

LAFAYETTE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

TOWER NOTES



Since 1855

April 12, 2009

CALLED TO SERVE

by
Laurel Anne Hill

The volunteer for Friends Outside--an organization that aids prisoners, former inmates and their families-- didn't answer my call. I had attempted to reach her several times today. She couldn't have spent the entire morning in the basement "clothes closet." Was she in the office at all? My kitchen clock read eleven-ten. I'd promised to make the delivery of donated clothing by noon. People were counting on me. What should I do?

I'd crammed the back seat of David's Ford Explorer with men's work pants, donations from members of Lafayette United Methodist Church. The local chapter of Friends Outside was down to their last few pairs. Released prisoners who'd served their time needed LUMC chinos and jeans. But should David and I make the forty-mile round trip between Orinda and Martinez if the charity's office was closed for the day?

"We could leave the pants at the Senior Help Center," David said. "Let the volunteer send a driver."

The Senior Help Center, our usual drop-off station for goods going to Friends Outside, was in nearby Lafayette. David's suggestion made sense. The Friends volunteer probably would have the pants by the end of the week. Still, an unexplained nagging sensation tugged at my brain. A promise was a promise.

"Maybe the volunteer's downstairs, after all," I said, "and can't hear the phone. Let's take a chance." We could swing by COSTCO afterwards and pick up some items we needed. Even if Friends Outside was closed, the trip wouldn't be a waste.

I added the bag of groceries to our SUV, food David had collected from our church's donation baskets the previous Sunday. This bag wouldn't go far but LUMC had a caring and generous congregation. A donation reminder at church would bring in more groceries to aid prisoner's families. I'd talk to the Friends volunteer about obtaining a "What a sack of food meant to me" testimonial.

David and I drove to Escobar Street in Martinez. A woman sat in the Friends Outside doorway, her head lowered, as though she stared at the stairs. A hand-written sign was taped to the door behind her. I climbed out of the car. The note indicated Friends Outside was closed today--Tuesday--but would be open tomorrow. The volunteer was at home, ill.

"Is today Tuesday or Wednesday?" The woman in the doorway, dressed in jeans and an old jacket, clutched her handbag. "I need help now. What am I going to do?"

We chatted. The woman needed a pair of men's work pants, size 34. I didn't know if she was a client of Friends Outside but figured it didn't matter. I rummaged through the bags of clothing in the back seat like a traveler searching luggage for a misplaced airline ticket. A pair of size 34 chinos finally surfaced.

"Do you have any cereal?" the woman said. "I could use some food."

I gave her the pants, the box of cereal I had and a few other food items for good measure. Her dark eyes sparkled with surprise and thankfulness. We hugged each other, as though we had been friends for years.

"God bless you," she said.

David and I then headed toward COSTCO. I pictured the stacks of groceries that always lined the mega-store's aisles. So tall compared to one box of cereal. At COSTCO, I would purchase plenty of dry and canned food items for Friends Outside. Then David and I would swing by the Senior Help Center in Lafayette and drop off our collection of donations.

How odd that a nagging feeling had arisen this morning, prodded me to make the trip to Martinez. Both the woman and I had gone to Friends Outside to find the volunteer. We had found each other instead.

God bless you. The woman's words reverberated in my memory. Illness had prevented the volunteer from answering my phone call this morning. The charity, short of staff, must have had no replacement available. God had called me to serve--to reach out and express Christ's love. He calls us all to be his volunteers.

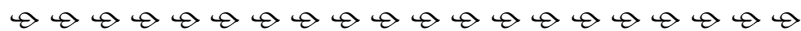


LUMC'S ANNUAL RUMMAGE SALE

FRIDAY, April 18 and SATURDAY April 19 – 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

PREVIEW PARTY for our church family Thursday evening

April 17 – 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.



EXPERIENCING CHRIST THROUGH WORSHIP IN THE EASTER SEASON

April 19 The Bible and the Afterlife: What Happens When we Die?

April 26 The Bible and the Afterlife: The Inferno of Hell

May 3 The Bible and the Afterlife: The Last Judgment

May 10 Festival of the Christian Home – worship led by our senior high youth

May 17 The Bible and the Afterlife: Glimpses of Paradise

Thank You

Dear Members of the LUM Church Family,

During the time Dick was receiving hospice care he was also cared for by his church friends. He appreciated receiving each card of encouragement, the phone calls and visits, and the support he felt from your prayers. These acts of love and concern undergirded him during his difficult days.

Since Dick's death I have received the same outpouring of your love and care. It has been amazing.

My heartfelt thanks and gratitude extend to the church staff who ably assisted with many aspects of the memorial service, and to the many, many friends who provided the lovely reception.

In the midst of the harder days there has been the touch of God's blessing. Pastor Lori's ministry at those times brought needed peace and comfort.

*My love and appreciation,
Virginia Black*



The Shack Book Discussion

Wednesdays, May 6, 13, 20 at 12:00-1:00 p.m.. Room 9 - Bring your lunch!

Wednesday, May 6, 13, 20 at 7:00-8:30 p.m. Maggie Mae Lounge



The Shack, by William Paul Young, has been on bestseller lists for months. The story is a fictional account of the tragic death of one of Mack's children and his subsequent struggle with his Christian faith. While it is not literature worthy of a Pulitzer Prize, it does touch on many major theological themes. Pastor Lori is offering a three-session book discussion to "flesh out" these themes. The only requirement is that you must have **finished reading** the book in order to attend the sessions. This discussion might be a good opportunity to invite an unchurched friend who has read the book and is asking some questions about faith.

Memorial Service

There will be a Memorial Service for Selma Johnson on Friday, May 8 at 2 p.m. A reception will follow the service in the Fellowship Hall.



MAY Birthdays

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 2 Marisa Monopoli
Paul Persons | 17 Pat Stull | 26 Marisa Chow
Madeleine Trouerback |
| 6 Jeanette Shearer | 19 Jeff Dible
Stephanie Schroter | 28 Martha Gerringer
Kennedy Kim
Brendan Rigger |
| 7 Delaney Park
Maureen Straw | 21 Michelle Doughty
Richard Walter
Daniel Warner | 29 Christine Chia
Nancy Sanders
Greg Ward |
| 9 Grace Alger
Sarah Warner | 22 Sande Hubbs | 31 Ken Barton
Carol Lu Zischke |
| 10 Martha Cervantes | 24 Alex Placzek
Victor Smith | |
| 11 John Alger | Diane Viera | |
| 15 Jordan Rigger
Janet Sategna
Mark Sawdon | 25 Kelly Noah | |

Wedding Anniversaries

- 7 Lissa and Mark Heptig
13 Jackie and Mark Wendland
29 Kelly and Peter Hartshorn
Lori and Mark Sawdon

THANK YOU

Special thanks to all of those who contributed to the Easter Basket Project. Over 100 baskets were put together on April 2, 2009 by The United Methodist Women. They were picked up by the Food Bank on the following Monday.

You have all helped to make a special day for some needy children!

*Thanks so much,
Nancy Flood*



MAY FOOD BASKET

The suggested food items for April are
canned meats (tuna, chicken, stew).

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



Thank You

Our congregation has been generous in our outreach gifts through the Lenten season. Thank you for your gifts of men's work pants for Friends Outside and bed linens for Winter Nights Shelter. Your donations enabled the United Methodist Women to fill 101 Easter Baskets for distribution through the Food Bank of Contra Costa County.

Our own ministries have been generously supported in many ways through the gifts of music from the choir, our music staff, and instrumentalists; Easter lilies for the sanctuary; food for the Easter brunch; flowers for the Easter garden; "elbow grease" to clean the campus for Easter Sunday.

Celeste Graham has donated new Easter paraments (altar cloth and bookmark) in memory of her father-in-law. The color of the Easter season is white for resurrection. The season lasts 49 days and ends with Pentecost, when the disciples received the gift of the Holy Spirit. We will enjoy them through the Easter season.

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

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

Check out the website www.cnumc.org and click the link to UM Volunteers in Mission



LUMC Minutes of the Church Council Meeting of March 17, 2009

Members present: Chairperson Pat Hershey, Carol Slatten, Ginny Leavitt, Pastor Lori Sawdon, Robyn Roberts, David Inglis, Lynn Sabatini, Pat Porter, Ginny Cowden, Dean Coons, Doug Cowden, Jack Cotteral and Secretary Kurt Teichmann.

Also Present: Chris Coons

The meeting began with sharing of Joys and Concerns. Chairperson Hershey officially opened the formal meeting at 7:37 with a prayer to God that “May we discern your will in our meeting.”

A discussion of the book Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations Chapter 3 on Risk Taking Mission and Service included a video presentation. Such congregations do not focus just on short-term issues but also bigger, longer term issues. An example is social injustice. Don't use “What can God do for me.” Use “What can we do. What can we do more. And What can we do better.” The question was asked what outreach, that our members do, causes us to take risks beyond our comfort level. Answers included the VIM projects taken on by the Floyds, Vic and Fran Smith and Joe Darrell. Others were the Sierra Service Project, Winter Nights, Glide visits, Vacation Bible School trips to the Food Bank and Homeless Shelter and the East Bay Stand Down. These projects have changed us in various ways including putting a face on the homeless and downtrodden.

Finance: Chairperson Leavitt reported that pledged giving was down \$686 YTD. Non-pledged giving was down \$2,340 YTD and Plate offerings were down \$400 YTD. Special offerings were also down. Total expenses were \$10,000 under budget so that on a year to date basis, Net Income After Expenses was \$9,353 above budget. A discussion ensued on the extent to which the low expense levels could be maintained and what periodic obligations were upcoming.

Trustees: Pastor Lori reported that the Trustees primary emphasis is getting roof leaks repaired.

The following committees had no reports: **Staff-Parish Relations, Lay Leadership, Program, and Endowment.**

Old Business: None

New Business:

Cokesbury with Olin Mills have proposed that LUMC prepare a new church directory. The present one is 4 years old. The directory helps members learn other members' names and families. Pastor Lori agreed to discuss this idea with church members that have or might be involved with this project and then report back to the Church Council.

Pastor Lori reported on changes approved by the Church Conference. As a cost saving measure, the Conference will reduce the number of superintendents from 7 to 5 plus 1 overall Conference supervisor. The District Superintendents will be spread thinner, some with expansive territories. To compensate, approximately 40 circuits will be formed led by elders who will lead Charge Conferences etc. These 40 elders will be chosen from the existing 500 elders in our Conference. Those pastors selected will have additional responsibilities in addition to their home church ministering.

Pastor Lori noted that her 3 year stint as a Regent of the University of the Pacific was coming to an end. She said she would accept another 3 year appointment if asked.

Chairperson Hershey announced that there would be no meeting in April so the next meeting would be May 19th. The Council Members concurred.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Church Council Secretary Kurt F. 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
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TOWER NOTES DEADLINE

2nd & 4th Thursday by Noon – Next Deadline **Thursday, April 23, 2009**

LUMC CONTACT INFORMATION

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