



## November 2023 Newsletter

### Sonora United Methodist Church



November is always, for me, a month to focus on gratitude. We start by sharing about our saints and thanking God for how they shaped our lives. All Saints Day reminds us that we haven't come to know the love of God without people who showed us how to walk with Jesus. We are also reminded that those we love may no longer be here with us physically, but the great cloud of witnesses is our hope of joining them in eternity. Then we end the month with Thanksgiving. It is a secular holiday which really should be a bigger part of our Christian year—maybe it is a part of our lives every day.

This is one of those years I am reflecting upon the journey of the pilgrims. In our modern world we take travel for granted, making plans on the road and when we get back home. The pilgrims boarded the Mayflower unsure of whether they would survive to set foot in the new land. The first winter was a struggle to endure. They celebrated the first Thanksgiving with joy and gratitude for just having a harvest dinner to share. It is the way, I feel, of celebrating Jamie enduring a long and difficult summer in the hospital and Tamy completing her radiation therapy.

The war between Israel and Hamas, governmental chaos, and difficulties in our own lives, create an environment where despair

can take hold. Remember that the Promised Land was only reached after 40 years in the wilderness and Jesus' followers walking the way that leads to the cross. We find God with us in the journey, and in the hard times we can be reminded to find joy in the smallest things; playing a game of cards at the bedside, watching Jamie build with her Legos, the song of a bird or a particularly beautiful sunset. An attitude of gratitude starts with knowing God is ever present with us. Thanksgiving is always sweeter on the other side of adversity. It is a great spiritual discipline to begin our prayers with thanksgiving before we lay our petitions before our Lord. Say thanks to God and remember to be the spark of joy to someone else going through a hard time this month.

Shalom,

Pastor Kevin

November 5th we will celebrate **All Saints Day**. I will be asking you to think about those who have shared the love of God with you and kindled your faith and nurtured your relationship with Jesus. Thanking God, we share our appreciation for the saints in our lives. We will bring items that remind us of our saints and tell their stories during worship. We rekindle the gift when we acknowledge those who have brought us to this place. We rekindle the gift when we recommit ourselves to this path, to the work of discipleship. Bring an item to display during worship to create a joyful day of worship.

Remembering calendar -- daylight saving ends on Nov 5<sup>th</sup>



## Women's Fellowship

Thank you to everyone who participated in and donated food for the Hot Dog Supper, Trunk or Treat and Haunted Hallway. As usual, (which is amazing) we had more food donated than we expected and more people came to help than expected. We are blessed with an unusually creative and giving congregation. Laura Mansfield did an incredible job of decorating our dark, drab basement hallway into a slightly spooky, beautiful space. One little boy, about 7 years old, went through it 4 times! David Simerley came with his prop of a plant with teeth and wandered through the hallway adding unexpected life.

Janice Samuels Johnson, Lorraine Vogt, Jane Gunter and Nancy Fraleigh, provided cars for the Trunk and Treat. Jane's truck had a farm in it and Nancy's witchy cackle was a great introduction to the Haunted Hallway. Iain and Colin Williams handed out the candy along with Jane and Nancy.

Karla Wasson, Ann Whitlach, Juliet Simerley, Sally Bredehoeft, Peggy Florence, Wendy Buckman, Janice Samuels Johnson, Loisi Hursky and Maqueda (Williams) Nicholson, cooked hotdogs, washed dishes, cleaned up spills, made drinks, and handed out food and condiments. We gave out 159 hotdogs and not everyone who came through the Haunted Hallway ate a hot dog. But all had fun and enjoyed

the experience. One father said that his son looks forward to our activity more than anything else about Sonora's Treat Street.

**Charge Conference:** Our annual official meeting with our District Superintendent, David Niu, will be Saturday, November 11, at Soulsbyville church. It begins at 10:00 a.m. with the Staff Parish Committee meeting with the District Superintendent and 10:30 with the rest of us.

All are invited to attend. We will find out who will be our officers for 2024 and make policy decisions along with the Soulsbyville/Tuolumne congregation.

**Thanksgiving Day Dinner:** The Beans, Rice and Jesus Christ staff will provide Thanksgiving dinner to the church members and the community members who attend our weekly meal. It will be a regular Thanksgiving dinner complete with Turkey and dressing. Dinner will be served from 4 to 5:30 on Thanksgiving Day.

### **Planning ahead for Christmas**

First Sunday in Advent is December 3. We will need someone or a couple of someones to read and light the Advent candles for the 4 Sundays of Advent. Please let Lorraine know if you are available.

Church decorating will be Saturday, December 2nd at 10 am. This is always fun, so plan to come and do our traditional decorating or help us discover something new.

Christmas Eve Service, Sunday, December 24, 6 pm. Carols and Scripture readings.

### **Anniversaries:**

Jerry and Lois O'Day. They were married 11/7/1976

## **Birthdays**

11/22 Loisi Hursky

11/29 Karla Wasson

Looking ahead, our **rummage sale** will be on **Saturday November 18th**. Donations of clean usable items are appreciated. This will be in the basement so we won't have to worry about possible rain.

Shoe boxes will be due for **Operation Christmas Child on Sunday the 19th**. Brochures, labels and boxes are available in the library. Contact me with any questions or visit the website [samaritanspurse.org/occ](http://samaritanspurse.org/occ).

It was decided to do a **Thanksgiving dinner for the Beans and Rice group on Thanksgiving day**. Be watching for how you can donate or serve.

If we have enough interest, we may have an **open house of sorts before and/or during the Christmas parade downtown on Friday the 24th**. We would offer cookies, cocoa, coffee and possibly a craft table for children.

Be thinking about how you are being called to serve. Thank you.

Blessings,



## **Hot Dogs and Haunted Spaces**

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## **JOTS FROM JANICE**

Beans and Rice & Jesus Christ ministry will still be having our Christmas Give-Away and Christmas dinner on Thursday, December 21<sup>st</sup> between 4:30-5:30 pm. It is open, not only to the homeless, but also the community as well. All the details are still in the making, but this is what I can share with you. We never know how many people will show up, but we are expecting 40-50.

Some families, but also people who are living alone or just with a spouse and do not want to cook for one or two.

Christmas Gift – Give Away details:

- \$5-\$10 gift certificate from Wendy's
- Socks – male white tube – size 10-13
- Candy – chocolate or hard candy – each one wrapped and put into gift bags
- Christmas cards
- Tubs that will hold miscellaneous small gifts like toothbrushes, toothpaste, small flashlights, etc.

Participants will be able to pick out 1 or 2, depending on how many we have had donated.

Christmas dinner menu (by Alice Mansfield) – Turkey breast – gravy – stuffing – mashed potatoes (her special recipe) - cranberry sauce – green bean casserole – rolls & butter – homemade pumpkin pie w/whipped cream – coffee, tea, lemonade, etc.

There will be no take-out boxes. If you would like to donate or help me in any way, please contact Janice Samuels Johnson 209-352-1354 or Alice Mansfield 209-559-5112.



Kevin's Korner

Why I Love The United Methodist Church (just a few)

1. Our doctrine of grace (which is not about our merit). We are in a journey to share this grace with a wider circle of people. We are not there yet. God has bid all humankind.

2. Made perfect in love. We love God because He first loved us.
3. We love our neighbor because we see the image of God in them.
4. Our connection for the purpose of mission. For example, now This is UMCOR in Ukraine (war). A few months ago it was Western Kentucky (tornado) . A few months before that it was Western North Carolina (flood). A few years ago it was Florida (hurricane).
5. Our work in discipleship. From Upper Room, Walk to Emmaus, Discipline Bible Study to Covenant Discipleship.
6. Our journey to inclusion. From women in ministry to the black college fund to becoming a global church to equitable compensation to struggling with our language and homosexuality. This is not a problem. This is the unfinished work of God in us.
7. Our doctrinal standards – which have not changed and do Not change, and our theological task.
8. We are an imperfect church, the cross is a reminder of our need for redemption, the flame a reminder of our hardened hearts in need of the warm fire of the Holy Spirit whose first fruit is love.

Kevin found this in the Nov. 23 EUMC newsletter, and liked it so much, that he wanted to share it with all of you.



**Sonora United Methodist Church**  
**90 Yaney Avenue**  
**Sonora, CA 95370**

**Office Hours:** Tues & Fri 9-11 am

**Office Phone:** (209) 532-4850

**E-mail - Office:** [sumc\\_office@att.net](mailto:sumc_office@att.net)

**Website:** [www.sonora-umc.org](http://www.sonora-umc.org)

**Worship Services:** - Sunday 11:30 AM

**Pastor:** Kevin Campbell

**Email:** [revkev835@gmail.com](mailto:revkev835@gmail.com)

**Administrative Assistant:** Juliet Simerley

**Pianist:** Juliet Simerley

**Custodians:** Dan & Alice Townsend

**Newsletter Editor:** Nancy Fraleigh

WORSHIP  WITH US!

