

Spire

March 2024

Pastor's Pen

Before the last General Conference, I spent a lot of time in tears. I came to understand the meaning of the verb: to weep. My heart broke watching what was happening, reading things being written, hearing things said, and being personally vilified by folks whom I have known for over thirty years. I don't think they realized that they were attacking me personally, but nonetheless the harm was done. I have known some of these folks for nearly 40 years. Seminary classmates. Prayer partners. Friends. It was worse after traveling to Minneapolis for a gathering with the "progressives" where that leadership made it clear that some of us, of a certain age, were not truly welcome. The months before the last General Conference were incredibly difficult. The mutuality of Methodism with which I had been raised was being tested, tried, and seemed to be crumbling and breaking. My heart broke along with it. I was asking how I could continue to serve a denomination which seemingly didn't want me. How could I sing the song of faith in such a hostile environment?

I spent a long time in prayer and tears that Winter and Spring. With COVID in 2020, the General Conference was postponed. My tears and prayers continued all the way through the special session in 2022. The turning point came when I began to pray not for the situation generally but for each of those individuals I knew in leadership in the Wesley Covenant Association (WCA) and the General Methodist Church (GMC). These are the leaders who are leading individuals and congregations to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church. I pray for them, my friends, by name each day still. Praying for them changes me.

I'm still hurt by things some of these folks have written and said. You can't vilify an entire class of people, in this case LGBTQIA+ folks, without also including me. I finally came to a decision: My friends may dislike me and vilify me, but to me they are still my friends. It took a very long time to work through all that I was thinking and feeling. In the end, there were two things I knew to be fact.

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Pastor's Pen

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First, they were and are, at least to me, my friends. They may not consider me a friend, but I still consider them friends. I don't really care what they think. We were friends nearly 40 years ago in school. With one of them, I was his prayer partner. I have been praying for him as colleagues for all these years; I see no reason to stop now. I was prayer partners with another at a Congress on Evangelism thirty years ago. I have prayed for his ministry all these years; I see no reason to stop now. I was mentored by one who became pastor to me when I was very sick. I see no reason to stop praying for him now, either. They may consider me however they choose. At the end of the day, their opinion of me, or what they may think God's opinion of me is, doesn't matter. Rather, I know that I am loved and claimed by God. That is all that does matter. Paul's letter to the Romans reminds that there is nothing in life or death which can separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus. They are my friends even if they choose not to see themselves that way; it's how I choose to see them.

Second, they were, as was I, baptized. Neither they nor the Church can take that back. Even if they don't like it, in those baptismal waters we were made siblings in Christ. There is no if, ands, or buts about it. This is what God has done and is doing. That is the nature of God's grace: God chooses us, it is not we who choose God. I cannot view this in any other way; it is the nature of grace. God's grace comes before we even know or realize it is there for us. They were baptized, too, just like me. Once the waters of baptism are applied, they can never be removed. Also, who are we to "remove" an outward and visible sign of what God is already doing (e.g.: actively gracing our lives)? God is doing this already without the sign of baptism in the first place! Baptism is something we do to remind ourselves of what God has already been doing! My friends want to qualify my baptism, limit what it means or can mean. I, on the other hand, see us as equal before God. I see each of us having a place at the Table. God chose them and me to have a place at the Table.

As we approach our General Conference gathering again this Spring, I'm not in tears this time. I'm hopeful for what can and will happen, although I have learned to not expect too much. My expectations are low, but I pray for everything and in particular those who would make me a second-class citizen in the reign of God. I invite you to join me over the next 180 days to pray for our General Conference and our coming Jurisdictional Conference. The General Conference will be setting the direction for how we will move forward. I expect there to be a special session of the General Conference in 2026 to work on these matters further. After General Conference concludes in early May, I'd invite you to begin praying for our Western Jurisdiction. Our bishop, Bishop Carcaño, retires this year. We will be served by a new bishop (new to us at least) beginning in the Fall. Your support in prayer for Bishop Carcaño as she prepares to retire from active service, and the coming election and appointment of bishops is needed. Join me in holding our church locally, regionally, and globally in prayer.

Peace,

Daniel

March Worship

Holy Thursday - Good Friday - Easter

Join us in Grace Chapel on Thursday, March 28, 7PM, for a Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday) service. We'll be using music and prayer similar to the music and prayer of the Taizé community in France as well as having an "Upper Room" experience as our celebration of The Lord's Supper. This service promises to be a time of reflection and renewal as we prepare for Easter on Sunday, March 31 at 10AM. The Music Department is adding a brass ensemble to our service that day; it promises to be a great day of celebration and music. For Good Friday, we are encouraging folks to participate in community Good Friday services. The Church Office is collecting information about Good Friday services and will publish them a few weeks before the end of March. Some information is not yet available.

Sunday, March 3

10AM

Third Sunday in Lent

Communion Sunday

Exodus 20:1-17; John 2:13-22

Sermon

Coloring Within the Lines

Daniel F. Diss, Preaching

Sunday, March 24

10AM

Sixth Sunday in Lent

Palm Sunday

Mark 11:1-11; Philippians 2:5-11;

Mark 15:1-39

Sermon

More than Meets the Eye

Daniel F. Diss, Preaching

Sunday, March 10

10AM

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:14-21

Sermon

Foundation to Become

Daniel F. Diss, Preaching

Thursday, March 28

Holy Thursday

Grace Chapel

7PM

Music & Prayer

Sunday, March 17

10AM

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Feast of St. Patrick

Jeremiah 31:31-34; John 12:20-33

Sermon

A Grinch's Heart

Daniel F. Diss, Preaching

Sunday, March 31

10AM

Easter Sunday

Acts 10:34-43; Mark 16:1-8

Sermon

A Surprise Ending ... Beginning

Daniel F. Diss, Preaching



children's ministry

Easter Egg Hunt
Saturday, March 30
10AM Sharp!
Church yard and playground
Ages 1 to 99
Rain or shine

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.

Faith Word: **LOVE**

March 3

Jesus Washes Feet – John 13:1-17

Today we are exploring the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. As Jesus and his disciples are having a meal, Jesus kneels down and begins to wash the feet of his friends. This act typically is something done by a servant, so the disciples are surprised. Peter says to Jesus, "No! You will never wash my feet!" This is a strong response. But Jesus, who soon will be led to his death, has a purpose behind his actions.

March 10

The Last Supper – Luke 22:14-20

The Passover meal was celebrated each year to mark the Israelites' escape from slavery in Egypt. Jesus and his disciples would have observed Passover many times throughout their lives. This year, the Passover meal with Jesus would be different from others, but they did not know that. During this meal, Jesus gave thanks for the bread and broke it and then took a cup and blessed it. Jesus used the bread and the cup, everyday items, to remind the disciples of his body (the bread) and his blood (the cup), given for them and for us. They have become symbols of God's love in Christian churches today.

March 17

Praying in the Garden – Luke 22:39-46

Our Bible story begins after Jesus and the disciples have shared the Last Supper and gone to the Garden of Gethsemane. While his disciples sleep—despite Jesus' instructions to pray—Jesus goes to pray.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem – Matthew 21:1-11

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March 24

Jesus Enters Jerusalem – Matthew 21:1-11

Today we experience the excitement of Jesus being welcomed into Jerusalem, even as we know that this week in Jerusalem will result in his death. In Luke 18:31-33, Jesus told his friends, the disciples, that he would be killed in Jerusalem. Jesus and his friends knew as they entered Jerusalem that Jesus' life on earth was short.

March 31

Resurrection – Matthew 28:1-10

Happy Resurrection Day! In today's story, women are the first to find the empty tomb. They do not come to anoint Jesus' body, like in Mark; they come to see the tomb. Some argue this is because they remembered Jesus' teachings about his resurrection and wanted to see if God's promise had been fulfilled.

Kids will stay in church with their families for the Easter Celebration.

Confirmation

Confirmation is traditionally the time in the life of our youth when they look closely at what it means to be a Christian in general, to be a United Methodist in particular, and to be a member of Los Gatos UMC specially. It is a great time to explore their faith, grapple with some of the tough questions facing them and their generation (and facing all people of faith), and to get to know themselves and their church a bit better. The word "confirmation" is used because for students who were baptized as infants or children, this class invites them to decide whether to "confirm" the vows made on their behalf at their baptism.

Students do not have to decide about church membership prior to joining the confirmation class. In fact, we would prefer that they come with an open mind - ready to explore the issues and learn more, but waiting to make their final decision about membership until they have taken part in the class.

Confirmation classes will be held on Sunday mornings, March 10, through May 12 from 11:30AM-12:30PM. We will have a snack lunch and fellowship during this time. After these classes, students are invited, but not pressured, to make their personal decisions about membership. The confirmation Service is on Pentecost Sunday, May 19, 10AM service.

Pastor Daniel Diss and Jonnye Cartmill will be leading these classes. They are open to all middle-high school students. Contact Jonnye Cartmill

Contact Information

Jonnye Cartmill
Children & Youth Ministry
kids@lgumc.org

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Kindred Spirits

Kindred Spirits Book Group selected *The Last Flight*, a thriller by Julie Clark, to read before our next meeting. In the book, Claire Cook appears to be living the perfect life, but behind the scenes is a hot tempered husband who engineers her life as he plans his political campaign. Meanwhile, she has been quietly planning a way to escape. Her plans are interrupted, and he sends her to the airport to fly to Puerto Rico. There she runs into another woman named Eva who is also desperate to escape her circumstances, and at the last minute, the two decide to exchange tickets. Eva takes Claire's flight to Puerto Rico, and Claire takes Eva's flight to Oakland and assumes her identity. Why does she do this rather than just escape, and what does she learn? You'll have to read this fast paced book and join us to discuss it.

We meet on the third Wednesday of the month, and our next meeting is in the Art Gallery, 1PM, March 20. All are welcome.



An Irish Blessing

May these rich blessings be your due—
A wealth of friendships, old and new,
Some service rendered, some solace given,
And gentle peace with God and Heaven.



SPRING FORWARD
Turn your clocks ahead

Sunday, March 10

Senior Resources Information

Our friends at Foothills Congregational Church put together a Seniors/Elder Care resources list and shared it with us thanks to Ruth Oveland. Copies of it are available in the Church Office, the Narthex, and Social Hall for any who are interested in this information. We hope this is helpful to the congregation. Thank you to Foothills Congregational for sharing and to Ruth for getting it to us.



Wishing You and Yours a Blessed Easter



Colonet Family Mission / Lighting for Literacy in early April

LGUMC is sending a fabulous team of 18 missionaries to Colonet, Mexico this April to construct a “casita” there for the family of Jacinto, his wife Mónica, and their daughter Abril. Our mission team is fortunate to include youthful and experienced, male and female, local and far-flung missionaries again this spring.

Our congregation has been remarkable in their wonderful connections with the people of Colonet and with the missionaries on our international teams over the greater than 20 years that we’ve been doing mission work there. Nearly everyone has benefited from these unique and enduring relationships.

Please plan to attend the time-honored **Colonet Fundraiser Brunch** in the LGUMC Social Hall of **Sunday, March 17**, immediately following the regular Sunday worship service. Our missionaries will be there to visit with you about Colonet mission trips past and pending, and the food will be as delicious as ever! Please plan to generously support our continuing work there. And feel free to invite your friends, neighbors and family members to join us and to contribute.

Our missionaries have a few needs this year as we prepare for our departure on the morning of April 6:

First, we need several local “*Prayer Partners*” who will “join us” electronically (and creatively, too) in our April mission journey. Prayer Partners can send prayers and conversations back and forth via any selected medium before, during, and even after the mission team’s travel. They can even exchange written notes or objects that they might choose. It’s completely open and subject to the creativity and the wishes of the individual missionaries and their Prayer Partners. So please sign up today to be a Colonet team “Prayer Partner.” Feel free to specify your selected April 2024 missionary if you so desire.

Next, we need *COVID test kits* for our use while our team is in Mexico. The US federal government is again offering **FREE** COVID test kits right now. Please consider placing your order online today for your FREE COVID test kits (you’ll receive 4 kits). Then, please donate any of your FREE kits to our Colonet team.

And finally, please keep your eyes open for *Lighting for Literacy workshops* that will be occurring soon as we prep the L4L solar kits for deployment in Colonet while we’re there. Deployments will be performed by our team members as well as by local Colonet youths who’ve been trained in this very helpful work. What a phenomenal collaboration!

If you have any questions about any of our Colonet activities, then please feel free to contact Pete Taylor, Maggie Harris, or Erik Eastland for more info.

Blessings,

Pete Taylor



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**LIVE OAK SENIOR NUTRITION AND SERVICE
CENTER CELEBRATES**



The Year of the Dragon, was welcomed with beautiful decorations, lively dances, great food, and many seniors from the community along with several members from the town of Los Gatos and the clients from Live Oak Adult Day Care Center. Many thanks to all of the volunteers who made this truly a day of rejoicing and celebrating, something our seniors will be talking about for a long time.

Live Oak Senior Nutrition and Service Center (not to be confused with Live Oak Adult Day Care Center) will soon celebrate FIFTY years of service to the seniors of our community. Look for updates in coming *Spire* articles. And, if you are on campus, take time to drop in, say hello, and thank you to the many volunteers and staff who make this program possible.



Gōng xǐ fā cái

"May you be
happy and
prosperous."



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Welcome

Welcome to Sherri McNeil and Ren Geisick! Sherri joins our staff as Administrative Assistant in the Church Office starting February 27. Sherri will be working with Mary Lou for six months while this transition occurs. We are grateful for Mary Lou's faithful service and assistance during this transition. Ren joins the staff effective April 1 as the Contemporary Worship Music leader. David asked to be relieved of those duties earlier this year. SPRC agreed to honor his request. Ren stepped forward to take the position. Welcome to both Sherri and Ren. We are excited to have both join our team.

Easter—Bring a flower from your garden to decorate the cross.



HUNTER/FRYE/UWF SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

Applications for the Hunter/Frye/UWF scholarship can be picked up in the narthex and in the church office. Online applications can be obtained by contacting the office at 408.354.4730 during office hours.

The deadline for turning completed applications and the related documents as listed in the application is Friday, May 17.

Estimates of Giving/Pledge Cards

If you have not yet completed an "estimate of giving/pledge card" for 2024, please do so. They are in the narthex and the church office. This helps the Committee on Finance and Stewardship plan a budget and manage our resources better if they have an idea of what you hope you are able to contribute. Of course, Finance & Stewardship understand that economic situations change for folks, even during a year: layoffs happen; job assignments change; medical issues arise; and a host of other possibilities face each of us. Be assured that if at any time during the year you would need to adjust your estimate, you can do that to either increase or decrease the amount. Please see this as a way to help rather than an obligation. Completing and giving Finance & Stewardship your best idea of what you can contribute is a big help so they are able to make their best recommendations to the Church Council. All this information is kept confidential. If you have already completed an estimate of giving, thank you. It is greatly appreciated. An estimate of giving goes a long way to help us plan carefully, responsibly, faithfully, and responsively to your needs.

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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, Kay Thoresen,
Joy Palmer, Ada Sutton, Peg Lang,
Ruth Marie Wolf, Mary Brown,
Carol Baker,
The Unhoused, Our First Responders,
Prayers of Peace for all people
and all countries.

March

Women's History Month
World Day of Prayer, 1st
Daylight Savings Time Begins, 10th
St. Patrick's Day, 17th
First Day of Spring, 19th
Palm Sunday, 24th
Maundy Thursday, 28th
Good Friday, 29th
Easter Sunday, 31st

EASTER FLOWERS

Honor your loved ones with Easter flowers. The Sanctuary will again be decorated with potted flowers on Easter Sunday. Each potted plant can be purchased for a donation of \$18 either in memory or in honor of an individual. Send the information and payment to the office by Sunday, March 17. You can make arrangements with the Church Office to pick up your flowers and those flowers left will be sent to a shut-in or the senior program at the church.

THE DEADLINE FOR ORDERS IS SUNDAY, MARCH 17.

Print the name(s) as you wish them to appear in the Easter Bulletin. Please print legibly:

IN HONOR OF: _____

IN MEMORY OF: _____

YOUR NAME: _____

NUMBER OF PLANTS: _____

Amount enclosed _____ (Make checks payable to LGUMC and indicate "flowers" in subject line).

You may place this form in the offering plate or mail to the church office, 111 Church St., Los Gatos, CA 95030.
Or email marylou.abrahamson@lgumc.org with your request.





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
Wes Toy, westoy4@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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kids@lgumc.org
- David Herberg, Music Director
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408.348.1736
- Joyce Rhodes, Organist
joyce.rhodes@lgumc.org
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408.507.7140 (cell)
- Shannon Albert, Accountant (A/P)
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408.354.4730 X104
- Carmen Garcia, Financial Secretary (A/R)
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408.354.4730 X101
- Leon Johnson, Technical Director
tech@lgumc.org
- Kristy Currie, Director, Grace Preschool
kristy.currie@lgumc.org
408.354.7163,
- Kathy Mlinarich, Director, Live Oak Senior Nutrition
kathy.mlinarich@lgumc.org
408.354.0707
- Richard Garcia, Facilities Engineer
408.627.3345

In observance of the holiday, the Church Office will be closed on Friday, March 29.

The Spire

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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.”*



Sr. Pastor
Pastor Daniel F. Diss

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



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



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.