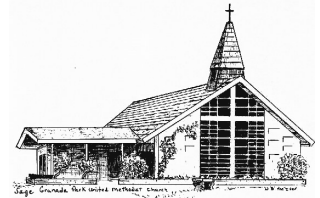




Sage Granada Park United Methodist Church

1850 West Hellman Avenue, Alhambra, California 91803



December 2019 E-Thymes

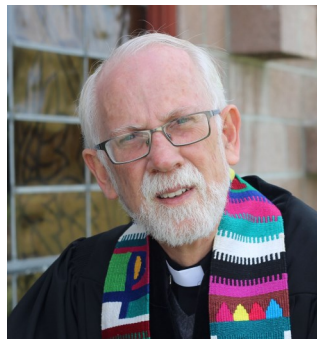
phone: (626) 284-3229 | email: sagegrandapark@gmail.com | web: <http://www.sgpumc.org>

Let's make room for the guest

"People, look east. The time is near of the crowning of the year.

Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table.

People, look east: Love, the Guest, is on the way." – Eleanor Farjeon, 1928



—by *Rev. George Martzen*

Thanksgiving week was pretty full at the parsonage. Over 40 came for our open house on Saturday, Nov. 23, from San Gabriel and Sage

Granada Park churches. We had several guests staying with us during the week, including a niece from San Francisco and a student from New York. On Thanksgiving Day we had another houseful of friends and relatives. We were sharing space together.

Many of you also had full houses for Thanksgiving gatherings, and like us you probably worked extra hard to prepare your households to prepare for guests.

Advent starts right after Thanksgiving on December 1. I also like to think of it as a season of hospitality. The words of the Advent carol by Eleanor Farjeon characterize the season as a time to prepare the household for a very special Guest. "People, look east the time is near for the crowning of the year. Make your house fair as you are able... Love the Guest is on the way."

Our Vision:

To be a light on a hill for our community (Matthew 5:14).

Our Mission:

We are called to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our Values:

We reaffirm our values as a multi-cultural and inclusive community united in the love of Jesus Christ.

Our Congregational Goals for 2019:

- To start a Saturday night fellowship with young adults.
- To develop a welcoming program.
- ◆ To encourage every member to tithe their prayers, their presence, their gifts, their service.

Meet Our Staff



Rev. Dr. George Martzen, Pastor
gmartzen@gmail.com

Ratheesh Pillai, Youth/Outreach Coordinator
ratheeshyam@gmail.com

Sally Bell, Sunday School
sallybell@gmail.com

Leslie Hutchins, Wedding Director
macychick@aol.com

Kris Taniguchi, Organist
ktani28@hotmail.com

Open position, Admin Assistant
sagegranadapark@gmail.com

Western Christians look east, to Jerusalem, as the place of Christ's coming. During Advent we think about Christ's first coming as a baby in Bethlehem, and also the promised second coming to fulfill God's peaceable kingdom. So our focus in this season is to make space in our lives, in our families and our world for the coming of Jesus, the chief and representative of all guests.

When I was a pastor in Baldwin Park some years ago we performed Las Posadas, in which church members acted out the story of Mary and Joseph, like a homeless family desperately looking for shelter. It is a wonderful musical dialogue. Our Nursery School performs a simplified Las Posadas in mid-December. It is a reminder not only to give shelter to Jesus, but also to show kindness to others who so desperately need some space to share.

Hospitality is a vital theme in Christian teaching. Jesus taught that whenever someone has done an act of kindness for "one of the least of these my kindred, you did it for me" (Matthew 25:40). The great 4th century bishop John Chrysostom urged his congregation to reserve a room in their homes for hospitality, "to which Christ may come" (Homily 45 on the Acts of the Apostles). During the Sundays of Advent, I will talk about the theme of making room for the special Guest God sends our way.

There are many ways we may enact Christian hospitality. In preparation for coming house guests, we clean house, spruce up the yard and set up Christmas decorations.

There are many other ways we can practice making room for Jesus. The Holiday Extravaganza takes place following worship on December 8, with performances by the kids under the direction of Ruth Chon. At the same time, you can get your Photo with Santa, and you can get your Omelet Brunch from Bill Yee. Come, invite family and friends, and share our space together.

On Saturday, December 14 we'll be Christmas caroling at Atherton Home, tentatively at 4 p.m., so we can share space with our elders. And if you're finished with your Christmas shopping, or need to drop the kids, we'll have a movie night on December 21 at 6 p.m. On Christmas Eve, we will join together to celebrate the birth of Christ. Through these and other means of grace, let us make ready for the coming of Jesus, the special Guest.


Looking for a new Administrative Assistant

A big thank-you to Karina Shafer and Sengdeuane Tom for volunteering in the office while we look for a new Admin Assistant. Benny Char found job at AQMD in mid-November. If you know someone who would like a part-time job, they should send their resume to Rev George - gmartzen@gmail.com.

Membership/Baptism



If you are interested in taking the next step in your spiritual life, whether it be baptism, church membership or joining a small group, please talk to Rev. George or Lay Leader, Jan Hurtado.

<p>Serving SGPUMC this month:</p> 	<p>1st Sunday of Advent December 1</p> <p><i>Liturgist:</i> Christie Cheng</p> <p><i>Acolytes:</i> Amanda W. Sophia W.</p>	<p><u>Communion</u></p> <p><i>Helpers:</i> Christie C. John T.</p> <p><i>Elements:</i> Wesley & Irene T.</p>	<p>December 8</p> <p><i>Liturgist:</i> Janice H.</p> <p><i>Acolytes:</i> Jerry L. Luke L.</p>	<p>December 15</p> <p><i>Liturgist:</i> Alicia M.</p> <p><i>Acolytes:</i> Ernest T. Nathan T.</p>	<p>December 22</p> <p><i>Liturgist:</i> John T.</p> <p><i>Acolytes:</i> Kevin W. Ryan W.</p>	<p>December 29</p> <p><i>Liturgist:</i> Kai Garcia</p> <p><i>Acolytes:</i> Angelea M. Jillian M.</p>
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What Are You Thankful For? How Culture Shapes Our Thanks

*Ratheesh Pillai,
Youth/Outreach Coordinator*



Do we still hold our first love of Christ? The longer we're Christians sometimes the more we might lose our gratitude to God and forget to count his blessings in our life. Since I've been exposed to different cultures, I have observed the ways people express thanks but still miss the essence of thankfulness: "Thanks, but no

thanks." Sometimes I want to skip certain cultural thanksgiving celebrations. This is because I have seen some people attend worship only during the special season, and afterward we don't see them until next year.

Let's ponder why we should be thankful, or what we are thankful for. Do we have to wait until this time of year to be thankful? In our Christian life, we also approach God when we are in need, such as when we get sick, are when awaiting a job interview or for our children to gain admission to a university; instead, we should recognize him every day.

One of the most dynamic qualities God longs for us to cultivate is that of a sincere heart of thankfulness. There are several reasons why we lose our gratitude to God. One is that we forget our roots—our family and where we came from. And then we forget to share these life stories to our children. Our children might then grow up seeing only prosperity with no thoughts about thanking God because they taken it for granted, or they don't understand God's story through their families. Our capacity to share our story of God's blessing is not just about the abundance of provision, wealth, or resources, but the capacity to recognize even the little things that we have.

David Bosch says, "Mission is essentially ecclesial: The missio dei is God's activity which both embraces the church and the world." Giving thanks to God is not merely the way to heaven; instead, it's our participation in his mission. Living in the culture of God and being thankful every day for his basic provision and protection is how we express our love to him. We neglect to give thanks because we have lost our first love and passion. Showing our thankful heart to one another is the simplest yet most powerful thing we can do for each other.

Therefore, we do not have to wait for Mother's Day, Father's Day, Friendship Day, or Thanksgiving Day. Paul says, "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Colossians 3:17).

We can achieve things not just because of our own abilities, but because of Christ. I haven't gone back home for a very long time. But I am thankful to the people around me who make me feel at home. As we come together with friends and family to enjoy food and solidarity, we take the day to offer thanks for God's provisions. As a community of God, we at Sage should be so thankful to God that he has allowed us to serve him voluntarily in our community. I am so thankful and blessed that at Sage I'm allowed to serve and receive with generosity. God called each one of us to create and cultivate a new culture of thankful hearts. Remarkably, he has chosen Sage to work for his glory and build his kingdom by serving.

Thanksgiving Hope Meals

Every year, Sage Granada Park UMC assists the group, Catalyst SGV, by providing food items to students within the Alhambra Unified School District. Many students do not have access to stable meals when school is not in session during the weeklong Thanksgiving break. This year, we were able to deliver 122 breakfast and lunch meals to Monterey Highlands families. We also added an additional 26 bags for students at Mark Keppel and assisted in delivering a total of 74 Hope Meals to Mark Keppel High School. In addition, we collaborated with Bridges Church and Marguerita School PTA to deliver food packages for Marguerita families. We are thankful for all of your donations and time. Thank you for being Christ's disciples in the world!



Delivery to Monterey Highlands

Thanks to the Mukai Family



Thanksgiving

A huge heartfelt thank you to Brad and Stephanie Mukai for returning to Sage Granada Park UMC on Sunday, November 17 to provide a wonderful luncheon for our congregation. It was so good to see the Mukai family again and to share in a delicious soup, salad and sandwich lunch with family and friends. The food was absolutely delectable. Both Carolyn Ikei and Sharon Mori stated that they were so in awe of the beautiful lunch as well as the delicious food! I am sure that all those present would agree!

What will happen to our United Methodist Church?

Will the United Methodist Church remain United?

Last February a specially called General Conference in Missouri adopted the “Traditional Plan” which retains the position that the practice of homosexuality is “incompatible with Christian teaching,” and that same sex marriage and the ordination of self-avowed practicing homosexuals is prohibited in the UMC. The General Conference is the top rule making body of our denomination.

The Traditional Plan also requires Annual Conferences to enforce this position. However, many within our Annual Conference and throughout the UMC disagree. There are already several gay and lesbian clergy in our Annual Conference, and many of our churches affirm same-sex weddings. They would like to change this position or leave the UMC. Note, however, that local Methodist congregations hold their church property in trust for the denomination. One cannot simply walk away with the property.

The next regular General Conference, in May 2020, will see several proposals in response to this discontent. Below is a brief summary of seven proposals, some of which involve a split or total restructuring of the UMC. <https://www.minnesotaumc.org/newsdetail/gc2020-a-preliminary-look-at-key-legislation-12978605>

1. The United States as a Regional Conference – administrative subdivision puts U.S. churches in separate region from churches in Africa, Europe and Asia.
2. Bard-Jones Plan – subdivides UMC into three ideological groups
3. Indianapolis Plan – UMC retains current Traditional plan but allows Annual Conferences to opt for a new Centrist/ Progressive denomination or a Progressive denomination. Local congregations may opt out of their Annual Conference decision.
4. UMC Next Plan – denomination remains intact, but prohibitive language removed from Book of Discipline, while local churches will have options whether or not to allow same-sex weddings or homosexual ordination.
5. New Expressions Worldwide (N.E.W.) Plan – UMC is dissolved and four new denominations formed along ideological lines.
6. Plain Grace Plan – calls for a period of discernment through which various like-minded ecclesial groups would be allowed to emerge.
7. Oppose Dissolution | Preserve Unity Plan – calls for further study to form new organization structure that maintains unity in mission while allowing the emergence of new contextual structures, some of which would be more inclusive of LGBTQ persons.

What do you think should happen to our denomination? What should our church do if our Annual Conference leaves the United Methodist Church? Are we entering a time chaos or are we entering a time of new adventure and mission opportunity?

Holiday Extravaganza!

Santa is coming to Sage!

Sunday, December 8, 2019

11:00 am—1:00 pm

Sign up for a time slot for

PICTURES WITH SANTA



SGPUMC will be hosting a Holiday Extravaganza immediately following church service. Please join us for an:

- ♦ **Omelet & Waffle Brunch by Bill Yee**
- ♦ **Photos with Santa**
- ♦ **Youth & Children performing under the direction of Ruth Chon.**

Invite friends and family and join us for this special event!

Seeing God



—by *Rev. Dickson Kazuo Uagi*

Hawaii had missionaries during World War 2 because Japan and China missionaries were chased out of Asia. They came to Hawaii for the duration of the war because Hawaii was full of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean heathen who were mainly Buddhists. My family was Koyasan Shingon Buddhists. They called us heathen. Missionaries told us that believing in the God was the most important thing. Why didn't we believe in God? We could not go to heaven if we were so ungrateful as to not believe in God.

But I decided it was all God's fault that we did not believe. Why is God hiding from us? If God showed up in our Hilo Ho'olulu Park every Sunday, we would all believe. If God protected Hilo Bay from the three tidal waves that devastated 1/3 of the town (including my Dad's grocery store), everybody would believe.

In my senior years I have changed my mind again. God is not hiding. I see God everywhere. Human beings are the best windows to see God. Mom and Dad, teachers, coaches, teammates in sports, partners in romance. I see God in every person I meet. In the hurry of everyday life, be aware that people can see God in you, if you are focused on kindness.

Christmas Caroling at Atherton

All church members and children are invited. We will meet at the church at 4 pm on Saturday December 14 and proceed to Atherton for Christmas caroling. We had so much fun last year and it was a joy to interact with the residents. We plan to come back for a light supper with hot cocoa. Please contact Rev. George if interested in attending.



Poinsettias for the Sanctuary

It is that time of the year again! Those interested in ordering the Poinsettia plants, please fill out an order form and return order form and payment to either: the church office or place in the offering plate during Sunday service



Last day to place an order is December 15, 2019.

Delivery Date of Poinsettia plants to the church is on Saturday, December 21, 2019 @ 9am. Volunteers are needed!

Pick Up Date: December 22, 2019 after Sunday service.

Fun With Numbers for SGPUMC

Nov. 3	Attendance: 64
Nov. 10	Attendance: 54
Nov. 17	Attendance: 81
Nov. 24	Attendance: 51
<u>Sunday School:</u>	
Nov. 3	Attendance: 4
Nov. 10	Attendance: 5
Nov. 17	Attendance: 4
Nov. 24	Attendance: 4



Finance Update

2019 general offerings from January 1 to November 24 totaled \$80,316.95. Our yearly general offerings budget is \$102,000.

Please consider donating by placing your gift in the offering plate on Sundays or going online at

<http://sgpumc.org/make-a-donation/>

Thank you for helping us do ministry in our area and the realms beyond!

Granada Park United Methodist Nursery School & Kindergarten

—from *Theresa Laib, Director*



We accept registration for children 2yrs 6mo and potty trained to 5 years old for the 2019-2020 School Year. Call the school for more information at 626-284-5006, or visit our web site at <http://gpumnsk.org>

Happy Holidays!

**December Curriculum Themes are:
Winter; Happy Holidays; Holidays around the World,
Happy New Year**

Our annual Christmas Program directed by Chapel Director, Mrs. Sally Bell, will be held on **Wednesday, December 18th at 6:30 pm in the chapel.**

This is a short program about Bible Gifts, narrated by Mrs. Bell with songs performed by the children. Don't miss this special evening. Please have your child in the Wittrig Room by 6:15 pm so we can start the program promptly at 6:30 pm. Refreshments will be available after the program.

Upcoming **December/Early January** Events:

- 18 Christmas Program "Bible Gifts" @ 6:30 pm
- 18 & 19 Santa Visit
- 19 & 20 Las Posadas
- 20-Jan 3 Winter Break for AM program Children, Daycare continues
- 24 School closes at 3 pm Christmas Eve
- 25 & 26 School Closed—Merry Christmas!
- 27 Daycare Continues
- 31 School closes at 3:00 pm for New Year's Eve
- Jan 1 School closed, Happy New Year
- Jan 2-3 Day Care Continues
- Jan 6 School resumes for All Programs



Santa & his helper to visit on December 18 & 19

GARDENING GROUP

There are still openings for our **Gardening Group**. If you care about the environment and like gardening or urban farming, please contact Rev. George Martzen or the church office at: sagegranadapark@gmail.com

Bazaar in Spirit final numbers

We surpassed expectation of \$15,000, with total donations of \$16,150. A total of 48 people gave to the Bazaar in spirit. Thank you all for your kindness and generous giving.



Alhambra Performing Arts Center

—from *Bill Yee, Artistic Director*

ALHAMBRA – Alhambra Performing Arts Center under the direction of Chef/Artistic Director Bill Yee presents the Annual Dickens Holiday Carolers Christmas Sing Along on Sunday December 15, 2019 7pm in a free concert at Sage Granada Park United Methodist Church, 1850 W. Hellman Ave., Alhambra 91803.

The Dickens Holiday Carolers (DHC) started at Southern California Edison 25 years ago as a casual caroling group and has evolved into an independent group over the years. The group contains over a dozen singers from several churches and professional singing groups including Lake Avenue Church Sanctuary Choir, Verdugo Hills Women's Chorus, the Towne Singers of Pasadena, and the Pasadena Crown City Men's Chorus among others.

When they perform, they wear colorful Victorian era costumes and sing an average of 15-20 times during the Christmas Season. They can sing as a large ensemble (up to 15+) or in traditional quartets depending upon which member is available and what the client asks for. For the past several years, the group has been contracted by the cities of Monrovia and Glendora to sing Christmas Carols in their downtown core for the merchants and shoppers during the Christmas Season. They also perform at churches, private clubs, charity events, convents, Christmas



Dickens Christmas Carolers

Tree lightings and many more. Their repertoire is just over 50 traditional carols and Christmas favorites.

Bill Yee has been part of the group in the bass section for over 13 years which also coincides with his leadership of the Alhambra Performing Arts Center which recently hosted the Alhambra Chamber of Commerce Business 2 Business breakfast event and also utilized Chef Yee's Chefs from his Alhambra Culinary School.

The audience is provided with song sheets and colorful Christmas hats and is encouraged to bring their jingle bells and children to this popular sing along event.

DATE: Sunday, Dec. 15, 2019 7pm

LOCATION: Sage Granada Park United Methodist Church, 1850 W. Hellman Ave., Alhambra CA 91803

ADMISSION: Free—Donations are accepted during intermission to support the artists.

CONTACT: Bill Yee (626) 230-5435 or e-mail bizwind@yahoo.com

IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers

Family of Mudge Goodwell, Family of Violet Tomei; Family of John Burgess; Family of Haru Hochi; Family of Rev. Paul Nagano; Echavarria Family; Shoji Tatsugawa; Ratheesh Pillai; Mary Sue Lodwick; Ken Okuda; Nancee Iketani; Mat Nakamura; Alfred Chu; Phillip & Nenita Marquez; Bette McIver; Marilyn McIver; Derek Tani

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

12/1 Eunice Suhee Lee
12/3 Roger Staal
12/5 Barbara Nozawa
12/7 Pyoung Hwa Lee
12/8 Jeannie Wong
12/8 Ryan Wong
12/9 Dorothy Tsuji
12/10 Etsuko Nakamura
12/10 Paul Hutchins
12/12 Ken Matsumoto
12/14 Joanne Jen Wong
12/15 Patricia Chou
12/17 Bunky Mar
12/19 Sehong Mun
12/21 Kevin Carey
12/26 Beatrice Tabata
12/29 Ravi Bariya
12/30 Ryan Taniguchi
12/30 Ellen Nakamura Miller

Anniversaries

12/1 George & Karina Shafer
12/27 Roy & Nancee Iketani
12/31 Parimal & Alphuno Roy

December 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>1 <i>1st Sunday of Advent/United Methodist Student Day</i></p> <p>9:30am Worship</p>	<p>2</p> <p>1:00pm Ukelele</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>1:00 pm Bible Study</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p> <p>6:00 Sage Choir 6:00 Cub Scouts 7:00 Hanging of the Greens by Cub Scouts</p>	<p>7</p> <p>8:30-12:30 JLS</p>
<p>8</p> <p>9:30am Worship</p> <p>10:45—Brunch by Bill Yee</p> <p>11:00 Holiday Extravaganza—Santa Photos and Children’s Performance</p>	<p>9</p> <p>1:00pm Ukelele</p> <p>6:00-8:30pm Vacation Bible School</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p> <p>1:00 pm Bible Study</p> <p>6:00 pm— GPUMNSK Christmas Program</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p> <p>6:00 Sage Choir</p>	<p>14</p> <p>8:30-12:30 JLS 4:00—Christmas Caroling at Atherton 5:00-9:00— COI</p>
<p>15</p> <p>9:30am Worship</p> <p>7:00 APAC Christmas Carol Sing Along</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>7:30pm— PAC</p>	<p>18</p> <p>1:00 pm Bible Study</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p>6:00 Sage Choir 6:00 Cub Scouts Potluck 7:30 Boy Scouts Court of Honor</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22</p> <p>9:30am Worship</p> <p>3:00pm PFLAG</p> <p>7:00pm APAC Concert—Sabine Porthier, Jazz Pianist</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 <i>Christmas Eve</i></p> <p>5:00pm Christmas Eve Service</p> <p>6:00-10pm— COI</p>	<p>25 <i>Christmas Day</i></p>  <p>11am— 8pm COI</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p>6:00 Sage Choir</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29</p> <p>9:30am Worship</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31 <i>New Year’s Eve</i></p> <p>7:00-10pm— COI</p>				