



The Herald

ABOUT OUR CHURCH

Rev. Stacy Brooks
Senior Pastor

Becky Valenzuela
Director of Children, Youth &
Family Ministries



Diane Freyling
Administrative Assistant

Nancy Reyes
Front Office Assistant



Lisa Wall-Urgero
Director of Music Ministry

Leslie Frank
Organist



Mike Seckman
Custodian



Susie Strombotne
Child Care Provider



Laura Hole
Wedding Coordinator

Mark Witman
Wedding Custodian



CROSSROADS CHILDREN'S CENTER

Michelle Gordon
Principal
(805) 526-2887



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SIMI VALLEY

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Welcome
2023!

Angel Tree Donations - Wow!

Thank you so much to everyone who contributed to the merry Christmas of so many children in ventura county! The people at James Storehouse who helped unload the packed van were so excited, and kept saying how amazing it was to have all the gifts, gift cards and wrapping paper. Thank you for making such a huge difference to these kids in our community. -Rebecca Sandoval



REGULAR SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:45 a.m. Childcare: For Infants – Kindergarten in the Nursery during the worship service.
10:00 a.m. Worship with Chancel Choir, Signing for Hearing Impaired, & Children's Sunday School
11:00 a.m. Coffee Fellowship
6:00 p.m. Youth Fellowship

Sunday, January 1, 2023***"Obediently Following"****Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23***Communion served****Preaching:** Rev. Stacy Brooks**Sunday, January 8, 2023****Epiphany Sunday****Guest Preaching:** Rev. Lew Fry**Sunday, January 15, 2023*****Isaiah 49:1-7*****Guest Preaching:** Rev. Ed McRae**Sunday, January 22, 2023*****"Building a Foundation"****Matthew 7:24-27***Preaching:** Rev. Stacy Brooks**From Pastor Stacy...**

January.

It is the month of new beginnings and new opportunities. It is a month in the church where we begin with a fresh budget and newly elected committee members. And it is a month where I like to ask the questions: what goals do we have as a church for this year? What practical steps are we going to take to reach our goals? Who do we hope to reach this year and how do we hope to reach them? And my favorite, in what ways do we hope to see God show up in unexpected ways?

Many of these questions can also be applied to our lives as we look towards the next twelve months. As you look at your goals, what are your goals in your relationship with God? How will you serve God in this year? And how will you open yourself to God's presence and calling?

These are challenging questions both for us as a church and as individuals. It can be easy to stare at a blank piece of paper, finally just giving up and letting this year play out as it will, but the process of putting goals and plans on paper is not intended to lock us into one path for this year (too often setting us up for failure), but to motivate us to strive for more than the ordinary. Take for example reading the Bible. If I have never read the Bible over a year long period and I choose to set a goal to read it through in 2023, but only finish the Old Testament, I have not failed to read it all, but I have gone further than I would have without the goal and the New Testament can become a goal for 2024. See how this works?

I am excited for 2023 and the ways that God is going to move in and through me and through our ministry here at Simi Valley UMC. I look forward to meeting new people, trying new things, reaching further out into our community, and sharing lots of delicious meals as we walk life together.

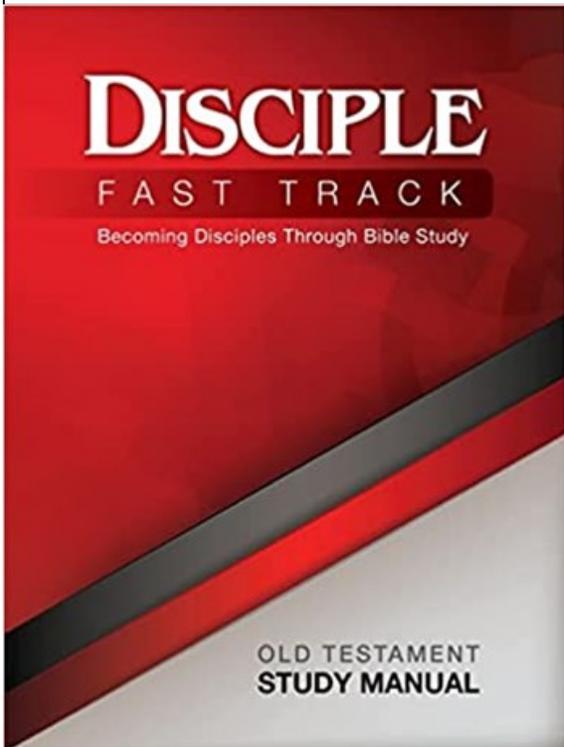
*Stewardship Campaign*

Happy New Year!

Pastor Stacy

We have arrived at the year 2023 with great excitement and anticipation of how the Lord will be moving in and amongst us here at Simi Valley UMC, but we cannot do all that the Lord has planned without you.

From January 22nd until February 5th, we will be having our annual stewardship campaign based on the theme, "We Built This Church, It Is Ours." We will remember and honor the volunteers who literally built the church we worship, study, fellowship, and gather in. With that legacy in our hearts, we will look towards our current ownership of the ministry that continues here as we pledge our tithes, our time, and our prayers in 2023. Plan to be a part of this time of remembrance and celebration, and mark your calendars for our catered commitment lunch after worship on Sunday, February 5th. RSVP to the church office or Pastor Stacy if you plan to attend!



Disciple Fast Track Bible Study

Are you ready to make a weekly commitment to studying the Bible with fellow disciples from our church?

If so, Pastor Stacy will be offering a Disciple Fast Track study on Tuesday afternoons from 1:00-2:30 pm in the Chapel, beginning Tuesday, Feb. 7th.

You can be “all in” by purchasing the study guide, reading the daily readings, and attending the weekly class. You can also be “as in as possible” by just attending the classes to benefit from the study. Or, you can be anywhere in between.

The study guide is \$16.99 for the first 12 weeks on Amazon, or you can talk to Pastor Stacy to purchase a copy through the church office. You can also request a list of daily readings from Pastor Stacy.



Parsonage Dinner

Friday, Jan. 27th

5:00-7:00 pm

This dinner will have a Greek theme, with grilled chicken, tzatziki, saffron rice, Greek salad, and baklava. RSVP to Pastor Stacy or the church office to join in this evening of food, fellowship, and faithful friends. This is also a great opportunity to bring a friend for a casual way to meet the friendly people of SVUMC!

Wonderful Wednesdays

No meeting on Jan. 4th

New Schedule (Begins Jan. 11th):

- 4:00 pm Adult Program
- 5-6 pm Dinner for All
- 6:00 pm Kids' Program

January Schedule for Adults

(4:00-5:00 pm in Witman Hall):

- January 11th: New Year, New You! Bible study on living a healthy & spiritual life in 2023
- January 18th: BUNCO!
- January 25th: Making personal prayer labyrinths and learning how to use them in prayer



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Elementary age children will start their Sunday in the Sanctuary with their parents, and following the Children's Message, they will be dismissed with their teachers to Sunday School.

The nursery will be open at 9:45 am for children 5 years and under with an age-appropriate lesson.

All children and youth, regardless of age (or noise!) are welcome to stay with their families in worship.

From Ms. Becky...

Happy 2023! It is with hope and excitement that I look forward to the days and months ahead! The youth will be going to Camp Wrightwood for a "Limitless" winter retreat on January 14-16th; Wonderful Wednesdays will continue to meet from 6-7pm on Wednesday evenings; youth will continue to meet from 6-7:30pm on Sunday evenings; but together we can plan for so much more.



Two important meetings will be taking place this month: **Sunday, January 22nd will be the Children's Ministry family meeting, and the following Sunday, January 29th, will be the Youth Ministry family meeting.**

Both meetings will be held in Witman Hall following worship at 11:30 am. At these meetings, we will discuss the future of children and youth ministries, share needed information, and dream together. Please mark the date(s) on your calendar and plan to be there!

Blessings,
Becky

Happy 2023!

I am so excited about the plans God has for CrossRoads Children's Center this year! Here are five spiritual rituals the staff and I are going to focus on: *privately reevaluate the past year, arranging a day to declutter our life, formally invite prosperity into our life, spending New Year's Eve in meditation, and placing special emphasis on the first twelve days.*

The month of January is typically a quiet one at CrossRoads; it is a month of planning for the new year. Some of my favorite events are celebrating Dr. Seuss's birthday in March, Open Houses in the Spring and Fall, Staff Appreciation Week in May, CrossRoads' birthday in June and Friendsgiving in November.

The staff and I are very grateful for your prayers and support, and we look forward to what 2023 brings!

Filled with Blessings,

Mrs. Michelle Gordon, Principal



Kidz Bells
Wednesdays
5-5:30 pm

Youth Bells
Thursdays
7:15-8:15 pm

Both groups meet in the Chapel.
Please join us!
New ringers are welcome!

For information,
please contact Stu Thomson.



United Women in Faith

UWF Sunday on January 29th

UWF will be in charge of the Worship Service, and two outstanding people in our church will be recognized for their tireless service.

UWF Circles

Circle of Joy will meet on Wednesday, January 11, at 12:30, at the home of Judy Thomson.

Seekers Circle will meet on Monday, January 16, at noon in the chapel.

Night Owls Circle will meet Tuesday, January 17, in the chapel at 7pm.

Circle of Faith will meet on Wednesday, January 18, at 11:30. The place is yet to be decided.

Teresa Circle will meet each month to visit those who are homebound.

UWF Board Meeting

***Wednesday, January 4th @ 10:00 am in the Chapel
All officers & Circle Chairs are asked to attend.***



Men's Donut Fellowship

**Wednesdays at 8 am
in front of Huddle Hall.**

**Drop by and enjoy
coffee, a donut and some
fellowship with the guys!**

WALKING GROUP!

Meet on **Tuesday and Thursday** mornings
at 8:00 am in the parking lot
for a 3-4 mile walk.

We hope you will
consider joining us.
**Everyone is
welcome!**



The MEOW committee would like to thank all who participated in our Alternative Christmas on December 4th. Our congregation is a generous one! \$1255.00 was raised for our local charities. Our members also learned about the goals and missions of groups new to this event. Once again, many thanks to all who helped to make a merrier Christmas for many in our community.

*MEOW (Mission, Evangelism, Outreach and Worship/Witness) meets
at 1:00 pm in the Chapel on the 2nd Tuesday of each month.*

The MEOW committee is a dynamic group of people working to promote ministry, evangelism, outreach, and witness within our church and our community. Willing hands and hearts are always needed! Please contact Ed Tingstrom at edtingstrom@yahoo.com for more information.

New scholarship available!



Scholarship

The MEOW committee will be granting scholarships to high school seniors for the first time this year. Applications can be picked up in the church office starting February 1, 2023. The deadline for submission will be April 1, 2023. Please contact Ed Tingstrom, MEOW chairperson, at edtingstrom@yahoo.com for additional information.

Dear Friends,

As I sit here writing to you, I'm still marinating in the afterglow of last month's successful and JOYous Christmas Concert. I have some thoughts I'd like to share.

I was explaining this to someone recently, reciting the exhaustive list of what is required to put on a concert such as we do each December. Yes, it takes about six months and many, many staff and volunteer hours to prepare what – 90 minutes of music? Is it worth it? You bet. In the end, not only do we get a glorious product that praises God and brings people together, but also, we get all these lasting effects.

BENEFITS OF DOING AN ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT

1. Community Outreach and Volunteer Enrichment – the most important benefits

An annual Christmas concert is a many-faceted outreach vehicle and it makes us better. Here's how:

Simply put, a concert is a low-pressure chance for **church-shopping folks** in Simi Valley to visit and enjoy not only the lovingly-prepared music, but also the warmth of our beloved church community – SVUMC is friendly and welcoming! How do you think our choir has grown despite the pandemic?

Statistically, church choirs are becoming a thing of the past in many congregations all over the US. Ours is strong partly because a quality program for singers and ringers offers *more* volunteer music opportunities than a praise band model.

Several times in my short tenure here at SVUMC, I've heard from musically gifted people who said they are here because they were attracted to our worship services and the quality of our music. They found it different from other traditional or contemporary praise band models in other local churches. And who else has FOUR handbell choirs?

We invite partnership from **professional instrumentalists and guest singers**. This symbiotic relationship challenges the choir to reach higher and dig deeper than normal into a musical work and really polish it, feeding our souls and reflecting our expertise through our music! The instrumentalists get the benefit of being appreciated and loved by the choir, the church community and the attendees. All leave fed – literally and figuratively.

A Christmas concert like this puts our volunteers **out in the community** and inspires interest and partnership. In preparation for this program, we visited banner printers, promotional material producers, dry cleaners, newspapers – the list goes on. SVUMC needs to be out in the community, and what better way to begin after a pandemic than with a free concert that all can attend?

2. Staff Enrichment

Church never sleeps. Fifty-two weeks a year our organist Leslie Frank, our handbell director Stu Thomson and our Director of Music Ministries, yours truly, must select music that can be learned in a short amount of time to be presented in worship each week. An occasional concert allows us to reach higher; it stretches us to find out what we are made of musically. This feeds us, helps us grow, gives us the opportunity to work closely together and all while elevating the program *and* for a broader audience than usual! We give our very best to God, and together with our pastor and office personnel, become a closer-knit staff.

3. Witness and Praise

The model for our Christmas concerts of late has been cantata first half with a variety of features in the second. Do you know what a sacred cantata is? It is literally the telling of Christ's birth story with music and narration. What better way to glorify God than to tell this important story to all who are eager to hear it?

4. Soul Salve

We are coming out of – or perhaps learning to live with – a new post-pandemic world. I believe, and I'm sure I'm not alone, that music touches the heart in a way that words alone cannot. It is my hope that you found and continue to find the annual Christmas Cantata Concert and the music presented in worship year-round a blessing, one that allows your heart to open to a hurting world – and invites it in.

Thank you for your partnership and support of this ministry.

Blessings,

Lisa Wall-Urgero
Director of Music Ministries





JANUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

January Birthdays:

- 1/08 Barbara Michaelson
- 1/09 Rebecca Campos
- 1/10 Jackie Seckman
Dan Shuster
- 1/12 Lauren Cowden
- 1/14 Colin Hunter
- 1/15 Amanda Poppen
- 1/16 Michelle Gordon
- 1/17 Diane Hayden
- 1/19 Sandi Wilson
Susie Stombotne
Joel Mueller
Owen Newman
- 1.20 Michael Reagan
- 1/21 Mary Campbell
- 1/22 Soledad Horney
- 1/23 Judy Harrigan
Maria Reynolds
Diane Thomson
- 1/24 Gary Laier
Marcia Reyes
- 1/26 Amelia Reyes
- 1/27 Lynn O'Hanlon
- 1/28 Luene Witman
- 1/29 Lydia Lighfoot
Dave Newman
Kara Riggsbee
- 1/30 Kale Madelon
- 1/31 William Palo

January Anniversaries:

- 1/12 Paul & Cheryl West

WE SUPPORT OUR CHURCH...

WITH OUR PRAYERS



If you have prayer requests, please let the office know. Also, please let us know if you would like your request lifted by Pastor Stacy in worship, if you would like to request a pastoral visit, and/or if you would like your request added to the weekly prayer e-mail.

With Our Gifts



Offering Received January to November 2022	\$528,394.28
Church Expenses January to November 2022*	\$625,743.65

* includes capital expenditures (roof & parsonage repair costs \$85,247.93)

WITH OUR PRESENCE



ATTENDANCE

November 2022

27th 176

December 2022

4th 113

11th 99

18th 99

25th 70

WITH OUR SERVICE

Dinner Church: Dinner is served to the hungry every Saturday and we are responsible for the meal on the third Saturday.

To help with this ministry call the church office at 805-526-6231.

Samaritan Center: Local resource center for the homeless is always in need of personal care items, coffee supplies, non-perishable food items, etc. Donation baskets in the Narthex Call 805-579-9166.



P.A.D.S. (Public Action to Deliver Shelter): We house the homeless overnight every Saturday and Wednesday, *Nov. 1 - March 31*, through this local church sponsored program. If you are interested in staying overnight as a monitor or to provide breakfast in the morning, contact Chuck McKee or Rich Reynolds.

AND WITH OUR TIME, TALENTS AND SPECIAL GIFTS

Coffee Hour

Volunteers are needed to help set-up, clean-up, make coffee and bring goodies (if you wish). You'll find the sign-up sheet in the Narthex.



For questions, contact Soloi Inoke (805) 522-1150

Ushers Needed (REALLY needed!)

Responsibilities include: Arrive 30 min. before services. pass offering plates, and warmly greet friends and newcomers.

Please contact Barbara Modlin at (805) 526-7969.

2023 Flower Calendar



Available now in the Narthex.

For questions, please contact Juanita Ward.

The

Herald

Simi Valley United Methodist Church

2394 Erringer Road Simi Valley CA 93065

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Update Your information



Please help us get it right!

Does the church office have your correct mailing information? Do we have your correct email address and phone number? Would you prefer to receive the Herald electronically? Would you like to receive the weekly eHerald and ePrayers emails? Would you like to receive weekly offering envelopes, or do you prefer to give electronically? Do we have your birthday and/or anniversary listed, and is it correct?

No update is too small!

Please email Diane at svumc@pacbell.net, or call us at (805) 526-6231.

Permanent Office Hours

Monday-Thursday:

9:00am-4:00pm

Fridays:

9:00am-Noon

The February Herald
Submission Deadline
is
Friday Jan.13



The church office will be closed on Monday, Jan. 2 and Monday Jan. 16

Needed!

Colored bottles of all shapes, sizes, and types (wine, beer, soda, tea, liqueurs, etc.) are requested for a special project for the garden.



Kindly leave them near the picnic table (from the east parking lot, take the path near the recycle bin and leave at the table to the right.)

Thank you!

Calendar and Room Requests

If you are needing to calendar an event or meeting, change the date of an event or meeting, or request to use a space at the church...

Please contact Nancy in the front office.

This will ensure that our published calendars are up-to-date, that the office is aware of what is happening and when, and to ensure that we do not have any conflicts on the calendars or in rooms.

