El Camino Real District

December 2010 Norah Miller, Editor

Grace Notes from Kristie

Count your blessings, name them one by one.

This Christmas, when I think of you, the congregations and pastors of the El Camino Real District, my heart is full of blessings. In the Spirit of the season, let us celebrate all we are doing together as the people called Methodist in this area.

Praise God for the wonderful mission efforts, including meals, construction projects, and food, toy, clothing collections that offer smiles, compassion, and hope to so many right in our own communities this Christmas season and all year.

"Give Thanks" to all the musical ones who offer up their Advent songs of reflection and Christmas melodies of joy in voice and instrument, filling our ears and hearts.

A smile for the children who don the angel wings and bathrobe costumes to bring the Bethlehem journey to life once more for visitors and friends alike.

Prayers for those who remember that this season can be the most difficult time of the year for some, and created Longest Night or Blue Christmas services or perhaps opened the door for the weary to come in.

A round of applause for all of us! The church conferences are completed! Most of you have sent off pages of forms to either our San Jose or West Sacramento office, too! What an effort... and we hear that some of the combined conferences were wonderful gatherings.

Welcome into the fellowship of Jesus Christ to those new persons who have joined our congregations in recent months.

A bow of gratitude to those leaders who served this past year in our churches, as lay leaders or Administrative Council chairs or choir directors or class leaders or teachers or kitchen workers or youth chaperones or treasurers or trustees or worship coordinators or so many other needed roles where we use the surprising gifts inside us. And an uplifting thank you to the new leaders ready to serve in the new year.

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Merry Christmas and Blessings in the New Year from your

El Camino Real District Staff Kristie Olah and Pam McKee

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In this difficult year, **a hearty hallelujah** for those churches who are making extra efforts to give their fair share in their apportionment giving this year.

A pat on the back for the creative congregations dreaming bold visions and organizing in new ways -- to be stronger in faith and connection with one another.

Finally, I thank each of you for inspiring me in my leadership. It is an honor to partner with you in holy ministry. My prayer for us is simple: Together, may we grow in faith and in love for God and for the world. May we trust in God's help deeply so that we may be the strong communities God calls us to be. May we receive the fullness of God's grace, that our hope will shine out and infect the world with love.

Come, thou long-expected Jesus. Bless us, we pray, that we might bless the world.

Rev. Kristie Olah

District Superintendent

New Creation Fellowship Is on the Move

The New Creation United Methodist Fellowship is moving from their current home at the Korean United Methodist Church of Santa Clara Valley to the Campbell United Methodist Church in January. Pastor Jason Ryu leads a congregation of young adults and young families.

Life Is For Everyone, Inc. [LIFE]

LIFE is a four day a week after school program in east Salinas that has volunteer tutors to work with students 3 days a week and recreation on the 4th day. There are also healthy snacks, skills building, computer access for research and paper writing, and much more that serves 50 children and youth, 2nd grade through Middle School. LIFE sees itself as a gang prevention program.

This county wide campaign will help LIFE raise critical funds to underwrite continuance of upgrading the program. Now, if you didn't see or get a copy of the Nov. 18th issues, no worries, as all the information is on the website: www.montereycountygives.com

LIFE is listed under Education & Youth subsection

The campaign lasts through 12/31/2010.

If you don't want to give through the website, you can print out a form and send in a check.

LIFE is where I tutor, and where I am also on the Board of Directors!

I know that the members of the LIFE Board would be delighted if you can lift up this opportunity of giving in your congregations.

This is another way of "giving gifts" that many people appreciate. You can encourage folks to give to LIFE instead of buying something for someone that they may not need or want!

Alice Ann Glen

NOR/CAL ECUMENICAL MEDIA RESOURCE CENTER MEDIA UPDATE – November/December, 2010 408-378-2532 FAX: 408-378-2652



emrcvideos@aol.com www.emrclibrary.org

Dear friends.

We have now completed the cataloging of the many books we have acquired this summer and fall. We would like to thank DONNA LINDSAY, once again, for her donation of many boxes of books upon her retirement from working as a Christian Educator. These books will have an 'L' at the end of the number, which is in the left column of the attached file. There are children's books, RB____ and books for adults AB___. Please pass this list on to those working in Christian Ed. at you church.

A New DVD list will be out soon. Most are already added to our online catalog. Later numbers are the most recent purchases. Check out our catalog at: emrclibrary.org.

Blessings, Rhonda Canale No. CA Ecumenical Media Resource Center emrcvideos@aol.com 408-378-2532

Changes of pastor appointments

On January 1, Rev. Mark Wendland will be reducing his hours as pastor of First United Methodist Church in Pacific Grove. He is making the change to follow a call into becoming a hospital chaplain. For six months, he will split his time at the church and hospital in Monterey. Then, on July 1, Mark will leave his position at the church. Blessings in this new ministry of care, Mark!

Also on January 1, Rev. Samuel Yun will begin a new position as Minister for Young Adult Ministry at Los Altos United Methodist Church. Sam is an ordained elder of the California-Pacific Conference and is moving here from the Los Angeles area.

The Longest Night: an Advent Service of Solace

For many of us, Advent is a time of joyful

Los Altos United Methodist Church Monday, December 20th 7:30pm

anticipation, happy preparation for celebrating, and warm time with loved ones, but this is not everyone's experience. Feelings of grief, loss, isolation, and depression are also very common during this time of the year and can even be made worse by the evident jubilation in others. The Longest Night will be a service designed to provide solace, safety, warmth, and welcome to those who are suffering in their hearts during this season. God comes to us wherever we are - even in our grief, even in our pain, even in the cold and dark dirt of a stable - and we invite you and those in your communities to come and know there is a place for you in this season, too. For more information, contact Pastor Cate Noellert at catenoellert@laumc.org, or at 650.948.1083x121

Help a Refugee Family from Bhutan

November 29, 2010

Dear Pastors and Lay Leaders,

I am a member of St. Andrew's United Methodist Church in Palo Alto and active in our Outreach programs. Since their arrival in November, 2009, we have been sponsoring a Bhutanese family who came to the U.S. as refugees. They had been living in a U.N. Refugee Camp in Nepal for 18 years, therefore limiting their opportunities to develop work experience. Both parents are actively seeking employment. Rup-Narayan is the father and Radhika is the mother.

Mr. Acharya is hard working, detail oriented, and very intelligent. He speaks Nepalese and Hindi. His receptive English skills are good, but his expressive English is more limited. We are seeking a work opportunity in a shipping and receiving environment or a mailroom in a company or business accessible by bus. The family lives at the intersection of Monroe Ave. and Scott Blvd. in Santa Clara. Mr. Acharya does not have a driver's license, so any job requiring driving of a company vehicle would not work.

Mrs. Acharya has experience, paid and volunteer, working with disabled youth. She is seeking employment in the areas of elder care, child care or caring for the disabled. She also does not drive or have a driver's

license. Some Indian families might view her understanding of the Hindi language as a plus, especially for an elder who might be most comfortable with someone culturally similar. Radhika has good receptive English skills and moderate expressive skills which have improved rapidly with instruction and practice over the past year.

If someone in your congregation has a contact through his or her workplace or can network to find an opportunity, could you please contact me? If no paid position would be available, we are also seeking an internship opportunity to enhance Mr. Acharya's expressive English skills and allow him to develop work experience. Mrs. Acharya is currently volunteering in a setting with disabled youth. The family would truly appreciate the opportunity to earn income rather than be dependent upon public and church assistance. Many thanks.

Sincerely,

Lisa A. Weyland 650-965-4921 lweyland@sbcglobal.net St. Andrew's United Methodist Church 4111 Alma Street Palo Alto CA 94306-4546

NOTE!

Katie Goetz is pastor at Trinity UMC in Sunnyvale, not First UMC. Trinity members were excited to meet their newest little family member on December 5 when Katie returned from maternity leave.

DEAR FRIENDS!

Please hold in prayer **Shirley Macemon**, pastor of Sunnyhills UMC in Milpitas, and her family. Both of Shirley's parents passed away in Oklahoma City on Saturday afternoon, November 20, within one hour of each other. They had been living with different illnesses and died in adjoining rooms in the hospital.

Mission Trip to Africa Recruiting Team Members

The Boulder Creek United Methodist Church is organizing a United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) team to <u>Swaziland</u>, <u>Africa in August 2011</u>. The Kingdom/Country of Swaziland, located in Southern Africa shares its borders with South Africa and Mozambique. It



is approximately the size of the state of New Jersey, with a population of over 1.3 million. This small country of vibrant people and culture is at great risk of extinction. In a letter from the US ambassador to Swaziland, Earl M. Irving says this: "HIV/AIDS is tearing at the social fabric of the Kingdom, and without a dramatic decrease in the rate of new HIV infections, it is not an exaggeration to say that the future of Swaziland is at risk." Over 30% of the population are orphaned and vulnerable children due to the AIDS crisis and, according to UNICEF, many are at risk of missing out on schooling, live in households with less food security, suffer anxiety and depression, and are in greater danger of exposure to HIV.

United Methodist Individual Mission Volunteer, Christine McLain has been working in Swaziland since 2007, providing assistance to the local Methodist women's organization (Manyano) to address the needs of the poor, especially women and orphaned and vulnerable children in rural areas of Swaziland. Our VIM focus will be to work with the children and families of Lomngeletjane Methodist Primary School, in a rural community near Manzini, Swaziland. We will organize a Vacation Bible School (based on John Wesley's Three Simple Rules) and assist with local projects. Visit to Bulembu, the City of Hope and fellowship with the Methodist women's group are also planned.

Do you find your heart turned towards Africa? Come and experience God's spirit which refuses to allow this small, breathtakingly beautiful country to die. You are invited to join this team lead by Becky Perry. Becky is a trained UMVIM team leader, lay leader at Boulder Creek UMC, 2008 Conference Lay Minister Training graduate, and experienced traveler who lead a Volunteers in Mission team of 12 to Swaziland in July 2009. Team meetings begin in January 2011. **Contact Becky at perry95006@yahoo.com or 831-338-4998 for details and information.**

To read about Chris McLain's work: http://onechildoneheart.org/

To read the blog from the 2009 Swaziland VIM team: http://swaziland2009vim.blogspot.com/



Christian Knox (VIM 2009 team member), Andile, Majaha and Bongiwe

Trip size: 12 adults (18 years or older) Ministry description:

- connectional ministry: VBS @ Lomngeletjane
 Methodist Primary School
- assistance to those in local communities near Lomngeletjane
- light manual labor work-painting, school maintenance
- fellowship with the local Methodist women's organization (Manyano)
- visit Bulembu in northern Swaziland, the City of Hope, orphan ministries

Experience the culture and beauty of Swaziland

– Side trip to nature preserve and Swazi cultural village

Recruiting team members now;

First team meeting: January 29, 2011

Smakadze Akubusise, Siyabonga!

God Bless and Thank you!

PASKONG PILIPINO

Sponsored by Lake Park UMC, Oakland, St. Paul UMC, Fremont, Valley Faith UMC, Sunnyvale Special Offering will be taken to go to CI General Fund.

When: Saturday, Dec. 18, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Where: St. Paul UMC - 33350 Peace Terrace

Fremont, CA 94555

Pasko na naman! Christmas is the longest and most celebrated holiday among Filipinos. As a matter of fact, Filipinos have only two distinct images in their religious consciousness: Santo Entiero and Santo Niňo expressed in Christian calendar as Biyernes Santo and Pasko.

In the spirit of cultural redemption, how about a celebration of Christmas in a Filipino way?... Pasko is the Filipino gift to the weaving of a colorful tapestry that is multicultural America...Pasko is more than an event; it is an enduring experience that is visually engaging, culturally empowering, and spiritually uplifting for human flourishing.

The gathering will have three parts:

- 1. Himig Pasko Caroling coming from different churches and groups. Parade of Parols Christmas lanterns made by Sunday School children, symbolizing the light of the Star of Bethlehem in human pilgrimage.
- 2. Simbang Gabi A Filipino liturgy based on an old tradition called Panunuluyan (derived from the word "tuloy" means "to come in."). It is the reenactment of Mary and Joseph looking for lodging in Bethlehem for the birth of the Child Jesus. Panunuluyan, in Filipino American experience, helps us retell the pain and pathos of Filipino sojourn in realizing the "America is in the heart." The liturgy also reminds us of those who continue to cross borders in search of newness of life, justice, and safety. Like Mary and Joseph, the immigrants often meet rejection and prejudice. But by God's extravagant grace, we are welcome. In turn, we are called to welcome others who may knock at our "doors." In the spirit of authentic Filipino hospitality, when someone say, TAO po, can we say TULOY!
- 3. Salo-Salo Filipino delicacies of suman, bibingka, puto-bumbong, salabat, kape.

All are welcome. For more details, call St. Paul UMC at (510) 429-3990.

CALENDAR

December 14-17

Ministry Staff & Cabinet meetings

December 17

Furlough day, District Office closed

Dec 23-24

Christmas holiday, District Office closed

Dec 31

New Year's Holiday, District Office closed

Jan 5, 9 am

DCOOM, Almaden Hills UMC, San Jose

Jan 12-14

Cabinet Meetings

December 2010



The District Spirit is published September through June by the El Camino Real District 408 295 5341. The purpose is to keep district churches connected with information on activities and news happenings around the local churches, District and conference. Send your church information to the District Office at

<u>elcaminorealdist@sbcglobal.net</u> or email Norah Miller at <u>nkmill52@cruzio.com</u>

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