

# Good News



Morgan Hill United Methodist Church

*Opening Hearts, Opening Minds, and Opening Doors*

## Thoughts From Pastor Jeff...

Lent, the forty days of preparation for Easter, begins on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 15. On Ash Wednesday, we will begin our Wednesday Lenten events:

- 6:00pm soup and bread supper
- 6:45pm classes for youth and adults
- 7:30pm choir rehearsal.

Ash Wednesday evening will also include a brief **Ritual of Ashes**, where people write a private note to God and placing this in an earthen vessel. The ashes we use come from last year's notes to God.

Jeannie Clayton will teach the Wed. evening youth class. I will teach the Wed. evening adult class. Both classes will be called "**God Moments**," where we will read out loud a written God moment from a well-known person of faith, discuss that account, and then see how that can help us think and talk about a God Moment in your own life. As a closing, both Jeannie and I will introduce and lead a way of praying for one another. I will also repeat this class after worship 11:15-12:00 each Sunday during Lent. Signups are going around.

Sunday worship will again include the popular **Radio Spots**, written by Denise Melroy and John McCotter.

Lent should also find us beginning to finish the exterior paint job on the church - contact Ed Church to assist and watch for **Saturday work days**. We want each person - no matter their ability - to participate in at least one painting work day. You can paint, clean, prep, or make lunch and coffee.

Pastor Jeff

## Minutes of Charge Conference, Held January 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Attending:** 23 people, in order around the room: Denise Melroy, Lynn Morgan, Eugene Davis, Janet Ohene-Nyako, Edith Ohene-Nyako, Koiwa Ohene-Nyako, John Braslin, Megan Richardson, Dan Skeen (presiding), Debby Skeen, Mary Ringo, Robin Church, Ed Church, Tammy Shelly, Susan Lucas, Jeff Kunkel, Tim Richardson, Janet Braslin, Carol Swartz, Kimberly Leiser(?), Carol Frazer, Jeannie Clayton, Wanda Garrett.

### Agenda

1. Proposal and Discussion: Church Identity
2. Ideas for Action in the Community

### Minutes

#### 1. Proposal and Discussion: Church Identity (Lynn)

Lynn is recommending we consider associating ourselves with the Progressive Church movement. Several local churches are in this movement, including Napa First UMC and Los Gatos Congregational. The essential elements of being a Progressive Church are described by the "8 Points of Progressive Christianity" (<http://www.tpc.org/about/8points.cfm>). We discussed each point to determine if we had general agreement, or if it needed further discussion.

The purpose of clarifying our church identity is to find language that accurately and appropriately describes the character of our church, for use in marketing (informal and formal) and in selecting our next pastor.

#### a. Summary

Here is each point, with a summary of the conversation.

*By calling ourselves progressive, we mean we are Christians who...*

- 1) Have found an approach to God through the life and teachings of Jesus. → *General agreement.*
- 2) Recognize the faithfulness of other people who have other names for the way to God's realm, and acknowledge that their ways are true for them, as our ways are true for us. → *General agreement.*

3) Understand the sharing of bread and wine in Jesus's name to be a representation of an ancient vision of God's feast for all peoples. → *Question whether this "ancient vision of God's feast" takes away the specific representation of the Eucharist, e.g. Jesus's body and blood. Needs further discussion.*

4) Invite all people to participate in our community and worship life without insisting that they become like us in order to be acceptable (including but not limited to):

- believers and agnostics
- conventional Christians and questioning skeptics,
- women and men,
- those of all sexual orientations and gender identities,
- those of all races and cultures,
- those of all classes and abilities,
- those who hope for a better world and those who have lost hope.

→ *General agreement that all are welcome. Question about the need to specify groups or identities – does that emphasize the categorization that we are trying to get rid of? Needs further discussion.*

5) Know that the way we behave toward one another and toward other people is the fullest expression of what we believe. → *General agreement. Speaks to accountability – "walk the talk."*

6) Find more grace in the search for understanding than we do in dogmatic certainty – more value in questioning than in absolutes. → *General agreement. We use questioning to clarify beliefs and become open to God's will. However, there is a question as to whether questioning has "more value" than beliefs. Needs further discussion.*

7) Form ourselves into communities dedicated to equipping one another for the work we feel called to do: striving for peace and justice among all people, protecting and restoring the integrity of all God's creation, and bringing hope to those Jesus called the least of his sisters and brothers. → *General agreement that we're working toward that ideal.*

8) Recognize that being followers of Jesus is costly, and entails selfless love, conscientious resistance to evil, and renunciation of privilege. → This required clarification from the online Study Guide: Being Christian doesn't give privilege, popularity, or special status, no more than Jesus received. Example – the story of the Good Samaritan, in which the Good Samaritan did his good work, and didn't get special recognition. *General agreement in this statement, but it requires more thought.*

**b. Next Steps:** Attendees are to review the online Study Guide and other online information. Pastor Jeff will meet with Lynn and Dan to determine further next steps.

### **c. General Comments**

1) If we identify ourselves as Progressive Christians, we would be added to the "TCPC" web site list of Affiliates. The label is fairly general; we can more specifically describe ourselves as we wish. (from Lynn)

2) What if the term "Progressive" scares people? It's more welcoming than "Liberal" (which has a decidedly political slant), but it's not as good as "open and welcoming," which is the phrase that brought several participants into the church in the first place.

3) Regardless of what we call ourselves, our actions will describe us.

4) As we articulate our identity, some in our church community are likely to be uncomfortable with it. (It's a natural but unfortunate consequence.)

### **2. Ideas for Action in the Community (Carol S)**

Carol proposed the following activities for later discussion. Those interested in them should contact Carol.

a. July 4 parade float: Could include a representation or image related to our church building. Community leaders – especially those within our church community – and youth could ride on it.

b. Taste of Morgan Hill: Open the church for a variety of activities, including an artisan glass blower that Carol has met; give tours; etc.

c. Hymn Fest: In early November, work with other local churches to host a hymn-singing event.

d. Sunday of 100% music: Offer a Sunday worship service done entirely in music.

- Minutes respectfully submitted by Wanda Garrett

## **Good News Interview: Mary Ringo**

Interviewed by Laura D.

**Where did you grow up?**

Rockford, MI

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

What I like most are the people that go there. And the reason why is they are open, friendly and willing to discuss anything.

**What is your favorite food?**

Steak & Lobster.

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

Since 1961.

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

I like Christmas, the reason is because of the children. I have grandsons and I like seeing them become so excited. I also like birthdays and I would much rather celebrate a birthday than a death.

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

Jerusalem and Israel because of all the history. I love history.

**What is your occupation?**

I am retired. I used to manage a Toys R' Us. Now I'm 68 and I volunteer at the library 4 days a week and I also volunteer at our church.

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

I like Sunday mornings, because I go to church and learn something and I love the Sunday school class led by John Braslin.

**Good News Interview:  
Ken Hanchett**

Interviewed by Marlena P.

**Where did you grow up?**

San Jose.

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

The people/fellowship. I like to be around our church people.

**What is your favorite food?**

Chicken.

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

I've lived in Campbell for 10 years.

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

Christmas because it's a time of sharing.

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

The British Isles. This is my heritage.

**What is your occupation?**

Delivery driver.

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

The morning!

**News From the Youth**

By Jeannie Clayton

Some of our youth are members of Morgan Hill Dance and the studio is holding a personal safety clinic on February 10. This is a free class, but you must reserve a spot in advance. The class is from 6:30-8pm. Please contact Jeannie if you would like to attend.

The youth are preparing for the Lenten season. We'll be meeting in small groups, practicing the same program as the adults, but in our own clusters. The 40 days of lent will end with the Youth Sunrise Service on Easter morning, April 4.

The youth will be serving at the homeless shelter in Gilroy on February 21. (the 3rd Sunday of the month from December through March)

The ski trip will be Sunday, February 28. We are going on a bus trip through Mel Cotton's to Bear Valley ski resort. Contact Jeannie for more information. All are welcome to attend! 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.

**Wise Words...**

"A man in love with himself will have no rivals."  
-Ben Franklin

## 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.

## Youth Group Meetings for February

- February 3rd**=6-8PM. It's Breakfast for Dinner Night..
- February 10th**=6:30-8PM. Personal Safety Clinic at Morgan Hill Dance.
- February 17th**=The youth will participate in the Ash Wednesday Service.
- February 21<sup>st</sup>**=The Youth serve food at the armory in Gilroy. Meet at the church at 5:15.
- February 24<sup>th</sup>**=6-8PM. It's Pasta Night.
- February 28<sup>th</sup>**=All-day ski trip. Contact Jeannie Clayton for details.

## Mary's Musings...

*(This is a collection of marquee sayings from other churches collected by Mary Ringo)*

1. "Free Trip to Heaven: Details Inside"
2. "Try Jesus. If you don't like him, the devil will take you back."
3. "Have Your Faith Lifted Here!"
4. "Don't Give Up! Moses Was Once a Basket Case!"

*(To be continued)*

### ***The GoodNews Letter***

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