Advent Season Events

Sunday, December 25 and January 1, 11:00 a.m.

This year, Christmas and New Year’s Day fall on a Sunday. On December 25 and January 1, we will worship at 11:00 a.m. Sleep in, enjoy your family rituals, and then we get to celebrate the day with worship!

Upcoming Holiday Events

- 12/4 Christmas Concert 7:00 p.m.
- 12/11 Christmas Pageant 5:30 p.m.
- 12/18 Christmas Caroling 3:30 p.m.
- 12/24 Christmas Eve Services 7:00 and 11:00 p.m.
- 12/25 Christmas Day Service (Sunday) will be at 11:00 a.m. (PJ’s are OK!)
- New Year’s Day Service (Sunday) will be at 11:00 a.m.
Pastors’ Ponderings

'Tis the season of joy and light and hope.
'Tis also the season when we get busy and sometimes worn out with all the busyness.
'Tis the season when we wonder at times, "What is it all about? Why are we rushing around so much?"

What would our preparations for Christmas look like if we were not focused on you and me? What would Advent look like if were focused on Jesus instead, and the kind of community Jesus is calling us to be? What can we do this year, to experience that joy, light, and hope of the season?

"Do we spend our holiday season worrying about presents for people, purchasing stuff they might not need at all, all because we think that’s what we are supposed to do? Or do we follow God’s way, a new way to live?"

This question is in our Advent devotional book, Down to Earth by Mike Slaughter with Rachel Billups.

Get our daily devotionals via email. We will send out an email to the congregation with a link to sign up for daily devotionals during Advent. Or pick up a hard copy at church. Ask us to order the Down to Earth devotional book for you, by calling the church office, 925-447-1950.

Our culture in the United States rates the success of the Christmas season by how much money we spend. If retailers have good sales, than, well, it’s been a good season.

I’m uncomfortable with that. What about you?

In the weeks leading up to Christmas, we can ask ourselves, “What are we celebrating at Christmas? Is it about the gifts, or the people? Is it about pleasing our children and other loved ones? Or is it about being with them? How do our daily decisions express our values as Christian, a people who celebrate the arrival of Jesus the Christ here on earth?"

This Christmas season, as we prepare to celebrate God’s Presence, here with us on earth, I invite you to try something that Ginsburg United Methodist Church in Ohio started doing: spend only ½ as much on buying gifts and decorations, and then give an equal amount (the other half) to a cause that honors Jesus’ birth.

Here are some ways to experiment with that approach: buy one gift for loved ones, and then ask them what project or causes they value. Make a donation in their name. You might pick up a copy of our Alternative Gift Catalogue, which features local ministries connected to Asbury. You can pick up a copy after worship in the Fellowship Hall, or in the church office during the week. Or, you and your loved ones can find other causes to support.

However you celebrate Christmas, I’m eager to hear your response to this idea that we could spend ½ as much on buying things, and then give an equal amount to a cause that honors Jesus’ birth. I’m finding this to be a challenge, yet also feel drawn to try it. I’m going to give it a try. How about you?

Blessings,
Pastor Kim
Asbury’s 5 Year Strategic Plan

Over the past year, we developed a 5 year strategic plan, and a leadership team works to implement it. Many thanks to Jean Braun, Jackie Bennet, Burlayne Wilson and Steve Elliott. This team works with the pastors to evaluate our progress towards:

1. Nurturing and retaining existing congregants
2. Enhancing and improving communication
3. Reestablishing a welcome committee
4. Develop more partnerships in serving others with love
5. Completing technology upgrades in the Sanctuary

The upgrades in technology are done! And we now are able to record worship services for people to watch online. (You can find them on Asbury United Methodist Church’s Facebook page, and the Vimeo and YouTube channels.) Many thanks to Chuk Campos, Tom Petty, Jim Lobao and Kirby Fong for their long hours of work. And thank you, Tim Arnold, for re-designing the sound booth.

We will continue with the other goals, and add one more. In 2017, we will explore worship at Asbury. What’s going well? What could be better?

How will we measure and evaluate our worship services? If you have ideas or feedback, please join the conversation. Send your insights to Pastor Kim at the church office.

Join a Small Group in Advent!

If you are interested in studying our Advent book, Down to Earth, with a small group, you are invited to join the Monday Night Small Group. We meet Monday nights from 7-8:00 p.m. Please email Chelsea to sign up.

Remember to turn in Stewardship Pledge Cards!

In this season of thankfulness we are grateful to everyone who has turned in their stewardship pledge cards. And if you have not yet, there is still time to bring it in either during offering on Sunday or to the church office. We are so appreciative for all the ways you support this community!

December Young Adult Activities

- **December 4:** Brunch after Church 10:30 a.m. outside the Fellowship Hall
- **December 8:** Bible Study at Chelsea’s House 7:30-8:30 p.m.
- **December 18:** Young Adult Christmas Party 6-8:30 p.m.
- **December 22:** Bible Study at Chelsea’s House 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Young Adult Christmas Party

**Sunday, December 18, 6:00 p.m.**

Come celebrate Christmas together on December 18 from 6-8:30 p.m. We will have food, fun, and a white elephant book exchange. Please bring a wrapped book that you have enjoyed, it can be used or new. We will also be collecting new socks and underwear of any size if you would like to bring some for the homeless.

The party will be at Chelsea’s house, 890 Jefferson Avenue.
Sunday, December 11, 5:30 p.m.
You are cordially invited to attend Asbury UMC’s No-Rehearsal “Community Pop-Up Christmas Pageant with a Surprise Twist” on Sunday, December 11 at 5:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary.
You can bring a friend or two or a few to join in this special intergenerational experience of “The Nativity Story”. Join us for a Community Soup and Sandwich Potluck Dinner in the Fellowship Hall following the Pageant Program. Sign up in the Fellowship Hall or Room 6 or email Jackie at the church office to bring a soup and/or sandwiches. The Children’s Ministry Committee will be providing dessert.

During Sunday School this month the children and teachers will be exploring the topics of Love, Being Humble, Serving Others, and Being Grateful within the “Down to Earth” series our community is engaging with during this Advent Season.

Following worship services this advent season we will be coloring posters in the Fellowship Hall. When the posters are all finished, they will transform into a 10x6’ colorful advent display.

Summer 2017 Opportunities
United Methodist Summer Camps for Grades 3 and Up
- Monte Toyon in Aptos, CA (near Santa Cruz): July 9-14 Many Asbury children and youth have attended this camp and have loved it. Former Asburyite Jenna Stark is the Camp Director.
- Camp Lodestar: July 16-22—Registration can be found at: http://www.calnewypm.org/index.php/events/registration-information
Asbury UMC’s 2017 Vacation Bible School “Super Heroes of the Bible” will be July 24-28, 2017.
Merry Christmas with love,
Jackie Bennett
Children’s Ministry Director

Youth Ice Skating Trip
On December 17, we will head down to San Jose to skate under the palm trees at Downtown Ice for an hour and then have dinner together before we head back home.
Drop off will be at Asbury at 3:30 p.m. and pick up will be at Asbury at 8:00 p.m..
Please RSVP to Chelsea by December 10. The cost of the trip is $17 for the ice skating.
Senior/Retiree Luncheon
Thursday, December 1, 12:00 p.m.
Join us for the Senior and Retiree Luncheon Thursday, December 1 at noon in the Fellowship Hall. The cost for lunch is $5.00 per person. Sign up after worship or call the church office at 925-447-1950.

Asbury Players Auditions
Asbury Players announces auditions for our 2017 production of Thornton Wilder’s award-winning comedy, “The Matchmaker.” This 1955 farce, set in the nineteenth century (about the same time as Asbury UMC was founded) has parts for nine men and seven women in period costume. You have two opportunities to audition with us:
- Thursday December 1, 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday December 3, 10:00 a.m.
Please mark your calendar and join us in the conference room for a fun read-through!

Boy Scout Tree Lot Is Open!
Asbury’s Boy Scout Troop 900 opened its annual Christmas Tree Lot which is located on the corner of Hillcrest Ave. and East Ave. in Livermore, just down the street from church. (map)

Hours of Operation
- Monday-Friday, 4-9:00 p.m.
- Saturday & Sunday, 9:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.

Tree selection (6-7’) and other items (tax included):
- Noble Fir $64
- Grand Fir $48
- Douglas Fir $42
- Tree stand $26
- Mistletoe $3
- Tree preservative $3
- Tree bags $3
Please come out this Christmas season to support Troop 900 in their only fundraiser of the year.

Ladies’ Night Out
Tuesday, December 6, 6:30 p.m.
This month we will be going to Terra Mia Cucina Italiana (www.terramialivermore.com) located at 4040 East Avenue. All ladies of Asbury are invited. Please call Nancy Grover at home and let her know if you plan to attend so we can let the restaurant know how many to expect.

’Tis the Season to Welcome Visitors to Asbury!
Every Sunday, we have visitors at Asbury. Some feel welcomed, and so appreciate that! Others have told me that no one seemed to notice them….even when they walked into the fellowship hall after worship. We want all to feel welcomed, and here are some tips (from the Lewis Center for Church Leadership) on how we might practicing welcoming everyone:
1. Say, “I don’t think we’ve met before,” if you are not sure if the person next to you is a visitor or not.
2. If you are an outgoing church member, sit in the pews where visitors most commonly sit, often near the entrance or in the back and introduce yourself.
3. Enact the “circle of ten rule”, that each member will greet anyone, member or guest, who comes within ten feet of them.
4. Make a special effort to remember visitors’ names and call them by name.
5. Did you know that 40% of visitors make up their mind about a church before they even see the pastor? Within two minutes of the beginning of a service visitors have formed an opinion about whether the congregation is friendly.
6. Don’t overlook visitors who come to the church for the first time for an event other than worship.

Celebrating our 150th at Asbury
In anticipation of celebrating our 150th anniversary as a church in 2017, please be on the lookout for pictures, household items, memorabilia and any other historical items. If you’d be willing to loan them to the church, they will become an integral part of our celebration. These items can come from any period in our church history.
Happy Anniversary, Asbury!
Thank You, Asbury UMC
Susan came into the church office with a homemade Thanksgiving card. She never imagined that she would need meals from Open Heart Kitchen, but in these past few months she did. This was her message:
"Dear Asbury United Methodist Church, Open Heart Kitchen and all volunteers,
Thank you so much for everything for the 3 times I have been here. I don’t feel comfortable but I can see and feel the warm welcome and sincere love from all the volunteers. I wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and Blessings to all. Truly grateful, Susan."
Thank you, Asbury, for making this type of ministry possible!

Interfaith Build Day – Habitat for Humanity
Saturday, December 17, 8:30 a.m.
On Saturday, December 17, Asbury will join other faith communities at the 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.

Update of Refugee Resettlement
The family from Yemen that Asbury helped sponsor, has settled in to an apartment in Foster City. The kids are doing well in school. While life in the US is still an adjustment, the family is moving forward. We have completed our transition assistance. We are now looking at the possibility of sponsoring another family in early 2017. If you are curious about how you might help, contact Steve Elliott

Alternative Gift Catalog for 2016
Asbury is offering a special way to give beyond the ordinary this holiday season. It is the Alternative Gifts Catalog. It is a way to donate to a mission or outreach of our church and if you wish, do it in honor of family or friends. You have several organizations and ministries to choose from. We will also provide you with gift cards that you may send to those whom you honor. Pick up a catalog at the church office.

Tri-Valley Haven Holiday Program
Many families in our community will be challenged to do much gift giving at the holidays. We can help. Asbury will be hosting the annual Tri-Valley Haven Holiday Gift Event at which low income families have a place to "shop" for presents. Hundreds of families will be served.
Any NEW gift, for any age, is welcome. Here are some suggestions:
Adults: Any new clothes (larger sizes are best), gift cards to Target, Kohls, etc., small household appliances, bath or personal care items, home décor gifts.
Teens: Sports equipment, sports team merchandise, gift cards, electronic games, casual clothing, cosmetic sets.
Children: Dolls, learning toys, arts and craft supplies, cars/trucks, electronic games, sport gear, clothing – Spanish gifts are welcome.
Infants: Stimulating toys, musical toys, clothing, bath or body care.
If you would like to help, bring your unwrapped gifts to the Sanctuary or the church office by no later than Tuesday, December 13.

UMCOR Depot Mission Trip Report
Imagine, if you will, a mother giving birth in the bush of Africa, a flood ravaged home or an impoverished child without basic school supplies. These are the kind of challenges addressed by the Relief Supplies Program of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).
In early November, a team from several Bay Area United Methodist Churches traveled to Salt Lake City, Utah to work at the UMCOR West Depot. This Depot is one of two major stocking locations in the United States for relief kits (the other location is in Louisiana). Kits are prepackaged supplies designed to address specific needs. They include Birthing Kits, Flood Buckets, School Kits and others.

(Continued on page 7)
Livermore School District Recognizes Two Community Partners

November 17, 2016

Fertile Groundworks was recognized this week at the Livermore Unified School District Board meeting for outstanding service to the children of the Livermore Public Schools. They were recognized for the guidance, planning and physical help they provide to the various school gardens they helped the school district establish. They helped rebuild the greenhouse at Livermore High School and have continuously assisted their teacher in planting and maintaining their large garden. In addition, they have nine gardens going at six other elementary and middle schools.

LUSD is working with Fertile Groundworks to secure a large grant from the US Department of Agriculture in order to provide funding to expand their program into other schools including Granada High School.

Serve Others With Love (cont’d)

(Continued from page 6)

Our week was devoted to processing Layette Kits – a modest bundle of baby clothes, reusable diapers and a couple of baby blankets. These kits are intended for mothers in other countries without access to basic baby supplies. We packaged about eight pallets—hundreds and hundreds of kits.

While the work could be tedious at times, we enjoyed each other’s company. We laughed a lot and swapped stories of our lives. The fellowship was wonderful. In addition to packaging kits, part of the team, very talented seamstresses, worked in the Sewing Room making new clothes and repairing items. Their creativity was remarkable.

Our trip included a half day at the Mormon Welfare Complex. This is an impressive facility where the Mormon Church operates baking and canning facilities, a thrift store, a grocery store and employment services program.

This was an eye-opening exposure to the steadfast commitment the Mormon Church makes to charity.

We concluded our time at the Depot with a communion worship service. It was a time of reflection on the meaning of our work and the importance of living our faith through service.

One of the most rewarding moments each day was when we finished packing a pallet, we stopped to lay hands on the boxes, say a prayer and bless the pallet. Visualize a warehouse full of pallets, lovingly packed by volunteers like us, each blessed with prayer, ready to go out into the world to do good. It touches the heart in a new and special way.

In Mission Together,

Steve Elliott, Kim Risedorph, Doug and Mary Ellen Huey, Bobbie and Coleman Johnson, Gary and Deb Grundman, Karen Brown and Beth Okurowski.
Anniversaries

Tim and Patti Arnold
Bob and Jackie Hoffman
Frank and Kris Raskauskas
Jim and Pam Wilson

Birthdays

Tim Ackerman
Cordelia Bate
Litza Bayless
Cassie Canfield
Jack Canfield
Judy Chagnon
Jim Cooper
Kirsten Cummings
Dave David
Jean Farmer
Kathy Faul
Peter Frumenti
Maureen Gandara-Swinbank
Ashley Gibson
Christy Gibson
Stephanie Goodman
Steve Goodman
Betty Griswold
Jim Haugen
Regina Juan

Becky Kasyanov
Athena McPeake
Laura Mercier
John Muldoon
Tim Muldoon
Bertha Ng
Mary Ouellette
Joanne Petty
Kathryn Piscotty
Glynice Pomykal
Brianna Prine
Natalia Pyle
Rob Rudd
Susannah Rudd
Mariah Siebers
Colleen Sorem
Pam Tegge
Kami Teruya
Lynn Tripp
Suzanna Whiteside
Leroy Williams
December 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. Cherub, Rainbow and Youth Choir rehearsals
- 10:30 a.m. Small Group, Room 13 (first and third Sundays only)
- 5:00 p.m. Stephen Ministry, Fireside Room (first and third Sundays only)
- 7:00 p.m. Bible Study, Room 10
- 7:00 p.m. Asbury Ringers Rehearsal, Sanctuary

Mondays
- 11:00 a.m. Crafting for a Cause, Room 10
- 7:00 p.m. Fertile Groundworks, Conference Room (second and fourth 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
- 10:00 a.m. Mom’s Bible Study, Fireside Room
- 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. Small Group, Room 10
- 7:00 p.m. AA, Rooms 11-12

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

Other Events

December 1, 2016 (Thursday)
- 12:00 p.m. Senior/Retiree Luncheon, FH

December 4, 2016 (Sunday)
- 7:00 p.m. Christmas Concert, Sanctuary

December 6, 2016 (Tuesday)
- 6:30 p.m. Ladies’ Night Out, Terra Mia Cucina Italiana

December 11, 2016 (Sunday)
- 10:30 a.m. SPRC, Room 10
- 10:30 a.m. Finance, Conference Room
- 5:30 p.m. Christmas Pageant, Sanctuary

December 16, 2016 (Friday)
- 1-7:00 p.m. Livermore Community Blood Drive, FH

December 19, 2016 (Saturday)
- 11:00 a.m. Fertile GroundWorks, Room 11/12

December 18, 2016 (Sunday)
- 10:30 a.m. Trustees, Conference Room
- 3:30 p.m. Christmas Caroling, FH

December 24, 2016 (Saturday)
- 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service, Sanctuary
- 11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service, Sanctuary

December 25, 2016 (Sunday)
- 11:00 a.m. Christmas Day Service, Sanctuary

January 1, 2017 (Sunday)
- 11:00 a.m. New Year’s Day Service, Sanctuary
Asbury United Methodist Church
4743 East Avenue
Livermore, CA 94550

Time Dated Material—Deliver Promptly

Address Service Requested

Asbury UMC Staff

Pastors
Chelsea Constant
Kim Risedorph

Children's Ministry Director
Jackie Bennett

Youth Director
Chelsea Constant

Secretary
Terri Gamble

Facilities Use Manager
Teri Lambert

Music Director
G. Allen Schell

Choir Coordinator
Jean Braun

Nursery Coordinator
Pam Tegge

Lay Leader
Martie Muldoon

Livermore Community Blood Drive
Friday, December 16, 1:00-7:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall
What better way to celebrate the season than giving the Gift of Life? If you’re 17 or older and in good health (or 16 with parental consent) help save a life of someone who needs more time with their family 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, December 23, 2016