



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.

How Goes It With Your Church?	3-5
Announcements	6-12
Spiritual Growth	13-16
Out Into the World	17
Celebrations	18
Among Ourselves	19

HOW GOES IT WITH YOUR CHURCH?

“Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together... but encouraging one another.”

— Hebrews 10:24–25

In the early days of the Methodist movement, long before there were sanctuaries and structures, there was a small group of students at Oxford University known as the “Holy Club.” Led by brothers John and Charles Wesley, this group was committed to a serious, intentional pursuit of a life with God. Their practices were simple, but deeply transformative: daily prayer, searching the Scriptures, acts of mercy, accountability, and regular gathering.

But perhaps one of the most powerful things they did was ask each other a question every time they met: **“How goes it with your soul?”**

This wasn’t a casual check-in. It wasn’t surface-level conversation. It was an invitation into honesty, reflection, and growth. It was a question that required vulnerability. A question that made space for confession, encouragement, and renewed commitment. It was a question that

reminded them that faith is not a solo journey—it’s something we live out together.

And it’s a question that still matters.

But today, I want to ask a slightly different question—one that grows out of that same spirit of accountability and shared discipleship: **How goes it with your church?** Or perhaps more accurately: **How goes it with our church?**

This is the question that will guide us as we gather for our upcoming **“State of the Church Town Hall”** on **Saturday, June 13 from 9:00–11:00 AM in Wesley Center.**

This will not be just another meeting. It will be a moment for us to pause, reflect, and discern together.

We will begin by grounding ourselves once again in the vision that we hold as a community: **to pursue a life with God and a life with each other by following Jesus, thriving in community, and healing the world.** This vision is not just words on a page—it is a calling that shapes who we are (**continued on next page**)

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and who we are becoming.

During our time together, I will share some pastoral direction for the road ahead—where I believe God is leading us in this next season of ministry and discipleship. Our Co-Lay Leaders, Peggy Crawford and Bill Fulcher, will bring to life the heartbeat of our church through testimonies they have gathered—stories of transformation, renewal, and hope. These are not abstract ideas. These are real stories of real people. From those who have been part of this church for decades to those who have only just recently found their way here—God is at work among us. There is so much to celebrate.

And yet, part of asking “How goes it with our church?” means we also take an honest look at our present realities.

Jill Shibuya, our Finance Chair, and Paul Kuelz, Chair of our Board of Trustees, will help us do just that. They will offer a clear and transparent picture of our financial landscape, as well as the very real needs before us—particularly around our campus and deferred maintenance. This is not meant to discourage us, but to ground us. Faithfulness requires both vision and honesty.

This gathering will also create meaningful space for your voice. We

will spend time in small group conversations—sharing reflections, raising questions, expressing concerns, and offering ideas for the future. The church is not built by a few—it is shaped by all of us, together. Your perspective matters. Your presence matters.

Childcare will be provided so that as many as possible can participate fully in this important time.

Friends, I truly believe this will be a sacred morning—one where we will be inspired, challenged, and invited into something deeper. A moment to realign, recommit, and reimagine what God can do in and through us.

And let me say this clearly, as your pastor, with deep faith and conviction: **Our best years are not behind us. They are still ahead of us.** God is not finished with this church. Not even close.

But the future God is calling us into will require something of us—greater commitment, renewed passion, courageous generosity, and a shared sense of purpose. It will require us to move from spectators to participants, from consumers to disciples, from maintenance to mission.

So I invite you—no, I urge you—to be there. Come with an open heart. Come with **(continued on next page)**

(continued from previous page) honest questions. Come ready to listen, to share, and to discern. Come ready to take your place in the story God is continuing to write through this church.

Because the question is not just, “How goes it with our church?” The deeper question is: **What kind of church is God calling us to become—together?**

Let’s discover the answer together! Amen?

With Great Hope and Excitement,
P. Sam | syun@srvumc.org



ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTRODUCING OUR NEW DIRECTOR OF NEXTGEN MINISTRY: MARIA SOTTILE (PRONOUNCED (SUH-TILL-EE)).

The Staff Parish Relations Committee is excited to share the news that we have hired a new Director of Next Gen Ministry who will be joining our staff mid-August! Please see her greeting below!

Dear SRVUMC!

My husband, Russell, and I have been married for 36 years and are the proud parents of two grown sons, Samuel and Aaron. Our daughter-in-law, Sophia, blessed us with our first granddaughter, Kaia, 18 months ago. We are over the moon in love with her and delighted that granddaughter #2 is expected in September.



Spending time with family is our priority, which led us to relocate to California about a year ago. God brought Russell and me together through music and continues to open doors for us to share our gifts in ministry together. I served as Music Director at Hamilton UMC in New Jersey for 13 years and have a deep love for Contemporary Christian Music. I find great joy in sharing music with children, participating in church mission work, teaching Sunday School, and leading Bible studies. But my favorite church event will always be Vacation Bible School!

My husband, Russell, is a retired social worker who loves having more free time to pursue his other passions: playing jazz saxophone, reading, writing, and fishing.

We look forward to meeting you and sharing in worship at San Ramon Valley UMC. As the song lyrics say... "See You in September."

God bless you,
Maria and Russell Sottile

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME ODIS JOHNSON TO THE SRVUMC STAFF.

We want to welcome Odis Johnson to our staff team as our new Facilities Technician. Odis is a family man with six children. Three boys and three girls. He worked at the US Steel Mill in Pittsburgh until it closed down. He is a self-employed car salesman and distributor. Odis loves music and has done some producing in the past. He also loves fishing.

If you have a facility need, just ask [Laura Roy](#) to arrange for Odis to help you or fill out a maintenance request form [here](#).

Please join us in warmly welcoming Odis to the SRVUMC community!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

ELEVATED CONNECTION RETURNS JUNE 6.



- **Live Music:** Inspirational performances by the talented Here and Now Band
- **Great Food:** A classic spaghetti dinner complete with garlic bread, salad, and dessert will be available for purchase before the show
- **Authentic Community:** Experience an inclusive community that welcomes you just as you are.

Praise music has changed in recent decades. On **Saturday, June 6**, Elevated Connection will explore the evolution of praise music with a special performance from the **Here and Now Band**.

Starting with the soulful sounds of the mid-20th century and concluding with contemporary Christian hits, the Here and Now Band will take the audience on a journey showcasing the unique development of praise music throughout recent decades.

Who: All ages are welcome

When: June 6 | 6:00 PM

Where: Wesley Center, 902 Danville Blvd., Alamo

Cost: Free!

Click here to RSVP or visit <https://ElevatedConnection2026.eventbrite.com>.

Help keep the music going! Your generous donation allows us to keep these inspiring Elevated Connection concerts free of charge and accessible to all. [DONATE HERE!](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

VOLUNTEER AT THE FOOD BANK ON JUNE 6.

Our next scheduled shift is June 6th, from 11 AM-1 PM, and we can take eighteen people on this shift. In March 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](https://www.foodbankccs.org) or visit <https://www.foodbankccs.org>.

Click [here](https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3466580) to register or visit <https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3466580>.



FREE PARKINSONS NETWORK PICKLEBALL CLASS.

Announcing a **FREE pickleball class Thursdays through August 27 from 1-2:30PM in the Activity Recreation Center (ARC) for people with Parkinson's and early dementia** to exercise and socialize in a healthy, safe, and fun environment. Whether new or experienced, all players are welcome (including accompanying caregivers)!

Instructors and equipment will be provided on site. Come on in and have fun, learn a new sport, and socialize.

For more information, contact [Brad Falk](mailto:bradralfalk@gmail.com) at bradralfalk@gmail.com.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE ON MUSIC SUNDAY JUNE 14.

Join us for a spectacular morning of worship as we celebrate the grand finale of our regular music season! Experience the full spectrum of SRVUMC's diverse musical groups through a beautiful blend of praise, instrumental selections, and contemplative pieces.

Featuring SRVUMC's Ensembles:

- The Chancel Choir – Stunning choral favorites
- Living Water – Inspiring Christian praise music
- Carillon Bell Choir – Beautiful handbell selections
- The String Alongs – Impactful uplifting ukulele arrangements
- Plus special solos and duets you won't want to miss!

Make a joyful noise this Music Sunday! Don't miss this jam-packed worship service on June 14 at 10 AM. Bring a friend!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

SPECIAL MISSIONS OFFERING: WHITE PONY EXPRESS.

Your Special Mission Offering this quarter will go towards supporting White Pony Express based in Concord, CA. The nonprofit group was founded by Dr. Carol Weyland Conner in 2013 to address the issue of food waste and hunger. White Pony Express' "Food Rescue" program delivers surplus high-quality food to local organizations serving those in need. Annually, the food rescue program rescues an average of 15,000 pounds of high-quality and largely perishable food from grocers, retailers, restaurants and wholesalers. Volunteers sort and deliver nutritious foodstuffs to receiving organizations in refrigerated vehicles the same day. SRVUMC members volunteers at White Pony Express about four times a year.

You can support White Pony Express' important work by donating to SRVUMC's Special Mission Offering fund [here](https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/giving/to/special-missions-offering) (<https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/giving/to/special-missions-offering>) Learn more about White Pony Express [here](https://whiteponyexpress.org/) or visit <https://whiteponyexpress.org/>.

Juneteenth

June 19



Happy Freedom Day!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BALANCE AND MOBILITY CLASS MEETS WEEKLY.

Balance and Mobility class for adults over 55 meets Thursdays from 12-12:45 PM in the Fireside Room.

Move with strength. Age with confidence.

Falls are one of the top reasons older adults land in the emergency department. As a former ER nurse, instructor Teri DeLaMontanya has seen firsthand how often loss of muscle, mobility, and balance are to blame—and how much of it is preventable.

After age 30, we lose up to 5% of muscle mass each decade. That decline affects strength, reaction time, and stability. But it doesn't have to. With focused movement and strength training, you can rebuild muscle, improve coordination, and protect your independence at any age.

This class is designed for adults 55+ and led by Teri—a Registered Nurse, Ironman triathlete, and lifestyle coach with deep medical knowledge and personal experience. Whether you're recovering, maintaining, or building

strength for the future, Teri will meet you where you are.

Join us at San Ramon Valley Methodist Church—a welcoming space where you'll train your body to stay upright, energized, and in motion.

It's never too late to start.

This is a donation based class and is open to the public. Suggested donation is \$15 payable to PEACE (Providing Easier Access to Care Everywhere).

[Click here to sign up or visit https://www.behavioralfitnesstoday.com/schedule/be-fit-classes-and-groups/.](https://www.behavioralfitnesstoday.com/schedule/be-fit-classes-and-groups/)

Contact [Rob Rudow](mailto:robert_d_rudow@yahoo.com), at robert_d_rudow@yahoo.com for more information.



SPIRITUAL GROWTH

IN THE PEW: ANGELA LEE.

By Sarah Stribling

Hailing from Seoul, South Korea, Angela Lee immigrated to the United States when she was 2 years old, eventually settling in Michigan. After graduating college, she moved to California where she earned her Master's degree from UC Berkeley. She worked with children in foster care. She and her husband Mike have two adult children named Adam and Olivia. Adam currently lives in New York City as a theater writer and actor while Olivia is a kindergarten aide.

Raised in the Korean Methodist Church, Angela began to research Reconciling churches during the pandemic because inclusion is one of her key values. When she found out that SRVUMC is a Reconciling congregation, she attended online services before attending in-person for the first time. "Everyone was warm and welcoming," Angela recalls of her first time at this church. She also remembers enjoying the choral music and Pastor Sam's sermon. She joined the church in November, 2025.

Since joining the church, Angela has

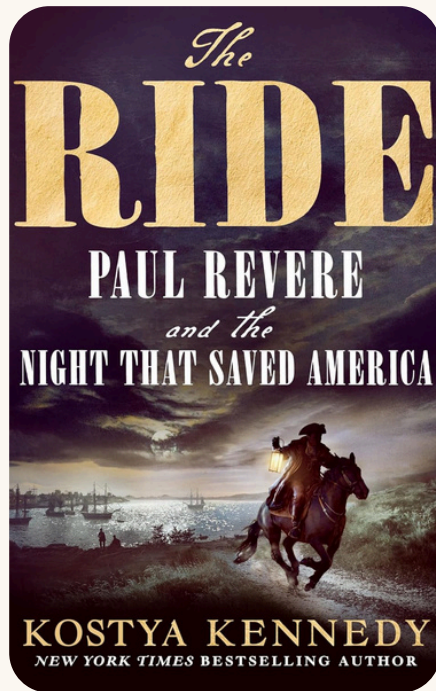
become very involved in the church. She has joined the Earth Care Hiking group, Earth Care Meditation group, Altar Guild, as well as volunteered for the White Pony Express food rescue program.

For Angela, this church feels like family. "The people invite you to get involved," she asserts. "Pastor Sam is a major reason Angela joined the church. Like Angela, Pastor Sam is a Korean American. "He's a genuine, humble, caring person," Angela affirms.

Left to right: Angela's husband, Mike, Angela, her daughter Olivia, and her son Adam.



BETWEEN THE BOOKENDS.



The merry month of May leads us into beautiful **June** with flowers bursting out fragrances everywhere. Beauty surrounds us. Flag Day is the 14th of June. Let us all display our country's flag and hang it proudly!

With the coming of our county's 250th birthday, a historical book has been added to the library collection. It is entitled The Ride: Paul Revere and the Night That Saved America. The author, Kostya Kennedy, researched extensively. There are 15 pages of selected bibliography plus an index, of course.

The conflict between the colonists and the British Crown reached its peak when Revere with many men boarded three British ships to toss 340 chests of black tea into the wharf protesting the king's enforced taxes. When King George III learned of the Boston Tea Party, he stated that "blows must be taken whether they remain subject of his country or independent." People living away from Boston did not realize a conflict would start.

Now it was time for Revere to carry the message to all that they needed to gather to forcibly take the storage of gunpowder from Fort William and Mary. The colonists knew this would be an act of treason that the Crown would not tolerate. Rebels came from everywhere. The fort was sieged, and the British flag that had waved for over a hundred years was torn down. Barrels of gunpowder were taken and stored throughout the countryside.

Revere never owned a horse. He would borrow, rent, or even offer a trade of some sort. For this very important ride he needed a very strong, fast horse which he found in Brown Beauty. He had a network of friends and acquaintances that extended great distances. He knew he could rely on all. He then contacted a childhood friend to light a signal in the Old North Church steeple. Two lanterns – one light if British were coming by land, two if by sea. They were coming up the Charles River. Paul and friend, William Dawes, started off on that most vital ride to alert as many as possible. As they rode and even knocked on doors, they urged those men to alert neighbors. Soon, a network of riders was spreading the word that the British were coming. They became known as the Sons of Liberty. This book is a must read for those who enjoy history.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

AFTERNOON BOOK GROUP.

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



NEXT BOOK SELECTION: CULPABILITY.

Culpability by Bruce Holsinger is our **June 22** choice. It is about moral dilemmas with an AI twist.

Click [here](#) to buy the book or go to <https://www.amazon.com/Culpability-Novel-Bruce-Holsinger/dp/1954118961>.

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

HAPPY PRIDE MONTH



San Ramon Valley
United Methodist
Church is a
Reconciling Church.



UMeUs
YOU/ME/US

BASEBALL

Field Trip

Cost
\$52*

Wednesday,
8
July

SF *Giants*

VS

Blue Jays

ORACLE STADIUM

24 Willie Mays Plaza, San Francisco

GAME TIME 12:45 PM

Register and Pay on Church Center



***Transportation Cost Not Included with Price of Ticket**

OUT INTO THE WORLD

SRVUMC HOSTS UNHOUSED FAMILIES DURING WINTER NIGHTS!

We had a very successful Winter Nights program this year! Approximately 42 church volunteers helped us host 6 families, consisting of eight adults and ten kids, ages 2-17. We had additional help from St. Isidore's Catholic Church in Danville (the entire second week), and from the Danville Congregation Church that provided two dinners. Many thanks to all who volunteered their time and resources. The clients were very appreciative. Here is a message from one family: "We were very grateful for our stay. This site showed a lot of dedication, love, and warmth to our family. I love the Bingo game night."

We are still accepting donations to cover our food and supplies cost. You can click [here](https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/giving/to/winter-nights-shelter) to donate or visit: <https://srvumc.churchcenter.com/giving/to/winter-nights-shelter>.

Next year, we'll be hosting the Winter Nights program May 3 - 17 and would love your participation!

Nancy Garnick and Kal Peters



CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Beth Robertson
- 1 Marty Osborn
- 2 Victor Hymes
Quinn McDaniel
Jane VanderWerf
- 4 Nick Brown
Emily Colman
- 6 Dana Jancarik
ClaudeC Johannessen
John Stienstra
- 8 Linn Coombs
Marilyn McCurdy
Steve Newburn
- 9 Susie Barton
- 10 Alex Buckley
- 11 Jeff Lang
- 13 Nadia Blank-Koliha
- 14 Brian Steffy
- 16 Elyse Rigolfi
- 17 Nancy Banisch
- 18 Erin Lowther
- 19 Sharon Greene
- 20 Kim Sherman-Porteous
- 21 Mary Ellen Brown
Beth McClelland
Mark Schramm
- 23 Lee Rust
Connor Sandoval
- 24 Amy Parnes
- 25 Cindy Leonard
- 27 Kira Rose Grant
Sam Yun
- 29 Justin Byers
Jess Erickson **(95)**
- 30 Sara Rossini

ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 Lucinda & Gordon Huffaker **(52)**
- 4 Norma Jean & Jim Bunker **(60)**
- 5 Ellen & James Kocins
- 6 Carrie & Jeff Doyle
- 6 Cindy & Rob Rudow
- 12 Sandy & Bill Gsand **(61)**
Joanne & Harry Knapp
- 14 Debbie & Mike Kelly
- 15 Linda Ashcraft & Richard Hudak **(58)**
Marilyn & Julien Hansen (69)
- 15 Elizabeth & Kristofer McDaniel
- 16 Pam & Brian Uitti
Karen & Tony Stepper **(59)**
Elke & Walter Torgersen **(67)**
- 19 Linn & Dave Coombs **(59)**
- 24 Marla & Bob Schleicher
Greg Lane & Patti May
- 26 Rosanne & Michael Ogles **(61)**
Jane & Steve Roath **(61)**
- 27 Liz & Don Field **(56)**
- 27 Joan & David Pierce **(56)**
- 30 Greg & Annemarie Warwick



AMONG OURSELVES.



HEALTH CONCERNS

Kay Jones, Jeff Lang, Melanie and Boyd Hasik, Lonnie Bristow, Carol Fhlug, Julie Klug's nephew Taylor, Gerry Carothers' son Brent, Chris Hoff, ClaudeC Johannesen, Bart Jacobi, Pastor Sam's parents, Bill Sabin, Jim Bunker, Mike Henderson, Leigh Meyering, Steve Garnick, Margie Durham, and Jess Erickson.



CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR

All those who live with long-term illness, Wendy Chu and her family, those recovering from unemployment, life decisions, homelessness, and sickness in their families, peace in the world, and peace in our country.



OUR SYMPATHY

To Bart Jacobi, Jennifer Andres and their families on the passing of Bart's wife, Le Anne.
To Judy Takeda and her family on the loss of her beloved daughter Becky.

To Judy Benedict and her family on the loss of her beloved husband Gene. Gene Benedict was a regular attendee here at SRVUMC from 1985 to 2017 when he and his wife Judy moved to Southern California. He was 91 when he passed on May 8, 2026.

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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SAN RAMON VALLEY
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

