

The Outlook

WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

"Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors"

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Anne Schlesinger, Pastor

January 8, 2024

10:30 a.m. Worship on Facebook and In-Person

January 12: Isaiah 43: 1-7, Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22. "I Will be With You"

January 19: Isaiah 62: 1-5, John 2: 1-11, "Fill My Cup with Hope"

Rev. Anne Schlesinger, preaching

♪ A Note from the Pastor

Happy New Year!

As we step into a new year, we give thanks for the blessings of the past and the opportunities ahead. Together, we have praised God for God's goodness and guidance, and I am confident that this year will be rich with blessings for our church and for each of us.

Charge Conference Announcement

Exciting news regarding our church property! Wesley's diligent Trustees have approved a landlease agreement allowing Dish Network to join the companies already using the cell tower on our property. After careful review by the Trustees and legal counsel, the agreement is ready for final approval. To complete this process, we will hold a **Charge Conference at 9 am on January 20 at Wesley**, with Rev. Jason Thornton presiding. All are invited to attend this important meeting.

Upcoming Worship Series

We recently concluded our Christmastide and Epiphany series and will celebrate the **Baptism of the Lord** on **January 12** as a stand-alone service. Following this, we'll begin a new worship series, "**Six Stone Jars**," based on this year's Revised Common Lectionary, which focuses on Luke's Gospel. This series begins with the wedding at Cana, where Jesus performs His first recorded miracle, transforming water into wine using six stone jars. As Marcia McFee reflects: "*At times, life can feel like we're 'running out'—of energy, resources, or hope. In these moments, we are invited to the abundant economy of Jesus, where fullness is for the whole community. Let us build the Kin-dom of God by drawing from jars of Hope, Purpose, Healing, Meaning, Vision, and Grace for all people.*" Starting the year with these themes—especially **hope**—is a wonderful way to focus our hearts and minds for the months ahead. ~continued on the following page~

Monthly Food Distribution Updates

We have two updates about our monthly food ministry: 1. **Funding Needs:** This vital ministry, which began with a generous grant, will need additional funding later this year as the grant winds down. With food purchased from the California Food Bank at just 19 cents per pound, it's a ministry worth every penny! While funds from our former food pantry are available, we invite you to contribute by marking donations for the **Food Pantry Fund**. 2. **New Schedule:** To provide more healthy food options, we're moving our distribution to the **second Friday** of each month, beginning this month. Volunteers are always welcome! Join us in the church's west parking lot at **2 PM** to help serve. And remember, food is available for anyone in need.

The Bishop's Gathering of Spiritual Leaders

From **January 14–16**, I'll attend the **Bishop's Gathering of Spiritual Leaders** at Asilomar Conference Grounds. This inclusive gathering brings together Elders, Deacons, Licensed Local Pastors, and Certified Lay Ministers for inspiration and renewal. Since the gathering begins on a Tuesday and Monday is my Sabbath, I will leave after church on January 12 to spend Monday with my daughter, Sunshine, in Santa Cruz County for a belated Christmas celebration. I'll then travel to Asilomar in Monterey County. While I am away, I'll remain available by phone Tuesday through Thursday and return home late Thursday afternoon. Time near the Monterey Bay—or any beautiful body of water—always renews my spirit. Let us all take time to notice and absorb the many blessings God gives us.

Blessings, Pastor Anne

Central Valley Christian Ashram Feb 7th and 8th

You may have heard of or attended the Redwood Christian Ashram, a six day interdenominational, intergenerational family camp that takes place every summer up in the Santa Cruz Mountains. It is a place to grow your faith through worship, teaching, prayer, and sharing. We are happy to announce that there will be a weekend Christian Ashram in February that will be held right here in Bakersfield.

When: Friday, February 7th 5 pm-9pm and Saturday, February 8th 8 am-6pm

Where: First United Methodist Church, 4600 Stockdale Hwy
Cost: \$25.00 per adult, children are free. Costs cover meals for dinner on Friday, continental breakfast on Saturday and lunch Saturday afternoon. There will be a program for the children.

Please register by February 1st. The three ways to register are:

Online at redwoodchristianashram.org/winter25

Email at info@redwoodchristianashram.org

Call registrar Gayle Kerr at (209) 352-1707

If you have questions please contact Rob or Liz Bewley at (661) 549-8739

We hope to see you there!



Prayers

We pray for our friends and family serving in the military

We pray for healing, for ourselves and others:

- For Balthazar, Danny, Jenifer • For Lea, receiving an injection to relieve back pain • For Stella's neighbor Sherry & family whose husband John passed away last week • For all who mourn losses at this tender time of the year, including Lisa S and Stella R • For Toni D who was sick his entire Christmas break • For Barbara's great-granddaughter Leona—a baby with a bad cold • Linda T—for pain relief, and for new prescription glasses • For all the people—patients and staff—in The Orchards post-acute, especially now due to another COVID outbreak • Sherry's son-in-law Tom had successful hip surgery, but we lift up prayers of protection from blood clots • Jeannette—tonsillitis • Nancy J.—for healing. She was moved to The Orchards Post Acute • Denice—sinus infection • Mike H—to have surgery on Tuesday • Eloise and Hannah—members of Laguna Country UMC with difficult health issues

We pray for other needs:

- For PEACE • For President-elect Trump • For the many people affected by fires, floods, and other natural disasters • That the hope of this season may continue • We pray for those who grieve: especially for Jennifer's mother's family. Barbara passed away on January 7 after a long illness
- Discernment and good decisions for all
- Linda T is concerned about money
- Linda R—peace and healing in her home

We pray in gratitude for many blessings and praise God for:

- Jerry's joy that all three of her grandsons are visited for Christmas
- Suzanne, Rose G's sister, whose cancer surgery was successful • Linda R's extended family was in town—it was very good to see them • For the many Christmas blessings • Barbara D's eyes are better—she can read and feels safe to drive • We give thanks for the life of Jimmy Carter • Terry's daughter Kristyn and her husband closed on a house in Bakersfield. • Terry's daughter Allison and her fiancé open escrow on a house in Bakersfield. (They will be married in May) • Linda T was sick but she is feeling better • Happy birthday (Jan 5) to Vance and Martha (Jan 6)

Human Relations Special Sunday, January 19

“This Sunday occurs during Epiphany, the season of manifesting God's light to the world. Human Relations Day calls the Church to recognize the right of all God's children in realizing their potential as human beings in relationship with each other. The purpose of the day is to further the development of better human relations.” (Par. 264.1, *The Book of Discipline 2004*) Wesley Church will have offering envelopes available in the January 19 bulletin or you may donate online. Thank you.

Meeting

The Administrative Council will meet Tuesday, January 21 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Deadline

The deadline to submit articles to the newsletter, *The Outlook*, is January 20. Thank you for your cooperation.

Coffee Bar

Thank you to the volunteers who host the coffee bar on Sunday mornings. There is a volunteer sheet on the coffee bar if you would like to host an upcoming Sunday.

A \$500 memorial donation was made to Wesley Church in memory of Leon and Radine Banks.



“Arise! shine, for your light has come, the glory of the Lord has dawned upon you.” Isaiah 60:1