

# Good News



Morgan Hill United Methodist Church

*Opening Hearts, Opening Minds, and Opening Doors*

## Brief Summary of Autumn 2009 Cottage Gatherings at Morgan Hill UMC

by Pastor Jeff Kunkel

### 1. What are the Unique Assets of MHUMC?

Downtown location, historic charm, accepting approach, progressive Christian theology, casual worship, conversational sermon, no ongoing warfare, multigenerational congregation, youth group, open to gays and lesbians...

### 2a. What are the parts of Ted Pecot's Legacy we want to Keep?

Learn from other religious traditions, music (choir and singing), dialogue nature of sermon, "something to think about from sermon."

### 2b. What are the parts of Ted Pecot's Legacy we want to Let go?

Micro-managing by pastor, reluctance by many to be involved or take leadership, grand dreams of growth and grand dreams of death, i.e. We are going to die if we don't..."

ninety-minute worship (too long).

### 3. What change would you like to see that you would help make happen?

Paint building and improve street presence, start up progressive dinners again, more teaching about United Methodist ways, monthly potluck after church, more focus on service and giving beyond our congregation, financial ability to meet commitments, give more reason for folks to check us out during city festivals.

### 4. What are the elements of an achievable, faithful future?

Grow a little - not a lot, (though some want to grow a lot) adjust to less-than full time pastor, mingle more, make progress in paying our

connectional apportionments, claim a specialty of some kind, more lay involvement and leadership.

**FYI: Average Weekly Worship Attendance at MHUMC, annually.** (conference stats)

From 1987...to 2008

40, 54, 70, 78, 67, 70, 67, 55, 51, 60, 75, 64, 70, 69, 75, 70, 60, 52, 51, 49, 50, 52

### Interim Goals Which Make Sense to Me:

- **Broaden and Strengthen Lay Leadership - training, time-limits.**
- **Make regular payments toward world service and clergy pension**
- **Paint Building Exterior by Easter**
- **More Opportunities to Learn About United Methodist Ways**
- **More Deliberate Focus on Newcomers**

## Minutes of Charge Conference, Held November 22<sup>nd</sup>

Morgan Hill United Methodist Church

Charge Conference

November 22, 2009

In attendance: 20 members of MHUMC, Pastor Jeff Kunkel, Rev. Clyde Vaughn

Presiding: Rev. Clyde Vaughn

The meeting was called to order at 11:17am in the MHUMC sanctuary. Rev. Vaughn opened with a brief introduction, prayer, and description of the role of charge conference meetings in the Methodist church. Business items were then addressed.

1) Pastor's Compensation Package for 2010.

Brought by John Braslin, chairperson of Staff-Parish Relations committee. The compensation package is identical to the previous package, with the exception of a \$444/yr increase to cover an increase in health insurance. Details of the compensation package are available separately.

Moved to accept: John Braslin

Seconded: Dan Skeen

Vote: Approved unanimously

2) Officers and Leadership for 2010.

Brought by Pastor Jeff Kunkel.

a) Leadership changes:

Lay Leader – Lynn Morgan

Finance Committee – Eugene Davis

(leader), Megan Richardson, Carol Frazer, John Braslin.

Vote: Approved unanimously

b) Building & Grounds/Trustees: Ed Church

(leader), Mary Ringo, John Ringo, Brad Gremban, Del Foster

Motion to cast a unanimous ballot for this

group: Eugene Davis

Seconded: Jeannie Clayton

Vote: Approved unanimously

3) Thanks for the saints we've lost during 2009:

There were no deaths in the immediate church family, although several members lost relatives. We honored the transfer of Ted Pecot and his family away from our congregation this summer.

4) Pastor Jeff led the "I Remember" prayer.

Meeting closed at 11:55am with a prayer by Rev. Vaughn.

## eScrip Is Now Available!

By Jeannie Clayton

Sign up with eScrip (Safeway and tons of other stores) and you can earn \$150 annually for our church. Sign up online. It's quick and easy! eScrip works with merchant partners to contribute to groups like ours each time you shop - at no cost to you!

1. Go to [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com)

2. Click on "sign-up"

3. Follow the instructions to register your grocery cards and your existing credit/debit cards. It's Easy! It's Free! It's Powerful!

Morgan Hill United Methodist Church is enrolled in the e-program at Nob Hill.

Use your Quality of Life Card for the paperless scrip program. It makes it easy for you to support church.

Here's how it works: Get your card from Jeannie or the office.

- Go to [www.nobhill.com](http://www.nobhill.com)
- Register online and select which organization you wish to support.
- Present your card to your cashier each time you shop. Nob Hill will donate a percentage of your purchases to the church.

If you do your grocery shopping at either of these stores, the church is able to receive a donation from a portion of your bill without any cost to you! It's easy, pick up a card in the office or after church and register your card. Safeway has an annual registration and Nob Hill is a one time deal. Then every time you shop present your card and MHUMC benefits! Easy at 1-2-3.

## News From the Youth

By Jeannie Clayton

The youth haunted house was a success! We had tons of fun participating in the downtown safe trick-or-treat. Several hundred families came to the event and we had a line going out to the street most of the night. The youth really got into the spirit of spook and we had many, many helpers from the congregation helping make it happen. Big huge thanks to Robin Church for her make-up and wig design and helping with the plans and decorations too! Thanks to Mary and Johnny Ringo who spent the entire day dressing up the front of the parsonage and thanks to everyone who donated candy, decorations and their time! We can't wait to do it again next year. You can check out the pictures on the church's Facebook Page.

This December the youth are presenting the play *Billie Jean Reborn* during the church's Christmas program. John McCotter wrote the piece and Greg Huffman is directing. Mark your calendars and join us, we'll be performing Sunday, December 13 at 7pm.

Calling all Christmas Carolers! We will be spreading holiday cheer and singing our favorites on Friday, December 18. Everyone is welcome to attend, we will sing at 2 local convalescent homes. Meet at the church at 6pm.

The youth will be serving at the homeless shelter in Gilroy on the 3rd Sunday of the month from December through March. This time it lands on December 20. You need a negative TB test and the results are good for 3 years, so bring a copy of the results if you have had the test during this time period.

If you are in Junior or Senior High School please join our Group Wednesday Nights from 6 to 8 p.m. Contact Jeannie @ 981-4034 or you can also access our website @ [www.mhumc.com](http://www.mhumc.com) for a current schedule and list of events.



All manner of spooks gathered for the Youth Group's Haunted Hous

## Goodnews Interview: Etta Lee

Interviewed by, Laura D.

**Where did you grow up?**

Northern Virginia and Louisiana

**What do you like most about MHUMC and why?**

I love the freedom of thought and the ability to explore different paths of faith.

**What is your favorite food?**

Red beans and rice.

**How long have you lived in Morgan Hill?**

I live in San Jose and have for 35 years.

**Which do you like better Easter or Christmas? Why?**

Christmas. I don't like thinking of being crucified.

**If you could visit anywhere in the world where would it be?**

New Zealand.

**What is your occupation?**

Retired nurse and school food director.

**What's the best part of your day?**

Working in the yard, gardening.

## Goodnews Interview: Janet Braslin

Interviewed by, Jeremy G.

**Where did you grow up?**

Branford, Connecticut

**What do you like most about MHUMC and why?**

I like the diversity of people's opinions and the freedom to express them.

**What is your favorite food?**

Grilled salmon.

**How long have you lived in Morgan Hill?**

I live in Gilroy and have for the past 7 years.

**Which do you like better Easter or Christmas? Why?**

Easter. Less commercial and more spiritual.

**If you could visit anywhere in the world where would it be?**

Mongolia.

**What is your occupation?**

Medical transcriptions/medical editor.

**What's the best part of your day?**

Waking up in the morning, because I feel energetic.

## Book Sale

Pastor Jeff will have his books available for purchase after worship for the next three Sundays. All money raised on his second collection of stories, *Bless Ewe*, will go toward our Christmas offering.

## Book Club Forming

By Megan Richardson

A book club will be forming in January at Morgan Hill UMC. Anyone is welcome to join as we will read a wide assortment of novels with a spiritual thread. We will meet once a month on a Thursday evening for discussion. Our first novel will be *The Whisper of the River* by Ferrol Sams, a southern novelist and practicing physician. Please contact Megan Richardson (#408-846-8217) if you are interested in joining this group.

## A Sampling of Group Activities at MHUMC:

- 1. Men's Group**=Did you know there was a men's group at the church? They usually meet for supper on a Friday night toward the end of the month. Contact Steve Roth (408) 782-7479 for details.
- 2. Catherine Stone Circle**=We meet on the first and third Thursdays of each month in the Fellowship Hall, at 9:30AM, to quilt. Anyone is welcome to join us. No experience is necessary.
- 3. United Methodist Women**=The UMW is involved in a variety of activities during the church year. Most recently it headed the effort to put on the annual rummage sale. For more information regarding meetings, etc., contact Kathryn Mendoza or the office.

## A Look Ahead...

- Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>**=Christmas Choir rehearsal following worship, 11:15-Noon.  
**Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>**=Adults serve food to the homeless at the Gilroy Armory. Meet at church at 5:15PM.  
**Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>**=Christmas Choir rehearsal, 11:15AM  
**Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>**=Annual Christmas service. Youth group will present play, *Billie Jean Reborn*. Choir will do special music. Sing along with carols, and have refreshments. Begins at 7PM.

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## MORE ABOUT FOOD ADDICTS ANONYMOUS

By John McCotter

Until I learned the truth, the idea of being addicted to food seemed really funny to me. What I have learned, however, is that certain substances (sugar in all its forms, wheat in all its forms, and processed flour, no matter what it is made of) get into the bloodstream as quickly as alcohol, and produce a similar biochemical craving in the bodies of people like me. We are food addicts.

Some signs of food addiction are:

**Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>**=Youth group serves food to the homeless at the Gilroy Armory. Meet at the church at 5:15PM.

## Youth Group Meetings for December

- Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>**=6-8PM. It's Mexican Fiesta Night.  
**Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>**=6-8PM. It's Breakfast For Dinner Night.  
**Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>**=Annual Christmas service at 7PM. Youth will present the play *Billie Jean Reborn*, there will be Christmas music from the choir, and we will all sing favorite carols. Please bring a desert to share.  
**Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>**=6-8PM. It's Make Your Own Pizza Night.  
**Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>**=Christmas Carols at local convalescent homes, followed by cider and cookies at the Richardson's, 6-9PM.  
**Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>**=Serve food to homeless at Armory in Gilroy. Meet at church at 5:15PM.  
**Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup>**=No Meeting tonight.  
**Dec. 30<sup>th</sup>**=San Francisco Dinner in Union Square and ice-skating.

## Christmas Offering Goal

The Ad. Council has authorized this ambitious goal. Funds will be used for our most pressing connectional giving to the UMC—including pastor's pension. Watch for a special mailing and offering envelope.

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1. Eating to calm down.
2. Hiding "stash" of goodies.
3. Lying about howmuch you eat.
4. Preferring to eat alone.
5. Hiding evidence of what or how much you have eaten.
6. Eating when you are not hungry.
7. Eating when bored.

I got involved in Food Addicts Anonymous when I saw what its food plan did for my wife, Cathy. Two years ago, Cathy was 55 pounds overweight. She suffers from degenerative disk disease in her back and was headed for a wheelchair. The pain from her condition was constant, and could not even be controlled by heavy duty, addictive, painkillers. She needed a seated walker and a cane to get across

the campus of the elementary school at which she taught. Her doctor referred her to a bone doctor. X-rays revealed that the damage to her spine from her condition was so extensive that surgery was not an option.

Cathy hoped that losing weight might ease the pain somewhat, so she went online and found Food Addicts Anonymous. The more she read about the chemistry of food addiction, the symptoms and the suggested food plan to arrest the condition, the more it made sense to her. In February of 2008, she began to gradually eliminate sugar, wheat, and flour from her diet. Her first truly *abstinent* (following the FAA food plan to the letter) day, was March 1, 2008. Within three weeks, a miracle occurred: the pain in her back became practically nonexistent! She had only lost a few pounds at that point—not really enough to make a difference.

When she went back to the bone doctor (who was about to give her a powerful epidural) he couldn't believe his eyes. This woman who could barely walk before, tap danced around the examination room for him! He had to pull her file to make sure he had the right patient! We donated the cane to Goodwill, and donated her seated walker to the church rummage sale. She has not needed either one, ever since. She still has degenerative disk disease it's just that the constant, powerful pain is gone.

She astounded students and faculty members alike when she played in a student/staff softball game at her school last June, and made a sliding catch of a fly ball to win the game! I am not a doctor and I don't even play one on TV, but I think there is a relationship between sugar, wheat and flour and the inflammation response in the body. The FAA food plan didn't cure Cathy's degenerative disk disease, but it DID reduce the inflammation that it caused, and that is where the pain came from.

For three and a half months after Cathy became abstinent, I was not much of a help. I continued to eat the junk I had always eaten, in front of her, while she was trying to stay abstinent. Gradually, it got through my thick skull that my not being on the food plan might cause her to abandon it, and she would be nearly crippled again. Even then, my addiction to sugar, wheat and flour was so strong that I

simply could not envision doing without my "comfort foods." I hemmed and hawed about trying the food plan for several weeks. Finally, I decided to try it. I started the food plan for the wrong reasons: I was doing it for Cathy and I also wouldn't mind losing some weight.

The FAA food plan is NOT a diet. The word "diet" implies that once you reach your goal weight, you can go back to eating all the regular foods, but just eat them in sane proportions. Because of the addictive nature of substances containing sugar, wheat or flour, I CANNOT go back to eating them, even though I am now at my goal weight—170 pounds (down from 232). The weight loss has been very gradual, as it should be. The FAA food plan is a way of life, not a diet.

So what is this "food plan," I keep mentioning? If I cannot eat sugar, wheat and flour, what do I eat, leaves and twigs? What follows is an *extremely* brief sampling of foods available on this plan. Cathy and I eat any kind of meat (as long as it is not breaded or cured with sugar), a limited number of eggs, potatoes (except for French fries and potato chips), yams, brown rice, oats, whole kernel corn, any steamed or fresh green vegetable, fresh fruit. A typical meal consists of a meat, a green vegetable, a salad, a starch, all in measured amounts. For a complete copy of the food plan, you can download it from the Food Addicts Anonymous web site.

The weighing and measuring and label reading sound like a hassle, but they become second nature after a while. Cathy and I have been at this long enough that we can go to restaurants and order abstinent food. We had no trouble staying on the food plan on our summer vacation on the Danube. Look, folks—I have no willpower. If being on the food plan was an ordeal, I would have gone back to eating the junk. The truth is, the food on the food plan is delicious, there is a LOT of it, and yet the weight comes off!

I went through severe withdrawal cravings in my first couple of weeks on the food plan. My reaction was to become irritable and angry. But I stuck with it, and after a couple of weeks, those cravings died down and have not been back anywhere near as strong as they were those first couple of weeks. Every now and then, I will get a weak craving for this or that, but I have built up so much equity in the food plan now, that they offer no real threat to my abstinence.

Here is some of the “equity” I mentioned: besides losing 62 pounds (Cathy has lost 55, and is at her goal weight, according to her doctor) I also no longer have to take my anti-cholesterol medication. I no longer suffer from sleep apnea, nor do I need to take an antacid pill each night before bed to prevent acid reflux. I have more energy now than I know what to do with.

Two months into the food plan, I realized that I was no longer doing this for Cathy. I was doing it because I enjoy the food on the food plan, and I like the way I am feeling.

The true gift of abstinence, however, is internal. A popular saying among members of FAA is, “I joined for the vanity, but stayed for the sanity.”

True food addicts spend a lot of time thinking about food. I can remember agonizing for over an hour over which fast food I would binge on, long before lunch time actually arrived!

Now, I don’t worry about it, and my mind is free to engage in other pursuits. I find my thought processes in general are clearer and my emotional responses to things generally calmer. Don’t get me wrong—I still experience negative emotions, but they are fewer, farther between, and don’t last as long.

One final word about food addiction: like other addictions, the goal of this disease is to kill. It will do it slowly and seductively, but its ultimate aim is to shorten life as much as possible. If you suspect you are a food addict, I hope you will choose to fight for your life. If you are interested in joining Food Addicts Anonymous, Cathy and I host a meeting every Saturday morning in our church’s annex from 10:15AM to 11:15AM. Food Addicts Anonymous also has a website with more detailed information. Simply Google Food Addicts Anonymous.

## ***The GoodNews Letter***

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