

# FIRST NEWS

## THE VISITOR

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First United Methodist Church | 2100 J Street Sacramento, CA 95816

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### 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.



**REV ROD**

It's Christmas now. How many times have you noticed Christ coming to you? I suspect it's thousands. Christ comes to us at First Church in myriad ways, with a mercy and invitation that has remade us over and over. Merry, Joyful Christmas to you, Friends.

And then we come to New Year. This new year will come with surprises of grace, and we can almost see some of those from here.

In the early Wesleyan movement, they used to gather on New Year's Eve for a "Watchnight Service". I've been to a few and led a few. It's hard to get strong attendance on a night now more associated with drinking and dangerous driving. But there is something that comes with a watchnight service that I'd like to offer you.

Usually this service is concluded with the Covenant Prayer Wesley prayed each day. This prayer has meant a lot to me and I return to it often. I encourage you to pull up this Visitor/First News on New Year's Eve. If you have family at home, maybe make a copy or two and pray this prayer, a modern language version of Wesley's prayer.

May this be the determinant for our coming year. May this be the way we live out the gift of Christ's coming into each of our lives.

*Continued*

I am no longer my own, but yours.  
Put me to what you will, place me with whom you will.  
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.  
Let me be put to work for you or set aside for you,  
Praised for you or criticized for you.  
Let me be full, let me be empty.  
Let me have all things, let me have nothing,  
I freely and fully surrender all things to your glory and service.  
And now, O Wonderful and Holy God  
Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,  
You are mine, And I am yours.  
So be it.  
And the covenant which I have made on earth,  
Let it be made in heaven,  
Amen.

Be Love First. Bless you,  
Rod Brayfindley

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## Messages for January

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These will be big Sundays for us at First Church. Favorite hymns and songs will fill the air along with wonderful opportunities for growth and sharing Good Words together. Take the first month of the year to set a course for 2020!

On Sunday January 5, 2020, we'll consider our New Year in The Light of God. John 1:1-9 will lead us to consider what it means "To Live Light".

Sunday January 12 brings us to Matthew 3:13-17 and a chance to look at the experience or lack of experience of a sense of calling in our lives. The message is "Your Calling".

Sunday January 19 is **Dr Martin Luther King Jr Sunday**. We'll read John 1:29-42, sing some wonderful music, and hear the message titled "Thankful, but Not Content".

On Sunday January 26, as we welcome **Bishop Carcaño** as our preacher!!

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We hope you can make all services, but as always remember the messages are available on CD at our office, online at [www.firstumcsac.org](http://www.firstumcsac.org) or now on podcast.

Download wherever you get your podcasts.



***We recently learned with great sadness of the passing  
Wayne Muller***

***June 1931 ~ May 2019***

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***It is also with deep sadness to inform you of the  
passing of Elaine Highsmith***  
***June 1924 ~ December 2019***  
***Memorial Service will be held January 16 1:00 p.m. in the***



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## From First UMC Finance

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### A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS GIFT

We celebrate Christmas recognizing the most special of gifts – God’s gift of Jesus to humanity.

In this season of giving and sharing, we encourage you to think of this beloved church. All that we experience here comes at a cost – maintaining the facility, providing programs and paying for utilities and services.

Countless volunteer hours provide a backbone for operation, but the costs are real. Please consider making a special Christmas gift to demonstrate our love to this special place.

Dorothy Klishevich  
Finance Chair

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## A New Church, Singing Together

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In May 2020 the UMC has its next, and critical, General Conference. We now know that a group who see themselves as Evangelical United Methodists, bound together by their animosity toward LGBTQ people, plan to either exit the denomination or force others who don’t hold to their exclusionary vision of the church to leave. In the last years, I’ve viewed this with tragic sadness. In many ways I still do.

**But:** Representatives of churches of the Western Jurisdiction of the UMC, which includes our Conference, had a meeting in November in which they declared firmly their intention to “refuse to limit the movement of God’s Holy Spirit in the lives of all God’s beloved children”, and to “stand firm in grace and love”.

They committed themselves to be the church we’re meant to be, grounded in God’s love and true to our Wesleyan roots “singing together a new, new song which echoes the old, old story of Jesus and his love which we have loved so long!”

What this shows is that the historical United Methodist vision will continue to unite millions in our spiritual family along with us at First UMC in Sacramento. We will be better than OK. We will be supported in our commitment to following the ways of Jesus.

So, while there may well be some type of division of the historic UMC coming, it will not be an end to our Methodist path. At my ordination I dedicated myself to living out my commitment to Christ **through** the United Methodist Church. I can joyfully and confidently encourage you to keep doing the same.

We are a church of God’s love. That has always been who we’re called to be and always will be.

Rod Brayfindley

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## Dr. Martin C. Briggs, Abraham Lincoln, and Slavery

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Undoubtedly, the most brilliant and influential minister in the early Methodist Church in California was Dr. Martin C. Briggs—the only minister to serve three pastoral appointments to our First Church: 1850-51; 1863-65; and 1875-78. In 1852 Briggs went to the General Conference in Boston to present the request of his California brethren that they be formed into an annual conference. The request was granted, and Briggs was seated as the first delegate.

Dr. Briggs was the first president of the Wesleyan College, forerunner of the University of the Pacific. He was also elected to serve the State Legislature as Chaplain. During his second term as pastor of First Church, in 1864 Briggs was elected a delegate to the National Convention which nominated Abraham Lincoln for his second presidential term. As chairman of the delegation, Briggs cast California's ten votes for Lincoln.

Perhaps the most important action of his career was the role Briggs played in helping to prevent California from becoming a slave state. A large number of Southerners had come to California in the 1850's and 1860's. Many wanted to change the state constitution to make slavery lawful. In the fall of 1851, a group of Southern politicians met in Wilmington, North Carolina, and spent some time planning to make California a slave state despite its constitution. Their deliberations resulted in a threefold scheme. The first was to rush in a large number of slaves under the promised protection of the governor. Then, if trouble followed, they planned to make a case in equity before a pro-slavery supreme court and achieve a modification of the law which would practically annul the constitution. Failing in this, they were to work for a constitutional convention under the pretense that the old one needed certain amendments, and then, having a majority in their favor, introduce a clause making slavery legal. The third plan, only to be undertaken in case neither of the others could be carried out, was to secure a division of the state and make the southern part open to slavery.

A circular explaining these plans was printed and secretly distributed; however, a copy of the circular fell into the hands of Dr. Briggs, who immediately communicated with President Lincoln in Washington. Lincoln went into action and prevented the plans in the circular from being carried out.

**Note a correction in last month's Visitor:** In the article "Of Finance and Red Tape"—the location of the lot chosen was the *south-east corner* of 21<sup>st</sup> and J streets.

Joan Haug-West  
Church Historian

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## Family Promise

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Once every 3 months, Love First provides a space for those transitioning out of homelessness. Families are provided meals and a safe place for overnight stays for a week. This January Family Promise begins the week of January 12. Want to volunteer a meal or help? Contact Gina McDaniels at: [reginacornish916@yahoo.com](mailto:reginacornish916@yahoo.com) More information about Family Promise at: <https://sacfamilypromise.org/>

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## Two New Ways to Serve

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Upstairs every Sunday people like Greg Beale, Vince Wetzel, and Dorothy Klisevich sit at a computer and push a button each time a verse or an act of worship changes in our service. They are the PowerPoint volunteers that make it possible for us to sing looking up, who put the Centering Prayer in front of us, who put the scripture on for us to read.

We need two more volunteers to take one Sunday a month to make this cadre full and not overtax any of the current kind servers. Could one of those be you? Talk to Rod or Greg Beale.

ALSO: Our office is a wonderful place to be a church volunteer. You get to see the beautiful work of the church and its staff close-up. An office volunteer needs a regular day of the week they can be there. This is a vital role and can be quite gratifying. Talk to Rod or Terry Haug.

Give gifts that serve and bless. Grace to you for all the gifts you give in life.

Rod Brayfindley

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## United Methodist Women

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Our first gathering of the 2020 will be held on Thursday, January 2. There will be an officers meeting at 9:45, a business meeting at 10:45, and a potluck lunch at 11:45. After lunch, the informational meeting will be led by our own Phyllis Helsel. She will share information that will shine a light on the many ways United Methodist Women have changed the lives of women, children, and youth on the margins through their gifts to "A Call to Prayer and Self-Denial". This giving also transforms members' own lives as they grow in their love of God and neighbors.

All are welcome to attend!

Questions or want more information call Phyllis Varney at: [gpvarney@yahoo.com](mailto:gpvarney@yahoo.com)

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## Evacuation Training

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A training class will be held on Sunday January 19 at Noon in Room 206. Please plan on attending to learn what evacuation routes you should take in case of an emergency.

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## Flowers

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Perhaps, after seeing Jaime Segura's beautiful floral arrangements on the altar on Sundays, you might like to take one home to enjoy. You may do so for a donation of \$50.00. The Flower Calendar is available at the Connections Table in the Social Hall for reservations. Payment will be due during the month of your reservation. This is such a beautiful way to support your church and to honor or memorialize a loved one or an organization.

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## March for the Dream

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The MLK Day March will be on January 20. March starts at 9:00 a.m. from 3835 Freeport Boulevard, Sacramento City College. Walk with Love First UMC. Watch for further details in the Sunday announcements or email: [reconciling@firstumcsac.org](mailto:reconciling@firstumcsac.org)

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## Methodist Spirituality Class

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Saturday January 11 at 11, Rod Brayfindley will lead a conversation about Methodist Spirituality. The three-hour event will include history, lively discussion and with some snacks to carry us through. Please RSVP to [rod@firstumcsac.org](mailto:rod@firstumcsac.org) or call the office at 916-446-5025.

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## Reconciling & Social Justice

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To each of you that donated items for those in need that were given away at Community Breakfast on Sunday December 22. The big hearty breakfast and those gifts put a lot of smiles on a lot of faces.

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, 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](http://eventbrite.com) and search for "trans queer youth collective".



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## Still Shopping?

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OK, so the Christmas shopping is done but shopping always continues! Still want 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](http://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.

JANUARY 2020 CALENDAR

**Sunday Worship – Every Sunday**  
**10:00: Hymns and Prayer**  
**10:30: Weekly Message**  
**11:00: Contemporary Music**

**Wednesday Jan. 1**  
Church office closed

**Thursday Jan. 2**  
UMW Executive Meeting  
9:45 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.: Library  
UMW General Meeting  
10:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.: Social Hall  
Scripture and Hymns  
6:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.: Library  
Choir Rehearsal  
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.: Sanctuary

**Saturday Jan. 4**  
Prayerwalking  
8:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.: Library  
Health and Karate  
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.: Room 201

**Sunday Jan. 5**  
Pathways to Faith Morning Study and Discussion  
9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.: Room 206  
SPRC  
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.: Room 205  
Board of Trustees  
12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.: Room 206

**Monday Jan. 6**  
Health and Karate  
5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.: Room 201

**Wednesday Jan. 8**  
Chair Yoga  
5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.: Room 201  
Health and Karate  
5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.: Room 201

**Thursday Jan. 9**  
Scripture and Hymns  
6:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.: Library  
Choir Rehearsal  
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.: Sanctuary

**Saturday Jan. 11**  
Prayerwalking  
8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.: Library  
Health and Karate  
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.: Room 201  
The Brewing Company  
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.: Library  
Methodist Spirituality  
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.: Asst Pastor’s Office

**Sunday Jan. 12**  
Pathways to Faith Morning Study and Discussion  
9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.: Room 206  
Prayer Shawl Circle  
11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.: Social Hall  
LGBTQ+ Reconciling & Social Justice  
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.: Room 206  
FAMILY PROMISE WEEK BEGINS

**Monday Jan. 13**  
Health and Karate  
5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.: Room 201

**Wednesday Jan. 15**  
Chair Yoga  
10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.: Chapel  
Health and Karate  
5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.: Room 201

**Thursday Jan. 16**  
UMW Circle 3  
9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.: Library  
Scripture and Hymns  
6:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.: Library  
Choir Rehearsal  
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.: Sanctuary

**Saturday Jan. 18**  
Prayerwalking  
8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.: Library  
Health and Karate  
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.: Room 201

**Sunday Jan 19**  
Community Breakfast  
7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.: Social Hall  
Pathways to Faith Morning Study and Discussion  
9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.: Room 206

JANUARY 2020 CALENDAR

**Monday Jan. 20**  
Church Office Closed  
March for the Dream  
9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.: Sac City College  
Health and Karate  
5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.: Room 201

**Tuesday Jan. 21**  
Community Dinner  
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.: Kitchen and Social Hall  
Finance Meeting  
5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.: Room 206  
Leadership Team Meeting  
6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.: Room 206

**Wednesday Jan. 22**  
Chair Yoga  
10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.: Chapel  
Health and Karate  
5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.: Room 201

**Thursday Jan. 23**  
UMW Workshop  
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.: Room 208  
Scripture and Hymns  
6:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.: Library  
Choir Rehearsal  
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.: Sanctuary


**Saturday Jan. 25**  
Prayerwalking  
8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.: Library  
Health and Karate  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.: Room 201  
Strathdee TQYC Benefit Concert  
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.: Sanctuary

**Sunday Jan. 26**  
Community Breakfast  
7:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.: Social Hall  
Pathways to Faith Morning Study and Discussion  
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.: Room 206

**Monday Jan. 27**  
Health and Karate  
5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.: Room 201

**Wednesday Jan 29**  
Chair Yoga  
10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.: Chapel  
Health and Karate  
5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.: Room 201

**Thursday Jan. 30**  
Scripture and Hymns  
6:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.: Library  
Choir Rehearsal  
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.: Sanctuary





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## Together We Can Do So Much

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Thank you to the volunteers for participating in the Children's Ministry Gifts from the Giver event. It was a success due to our volunteers who kept everything running smoothly.

Pastor Rod and JB provided loads of positive motivation and program organization both up and downstairs, Dorothy Klishevich's delicious homemade lasagna dinner ensured all were well fed, the work and organization in the kitchen of Sandy Adams and Geri Miloslavich had everything running right on time, we were blessed with the wonderful storytellers and craft helpers Susan and Ron Nakamoto, Jim and Jan Mischler, Cathy Love, and Irene Brown and we also appreciate Santa taking time out of his busy schedule to come visit us at First United.

Thanks again to the volunteers for their support!

Mary Meister  
Director of Children's Ministry

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## One Last Thank You!

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As you read this edition of The Visitor, there were many notes of thank you of support. This year Love First has demonstrated its methods of faith in so many generous ways. Whether it was in support of social justice by marching together on MLK Day, March for Our Lives or for Pride or from the toy gifts for Mustard Seed School, care kits for the needy, Gifts from the Giver, or by providing nearly 3,000 meals at Community Breakfast and Community Dinner, the annual Thanksgiving luncheon, or the support for MOMS and UMW. The number of volunteer hours given to support the office and the many committees to help run this church and for the beautiful music from our choir and the contemporary music band. Thank you!

Doug Treadwell/Rod Brayfindley

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## Climate Change

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Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL) now meets every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday at First UMC at 9:45 a.m. Join them in the Social Hall to learn about this important organization and how you can be involved.

Citizens' Climate Lobby is a non-profit, nonpartisan, grassroots advocacy organization focused on national policies to address climate change. Join us as we create the political will for a stable climate.

- Listen to the national conference call with a powerful guest speaker
- Learn about the CCL methods to empower ourselves and influence public opinion
- Learn about upcoming events
- Discover rewarding ways to join us

For more information, contact Edith Thacher at [egthacher@gmail.com](mailto:egthacher@gmail.com)

.... And watch for more news from First UMC about this important conversation.





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Address Service Requested



**FIRST**  
**UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
Midtown Sacramento **21<sup>st</sup> & J**