

A night scene of a church with figures in front of it, under a starry sky. The church is illuminated from within, and the figures are silhouetted against the light. The sky is dark with many small stars and a bright light source behind the church.

Spire

December 2023

Pastor's Pen

They are traveling not by their own choice, unable to find a place to stay, and then making the best of the situation in a barn. I can see Mary and Joseph looking back, remembering, what life was like before, when it was safe, comfortable, didn't change or challenge. Yet, in the moment we celebrate as Christmas eve, childbirth is imminent. Being focused on the past is not an option. They must remain focused in the present. A baby will change their lives even more. This Christmas we celebrate how a baby has changed our lives, too.

As a congregation, our mission is to grow as followers of Jesus Christ who live God's love in the world. One of the ways we live out our mission is to understand that each of us **belong**. We were formed for community. God intends us to be in relationship with each other and with the God's own self, too. We belong to each other, just like Paul tells us in Romans 12.

You Belong is our theme through Advent this year. I'm writing the Advent Wreath lighting reflection each week this year to explore this idea. Of course, those reflections can't be all encompassing to what it means to belong. To belong to a community comes with as many reasons and ways to belong as there are individuals who claim that community as their own. "Belonging" can be through formal membership or simply pointing and claiming that as "my church" or "my preschool" or "my senior center" or whatever the doorway and connection to the community may be.

This holiday season, we have many opportunities for the congregation and the wider community to find a doorway into the community known as LGUMC. Our ministry sponsorship of Live Oak Senior Nutrition and Grace Preschool and partnership with Live Oak Senior Day Care are some doorways to connect with LGUMC. Yet there are so many other doorways. Let me encourage each of you to understand yourselves as doorways, too. Be the doorway for others to discover this community of faith.

Continued on page 2

Pastor's Pen

Continued from page 1

This coming holiday season encourage and invite friends and family to join you in worship. Often folks simply need someone to help them not feel so “awkward” when they attend worship after not attending for a long time, if ever. It’s one of the ways you can become a “doorway” for your congregation, and help folks know they have a place with us. I know that going to a new place or into a new group for the first time it is far easier if I know someone who is already there. The same is true when it comes to church, too.

There will be a Christmas Cantata coming in a few weeks. It would be a lovely way to introduce the congregation to folks. On Christmas Eve, which is Sunday, December 24th, we are having three (3) Christmas Eve services. Our first Christmas Eve service will be at 10 a.m. It will be a traditional Sunday morning service. At four o’clock (4 p.m.) that afternoon, we will be having a contemporary Christmas Eve service designed for children, families, and seniors featuring Ren Geisick singing *O Holy Night* and, of course, the lighting of candles and singing of *Silent Night*. Our final service on Christmas Eve will be at 10 p.m. It will be a traditional “Lessons & Carols” service with, of course, the lighting of candles while we sing, *Silent Night*.

As something which will be a new experience for the congregation, I will be leading the *Wesley Covenant Service* on Sunday, December 31st. The *Wesley Covenant Service* is a deep part of our heritage as the people called Methodist. John Wesley, one of the founders of Methodism and its’ original leader, celebrated the Covenant Service with Methodists whenever he gathered with them. We’ll celebrate this updated form of the service as generations have previously at the change of the year. It is a good way to consider the year past and the year to come.

All of these offer a great opportunity to invite folks to share the joy of Christmas, the New Year, and that at LGUMC there is a place for everyone.

May you have a blessed and joy-filled Christmas.

Peace,
Daniel Diss



Pastor's Class

The Pastor's Class studying the book *Kingdom, Judgment, Grace* by Robert Farrar Capon, will continue meeting every Tuesday until the middle of May with the exception of December 26 and January 2.

December Worship

Advent

LGUMC is a reconciling church, which welcomes all persons as Christ did regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, cultural background, physical or mental health, family status, or financial circumstances. We welcome all persons into full participation into the life of the congregation.

Sunday, December 3
10AM

Contemporary Worship Service

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Mark 1:1-8

Sermon

Waiting for Welcome

Daniel F. Diss, Preaching



Sunday, December 10
10AM

Traditional Worship Service

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

John 1:6-8, 19-28

Sermon

Included in the Story

Daniel F. Diss, Preaching



Sunday, December 17
10AM

Cantata Sunday

Christmas Around the World
(see page 6 for details)



Sunday, December 31
10AM

Covenant Renewal Service

Christmas Eve Services

DECEMBER 24

10AM

Traditional Service

Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96;

Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20

Sermon

Valued Completely

4PM

Contemporary Family Service

"O Holy Night" by Ren Geisick

10PM

Traditional Christmas Eve Service
of Lessons & Carols

Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19; Genesis 22:15-18;

Isaiah 9:2,6-7; Micah 5:2-5a;

Luke 1:26, 35, 38;

Luke 2:1-7; Luke 2:8-16;

Matthew 2:1-11; John 1:1-14

Online Worship

Sundays, 10AM

LGUMC Facebook page

See Worship page at LGUMC.org for online
Worship live stream information.



Children's Ministry

Celebrate Wonder All Ages is a curriculum that honors the spiritual life of children. Celebrate Wonder All Ages will engage children in open-ended exploration and inquiry of the Bible. Through experiential activities, spiritual practices, and reflection, Celebrate Wonder All Ages serves as a biblical guide to help children make meaning for their lives. This curriculum seeks to deepen children's faith formation and to create a safe space for children to ask big questions and claim their spiritual identity as children of God.

Unit 1: JOY

God sent the angel Gabriel to deliver a message to Mary—she would have a child, and she was to name him Jesus.

December 3, Mary's Joy, Luke 1:26-38, 46-56

Mary was young and poor, the last person anyone would expect to be chosen to be the mother of God's Son. Yet, she was chosen by God. The message that called her to this task was delivered to her by the angel Gabriel, who declared that "nothing is impossible for God." Though she was frightened and confused, Mary accepted the call with joy and sang God's praises. Her song of praise (verses 46-55), often referred to as the Magnificat, is covered in today's session.

December 10, Joseph's Joy, Matthew 1:18-24

The story of Jesus' birth from Joseph's perspective as we continue our celebration of Advent. Like Mary, Joseph heard about Jesus' coming birth from an angel. Joseph had learned that his wife to be, Mary, was expecting a child. Joseph was thinking about quietly calling off their marriage because he didn't want to embarrass Mary. Then the angel came to him in a dream and told him that the child Mary was going to have came from the Holy Spirit and that Joseph should not be afraid to marry her.



Continued on page 5



December 24, Joyous News, Luke 2:8-20

Shepherds were quietly going about their night when suddenly an angel appeared to them. The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people" (Luke 2:10, CEB). The Bible states that the shepherds were terrified.

December 31, The Magi, Matthew 2:1-12

The Magi were wise men who studied the stars. They saw an unusual star in the sky one night and knew from their studies that the star meant a king was born. We don't know of magi for sure, but because they brought three gifts, we usually refer to them as three magi. Like the shepherds, the magi were unexpected people who visited the Holy Family.

December 17, Jesus Brings Joy, Luke 2:1-7

Before Mary and Joseph could enjoy the birth of their son, Jesus, they had to travel to Bethlehem. The emperor decided everyone had to be counted for tax purposes in the town they were born. They left Nazareth for Bethlehem, where Joseph was born. It was not an easy journey for a very pregnant Mary.



Contact Information

Jonnye Cartmill
Children & Youth Ministry
kids@lgumc.org

*Merry
Christmas*

December 17, 10AM

Get ready for a most special worship service on December 17, when we have some exciting music ready for you!

The choir and orchestra are preparing an amazing Christmas cantata featuring Christmas carols from around the world, that will surely get you into the Christmas spirit! It will be a perfect Sunday morning to attend church in person and, most importantly, to bring someone else with you! Tell everyone you know (as well as those you don't know!) to attend LGUMC at our 10AM Service on December 17. This is too good a gift not to share!



ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GIFT FAIRE



Our Christmas Gift Faire will be offered on Sunday, December 3 and 10, after worship service. We will have displays, and you will be able to “purchase” gifts of good-will donations to worthy programs in honor of family and friends. We will also have gift cards and descriptions of the programs that you support. Bring your checkbook or cash (no credit cards), and your shopping list, and plan to browse through the social hall. We will also serve coffee, tea, and cookies to munch on.
(See order form on page 13.)



Help Our Unhoused Neighbors Support the Shower Ministry at the Alternative Christmas Faire

Your generosity helps the 12-15 unhoused neighbors who visit us every Thursday afternoon for a shower, fresh lunch and much needed supplies. Our clients so appreciate all of the items they receive – it makes a big difference in their ability to stay warm, clean and healthy all year long!

This year funds raised will be used to purchase:

- * **New socks given out weekly**
- * **New underwear given out weekly**
- * **Soap, shampoo, conditioner, shaving cream**
- * **Rain Gear – we are hoping to raise enough funds to provide full rain gear for everyone. Many will have ponchos donated by others, but many may still need rain pants.**
- * **Gift cards for food**

A donation to the Shower Ministry makes a great gift for anyone on your holiday gift list!



"OUR FAMILY TO YOURS" GIFT TREE

GIVING TREE GIFTS DUE SUNDAY, December 3. Please leave in narthex. If you need more time, the absolute last day for drop off is Thursday, December 7. Call Toni Kent, 408.771.6077, for details or if you need help with purchasing or pickup of a gift! Thank you so much!



belong

grow

serve



Los Gatos Holiday Parade

LGUMC & Grace Preschool

Saturday, December 2, 11AM
(rain or shine)

Arrive at our staging area by 10:30AM (likely to be Alameda Ave.). Park early in LGUMC lot or nearby to arrive at 10:30AM.

The parade is an easy level mile long route from N. Santa Cruz at Hwy. 9 to the LGUMC parking lot.

All Are Welcome ~ Invite extended family, friends and neighbors to join us.

Join us for Float Decorating

Friday, December 1, 2PM

The Shaw Farmhouse, 18445 Beck Ave, Monte Sereno

Any red or white or "star" decorations would be appreciated.

Contact: Allison Shaw / ashaw@mac.com / 408.396.4986 (texts preferred)



Outreach

The Outreach Committee and the San Jose Family Shelter (Family Supportive Housing) would like to thank you all for the generous donations of jackets, coats, toiletries, pillows, and diapers. We delivered 89 coats, jackets, raincoats, and sweaters, 98 diapers, 6 pillows, two bags of family size shampoos and conditioners, dental care products, homemade knitted hats, bags of beans, mittens, and more.

This will "keep so many people warm" was the comment of Christi Moyer-Kelly, the director of Operations.

Thanks again to the congregation and the families at Grace Preschool for their donations



belong grow serve

*It was the best of times.
It was the worst of times.
~ Charles Dickens*

Live Oak Senior Nutrition and Service Center (LOSNSC), a ministry of Los Gatos United Methodist Church established in 1974, just celebrated a wonderful Turkey Dinner with 130 people in attendance. The event was sponsored and served by the service clubs of Los Gatos, the Kiwanis, the Rotary, and the History Club of Los Gatos. Twenty of the regular volunteers that help on a regular basis were treated to a sit down dinner replete with table cloths. A special thank you to all of the people who made this special event possible and a special thank you to Kathy Mlinarich, Executive Director of the center, who coordinated the event.



The pandemic, which many experienced as “the worst of times,” pointed to the importance of the hot, nutritious lunch and the opportunity to engage with other people. While most programs shut down during the pandemic, LO found a way to continue to serve the senior community and grew and grew. LOSNSC is now serving, on a regular basis, 70-90 meals per day to the seniors of our community. That is the good news. And here is the bad news: the County of Santa Clara which provides the majority of the funds for the lunch program, is only funding 53 meals per day.

And now for some “best of time” news. The Kiwanis Club of Los Gatos is sponsoring a craft fair on Saturday, December 16. Proceeds will benefit LOSNSC and youth programs in the community. Please see the attached flier. And more “best of times” news. Members of our congregation have the opportunity to donate to LOSNSC at the upcoming Los Gatos United Methodist Church Christmas Gift Faire on Sunday, December 3 and 10 in the Fellowship Hall after the 10AM worship service.

Any questions? Contact LOSNSC, 408.354.0707, for more information.

A festive holiday-themed flier for the Los Gatos Holiday Market. The top features a green background with red snowflakes, a red bell, and a red gift box. The title "Los Gatos HOLIDAY MARKET" is prominently displayed in white. Below the title, the text "Sip & Shop in beautiful Los Gatos on the Civic Center Lawn, surrounded by redwood trees and charm!" is followed by the date and time: "December 16, 2023 10am - 4pm, 110 E. Main". It also mentions "Over 50 Local & Regional Artisans will have plenty to choose from for all of your holiday gift-giving!". In the center is the Kiwanis Club of Los Gatos logo, which includes a large 'K' and the text "KIWANIS CLUB OF LOS GATOS" and "KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL". Below the logo is a blue banner that says "100 YEARS". To the right, it states "All proceeds from this event go to Los Gatos Live Oak Senior Nutrition Center & Local Youth Programs." and lists activities: ">Shop for handcrafted gifts", ">Sip fine local wines", ">Listen to live music from local high schoolers", and ">Grab a bite from the Grocer+Goddess Food Cart". The bottom left has the website "www.lgkiwanis.org" and the bottom right has the phrase "Keep Spreading Cheer!".

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Kindred Spirits

Merry Christmas! Kindred Spirits does not meet in December. We hope you can join us in the New Year. Our group meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 1PM in the Art Gallery. New members are always welcome. We have chosen the following books for 2024:

January – *Booth*, by Karen Joy Fowler
February – *Lessons in Chemistry*, by Bonnie Garmus
March – *The Last Flight*, by Julie Clark
April – *All the Sinners Bleed*, by S. A. Cosby
May – *Demon Copperhead*, by Barbara Kingsolver
June – *The Catcher in the Rye*, by J.D. Salinger
July – Summer Reading Bonanza
August – *Fahrenheit 451*, by Ray Bradbury
September – *The Last Season*, by Eric Blehm
October – *Luncheon of the Boating Party* by Susan Vreeland
November - Holiday Luncheon and book exchange



BACK FOR THE NINTH YEAR!

Ren's Winter Wonderland

**TWO SUNDAY CONCERTS
DEC. 3 & 10 AT 7 P.M.**

Jazz-blues-Americana singer Ren Geisick brings her band to the City Lights stage for seasonal favorites and new tunes. A Bay Area holiday tradition!



cltc.org/concerts-special-events



An Early Thanksgiving!

Eimie Lara is in a fight for her very young life.

And the folks of LGUMC's very caring congregation have responded to her need with loving warmth and great generosity in our efforts to help Eimie and her family in her fight against leukemia.

"Thank you! ¡Muchas gracias!"

When Ivan Ortega approached me to ask for LGUMC's financial help for Eimie's leukemia battle, we set an ambitious goal to raise \$5,000 to \$10,000 via a fundraising event.

With great help from so many good folks here and in Colonet, we were able to pull together a unique event...a Mexican "cena" (dinner) to be very carefully prepared & then served here by Eimie's family members. The Friday evening "cena" event was a very wide community effort involving many folks from around our own area and many others from Mexico. It was one of love, laughter, ample delicious Mexican food, lovely music (with singing-along in Spanish and in English), and great generosity.

At the time of this writing, we've raised in excess of \$12,000 for Eimie!

This amount far exceeds our initial goal. And folks are continuing to contribute generously. All of the contributions will help Eimie and her family tremendously!

Thank you to everyone who participated and / or who donated to this very successful fundraising event.

Many blessings and deep thanks,
Pete Taylor



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From Trustees: LGUMC friends, if you want to use the church facilities or meeting for anything besides support of Church Ministries, starting January 1, there will be a charge for such usage. Church members will receive a discount on the standard fees. Contact Mary Lou for a copy of the fee schedule which lists the costs and clean-up fees for each room.

Stock donations

are a great way to support your church.

If you are interested in making such a contribution, please contact

Shannon Albert,
408.354.4730 X104 or
shannon.albert@lgumc.org.
for information.

**Save the Date
Church Conference
Sunday, December 3, Noon
All invited.**

TECHNICIANS STILL NEEDED!

We are in need of people willing to learn and join our team of Sunday technicians. We will train you! (Community hours also available.)

Contact Leon Johnson, tech@lgumc.org

Become a Member

**Interested in Becoming a Member of
LGUMC?**

We will be receiving new members at a date to be determined. If you are interested in deepening your connection with LGUMC and becoming a member, email Pastor Daniel, daniel.diss@lgumc.org.

IN OUR PRAYERS

*~ Please keep the following persons and their families
in your prayers for continued recovery, care and support ~*

Aki Okuno, Celia Palm, Pat Salem, Anne-Marie Wiggers,
Eleanor Blumenthal, Becky Schmitt, Peggy Rose, Ada Sutton,
Kay Thoresen, Joy Palmer, Carol Baker,
Eric Muller, Ruth Marie Wolf, Mary Maier,
The Unhoused, Our First Responders,
Prayers of Peace for all people and all countries.

In observance of the holidays, the Church Office will be closed from December 25-January 2.

LOS GATOS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CHRISTMAS GIFT FAIRE

December 3 & 10, 2023

An Alternative to Christmas Gifting

Please make your donation selections on this order blank. Donations are 100% tax deductible.
(\$10 per share; Children under 12 may purchase up to 5 shares @\$1.00)

DESCRIPTIONS OF ALL THE ORGANIZATIONS are available in the Social Hall

(Purchases can also be made by mail: LGUMC, 111 Church St., Los Gatos 95030)

No. of Shares @\$10 Organization

INTERNATIONAL/NATIONAL

- _____ 1 SEEDS Homeless Youth Outreach
- _____ 2 Children's Tumor Foundation
- _____ 3 Volunteers in Mission/Colonet (VIM)
- _____ 4 Lighting for Literacy
- _____ 5 Doris Dillon School - Cambodia
- _____ 6 Habitat for Humanity
- _____ 7 UMCOR: Domestic Relief
- _____ 8 UMCOR: International Relief
- _____ 9 Heifer Project

RECONCILING MINISTRIES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

- _____ 10 Reconciling Ministries Network, MFS, LGUMC Social Justice Ministry

SANTA CLARA COUNTY AND LOS GATOS

- _____ 11 San Jose Family Shelter
- _____ 12 Live Oak Adult Day Services
- _____ 13 LGUMC Shower Ministry
- _____ 14 LGUMC Health and Visitation Ministries
- _____ 15 Live Oak Senior Nutrition Center
- _____ 16 "Bill Wilson Center" (adolescent counseling center, education and advocacy to support homeless youth in Santa Clara County)
- _____ 17 Grace Preschool Scholarship Fund
- _____ 18 Easter Seals Northern California for Cerebral Palsy care
- _____ 19 HIV Care Issues / PACE Clinic at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center
- _____ **TOTAL NUMBER OF SHARES @ \$10.00 = \$_____ Make checks out to LGUMC**

Please print your name _____

THANK YOU ***BLESSINGS, PEACE, AND JOY*****MERRY CHRISTMAS**



Los Gatos UMC
ESTIMATE OF GIVING
January 1 to December 31, 2024

With gratitude to God for the wonder of life and the vision of this church, I/we will give a portion of my/our income to LGUMC general fund.

\$ _____ every ☐ week ☐ month ☐ quarter ☐ year

☐ I would like to continue or add e-giving this year.



Print Name

Signature

Date



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

For those who wish to honor or remember a loved one at Christmas and would like to help beautify the sanctuary in the process, poinsettias are available.
The cost is \$15 each.

THE DEADLINE FOR ORDERS IS DECEMBER 11TH.

Print the name(s) as you wish them to appear in the Christmas Bulletin.
PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY:

IN HONOR OF: _____

IN MEMORY OF: _____

YOUR NAME: _____

NUMBER OF PLANTS: _____ Amount enclosed _____ (Make checks payable to LGUMC). You may place this form in the offering plate or mail to the church office, 111 Church St., Los Gatos, CA 95030.



Monday—Closed

Tuesday & Thursday—9AM-2PM

Wednesday & Friday—8AM-1PM

Church Council Members

Chair of the Church Board
Ray Owen, ray.owen@comcast.net

Chair of the Board of Trustees
Glenn Stansbury, glenn.stansbury@lgumc.org

Chair of Staff Parish Relations
Dixie Fisher, dixiefisher@gmail.com

Chair of Finance Committee
Doug Evans, eldoug1@msn.com

Chair of Health Ministries
TBD

Chair of Grace Preschool Board
Rita Matthews, fourwinn156@hotmail.com
Ann Reynolds, reynolds_reese@yahoo.com

Chair of LOSNSC Board
Trudy Burling, trudyburling@hotmail.com

Team Rep. of Social Justice Team
Jean Mundell, jmundell@earthlink.net

Lay Member of Annual Conference
Judy Petrokas, quiltqueen@ix.netcom.com
408.930.2162
Gail Hybarger, ca.unicorn@pacbell.net

Chair of Endowment
TBD

Chair Outreach Team
Ursula Young, ursulayoung@gmail.com

Chair Congregational Care Ministry
Lois & Elwin Stocking,
l.e.stocking@comcast.net

Chair United Women in Faith (formerly UMW)
Christina Capps, kl_capps@yahoo.com
Ruth Oveland, roveland@sbcglobal.net

Our Ministry & Office Staff

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408.354.7163,

Kathy Mlinarich, Director, Live Oak Senior Nutrition
kathy.mlinarich@lgumc.org
408.354.0707

Richard Garcia, Facilities Engineer
408.627.3345

Please check the church calendar to make sure your room reservations are accurate. We reserve only one year in advance, so your reservation may expire at the end of the year.

Contact Mary Lou, marylou.abrahamson@lgumc, to reserve, or fill out a reservation form on our website, lgumc.org.

The Spire

Los Gatos United Methodist Church
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Los Gatos, CA 95030
408.354.4730, www.lgumc.org
To be removed from mail or email list, contact
marylou.abrahamson@lgumc.org.
Editor: Mary Lou Abrahamson

If you no longer wish to receive this mailing,
please mail or email to the address shown at left.
Thank You.

Our Mission

Growing as followers of Jesus Christ
who live God's love in the world.

***"Serving Christ in this Community
since 1866."***



Find out more about our Ministries!
Go to www.LGUMC.org



Sr. Pastor
Pastor Daniel F. Diss

Please join us for in-person
Sunday Worship
10AM
or online at
lgumc.org, Facebook or YouTube

All Welcome!
We are a Reconciling Congregation

No one will be excluded from participating in the body of the church because of age, race, ethnicity, culture, religious origins, sexual orientation or challenging conditions.