

# Windows

at LAUCC



LOS ALTOS  
UNITED CHURCH  
of  
CHRIST

December  
2011



5550 Atherton Street • Long Beach, CA 90815 • Phone (562) 596-6718 • Fax (562) 596-5228 •

## A Word From Pastor Lance...

One of the Old Testament readings for Advent is the prophet Isaiah's vision of a "peaceable kingdom" when God's Messiah comes and peace reigns over all the earth: **"The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them."** (Isaiah 11:6).

For that day to come, not only will the wolf, the leopard, and the lion have to mend their **predatory** ways, the lamb, the kid, and the fatling calf will also have to bolster their **courage**. While the stronger parties will have to hold their appetites in check, the little ones will have to have faith (trust) that they really can all get along in radically **new** relationships.

It also strikes me that this experiment in peaceful cohabitation will be "riskier" for the vulnerable **lamb** than for the reformed **carnivore**. If it fails, the wolf, the leopard, and the lion will be able to quickly find their next meal.

Perhaps even more audacious than the ideal of **predator** and **prey** living together ("lying down" side by side!) is the thought that a **child** – a little child – shall lead them.

If this is the kind of extraordinarily **changed** (reformed and pacified) world that God has in mind for our earth, let's have a show of hands of **who among us** would volunteer to get the ball rolling. Such a huge (many would say "hopeless") undertaking – expecting the leopard to change its spots, the violent to lay down their arms, the powerful to treat the vulnerable as equals – holds so little chance of success, that most able-bodied adults would say: **"It'll never happen. Forget it."**

Maybe that's why the one to lead them will be a youngster -- an idealist, not a realist. Children don't know what might hurt them until they've encountered it. They may be as interested to reach toward a snake as to run from it, to try to pet a tiger as to pull its tail. Somehow, some children come across as "fearless." Chalk it up to inexperience, I suppose, or to the willingness to try something new, to trust inherently, to be curious about their world, or simply not knowing their limits.

If God really wants to change the world, it might make more sense to start with **a little child** and take care that it be raised with the values and skills -- to include imagination, creativity, risk taking, courage, and resourcefulness -- that God can use to provoke the kinds of changes we more mature folks would resist.

The Christmas story suggests that God has a plan to change the world in fundamental ways and has chosen humble people outside the power-structure – people like the Virgin Mary and her displaced fiancé Joseph and their "born in a cattle stall" Christ child. Together with ordinary shepherds and foreign wisemen, this little child will lead God's world to a more peaceful and just social order. At least, that's what we are hoping for during Advent. Come, little Lord Jesus.

Pastor Lance



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Men's Fellowship Dinner – December 19<sup>th</sup> 6:30pm @ Polly's

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**Rev. Dr. Paul Lance**  
*Pastor*

David Joseph  
*Music Director*

Ginger Joseph  
*Christian Ed. Director*

Sumer Lesser  
*Youth Coordinator*

Maria Shrout  
*Preschool Director*

Cindy Dufford  
*Office Manager*

## *From Your Moderator...*

It doesn't matter that my children have managed to move from the Age of Wonder to age of consumerism, I still love this time of year. Though the stress and static of life do not diminish (it may actually be worse!), remembering the reason we gather or connect with those we care about, decorate our homes and/or persons, have feasts, and give gifts to those we know and those we may never meet, is a refreshing time for my spirit. My body and bank account may get stressed, but getting past the incessant ad campaigns and commercialism of the foundation of my faith leaves me feeling closer to the principles that guide my life. My thanks to my faith family for the support they provide the church, and to me in my personal faith journey.

*Tom*



## **Leadership Council**

### **Moderator**

Tom Provencher

### **Moderator-Elect**

Hugh Shelbourn

### **Christian Education Chair**

Sumer Lesser

### **Communications Chair**

Elaine Thornton

### **Facilities Chair**

Clarence Solt

### **Fellowship Chair**

Maggi Shelbourn

### **Finance Chair**

Dave Lampert

### **Membership & Mission**

#### **Co-Chair**

Carol Brooks

### **Outreach Co-Chairs**

Eve Bettridge

Molly Smythe

### **Worship Chair**

Linda Allen

## *A Note of Thanks*

As our year ends I feel compelled to do this article in thanks of all the upward and heartfelt support I have received from this congregation.

Fear and anxiety can create in me a kind of spiritual amnesia. I might fear that I have been abandoned or believe I must do everything myself.

To counteract these feelings, I gently redirect myself and remember that I am never alone, because wherever I am, God is. God is a living, loving presence, with me at all times and in all places. Right here, right now, I am one with Spirit.

No matter the situation, I am comforted as I relax, breathe and connect with the presence of God within me. I feel this Presence in my heartbeat, in my breath and throughout my body. As I am calmed, I feel the blessing of God filling my body, mind and soul.

For prayer to be powerful it must bring about a change in behavior. The power is not in asking God to change the situation but, in the famous words of Gandhi, "being the change we wish to see." If we comprehend our Divine Nature, our living must reveal it. What good is having musical talent if we never reveal it through an instrument? What good is Divine Identity if we do not claim it in thought, word and action? We are channels through which Spirit illumines the world.

Happiest Holiday Season to all. May we all experience 2012 in a very special way.

God's servant,  
*Sue Solt*



A note of Louise Larson's new address:

Sunrise Senior Living #128  
3850 Lampson Ave.  
Seal Beach, CA 90740  
(562) 594-8717



The preschool is immersed in the holiday spirit. We will have our Santa's Secret Shop the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of

December. It is a wonderful time for children to "buy" gifts for their family members. If you have a few things that you are getting rid of before the holidays, we would love to take them off your hands.

Our holiday programs will be the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of December. If you would like a little extra holiday cheer, please stop by and see them perform. It is the best way to start your holidays.

The preschool would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas.

*Maria Shrout*



### **MEMBERSHIP AND MISSION**

If, instead of sending many individual cards, you would like to address a Christmas Card from you and your family to your church family as a whole, place it on the bulletin board near the entrance to Patterson Hall. You may want to put some or all of your "savings" on cards and stamps, to the Alternative Christmas Fair on Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>. Our choices this year are Pilgrim Pines and Habitat for Humanity.

Thank you for your consideration.

*Carol H. Brooks*

### **OUTREACH COMMITTEE**

We are continuing our pledge until the end of the year of providing \$100.00 a month to the Salvation Army Bed & Bread program. As stated, the money that is being donated has come from funds allocated for "charity" and "benevolence" in the Piotrowski and McMahon endowment accounts.

#### **Peanut Butter Sunday Update**

A total of 107 lbs. of peanut butter was collected for the "Mission: 1" campaign which was donated to the Salvation Army Food Bank. We greatly appreciate all the donations!!

#### **SCIC 8th Annual Interfaith Awards Banquet**

The Outreach Committee pledged \$50.00 towards sponsorship of the SCIC 8th Annual Interfaith Awards Banquet that was held on November 13th. Father Gregory Boyle was the invited guest speaker, and we had 8-9 congregational members attend this very special event.

#### **Mark Your Calendars**

**Alternative Christmas** will be held on Sunday, December 4, 2011. June Boutwell from Pilgrim Pines and Chris Untiet from Habitat for Humanity will be our guest speakers on this Sunday service. Please see the list on the Patterson Hall Bulletin Board for items needed to help out these special charities that we have chosen to support this year.

**Help pack Christmas boxes** with Eve Bettridge and Pastor Lance at the Salvation Army on Wednesday December 15, 2011 from 8:00-3:00 p.m. Please see Eve Bettridge for more details on how you can help out at this very special volunteer event.

The Outreach Committee meets after the coffee hour on the **2nd Sunday** of each month with the exception of some months where this date falls on holidays or other celebrations.

**Please let Eve Bettridge or Molly Smythe know if you wish to help or join us in any way.**



## **WORSHIP COMMITTEE**

The Worship committee is looking into the repair of the organ. Janet Hammel has donated \$500 toward the estimate and repair. We hope to have this beautiful instrument ready so we can enjoy it occasionally at our church services. We have received many lovely comments on the few changes that we have made in the services in response to the survey.

*Linda Allen, Worship Chair*

## **Worship Survey Results**

The surveys are in and the numbers crunched. We had almost 60 people return them so here are the highlights:

1. Music
  - a. 7 for traditional music, 3 for half of each and 40 people for more contemporary music.
  - b. The majority of people want 3 hymns.
  - c. If we were to have contemporary music only for a service, the votes were for once a month.
  - d. We should have both old and new at each service. 41 to 7 vote
2. Responsive Readings
  - a. We should have them 2 times during the worship service.
3. Announcements
  - a. The liturgist should not make all the announcements.
  - b. Individuals should make the announcements unless they would prefer a liturgist to announce simple meeting that don't need to be explained.
4. Prayer Requests
  - a. Each individual should use the microphone.
  - b. We should not limit how many are made. Individuals should try to be brief.
5. Scriptures
  - a. We should keep them the same (which was usually 2, but this was news to Pastor.)
  - b. The majority voted for one Old Testament and one New Testament scripture in each service.
6. Length of the Service
  - a. The vote was for 1 ¼ hours.
7. Sermons
  - a. The sermons should be 20 minutes long
  - b. The topics were voted on and suggestions were made for Pastor Lance at his request. They were passed on to the pastor. 18 suggestions were listed.

Three pages of comments were made regarding a great range of opinions. All were welcome and enlightening.

**A big thank you to everyone who took the time to give us this input!!!**





I can't believe it is December already. Looking back I realize that our youth have had a great year of activities. Just last month we had a "glow in the dark" themed jam session in McNeil Hall on November 20<sup>th</sup>. We had about 60 youth from the Samoan New Beginnings UCC, Torrance UCC, and ourselves included attend this event. As we ate hot dogs and chips, we danced from 4-8 using glow sticks. It was an amazing night. To end our year we will be going caroling followed by a chili supper at church on the 18<sup>th</sup> and a lock-in in Patterson Hall on the 27<sup>th</sup>- 28<sup>th</sup>. I am now starting to plan next year's events and activities so if anyone has any ideas please see Ginger or myself. We are always open to new ideas activities. Happy Holidays to everyone.

*Sumer Lesser*  
Youth Coordinator



### All Church Event

As a way of saying thank you to Domenico's Restaurant for providing the food for the "Country Fair" this year, we will be gathering for dinner at Domenico's on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in Belmont Shore on Friday, December 9 at 6pm. After dinner, join us as we walk the canals in Naples to see all the Christmas lights and beautifully decorated homes. For more information or to confirm your dinner reservation, contact Ginger Joseph at 562-458-3004 or gingerjoseph@charter.net.



### FACILITIES

We got a lot done at our November work party. With the threat of rain, most of what we did was inside, which was enough to keep us busy. I wish to thank everyone who participated for their outstanding work and devotion to the church. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

*Clarence Solt*  
Facilities Chair



Thanks to our devoted member, Vi Dwyer, Priscilla Circle will be hosted, with an always outstanding and beautiful celebration of Christmas on Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> at 12:30pm. Vi's address is 890 Hillside Dr. in Long Beach. Please tell her you're coming as she must leave names at the security gate. No meeting, just lots of food and conversation. Circle the date and invite someone new.

Chairperson,  
*Sue Solt*



### FELLOWSHIP

**Los Altos United Church of Christ  
2011 Volleyball Schedule**

12/3: 6:20PM  
12/10: 5:20PM



## The 11:30 Monday Mid-Day Movies



### Dec. 5... "Faith Like Potatoes" (2009)

Angus Buchanan, a Scottish farmer, moves his family to South Africa and suffers a series of apparently insurmountable losses. Through unlikely friendships and his unwavering faith in divine intervention, he discovers his life's true purpose as an evangelist as well as a potato farmer. Based on a true story.

### Dec. 12... "Man of Faith" (2006)

Endowed with the power to heal others through a mysterious force he calls "The Spirit," Leroy Jenkins begins his career as an evangelist who quickly built one of the largest ministries in America. Singing the gospel like Elvis, dressing like Liberace, and befriending the likes of Mae West, Rev. Jenkins becomes a celebrity who lashes out at anyone who doubts or opposes him. As he gets wealthier, Leroy makes mistakes and enemies. In the end, he must come to a final reckoning with his pride, his faith, and The Spirit. Based on a true story.

### Dec. 19... "Leap of Faith" (1993)

A fictional account of evangelist Jonas Nightengale (played by Steve Martin), a slick-as-oil flim-flam man who'll trade salvation for a donation to his touring road-show ministry. He knows how to work a crowd and a con, and his works of wonder are done with smoke and mirrors, hidden microphone receivers, and insider information. A revealing look under the big-top of traveling salvation shows as his team pitches their tent in impoverished Rustwater, Kansas, under the skeptical eye of the local sheriff (Liam Neeson). Making a believer out of some folks in the town will take a real miracle.

### Dec. 26... "Mother Teresa" (2003)

Olivia Hussey (who played Juliet in the 1968 classic "Romeo and Juliet") portrays the life-story of Mother Teresa, the selfless missionary who brought hope, love, and salvation to the poorest of the poor. The nun was also a shrewd diplomat and an indomitable force, unwilling to accept as impossible what her faith and compassion led her to undertake, fighting fearlessly for the unloved and the forgotten. Her good works transcended hardships and ultimately won her the Nobel Prize and international acclaim. The small miracles and humble triumphs of this modern-day saint will inspire us on this day-after-Christmas mid-day movie.



## All Church Christmas Caroling Event

Sunday, December 18



- 3:00 Christmas caroling to "Shut-ins"  
*Bring Christmas joy to those who are confined to their homes. Sing your favorite Christmas songs.*
- 5:00 Chili Supper  
*Homemade chili, cornbread, hot chocolate, hot apple cider, coffee, tea & dessert. All non-carolers are welcome to join us for supper in Patterson Hall!*

We will gather at the church at 3:00 and carpool to the caroling locations. This is a very special opportunity to bring Christmas greetings to some long time members who are now unable to worship with us on a regular basis. It doesn't matter how old or how young you are or whether or not you think you can sing. The smile on your face and your warm hello will be enough to make a shut-in happy. Join us as we share together the true meaning of Christmas.

## Women's Book Group



Thanks to everyone who came to the November meeting.

For our December meeting, those who have finished the Guernsey book will choose other books that might be good selections for the Book Group, such as Sarah's Key by Tatiana de Rosnay or Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet by Jamie Ford. Janice also recommended Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz, Racing in the Rain by Garth Stein, and The Story of Edward Sawtelle by David Wroblewski.

Our next meeting will be on Monday, Dec. 12 at 10am.

Have fun choosing a new book to read.

*Carrie Jo*



### A WORD TO THE WISE FROM SOMEONE WITH EXPERIENCE

Joe and Bev Northrop want to alert our seniors to two forms of telephone scam they have encountered.

First, someone calls saying they are one of your grandkids and there has been a car accident in Canada and they need money sent to them right away. Bev said Joe would have to take care of it, and when Joe asked who this was they said: "You know me, I'm your oldest grandson." But since they didn't offer a name, Joe tells us: do NOT come up with a name on your own, or they'll say "yes, that's me." Joe hung up. The person immediately called back asking: "Why'd you hang up on me?" Joe said that since he wouldn't give him a name, he knew it was a scam. Joe tells of one older lady he knows who was in the process of sending money when a caregiver came home and asked who it was. Beware of such stories.

Second, Bev was told she had won a lottery in Canada and needed to send \$1,000 to open an account in their bank so they could transfer in her winnings. Joe caught on to that also and canceled the credit card before the transaction was completed. Some of these same scams come in the form of emails from someone you know, when in fact, the person is not in any trouble. For some reason, swindlers seem more active during the holiday season, so please don't be fooled by someone's sad story asking for your money.



## Junior High JANboree Coloring Outside the Lines January 14 – 17, 2011 For youth in 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade

At Loch Leven Christian Camp  
and Conference Center.

Co-sponsored by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of the Pacific Southwest Region and the Southern California Nevada Conference of United Church of Christ.

LAUCC campers include Belle Hickman, Jeff Lampert, Natalya Lytwynec, Samantha Provencher, Maddie Reeves and Emma Thornton. Going as a Counselor in Training (CIT) is Scott Erickson and Ginger Joseph is going as a Counselor.

Campers received "Camperships" from the proceeds of this year's country Fair Auction and Dinner and from the Central Association of the Southern California Nevada Conference.

Once again, thank you to everyone who continues to support our children and youth through such significant, fun, formative and inspirational camping programs.



## YAHS

(Young at Heart, Age 50 and older)

We have a lot of activities happening here at LAUCC. Be sure to look at the monthly calendar on the board as you enter the front door, or click on the word calendar on the church home page on the web site.

Remember that on the first and third Mondays of each month all are invited to join us for dinner at one of three different places. If you don't want to cook and/or want to enjoy some fellowship at dinner, come eat with us. On the first Mondays we go to either Fantastic Cafe on Studebaker or El Pollo Loco at Clark and the Diagonal. On the third Mondays we always go to Deli News in Los Altos. See the calendar in the hall to see where we are going on each of the Mondays.

## FEB Camp 2012

### *A United Church of Christ & Disciples of Christ Partnership Event*



- What: A winter camp event  
Theme: "Love"  
Who: Sr. High Youth (9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades)  
When: 7pm February 20 (President's weekend)  
Where: Pilgrim Pines  
Counselor: Pastor Lance  
Cost: for LAUCC youth is \$50. Balance being provided by LAUCC and The Southern California / Nevada Conference of the UCC.

Checks to be made to LAUCC (note, FEB Camp)

Registration forms available from Ginger Joseph or online at [www.scncucc.org](http://www.scncucc.org), click on Youth & Young adult). Registration deadline is January 16, 2012. As we will register all of our campers at the same time, please have registration forms and \$50 check to Ginger or the church office by Sunday, January 8.



### The Circle of Life - Part 2 - All Church Bus Triip along the Central California Coast

In a sermon given by Pastor Lance on Sunday, November 6, he ended by reminding us to don't forget to be curious and keep learning, and don't forget to have fun. Well, here is your chance to do both. Several of you have been asking about another all church overnight bus trip. We used to go in January over the 3 day weekend, but that conflicts with Janboree camp at Pilgrim Pines. So this next year, 2012, we have a one night trip planned for the weekend of February 11-12. This is the weekend before FEB camp, and since not all school districts have a 3 day weekend at that time, we will be leaving on Saturday morning and returning on Sunday evening.

For those of you who went on the first Circle of Life trip, this one will be a little different with a different stop for lunch on the way up, a different place to spend the night and have breakfast, and two new places to visit. We will leave from church at 8 am Saturday morning on a motorcoach with Main Street Tours. Our first stop will be at a Miniature Horse Farm near Solvang. We will stop for lunch at Pea Soup Anderson's, and then it's off for a guided tour at Ostrich Land in Buellton where you can feed the ostriches and Emus. We will check in to the Oxford Suites in Pismo Beach with a reception of light refreshments, and then off to a fun dinner at F. McLintock's Dining House in Shell Beach.

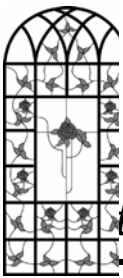
After a hot breakfast on Sunday morning at the Oxford Suites we will head for a 2 hour tour at the Happy Acres Goat Farm in Templeton and learn how to make goat cheese. We will stop for a country lunch and shopping at the Apple Farm in San Luis Obispo before heading back to church.

This trip includes ALL meals and transportation and a wonderful time with your church family. The cost, if we have at least 39 people going, would be \$241 per person/child (double occupancy). There is a \$45 extra charge for a single occupancy. The cost would be more if we have less people going.

Put this date (FEB 11-12) on your new calendars, and plan on a fun weekend next year. There is a sign-up sheet in Patterson Hall to make your reservation, or call Marilou Sams at 562-498-1876 to sign up or if you have any questions. The bus will hold 55 passengers so don't wait too long. Invite neighbors and family to join us too.

# December

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
				<b>1</b> 7pm Choir practice	<b>2</b> 4pm Girl Scouts	<b>3</b> 8am-Noon Samoan UCC (choir practice) 6:20 Volleyball
<b>4</b> 8:45 Adult Discussion 10am Worship ALTERNATIVE CHRISTIMAS 11:45 Finance Comm. Meeting 2pm Samoan UCC Worship	<b>5</b> 11:30 Movie: "Faith Like Potatoes" 6pm Dinner Out at Fantastic Café 7-9pm Boy Scouts	<b>6</b> 10am Bible Study: Acts 5pm TGIT Bible Study: Proverbs	<b>7</b> 9:15am Staff Meeting 10am Creative Hands 6pm YOGA	Santa's Secret Shop Discovery Preschool		<b>10</b> 8am-Noon Samoan UCC 1-4pm All-Church Work Party 5:30 Volleyball
<b>11</b> 8:45 Discussion 10am Worship 11:45 Christian Education Mtg. 11:45 Outreach 2pm Samoan UCC Worship	<b>12</b> 10-11am Book Group 11:30 Movie: "Man of Faith" 7-9pm Boy Scouts Court of Honor and Holiday Dinner	<b>13</b> 10am Bible Study: Acts 5pm TGIT Bible Study: Proverbs 7pm Leadership Council	<b>14</b> 9am - 4pm Sort and pack food at Salvation Army 6pm YOGA	Discovery Preschool Christmas Program		<b>17</b> 8am-Noon Samoan UCC 3pm Wedding in Sanctuary 6pm Samoan Christmas Party in McNeil Hall
<b>18</b> 8:45 Discussion 10am Worship with Christmas Cantata 2pm Samoan UCC Worship 3pm Christmas Caroling 5pm Chili Supper	<b>19</b> NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 11:30 Movie: "Leap of Faith" 6pm Dinner Out at Deli News 6:30pm Men's Dinner at Polly's	<b>20</b> 10am Bible Study: Acts 5pm TGIT Bible Study: The Prophets	<b>21</b> 6pm YOGA	<b>22</b> First Day of Winter  6pm Choir Christmas Party @ Joseph's	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 5pm- Christmas service of Lessons and Carols 7pm - Midnight Samoan UCC Christmas Eve Service
<b>25</b> CHRISTMAS 10: ☆ 	<b>26</b> 11:30 Movie: "Mother Theresa" 7-9pm Boy Scouts	<b>27</b> NO Bible Studies today Youth Overnight Lock-in	<b>28</b> 6pm YOGA	<b>29</b> No Choir practice	<b>30</b> Samoan Banquet in McNeil Hall	<b>31</b> 8pm Samoan New Years Eve Service



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## December 2011



### BIRTHDAYS

#### THIS MONTH

- |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Benjamin Joseph   | 21 Alan Singer      |
| 2 Kelly Morlock     | 23 Susan Rose       |
| 3 Tom Provencher    | 23 Harold Backstrom |
| 5 Jackie Provencher | 24 Adreinne Reeves  |
| 17 Michael Wilks    | 29 Brett Erickson   |
| 20 Felix Heflin     | 31 Kristen Wilks    |
| 20 Jacob Zinger     |                     |

### December Altar Flowers

- |    |                               |
|----|-------------------------------|
| 4  | The Josephs                   |
| 11 | Eve Bettridge                 |
| 18 | SINGER                        |
| 25 | Janet Hammel /<br>Linda Allen |

Please see the Flower  
Calendar in the narthex to  
reserve your special date.



12/26 Bob and Nell Kariger