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Next Oakleaf Deadline
January 11

If you've got something to say, send it my way! All bragging, volunteer solicitations, evangelizing, and testimonies welcome! This is YOUR newsletter!

From the Office

Oakleaf Schedule – The Oakleaf is distributed once a month. Articles are usually due on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, with the publication being mailed on the 3rd Friday.

Worship Times

Sunday Mornings
9:00 a.m., Blended Worship Service
11:00 a.m., Praise Worship Service

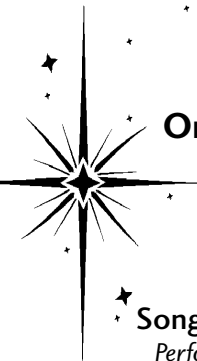
THE Oakleaf



December 16, 2011

Newsletter of the United Methodist Church of Thousand Oaks
Where we are Making Faith **REAL!**

Together, we welcome the Christ Child



Sunday, December 18
One Special Service, 10:00 a.m.

A CANTATA FOR CHRISTMAS

Winter's Grace

Songs and Carols to Celebrate Christmas
Performed by UMCTO Chancel Choir & Orchestra

Written by celebrated composer Joseph Martin, *Winter's Grace* rejoices in the Christ Child's great light and will fill the sanctuary with the Christmas message of hope, peace, joy and love.

Christmas Eve Services
Saturday, December 24

7:00 p.m.
Family Service with the
Christmas Story in Narrative,
Song & Liturgical Dance

11:00 p.m.
Worship & Carols
Communion & Candlelight
Chancel & Bell Choirs

Christmas Day
Sunday, December 25

Come celebrate this special day with a family-friendly worship that will bring young and old together to greet Baby Jesus at the manger.



"For a child is born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6 NRSV

and in 2012, we offer:

OUR PRAYERS

Sunday, January 1
New Year's Day
One Special Worship Service
10:00 a.m.



OUR PRESENCE

Saturday, January 7
8:00 a.m. Dickerson Hall
United Methodist Men Breakfast
Fellowship & Bible Study with Pastor Steve

OUR GIFTS

Saturday
January 21
9:00 a.m.
Dickerson Hall
Birthing Kits Project for Mission Area 6
(UMCTO, Newbury Park, Camarillo, and
Westlake Village UMC)



OUR SERVICES

January 28
5:00 p.m. Dickerson Hall
All-church potluck and Haiti Missionary
Program with Rev. Lynne Austin



and OUR WITNESS

Sunday, January 22
United Methodist Women Sunday

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Our Community

UNITED METHODIST MEN

UMM Breakfast Fellowship and Bible Study

Saturday, January 7, 8:00 a.m.

Dickerson Hall

Jerry Hong will lead the meeting and always offers an interesting and stimulating program.

Breakfast for Santa Barbara District meeting of the United Methodist Women

Saturday February 4, 8:30 a.m.

Dickerson Hall

Wanda Williams has invited the UMM to provide breakfast for the UMW, an estimated total of 75, at 8:30 a.m. on February 4. We will need men to set up Dickerson after the overnight stay of the homeless, and to prepare and serve the breakfast that morning.

Return to Boney Mountain

Last spring we launched an assault on Boney Mountain and as a result of inadequate trail markers the mountain won. This time we will have better maps, directions, GPS guidance, Ipods, etc. We don't have a date yet but it will be forthcoming.

Frisbee Golf Tournament

There is an 18 hole Frisbee disc course set up adjacent to Acorn Acres park next to TO high school and Horizon View School. Sounds interesting, anyone up for the challenge?

3rd Annual Corn Toss Tournament and Bar-b-que

Will take place in early June for the entire church and friends. So, keep practicing!



Questions about any of the above, Contact: Tom Maddux (805) 495-7355 or thomas.maddux@csun.edu

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Camellia-Rose Circle

Thursday, January 12, 10:00 a.m.

Wesley Room.

All women are welcome!

Contact: Winnie Keyser (805) 494-7368.

UMW Book Club

Will meet at Lois Sheen's on Monday, January 23, at 7:30 p.m. to discuss *Shanghai Girls* by Lisa See. It is the story of Chinese sisters sold in the 1930's to pay their father's gambling debts, and the struggle to find a new life in America while bound to the old.

Contact: Donna Mullennix (805) 523-1211 or mullennix@roadrunner.com

Christmas Greens & Boutique

Thank you to all who purchased Christmas greens and baked goods on Sunday, December 4. This major fundraiser for UMW netted approximately \$2840, which after expenses, will all go to support missions.

Jumpin' Junipers Circle

Jumpin' Junipers Circle is for women on the go! No pre-reading or studying required. We be meet Thursday, January 26 at 7-8:30 p.m. in the Brides Room.

As women, we are generally busy doing, coming, going and keeping everyone else "filled" up. Jumpin' Junipers is an opportunity to sit back, relax, hopefully laugh (or cry), reflect, and rejuvenate ourselves.

Contact: Diane Ray at dieray@juno.com.

Women Serving Others visits Lighthouse Shelter for Women and Children, Oxnard, leaving the church at 6:15 pm on Tuesday, **December 27 and January 24.** Contact: Barbara Schlesinger, (818) 889-4794 or hschlesinger@sbcglobal.net

AND MORE

Ring in the New Year With God!

Join your UMCTO church family in Dickerson Hall December 31 from 8:00 p.m. - midnight for Live Music, Group Dancing to Wii "Just Dance", Karaoke opportunities, snacks, movies, and games!

Contact: Laura Marlow 222-5180; singtopraise@gmail.com



Young at Heart Fellowship and Potluck

January 20

12:30 p.m.

Diana Rainer will regale us with tales of her studies in England last summer!

Contact: Juanita Wilson

805-495-4744

What's Happening on Saturday, February 11, 2012?

The 2012 Staff Appreciation Potluck and All-Church Talent Show, of course! With all the talent in our congregation, this ought to be a night to remember! **Mark Your Calendars!**

Save the date for next year's Women's Retreat!

March 2-4, 2012

Serra Retreat in Malibu

Led by Spiritual Director Dr. Joy Carol. Sign-ups begin in January.

2012 Flower Chart

P.S. when you add your name to the 2012 Flower Chart, please note the cost is **\$45.** (No, the price hasn't gone up since last month. The \$40 fee noted in the previous Oakleaf was an error. Still a bargain for all those gorgeous flowers you can either take home after the service, or donate to Jean Hensel's Flower-Delivery-to-the-Homebound ministry!

Reaching Out

Stephen Ministry



from "When You Lose Someone You Love" - by Richard M. Cromie, D.D., Ph.D.

"St. Paul writes: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content." Normally, we admire his contentment and inner peace, no matter what life brought to him. But, concentrate here on what he had "learned". He did not come by it naturally, anymore than you can speak in a foreign language you have not learned, nor play the flute the first time you pick it up. It takes work, hard work, learning how to do a new thing. When it comes to grieving, you and I must learn how to do that, too. There are many different teachers. Others who have walked that

road....pastors, counselors, parents, teachers, friends....St. Paul goes on in Philippians 4:13: "I have learned the secret," he writes, "...I can do all things in Him who strengthens me." That is, in Christ, who gives us strength, who knew how to grieve, who wept, who overcame his fears, and who turned it all over to His Heavenly Father. Jesus was a teacher, most of all. You have to *learn* how to grieve."

Our UMCTO Stephen Ministers understand this, and offer help with this hard lesson. We are grateful for their caring and dedicated ministry.

For A Caring Stephen Minister,

Contact: Susan Ruwhiu, Dianne Clouter, Connie Jones, Larry Brown or any Stephen Minister. 805-495-7215

January is Mission Area 6 Month! Birthing Kit Assembly Line



Join with our fellow Mission Area 6 (MA6) Methodists from the Westlake Village, Newbury Park, and Camarillo United Methodist Churches in this inaugural MA6 cooperative project. It's a chance to meet and greet our neighbor Methodists, and enjoy some fellowship as we put together the Birthing Kits for Haiti each church has contributed towards. (Our part is the receiving blankets and plastic sheeting.)

When: Saturday, January 21, 9:00 a.m.

Where: Dickerson Hall

The assembly lines for packing up the birthing kits can accommodate anyone who would like to help - volunteers can come for a few minutes or a couple of hours. It will involve people from all four of the other Churches, and of course, being Methodists, there will be refreshments. The goal is to put together 400 packets, so many hands will make light work. We are already halfway to having our items for the birthing kits at this point.

Haiti Mission Potluck with Haiti Missionary Rev. Lynne Austin

When: Saturday, January 28, 5:00 p.m.

Where: Dickerson Hall



If you missed the assembly line, come to the potluck. The potluck is for **everyone** who is interested in learning about Haiti, as well as those who worked on the birthing kits - it will include all four Churches. Come enjoy food and fellowship. p.s. The contact person is Wanda Williams. Need I say more?

Winter Shelter & Community Meal Program



Our faithful volunteers for the Winter Shelter program for the rest of December and January are:

Dec. 23

Sheets- Joanna Haberle & Barbara Marshall

Screener- Mary Levoy

Overnight- Fred Orsinger & Melinda Rathburn

Dec. 30

Sheets- Jan Maddox & Julia Snyder

Screener- Diane Ray

Overnight- Carolyn DeMint & Fred O.

Jan. 6

Sheets- Connie Noggle & Barbara Schlesinger

Screener- Jerry Hong

Overnight- Larry Ciuffitelli & Mary LeVoy

Jan. 13

Sheets- Eileen Fischer & Ann Gramlich

Screener- Tom Odegard

Overnight- Lori Rogers & Craig Diestel

Jan. 20

Sheets-Noreen Knutson & Diane Ray

Screener- Juanita Wilson

Overnight- Don DeMint & Craig Diestel

Jan. 27

Sheets - Judy Brown & Diana Lolley

Screener - Paul Crissman

Overnight - CLU Outreach Students

Meal Program Contact:

Liz Hoskinson (805) 495-6151

Shelter Program Contact:

Jerry Hong (805) 496-6696

Sock Program Contact:

Reine Wiley (805)495-8701

Tutors are needed for Study Buddies on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The program runs from 3:30 - 5:00 PM on both days. (The crucial time is from 4 - 5 PM as that is homework time!)

Contact Susan Ambrose if you are interested in helping on THURSDAYS: 805-402-1549

Contact Dori if you are interested in helping on TUESDAYS: 805-402-2100



For Your Spirit

A Word from Your Pastor..

The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

Then Peter spoke up, "We have left everything to follow you!"

"Truly I tell you," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first." Mark 10:26-31, NIV

New Year's Day stands as a marker of time in our society. We use it as an end of cycles and the beginning of others. It becomes a time of reflection and projection, and then tends to fade away...and here we are. Yet another year has brought alongside a simple feeding trough in a humble room filled with animals and we have peered inside and born witness to one of the central messages of our Christian faith: that the Eternal Creator of our universe has taken on the limitations of human form.

This witness quickly follows with the call to follow Jesus and the scriptures tell us the disciples left everything to follow Jesus. They took a chance, a risk, that somehow following this Jewish Rabbi would pay off in the end for them and their families...and I can't help but wonder, "Was it worth it for them? Is it worth it for us?"

I sometimes imagine the life of Christianity being similar to jumping into a lake in the High Sierra's. After a long, hot day of hiking, the idea of a refreshing dip to wash away the grime and cool off is an inviting idea...but the water is cold. A person has two choices: try and slowly edge into the water until they are completely immersed, or to leap off a rock and plunge into the water.

I can tell you from experience that those who edge into the water slowly rarely make it all the way. The wind comes up, and body gets cold, and eventually people give-up. But those who leap in are cleansed and refreshed...it's all a matter of commitment.

So let me ask you, when it comes to following Jesus, are you all in? Have you leapt off the rock and committed yourself to plunging deeper into God this year? Did you grow in each of the five areas of discipleship this year (worship, study, prayer, stewardship, service)? Have you made a commitment to grow in the upcoming year?

I hope you have, and I hope that we as a church be "all in" on following Jesus. In the end, I think it will be worth it...not just for us, but for the entire world.

In Christ, *Pastor Gene*



We are praying for....

Don Otsea (Elsemore)
 Sue Embree-Davis (Elsemore)
 Jeremy & Lacy Embree
 Eilers-Gutierrez Family (Valladares)
 David Hill, Beth Ugino (Gramlich)
 Elma Jocson (Missionary)
 Emery, Mayme Johnson (Reed)
 Lorene McDonald (Schrader)
 Jacklyn Overstreet
 Doug & Nolan Steele (Rainer)
 Judy Yoshida (Ambrose)
 Pam Gross
 Michelle Miller
 Laurie Moodie
 Dick Gramlich
 Reine Wiley
 Randy Harold
 Wyvetta Swartout
 Jerry Dunklin
 Jack Hoskinson
 Mary Frances Apgar
 Heinz Schubert
 Banks family
 Cifuentes/Canfield families
 Delaney family
 Howe family
 Janus family
 Lush/Simonds families
 Latu family

HOME BOUND

Ruby Blank	Louise Nekuda
Faye Crawford	Mertice Nichols
Lynn Fish	John Robinson
Nell Gardner	Katie Robinson
Odette Heckman	Betty Ruhr
Ruth Lewon	



MILITARY

Bradley Boyd	Casey Hughes
Chris Clohessy	Jeremy Laulom
Nichole Clohessy	Cory Mazza
Jeremy Embree	Matthew Rice
Todd Grimm	Mark Rabens,
Benito Hernandez	Wesley Rabens
	Dustin Vogel
	Randee Jo Clohessy

Formation

"Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than gold; for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her." - Proverbs 8:10-11



Mini Methodist Post

News from the desks of Miss Connie (education@umcto.org)
 and Miss Diana, (admin2@umcto.org)
 (805) 495-7215 ext 302



Sunday School Teachers Rock!

Ever wonder what happens to the kids after Children's Time? A group of 8 faithful & dedicated teachers teaches them! Infants & toddlers learn about Jesus & that he loves them. They love to sing songs, do crafts & snack time!

Our Preschoolers & Kindergartners are full of energy & imagination. These beginning readers learn their Bible story, make crafts to take home & have creative play time. These growing kids love to put their stickers on the attendance chart, play dress up & share their prayer requests with each other. They also love when their teachers bring them special treats for snack!

The 1st-3rd graders use activity pages to learn their Bible stories. This active & sometimes wild group also gets a firsthand look at characters in the Bible as they read each story aloud as if it were a play, complete with parts & narration. They enjoy competing

against each other to see who can answer questions about their lesson.

And finally, our 4th-5th graders have been transformed into Bible detectives, searching the Bible for clues about who Jesus is & how he expects us to live our lives. These pre-teens are smart & thoughtful & work hard each week to learn & have fun! They are currently learning to be responsible for bringing their own Bibles to class each week & are doing an excellent job!

All of this would not be possible without those 8 teachers each week! We cannot have Sunday school without help & we NEED new teachers to give those who have been working a break. Please pray about where the Lord is calling you to spend your time in 2012 & as you make your New Year's resolutions, consider teaching. Training, support & mentoring are available if you just take that step of faith. Remember that God does not

call the equipped, he equips the called! Contact: Connie Jones or Diana Rainer education@umcto.org or 495-7215 ext. 302



Thank you to ALL of the wonderful men & women who taught Sunday school, mentored our Youth, volunteered at VBS, taught adult Bible studies & served on the Education Committee this year! We are truly blessed by your gifts & could not do our jobs without you. God bless you during this special season of Advent & have a happy & healthy New Year!

Peace in Christ,
 Connie Jones & Diana Rainer

Youth Ministry

United Methodist Youth Ministry
 is open to all youth in grades 6-12.

Glimpse of our Youth Winter Retreat Weekend...by one of our YOUTH retreat leaders, James Giddings.

"DON'T impress, Just EXPRESS"
 Winter Retreat- Spiritual Weekend

January 6 - 8th! Cost \$50
 includes lodging and food.
 Skiing, Snowboarding Lessons, are EXTRA!

What I want of this spiritual weekend is that we all understand that we need to not impress: we don't need to act like we have it all figured out, don't act

like we are better, and that when we do Christian actions, that we tell no one (Sermon on the Mount).

Also to grow not just in faith but our self esteem as well. We need to accept that we are who we are, and we can't change that. WHO WE ARE HAS NEVER BEFORE BEEN CREATED AND WILL NEVER BE CREATED AGAIN. We are once in a lifetime.

We shouldn't be afraid of "prosecution" because we are Christians, Jesus endured mocking, temptations, flogging- essentially torture- and death from being nailed to a cross, but we can't even take it when a peer makes a small joke of us because we are Christians, or that they feel that

we are weird, etc. And finally I want you all to understand that God loves us more than we can even imagine, and that we cant be selfish with that love. We must all take the love God has given us and shower it upon others, even those who we cant stand, we need to love everyone equally as strong.

I hope this weekend is full of fun, good memories, and the love of God.
 -James Giddings

Deadline to Register is Dec. 10th, unless more space is available.
 Call Dori for more info....
 805-402-2100

