

THE VALLEY MESSENGER.

A publication of San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church

Pursuing a life with God and a life with each other by following Jesus,
thriving in community, and healing the world.

Our Values: Inclusion, Inspiration, Impact



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A SEASON OF LOOKING BACK, LEANING FORWARD.

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

~ Philippians 1:3-6

By the time you read this, we will be well into the season of Advent—those sacred weeks of waiting, preparing, and leaning forward toward the joy of Christmas. You all know how much I love this season. I love everything about it: the music that fills our homes and sanctuaries, the decorations that transform ordinary spaces into places of wonder, even the way the malls suddenly feel like cathedrals of twinkling lights, reminding us—often unexpectedly—of the miracle of Christ's birth.

But while Advent calls us to look ahead, my heart is also looking back. I find myself asking, How did 2025 go by so fast? With all that has happened, and with the wonderfully active rhythm of life in our community of faith, the year already feels like a blur. And yet, when I pause long

enough, memories begin to rise—clear, meaningful, and filled with gratitude.

What I remember first is you. Being in relationship with this incredible church family continues to be one of the greatest blessings of my life. After almost two and a half years as your pastor, I feel like I now know most of your stories—your faith, your generosity, your perseverance, your gifts. Your love and support have encouraged me more than you know, and your lives inspire me daily.

I'm remembering, too, the countless worship services we shared—each one an offering of beauty and devotion. Week after week, our worship is shaped by so many hands and hearts: our warm and welcoming hospitality team, our diligent media crew, our Next-Gen team pouring into our children and youth, and the many music ensembles that lift our spirits and draw us closer to God. I am grateful for every anthem, every greeting, every slide advance, every shared moment of praise.

I'm remembering the ways our church stretched (**continued on next page**)

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beyond our walls to bless our community and world. This year, we supported Monument Crisis Center, Hope Solutions, Trinity Center. We partnered across faith lines to host Red Cross blood drives. We served at White Pony Express and the Contra Costa Food Bank. We packed 14,000 meals through Rise Against Hunger. We collected diapers, food, backpacks, winter essentials—and every collection represented hope made tangible. Our outreach and missions never skipped a beat. Not once.

And then there are the everyday moments of ministry—the ones that rarely make a newsletter but make all the difference. The committee meetings where faithful work gets done. The small groups and Bible studies where we learn and grow together. The collaboration and camaraderie of our amazing staff. The hallway conversations, the prayers shared, the quiet acts of kindness offered without fanfare. These pieces, woven together, make up the tapestry of our life together.

A lot has happened in 2025. It may feel like a blip in time, but it took every day of every week of every month—and every heart and every person in our community—to make it all happen. I remember all of it. And from the bottom of my heart, all I can say is: **thank you.**

At Christmas, we celebrate the breathtaking truth that “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son.” This year, I also celebrate a humbler but very personal truth: For God so loves me that He gave me the faithful people of SRVUMC to be my partners and co-laborers in ministry.

As I move deeper into Advent, this will continue to fill me with joy, gratitude, and renewed hope.

Remembering and Celebrating,
P. Sam | syun@srvumc.org



ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICES.

Join us for Christmas Eve services on December 24th! There will be inspiring music and a special Christmas message by Pastor Sam. We'll have two services, both in-person and online to fit your needs. The 5 PM service will include a special children's moment. The 11 PM service will feature gentle candlelight, Christmas carols, and Holy Communion. If you will be worshiping with us from home, please prepare a candle to light during worship.

Christmas is a great opportunity to invite your family and friends to worship, so bring a friend!



Christmas Candlelight Services

DECEMBER 24

5 PM: Candlelight Family Service

11 PM: Candlelight and Communion

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SAVE THE DATE!

Save the date for the Elevated Connection concert series launch on Saturday, January 10 at 6 PM. This concert will feature the Cornerstone Band from Silicon Valley.



A CONCERT SERIES AT
THE WESLEY CENTER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

YOU'RE INVITED: JOIN AN ADVENT STUDY GROUP.

By Bill Rust

Experience Advent again as if for the first time!

Pastor Sam asks everyone to join in our annual congregation-wide Advent Study. He hopes each group will host a study. Explore your Christmas feelings and REMEMBER . . . your story and the Advent/Christmas story!

Our study resource is author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine's insightful book, LIGHT of the WORLD, a Beginner's Guide to Advent.

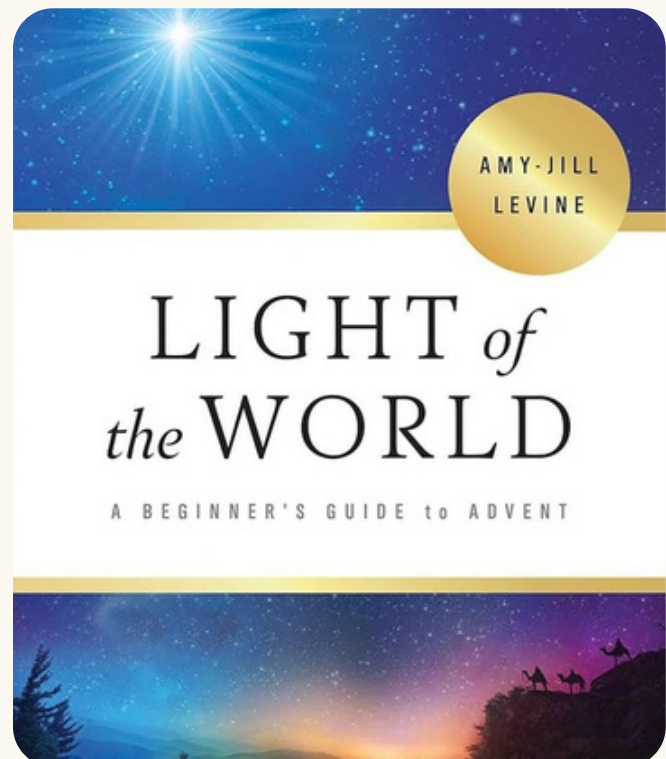
With curiosity, insight, and deep respect for the sacred biblical writings, Amy-Jill makes the wonder-filled stories of Zechariah, Elizabeth, and the births of John and Jesus, come alive for us! You will be particularly interested to see how she wrestles with Scripture to divine its meaning in the social context of the period and brings the story forward for our enjoyment and spiritual nourishment.

I hope you will join in a group study. We'll have a good time learning together!

Limited copies of Amy-Jill's book are available. Contact Patsy Kyles (pkyles@srvumc.org) to obtain a copy.

We are excited to experience the Christmas in this special way, and I hope you are, too. Be curious! Join us!

Questions or more information? Ask Pastor Sam (syun@srvumc.org) or Bill Rust (wrusjrarb@aol.com).



ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW MEMBERS JOIN SRVUMC.

Last month, SRVUMC had the blessing of welcoming several new members into our community of faith. We are thrilled that Holly Pence, Rob Rees, Bob Tharalsen, Kim Gillman, Jon Rairigh, and Angela Lee has made SRVUMC their spiritual home. We know they will continue to be a blessing to this community and this world that God so loves.

Please be sure to say hello to these new members when you see them on Sundays!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHARGE CONFERENCE OCCURS DECEMBER 3.

On Wednesday, December 3rd at 6:30PM, we will gather in Wesley Center for our charge conference. All are welcome. The agenda of Charge Conference includes approving the Pastor's Compensation for 2026, voting on church leadership for 2026, and annual review of our ministries and membership report. Church members can vote on issues raised during the meeting.

A light dinner will be provided.

Interested in attending? Please RSVP to [Patsy Kyles](mailto:pkyles@srvumc.org) at pkyles@srvumc.org.



SAN RAMON VALLEY CHORALE



CHRISTMAS WITH THE CHORALE

We invite you to join us!

December 6 & 7 at 4PM

SAN RAMON VALLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
902 DANVILLE BLVD, ALAMO

BUY YOUR TICKETS TODAY:
SRVCHORALE.COM/CONCERTINFO

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE MEN'S CHRISTMAS BRUNCH IS DECEMBER 6.

All men (and their family/guests) are welcome to attend the Methodist Men's Christmas Brunch in Wesley Center.

The date will be **Saturday, December 6, 9-11AM.**

After a six-year hiatus, we are pleased to invite all church members to the return of the Methodist Men's Christmas Brunch. Our co-breakfast leaders, Dave McWilliams and Brad Stribling, are preparing a special holiday breakfast, followed by a Christmas music program led by Jeff Howe and a group of choir members. We are delighted to announce that Santa Claus will be joining us. We look forward to celebrating together!

There will be a suggested donation of \$15 a person which will be collected at the event.

Click [here](https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3261406) to register or visit <https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3261406>.

After six years, we're delighted that the Men's Christmas Brunch is back! Rumor has it that Santa will make an appearance, too!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

AN INVITATION FOR YOU!

Who: For All SRVUMC Angels.

What: Our Annual Angel Tree Mission Project.

Where: Gift request tags will be on trees in the narthex or donations accepted and Angel helpers will shop for you.

When: Every Sunday November 16-December 7.

WHY: Support for local agencies that provide services for individuals and families who need our help this Christmas:

- **Fred Finch Youth Center** (children in long term care with developmental or mental health challenges ages 3-18)
- **Trinity Center** (serving unhoused adults)
- **Hope Solutions** (gifts for formerly unhoused families/individuals who have been very recently placed into a home)
- **STAND!** (gifts for families and the shelter that supports survivors of family violence and helps them stay safe and seek a happier, peaceful life)

- **Fostering Wishes** (grants wishes to children in foster care)

How: Choose a tag off the tree in the narthex. **Deliver your unwrapped gift with the tag attached to the church** either by putting it under the Angel Tree during Sunday worship (11/23, 11/30 or 12/7) OR by delivering them to the church office **no later than December 8th.**

There are three ways to donate:

- Angel helpers will be in the narthex before worship
- Donate to the Angel Tree online through Church Center
- Mail a check payable to SRVUMC with Angel Tree donation on the memo line to the church office:
SRVUMC
Attn: Angel Tree
902 Danville Boulevard
Alamo, Ca. 94507

Thank you in advance for being part of the Angel Team and helping to make this Christmas brighter for many.

Beth McClelland, Linda Green, Nancy Garnick and R.I.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

UPCOMING CONCERT: CHRISTMAS FOR EVERYONE.

The 14th annual "Christmas for Everyone" benefit concert on December 12 at 4PM in the sanctuary will feature cellist Stephen Evans, soprano Elizabeth Hunter Ashley and pianist, Melinda Morse performing classical, original and Christmas music.

Your voluntary contributions (suggested \$20/family) will go directly to the local 501(c)(3) charity Christmasforeveryone.com - serving Christmas dinner and a small gift to those in need in Contra Costa County.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

VOLUNTEER AT THE FOOD BANK DECEMBER 13.

Help fight hunger in Contra Costa and Solano County by volunteering at the local food bank. The next opportunity to serve is on **Saturday, December 13 from 11AM to 1PM**. In September we made an impact by packing fruits and vegetables for needy families. It's such a meaningful way to help with a significant need.

Click [here](#) to sign up! Or visit our website for more info:
www.srvumc.org/events.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHURCH CHRISTMAS CONCERT IS DECEMBER 14.

Join us as our church community musicians share the joy of the season on **December 14th at 5PM** in the sanctuary. This free Christmas concert is open to all. Bring a friend!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

SERVICE OF THE LONGEST NIGHT IS DECEMBER 21.

On December 21, the longest night of the year, we gather for a quiet service at 5:30pm in the Fireside Room.

Many of us approach the holidays with pain or grief, either new this year or renewed each year. Perhaps we feel removed from the festivities around us. Or, we might feel guilty when we take some pleasure in them and try to shrink away. The Longest Night Service is for everyone who has experienced grief, depression, or lingering pain of loss.

stephen
MINISTRY®

ANNOUNCEMENTS

REGISTER FOR THE WOMEN'S RETREAT.

2026 SRVUMC Women's Retreat
January 30 – February 1, 2026
Villa Maria del Mar – Santa Cruz, CA

Click [here](https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3213690) to register or visit <https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3213690>.

**“Touching Hope: Healing,
Wholeness, and Thriving in Troubled
Times”**

Retreat Leader: Rev. Debra Brady

In a world that often feels broken and unjust, how do we hold onto hope? As followers of Jesus, how do we find our center, tend our wounds, and reclaim joy—personally and communally?

Through the intertwined healing stories of two daughters in Mark 5:21-43, we'll explore the courage to reach out, the power of being seen and known, and the sacred possibility of being restored. Together we'll name our anger and grief, ground ourselves in sacred wisdom, and awaken to hope—not as wishful thinking, but as resilient, Spirit-led living.

All registration is online this year.
Our 2026 rates: Single is \$485 and Double is \$395.

**The Women's Retreat will be facilitated by
Rev. Debra Brady, pictured here.**



ANNOUNCEMENTS

COMING SOON: TRINITY CENTER MEALS.

By Peggy Crawford

As we have done for the past three years, groups from our church will provide evening meals to Trinity Center, the respite center for unhoused people in Walnut Creek. We have quite a history with Trinity Center, with groups having served Friday lunches there for several years in the past.

Meals will be prepared in our kitchen and delivered to Trinity Center. After the meal, the Trinity Center participants will spend the night in a warm secure location.

Sign up to lead a small group of 3-5 people to cook and serve in this important outreach opportunity. The dates are every Friday from January 9 through February 27.

We hope for a robust and rewarding participation again this year.

Questions? Contact [Peggy Crawford](mailto:pcraw2164@gmail.com) at pcraw2164@gmail.com for more information.

Earlier this year the Stephen Ministers prepared and delivered warm meals to Trinity Center in Walnut Creek.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

PLAYERS NEEDED FOR CHURCH PICKLEBALL.

Join the SRVUMC Pickleball Group for indoor play on Wednesdays from 6:30–8PM and Sundays from 3–5PM in the climate-controlled Activity Recreation Center (ARC) with three courts. New players can learn from experienced members during special sessions held once or twice every month or two. Extra rackets are available if you need one.

If you're interested in joining us, please contact Larry Pasquale at larry_pasquale@hotmail.com for more information and preparation details.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

SRVUMC STRENGTHENS BRAND IN 2025.

By Sarah Stribling

With God's help, the year 2025 saw SRVUMC take significant steps towards strengthening its new brand. Slam Media Lab, the Bay Area marketing design agency hired to develop a complete branding package and revamp the church website, concluded their work in March. The newly branded website showcasing our new logo, color palette, and crucially, our core values, launched in March as well. The new brand is important because it sets SRVUMC apart from other faith communities and demonstrates that SRVUMC aspires to live up to its core values of inclusion, inspiration, and impact.

Once the website launched, all other channels of church communication required rebranding as well, including the Friday Memo, newsletter, social media, and slides shown during worship. This was accomplished in early April. Since that date, all church communications have sought to embody the church's core values. For example, photography of church events strives to portray inclusion and diversity, especially in terms of race and age. In the first half of the year, feature articles in the newsletter highlighted inspirational life lessons from Nelson Mandela's antiapartheid work, a biography of Sojourner Truth, and the history of the LGBTQ rights movement. These articles generated positive comments from members of the congregation. Additionally, words used to promote church events on social media and in the Friday Memo often reference our core values or words related to those values.

As church communications began to emphasize our core values, it became clear that guidelines were needed to streamline promotion of church events and clarify expectations between the communications staff and the congregation (and vice versa). Approved by Church Council in October, the guidelines authorize communications staff to produce all promotional material on behalf of the church. This ensures that the brand's unique properties, including its font and color palette are employed in church communications and that church materials stay within the bounds of copyright.

SRVUMC hosted renowned Christian author Brian McLaren for a special event in March. He lectured on his new book *Life After Doom*. Because his book tackles faith and the timely topic of climate change, this bridge event drew 202 attendees from SRVUMC as well as the surrounding community. Part of this event's success may also **(continued on next page)**

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(continued from previous page) stem from using Eventbrite.

During the summer months, this writer and SPRC developed a job description and searched for a Communications Intern who could provide much needed backup for myself in case of a brief absence. Alex Maddux was hired in this role in September. Since then, this writer has trained him and delegated many key time-sensitive communications tasks to him. This writer has also written documentation of several communications tasks. This is the first time this writer has been in the role of supervisor.

The number of social media followers continues to increase. As of November, the SRVUMC Instagram account has 74 followers, up from 55 last year. Our YouTube channel has gained 80 subscribers this year, for a total of 415 subscribers total. Of the 44 YouTube Shorts that have been posted in 2025, 8 (18%) received over 400 views, 6 (14%) received over 500 views, and 3 (7%) received over 1,000 views.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES.

At SRVUMC, our Communications Department and Staff are dedicated to supporting the life and mission of our church. We want every ministry, program, and special event to receive the visibility it deserves so that people are informed, engaged, and inspired to participate. To achieve this, we depend on the partnership of ministry leaders to follow these guidelines. Doing so ensures consistency, excellence, and strong brand recognition across all church communications.

1. Promotion of Church Events

Our primary communication platforms (Friday Memo, monthly newsletter, social media, website, and campus signage) are designed to promote SRVUMC events and programs. Outside organizations, including nonprofits, will not be promoted unless explicitly approved by the Pastor and the Director of Communications.

2. Event Scheduling

To avoid conflicts and double-bookings, all events must first be approved by the Facilities Manager before they can be added to the church calendar. Only SRVUMC-specific events that are officially scheduled will be promoted by the Communications Department. Because campus scheduling is complex, please ensure you begin this process early.

3. Information Required for Promotion

For accurate and effective promotion, please email the following details to media@srvumc.org:

- Event title
- Day, time, and location
- Contact person (name & email/phone)
- Cost (if applicable)

Incomplete submissions will be referred back to the event contact for clarification.

4. Editorial Oversight

Event contacts are expected to draft blurbs or articles for their respective events. However, the Communications Staff has final editorial authority over all church communications. This includes text, titles, logos, images, photos, and multimedia. Edits may be made to ensure clarity, consistency, and alignment with church branding. **(continued on next page)**

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5. Authorized Design & Promotion

The Communications Staff is authorized to determine what, when, where, and through which platforms events are promoted. To maintain consistent branding, members and ministry leaders should not produce their own logos, flyers, postcards, or social media posts for official church communication. Digital and physical promotional materials will be created by the Communications Department as appropriate.

6. Image Use & Copyright

All images used in church communications must either be:

- Original photos taken at church events and submitted to media@srvumc.org, or
- Public domain/copyright-free images.

This ensures SRVUMC remains in compliance with copyright laws.

7. Balanced Promotion

Event promotion will be scheduled in the broader context of all upcoming church activities. The Communications Department will work to balance visibility among multiple events happening within the same time frame.

8. Flyers & Campus Placement

The Communications Staff is authorized to decide whether a flyer will be created for an event, and where (if at all) it will be placed on the church campus.

9. Communication Contact Person

When a group (such as a small group, class, or committee) wishes to promote an event, one designated person should serve as the contact with the Communications Department. This helps streamline communication and ensures accuracy.

10. Submission Deadlines

- Friday Memo: Submissions due each Wednesday by 4:00 PM.
- Monthly Newsletter: Submissions due on the 15th of each month.

Late submissions may not be included unless approved by the Senior Pastor.

By following these guidelines, we work together to ensure that SRVUMC events and ministries are communicated with clarity, professionalism, and consistency—so that the life of our church continues to shine brightly in our community.

For any questions or concerns, please reach out to the Director of Communications or to the Senior Pastor.





MERRY CHRISTMAS

December 25, 2025

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life."



A CULTURE OF CARE STARTS WITH PRAYER.

By Sylvia L.E. Hemmerich

How amazing is it that Almighty God wants us to spend time with Him? There's something about being in God's presence and taking time. Prayer holds you up in God's presence and you come out of it stronger.

Matthew 18:20 states "When two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them." It emphasizes that the power and validity of a gathering are not determined by its size but by the focus on Christ and the unity of believers. Praying faithfully on an ongoing basis is a part of everything we do as your Prayer Team. We are encouraged by the number of prayer requests we have received from October 2023 (73) to date. The increase from 2024 (443) to 2025 (673) is 52%. It is important to share the statistics with you for the following reasons:

- The increase indicates a culture of care. Our congregants and those streaming our service from YouTube feel heard and valued.
- A high volume of prayer requests can signal an active and engaged prayer life within the church. It fosters a stronger sense of

community and dependence on faith. It shows a strengthened prayer culture.

- Tracking and following up on requests allows the church to acknowledge God's faithfulness and celebrate when prayers are answered.

The team's goal remains the same: To help lead church members to an active prayer life. Some of you have asked for ways to show appreciation for the team. Here are a few ideas:

- **Write a note or a card.** This is a personal and direct mail to express your thanks.
- **Be specific.** Mention how their prayers specifically helped you.
- **Mention their impact.** Let them know that their prayers have helped your spiritual growth.
- If you can, **follow up with them** to let them know the positive outcome you experienced thanks to their prayers.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Light of the World, may we begin to see the world in the light of
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SPIRITUAL GROWTH

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understanding He gave us. As He chose the lowly, the outcasts, and the poor to receive the greatest news the world has ever known, may we worship Him in meekness of heart. May we also remember our brothers and sisters less fortunate than ourselves in this season of giving.

May God fill your heart with love and light this Christmas!



SPIRITUAL GROWTH

NURTURING OUR FAITH.

By Bill Rust

This has been an active year for our adult faith development ministries at SRVUMC. Adult ministry groups have been generally under the umbrella of the Faith Development Committee. Key areas of focus include Adult Education, Disciple Bible Study and other Bible studies, and the Life Group Ministry.

Our classes, study groups and events are designed to give practical meaning to SRVUMC's guiding vision: PURSUING A LIFE WITH GOD AND A LIFE WITH EACH OTHER BY FOLLOWING JESUS, THRIVING IN COMMUNITY, AND HEALING THE WORLD.

These classes are for busy people. Several are short (only six sessions), making participation easier. Longer classes may be "drop-in" or for a set group. People mix and match classes that fit their schedules. Classes have included Taking the Sermon Into the World, "The Historical Jesus" discussion group, Tuesday morning Bible study with Pastor Sam, Disciple Fast Track, the Friday Morning Coffee Group, and a congregation-wide Advent study, among others.

In addition to these classes and studies, many of our ongoing groups also present complementary book and video studies and other faith growing experiences. These studies have included Discovery Dinners for prospective new members, "shepherd" training classes for facilitators of Life Groups, LIFT (Living, Loving, Learning in Faith Together), a women's study group, the Men's Faith Sharing group, the Friday Morning Men's Group, the Earth Care Meditation & Movement Group, retreats, and more.

In addition to the faith-related classes, we have about 40 active groups with a variety of interests, from faith formation to fellowship. These have included The Kindness Korps, UMeUs (You, Me, Us), and Stephen Ministry. Highlights also include renowned author Brian McLaren's visit to SRVUMC in March to teach an overflow crowd of church members and interested people from the surrounding community. There were also two Ministry Fairs that showed people how they can get involved in our church community and equipped for outreach.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

MOBILITY CLASS HELPS SENIORS STAY STRONG.

By Susan Madden

I attended the first mobility class hosted by PEACE (Providing Easier Access to Care Everywhere) today during my lunch break. I was surprised how tight my muscles were when we started, all the hours sitting at my desk take a toll that I hadn't noticed or probably just ignored.

The instructor was Teri DeLaMontanya, a registered nurse, and cofounder of PEACE. She said during her 22 years in Emergency Services at John Muir Health the most common source of injuries was falls and how important it is to retain strength and balance as we age. She led us through some no-nonsense basic stretches and exercises with simple equipment and easy to follow instructions. Spoiler Alert – a small movement can create a huge benefit. And we had a free form dance session too; it was quite fun.

Teri tailored her coaching to accommodate the varying levels of abilities, and I felt the class was inclusive, not the usual 'gym approach'. I particularly liked that she was engaged and watching each of us, and if someone needed help, Nurse

Teri would have our backs...literally. I was wondering if I'd be tired returning to work but was surprised by how energized I felt when we were done and how loose and warm my muscles were when we finished.

Registration in advance is required because there are a few pieces of equipment she brings to class for each registrant. I recommend that people try it, if not once a week, then whenever they can fit it into their schedules. It is worth it.

To register, click [here](#) or visit <https://shorturl.at/DznaP>.



BETWEEN THE BOOKENDS.



MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!

We celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, this month. Let us remember his teachings which we find in the Bible. Be helpful to others in any way and be generous.

Relax and read a warm-feeling book as you listen to holiday music. There are many on the cart for your browsing.

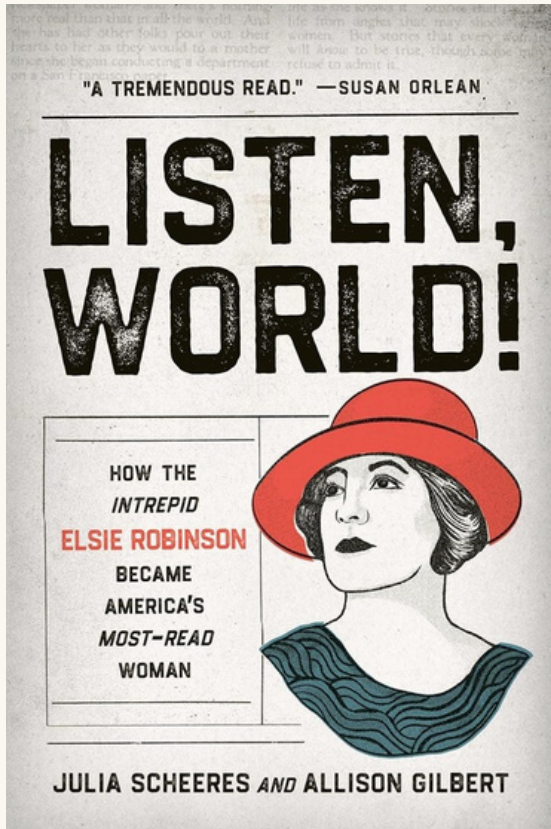
Happy Reading!

~ Caroline Walsh

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

AFTERNOON BOOK GROUP.

FOURTH MONDAY OF THE MONTH AT 1 PM IN THE CHURCH LIBRARY.



NEXT BOOK SELECTION: LISTEN, WORLD!

In our (combined November/December) meeting on **December 8th**, the book is **Listen World** by Julia Scheeres and Alison Gilbert. This is a biography about a local woman who pushed through limits and expectations and became a syndicated columnist in the 20s and 30s.

Click [here](https://www.amazon.com/Listen-World-Intrepid-Robinson-Most-Read/dp/1541674359) to buy the book or go to <https://www.amazon.com/Listen-World-Intrepid-Robinson-Most-Read/dp/1541674359>.

Contact [Jenny Swanson](mailto:jenny.swanson646@gmail.com) (jenny.swanson646@gmail.com) for more information.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH



This will be UMeUs' second excursion to Filoli Gardens! This past October, UMeUs visited the troll exhibit in beautiful autumn.



The Women's Christmas Tea is an eagerly anticipated event with festive food, entertainment and stunningly decorated tables.

FIELD TRIP: CHRISTMAS LIGHTS AT FILOLI GARDENS, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6

Celebrate the season by basking in the glow of festive Christmas lights at the beautiful Filoli Gardens! Meet in the church parking lot at 3:30PM on December 6th to carpool to Filoli Gardens. The cost is \$45 per person. Click [here](https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3240354) to register or visit <https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3240354>.

WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS TEA SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13

Save the date for the annual Women's Christmas Tea on Saturday, December 13th. This is one of our most special inter generational events. Click [here](https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/2663463) to register or visit <https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/2663463>.

JANUARY SCHEDULE

Regularly scheduled UMEUS events will resume in January 2026.

HARVEST FESTIVAL

A HUGE SUCCESS.

By Shannon Dever

We have just experienced our 16th Harvest Festival Craft Fair. It has grown from its humble beginnings as a venue to sell items made by the Handicrafters group to what it is today: A celebration of our church artisans and talented members of the community.

This year was extra successful. From the increased publicity, handled by Linda Green, to the excellence of our crafters and extra visitors from the voting on campus, we served more people in the Harvest Cafe and saw more visitors to the Fair.

It takes a lot of hands to accomplish a successful event. I am so grateful to the ladies of our Thursday LIFT (Learning, Living, Loving In Faith Together) group for setting up and breaking down the many tables and chairs needed for our crafters and diners. What Boyd Hasik and Brian Roberts used to do solo now takes many hands. The takedown crew included husbands of LIFT ladies: Linda Albertoni and Dave Engman, Sandy and Bill Gsand and grandson Robby, HollyAnn Melton and Margie Durham. Our cooks and bakers for the

Harvest Festival did a marvelous job. Cooks Nancy and Greg Benvenuto and Anita Weir-Ball and Jim Ball created the delectable soups and salad we all enjoyed. Our bakers, Carole Johnson, Brad Stribling, Ellen Siegel and Anita Weir-Ball, made their most delicious pies. Kitchen crew included: Ellen Siegel, Margie Durham, Peggy Hiratzka, and the cashiers were Bill Van Bezey and Jim Ball.

Also thanks to the String Alongs ukulele group, led by Teri Hawk, for serenading us through lunch.

It was a fun day with lots of hugs and laughter and seeing old friends, like Alison Berry and Heather Hammer. As a fundraiser for the church, it was an extra successful event, raising \$2800 for missions supported by our church.

Thanks to everyone who came and enjoyed a day that has become a much-awaited treat each year.

OUT INTO THE WORLD

HARVEST FESTIVAL.

As the article on the previous page attests, last month's Harvest Festival was a huge success! Thank you to everyone who supported all the local artists. Hosting memorable events like these are another way SRVUMC thrives in community!

Special thanks to the artists who showcased their lovely homemade items!



OUT INTO THE WORLD

WHITE PONY EXPRESS.

By Jerry Ricker

Last month nine church members and two of their guests volunteered to sort food at White Pony Express in Concord. All participants felt that they did hard work and were happy to help provide good food for those in need.

Please consider joining us for another volunteer opportunity at White Pony Express in January. God's blessings to everyone who attended.



DONATE TO THE COAT DRIVE.

By Karen Hernandez

Now through December 7, the youth group is coordinating a coat drive for women and children who are served at Love a Child Missions in Bay Point. Serving the Bay Area since 1984, Love A Child Missions helps unhoused women and children of Contra Costa County by providing emergency shelter, food, clothing, and offering hope through substance recovery programs, job training, educational support, and many other programs.

The coat drive is also a county wide effort through the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County - where youth from several faith traditions, including the San Ramon Valley Islamic Center (of which the confirmation class visited in March), will also collect coats. On December 7, after worship, youth from the Islamic Center will join our youth group for lunch. After, we will all drive to Love a Child in Bay Point and drop off the coats.

New or gently used women's coats in all sizes, as well as children's coats in all sizes (for boys and girls), are needed and welcomed. Collection boxes are located in the narthex and the entry way in Wesley.

Please reach out to [Karen Hernandez](mailto:khernandez@srvumc.org) (khernandez@srvumc.org) with any questions and thank you for not only supporting the SRVUMC Youth Group's efforts, but for offering much needed warmth to those who need it, across Contra Costa County.



CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

- 1 David Hagebush
- 2 Madison More
Anita Weir-Ball
- 3 Chris Neisinger
Greg Koos
Thomas Mannell
Jane Roath
- 7 Niles Bybel
Bailee Smallwood
- 9 Kirsten Choy
Alison Kuelz
Marlys Siegel
Epi Vazquez
- 10 Karen Steffy
- 12 Dewey Reikofski
- 13 Olivia Bybel
Amanda Lang
Robbie Rigolfi, Jr.
Deborah Robinson
- 14 Lillian Baker Holleman
Ivan Kerr
Annette Whiting
- 17 Teresa Christensen
Helen Sinclair
- 18 Carol Arabian
Anne Kuelz
- 19 Teresa Stroin
- 20 Kathleen Isbell
- 21 Susan Pickering-Gest
- 22 Kevin Isbell
HollyAnn Melton
Flo Spanier **(104)**
- 23 Angela Norton
- 24 Gordon Pierce
- 26 Katie Merchant
Sherry More'
- 29 George Hawk
Kevin Keen
- 30 Phyllis Meyer
Elise Doyle
Susan Rideout
- 31 Warren McGuffin

ANNIVERSARIES

- 9 Renée & Doug Beck
- 9 Frances & David Stephenson **(53)**
- 17 Donna & Lance Schlichter
- 18 Laura & Tom Roy
- 21 Shelley & Bill Lettis
- 27 Barbara & Tom Valdriz
- 28 Sheryl & Ivan Kerr **(63)**



AMONG OURSELVES.



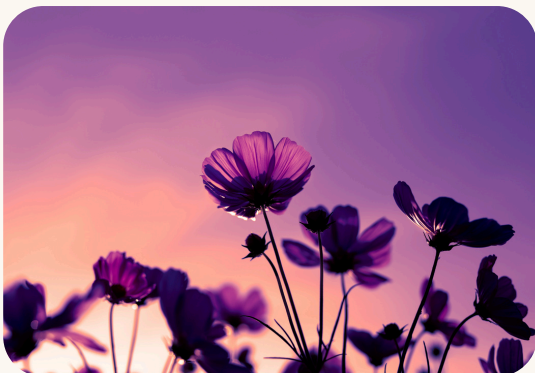
HEALTH CONCERNS

Kay Jones, Jeff Lang, Mary Nelson, Melanie and Boyd Hasik, Adam Kennedy, Lonnie Bristow, Carol Fhlug, Isabel D'Elia, Andrea Bourgeois, Julie Klug's nephew Taylor, Chris Hoff, ClaudeC Johannesen, Shana Carroll, Pastor Sam's parents, Jan Anderson and Bill Sabin.



CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR

All those who live with long-term illness, those recovering from COVID-19, unemployment, life decisions, homelessness, and sickness in their families.



OUR SYMPATHY

To Vin Hirsch and his family on the passing of his wife, Jo Ann.

To Andrea Bourgeois and her family on the passing of her father.

NEVER MISS AN ISSUE!

The Valley Messenger is delivered right to your inbox. Stay connected with all things SRVUMC, and read interviews, book reviews, and more.

Check out our website to keep up with church happenings, sign up for upcoming events and groups, and read our newsletter anytime, anywhere.



OUR TEAM

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