



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



TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Don't Miss This Greatest Opportunity!	3-4
Announcements	5-9
Spiritual Growth	10-15
Out Into the World	16-17
Preschool	18
Celebrations	19
Among Ourselves	20

DON'T MISS THIS GREATEST OPPORTUNITY!

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

— 1 Peter 1:3 (NIV)

We are now fully into the season of Lent—and before we know it, we will be stepping into Holy Week: Palm Sunday. Maundy Thursday. Good Friday. And then, by the grace and power of God, Easter Sunday. What a sacred stretch of days this is.

In these weeks, we are given an abundance of opportunity to bring our hearts in worship to the One who laid down His life for us on the cross and has given us eternal hope through the resurrection. This is not just another season on the church calendar. This is the heart of our faith.

And that is why I want to say this as clearly as I can: **Don't miss this greatest opportunity.**

Easter is one of those Sundays when people, in general, are already thinking about Easter. Of course, Target, Walmart, and Safeway help with that—aisles full of chocolates,

giant bunnies, baskets, and every imaginable pastel-colored thing. For many people, Easter can feel a little secular, a little fictional, and mostly kid-focused.

But we know Easter is so much more than pastel eggs and oversized rabbits. **Easter is the central celebration of the Christian year.** In fact, I would argue it deserves even more focus and attention than Christmas. Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus—and yes, that is wondrous and holy. But Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus. And as far as history records, **only one person has died and returned in victory over death itself**—Jesus Christ.

That changes everything.

Frederick Buechner captured the Easter hope so beautifully when he wrote, **“The resurrection means that the worst thing is never the last thing.”**

That is Easter. That is our hope. That is the message our world desperately needs.

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And here is where this becomes very practical for us as a church: Research continues to show that people are often more open to an invitation than we assume. A Barna study found many churchgoing adults viewed Easter as a natural time to invite someone, but only 31% saying they would definitely invite a non-churchgoing person that year. And LifeWay Research has reported that 63% of Americans say a personal invitation from a friend or neighbor would be very effective in getting them to visit a church. And that means this moment matters.

We have all shared good things with friends: a great restaurant, a new movie, a favorite recipe, a vacation spot we loved. So why would we not share the greatest news of all?

Jesus Christ—and the hope He offers for our lives.

This year, **Easter is April 5.** That means you have a whole month to begin praying and making personal invitations.

Invite a neighbor. Invite a coworker. Invite a family member. Invite that person who has been “meaning to come someday.” Invite someone who is hurting. Invite someone who is searching. Invite someone who has not been in a church in years.

Let’s not miss this opportunity.

Let’s pack the church! Not for the sake of numbers. But for the sake of people. For the sake of the Gospel. For the sake of love. Because this may be the most important and loving invitation you ever extend to someone.

Both of our Easter Sunday services (9:00 AM & 11:00 AM) will be a joyful and hope-filled celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are preparing a beautiful morning of **uplifting worship, powerful music, and a life-giving Easter message** that proclaims the victory of Christ over sin and death. Whether someone is a longtime believer, a returning churchgoer, or a first-time guest, this will be a meaningful Sunday to experience the love and hope of God.

And for our families: we will also have a **special Easter Egg Hunt for the kiddos between services**, making it a wonderful morning for the whole church community.

So start now. Pray now. Invite now.

Don’t miss this greatest opportunity.

Excited To Celebrate The Best Easter Ever,

P. Sam | syun@srvumc.org

P.S. Also don’t forget that we will be having services for Maundy Thursday (April 2) and Good Friday (April 3) both at 7 PM in the sanctuary and online. Hope you can make it!

Join SRVUMC for

HOLY WEEK



PALM SUNDAY

March 29 • 10 AM

MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 2 • 7 PM

GOOD FRIDAY

April 3 • 7 PM

EASTER SUNDAY

April 5

Sunrise Service • 6:30 AM

Easter Worship • 9 AM • 11 AM

Easter Egg Hunt • 10:30 AM



srvumc.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW CONCERT SERIES CONTINUES MARCH 7.

Join us on Saturday, **March 7 at 6 PM** in the Wesley Center for our brand new **ELEVATED CONNECTION Concert Series**. We will be featuring Christian singer-songwriter Rachel Gould from the Walnut Creek / Concord area. Come and enjoy an evening of great music, delicious food, and awesome community! Be sure to spread the word and invite a guest to come with you!



VOLUNTEER AT THE FOOD BANK ON MARCH 7.

Our next scheduled shift is March 7th, from 11 AM-1 PM, and we can take eighteen people on this shift. In December we packed thousands of individual packages of fruits and vegetables for needy families, and those who went had a wonderful experience. It's such a meaningful way to contribute to a significant need right now. Learn more about the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano [here](#) or visit <https://www.foodbankccs.org>.

Click [here](#) to register or visit <https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3466506>.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

VOLUNTEER AT WHITE PONY EXPRESS.

Volunteer to sort food (mostly fruit and vegetables) on **March 17th from 9-11AM** at White Pony Express in Concord.

Meet in the church parking lot at 8:30AM.

Please be sure to wear your SRVUMC volunteer shirt if you have one.

Learn more about White Pony Express [here](#) or visit <https://whiteponyexpress.org>.

Click [here](#) to sign up on Church Center or visit <https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3351297>.



SPECIAL OFFERING: HOPE SOLUTIONS.

Your Special Offering this quarter will go towards supporting Hope Solutions. This well-respected charitable organization helps end homelessness by providing housing and support services to more than 2,000 marginalized families and individuals. Hope Solutions is the “go-to” role-model that cities in Contra Costa County use to help those in need get back on their feet.

You can support Hope Solutions’ important work by donating to SRVUMC’s Special Offering fund [here](https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/giving/to/special-missions-offering) (<https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/giving/to/special-missions-offering>)

You can also donate to Hope Solutions’ annual fundraiser gala on March 14th.

Grab your tickets [here](#) before they’re gone or visit <https://www.hopesolutions.org/annualgala/>.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEWS FROM THE ROUSH KITCHEN.

By Anita Weir-Ball, Kitchen Manager

We are starting the new year off with sparkling clean cabinets and walls thanks to a small crew of super scrubbers! Hat's off to Nancy Amini, Margie Durham and Ann Radick who applied a lot of TLC and arm action last week!

The Board of Trustees is working diligently to find a suitable replacement dishwasher which will take some time and, of course, money.

Keep the kitchen green! Remember: Those pretty colored plates, napkins and cups have to go to the landfill. Please avoid buying them and ask caterers not to bring them.

Thanks to all of the kitchen users for keeping it clean and organized so we pass county inspections!



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

March 8

Happy International Women's Day to the women of the world! We celebrate your inspiring courage and resilience.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR WINTER NIGHTS PROGRAM.

We are excited to be hosting unhoused families this year from April 27 - May 11. SRVUMC is responsible for taking care of the first week (April 27 - May 3). St. Isidore's Catholic Church will be responsible for the second week, on our campus. For the program to be successful, we rely on lots of volunteers!

This year, we will be asking everyone who is interested in volunteering to sign up for the shift(s) they are interested in via Signup Genius. There are a variety of jobs available, such as helping with meals, childcare, laundry, etc. Note that a couple of the jobs have special qualifications: kitchen managers must have undergone kitchen training with Anita Weir (she is happy to provide additional training sessions), and any adults working directly with children must have current Safe Gatherings certification and be fingerprinted (the church will cover the cost of those; contact [Laura Roy](mailto:Laura.Roy@srvumc.org) ([lroy@srvumc.org](mailto:Laura.Roy@srvumc.org)) for details).

You can sign up to volunteer [here](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0949A8AD22A31-61831546-winter) or visit <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0949A8AD22A31-61831546-winter>.

If you are interested in making a donation to help pay for groceries and supplies, you can do so [here](#) or go to <https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/giving/to/winter-nights-shelter>.

You can learn more about the Winter Nights program [here](#) or visit <https://cccwinternights.org/>.

Thank you for your support and your generosity. Feel free to contact either of us with any questions you might have.

Kal Peters (kaltpeters@gmail.com)
and Nancy Garnick
(nancyogarnick@gmail.com)



SPIRITUAL GROWTH

LAY LEADER MUSINGS.

Do you know what the Lay Leader, or in our case Co-Lay Leaders, do? We are the co-lay leaders and we only sort of know! Clearly, it is supposed to be a whole lot more than just reading the opportunities announcement on Sunday morning and attending some meetings as a voting member (Lay Leaders participate on the Finance Committee, Staff Parish Relations Committee, Nominations Committee and Church Council).

Here at SRVUMC our role is evolving, an evolution started by Brad Stribling and we hope to continue and expand. And we truly hope you will be a big part of that process. How is that you ask?

Have you ever had that moment; you know that moment; maybe it woke you up at 2 AM, maybe it popped into your head at mile marker 1 on the Iron Horse Trail or maybe it just became clear while quietly enjoying your morning tea or coffee. You know what we're talking about. It's that moment when you found yourself thinking, our church could do that!

We would dearly love it if you would

seek us out and share what that moment was about! You may as well throw in whatever vision(s) of the future of SRVUMC you may have. And just like, "there is no dumb question," there are no unworthy moments. Let's dream together.

It is our goal to have ongoing "musings" in future newsletters with a continuing view to the new things we Co Lay Leaders are doing. And just maybe it will be all about your moment.

May the Peace of Christ be with you.

[Peggy Crawford](#)
(pcraw2164@gmail.com) & [Bill Fulcher](#)
(objoyful1952@gmail.com)
Co Lay Leaders



SPIRITUAL GROWTH

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: TANIA MOORE-BOLSTAD.

By Sarah Stribling

Hired in October 2025, Tania Moore-Bolstad is SRVUMC's Youth Ministry Coordinator. Her extensive background working with children demonstrates her strong passion for facilitating faith formation of young people.

Raised Jehovah's Witness in Merced, Tania found a spiritual home in the United Methodist tradition at age 25. Drawn by the inclusive environment of UMC Merced, she became a youth ministry leader there for a decade. In addition to being a consistent adult presence in children's lives, Tania helped ensure Sunday School was a safe place to explore faith and ask questions.

Tania realized she wanted to work with youth while working at an after-school program. Working with shy children softened her heart. "Getting shy kids to open up is amazing," Tania says. She loves watching young people flourish.

Tania has extensive experience working in human services and advocacy. She's connected survivors of domestic violence and sexual

assault with needed resources for the past five years. Tania is currently working on completing her Bachelor's degree in Trauma Informed Care.

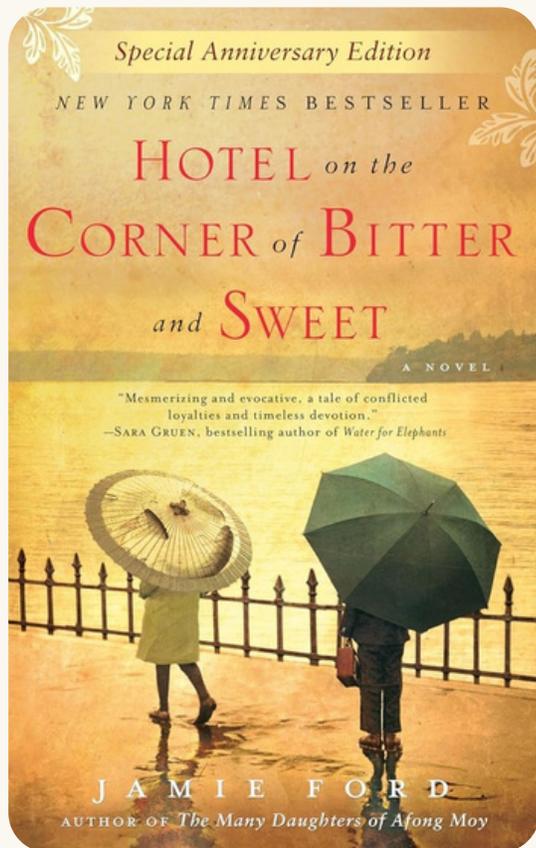
Tania's hopes for the youth program include expanding it and facilitating an environment where kids can be themselves and grow in faith at their own pace.

A scripture verse that guides Tania's life is Micah 6:8, a reminder to act justly, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. "Faith is lived through compassion," Tania asserts.

**Tania and her wife Marci.
The two married in 2025.**



BETWEEN THE BOOKENDS.



CELEBRATING LUNAR NEW YEAR!

“Beware the Ides of March,” so said the soothsayer to Caesar. No soothsayer hears warnings of bad news, only good news of some different books. Lunar New Year occurred Feb. 17. Therefore, these books might interest some readers. They are:

[Thousand Pieces of Gold](#)

[The Street of a Thousand Blossoms](#)

[Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet](#)

This last book involves two younger kids: Henry, a boy of Chinese descent and Keiko, a girl of Japanese descent. Both live in San Francisco but in two separate areas quite a distance apart. They attend the same school because each of their parents wants the same thing: That their children attain a better education by attending a

school where English is spoken. The effect on them is very stressful because neither one is accepted by their classmates. Henry experiences bullying almost daily. Keiko and Henry become acquainted because each one works in the cafeteria and they eat lunch together when the serving ends. They become fast friends and remain so as the conflict escalates with Japan targeting various areas of China. It becomes apparent to the U.S. that a war with Japan is inevitable. The entire Japanese area of San Francisco is closed down, and everyone is sent off to concentration camps. Henry, having become enamored with Keiko, can barely say goodbye. What he tells her is that he will wait for her to return.

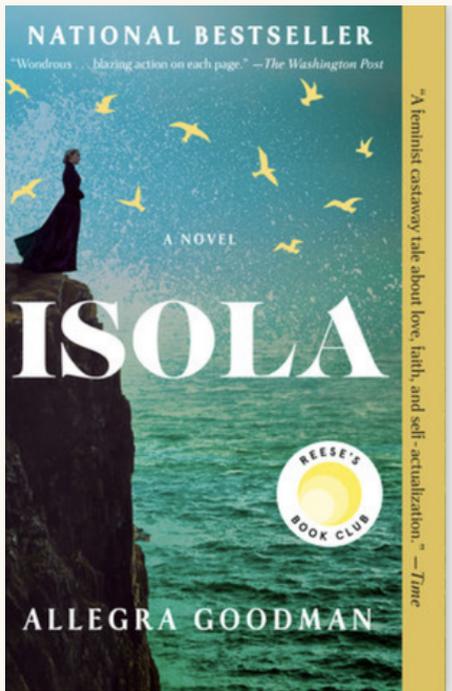
The reader of this book will recall that the war lasted longer than anticipated, then ended with the signing of a peace treaty aboard a naval ship. Today Chinatown is located in one part of San Francisco and Japantown with its fortune cookie bakery in another section.

For you readers who watched the Grammys, you know that Trevor Noah was the master of ceremonies. His book, [Born a Crime](#), is also on the cart.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

AFTERNOON BOOK GROUP.

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



NEXT BOOK SELECTION: **ISOLA.**

The **March 23** pick is *Isola* by Allegra Goodman. It is a historical fiction novel based on the true story of a 16-century French noblewoman abandoned by her guardian to survive on her own.

Click [here](#) to buy the book or go to <https://www.amazon.com/Isola-Novel-Allegra-Goodman/dp/0593730089>.

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

TRANS DAY OF VISIBILITY

As a Reconciling congregation, SRVUMC stands in solidarity with the transgender community to raise awareness about anti-trans discrimination.

March 31



SPIRITUAL GROWTH



Last month, our own **Bill Dastic** shared stories from his writing journey. His warmth and insights made for an inspiring afternoon.



The luck of the Irish be with you! Don't miss UMeUs' **St. Patrick's Day feast!** Remember to wear green!

POTLUCK & PRESENTATION TUESDAY, MARCH 3RD, 11:45AM, WESLEY CENTER

Join us for our March Potluck & Presentation as we welcome **A New Wrinkle**, a local nonprofit that helps seniors and their families find personalized support and resources. **Clarke Stone and Julie Derby Jaecksch** will share the heart behind their work and the ways they walk alongside older adults in our community. **Bring a dish to share!**

LUNCH WITH FRIENDS TUESDAY, MARCH 17TH, NOON, WESLEY CENTER

Our March Lunch with Friends features a comforting Shepherd's Pie and plenty of time to relax, connect, and enjoy one another's company. Since we're gathering on St. Patrick's Day, feel free to **wear a little green**—or expect a playful pinch from someone who does. This lunch is simple, warm, and always full of good conversation. Everyone is welcome at the table.

APRIL SCHEDULE

Mark your calendar for **Potluck and Presentation April 7th** and **Lunch with Friends on April 21st!**



BINGO & BUFFET

Looking for a fun way to spend your afternoon? Join us for **UMeUs Buffet & Bingo** – a simple lunch, friendly faces, and a few rounds of bingo with prizes. It's an easy, joyful way to connect, relax, and share some laughs together.

MARCH 31 | JUNE 30 | SEPT. 29

12:00 PM WESLEY CENTER

UMeUs
— YOU/ME/US

OUT INTO THE WORLD

NOT YOUR AVERAGE JOES.

By Warren Cancel

On Friday, February 6, a small group from SRVUMC prepared and served dinner for thirty people gathered at Trinity Center in Walnut Creek.

Brad Stribling, Claudia Artiga, Lindsay Hiratzka and Warren Cancel enjoyed lively conversation and fellowship while preparing a dinner that included their now famous "Signature Sloppy Joes" that were enjoyed by all.

What a wonderful way to continue to deepen friendships while serving others.



THE ROAD AHEAD FOR WHITE PONY EXPRESS.

By Mandy Nakaya, White Pony Express

As we step into 2026, WPE's feels more important than ever. Thanks to your support, our volunteer-powered effort to end hunger and protect the planet is moving faster and further than ever before. This year, we are expanding to 110+ nonprofit recipients and delivering fresh food to school pantries and senior homes across the county.

We are welcoming more grocery stores and restaurants into our food donor family of communities. Together we are already preventing 56,741 metric tons of CO2 from entering the atmosphere. What is good for people is also a win for the planet.

Today, WPE touches 130,000 lives and saves 12,000 meals every day, yet a waitlist remains. Our goal is simple, shrink that list to zero.

Abundance belongs to everyone. Together, we can make sure it always finds its way to the plate.

OUT INTO THE WORLD

THE WOMEN'S RETREAT.

The 2026 Women's Retreat was a huge success! Over fifty women gathered at the Villa Maria del Mar retreat center in Santa Cruz. Rev. Debra Brady facilitated the retreat with the inspiring theme "Touching Hope: Healing, Wholeness, and Thriving in Troubled Times." May God bless the friendships and spiritual growth that were forged during this sacred time.

Special thanks to Debra Brady for leading the retreat!



PRESCHOOL

PANCAKES AND PAJAMA DAYS!

Our United Methodist Preschool recently hosted Pancakes and Pajama Days for our children and families!

We were joined each morning by happy, hungry children dressed in their favorite pajamas. For three days in a row Wesley Hall was filled with smiles, comfy pajamas, and the delicious smell of pancakes. The children loved showing their pajamas to their friends and enjoying yummy pancakes for breakfast with their parents! All of this took place before school began for the day.

Thank you to our families for helping make these special days such a sweet success. We love it when parents join us for our extra special days; it helps us create such a warm sense of community. We especially loved starting our day with togetherness, joy, and bellies full of yummy pancakes!



CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Bart Jacobi **(94)**
- 2 Al Tiedemann
- 3 Debra Carter
Peggy Hiratzka
- 4 Steve Roath
Mike Scalzi
- 5 Patsy Kyles
Richard Carter
- 7 Cindy Rudow
- 9 Terry Sherman
Paige Steffy
Roger Ten Elshof
- 11 Carrie Doyle
William Gross
- 13 Al Banisch
Ellen Kocins
- 15 Cathy Colman
Brian Doyle
Annette Patch **(92)**
- 16 Corinne Pavel
Susan Stevenson
Erica Grant
- 17 Patti May
- 18 Grace Willman
- 19 Jim Burk
Gavin Helms
Abby Lang
Lori Pavel
Shirin Beshara
Grady Milligan
- 20 Bill Van Bezey
John VanderWerf
- 22 Liz Field
Mike Gross
- 23 Karen Scalzi
- 24 Katie Buckley
- 25 Marianne Templeton
- 27 Dianne Anderson
Elizabeth Beck McDaniel
- 29 Katie Hawk
- 30 Sam Hoff
Kevin Peters
- 31 Candice Newburn
Greg Warwick

ANNIVERSARIES

- 5 Kirsten & Langley Choy
- 6 Amy & John Riedel
- 8 Cindy & Tony Leonard
Andrea Bourgeois & Dave McWilliams
Lori & John Pavel
Susie & Peter Ruotsi **(57)**
- 21 Carolyn & William Gross **(56)**
- 22 Erin & Rich Lowther
- 25 Sherry & Sanjiv More'
- 26 Dianne & Roger Ehlers **(54)**
- 31 Susan & Dale Stevenson **(63)**
- 31 Sandy Greenwood-Davidson & Ed Davidson



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, Dave McWilliams, Julie Klug’s nephew Taylor, Chris Hoff, ClaudeC Johannesen, Bart Jacobi, Pastor Sam’s father-in-law, Pastor Sam’s parents, Bill Sabin, Jim Bunker, and Judi Bauerlein.



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 Flo Spanier and the family of Gus Broelin on his passing on February 24, 2026.

To Julien Hansen on the passing of his sister, Hazel

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.



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