The Voice

LA VERNE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

July-August 2021 Newsletter

Relaunching Our Mission Focused Church

Dear beloved brothers and sisters,

I send the peace of Christ our Lord to all of you. During the hot summer and pandemic of this year, it is my privilege to serve the Lord and His Church with our faithful people. I am very grateful to be with you on your faith journey.

I got a call from a pastoral colleague this week. She asked me how her church can reopen by following the COVID-19 safety guidelines and how to use the audio-visual technologies for its online worship service. Her church's council has decided to reopen their in-person worship service in August. Since I do not have much knowledge of the questions she raised, I just shared with her how our church has done worship services and activities so far.

Much longer than a year, almost all churches have closed for their in-person gatherings, and have been only doing virtual services and meetings. When churches have time to reopen their doors for in-person services, they raise the concern about membership and attendance declining and their unstable financial situation. In much of the world and parts of the U.S., the pandemic continues to be a major threat. Many worshippers, who have been use to participating in online services only, might find it hard to return to what it was before the pandemic. I have heard some people say, "pastor, I will come back from Christmas this year," "Pastor, sorry to say that I want to come back for next year, but I will continue to join in online service. . . " It may take much longer than expected for churches to get back to their good habits, such as worshipping together, working together, praying together, and studying the words of God together. Whenever we think about how soon and how well our church can return to "normal," pre-pandemic, we can get more stressed and disappointed than before in this season of reopening the church. The sick world is very slowly being recovered.

I would like to invite you to see the "silver linings" we have found in the pandemic. We have over-come the fears of using technology. We have experienced how our church really needs to change its practice of ministry for effectively extending the kingdom of God on earth here and now. We have experienced greater teamwork among staff and leaders. It has never been easy for members of the task force of COVID-19 and the church council to serve together for their church and people.

(article continued to page 2)

(article continued from page 1)

Without our task force's countless meetings, diligent work, studies, discussions, and their sacrifices, our church could not have had in-person worship services for the last 10 months. It is also grateful for us to see our worship team growing in terms of stewardship and formation.

Our "silver linings," therefore, are not just a superficial and optimistic mindset, but they are based upon our experiences in the pandemic and faith in God. I believe it is time to relaunch, rather than simply reopen, our church, a new mission focused church. It is an opportunity for us to reboot the purpose and mission of the church for transforming the world. It is the time to think about what God is calling us to do and to be willing to get out of our routines. It is also the time for our church to listen to the needs of the people, not only the needs of the people in the church, but one the needs of the people the church is serving and respond to them as a practical, not superficial, way of loving God and your neighbors. It is a way of recovering the real meaning of "WORSHIP-SERVICE."

Finally, I would like to invite you to have a time to reflect and discuss about how our church and how we can relaunch in this pandemic, how we can set our mission and effectively act it out, and what routines of which we need to get out in the lives of our faith community. Please feel free to share them in our conversation.

Your servant,

Pastor Park

~~~~~~

On Sunday, July 11, 2021 we welcomed new member, Sonja Moore!

Our dear brother in Christ, David Fiztsimons, went home to the Lord on July 8th
~~~~~~

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

ALL HANDS ON DECK! SATURDAY, JULY 24

You may have noticed that the wood chips under the slide and swings in the Preschool Play Yard are getting sparse. A load of new certified Preschool Wood Chips (18 yards to be exact) will be delivered. We need your help to transport the chips from the pile that will be dumped outside the fence, to the areas beneath the slide and swings. Not only do **we need you** but we invite you to bring a **shovel and wheelbarrow** if you have one. Preschool Parents are also being invited to "come on down." This will be a great opportunity to get to know our Preschool families. **We will begin at 8:00 A.M.** Coffee and doughnuts will be there too.

NEW DIRECTORY COMING SOON

It had been a while since our last Directory was published. During Covid time we have welcomed many new people into our church family, others have changed their information

Please look for the **Directory Information Sheets** on Sundays and be sure to fill one out with your current information. We much appreciate your help with this!

- The Office

UM(ALL)WOMEN INVITED! To what you ask? To a POTLUCK PICNIC REUNION

That's right, we have not been able to meet for over a year. It is time for a fresh beginning. It doesn't matter if you have ever come to a UMW meeting before, you are invited and urged to join ALL of the women at LVUMC, new and long- time, young and old, on Saturday, July 31 at 10:30 on the beautiful lawn at LVUMC.

We will make it a true Potluck by not telling you what to bring. It will be the *"luck of the pot."* Bring a favorite dish - main dish, salad, or dessert. Plates, plasticware, and beverages will be provided.

Also bring ideas for events and programs for our UMW in the year ahead. We are meeting on Saturday so that any of you who are employed during the week can attend. We hope that you will. And, don't come alone, bring a friend.

CALIFORNIA-
PACIFIC
CONFERENCE

Report from the AC 2021 June 17-19, 2021
Story with oil lamp….

The theme of the AC this year was ***Restoration: Parables of the Pandemic.*** Broken and mended pots and bowls were the images around which worship happened. During the past year we as individuals and certainly our churches have been broken in many ways. But at the same time restoration and new life has appeared. Parables undergirded a variety of creative church responses during the pandemic - parables such as the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan, the Workers in the Vineyard.

There is a Japanese word ***kintsugi*** which means brokenness being made whole. Brokenness is not the end of the story. Bishop Grant Hagiya spoke of the pandemic causing dis-ease which leads to languishing. But this can be replaced by flourishing. God never promised that we would have NO problems, but He did promise we could overcome them. The video sessions were filled with positive actions that were the result of churches responding to the needs the pandemic created. It is as if the pandemic has reawakened a hunger to do and be more.

On a business level, we heard from the **Lay Leader** of the Conference and the priorities the Laity have for the year: supporting ministries that support youth and young adults; developing and using the skills of the laity; increasing communication between laity and the Annual Conference; being one in ministry with the clergy.

One exciting program was introduced: **C2 Leadership Institute.** It is a training opportunity that deals with the intersection of Church and Community, showing pastors how to reach out beyond their church to partner with the community on new joint adventures.

I kept jotting down **motivating statements** that were shared. Like, *We are in a Season of Change, a Season of Uncertainty.* then considering God's action of restoration and healing *with "golden strands of grace, silver strands of compassion, precious stones of love."*

We heard from the leaders of the **delegation to General Conference**, now scheduled for August 29- September 6, 2022 in Minneapolis. There may be a special called GC to retire some Bishops, and Jurisdictional Conferences will meet to elect new Bishops. Legislation was presented regarding actions that will be taking place at the GC.

Our **Camping and Retreat programs** have really suffered financially during the past months since camps were all closed down. However they are once again up and running and have gone, and continue to undergo, improvements. Some churches are even scheduling time to go to the camp together and to do work while there - something to think about.

The GBGM presented an impressive report on ministries in the US and around the world. It is impressive to see how the UMC through UMCOR and through individuals is responding to needs and disasters around the world. Two young women were commissioned to serve as US2's, which means they will be doing short term mission projects in the US for 2 years. Later in the day we also heard of the great work of our own Conference Disaster Relief Team.

We approved to **sale of one church** and the **joining together of 2 churches** in Hawaii. Rather than a sad moment, it is a time to celebrate new uses of our facilities. Some are considering in addition to being a Worship Center, it might be a Mission Center or an Enterprise Opportunity Center. This is especially true in the African American Community.

(*article continued to page 5)*

(article continued from page 4)

The **Conference budget** was presented and it was clear that there is an attempt to reduce amounts wherever possible. Some reductions, such as eliminating a District Office may need some rethinking as our East District's Administrative Assistant says her home is filling up with the file cabinets and furniture from the District Office. 2022 budget if $531,000 less than 2021. I do have a copy of the budget if any of you wish to see it.

The **Bishop shared his vision** for the Quadrennium 2020-2024. It involves being Rooted in Jesus Christ, leading to Vital and Thriving Local Churches and Communities that will Come out of Covid Safely, Develop a Culture of Call for Youth and Young Adults, fight Hatred and Racism, be together as One Family in the AC, and develop Financial Sustainability.

Of course there were the **traditional happenings** at the Conference, all by ZOOM - the Ordination Service for new pastors, the Celebration of the Ministries of Retiring pastors, and the memorial Service of pastors and spouses who have died and gone on to join the Church triumphant. However, for me the highlight of the Conference was the awarding of the **Bishop's Award** for 2020 and 2021. The work and ministry of close to twenty persons - lay and clergy - echoed one theme. All have made it a lifetime commitment to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly. Echoing founder John Wesley's Three Little Rules, they have done no harm, they have done good, and they have stayed in love with God.

Thank you for letting me be your AC delegate. Next year we will be back at the University of Redlands, June 16-18, with partial use of ZOOM, and your delegate will be someone else, let Pastor Park know if you would like to be that person.

Alma Roberts

~~~~~~

SAFE AND FEARLESS "VITAL CONVERSATIONS" TO BEGIN IN AUGUST

There has been so much happening in our world today that can make a person lose hope. Covid has put us all on edge. Hatred is being expressed in so many ways. Division is apparent among our diversity. Yet, as Christians, as followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to be the **bearers of hope and love.** What to do, what to do??? Several of us have thought it would be helpful to provide opportunities for conversations to take place.
As Summer is still with us, these may take the form of back yard gatherings.

Look for sign-ups to express a preference of time and day.
We hope to start in August.
~~~~~~

Campus Project Plans

- Pick up and set aside stepping stones in Memorial Garden. **This is #1**, (just the stones set aside)

- Level area with slight rise in the middle to allow for runoff with “fill dirt”
- Lay plastic sheeting down for weed control
- Replace stones in appropriate place for comfort of benches.
- Fill in area with decorative gravel from ILB project from Round Up grounds.

- **We can use the black trailer** for clean up. Also the grate from the trailer can be used for gravel cleaning. (The gate has a 1/2” grate, I am making a 1/4” Screen which will adapt and work better)
- **The #2 move here** is “Bushes, and Bad stuff day”. This will include the outgrowth of the trees we have trimmed down, especially along the west wall of the property. It also includes the hedge on the east side of the BSA Barn. This is a little bigger deal than first thought, and may be a work day in itself. It must be coordinated with Adrian Vargas, who will supervise the operations in volved in the strawberry field because that south wall is a concern.
- Anything loose: **(Part of #2 move)** bricks, bones, blocks, branches, abutments, **(*byproduct),** will be picked up, loaded into the black trailer and taken over and placed into the walkway on the south wall of the strawberry field for a “base”. **Real rocks will be set away** from the wall in the open to be picked up afterwards and placed around the strawberry tree.
- ***The asphalt will be place behind the trash container and discarded “piece by piece”.**
- I will talk to Adrian about cleaning up that entire south wall.
- This would entail the removal of debris, and leveling everything from the sidewalk on “D” to the west wall.
- It needs to be flat enough surface for a mower or weed eater at the least.
- He wants that Peach Tree, but it needs to be cleaned up and the rest of the wall needs to be trimmed back to the wall. (For all intents and purposes, you could probably leave the stuff that is in those trenches there and start “filling” with rocks, asphalt, concrete, and assorted animal bones we have in our possession and want to rid ourselves of.
- I’m sure there will be enough gravel from the ILB project to provide the walking path desired, that will encompass the strawberry field.

- Run off road from “Gate Hole” to the SW needs to be deeper along with the round-a-bout road around the trash bin. We are asking for help from Adrian.

- Fill in and level the “Gate hole” with the ILB Gravel to level needed.

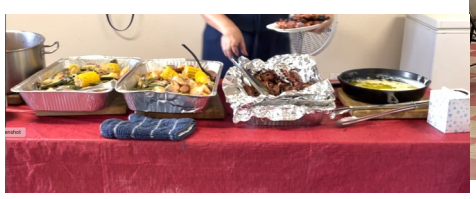
- **Prior to the energies set forth, we must have the tools in order. We are presently in the process, and then we can set a date.**

- The development of the RV lot toward a money making proposition can be addressed at any time.

- The next concern is the parking lot in general. A big project.

- The above is all relatively cheap and only needs manpower and attitude. From here on, we need to have some serious “knees to knees” on where we are going with the ministry.

Happy 4th of July!



La Verne United Methodist Church
3205 D Street
La Verne, CA 91750

Office: (909)593-2013
Pastor: Rev. Min-Kyu Park, Ph.D.

laverneumc@gmail.com
Worship ~ 10:00 a.m.
Online Service uploaded every Sunday ~ 7 p.m.
www.lvumc.org

Return Service Requested

Those to keep in Prayer

For those who need healing:

L. Connie Brown, Alec Guest, Cristina Hernandez, Maggie Hortick, Barbara Jackson, JoAnne Jackson, Tomiko Kitani, Percy Salta, Helen Sanelo, Ken Sandelo, David Svatos, and Larry Weeden.

Those whom from their labors rest: David Fitzsimons

Our Preschool for its safety and financial stability.

All those impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Myanmar Crisis: For Peace and Democracy

Scan our QR Code to take you directly to our website