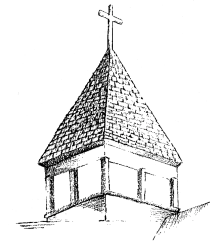


LAFAYETTE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# TOWER NOTES



Since 1855

---

March 1, 2009

## Message to the People of the United Methodist Church

From the President of the Council of Bishops, Chair of the Table of General Secretaries, and the  
Chair of the Connectional Table  
February 24, 2009

The global financial crisis is bringing hardship and suffering to people in every part of the world. For those in wealthy nations, it causes anxiety and uncertainty about declining pension accounts and the threat of lost jobs. Others are coping with unemployment and foreclosed mortgages. And for still others who live in places with scarce resources or exist in conditions of poverty, it means empty stomachs, lack of care for urgent health needs, and no prospects to earn a day's bread.

The International Labor Organization projects a loss of 50 million jobs globally by the end of 2009. The World Bank warns that an additional 53 million people will fall into poverty (living on less than \$2 per day) and that 200,000 to 400,000 more children will die by 2015 if the crisis persists.

Local congregations, annual conferences, and the general agencies likewise face economic constraints, requiring them to reassess how they carry out ministry and to seek greater effectiveness and economies while keeping focused on loving God and neighbor.

In addition, the crisis is generating increasing global unrest and violence, creating even more misery and an insecure world. It is a prophetic reminder that our destiny as a worldwide community and a global church is interwoven with complex bonds of prosperity, security, dignity, and justice. We are no more secure than the most vulnerable among us; no more prosperous than the poorest; and no more assured of justice and dignity than those who live in the shadows of power, void of fairness and equity. We reclaim anew Jesus' teaching, "as you [cared for] the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Matt 25:40), as an urgent appeal for how we can live today.

At all times, but especially in fearful and dangerous days, we followers of Jesus are called to live in hope and in the assurance that God is present with us. Facing hard times, the Apostle Paul asked: "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything

else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:35 and 37, 39).

To the Israelites, having lost everything and living in exile, God offered assurance: “Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you” (Is. 41:10). The psalmists are similarly convinced: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear” (Ps. 46:1, 2).

With this firm assurance that the whole of creation lives within the embrace of a loving God, we are confident that the Four Areas of Focus for the mission and ministry of the people of The United Methodist Church affirmed by General Conference 2008 are among the most important ways we faithfully bear witness to the Gospel. We urgently need principled Christian leaders for the church and the world. People searching for meaning are seeking new places of welcome and hospitality for worship, prayer, and spiritual growth. It is abundantly evident that United Methodists must engage in ministry with the poor and tackle the diseases of poverty that rob people of the fullness of life, health, and wholeness.

As we enter into the season of Lent we are called to reflection, repentance, and sacrificial living. Lent is a time of preparation when we look beyond human frailty and the brokenness of the world to resurrection, hope, and new life. We are reminded that our faith does not rise and fall with the financial markets but resides in the enduring love of God who is present with us as we struggle and strive to love God and our neighbors. This Lent can be a time when we recommit to practice every day the Wesleyan values to do no harm, do good and stay in love with God.

## **Lent 2009: A Prayer-Full Life**

**Lenten Quiet Day:** A Mini-Retreat for prayer, sharing, centering  
Saturday, March 7  
9:00 a.m. to 12 noon  
Maggie Mae Lounge  
Call the Church at 284-4765 to let us know you are coming

Sunday, March 8  
God’s Word Embodied in Drama with the **Covenant Players** Christian drama troupe

Sunday, March 15 ***Purifying Prayer***  
Psalm 51:1-12; Mark 2:15-17

Sunday, March 22 ***In the Palm of God’s Hand***  
Isaiah 40:28-31; John 17:6-19

Sunday, March 29 ***Embracing the World***  
John 17:20-27

Sunday, April 5 **Palm Sunday** *A Lamp in the Darkness*  
Matthew 27:45-47; Luke 23:34-35, 46; John 19:28-30

Thursday, April 9 **Holy Thursday**  
7:30 Worship with communion and Taize music

Friday, April 10 **Good Friday**  
12-2 p.m. Sanctuary open for prayer

Sunday, April 12 **Easter** *The Blessing of God*  
Numbers 6:22-26; Luke 24:1-12, 36-53  
Worship at 8:30 and 10:30; Easter Brunch at 9:30; Easter Egg Hunt at 10:00

UMW Meeting - Thursday, March 5

"How Humor Beats Stress" will be addressed at the next UMW meeting, to be held on Thursday, March 5, at 11 a.m. in the Fireside Room. All women of the church are invited. Linda Thaxter, Orinda resident and a consultant to retirement communities, will lead the discussion, which will include 18 different stress management techniques! Lunch will be provided.

### **EASTER BASKETS**

Once again the United Methodist Women are planning to create Easter Baskets for needy children. Last year, with the help of the entire congregation, we were able to supply baskets for over 100 children. We hope to do the same this year. We would like baskets, small toys and books, toiletries, and school supplies to fill the baskets. There are two ways to take part: purchase items for the baskets and bring them to Church or fill a basket or two with your family and bring the completed basket to Church on or before our April meeting day - April 2. The baskets will be distributed by the Food Bank.



Join us for the fun of packing baskets on Thursday, April 2 in the Fireside Room at 11:00 a.m. Bring a sandwich; drinks and dessert will be provided. If you have any questions, call Nancy Flood at 283-3409. Thank you.



## **M&Ms' Event**

Catherine Sinnott will host a dinner at her home for the M&Ms on Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. Please call Catherine at 284-5510 by March 10<sup>th</sup> to make your reservation and receive your food assignment.

## **ALL CHURCH RUMMAGE SALE -**

**Friday, April 17 and Saturday, April 18**

**Preview Party for church families**

**Thursday evening April 16**

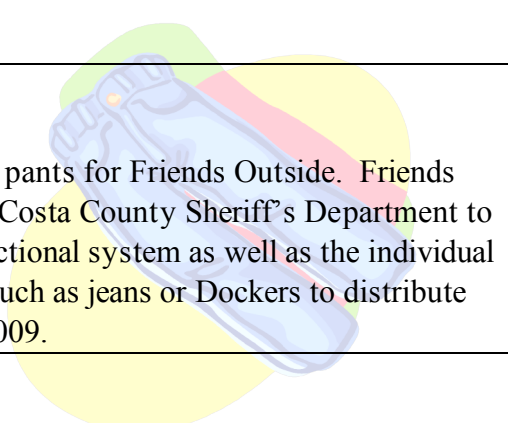
Are you in to cleaning out those closets, the garage, etc? . Then think of the church's annual RUMMAGE SALE and know with your help and contributions, it can be the biggest and best yet! We can take all sorts of items for sale, except, please, no heavy overstuffed furniture or big appliances! In other words, nothing so heavy it takes a crew to move it! Clothing is accepted but remember it should be clean and in good condition. (Team logo shirts do not sell!)

It would be best if you bring your goods to donate after church on Sunday, April 12, or during the first three days of the week of the sale, during church office hours. Should you need to bring items early, call Ginny Leavitt at 284-7857. We have some arranged storage. Remember, your discards are often someone else's treasures.

**We will be setting up** for the sale during the days of Monday through Thursday, April 13-16. If you can spare some time to help, with set up or during the sale days, please let us know. Look for sign up flyer in the next Tower Notes.

### **GOT PANTS?**

The Outreach Team is collecting new or gently used men's pants for Friends Outside. Friends Outside is a non-profit organization funded by the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department to provide services to the families of participants in the correctional system as well as the individual participants. Friends Outside has requested casual pants such as jeans or Dockers to distribute to those in need. Pants will be collected until March 29, 2009.



## **MONTE TOYON, ALL CHURCH RETREAT**

### **APRIL 25-26, 2009**

Former member of LUMC, SUE KING will be the inspirational leader.

Sue has three years of pastoral experience, a Master of Divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary and 18 years of corporate experience as a computer programmer. She and her husband, Warren, lived in the Middle East for more than two years where they enjoyed unique opportunities for cross cultural experiences and faith formation. They founded and operate the non-profit organization, Faith Exploration, which provides the public with additional opportunities for Christian Education. From 1984 until their move overseas in 1996 and Sue's pastoral experiences beginning in 2001 they were active members of the Lafayette United Methodist Church.

THEME: "RENEWAL OF THE HEART: More Than Illusion"

When renewing our hearts we often depend on light-hearted devices to demonstrate the serious side of life, the mechanical to illustrate our emotions, and the visual to reveal the unseen. The three sessions of "Renewal of the Heart" will investigate God's truths about the formation of our hearts through the fun, slight of hand, and demonstration of magic tricks.

A heart renewed under the guidance of God's graciousness is full of peace and is well prepared for all situations in life. Such a heart responds to life with goodness and is capable of bringing remarkable harmony to all pursuits and daily activities. The retreat sessions will explore the interaction of our endeavors with the unseen action of God. Together these influence and shape the depths of our being and impact all who cross our path.

Saturday Afternoon Session: "Addressing Our Wills"

Saturday Evening Session: "Addressing Our Needs"

Sunday Morning Worship: "Addressing God"

Registration form and fee schedule:

***"RENEWAL OF THE HEART"***  
***ALL CHURCH RETREAT***  
***TO MONTE TOYON, APRIL 25-26***

Starting MARCH 8.....YOUR PAYMENT is your reservation.  
Bargains before MARCH 29!!

~~~~~Registration Form~~~~~

**FEES:**

Adults \$80 Child(5-11 yrs) \$50 Youth(12-18 yrs) \$60 Child(0-4 yrs) FREE  
Before March 29: Family of 3 \$195 (after 3/29 \$210)  
Before March 29: Family of 4 \$220 (after 3/29 \$240); each additional  
child \$40, additional youth \$50

**FINAL PAYMENT DEADLINE: FRIDAY, APRIL 10**  
(No refunds after April 19).

Payment attached: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to **Lafayette United Methodist Church** (or LUMC).

VERY IMPORTANT: write RETREAT in memo space.

Please give full name of all attending and AGES of children/youth for groupings.

---

---

---

---

---

---

## **New Gift from Endowment Fund**

The Endowment Committee awarded a grant of \$359 to the Worship Ministry Team for the purchase of a new Lenten altar cloth and bookmark. Purple is the color for the season of Lent for it is the color of royalty, remembering the Prince of Peace, Christ the King. These paraments were commissioned to a liturgical arts ministry, Gospel Colors, in Kansas City, Missouri. They have also made red and green paraments for LUMC for other seasons of the Christian year.

We are grateful for the generosity of saints from the past who have remembered LUMC in their estates. Their gifts keep on giving today. LUMC has two major Endowment Funds for Outreach and Inreach. Additional funds support Retreats and Scholarships. If you would like more information about contributing to the LUMC Endowment Funds, contact Doug Cowden, Chairperson of the Endowment Committee, or any member.

## **From the LUMC Library, Room 9**

I have my own opinion. What's yours??

**"More Jesus Less Religion"** by S. Arterburn and Jack Felton

Arterburn and Felton have devised a new system of measuring, identifying and classifying persons, pastors, churches, practices and belief. It speaks of toxicity, health, unhealthy, toxic faith, etc. Nothing escapes this measuring stick's scrutiny. The first chapter sent me running to my book shelf to consult with Webster's Dictionary. What did Webster have to say about toxic, faith, thinking, belief? Why didn't this new device resonate with all that I had ever read and understood? Was I at odds with the premise of this book?? Webster's definitions proved to be contradiction of the use and pairing of these tools (i.e. toxic faith) used by Arterburn and Felton. As you move through the book be aware that the two authors did not collaborate and contribute to a whole text. There are sections throughout that refer to one or the other's life experience. J. Felton usually identifies himself. Not so with Arterburn so it can be a bit confusing. There is no subtitling or margin reference to help. Arterburn does acknowledge authorship of the following, "I have published thirty books in my writing career. Some have been best sellers; others, worst sellers."

I don't know how this book has sold, but as to the book, I have my own opinion. What's yours??  
Blanche Cancel (LUMC reviewer)

## **News of our Congregation:**

It is with great sadness that we report that Dick Black passed away on Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>. A retired Methodist pastor and long-time member of our congregation, together with his wife Virginia, he will be very much missed. A memorial service will be held at LUMC at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>.

Selma Johnson and Ruth Wilcox have moved to Chateaus in Pleasant Hill; please contact the church office for their addresses.

## **Methodists of the Century**

Recently two long-time members were recognized for their faithful ministries, the total years when combined are a century's worth of service to LUMC!

Barbara Tilton recently retired as Altar Steward, a position she held for 30 years, and as Treasurer of United Methodist Women, a position she held for 20 years! The Altar Steward cares for the fabrics which decorate the altar, called paraments. The colors change with every liturgical season. Through February they are green for Ordinary Days; with the season of Lent they will be purple; white for the 50 days of Easter; red for Pentecost, the birthday of the church; green for Ordinary Days until the new Christian year begins with Advent (purple), 4 weeks before Christmas (white).

Cheen Chow recently retired as Communion Steward, having served for 45 years! She has prayerfully prepared the bread and juice for communion Sundays. In addition, she is a Pew Steward, re-arranging the pews following worship. She has coordinated the Easter Brunch for many years, along with her family, who shares her quiet service.

### **Holiday Offering Appreciated**

Additional Expressions of thanks have been received from other recipients of our Thanksgiving and Christmas Offerings.

From Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano:

“Your recent gift of \$50 helps us provide food to many people in Contra Costa and Solano counties. We appreciate your support.”

From Heifer Project International:

“We acknowledge with gratitude your gift of \$2,785 received for Heifer Project International. This gift, representing the generosity of the members of your congregation, plays a critical role in initiating “passing on the gift”, and ultimately touches numerous lives throughout the world. By improving nutrition and income, fostering sense of community, and providing individuals with invaluable skills, your gift of livestock helps Heifer to promote self-reliance and ensure long-term sustainability.”

From *Trick or Treat for UNICEF*

“Thank you for making Halloween count by participation in the 2008 Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF campaign. Your gift of \$100 to the U.S. Fund for UNICEF ensures that UNICEF will be able to do whatever it takes to save children’s lives.

Since 1950, children across the U.S. have been learning about the world beyond their back yards and the importance of being global citizens. Pioneered by a conscientious youth group in Philadelphia, the first Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF began as a door-to-door initiative on Halloween night with milk cartons to collect funds for kids left vulnerable by World War II. We continue to empower children around the country to help their peers in need around the world, raising over \$140 million to date.”

## Youth News:

Lots of folks enjoyed the traditional youth pancake breakfast the Sunday before Lent, February 22nd. Youth going to Sierra Service Project next summer cooked, served and cleaned to raise money for transportation to Indian Valley, California and Ft. McDermott, Nevada to work on Indian Reservations. Many thanks for purchasing tickets and enjoying the breakfast which netted nearly \$500.

And, we will be selling small boxes of See's candy again this year before Easter. Look for a table in the Fellowship Hall after church to buy the special boxes at \$5 each for friends, children and grandchildren. Who doesn't love See's candy?

LOOKING FOR SUMMER FUN, SERVICE and SPIRITUAL GROWTH!

Check out these opportunities!

Vacation Bible School July 13-17 9 a.m. to 12 noon

Church Camps offered by the California-Nevada United Methodist Conference

Varied Dates – Great Locations – All Ages and families

Check out the website [www.cnumc.org/camping](http://www.cnumc.org/camping)

Volunteers in Mission needed in California, the U.S., and around the world

Check out the website [www.cnumc.org](http://www.cnumc.org) and click the link to UM Volunteers in Mission

## PRESCRIPTION GLASSES WANTED AND NEEDED

Your old glasses can be recycled! And since they will be recycled to a Third World Country, you can know you have helped the effectively blind to see, which may allow them to work and support their families. Please bring your old prescription glasses to the church. There should be a Lions Club collection box near the entrance to the Fellowship Hall. Or give them to Lions Pat Porter or Kurt Teichmann. The March 21<sup>st</sup> Men's Breakfast contingent is planning to clean and polish these glasses for distribution in the Third World. So get your old glasses and those of your nearsighted friends in now.



## **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**

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday by Noon – Next Deadline **Thursday, Jan. 22, 2009**

## **LUMC CONTACT INFORMATION**

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