

THE VISITOR

FIRST NEWS

First United Methodist Church | 2100 I Street Sac. Ca. 95816

Our Mission

Faithfully growing together as the hands and heart of Jesus Christ for the world through knowing, loving, serving God and others.

Member of Reconciling Ministries Network

First United Methodist Church is called to the ministry of reconciliation. We affirm that all people are created in the image of God. We celebrate our human family's diversity of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, faith history, economic status, marital status, education, and physical and mental ability. We welcome all as beloved children of God.



December 2019



REV ROD



A Joyous Advent and Blessed Christmas to You!

The gift of this church to so many, you and I included, is immeasurable. And beautiful. And sacred. Bless you, each of you! You are Love First in so many, many ways. Let's celebrate the liberating message of Jesus together this season. This life is full of God. In the birth of Jesus, we come to see this life for what it is. Advent and Christmas matter!

As you read this, I'm in Ethiopia or Kenya. I laughed as I wrote that line, because it's a common email scam to tell you someone is stuck in another country and needs

your money to get them out. Assuming all goes as planned, I should be able to get out just fine. We plan to be with you for worship again on December 8 (Carl Thomas is preaching December 1! And thanks to Cathy Love who will have preached on Thanksgiving Sunday by the time you see this).

This trip is a lifelong dream. The ancient cultures and their buildings, some of them 3,000 years old, mixed with a fast-growing economy and a new, dizzyingly wild democracy will fill our time quite well. We will spend two days in Kenya also.

Continued

As you are thanking God for the great gifts, know that in many countries of Africa, the United Methodist Church has done spectacular work there. Particularly in health care, but in universities and women’s rights, in peacemaking, and in its growing churches, God has moved mightily through us. We will see less of that in Ethiopia, but the Methodist presence in Kenya is bright, more consistent with the rest of sub-Saharan Africa.

The UMC has had a rough year. We’re coming to a new birth, I think. Along with the Christ who always comes with surprises and love. Bless you each.

Rod

Messages Coming in December

December 1:	John 1: 1-8	“The Word Became Flesh”
December 8:	Matthew 3: 1-12	“Bear Fruit”
December 15:	Matthew 11: 2-6	“You Found It!”
December 22:	Matthew 1: 18-25	“Emmanuel”
December 24:	Luke 2: 1-14 John 1: 1-14	“Your Story, Too”
December 29:	Matthew 2: 13-23	“Surviving an Onslaught of Goodness”

Remember the messages are available on CD at our office and online at www.firstumcsac.org or now on podcast. Download wherever you get your podcasts.



Holiday Concerts at Love First

6, 7, 8 & 10 December:

Sacramento Gay Men’s Chorus
Tickets @: sacgaymenschorus.org

19, 20, 21 & 22 December:

Master Singers’ Chorus Christmas
Tickets @: www.mastersingers.org

21 December

Master Singers Jingle All the Way – Family & Children Concert
Tickets @: www.mastersingers.org

26 December

Sacramento Choral Society & Orchestra Messiah Sing-Along
Tickets: sacramentochoral.com

Pathways to Faith

Getting Ready for Christmas Again!

Join the Pathways to Faith gatherings on December Sundays for spirit-filled experiences in preparation for the birth of Christ. Powerful lessons from the Gospels of John and Mathew will be the focus of insightful study and faith-building discussion.

Begin Sunday, December 1, 9:00 a.m. in Room 206, and, yes, everyone is invited!

Christmas Eve Services

We are looking forward to two Christmas Eve services this year.

- The Family Service will be at 5:00 and will include the Tableau that kids can participate in. It is a candlelight service.
- Then there is chili for anyone who wants to stay after or come earlier for the next service.
- The 8:00 service will be our Traditional Candlelight Service.

These are unique services. I cherish both services for unique additions they make to the Christmas Eve experience.

Rod Brayfindley

The Many Methods of Our Faith – The Gift of Giving

First Church has a long history of being a giving and caring community. Throughout the year, this generous congregation has provided much needed support for our neighbors. Your volunteerism, help and contributions are deeply appreciated by many. Here's how you can continue to help your neighbors.

Care Gifts: At Community Breakfast on December 22, hygiene and items to help people keep warm will be distributed. To help provide items please purchase items by shopping the "First UMC Sacramento – Care Kits" wish list on Amazon. Please be sure to see the other article in the Visitor about how you can help support First Church by shopping on Amazon. Can't shop on Amazon? Cash donations are great also! Make sure you make your check out to First UMC and write "Reconciling – Care Kits" in the memo line. Deadline for purchasing is December 13.

QSpot: Reconciling & Social Justice collects clothing and necessities for the homeless youth drop-in center at the LGBTQ+ Community Center just around the corner from First Church. Used clothing, hygiene items (NO RAZORS BLADES PLEASE) and microwaveable foods (popcorn, ramen noodles, mac and cheese) or snack foods are needed. 45% of homeless persons is LGBTQ+, many times because they are rejected by family and friends. Drop off any donations in the collection bins in the hallway facing the courtyard.

Mercy Peddlers: United Methodist Women collect mittens, gloves, scarves, and socks to be distributed to the homeless. Bring your gifts to the meeting luncheon on December 5 or drop them in the red barrel located in the Social Hall.

Blessing Snack Packs: Every week, Monday through Friday, 40-50 people knock on our doors, just for a little bit to eat and drink. We provide them with two snack bars and a bottle of water. Sometimes this is all they get to eat all day.

Continued

Community Breakfast: The last two Sundays of every month, volunteers gather early in the morning to prepare breakfast for as many as 110–125 individuals. It is heart-warming and is much appreciated by our guests. Want to volunteer? Breakfast in December is on the 22nd and the 29th. Arrive at the church between 6:30 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. to help in the kitchen, help setup or help serve.

Community Dinner: On the 3rd Tuesday of the month, volunteers prepare dinner for 50 – 60 guests. There is no dinner scheduled for December, but this program does resume on January 21.

Family Promise: Every 3rd month, First hosts families in transition out of homelessness by providing meals and shelter for a week. This is a highly successful program and volunteers are always needed to provide meals and over-night stays.

Bless you in the giving!

Questions?: reconciling@firstumcsac.org
Reconciling & Social Justice Team

Of Finance and Red Tape: How Our Present Building Came to Be

Of Finance and Red Tape: How Our Present Building Came to Be

In the early 1920's the city of Sacramento experienced considerable growth, including an eastward push along K and J streets. In its efforts to find a suitable lot for the new church building, the Site Committee had determined that the new church should be located on a streetcar line and should be no further out than 22nd Street. The parcel of land chosen was located at the northwest corner of 21st and J streets, measuring 160 by 160 feet, and was purchased for \$50,000. The next step was to engage the architectural firm of Woollet and Lamb to draw up plans for the new church. However, there was trouble on the horizon.

The first obstacle was the problem of financing the project. The Methodist Church Board of Missions and Church Extension, as part of the ambitious Centenary Movement, promised to give our church \$50,000 for the new building project. However, only \$10,000 of that amount would ever reach our church. In January 1921, the Finance Committee recommended a thirty-month finance campaign with the goal of raising at least \$50,000. This campaign was successful, but the amount raised still fell far short of the cost of the whole project, which eventually amounted to \$200,000. Other finance campaigns followed, but it was not until 1944 that the mortgage was finally paid off.

The second obstacle was the requirement that the Architectural Division of the Board of Missions in Philadelphia had to approve the plans submitted by our architects. Unfortunately, in May, 1924, our Building Committee received a long letter from the Architectural Division with a list of criticisms of our plan: The kitchen and lobbies were too small, the church should have a rose window instead of three large arches, exterior design was too Roman Catholic, and the sanctuary should have a center aisle instead of two side aisles. Our Building Committee didn't like the suggested changes and believed it was too late to make such changes anyway. After a tense period of exchanging telegrams, the Philadelphia Board relented and gave approval for the work to proceed.

Continued

And proceed it did. The cornerstone was laid on March 29, 1925. Much work remained to be done, including the installation of a new pipe organ, but thanks to the planning, sacrifice, and perseverance of dozens of people, the dream of the new First Methodist Church became a reality.

Joan Haug-West, Church Historian

Moving Forward in Unity

Greetings!

We are in the planning stage of unifying missions in our beloved communion and with several in our sisters and brothers in the Lutheran Communion. I have been given a green light from the members associated with the Prayer Shaw ministry to make contacts with the outreach ministers at one of our mid-town congregations for this purpose. As of today, I have received a positive response from two ministers in the Lutheran Communion in Sacramento. I continue to try and make contact with the one closest to our facility. If you are part of a ministry that you wish for a combined effort in Unity with the Lutheran Communion please give me a call or pass a note to our administrative office. You can email: admin2100@firstumcsac.org

Until we meet again. Peace.

Allen C. Johnson, member CALNV

General Committee for Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships

Intern Introduction

Greetings, First Church Family!

I'd like to take a quick moment to introduce myself, in my new role as a pastoral intern here at First Church. Many of you know me, know my journey, and have been a vital part of my life here. I've been attending since January 2016, and a member since January 2017. Through the love and support of this amazing First Church family—the conversations, the deep, spiritual work, and the living example of being the hands and feet of Jesus Christ, I've realized a call to ordained ministry.

August of last year found me starting seminary at Claremont School of Theology, pursuing a Master of Divinity degree; I'm now fully immersed in my second year. Part of the second-year coursework is to do an internship in a setting that I would see myself in as an ordained pastor. As such, I am splitting my time between a pastoral internship here and working with Disaster Ministries at the California Nevada Annual Conference office.

What does this mean at First Church? Well, you might see me in a few different roles. I have stepped aside from many of the ministries I had been working in, such as Community Breakfast, SAM, and preparing Communion, and moved into some more pastoral roles. These include sharing in hospital visits, offering the Sunday morning Pathways to Faith, attending meetings (such as Finance and Leadership) that will help me learn more about a pastor's role in ordering the church, and preaching, here for the first time on November 24th. I am working with Pastor Rod to craft a class or small group as well—stay tuned for more information!

Continued

My goals with Disaster Ministries is to gain a solid grounding in disaster response, both from a resource perspective (what does a local church have to offer in times of disaster, and what might be the needs of a local church experiencing a disaster) and from a pastoral care perspective. We hear a lot about UMCOR responding to disasters, but their number one priority isn't rebuilding and cleaning up—it is to offer a caring, Christian presence to disaster survivors. Looking at the geographic area in which I might get assigned to a church, this seemed a good tool to have in my toolkit.

If you have any questions or suggestions for me, I'd love to hear from you. I am around on an irregular schedule, but you can leave a note for me in the office or on the door of 125—that's my office space these days. I look forward to these new opportunities to serve here at First Church!

With gratitude,

Cathy Love

UMW News

In December, our Methodist Women are looking forward to a program of Christmas themed music and verse. All are welcome to join us for a potluck lunch at 11:45, on Thursday December 5. The business meeting will precede the lunch and program. We are asked to bring gifts of mittens, gloves, scarves, and socks for the Mercy Peddlers to distribute to the homeless. Then on Thursday, December 19, UMW Circle 3 will meet in the Library at 9:45 for a time of fellowship and sharing.

United Methodist Women is an international organization, serving those in need all around the globe! Join us in January, for the annual, Call to Prayer and Self Denial presentation to hear more about this important work!

Reconciling & Social Justice

Thank you to everyone that contributed to purchasing care items for those in need to be distributed at Community Breakfast on 22-December. These little items will help keep people warm and hygienic. Thank you!

Save the Date. Saturday 25-January 7:00 pm there will be a benefit concert here at First UMC Sacramento featuring Jean and Jim Strathdee, the Sacramento Women's Chorus and the Gay Men's Chorus. This concert is to raise funds for much needed counseling services for LGBTQ+ youth, ages 12-17, that is run by Jim and Jean's daughter Julie. This will be a fun night full of music for an important cause. Tickets are just \$15 online or \$20 at the door. Tickets will be available in the office or in January after service in the Social Hall. Purchase tickets online at eventbrite.com and search for "trans queer youth collective".

Regional Reconciling Pride Collective

After the painful decision of the General Conference last February, a group of inclusive and reconciling churches in the area came together to organize for the Sacramento Pride March and Festival. Remarkably we had 15 churches represented, from Elk Grove to Woodland, from Sierra Pines to Davis, some reconciling congregations and some conservative congregations. This great effort of coming together made a large visible presence of over 300 Methodist marching and participating in our 3 booths at the festival.

Continued

After that event, a number of representatives from the churches represented decided to continue to work together. We have been meeting monthly since August to discuss how we can continue to work together. The concert in January with the Strathdees, the Women's Chorus and the Gay Men's Chorus is one result of the group's efforts.

Our mission published on our website is:

The United Methodists Churches of this collective recognize the damage that has been done by the Church, by different denominations, by different religions, and by society itself, to those persons that are of non-conforming sexual orientations and/or gender identities.

This collective works to support, help defend, and ensure a path to those individuals seeking to survive, to reconcile, and to thrive, and those that wish to seek to know God.

See more about the UMC Pride Collective at: www.umcpridecollective.com or follow us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/MethodistPrideCollective

And if you'd like to join us our next meeting will be held on Wednesday 29-January at 6:00 p.m. Location to be announced. Contact reconciling@firstumcsac.org for more information.

Christmas Shopping?

Are you going to be doing some shopping this month? Or even next month? Want to have a percentage of your purchase donated to First UMC? It's easy and won't cost you a penny more!

If you are shopping on Amazon; log on to smile.amazon.com just as you would log on to your Amazon account. In the search bar type in First United Methodist Church Sacramento and click search. A new box will pop up and select First Church Sacramento. On the next screen acknowledge the message and then you are ready to shop!

Remember this won't cost you anything! A portion of your sale will be donated to the church and all the good works we do collectively.

Fun, Food, Family & Friends

Everyone is welcome to join us on **Sunday December 15th from 5:00 to 7:00 pm** for our fun holiday event, the Gift from the Giver. We will gather in small groups to travel to different rooms upstairs to do craft projects and hear three very special people tell their stories of the Gifts they have received from the Giver. Then we will journey to the Social Hall to enjoy the company of family and friends, share good food, and receive a visit from a special guest, we will end the evening in the chapel. See you there and bring a friend.

Mary Meister

First UMC Sponsors Advent Gratitude 2019 on Facebook

This group is open to anyone no matter where they are on life's journey and no matter what they have experienced. Advent starts on Sunday, December 1, and the first week's emphasis is on Hope. Kay Harrison Taber, a member of FUMC, will moderate the group. Kay created the original group in 2008 on Facebook and the last time she offered it in 2017 it had over 250 participants. This year First United Methodist Church of Sacramento has asked that the framework be set up on Facebook and open to all. Once you've joined you can add your other Facebook friends and you can also "unjoin" if it's not for you. If it is for you and you wish to invite friends, please do so!

On Saturday, November 30, Kay will post information on the Facebook page, ADVENT GRATITUDE 2019, with information on the first week of Advent. The group will close the day after Christmas. The group will open November 20 and instructions are below on how to join.

It's so simple to be part of the group. All you need to do is make your first status post of the day reflect something you are grateful for and then post it for the group to read! Feel free to respond to others who have posted.

Kay will be adding a group of FUMC members who have been past participants to get the group started. If they do not wish to participate this year they may "unjoin" on the page. Life has been really hard for many folks this year and the world's challenges are getting more and more complex and can be divisive. Even in hard times there are still so many things to be grateful for! Are you in???

How to join:

- Go to Facebook.
- Search for ADVENT GRATITUDE 2019.
- Join.
- On the page you may set the frequency with which you wish to be notified of posts.

Questions?: Contact Kay Harrison Taber at khtaber@aol.com or send Kay a message via Facebook Messenger.

Compass Kids



Thank you so much Dorothy Klishevich for volunteering in Compass Kids. Volunteers such as you are an incredible asset to Children's Ministry. The children and staff greatly appreciated your time and talent as you shared the joy of music with the children. We all hope you'll stop by again soon.

Mary Meister
Children's Ministry

DECEMBER 2019 CALENDAR



Sunday, Dec. 1

Pathways to Faith Morning Study & Discussion
 9:00 am – 11:00 am - Room 206
 Sunday Worship
 10:00 am - 12:00 pm - Sanctuary
 SPRC
 12:30pm – 1:30 pm - Room 205
 Board of Trustees
 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm - Room 206

Monday, Dec. 2

Health and Karate
 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm - Room 201

Tuesday, Dec. 3

Scripture and Hymns
 6:30 pm - 7:00 pm - Library
 Choir Rehearsal
 7:00 pm – 9 pm - Social Hall

Wednesday, Dec. 4

Chair Yoga
 10:00 am - 11:30 am - Chapel
 Health and Karate
 5:30pm - 8:00 pm - Room 201

Thursday, Dec. 5

UMW General
 10:45 am – 1:00 pm - Social Hall

Friday, December 6

Sacramento Gay Men’s Chorus Concert
 8:00 p.m. - Sanctuary

Saturday, Dec. 7

Prayer Walking Retreat at Mercy Center
 8:00 am - 9:30 am
 Health and Karate
 10:00 am – 12:00 pm - Room 201
 The Brewing Company
 10:00 am - 12:00 - Library
 Sacramento Gay Men’s Chorus Concert
 8:00 pm - Sanctuary

Sunday, Dec. 8

Pathways to Faith Morning Study & Discussion
 9:00 am – 11:00 am - Room 206
 Sunday Worship
 10:00 am - 12:00 pm - Sanctuary
 Prayer Shawl Circle
 11:30 am - 12:00 pm - Social Hall
 Sacramento Gay Men’s Chorus Concert
 3:00 pm - Sanctuary

Monday, Dec. 9

Health and Karate
 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm - Room 201

Tuesday, Dec. 10

Sacramento Gay Men’s Chorus Concert
 8:00 pm - Sanctuary
 Health and Karate
 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm - Room 201

Wednesday, Dec. 11

Chair Yoga
 10:00 am - 11:30 am - Chapel
 Health and Karate
 5:30pm - 8:00 pm - Room 201

Thursday, Dec. 12

UMW Workshop
 10:00 am – 2:00 pm - Room 208
 Scripture and Hymns
 6:30 pm - 7:00 pm - Library
 Choir Rehearsal
 7:00 pm – 9 pm - Sanctuary

DECEMBER 2019 CALENDAR



Saturday, Dec. 14

Prayer Walking
 8:00 am – 9:30 am - Library
 Health and Karate
 10:00 am – 12:00 pm - Room 201
 2nd Saturday Art Party
 3:00 - 9:00 pm - Social Hall

Sunday, Dec. 15

Visitor Submission Deadline
 Pathways to Faith Morning Study & Discussion
 9:00 am – 11:00 am - Room 206
 Sunday Worship
 10:00 am - 12:00 pm - Sanctuary
 Gifts of the Giver
 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm - Chapel and Social Hall

Monday, Dec. 16

Health and Karate
 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm - Room 201

Wednesday, Dec. 18

Chair Yoga
 10:00 am - 11:30 am - Chapel
 Health and Karate
 5:30pm - 8:00 pm - Room 201

Thursday, Dec. 19

UMW Circle 3
 9:30 am – 11:30 am - Library
 Choir Rehearsal
 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm - offsite
 Master Singers Concert
 7:00 pm -- Sanctuary

Saturday, December 21

Prayer Walking
 8:00 am – 9:30 am - Library
 Health and Karate
 10:00 am – 12:00 pm - Room 201
 Master Singers Concert for Family & Children
 3:00 pm - Sanctuary
 Master Singers Concert
 7:00 pm - Sanctuary

Sunday, December 22

Pathways to Faith Morning Study & Discussion
 9:00 am – 11:00 am - Room 206
 Sunday Worship
 10:00 am - 12:00 pm - Sanctuary
 Master Singers Concert
 3:00 pm - Sanctuary

Monday, December 23

Health and Karate
 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm - Room 201

Tuesday, December 24

Family Christmas Eve Service
 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm - Chapel
 Traditional Christmas Eve Service
 8:00 pm – 9:00 pm - Sanctuary

Thursday, December 26

Messiah Sing Along SCSO
 2:00 pm - Sanctuary

Saturday, December 28

Health and Karate
 10:00 am – 12:00 pm - Room 201

Sunday, December 29

Pathways to Faith Morning Study & Discussion
 9:00 am – 11:00 am - Room 206
 Sunday Worship
 10:00 am - 12:00 pm - Sanctuary

Monday, December 30

Health and Karate
 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm - Room 201

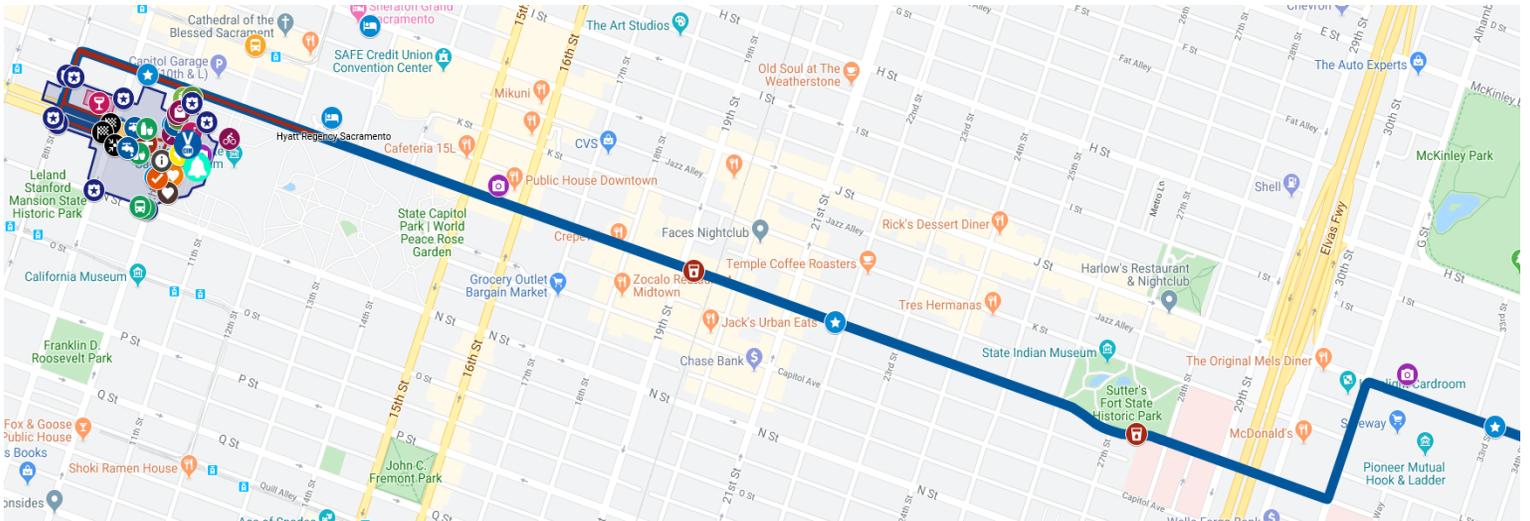


Interested in Membership?

Interested in being a United Methodist member? Sign up for the Methodist Spirituality Class on Saturday January 11 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Lunch provided! Email either rod@firstumcsac.org or admin2100@firstumcsac.org for more information or to sign up.

Traffic Alert!

The California International Marathon is on the morning of Sunday December 8. That means many road closures along the course from Folsom to the Capitol Mall. For details on road closures go to: <https://runsra.org> Maps and list of road closures are available at the "Get Connected" center in the Terrace Room Social Hall.



It's the season of Advent and Christmas!

Soon our sanctuary will be dressed with lovely red poinsettias. If you would like to purchase a poinsettia (one or more), please complete the order form or call the church office. Poinsettias are \$10.00 each. The deadline for purchasing a poinsettia for the sanctuary is Tuesday, December 18, 2018.

Name _____

In honor/memory of _____

Number of poinsettias _____ **Amount** _____

First United Methodist Church
2100 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95816
USPS 91790

Address Service Requested



FIRST

United Methodist Church

Midtown ~ 21st & J