



Good News!

The newsletter of the Memorial United Methodist Church of Clovis

March 2005

SPIRIT QUEST CLASS: CONNECTING TO THE CHURCH BEGINS

If you are new to the church and interested in becoming a member Connecting to the Church taught by Pastor Denice Leslie begins Sunday, March 13 at 9 a.m. At the conclusion of the class, those who so decide, will be received into membership.

PALM/PASSION SUNDAY PLANS

Palm/Passion Sunday is March 20. Parents and children are invited to gather in the lobby of the church to parade with palms during the singing of the hymn. Anyone wishing to join the Parent Time Out group in dressing in costumes of Jesus' day is invited to speak to Laura Williams or Connie Alfaro, youth director.

PASSION NARRATIVE ON PALM SUNDAY

If you would enjoy being a reader for the Passion Narrative, the story of Jesus trial and crucifixion, on Palm Sunday please speak with Pastor Denice Leslie. This dramatic reading follows the excitement of the Liturgy of the Palms and helps us prepare for Easter. The Stripping of the Church will conclude the service.

SIMPLE SUPPER AND HOLY THURSDAY SERVICE

We will gather for our annual simple supper and observance of Holy Thursday on Thursday, March 24 in the Fellowship Hall. The supper begins at 6 p.m. and the service follows at 7:00 p.m. In addition to communion we will once again observe the act of Jesus in washing the disciple's feet with hand washing. Childcare provided.

GOOD FRIDAY OBSERVANCE

Academy Church will provide the annual Good Friday service at 7:00 p.m. at March 25. The Academy church is located off Tollhouse (168). Turn left on Madsen and the church is down the lane on the left.

EASTER SERVICES SUNDAY MARCH 27

Sunrise service is at 6:30 a.m. at the Academy church off Tollhouse, (168). Turn left on Madsen. Dress warmly as the service is outside. Easter Celebration service at Memorial is at 10 a.m. Children and teachers are invited to gather in the Fellowship Hall of the church at 9:45 a.m. for the Easter Victory parade.

ALL CHURCH SNOW DAY MARCH 5

On Saturday March 5, everyone is invited to join your church family and friends for a Day in the Snow. We will meet at the church at 8:45 a.m. and return by 4:00 p.m. A big pot of something hot and hearty will be provided for lunch. A sign-up sheet will be available in the narthex, so we can get a head count. (FYI: We may decide that morning that the weather or the roads are too dicey, and we won't go after all. If so, we'll stay at the church and play games and other activities for the morning, and have lunch together before we go home.) If you have any questions, please see Connie Alfaro or Laura Williams

THANK-YOU NOTE

It is impossible to thank all of you enough for your love and generosity at this tragic time for us and the community. We will never forget all the comfort and blessings you have given.

Vaya Con Cristo
Tyler's Family

CORRECTION: MEETING SCHEDULES

The Finance Committee meets the third Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. in the Conference room. The Staff Parish Relations committee meets the third Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the Library. Both committee meeting times were incorrect in last months Good News.

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Think About It by Gloria McClanahan

After leaving my part-time job at 12 p.m., I had to return to work at 3:00 p.m. to listen to a presentation to teachers and staff at Roosevelt High. We had settled in the auditorium and waited and waited and at 3:20 a very obese, non-professional, not young, rumped gentleman was introduced as our speaker. All I could think was, "Why are we here, just look at him."

He sat down, get this, sat down with a three legged table balanced on his knees (one of the legs was missing or shorter). I was sighing and waiting with one of those awful disapproving looks on my face, I'm sure. He began his speech with "My name is David Hinsburger, I have been fat all my life and I know what it is like to be gazed upon in disgust." His subject was "Bullying" and Sexual Victimization of People With Developmental Disabilities.

Mr. Hinsburger's message described the inherently hostile world which greets special needs students every day of their lives. He described a study where hundreds of persons with special needs were sent into the public with the assignment of describing what happened to them within the first fifteen minutes. 100% reported that something nasty happened to them. "Nasty" included rude stares, thoughtless and rude comments, pushing, shoving, pinching, harassment and even violence.

Mr. Hinsburger gave us guidelines of how to respond to persons with a complaint bearing in mind how much courage it takes to reach out for help. He said everyone including teachers and parents almost always say, "Just ignore it," which response really doesn't help. He suggests teaching the person to say in their head "I don't care what mean people think" and to recite that to themselves when being taunted or treated impolitely.

In conversing with the victim who comes to us with a complaint, he offers the following five steps to take: 1. Answer with the truth, "That must hurt," which acknowledges it; 2. Then ask "What do you think of those people?" 3. Then ask, "Do you think this just happens to you or everyone? This question takes away the loneliness; 4. Point out that aggressors are mean and remind them to tell themselves "I don't care what mean people think." And 5. Let them know they are welcome to come back if there is anything else to tell.

Of course, take action on their behalf!! There were a lot of statistics and situations described by Mr. Hinsburger, but I wanted to share the part of this presentation that sensitizes us to be better companions and caregivers to God's special people who really need our friendliness and kind gestures.

CROP Walk 2004

It is a pleasure to announce that the final total collected for the Fresno-Clovis Community CROP Walk for the Hungry was over \$29,000 with 400+ walkers from diverse faiths and organizations participating. The 2004 Walk was the most successful in the local Walk's 21 year history in terms of amount collected and number of walkers! Our church more than doubled the amount we raised over last year, collecting a total of \$2017! What a blessing it was to be the host church for this unforgettable event which helped to raise awareness about global and local hunger issues. It was a joy to walk through the town of Clovis which went out of its way to make our guest walkers feel welcome. Thanks again to all of you who helped in any way to make the day such a success. Don't put your walking shoes too far back in the closet-the CROP organizing committee is already making plans for the 2005 Walk which will be hosted by Westside Church of God.

Micah Ministries

Local & World Missions

"What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

(Micah 6:6)

HART ACADEMY MEAL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

HART Academy needs volunteers to help serve lunch. Training in procedure is provided. Please call the church office at 299-4615 if you are interested. School Secretary Melody Yang or Pastor Kham Dy Yang will get back to you. The school is located at St. Paul's United Methodist Church on the corner of Clinton and Thesta, in Fresno. There is ample parking.

Fair Trade Coffee

Thank you for your support of our Fair Trade Coffee Hour and coffee sales over the past few months. By purchasing and promoting fairly traded products we have helped small scale farmers in Latin America, Africa, and Asia earn a fairer share of income, obtain access to credit and technical support, and gain a trading partner they can trust, a fair trade organization called *Equal Exchange*.

Your contributions to the basket on the fellowship table or your purchases of the Fair Trade coffee we have been selling will also allow us to give to an Advance Special project of the United Methodist Church. 100% of funds collected for an Advance project go directly to the project! A suggested donation of \$6 per bag purchased will cover our cost for the coffee and provide a profit of about \$1 that will go directly to our Advance project. If you choose to give more, any amount over the cost of the coffee will benefit that cause as well. Because our first shipment of

coffee was paid for by a donation from a church member, our first gift to our project will be \$84.

In the wake of the December 26th tsunami, farmers in Indonesia who supply coffee to *Equal Exchange* have had their land, their crops, and their lives devastated. Your support of our 2005 Coffee Project will help them regroup and rebuild. A new shipment of Fair Trade coffee will arrive soon with French Vanilla, Columbian Decaf, Organic Breakfast Blend, and Organic Mind, Body and Soul Blend available for purchase.

Please see Sue DeFranco if you would like more information on Fair Trade, would like to reserve a bag of coffee, or would like to provide input for future coffee purchases.

One Great Hour of Sharing-March 6th

Each year United Methodists worldwide join together on the fourth Sunday in Lent to celebrate and support a very special ministry through the *One Great Hour of Sharing* offering. On behalf of The United Methodist Church, UMCOR (the United Methodist Committee on Relief) brings relief when a catastrophe strikes. UMCOR representatives rush to disaster areas all over the world to provide food, clothing, shelter, and medical help and then stay to assist survivors with rebuilding their lives. From re-educating soldiers to feeding school children to establishing medical clinics in remote villages, UMCOR is hope for millions in nearly 100 of the poorest countries in the world. This past year UMCOR rushed to the scene of so many tragedies--flood and hurricane damage in the United States, aid for victims of civil war and unrest in the Sudan, and comfort to those in South Asia devastated by a massive earthquake and the resulting tsunami to name a few.

Most contributions to UMCOR are designated for specific programs-- and those programs receive 100 percent of those gifts. So part of the *One Great Hour of Sharing* offering plus a small percentage of other general donations support UMCOR's administrative costs. Of the total, general and designated gifts, UMCOR spends 90.7 percent on programs-- a very respectable ratio according to the National Center for Charitable Statistics.

"The One Great Hour of Sharing offering on March 6, 2005, is absolutely essential to UMCOR," says the Rev. Paul Dirdak, the agency's chief executive. "UMCOR receives no World Service funds or any other apportionments. United Methodists' gifts to this special offering not only keep UMCOR's lights on and UMCOR's delivery system in place at home and around the world-- they also enable us to respond immediately to disasters."

Such works of recovery and life-changing ministry don't happen without the broad support of congregations and individuals. Once a year, during One Great Hour of

Sharing, our congregation can join other United Methodists worldwide by making a special offering to support this humanitarian aid from UMCOR. Help assure that The United Methodist Church, impelled by Jesus' love and compassion, will be in the lead to ease the pain when catastrophes strike.

Special Sundays

Six times throughout the year United Methodist congregations all over celebrate special Sundays by collecting offerings that benefit some wonderful ministries carried out by the connectional church. Thank you for the support you showed for our Special Sunday offerings in 2004, so critical to the survival of these ministries and one more opportunity for our church to share with the world the many gifts God has given us. Our special offerings for 2004 included \$188 for *One Great Hour of Sharing*, \$45 for *Native American Ministries*, \$27 for *Peace With Justice Sunday*, and \$5 for *Human Relations Day*. The special Father's Day offering netted \$145 for Church World Service's *Tools of Hope* program. Again, thank you for your generous giving.

Worship Ministry

News from the teams that support
the Sunday worship services.

*"Make a joyful noise to the LORD...
Serve the Lord with gladness!" (Psalm 100)*

The Easter or Paschal Candle

The Paschal candle is the most traditional, and the largest, of all the candles used in Christian worship. It is a tall decorative candle, held in a floor stand, which symbolizes Christ's appearances after his resurrection. A new Paschal candle is lit at the Easter Vigil, on Easter Eve, or at the first service on Easter morning, and it stands close to the Lord's Table. After Easter Sunday, it is then lit every Sunday throughout the Great Fifty Days between Easter and Pentecost. During the rest of the year, the Paschal candle is placed by the baptismal font and is lit at baptism, which the ancient church called "enlightenment." It may also be lit at funerals and memorial services, symbolizing Christ's leading the baptized through the exodus of death.

The Paschal candle may be very plain or extremely ornate, often having the design of a cross, the Greek letters alpha and omega, and numerals of the current year embossed or inscribed on it. The height of the candle varies, but most are 25-36 inches tall with the stand being around three feet tall. An interesting historical note is that in Medieval England in Durham, the Paschal candle with stand was a total of seventy feet high and had to be lit from above!

(Adapted from The New Handbook of the Christian Year and United Methodist Altars)



Music Notes

FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

Our Chime Choir, Fellowship of the Ring, has rehearsal every Sunday at 4:00. All are invited to come. For more information, see Janette Erickson or Connie Alfaro.

SING UNTO THE LORD!

The choir is always welcoming new voices. All who would like to sing are invited to join us in rehearsals on Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.

Care Ministries

Giving Special Care to Others

SPECIAL FRIENDS TEAM REPORT

From February 8 Meeting

We gathered in the Lose Library: Pauline Middleton, Evelyn Haulman, Pastor Denice Leslie, Max Cannon, Margie Magargee, Pat Frey, Dee Carr and myself.

For our worship we focused on EYES OF FAITH as mentioned in Denice's Sunday sermon. We recalled a Brazilian poet who wrote: "When the blood of Christ spurted over my eyes, my vision became universal." What DO we see when we look through the eyes of God? We prayed/sang "Open my eyes that I may see glimpses of truth thou hast for me."

The Good Grief Group has renamed itself The Grief Recovery Group and new members are still invited. It will continue meeting from 11 am to 12 noon on Tuesdays for informal discussion. Contact John Tallmadge or Gil Stocks.

Evelyn reported on things Wesley Church does with seniors. Laurie will update our volunteer driver list and we will think on the Senior Birthday Party idea to discuss at next meeting. We reported on at least 31 visits, 21 telephone calls and 17 cards and notes sent, not counting those of Pastor Denice. We prayed for Kham Dy Yang, our special friends and many with pain, surgery, tests, cancer and grief.

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 8 at 1:30 pm in the Lose Library. Everyone is invited.

Laurie Hill, coordinator.

DRIVERS NEEDED!

Special Friends has been asked to hook up our Volunteer Drivers List to the Church's Care Cluster Program, so as to offer rides to doctor, shopping, etc. We still have seven (7) drivers from the 10/04 survey. We need more. You would be driving as able, and would be covered under our church's liability insurance. Call Evelyn Haulman (Care Cluster) or Laurie Hill (Special Friends).

Congregational Life

News of the church life and the groups that meet for fellowship and support.

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." Matthew 18:30

Coffee Hour Help

Our Coffee Hour Fellowship has become an important part of Sunday morning, a time to share a word with friends and to welcome new people into the fold. Please help our fellowship continue on an uninterrupted basis by volunteering to help out with this ministry. I could use 8-12 individuals, families, or groups to help on a rotating Sunday, as little as once a quarter.

Detailed instructions about what the job entails are posted in the little kitchen. Supplies and treats are provided-you just need to set up, serve, and clean up. If you are interested in volunteering or have questions, see Sue DeFranco or sign up for an upcoming date on the sheet provided in the church narthex.

THURSDAY NIGHT POTLUCK

March 3 – Oriental Food Night. Bring your favorite dish.

Tonight we celebrate birthdays. Special door prizes.

March 10 – Just an Ordinary potluck.

March 17th – St. Patty's Day – Wear something green.

Door Prizes.

March 24 – Maundy Thursday. Regular potluck will be cancelled; however, we will have our traditional simple supper with soup, nuts, cheeses, and fruit. A small service will take place in the Social Hall that evening after supper.

THRIFT SHOP NEWS by Pauline Middleton

Please bring your Mission Thrift Shop donations to the west end door of the Thrift Shop {next to the parking lot} on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month from 9-11AM, or following the Sunday service until 12 o'clock on the 2nd and 4th Sundays. The Thrift Shop has fourfold blessings to those who donate, those who give of their time to work, those who purchase and those whose lives are touched by God's love through the missions of our church. Thank you.

UNITED METHODIST MEN

The meeting for March 5 will be in the Fellowship Hall at 8:00am with a surprise breakfast; a surprise because I haven't worked up the menu yet. We may also have a surprise presentation for the same reason. Actually, George is going to give the presentation but the subject is a mystery so you'll have to be present to find out what it's going to be. Come and bring a friend and enjoy great fellowship.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

March 7 – Board Meeting, 9 am, Library
March 9 – Red Bird Circle, 9:30 am, Library
March 23– Wesley Circle, 1 pm, Social Hall
March 15 – Meeting, 10 am, Social Hall. Guest speaker from Fresno Co. on Aging. Wesley Circle hosts. Bring your own service.

The United Methodist Women thanks everyone who contributed to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). As of February we have sent \$221 to United States Disaster relief. 100% of the money donated will be used for that purpose.



Sunday School

Christian Education

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable."

CHILDREN'S & ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:00 a.m.

SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our faithful Sunday School teachers need a summer break and have an opportunity to fill their own well such as by participating in an adult study class. Sunday school for children is at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings. The current Sunday format is a rotation of creative activity centers related to a monthly study theme. Curriculum is provided.

One Sunday a month is a cooking activity, one a craft activity, one the bible story or study theme using a multi media, and one Sunday is music provided by the Young Adult Sunday School class.

If you would take a turn as a volunteer for a Sunday or a couple of Sundays spread throughout the summer please speak to Sunday School Superintendent Dorrie Osback, or Christian Education member Barbara Grams. We would like to have things organized early so all will go smoothly. Final scheduling can be done closer to the actual summer session but we would like to be able to provide program orientation, information and review materials before hand. Thank you.

YOUTH CALENDAR

Saturday 03/05/05 - All Church Snow Day
Sunday 03/06/05 - 5:00-7:30 p.m. Sunday Night at the Movies - "Luther"
Saturday 03/12/05 - 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Poverello House Work Day
Sunday 03/13/05 - 5:30-7:30 p.m. Meeting (Bungalow)
Sunday 03/20/05 - 5:30-7:30 p.m. Meeting (Bungalow)
Sunday 03/27/05 – No Youth meeting - **Happy Easter!**

"LUTHER" FEATURED PRESENTATION MARCH 6

For our March 6 Sunday Night at the Movies, we would like to extend an open invitation to the church to view the movie, "Luther," a presentation about the life and struggles of Martin Luther. Luther was a monk who was committed to justice and righteousness, and in so doing dared to question the authority of the Catholic Church. The spread of his beliefs led to the birth of the Methodist Church. The presentation will begin at 5:00 p.m. Check the March 6 bulletin for details on location.

TRUE LOVE WAITS SESSION TO BEGIN April 3

As Christians, we are called by our Lord Jesus to be in this world, but not of the world. As human beings, we feel the pull of the world and its temptations every day. To give you more powerful tools to stand strong in your beliefs, the Memorial UMC Young People's Board is sponsoring a six-week course based on "True Love Waits." The course covers personal relationships for Christian youth, and emphasizes making a prayerful choice regarding abstinence until marriage. Participants' commitment to abstinence is symbolized by a ring, and is blessed through a commitment service before the church membership. The sessions will be held on Sunday evenings starting April 3, and will be led by Connie Alfaro and Roger Grams.

The Young People's Board hopes you will discuss this opportunity as a family. If you would like to review a copy of the curriculum to review before your family makes its decision, please see Connie Alfaro. Or you can check out our web site at www.clovismumc.org for a copy to download. All parents are invited to a meeting on Tuesday, March 15, at 7:00 p.m. to discuss your concerns or questions.

For more information, please feel free to contact Chairperson Laura Williams or Youth Director Connie Alfaro.

Coach's Corner

This month I want to lift up some special facilities needs for you to be aware of and bring you an update on our Hmong Outreach Ministry.

Projects:

I am so excited by a proposed master plan for re-landscaping our facility presented to the Board of Trustees by landscaper Karen Faulkner and the Renovation Committee. The first phase has been approved by Trustees and has been planted! Drive by the front of the church and you will be delighted! You will be hearing more about this and have an opportunity to participate with your donations as things unfold. This will not be an immediate huge financial outlay thanks to the consideration given as to how plantings will go in over time and future planting seasons. Watch for more information.

As you know we are having increasing difficulty with our sound system. Ron Zastovnik presented a Sound Improvement plan to the Council which was adopted and reported in detail in a previous Good News. What we need now is funding. The first phase of the improvement was funded by last year's concert in cooperation with Jenny Meyer's Vocal Studio. Although it is now easier to hear me preach thanks to the new wrap around cordless microphone and new mike receiver, because the speakers are blown the ability to understand what is spoken is greatly diminished. One of these Sundays they are not going to work. It is a constant battle during Sunday worship and so disruptive to have the sound act up. This next phase is substantial in scope and requires a little over \$6,000. Donations will be gratefully accepted! Mark your donation Sound System.

Finally the sanctuary floor, choir rail and backwall renovation (not to mention the organ chambers) all need addressing. A proposal is in the works for a project to meet these needs with the possibility of funding them over a longer period of time.

Hmong Ministry

As for our Hmong Outreach Ministry, there are now 160 people involved in the Hmong Language Ministry thanks to the tireless work of Pastor Kham Dy Yang. Pastor Yang has not been as visible as he would like to be with us due to the on-going chartering authority and funding crisis with the HART Academy of which he is the Executive Director. This crisis resulted in a terribly precarious financial situation for Kham Dy and his family as well as for the school, ate up mountains of time and the

resulting stress has had an adverse affect on Kham Dy's health.

You may not be aware that we fund only \$17,000 of Kham Dy's support which, after deducting for professional expenses results in about a quarter time salary. This money has been fully funded from grants from our denomination through the present. The school has been his family's primary means of support.

I firmly believe Providence had a hand in the salvation of the school and the Yangs and as a result of the future of our Hmong Language Ministry. The Kingsburg Elementary Community Charter School district stepped in at the very last minute (literally)—as the school was set to close its final day-- and expressed an interest in taking on the school. The result is the Academy is now on firm financial footing, there will be no delay in paying salaries, all the financial administrative tasks will be provided by them, all curriculum is fully provided, and they will partner with the school when and if they decide to charter in the years ahead. In addition to that the board members of the KECC and Dr. Mark Ford are Christians and resonate to the evangelistic work we are doing here at Memorial permitting Kham Dy to continue in his work here (which is separate from the school—the school is a public school).

Because this ongoing crisis, spanning the last nine months with a "save" by the newly chartered Valley Preparatory School which carried the Academy from September until January 15 on skeletal pay --when they were able to pay the staff. As a consequence, much of the development work we had been doing with the Hmong members and the larger congregation was stalled. Things are gradually righting themselves, and we covet your prayers!

This has truly been a resurrection experience for all of us involved! God is faithful and we are surprised by joy! May the Living Christ keep you young at heart, ready and willing to risk for the sake of the good news and open to the work of the Holy Spirit!

Pastor Denice Leslie

YANGS NEED FINANCIAL SPONSORS FOR CITIZENSHIP

The majority of the 1.5 generation of Hmong refugees who have come to the United States are in need of citizenship. Most of these folks now in their 20's and 30's were born in the camps in Thailand and educated here in the United States. The fees required are a major hurdle to gaining citizenship. Pastor Kham Dy Yang and Melody want to apply for citizenship and have not been able to afford to do so. The fees needed are approximately \$500 each. This includes a filling fee of \$320, and funds for the required security background check, fingerprinting, photographs etc. If you would be interested in sponsoring the Yang's in their quest for citizenship please speak with Pastor Denice Leslie