

Voice of the Hills



Newsletter of

CHAPEL OF THE HILLS

COMMUNITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
DESCANSO, CA

December 2016/January 2017

Christmas Tree Decorating

Join us Sunday, December 6th, and help decorate our Christmas tree during worship. Watch over the first weeks of December as our church is transformed by the Christmas spirit.

Christmas in the Mountains Brunch

Join us for a wonderful gathering on December 10th from 10:30 am to 1 pm at the Town Hall for a delicious meal, a carol sing-a-long, handmade bags and crafts from Guatemala, and great fellowship. Proceeds from the event help the United Methodist Women provide mission outreach to the local community during the holiday season and throughout the year (See insert).

Caroling Party

Join us Monday, December 12th, for our annual potluck and caroling party, everyone is invited to come and join in. (See insert).

The Journey—Sermon Series

Each of the remaining three Sundays before Christmas and Christmas Eve will include a part of a special Video presentation produced by Rev. Adam Hamilton from his journey through Israel retracing the story of the Nativity of Jesus. (See insert)

Christmas Eve Worship Service

Saturday, December 24th

3:00 pm - Family Friendly Service

7:00 pm - Candlelight Service

Bring the little ones at 3:00 pm for a 45-minute Christmas Eve worship. At 7:00 pm, we will have a more traditional candlelight service. Both services will include singing of carols and a re-telling of the Christmas story. Mark your calendars and join us over the Christmas weekend. (See insert)

Upcoming Events

December 2nd -

Couples Potluck - 6:30 pm

(see page 3)

December 10th -

Christmas Brunch (see insert)

December 12th -

Christmas Caroling (see page 3)

December 24th -

Christmas Eve Services - 3:00 pm

& 7:00 pm (see insert)

December 25th -

Sunday/Christmas Day Worship - 10:30 am (see insert)

January 6th -

Couples Potluck - 6:30 pm

(see page 3)

January 16th

John Nilsen in Concert - 3:00 pm

(see page 3)

January 22nd

Church Council - 11:30 am

(see page 4 for notes from the last one on Nov. 6th and pages 5-6 for info from the Charge Conference on Nov. 22nd)

January 29th (Sunday)

Faith Development Workshop - 4:00 pm (see page 2)

CHAPEL OF THE HILLS
COMMUNITY UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH

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**PASTOR JOHN'S
DESCANSO HOURS (approx.)**

Mondays 9:00 am - 2:00 pm
Tuesdays 9:00 am - 2:00 pm
Wednesdays 11:00 am - 7:00 pm
Thursdays 9:00 am - 2:00 pm

Call his cell phone to see if he is
in the office before coming over.

SUNDAY MORNING

Sunday School—9:30 am
All Ages

Worship Service—10:30 am
Sanctuary

Potluck Lunch—All Welcome
After service in Fellowship Hall

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Senior Minister
Rev. John K. Demaree
<pastor@chapelofthehills.org>

Lay Leader
Andrew Strother

Church Council Chair
Don Dyer

Office Assistant
Syndee D'Spain

Country Treehouse
Preschool Director
Terri Bell

Youth Directors
Jill and Alan Sawyer

Bookkeeper
Krystal Scott

Nursery Attendant
Raylah Peterson

Pastor's Pen

The holidays are a busy time. We have parties, extra shopping, traveling, cooking, and cleaning to do. It's easy to forget to reach out to those around us who desperately need our care and concern especially at the holidays.

There are several in our church who are to some degree stuck at home or alone most of the time. Please take time out of your busy holiday schedule to reach out to those you haven't seen in church in a while. A call or a card, especially this time of year can make a big impact.

If you would like a list of people to contact, please feel free to contact me. There are at least a half dozen that I can think of off the top of my head. More, I'm sure, if I think harder. In this season of running and hurrying, take time to slow down, and experience the true miracle of Christmas by sharing God's love in real and practical ways.

I will be doing my own running after Christmas as I take Joanna back to Indiana to see my parents. We can never spend too much time building personal relationships. I will be out of town Dec 28 - Jan 4th. Andrew will be preaching on Sunday, January 1st.

In Christ's Love, *Pastor John*

Faith Development Workshop

Sunday, January 29th - 4:00 - 7:00 pm

Child Care WILL be provided—A light dinner will be served

**How do we connect the Love of Jesus Christ to our Neighbors
and Friends?**

We have really stepped out in faith this year with a new schedule, and a lot of personal time committed to the church. It may seem like that it is not gathering much steam.

Our District Superintendent visited with us at our annual Charge Conference meeting in November. He suggested that we put a plan together and request a grant from the district for advertising and reaching out. He shared a few ideas about how we could use this money. Our January meeting will also be a time to put a plan together and formerly request some of those funds for our efforts.

When we made the change, the intent was to take time later to reflect and study our efforts along the way. This special gathering in January is our first formal opportunity to reflect on the changes we have made this past year, as well as, look at how we can improve our efforts in the months to come. We will look at questions like the following:

- How can we reach out to our church family and support and encourage one another?
- How can we get the community more involved in activities where they can experience God's love.
- How can we be more effective and reach larger groups of people with the ministries we are already doing?

Who is invited?

Short answer: **EVERYONE!**

Everyone who is truly interested in sharing God's love in real and practical ways. Everyone who has ever taught Sunday School, or attended Sunday School or a Bible Study. Everyone who has children who attend Sunday School, or who will in a few years. Everyone who is looking for a Bible Study for any age.

Ministries

Youth Group Mondays - 6:00 - 7:30 pm

Our youth group meets at the church for a meal, some activities, and discussions about how best to deal with being a teenager in this day and age. If you know someone in 7th grade or older, have them come some Monday night and join the dozen or so other youth learn about the teachings of Jesus and how they still apply to today's crazy world.

DECEMBER SCHEDULE

Don't forget that the Youth will be off for the Christmas break. We will meet December 5th, 12th, and 19th and then return on January 9th.

See the insert about our December 12th Caroling Party.



Couples News

Merry Christmas!
and
Happy New Years!

We will have our next meeting on Friday, December 2nd at the home of the Jessup's starting at 6:30 pm. The next one will be on January 6th, see Sunday bulletin for more information. Even if you are not part of a couple, you are welcome to join us.

Why not consider giving it a try and come to the next meeting. For questions, call Shirley Somes 445-1097 or Teresa Burrows 473-9810.

SPECIAL EVENT

JOHN NILSEN

Saturday, January 16th, 3:00 pm

Chapel of the Hills UMC

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

John will be sharing an hour of his time and talent on the 16th. This is a wonderful opportunity for all ages to enjoy a great piano concert. The concert is free. A freewill offering will be taken during the concert, and CDs will be available for sell. .0

ABOUT THE PERFORMER

John Nilsen began studying classical piano from his mother at age six. He founded the Magic Wing recording label in 1987. The label has a catalog of fifteen successful titles, each with international distribution totaling more than 1 million copies sold.



Advent & Christmas @ Chapel of the Hills



Adopt-a-Family

Christmas for most of us is a joyous time filled with family, good friends, and good times. For many in our own in local communities, however, the holidays are even more stressful than normal times. Many families who are barely making ends meet have nothing extra for Christmas. This is our opportunity to help. We are continuing our annual outreach to these families.

Once again, the UMW will be providing Christmas food baskets for up to 5 families. They are also collecting cash donations so that the parents of these families will have a little extra to buy gifts for their children. I hope you will be generous, so that others may experience the joy of Christmas.



Christmas Caroling Party December 12th

Do you like to sing Christmas carols? Do you like to eat? Then you need to join our annual all-church caroling party.

Everyone is invited to **gather at the CHURCH** this year on Monday evening, December 12th, around 6:00pm. We will begin with a potluck dinner followed by practicing some of our most favorite carols, and then we will car pool around to several homes of our neighbors in Descanso. This is a great way to celebrate the season of love. See you there!

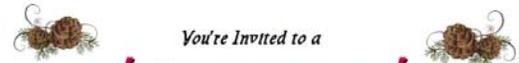
P.S. There is a chance that this year that we will travel in a Hay Ride. Come find out!



Sermon Series "The Journey"

With video clips from Adam Hamilton's renown Bible study "The Journey: the Road to Bethlehem;" seeing the actual places like Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem really make the story come to life.

Sermon Dates:
Nov 27, Dec 4, 11, 18, and
7pm Christmas Eve



You're Invited to a

Christmas Brunch in the Mountains

Saturday,
December 10th
10:30^{am} in the
Morning
at Descanso
Town Hall

Delicious Meal
Wonderful
Gift Baskets
Favorite
Christmas Songs
Shop The
Guatemala Shop



Proceeds help Chapel of the Hills' United Methodist Women
Provide a Merry Christmas to Local Families

Please call Judy Inskip at 445-3823 to save a seat.
Tickets are \$12 each.

* Doors open at 10:30. Brunch served at 11:30

Christmas Eve

Saturday, December 24th

3:00 pm - Family Christmas

Because Christmas is on a Saturday we are offering a special 3:00 pm Family Christmas Celebration. This special worship will be oriented toward the kids, but capture the heart of anyone who believes in Christmas. Before you spend hours trying to get the young ones to sleep, come and hear the story of first Christmas. Children will be encouraged to participate with carol singing and unwrapping some special gifts that help tell the story.

7:00 pm

Candlelight Christmas Eve

Our traditional candlelight service will include the final installment of the Sermon Series "The Journey" and will end with a candlelight singing of Silent Night. This service is a great way to prepare your hearts, before the presents, food, and football.

10:30 am

Christmas Morning

Christmas morning is a Sunday this year. We will have a simple service with no Sunday School before church, and no potluck lunch after church. Come hear the story of how we have celebrated this glorious holiday throughout the ages.

Church Council

Notes from the Church Council Meeting on November 6, 2016

OLD BUSINESS:

Equitable Compensation - Pastor John reported that the application has been completed and mailed.

Signage - Don Dyer reported that he and Linda Hoody will meet after Linda returns from the Grand Canyon.

Turkey Dinner – Alan Sawyer will recruit some of the youth to serve and bus tables.

Eagle Scout Bench Project – Jonathan Zentmyer presented his project proposal to his troop. The project was approved, and installation is currently scheduled for the first Saturday in December (Editor's note: This will be a later Saturday).

FINANCE:

Apportionments - Apportionments are the monies we give to the larger church to help with Pastoral support, and mission projects around the world. We are caught up through September.

Building Fund – Jeff Lashmet commented that we need to put some money in the building fund. The classroom part of the church building and the parsonage need repairs to and/or replacement of their roofs.

NEW BUSINESS:

Replacing Check Signers -

A new signer is needed on the checking account to replace Linda Dee Ames who has moved away. Jill Sawyer moved to replace Linda Dee Ames with Linda Hoody as a signatory for our California Bank and Trust Checking Account. Jeannie Cram seconded, and the motion and it was adopted.

Advent/Christmas –

Pastor John pointed out that Christmas Day is on a Sunday this year, and asked if he should plan for a 6:00 pm Christmas Eve service on Saturday night. No consensus was achieved, so Pastor will check with Preschool staff about times for a possible (additional) earlier service, and go from there.

Tree decorating will take place on the first Sunday in December in order to coincide with Communion.

We discussed the annual caroling party. Alan Sawyer suggested having the meal at the church on Monday, December 12th. As we no longer have a bus and don't wish to rent vans, Alan and Don Dyer will try and work out a hay ride using a stake-side truck and/or a flat-bed trailer. In case of wet weather, it may be necessary to go in cars instead.

Charge Council Organization –

Pastor John explained that we have been doing business differently than the model we are currently set up for. The Church Council is designed to be a 15-member committee who votes on the matters that come before it. Being such a small congregation, we have been allowing everyone who attends the Council meetings to vote. Most items pass unanimously, so it is assumed that the vote of the committee would match that of the congregation.

2016 State of the Church

In our annual report (copies are available in the church entry way).
I wrote a report entitled the State of the Church. Here are just a few selections from the report.

This year had its struggles. We said goodbye to three members, Simon Wesselink, Dwayne Grimes, and Gene Sickles as they went home to be with God. We also said goodbye to Linda Dee and Evan Ames as they moved to Kentucky. The yearly ebb and flow of our church weaves through us as time goes on. We are still struggling with attendance at our weekly services, and searching for ways to be more effective in reaching out to the community. It's important, however, to look back at all we have accomplished this year and approach our ministry with a sense of gratitude.

In January, we met for a special Saturday workshop where we talked about Faith Development. In that meeting, we decided to take a leap of faith and make a radical change to our Sunday mornings. We now have an hour of Sunday school for all ages including adults. That hour is followed by an hour of worship. To advertise this change, we sent out a special mailer to every address in the Descanso and Guatay zip codes. Thanks to a generous offer by the Cal-Pac Annual Conference for free background checks, we were able to institute a Safe Gatherings policy for abuse prevention. All of our volunteers who work with children including our preschool staff all completed a Safe Gatherings background checks. We are providing a safe place for our youngest members.

In February, we built a shed to store the clothes we have been collecting from church members and our preschool families. We now hand them out almost every month along with the food distribution from Feeding San Diego. We still want to get more people involved and perhaps grow our collections beyond just clothes to perhaps medical equipment and other household items.

In March, we had a second Saturday meeting which focused on understanding the demographics of the community, and discussing ways to make our facility more inviting and ways to reach out to the community to let them know who we are and to share God's love in more effective ways. This meeting led to several different and diverse efforts.

In April, just before Easter, I used the knowledge I learned in my class, and tips from United Methodist communications and other sources to renovate our website and make it more user-friendly. In turn, over the summer I began video recording the sermons and closing praise music. These videos are now uploaded to our website on a regular basis. Some of our shut-ins are now able to watch the sermons weekly from the comfort of their own homes.

In June, we took another big step and moved the Annual Western Luau BBQ to this month. The move to June was to separate it from all of the community events which already happen in late July and August. One of the big upticks of the move was Deborah Mancini being able to bring over 20 vendors to the event. We were also able to include the Preschool children in the event. Overall, the move to June was a positive one and we are planning to host the 2017 event in June as well.

This fall, the Youth Group has exploded. From an average of 5 or 6 youth per week, they are now having an attendance of nearly 20 every Monday night. Al and Jill Sawyer are still dedicated to this most vital outreach ministry. They are facing new problems that come with such a large group including no longer fitting in the Youth Room for their meetings. God's blessings are truly abundant.

In November, we used Facebook to help share our message to a larger audience. Just a few years ago, very few households in Descanso had Internet access. Now most do. There is a Facebook page called Descanso Neighbors where many in the community talk and share news. There are similar pages for Pine Valley and Alpine. These pages along with our own Facebook page are great places to advertise our events. This year we made our first ad purchase of \$20 to advertise our Annual Turkey Dinner. The results are not directly measurable, but it was one of the best attended Turkey Dinners in years.

In December, because of the generous giving of our membership, our Apportionment giving is at 100%. This is in part because of the Pastor support we are receiving from the conference. The conference's support and belief in our purpose, mission, and vital presence to this community is a tribute to our work and dedication.

Blessings, Pastor John

Charge Conference

In the United Methodist Church, a pastor is appointed to a Charge. This is usually (as in our case) as single church, but it can be multiple churches. The Charge has an annual meeting called a Charge Conference. At the meeting, we vote on a variety of things including budget and leadership for the coming year. At our November 22nd Charge Conference meeting, the people listed below were elected into office starting January 1st. Please let them know how much we appreciate their service and time. If you have any concerns about the church or Pastor John, you can talk directly with one of the SPRC members, If you have a facility issue, you can talk with one of the Trustee members. We are still looking for at least one more member of the Pre-school Advisory Committee.

You may notice some blanks below. This year we were told that the Nominations committee will be responsible for filling those in the coming weeks. Please prayerfully consider the request, if you are asked to fill one of the remaining openings.

CHURCH COUNCIL (15 Members)

Council Chair: Don Dyer

Lay Member to Annual Conference: Andrew Strother

Lay Leader: Andrew Strother

Name	Primary Responsibility/Sub-Committee
<u>Class of 2017</u>	
Linda Hoody	SPRC
Jeff Lashmet	Trustees
Chuck Inskeep	Finance
<u>Class of 2018</u>	
Jeannie Cram	SPRC
Dave Somes	Trustees
_____	Finance
<u>Class of 2019</u>	
Alan Sawyer	SPRC
Lee Wirschem	Trustees
Chris Lashmet	Finance
Ex Officio Members (with vote)	
<u>Jennifer Demaree</u>	President/Representative, United Methodist Women
<u>TBD</u>	President/Representative, Preschool Board
<u>TBD</u>	Youth/Young Adult Member representing SPRC 2016

LEADERSHIP (NOMINATIONS) (6 Members)

2016	2017
Linda Hoody	_____
Syndee D'Spain	_____
Christie Sawyer	_____

PRESCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (9 Members)

	2016	2017	2018
Church Reps	Susan Neville	Jeanie Cram	Jeff Lashmet
Church Reps	Syndee D'Spain	Jaime Dyer	TBD
Preschool Reps	TBD	Shawna Kramer	TBD

Thank You

Holiday Bazaar



A special thank you to so many who helped make the bazaar such a success. Every Tuesday for several weeks, ladies met at my home or worked at their homes on their own to create our bazaar items. Thanks to everyone who helped so much.

Judy Inskeep

Annual Turkey Dinner



The United Methodist Women would like to thank everyone who worked so hard to make the Annual Turkey Dinner and Bazaar a success. We served close to 150 meals, a recent record.

The kitchen crew was efficient and ready for all the hearty appetites that came to eat and that waited for them. We can't forget all the willing hearts and hands that were part of the preparations and clean up - those who prepared the turkeys ready to serve - those who put up tables and set and decorated them, and took them all down the next day.

Then, there were all the behind the scenes things that needed to happen - somebody had to put up and take down the signs around town, wash the dishes during and after dinner, serve and bus the tables, etc. Thanks so much to everyone who came, ate, pitched in, and helped.

Jenifer Demaree

Military Gifts



A special thank you to everyone who made cards for our military care packages and donated money for shipping them.

Your efforts big or small help make the holidays brighter for several men and women serving our country. We will report back in the next edition of the newsletter with details about the packages and their recipients.

Jennifer Demaree

Turkey Dinners



A special thank you to the Dyers for putting together a dozen individual turkey dinners. I had the chance to ride with Claudia Parent as we delivered several of these meals.

Every single recipient was overjoyed for the food and for the kind loving spirits that thought to make the meal possible. A big thank you to Jaime Dyer who goes above and beyond each year to make sure everything is in place and ready to go.

Pastor John

POINSETTIAS



Flowers always make our sanctuary look more festive. If you would like to buy and donate a Poinsettia or other Christmas Flowers to our sanctuary, you are more than invited to bring them in any Sunday starting on December 11th. You are also welcome to take them home after the Christmas Eve worship or after church on the 25th. If you'd like your plant to go to a family in the community after December 25th, please let Pastor John know.



Christmas at Chapel of the Hills

Sunday, December 4th

In worship, we will all participate in decorating the tree.

Saturday, December 10th

Christmas Brunch in the Mountains
10:30 am - 1:00 pm

Monday, December 12th

Potluck meal and Caroling 6:00 pm. We will be starting at the church this year, and carpooling.

Saturday, December 24th

Christmas Eve Worship. At 3:00 pm, we will have our family-friendly worship.

December 24th (cont.)

At 7:00 pm, we will have our traditional Christmas Eve service with scripture, candlelight, and carols.

Sunday, December 25th

On Christmas Morning, we will have a special simple worship without Sunday School, or a potluck afterwards.

Friday, January 6th

Couples Study. Join us for an evening of fun learning what it takes to grow as a couple and in all our relationships.

Saturday, January 16th

3:00 pm: John Nilson in Concert. We will have international pianist, and heartfelt Christian, John Nilson performing at our church. All are invited.

Sunday, January 22nd

Church Council meeting after church.

Sunday, January 29th

Intentional Faith Development Workshop 4:00 pm—7:00 pm



Chapel of the Hills

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OPEN HEARTS OPEN MINDS OPEN DOORS
The People of the United Methodist Church

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Place
Stamp
Here