They could use 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, February 27. Pick from one of two shifts – 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. or 1-3:00 p.m. It will be like organizing a garage sale! Fun and helpful! For information to signup stop by the Serve Others Table after worship or see Steve Elliott.

Registration Open for Spring Mission Trip

April 30-May 7, 2016

We will be traveling to Weed, California (near Mount Shasta) to help rebuild from the 2014 fire. The so called “Boles Fire” destroyed half of the town and much of the surrounding area. The California Nevada Conference is now sponsoring a long term recovery effort.

We will carpool to the area on Saturday, April 30 and return on Saturday, May 7, 2016. It is roughly a five hour drive. We will be preparing our own meals and staying at the Mount Shasta United Methodist Church. The church has sleeping rooms, a kitchen, gathering areas, but no showers. Showers will be at a nearby Wellness Center.

The cost of the trip will be $150 to $200. Scholarships are available, so cost should not be a barrier to going. For more information contact Steve Elliott or stop by the Serve Others Table after worship. Registrations are due by Sunday, April 10, 2016.
Addressing Poverty in Our World

Our Serve Others Focus for February is our new ministry – Circles for Change. It kicks off this month. The mission of Circles for Change is to empower people to chart their own course out of poverty and towards sustainable self-sufficiency.

While Asbury UMC is sponsoring the startup of this new initiative, it will be a joint effort between the faith community, social service agencies and local government. Participants are motivated individuals who want the support to make lasting change.

Consider volunteering as an Ally (someone who offers an ongoing relationship of encouragement and support). We also need people to sponsor participants ($600), to share your unique skills with participants (such as budgeting or financial planning) or to help with tutoring and childcare during the weekly meetings.

Learn more by talking with Shana Peete, the program director or Pastor Kim.

Feed the Hope Meter!

Our kickoff of Circles for Change is represented by the Hope Meter – donations help move people from “Despair” to “Hope.” Feed the meter located in the Sanctuary Lobby to show your support (folding money welcome as well!).

Stop by the Serve Others With Love Table during the Fellowship Hour during February to learn more or visit the program website: www.circlesforchangetrivalley.org.
Fertile GroundWorks, in partnership with Asbury UMC, is blazing the trail for institutional on-site recycling of vegetable food preparation waste and other organic materials. On average we receive and compost about 200 pounds of vegetable food preparation waste from the Open Heart Kitchen operations every week. Vegetable food scraps are mixed with stover and plant hay from the Garden, leaves from trees (on-campus and off), manure from our neighbor’s horses and then hot-composted to produce a pasteurized nutrient rich compost. However, for public health reasons, there are some food wastes that we are not able to compost (meats, fats, cooked and baked good scraps and table scraps.

Asbury’s Teri Lambert is now working to help capture this sizable remaining food scrap waste stream by looking at having Livermore Sanitation collect it through their institutional food scrap composting service. Vegetable food preparation scraps (peelings, waste greens, cores, spoiled fruits, etc.) will continue to be managed and composted by Fertile GroundWorks at the Garden of Grace.

Fertile GroundWorks recently received a grant from Stop-Waste to help spread the word about “curbside food scrap composting”. This can be done at home and hopefully very soon here at Asbury too! We can collect food scraps at home and place them in the green organic waste containers for curbside pick up. By committing to compost our food scraps and food-soiled paper, we can support curbside food-scraper composting at home and on campus to keep this significant waste stream out of our landfills.

Saturday, February 20, 11:00 a.m.
Please join us Saturday, February 20 in Rooms 11-12 at 11:00 a.m. to hear StopWaste’s Tommy Fenster explain and answer questions about curbside food scrap recycling and its benefits.

Please also take a look at the following links to four short (less-than 2-minute) videos produced by StopWaste to introduce the “what”, “how to” and “why” of curbside food scrap composting:

- Learn how you can easily collect and compost your food scraps and food-soiled paper at home to keep them out of the landfill. Your efforts will create compost that supports water-conserving soil for California farms and gardens: youtu.be/MiQOvh56H2Y

- Find out what happens after you compost your food scraps and food-soiled paper in your green bin. Learn where they go and how they become essential compost helping to create water-conserving soil for growing local crops: youtu.be/FgJVGPHp4IU

- Learn from a local family farmer about how Alameda County food scraps produce compost helping to create water-conserving soil that farmers use to grow healthy, local crops for Bay Area restaurants, CSAs and grocery stores, even during the drought: youtu.be/nx2Niy3gxnk

- Learn how local compost fuels urban farms in Alameda County, engaging community members who need it most, enriching the community by providing fresh produce, and helping the environment and California thrive: youtu.be/rg7OVjkehvU
Building an Inclusive Church

The Reconciling Committee would like to thank Pastor Kim and the dozen or so people who gathered for three Sunday evenings in January to study the Scriptural passages most often cited in discussions of LGBT issues.

As we probably knew before and certainly learned during our gatherings, there are no easy or clear answers. That is part of why the church in general and the United Methodist Church in particular have been wrestling for so long over the questions.

People of faith can hear different things in the passages. We all must continue to read, pray, and seek God’s Word for our lives today.

**Sunday, February 28, 7:00 p.m.**

The committee is also busy preparing another panel discussion, to which everyone in the congregation is invited and encouraged to attend. The speakers will be members and friends of our Asbury family; they will talk about their own experiences within the church and what being “reconciling” would mean to them.

As with our presentation last October, everyone is encouraged to linger afterwards for refreshments and further conversation. Mark the date on your calendars: Sunday, February 28 at 7:00 p.m. in the Chapel.

Many good questions have been raised during our one-to-one, and the committee is working to find answers to as many of them as we can.

One of these questions, “Why do we have to make a public statement?” was addressed in the January issue of the Asbury Articles along with a link to the website http://bit.ly/1R9BIaQ.

Our goal is to compile a more comprehensive summary of the questions and answers and present it in the March edition of the Asbury Articles.

Finally, in this month of Valentine’s Day and the celebration of love, we are especially saddened that there are already people in the United Methodist Church who do not feel safe revealing their truth about themselves: that they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.

if you’d like to know more of what it might feel like to have to hide who you are, read the moving story of one such woman, a Methodist pastor in Edgerton, Kansas: www.rmnetwork.org/newrmn/now-is-my-time

We ask for your continuing prayers for us, for everyone in the Asbury family, and for all the LGBTQ folks who yearn to hear a church community call their name and invite them to share in the Good News of God’s unconditional love.

Margot Platt for the Reconciling Committee (Bill Groth, Larry Wiley, Dale Boercker, Leila Epperson, Val Pace, Carol Perry, and Margot Platt)
Anniversaries

Spencer and Litza Bayless
Rex and Linda Beach
Chuk and Kellie Campos
Glen and Theresa Dawes
Dean and Regina Juan
James and Kelly Pettis
John and Jan Stevenson
Ron and Lynn Tripp
Allan and Eve Van Lehn

Birthdays

Patti Arnold
Harry Bate
Sara Bayless
Dylan Bennett
Ashleigh Bohling
Laurie Cano
Anne Coll
Linda Culpepper
Christopher Danan
Barbara David
Theresa Dawes
Nancy Deis
Beth Giannotti
Joe Giannotti
Keri Gibson
Andy Grant
Leslie Hammer
Betty Holdener
Pam Howell
Nickolaus Item
Delainea Jantzen
Janet Johnson
Alec Kenward
Lori Kenward
Warren King

Virgil Koon
Susan Lambaren
Kathy Lee
Lyle Lee
Brittany Lord
Maris Medeiros
Jeff Molvik
Tina Morris
Ruby Mueller
Carolyn Norton
Kelly Pettis
Kelsey Pettis
Andy Pomykal
Margaret Price
Charles Runnels
John Sharry
Joel Spooner
Laurence Suter
Brenda Sveen
Brady Taylor
Kimberly Wakefield
Otis Walton
Kayla Webber
Laura Whipple
Kevin Wiley
Cathy Yung
February 2016 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. Bible Study, Room 15
- 10:30 a.m. Cherub Choir Rehearsal, Room 6
- 10:30 a.m. Rainbow Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 10:30 a.m. Youth Choir Rehearsal, Room 9
- 5:00 p.m. Stephen Ministry, Fireside Room (first and third Sundays only)
- 7:00 p.m. Handbell Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- 7:00 p.m. Bible Study, Room 10

Mondays
- 7:00 p.m. Fertile Groundworks, Conference Room (second and fourth Mondays only)
- 7:30 p.m. Reconciling Ministries, Room 10 (first and third Mondays only)

Tuesdays
- 11:00 a.m. Loose Canons
- 11:00 a.m. The Long Good-bye, Fireside Room (second and fourth Tuesdays only)
- 12:00 p.m. Open Heart Kitchen, Fellowship Hall
- 7:00 p.m. Small Group, Fireside Room (second and fourth Tuesdays only)
- 7:00 p.m. Alanon/Alateen, Rooms 13-15
- 7:00 p.m. Band Rehearsal, Sanctuary

Wednesdays
- 9:30 a.m. Mom’s Bible Study
- 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
- 7:00 p.m. Asbury Players, FH

Fridays
- 10:30 a.m. Bible Study, Room 15
- 10:00 a.m. Crafting for a Cause, Room 10

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

Other Events

February 2, 2016 (Tuesday)
- 6:30 p.m. Ladies’ Night Out, The Riata

February 3, 2016 (Wednesday)
- 7:30 p.m. 5 Year Planning Meeting (Braun’s house)

February 4, 2016 (Thursday)
- 12:00 p.m. Senior/Retiree Luncheon, FH

February 7, 2016 (Sunday)
- 10:30 a.m. SPRC, Room 10

February 14, 2016 (Sunday)
- 10:30 a.m. Finance, Conference Room

February 19, 2016 (Friday)
- 1-7:00 p.m. Livermore Community Blood Drive, FH

February 20, 2016 (Saturday)
- 11-12:00 p.m. Fertile GroundWorks & Stop Waste: Composting Lecture, Rooms 11-12

February 21, 2016 (Sunday)
- 10:30 a.m. SPRC, Room 10
- 10:30 a.m. Trustees, Conference Room

February 23, 2016 (Tuesday)
- 7:30 p.m. Fellowship Team, Rooms 11-12

February 28, 2016 (Sunday)
- 10:30 a.m. Church Council, Conference Room
Livermore Community Blood Drive

Friday, February 19, 1:00-7:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall

Every single day, Bay Area hospitals need over 300 units of blood to help sick and injured people live. If you’re 17 or older and in good health (or 16 with parental consent) help save a life by giving blood! Go to redcrossblood.org and use sponsor code: ASBURY925. Call Tom Petty at home for more information. 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 Friday, February 19, 2015