

The Viewpoint

January 1, 2011

Lake Merritt United Methodist Church

*We are an open and welcoming Christian congregation
serving God in downtown Oakland.*

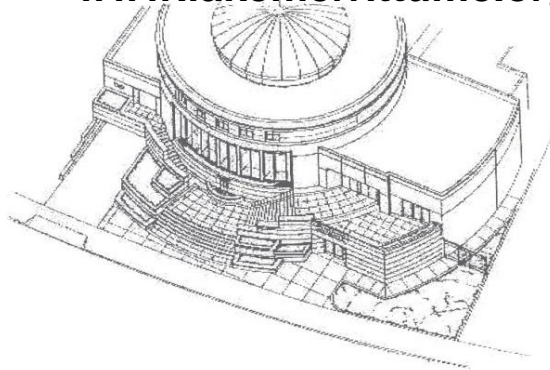
1330 Lakeshore Avenue σ 1255 First Avenue σ Oakland, CA 94606

510/465-4793 σ Office hours: 9:30am-5:00 pm Mon & Wed
9:00-2:00pm Tue & Thurs

Mary Elyn Bahlert, Pastor
Katie Koeplin, Music Director
Katy Crawford, Office Manager
B Avalon, Facilities Administrator

pastor@lakemerrittumc.org
music@lakemerrittumc.org
office@lakemerrittumc.org
rentals@lakemerrittumc.org

www.lakemerrittumc.org



REGULAR SUNDAY SCHEDULE

- **Adult Bible Class**
Sunday mornings at 9:30 am in the Conference Room.
- **Sunday Programs for Children:**
 - **Nursery Care** for babies and toddlers up to 3 years old is provided from 9:30 am – 11:30 am in the nursery. We have excellent staff to be with your child(ren).
 - **Preschool Activities and Sunday School** is provided 9:30am – 11:30 am. Our preschool teacher welcomes your children for all or part of this time.
 - **Younger Elementary Sunday School** follows the Children's Moment in worship for children in Kindergarten through grade 3.
 - **Youth Sunday School** follows the Children's Moment in worship for children in grades 4 and older. The youth are invited to remain in worship on Communion Sunday.
- **Celebration of Divine Worship:** 10:30 am in the Worship Center.
Holy Communion celebrated on the first Sunday of each month.

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

I invite each one of you to prayerfully consider your hopes and dreams for the congregation as we start the New Year. Like many congregations, Lake Merritt UMC cannot continue to "do church" the way we've always done church! What we consider congregational life has not been attractive to new people for a long time - in fact, for decades.

The Administrative Team - your elected Administrative Team - has been having important conversations over the past few months. The leadership of the congregation is looking at the giving patterns of our community, the costs of having staff, and the rising costs of what it takes to maintain the church building. We know we have to look at new, energetic ways to raise money to provide for our current and future needs. We also know that we have to learn about our understandings of stewardship - what it means to use the resources and to provide for the resources we've been given - as a congregation.

Most of us know the United Methodist Membership Vows: "Will you be loyal to the United Methodist Church, and uphold it by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness?" What leaders in the United Methodist Church have begun to understand in the past few years is that we have not always faithfully lived up to those vows. Many of the practices of local congregations - this congregation included - have been based on the *preferences* of its members, rather than having been based on being disciples of Jesus Christ to transform the world. Our worship, our decision-making processes, our expectations for members in terms of growing in faith have been *preference* driven.

As a result, United Methodists have few expectations about what is required of them to be members of a congregation, which is not simply membership in a club, but which is a commitment to God in Jesus Christ through the United Methodist Church. We all know that we could not work, do business, be a healthy parent, or be a good citizen without expectations. But we have had no expectations of those who are part of the congregation!

Churches that are growing have certain expectations of their members. There is an expectation of participation in faith-sharing, including Bible Study and prayer with other Christians. There is an expectation that one's life is lived in a spirit of good-will and growing concern for others, both personally and in relationship to the world. There is an expectation that one will regularly worship and take Holy Communion. There is an expectation that as one grows in faith, service to others is a part of that growth. There is an expectation of stewardship, toward the congregation and toward the world.

In the Methodist tradition, those are the expectations that John Wesley had for those first "Methodical" Methodists! Rather than being members of a church, the first Methodists were faithful Christians, whose vehicle for growth in faith was their participation in Methodist Societies, or small groups. Their presence in worship, at Holy Communion, in Bible Study, and in service grew out of their faithful relationship to God.

In many ways, it seems that United Methodists have lost their heart. That heart seems to be faith. Out of faith grows our commitment to justice and to mission and ministry. We know that we cannot continue to do things as we have and at the same time expect things to be different! Common sense tells us that! But are we ready to change, to think about church differently than we have?

I began by asking for your prayers for this community of faith. I close there, as well. As the leadership of this congregation continues to discern how we will move into the future, your prayers are part of the process. Will we be present here in downtown Oakland in the future? That's up to all of you! As 2011 unfolds, we'll all be asking God for guidance as we face the years ahead.

As your pastor, I think of this as an adventure we're embarking on. Get on board! Open your hearts and minds by praying for wisdom and discernment. The best is surely yet to come!

Kindly,

Pastor Mary Elyn

DISCIPLE

NEW TESTAMENT DISCIPLE STUDY

Monday Evenings, **January 10-February 28, 2011**
Conference Room, 7-9 P.M.

This Disciple Bible Study, part of the United Methodist Bible Study series, takes us through the New Testament. Even if you have studied the New Testament before, studying with a group of other folks who are learning and growing in their understanding can bring you new insights into the scriptures and into your faith.

If you are interested in being part of this Disciple Bible Study Class, led by Pastor Mary Elyn, please sign up by using a yellow sheet in your Sunday bulletin. Study guides will be ordered before the class begins, and you'll receive your copy ahead of the first meeting, which will be on January 10. Join us!

TOUCHING PEACE, TOUCHING JOY

Mindfulness Meditation and Contemplation Group

Saturday, January 15, 2011
9:30am – 12:00pm

Third Sundays starting January 23, 2011
6:00 – 7:30pm



Mindfulness meditation is a meditation technique that inclines the mind, heart, and body toward spaciousness and calm. Within this spaciousness of mind/heart, qualities such as peace, joy, compassion, insight, love etc. can arise. Lectio divina is a Christian contemplative practice focusing on a scriptural passage so that wisdom and meaning relevant to one's spiritual understanding and growth can arise. The meditation nicely creates an inner space for deep contemplation.

Paul and Sylvia Bell-Tull will lead this experiential class and ongoing group. Paul and Sylvia have over 25 years practicing mindfulness meditation and Paul is a former Presbyterian minister.

We will begin with a class on mindfulness meditation on Sat. Jan.15th from 9:30am-12pm. We will meet again on Sunday Jan.23rd from 6-7:30pm for mindfulness meditation and lectio divina. Thereafter, we will gather the 3rd Sunday of each month. For this ongoing group we will start with meditation, have time for sharing and discussion, and conclude with lectio divina, sharing and discussion. The public is welcome and is requested to donate to LMUMC \$25 for the Jan.15th class and \$15 for each ongoing group. We'll gather in the Edward's Room. Please let us know if you plan to attend by calling 510-724-1591 or emailing Sylvia at stull2690@sbcglobal.net or catching us after church.

STAFF CHANGES IN CHURCH OFFICE ANNOUNCED BY STAFF PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Beginning the week of January 10, 2011, the Church office will have a new staffing format. Please keep this information handy, so that we all help the transition to go smoothly.

Katy Crawford will be joining the office staff as **Office Manager**. Office Manager's hours will be Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 AM to 2 PM. Katy's email is: office@lakemerrittumc.org. Her voicemail extension is: # 305.

Katy's responsibilities will involve preparing the bulletin, working with office volunteers, preparing mailings, etc.

B Avalon will be working with community groups for building rental and facilities management. Her title will be **Facilities Administrator**. Facilities Administrator's hours will be Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30 AM to 5 P.M. B's email as of January 3, 2011 is: rentals@lakemerrittumc.org

We think the skills that both B and Katy bring to each position will be positive for us all. Both B and Katy have lots of church office experience, and both work well in the city church setting. During the first week of January, B, Katy and Pastor Mary Elyn will be working to set up communication systems that will serve us all.

If you have questions, please email Pastor Mary Elyn at: pastor@lakemerrittumc.org

Thank you all for your help as we work together to serve the mission and ministry of Lake Merritt UMC in downtown Oakland!

The Staff Parish Relations Committee

BUDGET- SETTING DATE SET

The Finance Committee and the Administrative Team will be meeting on **Saturday, January 22, 9 AM - 1 PM in the Conference Room** to set the church's budget for 2011.



ALL ARE WELCOME TO JOIN FOOD 4 THOUGHT ON FEBRUARY 6

Food 4 Thought meets the first Sunday of every month at 6:00 in the Edwards Room at church. After a light potluck supper, we watch two (half hour) lectures on DVD and discuss/reflect on what we have heard. We are usually on our way home by 8:30.

Everyone is welcome and we would love to have you join us. Please contact Laurel Williams (510-521-4626, laurelandrandy@gmail.com) if you plan to attend or if you have questions/need child care.

SEEKING COFFEE HOUR HOSTS!

Hosts are needed for coffee hours for the coming quarter. Please contact Kathleen Bell (wkbell@mac.com or 510-986-0134) to sign up for any Sunday, January through March.

Pair up with another family, drag out a favorite family recipe, use your imagination or simply bring some cut up fruits and veggies. All offerings are gladly received!



GREETING FROM OUR NEW OFFICE MANAGER

Hello Church! My name is Katye Crawford, and I am the new Office Manager. Thank you so much for welcoming me into your community. I am excited to meet you and serve you in any way I can. I want to share a little bit about myself with you:

I'm originally from San Jose, CA, where my father is pastor of the First United Methodist Church there. I attended UC Davis and received my B.S. in Mathematics. After earning a Teaching Credential from UC Davis, I taught math to a diverse group of students at River City High School in West Sacramento. I moved to Oakland this past August to start a two-year internship with an organization called Servant Partners (www.servantpartners.org) that seeks the transformation of urban poor communities through church planting and community organizing. I currently live in community in East Oakland with nine other interns, and attend New Hope Covenant Church.

During my time in university I was a part of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (www.intervarsity.org), and through their missions department I traveled to urban squatter communities in Mexico City for three summers. My experiences in Mexico City shaped my faith and global paradigm in profound ways, prompting me to move to Oakland and to work with the Urban Projects arm of InterVarsity. Through my position with InterVarsity I help college students learn about God's heart for the poor through weekend, week-long, and summer-long experiences in over 25 cities in the United States.

In my free time I love reading anything by Henri Nouwen or Madeleine L'Engle, going to Farmer's Markets, cooking meals with friends, community prayer time, practicing Spanish with my neighbors, and having adventures with the rest of the Servant Partners interns.

IMPORTANT UPDATE FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM OF LAKE MERRITT UMC

The Lake Merritt United Methodist Church Finance Committee and the Administrative Team have continued to meet this autumn on behalf of the congregation to look closely at the financial health of the congregation, and how our current financial health can continue in the coming years. The needs and realities of this time in the life of this “open and welcoming Christian congregation serving God in downtown Oakland” are being discussed, evaluated, and looked at fairly. Finance and the Administrative Team will continue to report regularly on what they learn.

Throughout this year, 2010, our yearly income has roughly been equal to expenses, although this information is somewhat misleading. Part of what shows as “income” on monthly reports is actually money that we pull from savings accounts and bequests. Although our current savings are wisely invested, the savings are not growing at a rate that exceeds money taken out to meet current expenses.

We expect our income from building usage and grants from the Oakland Methodist Foundation to total about what we expected – and budgeted – for this year. However, we’ve had unexpected expenses occur that required our immediate attention, including replacing a storm drain and purchasing five furnaces. As the church building ages, we as a congregation can expect such building needs from time to time.

How have we expected to meet our expenses? For the past several years, we have “balanced” the church budget by not paying our share of United Methodist apportionments. **Apportionments are our share of shared giving that goes to support United Methodist ministries and programs and missions world-wide. As United Methodists, we are a connectional church, congregations and ministries connected throughout the world. Apportionment-giving from this congregation represents part of our connection.**

The Finance Committee has carefully reviewed our apportionment giving to be able to pay the “Pensions and Benefits” portion of our total apportionments. If we do not pay within a calendar year, the congregation is expected to pay the “Pensions and Benefits” at a later date.

Beginning in 2011, Lake Merritt UMC, along with all other churches in the Northern California Annual Conference, will be billed for the Pensions and Benefits of the current pastor, which is the way we currently pay for Health Insurance Benefits. The Finance Committee of LMUMC has carefully reviewed this change, which will affect our budget favorably beginning in 2012. (2011 is a transitional year).

This is what you need to know:

Lake Merritt UMC cannot continue to deplete our reserves and expect to have a vibrant congregation in a functional physical plant in the future. As the Finance Committee, the Administrative Team, and other leaders prepare to plan the budget for 2011, we face difficult decisions to insure our continued financial health. As the budget is set for 2011, a variety of ways to increase income and to reduce expenses will be considered.

How can you help?

You can help by continuing to give generously – in your offerings, and in your service. For example, in the future we will need to have fundraising events that extend our “givers” to the community we serve, beyond the doors of this congregation. Over the past 3 years, income from fundraisers has declined. The congregation is in great need of leadership to make fund-raisers happen. Please “answer the call” when these opportunities to serve are offered!

SIGN UP NOW FOR UPCOMING FOOD DISTRIBUTION DATES

We will begin packing bags on Saturday afternoon, Jan 29 from 3-5 pm. Volunteers are needed for that shift as well as distribution on Sunday morning, Jan 30 from 9-10:15 am. This will be our schedule for the next three months. Please join us for any shifts; contact Sue Dickey to sign up: suedickey2@yahoo.com or 510-410-3699



Our Food Pantry *REALLY* needs your extra
BROWN PAPER GROCERY BAGS
for our twice monthly food distributions!
Brown bags are also needed for our weekly distributions to
La Escuelita Elementary School.
Bring your bags to church. Thanks!

A LETTER ABOUT THE FOOD PANTRY

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, January 19, 2011, 7:30 P.M.

The Food Pantry Program, which is an important part of our service to the community of downtown Oakland, is making important changes that will allow us to use our volunteers better.

What we need is your help!

Please sign up with Sue Dickey or Sherri Elinson on Sunday mornings when they ask you to volunteer for the Food Pantry.

Also: Please plan to attend the next important meeting of the Food Pantry,
Wednesday, January 19, 2011, 7:30 P.M.

Constantly changing schedules mean that leadership needs to continue this important service to the community require new volunteers all the time!

Thank you all for your dedication and hard work on behalf of the community!

Kindly,
Pastor Mary Elyn

TECHNOLOGY NEEDS



Right now, Lake Merritt UMC has a technology need: We need someone who can set us up to have announcements as a "visible presence" during worship. This would mean that announcements would be on a screen at the front of the sanctuary during worship, so that when people come in they can read the announcements even if they've missed the announcements at the beginning of worship.

We are ready to take this next step to make what we do - which is very important not only to "our" church but to the whole community we serve - available to all.

Contact Pastor Mary Elyn if you are ready to take this and run with it!

LEND A HAND

Men are invited every Wednesday from 10 to 12 noon to share some conversation and some constructive church grounds maintenance. Three men from the Men's Drop In Sunday Community have committed to come at that time each week and do some much needed weeding, gardening etc. Look around and you will see the need. Tools provided, gloves are not! We hope to see you.

John Hege, Allen Letsome and Chuck Cordes.



OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE AT LAKE MERRITT UMC

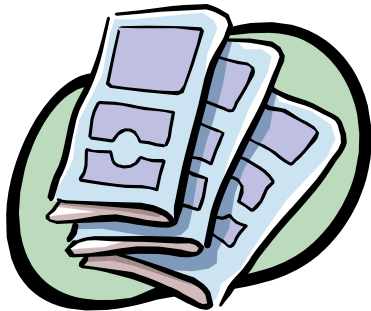
Fall in love with God... Grow in Faith... Go and Serve!

Have you been wondering how you can help the community of people at Lake Merritt UMC continue to serve the community here in Oakland? Many of the needs for service begin here in the congregation and in the church building! Here are some needs:

- Pantry organizer - training to be provided
- Potluck Coordinator - written instructions are available, and you will always have others to help you!
- Someone to wash, fold and care for tablecloths that we use for special events.
- Furniture polishing! Even children can do this!
- General picking up, "neatening up!"
- Two people to coordinate receptions for memorial services and funerals - training to be provided, and others will help you!



SUBMITTING ARTICLES FOR THE VIEWPOINT



Viewpoint articles are due by the 15th of each month to ensure inclusion in the upcoming newsletter. Electronic files are preferred but hard copies can be dropped in the member mailbox in the yellow folder under V. Articles can be submitted via email to Rose Lynn Abesamis-Bell at roselynn20@gmail.com. Please make the subject line read the issue in which you'd like to have the item included (ex. Subject: Dec. Viewpoint article).

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

If your birthday is missing from this list, please contact the church office to update our information.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

Prince Solomon	January 1	Earl Dunnam	January 19
Dolma Tsering	January 2	Kevin Waring	January 19
Kate Wilson	January 3	Mehret Ghebre	January 21
Flora Orzell	January 7	Gia Paoli	January 24
Eugene Benavides	January 8	Audrey Huetteman	January 26
Malcolm Solomon	January 12	Randy Reed	January 27
Jean Moorhead	January 14	Don Cunningham	January 28
Tanas Sliheet	January 16		



PLEASE POST at HOME

• Sunday	January 2	Worship, 10:30 am Men's Check-In, 11:30am, Conference Room Food for Thought, 6:00 pm, Edwards Room
• Wednesday	January 5	Men's Service Group, 9:00 am Staff Parish, 7:15, Conference Room
• Friday	January 7	Men's Prayer Breakfast, 6:30 am, Stark Room
• Saturday	January 8	Food Pantry, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm, Octagon Room
• Sunday	January 9	Worship, 10:30 am
• Monday	January 10	Disciple Bible Class, 7:00 pm, Conference Room
• Tuesday	January 11	Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 pm, Sanctuary
• Wednesday	January 12	Men's Service Group, 9:00 am Finance Committee, 7:30 pm, Conference Room
• Thursday	January 13	Trustees, 7:30 pm, Conference Room
• Saturday	January 15	Touching Peace, Touching Joy Meditation, 9:30 am, Edwards Room
• Sunday	January 16	Worship, 10:30 am
• Monday	January 17	Disciple Bible Class, 7:00 pm, Conference Room
• Tuesday	January 18	Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 pm, Choir Room
• Wednesday	January 19	Men's Service Group, 9:00 am
• Friday	January 21	Men's Prayer Breakfast, 6:30 am, Stark Room
• Sunday	January 23	Worship, 10:30 am Touching Peace, Touching Joy Meditation, 6:00 pm, Edwards Room
• Monday	January 24	Disciple Bible Class, 7:00 pm, Conference Room
• Tuesday	January 25	Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 pm, Sanctuary
• Wednesday	January 26	Men's Service Group, 9:00 am
• Saturday	January 29	Food Pantry, 3:00 pm,
• Sunday	January 30	Food Pantry, 8 am and 11:45 am Worship, 10:30 am
• Monday	January 31	Disciple Bible Class, 7:00 pm, Conference Room

January 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday													
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<p>16</p> <p>9:30 AM CHRISTIAN EDUCATION</p> <p>9:30 AM L MUMC CHOIR/WC</p> <p>10:30 AM WORSHIP/WC</p> <p>11:30 AM FELLOWSHIP/Stark</p> <p>12:00 PM - 3:30pm Korean M C</p> <p>4:00 PM - 6pm CCEA Board/Oct.</p> <p>7:30 PM AA Mtg/Oct</p>	<p>17</p> <p>6:00 PM - 8pm Sevhdh/Stark</p> <p>7:00 PM - 9pm Discipline/Conf</p> <p>8:00 PM AA Mtg /Oct</p>	<p>18</p> <p>7:00 PM WHC/Edw</p> <p>7:00 PM AA Mtg /Oct</p> <p>7:30 PM L MUMC CHOIR</p> <p>8:30 PM AA/Oct</p>	<p>19</p> <p>9:00 AM - 11am MENS SERVICE GROUP</p> <p>5:30 PM - 7:30pm VL-C/Presd</p> <p>7:00 PM OCO/WC</p> <p>7:30 PM EA Mtg /Oct</p>	<p>20</p> <p>10:15 AM - 12pm TTime/Edw</p> <p>2:00 PM - 4pm Moms/Edw</p> <p>7:30 PM Lady A/Oct</p>	<p>21</p> <p>6:30 AM PRYR BKFST/Stark</p> <p>8:45 AM - Noon CCEA/C Wing</p> <p>9:00 AM MusicTgthr/Edw</p>	<p>22</p> <p>8:30 AM - 2:30pm Sarahs Science M/D/Stark, Edw</p> <p>8:45 AM - noon CCEA/C Wing, Oct.</p> <p>8:45 AM - 10:45 am Achalan Yoga</p> <p>9:00 AM - 1pm Budget Setting Mtg/Conf</p>													
<p>23</p> <p>9:30 AM CHRISTIAN EDUCATION</p> <p>9:30 AM L MUMC CHOIR/WC</p> <p>10:30 AM WORSHIP/WC</p> <p>11:30 AM FELLOWSHIP/Stark</p> <p>12:00 PM - 3:30pm Korean M C</p> <p>4:00 PM - 6pm CCEA Board/Oct.</p> <p>7:30 PM AA Mtg/Oct</p>	<p>24</p> <p>9:30 AM - 5pm Alegria/Stark</p> <p>6:00 PM - 8pm Sevhdh/Stark</p> <p>7:00 PM - 9pm Discipline/Conf</p> <p>8:00 PM AA Mtg /Oct</p>	<p>25</p> <p>9:30 AM - 5pm Alegria/Stark</p> <p>6:15 PM - 10pm WHC Concert/Edw, WC</p> <p>7:00 PM AA Mtg /Oct</p> <p>7:30 PM L MUMC CHOIR</p> <p>8:30 PM AA/Oct</p>	<p>26</p> <p>9:00 AM - 11am MENS SERVICE GROUP</p> <p>5:30 PM - 7:30pm VL-C/Presd</p> <p>7:00 PM OCO/WC</p> <p>7:30 PM EA Mtg /Oct</p>	<p>27</p> <p>10:15 AM - 12pm TTime/Edw</p> <p>2:00 PM - 4pm Moms/Edw</p> <p>6:30 PM Threshld/Edw</p> <p>7:30 PM Lady A/Oct</p>	<p>28</p> <p>8:15 AM - 5:30pm Positive Discipline/Stark</p> <p>8:45 AM - Noon CCEA/C Wing</p> <p>9:00 AM MusicTgthr/Edw</p>	<p>29</p> <p>8:00 AM - 1pm Oak Yth Orch/WC HOLD</p> <p>8:15 AM - 5:30pm Positive Discipline/Stark</p> <p>8:45 AM - noon CCEA/C Wing, Oct.</p> <p>8:45 AM - 10:45 am Achalan Yoga</p> <p>3:00 PM - 6pm FOOD PANTRY</p>													
<p>30</p> <p>8:00 AM & 11:45am FOOD PANTRY</p> <p>8:00 AM FOOD PANTRY</p> <p>9:30 AM CHRISTIAN EDUCATION</p> <p>9:30 AM L MUMC CHOIR/WC</p> <p>10:30 AM WORSHIP/WC</p> <p>11:30 AM FELLOWSHIP/Stark</p> <p>12:00 PM - 3:30pm Korean M C</p> <p>7:30 PM AA Mtg/Oct</p>	<p>31</p> <p>6:00 PM - 8pm Sevhdh/Stark</p> <p>7:00 PM - 9pm Discipline/Conf</p> <p>8:00 PM AA Mtg /Oct</p>																		