

LAFAYETTE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

TOWER NOTES



Since 1855

Nov. 30, 2008

SEEDS OF A SOWER

The season of Advent begins on November 30. The origins of the season are somewhat fuzzy. Epiphany, celebrated on January 6, was probably an older celebration than that of Christmas. Advent likely grew out of the practice of a 40 day season of preparation for Epiphany, when baptisms were celebrated.

Eventually the Roman church created the commemorative day of Christmas, designating the four weeks prior to December 25 as Advent. Advent comes from *adventus* and refers to the “coming of Christ.” It looks back to the historical presence of Jesus of Nazareth on Earth. It refers to the present coming of Christ into our very lives. It also refers to the future coming of Christ, when the reign of God will be accomplished in all its fullness.

It has commonly been thought that Christmas was dated in December to usurp the pagan solstice celebration. However, there is also evidence that it was based on the ancient belief that the date of death is also the date of conception. Early in the Christian calendar, Jesus’ date of death was commemorated on March 25. If his conception was also March 25, then nine months later is December 25.

During this Advent season we will be focusing on ways in which we are seeing God – in people, in the world, in the work for justice, in the Christ Child, and in the Light. I’d like to hear ways in which you have seen God and will use them in our worship liturgy. See the insert in the Sunday program or send me an email at sawdon2@pacbell.net.

Blessings,

Pastor Lori

TOWER NOTES HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

There will only be ONE Tower Notes issue in December on **THURSDAY, DEC. 11**. We will go back to our normal schedule in January.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

the Bethlehem Experience IMPORTANT DATES



Set Construction

Please bring, if you can: hammers, saw (crosscut or skill), jig saw - plywood blades, power drill & bits, tape measures, square, staple gun, extension cords - (and 2 to 3 prong converters), socket wrench with ratchet (1/4", 5/16", 3/8", 1/2", etc.), and a carpenter's pencil.

Construction/Booth Setup

w/ Props Placed

Saturday, Dec. 6th 9:00AM to 3:00PM

The Set Construction Crew under the direction of Steve Breashears and Karen Chelini will meet at other times as needed to complete the transformation of the Fellowship Hall into the Bethlehem Marketplace.

Costume Fitting and Individual Line Help As Needed

Sunday, November 30th, 11:45am - ?

Final Touches to Set and Dress Rehearsal

Sunday, Dec. 7, 3PM to 6PM

BETHLEHEM EXPERIENCE

Friday, Saturday & Sunday

Dec. 12, 13 and 14, Tours from 5:30PM to 9PM* (Last tour Begins at 8PM)

(Guests Arrive at 5:15PM for first tour)

(Cast members plan to be at the church from 4:30PM to 9PM)

Booth Take-Down

Monday, Dec. 15, 9AM - 12 PM

Set Take-Down

Monday, Dec. 15, 5PM to Finish

Here Is Our God!
Advent/Christmas 2008

In this season of Advent we will herald the presence of God – the incarnation of the Holy – as evidenced in people, in the world, in the work for justice, in the Christ Child, and in the Light.

Advent Devotional booklets are available in the Fireside Room after worship or at the church office.



Dec. 7 Advent 2 God in the World: A New Heaven and A New Earth

Isaiah 40:1-11, 2 Peter 3:8-15a

Dec. 14 Advent 3 God in the Lowly: Looked Upon with Favor

Guest Preacher, Rev. Mike Nicolson

Isaiah 61:1-4; 8-11; Luke 1:47-55

Dec. 21 Advent 4 God in the Child: Heirs to the Kin-dom

Galatians 4:4-7, Luke 1:26-38



Dec. 24 Christmas Eve

5:00 Family Worship Service

11:00 Candlelight Worship God in the Light: Do Not Be Afraid



UNITED METHODIST WOMEN



Start your Christmas celebration with the UMW meeting on Thursday, December 4. We will gather in the Fireside Room at 11:00 a.m. to sing Christmas Carols and enjoy a delicious lunch. Following lunch, we will pack baskets for members of our congregation who are not able to get out and about. Come enjoy the fellowship and help with this special annual project.



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Children who have been singing after church with Bunny Gruhn, our choir director, are sounding great! The next rehearsal with her will be Sunday, December 28 at 10 a.m. in the sanctuary. Sunday School classes will still be singing traditional Christmas carols through December with their teachers.



You may add to the beauty of our worship this year by donating toward our flowers. The flowers will be placed in the sanctuary on Sunday, December 7, through Christmas Eve. All gifts will be noted in the bulletin on Sunday, December 21, 2008.

Suggested amount - \$10

Donated by:

Phone: _____

(In memory of)

(In honor of)

Enclosed is my check made payable to Lafayette United Methodist Church for \$_____ for Christmas worship flowers.

If you wish to donate your flowers, please check here _____



BAY AREA CRISIS NURSERY

Wrapping Thing Up At The Bay Area Crisis Nursery

A delightful holiday volunteer opportunity – Gift wrappers are needed to wrap presents for the children from 12/7 through 12/22. Four sessions daily – 9-11 a.m., 12 noon-2 p.m., 3-5 p.m., 6-9 p.m. Call or email the crisis nursery to sign up 925-685-6633 or events@bacn.info. Maximum of 12 people per session; maximum two sessions per group. Children even young ones welcome with adult supervision – 1 adult for every four children. We provide the gifts, wrapping supplies and refreshments. If you can provide wrapping paper, gift bags, boxes, tissue, ribbons, bows and tape we would be most appreciative! Please contact us if you would like to donate new toys and clothes for gifts.

Christmas Caroling

Sunday, December 21, 6:00 p.m.



We'll take the carols of Christmas "on the road" to some of our homebound members. All are welcome to meet at the church and carpool to several homes to share the joy and cheer of the season.



Christmas for Garden Park Apartments Residents

Permanent, safe, and supporting housing is provided for 27 families at the Garden Park Apartments in Concord. As one of the supporting congregations of Contra Costa Interfaith Housing, we have been given the opportunity to contribute gift cards (suggested amount \$20) to supermarkets (Safeway, Lucky), discount retail stores (Ross, Marshall), and entertainment (Century Theaters, Starbucks, etc.). These will allow teenagers to have a rare treat to the movies, parents to purchase a coat for their child, and families to have dinner at home together. You may leave gift cards at the church office or place in the offering plate on Sundays.

Five Practices Follow-Up

During the Fall our congregation focused on Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations. In the New Year, we hope to have focus groups meet for 3 sessions each to assess our ministry in each of these areas and share ideas for enhancing those practices. If you would like to participate in one or more of the focus groups, please check the practice(s) in which you are interested below.

- _____ Radical Hospitality
- _____ Passionate Worship
- _____ Intentional Faith Development
- _____ Risk-taking Mission and Service
- _____ Extravagant Generosity

You may place this in the offering plate or send it to the church office or email Pastor Lori at sawdon2@pacbell.net.



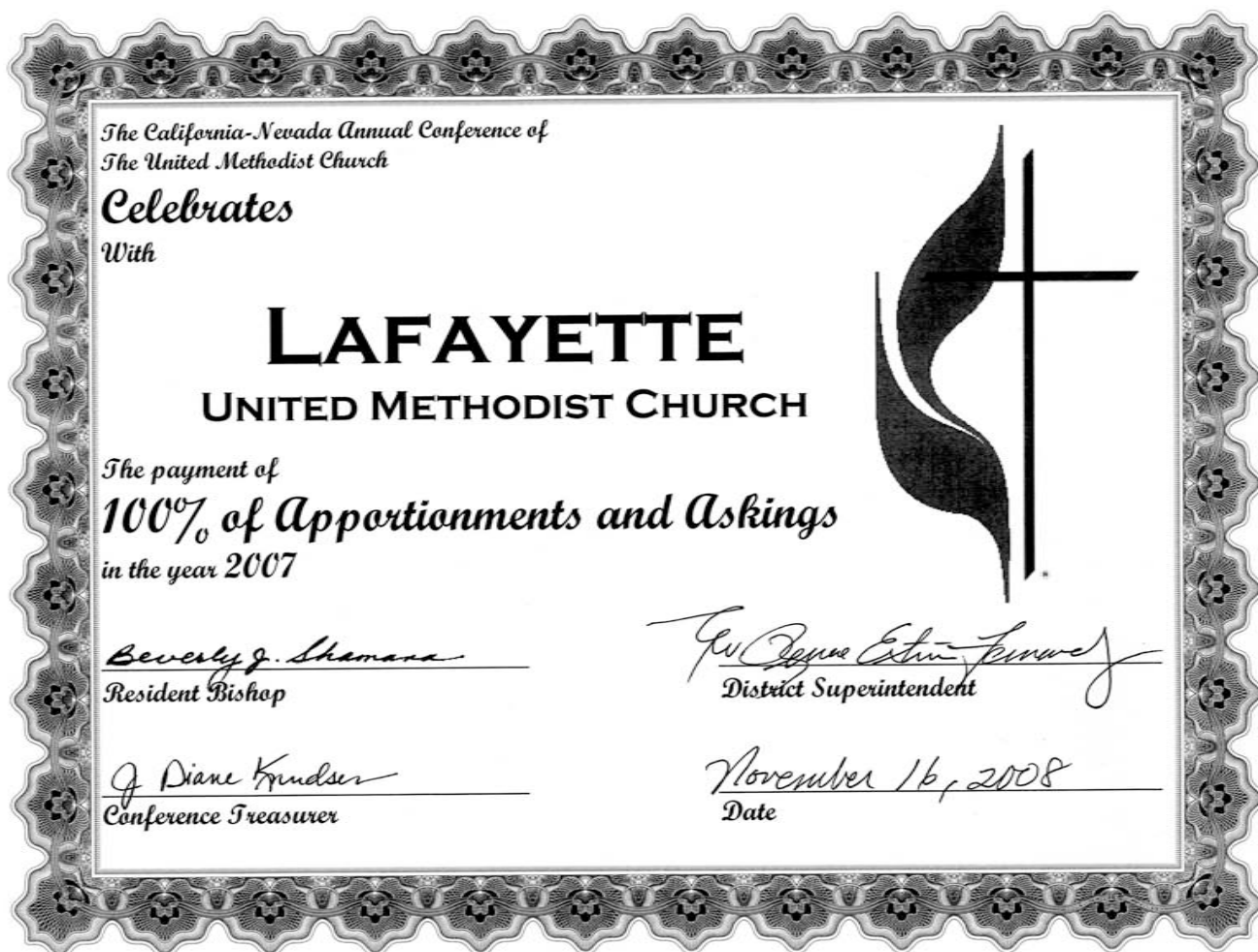
Have you renewed your eScrip???? if not, the church is no longer receiving a percentage of your purchases!! Please do so today - every little bit helps! Any questions, Call Ginny Leavitt - 284-7857



HOLIDAY BOUTIQUE/TRADITIONAL TEA WRAP-UP!

For me, Saturday, November 15 was a delightful day! To see all the hard efforts come together so beautifully was a joy, indeed! I hope all of you who contributed in any way, and/or attended, felt the same way! In addition, we raised approximately \$6,900 for the mission of our church! A special thanks to Tea Organizer Sande Hubbs and her wonderful crew and to Ginny Horner, Stitch in Time Organizer and her nimble fingers group of workers! The Tea Café, organized by Barbara Levander, was a pleasant new addition. I greatly appreciated all of you who contributed in any way – you made the day the success it was!

Thank you! Ginny Leavitt



LUMC received this certificate of appreciation from the Annual Conference on Nov. 16. Thanks to your generous giving we are on our way toward payment of 2008 apportionments. \$23,749 of our apportionments and asking were not budgeted. Our yearend giving will help us make up the difference.



LUMC Church Council Meeting - November 11, 2008 Meeting

Present: Chairperson Pat Hershey, Dean Coons, Carol Slatten, Ginny Leavitt, Pastor Lori Sawdon, Tom Henderson, Robyn Roberts, David Inglis, Ginny Cowden, Doug Cowden, Jack Cottler and Secretary Kurt Teichmann

After the committee members shared joys and concerns, Chairperson Hershey opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. with a Centering Prayer. The minutes of the September 16, 2008 and October 21, 2008 meetings were approved as submitted.

Finance Committee:

- Ginny Leavitt reported that pledged giving for 2009 has not reached the goal for a balanced budget. Pledges received as of this date were \$65,000 below what was pledged for 2008 with about 30 pledges still outstanding. She noted that quite a few past individuals/families that pledged last year had not made their 2009 commitment. Thus, Finance was not in a position to recommend a budget for next year. In view of that, Finance was recommending the status quo for all expenses for next year including the same compensation for our pastor except for a necessary increase in pastor's insurance expense. No budget will be presented to the Church Conference this coming Sunday. Leavitt reported that the church had done a mass email to all listed church givers to remind them to send in their annual pledges. The Finance Committee will follow with a letter to all who have not pledged, with phone calls to follow as needed.
 - Concerning the results of the first 10 months of 2008, Leavitt reported that pledges to date are right on expectations. Non-pledged income YTD is about \$3,000 below expectations. Plate offering continues to be strong, about \$300 over expectations. Use of the church income is about as expected. Acalanes has paid for the full year as have a couple of others users. Futures Explores continues to be a bonus with \$4,500 to date. The new designated Mission Outreach offering has already grown to \$800. In total, on a budget basis, income is \$13,570 ahead of budget.
 - With the rollover from last year, Total Income is \$43,985 ahead. This is very good news for this time of year. It is too early to estimate the roll over into 2009.
 - Leavitt reported that total expenses to date: Church Office is \$3,750 below budget; Church Home was also under by \$2,800, Church Family was \$2,000 under and Church Management was under by about \$12,000. Leavitt noted that since the bookkeeper had been on vacation, there had been some expense items that had not been paid making the above figures somewhat misleading. But we continue to be in good financial shape on a current accounts basis. The requested amounts for mission giving and askings are not included in these budget figures but will be added in the future. Thus, the church's positive cash flow may be considered to be over stated by those amounts.
 - The request by the Finance Committee for an exception to the Endowment Policy, which was tabled at the October meeting, has been withdrawn. The Endowment Committee has finished its consideration of the exception proposal. The Church Council has agreed to appoint a committee to review the Endowment Policy as a whole.
- Trustees:** Pastor Lori reported that Trustees was considering insulating the attic roof in the education building at an estimated cost of \$2,000. This would improve the temperature in several cold rooms. The Fire Marshall's inspection found that we need to replace the kitchen oven hood, which is estimated at a cost of \$3,000 to \$4,000. Trustees are getting more bids. These funds are in the budget.
- Staff Parish:** Ginny Leavitt said that, right now, we don't have the money for any increases. Our pastor's family insurance cost has increased by approximately \$3,000 but otherwise her compensation is to remain the same. It was noted that after additional pledges were submitted, another church conference meeting could be scheduled to consider employee salary increases. And Trustees' additional requests will also be placed on hold.

•Motion by Ginny Leavitt, Second by Doug Cowden that we retain the status quo on next year's budget until more pledge information is obtained to allow consideration of raises. This was approved unanimously.

•After extended discussion, Jack Cotteral made a motion that Church Council be on record supporting the ban of use of alcohol on church property and that a more definitive policy should be written for consideration by the Church Conference. Seconded by David Inglis. Passed on a 9-2 vote with one abstention.

Lay Leadership: There was no report. A report is to be made at Sunday's Church Conference.

Old Business: None.

New Business: Chairperson Hershey reported that the Vital Signs Committee had completed its assessment. It found that LUMC is a growing church with some areas of exposure to continued health. It was recommended that we present the findings (especially the areas where we could focus more attention) to the Church Conference. In that regard, it was agreed that the Church should try to work even more concertedly to develop our intimacy with visitors, new members and even existing members. And this should be incorporated with a greater effort to provide more Adult Christian Education opportunities.

The next meeting is combined with the Finance Committee on December 9th. The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Church Council Secretary, Kurt Teichmann

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor.....	The Reverend Lori Sawdon
Pastor e-mail.....	Sawdon2@pacbell.net
Director of Music Ministry.....	Bunny Gruhn
Organist & Keyboard/Pianist.....	Ken Mansfield
Office administrator.....	Lorri Sullivan
Joyful Beginnings Preschool Director.....	Dot Feist
Custodian.....	Jason Cano

TOWER NOTES

Editor.....	Ginny Cowden
Computer Formatting.....	Tom & Mary Henderson
Mailing.....	Fran Smith and Evelyn Clark

TOWER NOTES DEADLINE

2nd & 4th Thursday by Noon – Next Deadline **Thursday, Dec. 11, 2008**

LUMC CONTACT INFORMATION

Telephone....	925-284-4765
Fax.....	925-284-5170
E_Mail.....	lumc@pacbell.net
Web Site.....	www.thelumc.org