

Volume 2009: January

Jan. 1, 2009



CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# Reflector

## A Note From Your Pastor

*"Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus."*

(Phil. 3:13-14, NRSV)



Dear friends, we are now again facing another new year. The days of busy holiday seasons are gone and we are entering a new year. Some of us may feel emptiness because the exciting noise of the Christmas season will be gone soon. For the world without faith, Christmas has come and He is gone, and all that remains is a feeling of emptiness. However, as Christians we know that it's not the end of the story of the birth of Christ, but rather the story of the beginning of our new life in Christ. God has blessed us with the start of a new life in Christ, a life that stands on the solid rock of what God has done, and that sends us on a new journey into the new year.

We may have had some times of sadness and weakness in our lives physically, emotionally and spiritually during the year past. Or there may have been sudden and unexpected accidents, physical weakness, or the experience of hurtful pain and misunderstanding in the relationship with other people--or with God, too. We faced national and global difficulties that had an impact on our individual lives. As human beings, we experienced all kinds of weaknesses, mistakes, and troubles. However, in spite of all that went wrong during the past year, the gospel reminds us that we are new creations in Christ. The Apostle Paul encourages the people of God to forget all the old things, and to stretch forward to the goal of the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

As children of God, our greatest blessing is that we can live new lives in Christ, always. God sent the Baby Christ Child on Christmas night to clear away all our sins, and to give forgiveness, love, and healing as the gifts of His eternal love. In the Baby Christ Child, new life has entered the world which God so loves. And a new life has been made possible for each of us in Christ. During the Advent season, we sang "Emmanuel," which means "God is with us." Now we know that God is with us as we enter a new year of life.

Also, in our ministry, we have the blessed opportunity to forget all the things of the past, and to look forward to "the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus, in the year ahead joyfully and faithfully. As we approach the 80th anniversary of Christ United Methodist Church, we can trust that God will continue to be with us in the ministry in Santa Maria for the new year of 2009. God has been the foundation of this church's life for 80 years. We have never been alone in our mission of love and mercy. If God is for us, who can be against us? If God is our strength, why be afraid? Today, God is calling us forward to the tasks which lie ahead. The message of the Bible challenges us to move faithfully, joyfully, and thankfully into the new year. Remember: God will hold us, guide us, and bring to completion this good work that he has begun in us.

It is my deepest prayer that God's abundant blessings will be upon us--upon us individually and upon our families--as we seek to be Christ United Methodist Church, in faith, hope, and love in the new days ahead.

Happy New Year in Christ!

  
Seung-Eun Grace Lee



A YEAR OF NEW BEGINNINGS

## Suzie's Info Column



Kinder teacher at Alvin School, Corinne Araki-Kawaguchi, sent a special thank you letter and a package from her students to Santa Maria Navy F-18 fighter pilot, Lt. Benjamin Ciltadino, Stationed in Afghanistan. She used Lt. Ciltadino as an example for her class' community service project. Corinne used the project because the children are fortunate to receive so much from the State and Country. Parents of Benjamin said they were very touched because the letter was so special and from the heart. Congratulations to Corinne for her dedication to teaching, her students are fortunate to have her as their instructor. She was honored during a school assembly and Lt Ciltadino's sister attended to thank Corinne for her thoughtfulness.

On the other hand, Corinne's husband Michael completed part of his culinary course at Santa Barbara City College. He hopes to graduate sometime next year. At the end of the year an eight course dinner was served to the families of the students. Daughter, Sumi came from Southern California to attend the function - she really enjoyed the ceremony, especially the dinner. Michael is teaching pharmaceutical subjects to students on Saturdays in Lompoc - he is really enjoying the teaching, said it is less stressful than the culinary subjects.

Dr. Warren Inouye, son of Emi Inouye, was recently promoted to the prestigious rank of Captain in the U.S. Navy Medical services.

Mitsuko Redding traveled to Japan for two weeks in early December. She went to see her sister who is having a difficult time following three strokes. Currently her sister has a full time care taker.

Nancy Kunishige's son-in-law, Sam Fast, has been cleared by his doctor of cancer. We were happy to hear of the good news. Sam is the son of local famous artist Nat.

Erwin Maas has been suffering the past few months of backache plus the weakness in his legs. He consulted a back specialist in Santa Barbara and the doctor there said a simple in-and-out procedure will considerably ease his

back pain. Erwin consulted with his local heart doctor but he said no-way can he have his surgery with his heart condition. Currently the two doctors are trying to come up with a solution so he can have the surgery. Everyone is continuing to pray for him.

Robert Park, son of Don & Nobuko, celebrated his birthday in December - he spent the Christmas holiday week with his parents and we are always glad to see him when he attends the Sunday Service during the time he is in Santa Maria.

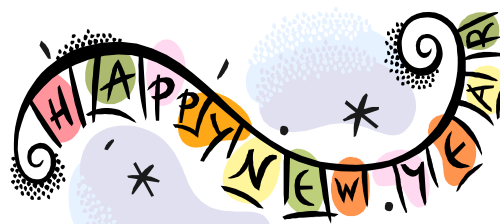
John & Tina Fox celebrated 56 years together on December 29th. Happy Anniversary to them and may they have many more years together.

During the holidays, Kay Moreland had to go back to Georgia to see her step-mom, Lois Craft, who has been ailing and her illness has become critical. All of Kay's friends are thinking of her during this difficult time.

Dr. Amy, of Iowa, daughter of Fred & Sachi Kumagai, came to visit her parents for New Years and a one day late Christmas celebration. She arrived in LAX and her sister Lynn greeted her on arrival and together they drove up to Santa Maria. Amy said it isn't cold here compared to the freezing weather in Iowa.

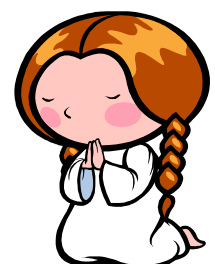
Tak Shigenaka has attended our last two Sunday services - it was so wonderful seeing him after about five months. He is recovering daily and should be able to rid of his walker soon.

Friends, it's unbelievable how quickly 2008 went by. Hopefully, 2009 will be a better year as the situation economically is in a precarious state. Stay well but enjoy. A Happy New Year to all !!!



## People in Our Prayer List

- ✦ Revs. Toshimasa Yamamoto and Claudia Genung-Yamamoto and their family for their missionary work in Japan
- ✦ Rev. Tim Boyle and his family for their missionary work in Japan
- ✦ Tak Shigenaka      ✦ Jose Auyeung      ✦ Lois Craft      ✦ Don Park
- ✦ Sam Fast      ✦ Richard Gahagan      ✦ Mary Stringfellow      ✦ Don Bloom
- ✦ Yolanda Colon      ✦ Carl Turner      ✦ Joe Rodriguez      ✦ Mindy Garcia
- ✦ Barbara Puckett      ✦ Don Nichols      ✦ Karen Johnson      ✦ Manny Ramirez



# NEW YEAR'S SPECIAL SENIORS PROGRAM

for the young at heart!

11:00 a.m., Friday

January 9, 2009



Guest Singers: **Barbershop Quartet**

**"Four-Given"**

**Gordon Lees and his Pals**

*and*

Guest Speakers: **Rev. & Mrs Paul Motzer**

**Topic: "New Year's Resolutions for Seniors"**

**Free Lunch!**



*Please don't miss this wonderful gathering!*

## "An Old Year Ends, A New Begins"

The old year ends, a new begins  
With pages clean and new;  
And what is written on each page  
will now depend on you.

You can't relive the year that's past,  
Erasing every wrong;  
For once a year - or day - is spent,  
It is forever gone.

But don't give up in dark despair  
If you have failed some test;  
Seek God's forgiveness and resolve  
Henceforth to do your best.

Resolve each precious day to do  
Things good and kind and pure;  
Though days and years may pass away,  
These things shall still endure.

You know not where your path may lead  
Nor what's beyond the hill;  
But know that God walks at your side,  
If you will do His will.

All things are possible with God,  
Though days be bright or dim;  
So do your best and know that you  
Can leave the rest to Him.

# REFLECTOR

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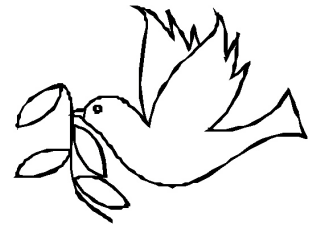
*"A Church for All People"*

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Pastor: Rev. Seung-Eun Grace Lee  
Japanese Language: Rev. Mark Moon

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Our Mission is to be --  
**"A Church for All People"**



Our Vision is --  
We seek to grow in the love of God through meaningful  
worship and serving, and to grow in the love of all our  
neighbors by making everyone truly welcome, and by  
helping our neighbors near and far.

### Worship & Regular Programs:

- Sunday Worship Service, 10:30 am
- Sunday School, 9:30 am (Adults)  
10:30 am (Children)
- Bible Study & Sharing Group, Wednesday 7:00 pm
- Japanese Worship Service, 1st Saturday 11:00 am
- Prayer Meeting, Friday 6:30 pm

Visit us on the internet at <http://www.smchristumc.org>