

LAFAYETTE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

TOWER NOTES



Since 1855

Dec. 14, 2008

SEEDS OF A SOWER

I continue to be amazed at and grateful for the ministries and commitment of this congregation. Certain groups have adopted various projects and missions and faithfully fulfill them year after year. Newcomers are informed and invited to participate, growing the ministry and sharing the love.

The M & M's Fellowship Group has once again beautifully decorated our sanctuary for the season, with donations of poinsettias from many of you. New chrismsons have been made for the Christmas tree donated by Sue Renno. Mary Henderson led Ginny Cowden, Ginny Leavitt, and Gloria Pleis in making the chrismsons, which are monograms for Christ. Take a good look at our tree and note the various symbols which speak of Jesus and his life.

The youth group has again adopted a family and donated their own money to purchase Christmas gifts. This family with four children has been with Winter Nights Shelter. They are finally returning to their own apartment. We have the opportunity to assist in providing furnishings for their new home. If you have an extra bed or other items that may be helpful, let the church office know.

The village of Bethlehem has undergone some redevelopment this year, thanks to the guidance of Steve Breashears and Karen Chelini, motivated by the vision of Teresa Gerring. They and their families have led the effort to bring Bethlehem to life once again. Many of you have lent your time, talent, energy, and presence to bring the story of Jesus' birth alive. What a wondrous gift to the community! Thanks to the labor of Michael Gerring and others, we have a new storage container for Bethlehem Experience sets, costumes, etc.

All this has already happened, and it's only mid-December. Yet to come is more inspiring music from our Chancel Choir and children.

YOU ARE A BLESSING!

Pastor Lori

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. 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

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FINANCE ALERT

All outstanding bills for LUMC should be submitted before Dec. 31--- the only exceptions, December bills can be submitted until Jan. 13th. Any questions, call Ginny Leavitt, Finance Chair - 284-7857



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.

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.



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.



Horners to Renew Vows



In the spirit of Advent and of the New Year, Greg and Ginny Horner plan to renew their wedding vows on Jan. 4, the day of their tenth anniversary. Following worship and communion on Jan. 4, they will host a light lunch during social hour. All are welcome. All members of the congregation are invited to stay till 12:30 when Pastor Lori will officiate over a brief ceremony in the Sanctuary. Cake (possibly pie) and coffee will follow.

JANUARY FOOD BASKET

The suggested food items for

January are

**Paper towels and
baby food.**

Food baskets can be found at both
Entrances to the church sanctuary.



JANUARY HAPPY BIRTHDAY

2	<i>Becky Straw</i>	12	<i>Marcella Monopoli</i>	22	<i>Skye Dailey</i>
4	<i>Sarah Newcomb</i>		<i>Sue Renno</i>		<i>Peter Husch</i>
5	<i>Teresa Gerringer</i>	15	<i>Joseph MacDannald</i>	26	<i>Nancy Lennstrom</i>
	<i>Celeste Graham</i>		<i>Carol Slatten</i>	27	<i>Selma Johnson</i>
	<i>Matt Keeble</i>		<i>Emily Slatten</i>	28	<i>Ian Walters</i>
	<i>Rachel Lennon</i>	17	<i>Doug Cowden</i>	30	<i>Ryan Chan</i>
	<i>Warren Makinson</i>	18	<i>Kalia Johnson</i>		<i>Paul Ghaziani</i>
9	<i>Jim Brown</i>		<i>Phillip Makinson</i>	31	<i>Matthew Teichmann</i>
	<i>Javier Marcus</i>	19	<i>Qing Inglis</i>		
	<i>Carlton Walter</i>	20	<i>Scott White</i>		

Happy Anniversary

4	<i>Ginny and Greg Horner</i>
5	<i>Laurel and David Hill</i>
7	<i>Julia and David White</i>
12	<i>Cindy and Tom Tornow</i>
16	<i>Janice and Del Kolbe</i>
19	<i>Sandy and Pat Porter</i>

UMW will hear Executive Director of Contra Costa Crisis Center on January 15th

John Bateson, executive director of the Crisis Center, will tell us about the new 211 help line available in our county and bring us up to date on the services available from the Crisis Center. All women of the church are invited. UMW begins at 11 a.m. in the Fireside Room and he will speak at 11:30 a.m. Please try and arrive well before 11:30 a.m. Lunch will be provided.



Recovery International Meets at LUMC Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. Room 8

Recovery, International is an internationally based, non-sectarian, free self-help mental health organization. They offer a proven (since 1937) method of self-help for those with a broad range of diagnoses. It's even helpful for dealing with the frustrations of everyday life that "normal" individuals encounter. More information is available at the website www.recovery-inc.org. This is not a ministry of LUMC, but one of the community organizations that uses our facility and offers an open invitation to participants.



Lafayette United Methodist Church Minutes of the Annual Church Conference - November 16, 2008

Present: Reverend Renae Extrum-Fernandez, District Superintendent, Pastor Lori Sawdon, Pat Hershey, Joe Darrell, Robyn Roberts, Dean Coons, Chris Coons, Carol Slatten, Jan Davis, Pat Porter, Ginny Leavitt, Nancy Flood, Doug Cowden, Ginny Cowden, Mary Henderson, Maureen Straw, Jim Straw, Vic Smith, Fran Smith, Rod Levander, Barbara Levander, Lynn Sabatini, Teresa Gerringer, Tom Henderson, Celeste Graham, and Secretary Kurt Teichmann

The District Superintendent opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. in the Church Sanctuary. Lay Leader opened with a wonderful prayer including the place of Methodists in the world. The District Superintendent noted that John Wesley in 1774 called for a holy conference in the Americas, which was the first precedent for church conferences.

Church Council Chairperson Pat Hershey reported that a subcommittee had read Dan Dick's book Vital Signs: A Pathway to Congregational Wholeness. The book listed 4 church types: Vital, Dystrophic, Retrogressive, and Decaying. The subcommittee found LUMC to fall into the Dystrophic category which describes a growing but less stable

church [less than a Vital church.] The subcommittee found that we are doing well in the following assessment areas:

Congregation Growth- This covers both membership and attendance

Outreach Ministries- She cited our large numbers attending Sierra Service Project, and a record setting Vacation Bible School and Joyful Beginnings Preschool.

Active Members- Percentage of members who are very active including in leadership positions.

Age-Related Ministries- Number of ministries for different age groups, particularly for preschoolers, children and teens

Areas which the Church Council agreed we should increase our focus and efforts are the following:

UMC Mission-Increase the awareness and shared understanding in our congregation of the stated mission of the United Methodist Church, “To make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World.”

LUMC Ministry- Increase our focus on two aspects of our local ministry:

- We are an “**intimate church**”; so we want to continue to strengthen our relationship-building activities
- We are a church that “**welcomes new families,**” so we want to look for ways to strengthen our welcoming presence with families in the community.

Adult Christian Education- Look for new ways to incorporate adult Christian education opportunities in conjunction with our relationship-building activities. The District Superintendent was complimentary that our church had spelled out clear goals. She recommended that the church always keep in mind what we could do to move even more towards the goals of growth and stability.

Election of Officers

Trustees: Lay Leadership Committee moved that Mason Walters (2011) and Henry Kim (2011) be added to the Board of Trustees and that Brian Chuck, Randall Husch, Corinne Roberts, Ray Peters, Meng Ward, and Tom Woo all be reconfirmed in their existing positions as members of the Trustees. Seconded by Pat Hershey. Approved unanimously.

Lay Leadership: Lay Leadership moved that Mary Teichmann (2011) be approved as a new member of Lay Leadership Committee. Seconded by Vic Smith. Approved unanimously.

All Other Committees: Lay Leadership moved that Celeste Graham (2012), Carol Slatten (2012), Dean Coons (2011), Jack Cotteral (2011), David Inglis (2011) and Lynn Sabatini (2011) be added to Church Council, Joe Darrell (2011) and Bob Lewis (2011) be added to the Finance Committee, Paul Renno (2011) and Donna Partlow (2011) be added to the Permanent Endowment Fund Committee, Carol Sebastian (2011) and Renee Emerson (2011) be added to the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, Pat Doughty to the Kitchen Ministry Team, Lynne Sabatini and Sande Hubbs be added to the Memorial Reception Team, Henry Kim be added to the Men’s Ministry Team be approved. Seconded by Teresa Gerringer. Approved unanimously. Other members of the Stephen Ministry Team, the Tower Notes Editors and Producers, Youth Ministry Team and

Women's Ministry were also accepted as presented with some changes in the Youth Ministry Team.

Membership Report: Vic Smith reported that our membership had remained at 303 from last year to this. He requested moments of silence for our members who had passed away this past year: Therese Amidon, Sally Stan, Fred Youngmans, and Boardman Moore. He motioned that Barbara Johnson and Christine Foster be removed from our membership list as of December 31, 2008. Seconded by Joe Darrell. Approved unanimously. It was agreed that Christine Foster would be contacted again and if she came back, she could be reinstated. Smith also reported that we had three baptisms this past year: Marcella Monopoli, Addison Placzek, and Anthony Griffin-Yeh.

Pastor's Compensation, Benefits & Reimbursements Report: Chairperson of Staff-Parish Relations Committee Pat Porter stated that until additional pledges for 2009 were obtained, SPRC was not in a position to recommend any increase in this compensation except for an approximate \$3,000 increase in the cost of the Pastor's family health insurance. He said that when all pledges have been received, SPRC hopes to revisit this category. In response, the District Superintendent noted that "We walk by faith and not by sight" and that some other congregations likewise affected by the economic tumult had approved pastor's increases in similar situations. Chairperson Porter recommended approval of the 2008 Pastor's Compensation Package with the addition of the additional \$3,000 for health insurance for an approximate total of \$80,308. Seconded by Robyn Roberts. Passed unanimously.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Lori Sawdon reported that for many years the church had relied on one person to lead the Youth Ministry. Over the years, the Church had hired two replacements to Judy Stillman but for various reasons, these hires had not worked out. She noted that for the proposed team Teresa Gerringer was the Convener and that there were 8 youth members and 9 adult members comprising the new team. Pastor Lori cited this as an example of our church members actively participating in the Church functions. Pastor Lori reported that the Church had distributed 100 copies of the book Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations. She hoped to have short-term focus groups on 2 or 3 of the Practices. Pastor Lori also acknowledged what a wonderful learning and contributing experience her time as a board trustee of the University of the Pacific had been.

District Superintendent Extrum-Fernandez presented a certificate to Stewardship Committee Chairman Robyn Roberts on behalf of the church crediting LUMC for having given 100% of its apportionments in 2007. The District Superintendent noted that a 30-year study had shown that all church expenses had increased but that apportionments had remained stable. She said that "God doesn't ask us to do little things; God asks us to do great things. Because our God is a Great God." She then announced a plan that with other organizations, Methodists will work to eradicate malaria in the world.

The District Superintendent said that “None of us have done this yet. No one had been a Christian in the Year 2009.” She ended with a closing prayer. The meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Kurt Teichmann, Church Council Secretary



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, Jan. 8, 2009**

LUMC CONTACT INFORMATION

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