



Connection

California-Nevada Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church

Africa U. has new California connection

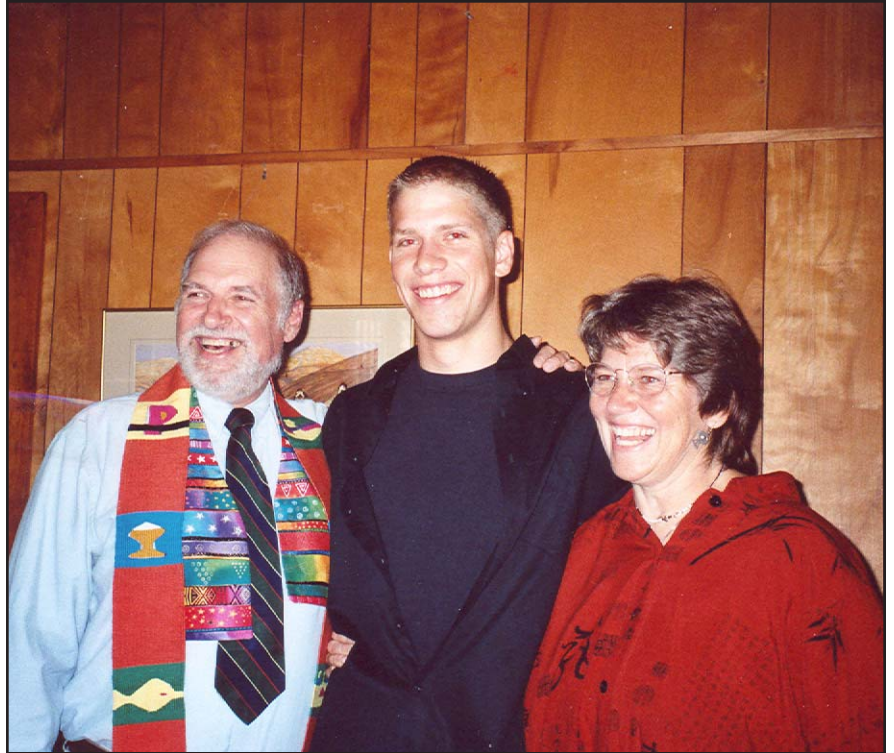


By Jeneane Jones

Director of Communications

When Trinity UMC pays \$134 toward the support of Africa University through its Conference Apportionments (Benevolences or “Shared Giving programs of the United Methodist Church) the congregation enjoys the knowledge that it is helping students on the continent of Africa and, one in particular, from their own church. Kabir Moss, 18, is the son of Trinity pastor David Leeper Moss and his wife Cedar. He is also a freshman at A.U., and the first student from Chico, California to attend the United Methodist-related University. Talking with friends before leaving, Kabir summed up his interest in studying at A.U. by saying, “I was born not to suburban America, but to the world.”

Rev. Moss said, “Kabir had been accepted at Dominican University in San Rafael and at Butte College, but when his Uncle David wrote to say *he* was accepted on the Africa University faculty in Peace Studies, Kabir said suddenly, ‘That’s where I need to go.’ The family knew about A.U. from the many correspondences from the General Board of Global Ministries and the Conference mailings. Cedar and I were pleasantly surprised at Kabir’s recent interest in being a citizen of the world and an advocate for peace and justice. Heretofore his major interests have been his friends and basketball – but facing his high



Kabir Moss is all smiles surrounded by his parents, Rev. David Leeper Moss and Cedar Moss. Photo credit: June Rothe-Barneson

school graduation he suddenly began to bloom in a whole new way.”

Kabir’s basketball skills are not gathering dust. He made the A.U. team and is flourishing there. His coach even suggested that he play on the team for the entire Harare Province. “Hopefully,” his father says, “Kabir will be traveling to other universities on the African continent representing A.U.” His mother points out the irony of having the star basketball player being “the only white guy.”

Kabir keeps in touch with family at home by e-mail. Proud father David reports that Kabir’s recent letters home reflect that he is also becoming more aware of the economic issues facing the country he is adopting. “Kabir is sobered by the extent of poverty in Zimbabwe and among his classmates and it is his **continued on page 3**

Also Inside

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- The church/wireless company dilemma
- Missionary’s Notebook
- Pastor presses on while battling ALS



Walking in the Spirit

Bishop Beverly J. Shamana

Bishop's Itinerary

Council of Bishops -
Mozambique
Oct. 28-Nov. 10

Ministry Staff and
Cabinet -
Conference Center
Nov. 14-17

San Jose,
Wesley UMC
Nov. 19

Delta District - Day
with Clergy
Nov. 28

Clergy &
Congregational
Development Summit
- Conference Center
Nov. 29-30

Lindsay UMC
Dec. 3

Ministry Staff and
Cabinet -
Conference Center
Dec. 5-8

Hamilton UMC
Dec. 16

Cal-NeV Life Together – in Italy!

DEAR SISTERS AND BROTHERS IN CHRIST:

I am excited to invite the California-Nevada Conference and friends to share our life together in a spiritual journey of a lifetime as we experience the art and architecture inspired by the Christian faith of Italy's world famous artists, including Da Vinci and Michelangelo.

Spirit of Italy 2007 will be an inaugural event for us – traveling together overseas to be stirred by God's heart of creativity as we build and deepen relationships as the Body of Christ.

October 2–11, 2007 has been scheduled for our Conference adventure that will take us to such cities as Verona, Venice, Florence, and Assisi, the home of St. Francis.

The cost of \$2,898 includes round trip airfare from San Francisco, comfortable hotels, two meals a day, and ground transportation in each city. Our trip is planned and led by Educational Opportunities, a Christian Tour Company founded by a United Methodist pastor 32 years ago, and widely used by annual conferences around the country.

Your District and Conference offices will have brochures with registration material by October 30, 2006. In addition, you may use this link to download the complete itinerary.

<http://spiritofitaly2007.org>

As we travel and discover more of God's Holy Spirit that has inspired the arts throughout history, my fond hope is that we will also celebrate who we are: *Diverse Cultures, Diverse Geography – One in Christ*.

I look forward to our sharing devotional and worship experiences surrounded by the variety and beauty of religious and public arts in this Mediterranean setting. I believe that the gift of traveling together will be an opportunity to live out the meaning of Koinonia.

Some may wish to stay for the five day Sorrento extension which features the rich tapestry that is Southern Italy with its breathtaking coastal cities.

Bring family and friends and let us rekindle our own creative passion as we grow in our life together under the rainbow of God's artistic palette.

Yours for a soul stirring journey,

YOUR SISTER IN CHRIST,

Beverly J. Shamana

Bishop Beverly J. Shamana

Bishop Shamana urges ‘concert of prayer and letter-writing’ for Philippines atrocities

Bishop Beverly J. Shamana has urged United Methodists to join hearts and minds together in a concert of prayer and letter-writing in response to the continuing violence against church workers in the Philippines – and urges United Methodists to write their elected representatives asking that our government pressure Philippines President Arroyo to take action in the matter.

“As we look to the future with hope in Jesus Christ, I ask that we join our hearts and minds together in prayer and letter-writing ... for the victims, United Methodist pastors and their families, who have been murdered and assaulted,” the Bishop states.

Since May 2001, more than 20 church workers have been murdered in the Philippines – most recently, United Methodist pastor Isaias Santa Rosa. In response to the killings, delegates to the 2006 Annual Conference Session voted to send letters of protest from our churches to members of Congress and state representatives. A template letter expressing “outrage and deep concern” is available for download, along with a contact list and set of mailing labels for your use, at www.cnumc.org.

In addition to the letter-writing witness, Bishop Shamana asks that we be mindful of the personal nature of the situation for many in our Conference. She expresses her concern by saying, “We join with members and pastors of Filipino churches in our Conference who are deeply concerned for loved ones who may be in danger.”



Africa University’s California connection

continued from page 1

hope that he might be able to stimulate some interest among Methodists in North America to help with their scholarships and their room and board while at Africa University. Some people he knows cannot afford the cafeteria meals or even a loaf of bread; many are living on tea and rice.” Kabir’s parents bought him a meal card, so “Kabir eats with his aunt and uncle at least once a day and gives his cafeteria meal to one of his room-mates,” his father says.

Kabir expects to finish his studies by 2010, although he only intends to stay at A.U. for one year. Africa

University is the first fully accredited United Methodist-related institution on the continent of Africa. There are six faculties or colleges: theology, education, agriculture & natural resources, management & administration, humanities & social sciences, and health sciences. There are five postgraduate faculties: agriculture, management & administration, theology, health sciences, and peace, leadership & governance. There are currently 1,246 students enrolled from 15 African countries, with twelve countries represented on the school faculty. To date more than 2,300 students have

graduated from AU.

In addition to the support churches can provide A.U. through Conference Apportionments, anyone can personally donate to Africa University. For \$5,000 per year, anyone can sponsor an A.U. student. Doing so offers students from around the continent access to a quality education that has been, and will continue to be, raising up leaders working for peace in their country and beyond.

June Rothe-Barneson and Chuck Myer contributed to this article.

Introducing praise worship creates anxiety

[Editor's Note: Many churches initially experience trepidation introducing contemporary worship, also called praise. But pastors often feel it must be done to reach a new generation. Here a pastor introducing contemporary worship in 2006 tries to assure those who may be perplexed.]

By Rev. Jinsik Lee

UMC of Petaluma

[Adapted from the *Petaluman*, September 2006]

More people are coming to our first worship service. It is an experimental and new style of worship using cutting edge technology, the computer Power Point program. When you come into the Social Hall where Sunday morning praise worship is held, you will see a big silver screen filled with rapidly moving videos, and hear new style gospel music from the audio system.

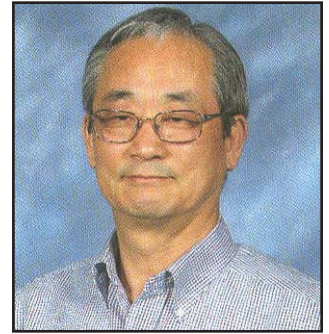
There are no traditional formalities such as a prelude or call to worship. The worship starts with singing several songs. They are mostly new-age gospel songs, sung by the current world community of Christian churches. It is not the music but also the words to which worshippers must give attention. The service puts more concentration on Jesus Christ, the Son of God. If you don't know the melody, it is all right for you just to follow those words on the screen while you tap your toe on the carpet or slightly move your body to the rhythm. Most of the words are biblical, so you can remind yourself of the Word of God, God's love and grace, Jesus Christ, and what He did for you.

Our world is changing rapidly and, in some sense, relentlessly. The change has both positive and negative sides.

Fortunately, we have many worship leaders who have tried to take the positive side only. With amazing gratitude I see so many young artists trying to use modern technology for Christian worship. The music may sound the same to you as modern pop or rock music, but if you hear their words, they are messages and proclamations from the Bible.

The truth, the gospel of God, the teachings of Jesus Christ, never change as the generations pass by. The gospel that our ancestors sang in the underground church is still the same gospel sung in modern Sunday worship. However, the style of Christian singing has been changed and will continue to change. No matter how the style might be changed, in every worship service, we focus on the words of God, singing His praise, and offering ourselves to our loving heavenly Father.

All church families can use this new style service for their alternative opportunity for Sunday worship. For example, if you must go somewhere Sunday at the time of our regular worship, you can come at 9 a.m. – to praise worship – rather than skip one Sunday worshipping God. You can also invite your neighbors, young families who are busy going to games or activities on Sunday. It is exciting to have new style worship in our church. We will continue to develop more fresh ways of this praise worship while keeping our 10:30 traditional service.



Rev. Jinsik Lee

Placer County churches act jointly on homelessness

By Bruce Pettit

Conference Communications Commission

Placer County in the Sierra foothills doesn't have much homelessness – compared, say, to San Francisco. The 2000 census found only about 400 people without any permanent shelter. Nor are Placer's homeless as visible as a big city's. Nevertheless, 57 churches in the county have worked together for two winters to ameliorate whatever homelessness there is, according to Pat Perdue, who facilitates First UMC of Roseville's involvement. On October 1, the program began again for a third year.

Four United Methodist churches in the county have participated in "The Gathering Inn" – offering shelter on a rotating basis during the cold fall, winter and spring weeks. Roseville First has

hosted every Sunday night, and followed that with a Monday lunch (the lunch is year-long). Pioneer UMC in Auburn has sheltered two successive nights once a month in cold times, with other churches supplying meals. Cornerstone UMC in Rocklin has also offered monthly shelter. Newcastle UMC cooked the first year.

Cornerstone was able to host the second year after it did some remodeling in the spring of 2005. To meet the health department guidelines, food served for Gathering Inn had to be cooked at the site where the homeless were staying, and Cornerstone needed a kitchen. For the winter of 2005-06, it had completed a kitchen and hosted three times. Men slept in the sanctuary and women in the fellowship space.

"The Gathering Inn" was started by a deacon at St. Rose Catholic Church in Roseville. It takes charge of an intake

center, dispersing the homeless to a host church on a given night. The Rev. John Broad of Pioneer UMC, which can host up to 50, said that, since the intake center knows each church's capacity, the churches themselves have never been in the awkward position of having to turn folks away. Generally, he said, the capacity is reached only on rainy nights.

There is talk of taking the program year-round, Perdue said, but it needs more grants and donations for that. The expenses involve maintaining a bus to transport the clients, paying a driver, paying insurance, paying two monitors with cell phones each evening, and doing drug and alcohol testing on anyone appearing to be under the influence.

Rev. Broad has been part of a task force to come up with a 10-year plan to end homelessness in Placer County.

Redding First joins Darfur campaign with interfaith rallying

By Bruce Pettit

Conference Communications Commission

Marv Steinberg, 75, a parishioner at First UMC of Redding, told associate pastor Kay Young in March he had promised the Lord that, if he came out of the hospital all right from a suspected heart problem, he would do something about the genocide in Darfur. He did come out. It was not as serious as first thought. And he knew he had to follow through.

He started organizing not only *his* church, but also Congregationalists, the Catholics, Disciples of Christ, the Jewish temple, and the Muslim center of Redding – for interfaith action against the genocide the Sudanese government has waged against its western region around Darfur: at least 200,000 killed and another 2.5 million refugees since 2003.

He announced his intentions to his congregation on April 2. Letters were sent to the six churches in Redding before the month was out. Those responding vowed to raise awareness in the area. Television and newspapers covered the community response. The group's members set a goal to raise \$15,000 to send to UMCOR and other faith groups. They have raised and sent off \$7,000 already.

And they wanted to “get things done.” In conjunction with a worldwide campaign against the Darfur atrocity the weekend of Sept. 16-17, the pressure was on. President Bush appointed a special envoy to the Sudan the next week, and called it genocide for the first time. The United



Marv Steinberg of First UMC of Redding launched interfaith campaign against Darfur genocide.

Nations wants to send peacekeepers (but the Sudanese government is reportedly resisting).

Even though there have been greater numbers of deaths in previous genocides in the last century, “this one was happening now, and we can stop it!” Steinberg said. We didn’t have the chance with some previous genocides, learning of them only later, he said.

The feeling was acute with him. He was raised Jewish. In the early 1940s his rabbi asked why the world was doing nothing about the Holocaust in Europe. As he lay in a hospital bed in March, Steinberg watched a television report on Darfur, and the feelings of outrage

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GodFest West set for great weekend of fun in the Spirit

Planners of the upcoming Senior High Conference youth event, GodFest West, have been hard at work this past year planning something that offers the best available fun and safe activities for youth. GodFest West is being held November 17-19 at the Modesto Doubletree Hotel and Convention Center.

The planning team is seeking to provide a time for youth to explore a variety of different activities throughout the weekend, including Saturday’s Battle of the Bands competition for up and coming local Christian youth bands. According to Paul Castonguay, GodFest West Director and pastor of the Ione Community UMC, “We want to impact upon kids attending GodFest West that leading a life of faith can be exciting and awesome. We want to

see youth attending this event come away with an attitude of having had a totally awesome experience—and to have learned something more about their lives in Jesus Christ.”

On Friday night, the event will kick off with the awesome music of Cornerstone and speaker Schuyler Rhodes. This will be followed by a dance and movie. Saturday morning will feature the festival time with the band competition and various booths and games. The booths will have hands-on activities such as crafts, Christian vendors, and midway style games with prizes. There will also be large group games throughout the morning including human foosball, tricycle races, and basketball.

On Saturday afternoon participants

will have the option of participating in a couple of mission outreach activities. GodFest West will also have learning options for youth which will include drumming, experiencing God through art, singing with event band Cornerstone, and a workshop for youth leaders led by Cal-Nevada Conference Coordinator of Youth and Camping Ministries, the Rev. Colin Kerr-Carpenter.

GodFest West is for all high school youth and their adult chaperones. The cost of the event is \$190 per person. Registration materials have been sent to all local churches. For up-to-date information please visit the GodFest West website at www.cnumcyouth.org.

When a wireless company wants a piece of your steeple

Across the United States, wireless companies – telephone, Internet, public service, and others – are putting antennas into our landscape. Yet many of those antennas are unseen – hidden in church steeples and bringing \$1,000 or more each month to the church budget.

When a wireless company wants to send a check to your church each month, your trustees have little guidance to rely on. This is a technical field and the wireless companies know how to make deals that are most advantageous to them and less advantageous to the church. Churches are often eager to receive payments, and not well-enough prepared to work out the details.

On behalf of all the United Methodist Churches in the United States, United Methodist Communications has made arrangements with SteepleCom, Inc. to represent our churches. Yes, there are costs connected to use of this company to represent your interests, and in return you get what you pay for: experience, integrity, and expertise.

Trying to make arrangements on their own, churches and their attorneys have:

- *Given up rights underneath the church building
- *Given up control of their own steeples
- *Granted exclusive rights to 1 carrier when they could have been paid by 3 or 4
- *Agreed to financial terms well below what they could have received
- *Failed to negotiate annual increases
- *Agreed to pay for charges they shouldn't pay
- *Agreed to capital improvements well below cash value of the lease
- *Granted long-term rights that entangle the conference

SteepleCom was created in the New England Conference. One of our churches in New England sought help before signing a contract with a wireless company. They contacted a church member with great experience in the telecommunications field. As a result the contract was re-written and the church has now realized much more

money and peace of mind. That church member and the New England Conference worked out the original relationship that has now been extended to all United Methodist Churches by United Methodist Communications.

SteepleCom already represents your church. The company has coordinated locations of all our U.S. churches with locations desired by Verizon, Cingular, Sprint, T-Mobile, and other wireless companies. These companies often work with SteepleCom to find possible locations. We hope a large percentage of the telecommunications money makes its way into supporting congregations and missions of our United Methodist Churches.

United Methodist Communications recommends that when your church is approached by a wireless company, you contact SteepleCom for assistance. Pastors and District Superintendents – engaging with SteepleCom and with wireless companies requires certain steps, including a charge conference.

For advice, contact Conference Treasurer Diane Knudsen at (916) 374-1520. A decision flow chart prepared by Dr. Jeffrey A. Smith, senior pastor of Woodway First UMC in Waco, Texas, can be accessed from the conference website.



Opinion: Response by Mark Zier

For several weeks the *Instant Connection* has been running an item about wireless carriers and churches. Unfortunately, while the information provided gives some perspective on the dangers and pitfalls of dealing with these commercial juggernauts, nothing is said about the ethics and health concerns that surround the issue.

As one who has battled the telecoms over the siting of antennas in my neighborhood, I am very much opposed to the idea of churches being willing agents and promoters of these businesses.

Let me say at the outset that I fully appreciate the utility of cell phone technology. At the same time, I am fully aware just how little the industry wants consumers to know about the health risks associated, not only with the phones themselves, but also with the base station antennas that are becoming ubiquitous (though perhaps hidden in structures like steeples). Most of the science on the issue has been paid for by the industry: there has been little in the way of independent investigation, and what little has been done suggests that there are real effects on

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Pine UMC: 120 years strong – and growing!

By Margaret S.A. Bacon

Pine UMC

SAN FRANCISCO – Pine UMC has seen a lot of changes in its 120 years of serving San Francisco’s Japanese American community and the community at large. In fact, the church, acknowledged as the “mother” church of Japanese Methodist Churches in the U.S., is fast becoming a multi-cultural place of worship. Pine UMC is listed sixth in our Conference in growth in worship.

Most recently, Pine UMC has added a new contemporary worship service, a newly formatted Sunday School, a religious study program for Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, a Men’s Covenant Group, a reconciling fellowship, and an adult class that addresses the age-old question, “What is God?” As if that weren’t enough, the church affectionately known as simply “Pine,” is welcoming its new Nichigobu (Japanese language) minister, Rev. Atsuko Fujinami, working towards a nursery/toddler ministry and a youth orchestra, and offering Vacation Bible School in August.

Pine’s roots can be traced back to the 1870s when a group of Japanese immigrant men met in the basement of the Chinese Mission to study the Bible and learn English. The church was founded in

1886, but didn’t move to its Pine Street location until 1909. The church was closed due to the forced evacuation of all persons of Japanese ancestry during WWII. In 1946, Pine Church reopened its doors and in 1965, the church moved to its present location at 33rd Avenue in San Francisco’s Richmond District.

Pine’s new contemporary worship, City Light Fellowship, began just last year under the direction of Rev. Jeannie Kim. The inter-generational worship team offers contemporary praise music backed by a live band. Senior Pastor John Oda continues to deliver the message at Pine’s traditional English worship as well as at the contemporary worship, which includes a children’s time.

Pine has always been a progressive church and the congregation is excited about some new inclusive programs reaching out to even more people. The church recently received grants to help build its senior ministries, another to help strengthen Christian relationships with Muslim communities in San Francisco



and a grant to outreach to the API GLBTQ (Asian Pacific Islander, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer) community. Along with all the new programs, Pine continues to offer traditional English worship services, along with Adult Forum and Japanese language services. The Japanese language ministry includes not only a Sunday service, but a friendship circle and a bilingual preschool and a Japanese language after school program as well.

On October 8, Pine celebrated its 120th anniversary with Bishop Beverly Shamana delivering the message. Rev. Lloyd Wake was the guest speaker at a celebration luncheon.

Opinion: wireless carriers

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living tissue, especially in the young. Not enough has yet been done to prove a direct link to specific diseases (as in “smoking leads to cancer”), but this is likely only a matter of sufficient investigation.

After all, the microwave frequencies used in cell phones are the same as in your microwave; the difference is only in their intensity. If John Wesley had had a cell phone at Aldersgate, we might wonder just what it was that “strangely warmed” his heart!

In the meantime, it behooves public authorities and other private businesses like the church, to invoke the “Precautionary Principle,” that says: let’s put the brakes on the spread of this technology until its impacts have been properly assessed.

On the ethical/theological side of the coin, there are two issues. One is the principal reason for churches being attracted to these arrangements: the poor financial health of our congregations. This wouldn’t be an issue if we were financially healthy. Is this not simply an attempt to ignore, suppress or minimize the fundamental issue of our stewardship?

One could argue that by making these arrangements, the

church provides a service to the community. But this is not a service like a daycare center or after-school program. It is a profit making venture, and the businesses driving it don’t really give one whit about the quality of our lives, never mind Christian service.

Finally, there are many community groups opposed to the siting of these antennas in their communities. If a church should decide to install an antenna and were open about it with the neighbors, there would likely be protests. While the church should not be afraid of protests, it should not find itself on the side of profit and technology, and against those representing quality of life issues.

In the Bay Area, one of the groups that has stood up to the telecom giants is the San Francisco Neighborhood Antenna Free Union, SNAFU for short. You can find them on the web at: <http://www.antennafreeunion.org/>

I would be happy to talk with anyone at any time about these issues.

Rev. Mark Zier

Lindsay UMC sees growth from midweek kids' ministry

By Bruce Pettit

Conference Communications Commission

Lindsay is a farming town of about 10,000 people, located 60 miles southeast of Fresno in California's central valley. A year ago Lindsay UMC averaged about 20 people in worship. Lately it's been up to about 50.

The difference, according to the Rev. Karen Stoffers: the church's midweek ministry to children, now in its 15th year, has reached a critical mass. It now averages 100 each Wednesday evening and many of the families of those children – who are predominately Mexican American – are coming back to worship on Sunday mornings.

The ministry is J.O.Y. – loving Jesus, Others, and Yourself – coined by former pastor Dick Pitcher when it began. It starts with a half hour of praise music before it rotates for

another hour into other activities – Bible study, arts and crafts, and snacks and games of 20 minutes each. Two of the founders, Guy and Joanie Wollenman, are still there every week as song leaders – Guy on guitar, Joanie hand-signaling words – with junior high youth on other instruments. (Guy manages olive and orange groves for his day job. Joanie is a teacher and librarian in an elementary school.)

Collections to bring joy to others are weekly also. “The children bring their nickels, dimes, and quarters,” says Rev. Stoffers, now in her second year at Lindsay. “Last year the total was about \$75. It was donated to the local food bank and to United Methodist Committee on Relief for (Hurricane) Katrina relief.”

The 100 kids, from age 4 through junior high, are all from the town, but from multiple denominations –

Catholic and Protestant. The majority of parents work as farm labor or in the area's packing houses. In nearly 75 percent of the homes, Rev. Stoffers says, Spanish is the first language.

But almost all kids in Lindsay are in bilingual immersion classes. The J.O.Y. ministry is in English, but that could change. Stoffers recalls watching a young child who was having difficulty understanding the pastor's sermon, and seeing another child help translate. She says that's when she realized that if a child was doing better than she in communicating, she needed to brush up on her elementary Spanish. Stoffers now has vowed to immerse herself enough to reach a goal of preaching a sermon in Spanish within two years.

Lindsay UMC is observing its 100th year anniversary on December 3, with Bishop Shamana preaching –

'My Soul is a Witness' copies still available

Some copies of “My Soul is a Witness,” detailing the faith testimonies of some of those who make up the Body of Christ in the Cal-Nevada Annual Conference, are still available by request. The DVD was produced by Communications Director Jeneane Jones and premiered at Annual Conference Session. It shares the stories of three United Methodist Conference people whose very different witnesses are making a remarkable impact in the world around them.

Pastor Michael Pina, from the Nomlaki tribe, is working with members of the Yurok tribe in the Klamath region, rebuilding bridges between two cultures that were once painfully distant. As a United Methodist pastor at the Church of the Redwoods, Pina says he is helping reintroduce the Christian faith in a way that Indians in the Klamath community can hear, without demonizing their own culture. “I don't speak about cultural differences but cultural similarities. I don't emphasize I am a Native American pastor. That's who I am.”

Kimberly Hallowell is a young African American student at California State University in Monterey, California. As a member of Shattuck Avenue UMC, she used relationships she built among United Methodist Women there to

spearhead both a high school movement to fight child labor, and to set the foundation for her career as child labor advocate.

Margaret Marshall, a member of South Reno UMC, extended her Reno family to include young people from South America when she became a United Methodist Volunteer. When Hurricanes Katrina and Rita struck, her extended family watched from afar, and decided they needed to stand with her. Marshall worked to bring young people from Thiu Rancho, Bolivia to the South Gulf region as the first international team of UMVIM volunteers to go to the Hurricane devastated south.

You can share their stories with your church and youth groups, and be reminded that each of us carries a special story – a witness of the faith we live out each day.

Each Annual Conference participant received a complimentary copy of the 15 minute video, to be shared with every church in the Conference.

While supplies last, you may request a free copy of “My Soul is a Witness” from the Communications Office. Contact Cate Monaghan at (916) 374-1529; e-mail catem@calnevumc.org.

Conference News Briefs

City Government Gives Grant to Church for a New Look

The city of Sebastopol recently approved a grant of \$3,500 to Sebastopol UMC for a facade improvement. It is a grant usually reserved for commercial businesses. "But the city believes that our church is such an iconic building in downtown Sebastopol that improving it will have a significant impact on the look of the downtown area," said the Rev. Judith Stone. In a recent survey, the city found that city residents regard the church building – at the top of Main Street – as the single image in their minds that best represents the city of Sebastopol. A church was able to get a government grant because in this case, Rev. Stone said, three secular non-profits – a pre-school, a county welfare agency, and a theater group – were building users.

Santa Clara UMC Celebrates 160th Anniversary

November marks 160 years since Adna Heacox preached his first sermon in 1846 in an adobe home in Santa Clara. It is believed to be the first Protestant sermon, of record, preached in what is now the State of California. Bishop Beverly Shamana served as keynote speaker at the anniversary celebration event. At the Sunday worship service October 22, District Superintendent Nymphas Edwards was the preacher, and a Southern Gospel Quartet, *A-V-Seven* were scheduled to sing, making for a memorable weekend.

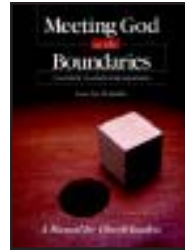
Study-Travel Team Heading to Palestine-Israel

It's not too late to join the study-travel team from our conference to Palestine-Israel, January 15-26, 2007. "Seeking Peace and Pursuing Justice" is a General Board of Global Mission study trip that will involve about 100 people, half a dozen or so from every conference. So far, five people from Cal-Nevada are signed up. For more information contact Rev. Becky Goodwin, Conference Secretary for Global Ministries, UMC Rancho Cordova at (916)635-4242, or begood@avantac.com.

UM Bell Festival, Nov. 4

The third Annual United Methodist Bell Festival is scheduled at Lake Merritt UMC in Oakland (1255 - 1st Ave.) for Saturday, Nov. 4, at 6:30pm. Dorothy Straks of Twin Towers UMC in Alameda was chosen as conductor of four mass ring pieces. Individual church choirs prepared other pieces.

This concert began in 2004 in the Golden Gate and is expanding this year, especially to the Bay View District. Should churches in other districts care to participate, they will be welcomed! The concert is free to the public. Participating choirs are requested to donate \$10 per ringer. For participation, respond to the Golden Gate District: goldengateumc@scbglobal.net.



New Cross-Cultural Manual Out

A new manual by Dr. Shan McSpadden has just been published by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry – *Meeting God at the Boundaries: A Manual for Church*

Leaders. This manual, which is designed to be used with the previously published foundational book, *Meeting God at the Boundaries: Cross-cultural-Cross-racial Clergy Appointments*, was developed in response to requests for hands-on material which would assist people who wanted to become more cross-culturally competent, especially in congregations with a cross-cultural/cross-racial appointment or multi-cultural churches. The manual has conceptual material, worship and Bible studies, guided discussions, experiential exercises, case studies, and recommendations. There are also some designs for events in the local church. The manual and the foundational book are both available through Cokesbury.

Celebrating 50 Years of Ministry

The Rev. John Emerson of Sparks celebrated 50 years as a minister by preaching an anniversary sermon Oct. 15th at First UMC, Reno where he was pastor in the 1980s.

His first Sunday as a student pastor in Idaho's ridge farming communities of Kendrick and Juliaetta was Oct. 14, 1956. "Those gracious congregations were very patient with and forgiving of this wet-behind-the-ears young preacher," he said. In Nevada, Rev. Emerson has served UMCs in Carson City, Winnemucca, Ely and McGill, as well as the downtown church in Reno where he was granted the title of pastor emeritus.

Emerson attended seminary at Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley and Boston Univ. School of Theology. He did his clinical training at Boston State Hospital.

The church choir sang an anthem composed by Emerson in collaboration with Dr. Michael Cleveland, former chair of the UNR Music Dept. The congregation sang a hymn composed by Emerson and Brian Wren, a renowned contemporary hymn writer.

A Missionary's Notebook

Rev. Linda Kelly

Linda Kelly directs the Side-by-Side Spiritual Companions program as Conference Missionary to Loaves & Fishes. Her work is supported entirely by donations (Advance Special #811). Phone: (916) 443-4362; revlinda@sbcglobal.net.

A Thanksgiving reality check

As I write this column I am on a clear liquid diet in preparation for a medical procedure. I am hungry and complaining. Then I remember how lucky I am. I have good preventative medical care. I have a comfortable home, running water, an electric coffee pot and my own refrigerator stocked with beverages and food. I am rich in the material gifts my homeless friends lack. They help me see life from a different perspective.

One such homeless man is Al. (I am using a pseudonym because Al would be embarrassed to know I

was writing about him.)

Al's blue jeans are too big for him, and dirty. His tennis shoes, worn without socks or benefit of shoelaces, flop when he walks. Al could get clean clothes and laces from Loaves & Fishes but chooses not to take more than he needs. He wears his knit cap neatly folded low across his forehead to hide the tattooed Grateful Dead bears that dance across his brow. The back of his hands and fingers sport jagged prison tattoos and a teardrop near his left eye probably indicates a past gang affiliation. On one side of his neck in beautiful script is a professional "tatt" that spells "Outlaw." On the other side is the somewhat incongruous word "Jesus" in the same script. "Incongruous" until you get to know Al.

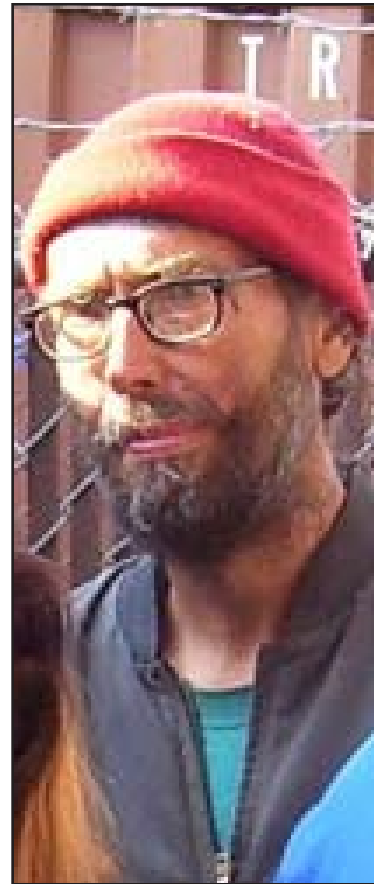
Al is a faithful member of our morning prayer circle in Friendship Park, Loaves & Fishes where the *Side-By-Side* ministry is located. He often comes with his hooded blue sweatshirt flecked with dry grass from sleeping in a field the night before. Al is humble and meek like Jesus, deeply grounded in spirit. He rarely speaks, but when asked, says that he is "blessed." Today he said, "I am blessed because I

slept in this morning. I got up late." Not easy to do when you sleep in a field.

In spite of a few missing front teeth Al's smile is radiant, and his eyes behind his cheap black-rimmed bifocals are full of light and life. He is prayerful. I was deeply touched the day he told me that I and all the folks in our prayer circle were on his prayer list.

Al is taking his time before he seeks housing. He knows what he is able to handle for now, and for today, sleeping outside, coming to morning prayer and getting lunch is all he needs. Next year, he says he plans to go inside.

Al helps me keep life in perspective. Al, serene and at peace with what little he has, takes nothing for granted. May we feel as rich as we sit at our overflowing Thanksgiving tables this year.



"Al's" cap hides forehead tattoos.

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Other Voices

Pastor presses on with life while battling ALS

By Rev. Victoria Schlintz

Atwater United Methodist Church

I'm continually surprised by joy at the grace of God that dramatically transforms and fills life. My testimony is that the paradoxes of life are more real as I've been faced with a terminal disease: as I live with dying, I can come more alive; as I look beyond this life, I can gain a perspective for living this life; as I lose my life, I gain it. My testimony is about four gifts of God, writing grace beyond this disease on my soul, for me and for those with whom I am in ministry. The first is perspective, which not only says "don't sweat the small stuff," but reminds us to "let go and let God," becoming more available to be used of God for transformation, renewal and healing. The second is values clarification, which allows me and others to look at what we're doing with the rest of our lives, blessing others and honoring God. The third is developing a clearer theology of suffering, a grace to answer the age-old question of why people suffer. And the fourth gift of God through this disease is a deeper understanding of grace, God's "enoughness," sufficiency, and abundance.

As a teenager, in the late 1960's, I sensed God's call on my life. I asked my Methodist pastor uncle if he thought I should



Rev. Victoria Schlintz in her customized wheelchair pulpit.

consider becoming clergy, "since I didn't know any lady ministers." The advice to "do whatever you do in life as ministry" served me well through a career in nursing and back full circle to a pastoral ministry in my 40s. I love pastoral ministry. I believe it brings out my passions and compassions that allow God to use me. I love worship, service, and order of the church, Bible study, prayer, and coming alongside people in pastoral care, counseling and fellowship, helping folks to see the spiritual dimensions of all of life. I'll continue to do this as long as God enables, however long or short that may be. What a privilege and blessing!

The Atwater church is thriving in the midst of it all. Last year attendance grew by 25%, our UMCOR giving was over \$10,000, we did health kits, school bags, UNICEF and shoebox gifts, Crop Walk, a food pantry; chartered a Scout pack, graduated five lay speakers and a CLayM minister, paid 100% of apportionments, hired a new youth director, and began new groups and classes. We're modifying the sanctuary and renovating the nursery, a small chapel, and one of our parking lots. God is at work despite any obstacles. Praise God!

So far, in this progressive neuromuscular disease, I've lost the use of one leg. I struggle with activities of daily living like showering and dressing, but my husband of 31 years graciously supports and assists me. Aside from mobility, I function fully. The congregation has recently built a wheelchair ramp and short pulpit in our sanctuary. I walked down the aisle, with assistance, for the last time in September. October 1st I sat at the wheelchair pulpit. I wondered if it would affect my ability to preach, but as God has proven before, times too numerous to count, God's ability is not stifled by our inabilities – God's strength is made perfect in our weaknesses. God can still preach with me sitting down, and use me in a wheelchair at a parishioner's hospital bedside, teaching a Bible study "on wheels," greeting folks seated after worship, or rolling up to a counseling table in my office. God meets me in all my need, and uses me for others in their needs, not only with sufficiency and "enoughness" but with grace abundant and amazing. Thanks be to God!

September 24 marked the last Sunday Rev. Victoria Schlintz was able to walk down the aisle of her beloved sanctuary at Atwater United Methodist Church. From now on, all services will be conducted from her wheelchair, due to the progressive nature of her ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease). She is in the fourth year of a disease with a textbook life expectancy of two to five years, although, she says, "I would not put the boundaries of a textbook on our Creator's grace."

Schlintz is Atwater's first female pastor and has served there since July 1, 2004. Her parishioners praise her enthusiasm, joy of service, energetic interaction in all activities and compassionate expertise in directing and supporting the diverse spiritual needs of the approximately 300 members.

Future plans for Pastor Victoria are predictably positive and progressive. "Onward and upward" is her motto. "Obstacles are just a temporary condition that can and must be overcome."

Victoria Schlintz's ministry would be empowered and lengthened all the more if she had a specially equipped vehicle that accepted her wheelchair and allowed her to drive.

A Vehicle for Victoria Fund is seeking \$40,000 to purchase such a vehicle. Your generous contribution can be sent to: Vehicle for Victoria Fund, c/o Florin UMC, 7560 Florin Road, Sacramento, CA 95828. Call (916) 421-1876 for more info.

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The Church through the years

In **Christian Fundamentals in a Time of Change and Conflict (DVC-549)**, Marcus Borg gives his

view of what is happening in the modern church. He speaks of an early paradigm, an emerging paradigm, and Christian fundamentals for our time. Borg defines the relational and transformational meaning of faith. There is a time of questions and answers after his talk.

Theologians under Hitler (DVC-815)

tells of three great German Christian scholars of the 20th century: Paul Althaus, Emanuel Hirsch, and Gerhard Kittel. All three of these men were outspoken supporters of Adolf Hitler. How could this happen in Christian Europe? Could it happen again? How does the

scholarship of this period affect the church today Does the church of today retain the ability to recognize profound evil?

The two DVD's in **Christianity: The First Two Thousand Years (DVC-814)** draw on ancient texts,

the Scriptures, commentary from renowned scholars and visits to many sites where history was made to provide an account of the history of Christianity. They tell not just the events and personalities, but all the forces behind them.

1. **The First Thousand Years** traces the rise of Christianity from the Crucifixion to the coming of the Crusades. Scholars explore the intertwined fates of the Roman

Empire and the faith it persecuted, then later adopted. Theologians reveal how the New Testament was shaped, how pagan festivals were transformed into Christian holidays, and how modern discoveries shed new light on early Christianity.

2. **The Second Thousand Years** is a panoramic journey through ten centuries of belief and conflict which chronicles the events and personalities of the second thousand years and also the forces behind them.

From the Crusades and the Reformation to the sweeping changes of Vatican II, each episode uses historical documents, commentaries from renowned scholars, and visits to historical sites.

Job Opportunities listed on www.cnumc.org

Redding First launches interfaith campaign

continued from page 5

came flooding back.

From Thursday, Sept. 14, through Sunday, Sept. 17 there were letter-writings, a discussion and a showing of the movie *Ghosts of Rwanda* at Simpson University in Redding, a prayer vigil in which participants spanned the 500-foot Sundial Bridge of downtown Redding, and an interfaith worship at First UMC of Redding on Sunday. A prayer by Desmond Tutu on Darfur was read with permission from

Waging Peace in London. Steinberg was informed that Tutu was advised by Waging Peace of the Redding reading.

Three major cities in San Francisco had major action protesting the Darfur genocide that weekend – Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego. And one much smaller city of just 85,000: Redding.

For more information, go to www.darfurredding.org.

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