



## *Grace Notes from Kristie*

It has been over three weeks since my husband Bob and I returned from our trip to Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary, but I have not had time to reflect on many of the experiences we had. The everyday phone calls, family events, church issues, meetings, and even laundry come first. But some of the places and feelings have deeply shaped my soul.

We have all read about the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw, where Jews were confined during World War II. Today, few buildings remain after the devastation of the war, and only a few Jews live there. The Jewish quarter outside of Krakow developed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when Jews were forced out to settle in Kazimierz. But most were sent off to the camps in 1943, never to return.

There are many synagogues in Budapest, but once again, few Jews to restore them. Near the largest synagogue are the tombstones of many who were buried there as the Jews moved behind the walls. Near the Danube River is a memorial of metal shoes in the spot where Jews were shot into the river after leaving their shoes behind.

On the walls of the Pinkas Synagogue in Prague are inscribed the names and birthdates of the 80,000 Jews from Moravia and Bohemia who died in the Holocaust. Most of the synagogues in the city date from the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century. We came as tourists, but as a person of faith, each visit was a moment with God. I could feel the presence and power of the many whose faith had built these buildings and their lives together. In all these places, there is a deep sadness in the air. In the silence, one hears a cry for justice.

Nowhere was the connection and loss more real than at Auschwitz and Birkenau, two concentration camps in southern Poland where the victims are counted in the millions. The brick buildings rise out of the beautiful, green, almost idyllic countryside. There, I had a hard time staying with the group. I needed to take this in as the spiritual experience it was. I stood alone for a few minutes near a wall where many were shot. I watched the sun set over the site of the cremation chambers, tuning out the noise to feel the presence. To be with the Presence.

As we journeyed from country to country, I often found myself in prayer. Again and again, I thanked God for my community of faith. For the hope and care we share with each other in difficult times. For the hard work we do of speaking out for the voiceless and standing with the hurting. For the values that we United Methodists claim and proclaim that hold each other up and shape decisions in our schools and our work places and our governments. For the way we can worship and study Scriptures freely and be who we are. For the reminder that God cries with pain in the pain and celebrates in joy in our faith, and knits us together so that we may cry and celebrate together.

O God, help us to remember, help us to have courage, help us to be disciples of love and justice.

*Rev. Kristie Olah*  
District Superintendent

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# Remembering Ava Johnson

**Ava Johnson**, who served as co-lay leader of our San Jose District from 2002 through 2005, passed away on September 28. In her leadership role, she sometimes attended church conferences in our area and wrote regular columns for our newsletter. She worked often with Rev. Nymphas Edwards and was close to our current district superintendent, Kristie Olah, who was her church pastor for 5 years.



For the last 29 years, Ava was a member of the Good Samaritan UMC in Cupertino. She chaired and participated in many church committees and was very close to her covenant group. Ava also had a successful career at NASA for 27 years, working in the procurement area, eventually as a Review Officer.

Family and friends celebrated Ava's life in stories, song, and much prayer on October 10 at Good Samaritan UMC. While tears were shed, the power and presence of God and the promise of resurrection were proclaimed again and again – affirming Ava's own deep and abiding faith.

## November 7, 2009 Quarterly Conference

Hope to see you at the Quarterly Conference at Salinas First UMC from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm. This time the program will hear from churches to learn how they are doing Risk-Taking Mission right in their own communities.

## COMING UP: Speaker at the 2010 Annual Conference Session in Sacramento:

Bishop Robert Schnase, author of  
[Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations](#)

## DID YOU KNOW? The San Jose District has equipment for language interpretation.

In our district office, available for your church, our district has technical equipment to assist with language interpretation. There are 75 individual listening units and a system that would allow on-the-spot language translation during events. One designated person would speak and many in the room could quietly listen. This system has been used for worship services and other occasions. To borrow the materials, talk with Pam in the district office.

## Clergy: Register Now for Gathering of the Orders 2009

More than 200 clergy friends and colleagues will be gathering at Zephyr Point, Lake Tahoe on November 17-19 for inspiration, learning and fellowship. Plan to join them!

Attendees will be guided in conversation and learning by California-Nevada Annual Conference Resident Bishop Warner H. Brown, Jr. and Doug Anderson of the Reuben Job Center - to grow together in a coordinated connectional ministry and focus the Conference on making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

**Register by the November 1 deadline** to have the fire of the Gospel reignited in your heart!

If you have questions or would like to request a scholarship, contact Susan Smith at 408.294.9796, Ext.30 or [susan@wgumc.org](mailto:susan@wgumc.org).

*From Instant Connection October 16, 2009*

## ARTISAN'S FAIRE AT APTOS UMC

Join your friends at Aptos UMC for their annual Artisan's Faire on Friday, November 13 and Saturday, November 14. Beautiful fine arts and hand crafts by local artists will be on display, for sale and silent auction. Friday evening (7-10 p.m.) is the "Preview Party" with tasty hors d'oeuvres, live music, and door prizes (\$10 admission). Saturday will be an all-day affair (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.) with entertainment and lunch items available at The Bistro (free admission). Aptos UMC is at 221 Thunderbird Drive in Aptos (near Rio Del Mar School).

## UMVIM PROJECT IN BRAZIL

Another UMVIM work project in Caconde, Brazil sponsored by Los Gatos United Methodist Church is scheduled for early February, 2010. Volunteers will assist a local contractor with the completion of the second of three sections of a large Senior Care Center. Skilled and non-skilled workers are welcome. The trip has been timed to coincide with Carnival so those interested can extend their stay for the festivities.

The cost will be about \$2,000. An earlier trip in February 2009 was highly successful and satisfying. An informational meeting is scheduled for Sunday, November 15, 2:00 in the Art Gallery at LGUMC. The project is open for churches of the District. Speakers and a short video from the last project are available upon request. Please contact Eliana Brown (628 4301) or Dave Wolf (268 5806) if you plan to attend on the meeting on the 14th, although pre-registration is not required.

## CHURCH WEB PAGE ON CONFERENCE WEB SITE

Each church in the California-Nevada Annual Conference has its own web page on the Conference site: a place where they may post their current information and update it themselves. It is their link to the larger UMC community. Churches may post classified ads for job openings and "for sale" or giveaway items, along with upcoming church events (which will appear both on the church's own page and on the church events calendar on the main Conference website). Churches also may use their page to publish prayer concerns.

Every church has received a user name and password in the mail, along with instructions for logging in and moving around the site. **The User Name and Password will be changing to your church's GCFA number in the near future.** Call Pam at the District Office 408 295 5341 if you have questions.

## SAN JOSE DISTRICT WEB SITE

We know the San Jose District web site has not been updated for a while and contains obsolete information. The District is current exploring options for redoing the web site and keeping it current. We have received some suggestions from the District, and welcome others.

## FIND-A-CHURCH

The redesigned [Find-A-Church](#) option on [www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org) provides United Methodist churches a [free online profile](#). Churches can share not only their address, phone number, and Web site information, but can also create a more personalized snapshot of their congregation. It's a chance for churches of any size to build a positive image, present opportunities and attract newcomers at no charge. The Find-A-Church directory receives approximately 280,000 hits a month. By updating the Find-A-Church profile, churches can reach anyone searching for a church home. Many churches use Find-A-Church as their primary Web site and others view it as an extension to their church Web sites and direct traffic there. If you have questions about updating your Find-A-Church information, contact United Methodist Communications at [FAC@umc.org](mailto:FAC@umc.org) or (800) 251-8140.

## It's Church Conference Season

Your local church conference will be different this year! Most of the conferences will be led by presiding elders from churches in your circuit. Business may be simplified, but you should be voting on your pastors' compensation packages, church leaders for next year, candidates for ministry, and be receiving membership reports. The conference continues to be important in the life of your church.

You probably will not see our district superintendent, Kristie Olah, at your conference, but she will come to your church at other times. She is visiting with pastors, meeting with SPRC or PPRC in the next months, may turn up for congregational events, or may come worship with you. Your leaders are encouraged to invite her to support your work in making disciples and being church together.

## Watch Out: Break-ins at Fremont Churches

Two of our San Jose District Churches have had burglaries in recent months. And, worse yet, the burglaries were repeated AGAIN at each church! Three times persons broke into the St. Paul UMC and just recently, the First UMC in Fremont had two invasions.

Someone broke through a window at St. Paul, and returned again not once but twice, taking a number of items. Pastor Allen Yan-Chamberlin at First UMC says that in their first incident, it didn't seem that the person or persons took anything. But during the week of October 20, computer monitors and stamps were taken. The church speculates that the burglars found keys and used them to get into other office areas.

Both churches have made changes in security. St. Paul installed an alarm and First UMC is re-keying the buildings.

Sometimes church robberies occur in clusters, so let's all be aware. How safe and secure are our buildings? Are they well lit at night? What more could we do to protect valuables, especially those people who might be in our buildings?

## Sign Up for Free Interpreter Magazines

Yes, there is a free... magazine for church leaders. Every United Methodist Church is offered 5 copies of the **Interpreter** magazine mailed to them each month and 5 digital subscriptions. Our San Jose District Office sent the information to your pastors or church offices on how to renew or start subscriptions.

But only a few forms were returned to the magazine in any way, according to information sent recently to our District Office.

So... you have a second chance. Pull together the list of which persons would receive each type of subscription and their addresses. Then, sign up. The easiest way, if you have the form, is to go online: <http://www.umcom.org/subscriptions/> Or you may call Customer Service at (888)346-3862.

Interpreter features articles on developing leaders, church revitalization, UMC news, and ministry in a variety of settings. It connects churches large and small, of many different cultures and theologies.

# Soledad Parsonage Repair Project successfully completed for Misión Metodista Hispana de Soledad

By Rev. Robin Mathews-Johnson, Chair of the Monterey Bay Church Extension Society

*"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. And let all the people say, "Amen." Praise the Lord!" Psalm 106:48*

We were doing just that at the most recent meeting of the **Monterey Bay Church Extension Society**. Why? By the grace of God, with your prayers and support, and through the able leadership of Carmel's Jerry Gleason, we completed the Soledad repairs just in time to welcome their new pastora Rev. Ines Lugo Verdugo.

Over **\$16,000.00** was raised, and a wonderful group of **21 volunteers** (including English and Spanish speaking adults and youth) worked together for 7 Saturdays last summer. Most of the work was completed by the end of July, with the windows finished this past month.

Thanks to *all* of you and your churches who donated so generously with your prayers, your presence and your love to this project. Thanks also to our District Superintendent and the churches that supported us 100%. Blessed be the Lord!



## 2009 Pajaro Valley CROP Hunger Walk

Over **70 people** participated in the walk, and we raised **\$2,263.05** to fight world hunger and locally for Second Harvest Food Bank.



Members of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) man the registration table.



Dave Miller, member of Watsonville First United Methodist Church, prepares balloons for the event.



Pastor Robin Mathews-Johnson of WFUMC walks with members of City of Watsonville Neighborhood Services.



Rosa Mendoza, of the Pajaro Valley Children's Center leads the pack up the hill on Main Street

Thank you to **Rev. Vy T. Nguyen**, Assistant Regional Director of Church World Service for guiding us on our first CROP Hunger Walk! The walkers & set up this year were from the following organizations:

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),

Holy Eucharist Church (Catholic),

Pajaro Valley Children's Center,

City of Watsonville Neighborhood Services,

Second Harvest Food Bank, AmeriCorp volunteers & Watsonville First United Methodist Church

**NOR/CAL ECUMENICAL  
MEDIA RESOURCE CENTER  
MEDIA UPDATE – November, 2009**

408-378-2532 FAX: 408-378-2652  
[emrcvideos@aol.com](mailto:emrcvideos@aol.com) [www.emrclibrary.org](http://www.emrclibrary.org)

**Advent Resources**

**For Children**

**The Legend of the Candy Cane (DVX-346)** is a wonderfully animated program in which children will discover a fascinating story of hope and the hidden meaning of a favorite Christmas candy.

**For Youth/Adult Study**

**A Christmas Carol Bible Study (DVX-801)** features lessons and discussions based on the famous story by Charles Dickens, “**A Christmas Carol.**”

Section 1 – **Scrooge** – Lesson – Bah Humbug! – Mark 8:36

Section 2 – **Marley and the Ghost of Christmas Past** – Lesson – A Past of Regret – Ecclesiastes 3:15

Section 3 – **Ghost of Christmas Present** – Lesson – Present Repentance – 2 Corinthians 7:10

Section 4 – **Ghost of Christmas Future** – The Salvation of Scrooge – I Thessalonians 5:9

**For Adult Study**

Through **Advent Conspiracy (DVX-802)** viewers are invited to join the groundswell of Christ’s followers who are choosing to make Christmas what it should be – a joyous celebration of the birth of Jesus, not a retail circus. The four sessions are:

1. Worship Fully.
2. Spend Less.
3. Give More.
4. Love All.

Submitted by *Pat Strandburg*  
Media Resource Center



**Senior New Ways Older Adult Groups  
and Activities—Nov. ‘09**

**New: BLIP.TV!** Our monthly TV programs are now on the internet. Just go to <http://blip.tv> and search on Senior New Ways. Note which entries are designated as highlights vs. the full half hour programs.  
**Coming Fully Alive Series: Coming Fully Alive as You Age—**(on Finding Meaning in Life, Being Fully Alive, Aging as a Spiritual Journey, and Humor): Woodside Terrace (**Redwood City**), Nov. 11, 10-11:30 (Cultivating Joy); DVD teaching kit also available. **Looking Forward, Looking Back** (on Journaling, Movement-Meditation, Rituals, Communication, and Capturing Our Life Stories): **Alameda County Libraries:** Nov. 5, Albany; Nov 17, Newark; Nov. 19, Castro Valley, all on Journaling and Memoir-writing, 1:30-3 pm.

**Senior Health Chat at Los Altos United Methodist Church (LA UMC)**, 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays, 10-12 noon. Call Dona Smith-Powers (650-494-3093) or Rick Plain (650-948-1083).

**Adult Children/Caregivers of Aging Persons Support Group—**2<sup>nd</sup> ODD month Mondays, 7:30-9pm, Los Altos UMC Room 2. Sept. 14.

Call Judith Pruess-Mellow of Senior New Ways for information (650-209-1119) on any of these groups. [www.seniornewways.org](http://www.seniornewways.org); email: [judithpm@seniornewways.org](mailto:judithpm@seniornewways.org). 655 Magdalena Ave., Los Altos CA 94024. Senior New Ways is a 501 (c) (3) corporation.



## CALENDAR October 2009

Nov 7 8:30 am - 1 pm

**Quarterly Conference, Salinas UMC**

Nov 11-13 **Cabinet**

Nov 17-19 **Gathering of the Orders, Zephyr Point Conference Center**

Nov 20 **Furlough day District Office closed**

Nov 25 9:30 am to 2:30 pm

**DCOOM, Almaden Hills UMC**

Nov 26-27 **Thanksgiving Holiday District Office closed**

## November 2009



*The District Spirit* is published September through June by the San Jose District 408 295 5341. The purpose is to keep district churches connected with information on activities and news happenings around the local churches, District and conference. Send your church information to the District Office at [sjdist@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sjdist@sbcglobal.net) or email Norah Miller at [nkmill52@cruzio.com](mailto:nkmill52@cruzio.com)

San Jose District  
California-Nevada Conference  
Of the United Methodist Church  
729 Morse Street  
San Jose, CA 95126

You are invited to a celebration of full communion of  
The United Methodist Church and the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

## Together We Serve

November 15, 2009

Sunday

7:00 pm

First United Methodist Church

2100 J Street

Sacramento, California

Bishop Warner H. Brown, Jr. presiding

Bishop Mark W. Holmerud, preaching

Clergy are asked to arrive by 6:30 pm to assemble  
for the clergy processional. Please wear robes and red stoles.

All congregations are urged to attend.

“Together we serve united by love!”