



UMCTO CONNECT

Friday, March 29, 2019

A Weekly Eblast of News & Newsmakers from UMCTO

PASTOR'S CORNER

In 1986, Henry Nouwen toured St. Petersburg, Russia, the former Leningrad. While there he visited the famous monastery where he saw, among other things, Rembrandt's painting of the Prodigal Son. The painting was in a hallway and received the natural light of a nearby window. Nouwen stood for two hours, mesmerized by this remarkable painting. As he stood there, the sun changed, and at every change of the light's angle he saw a different aspect of the painting revealed. He would later write: "There were as many paintings in the Prodigal Son as there were changes in the day."

This Sunday we will once again encounter the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15), and just as Henri Nouwen saw a half dozen different facets to Rembrandt's painting of the Prodigal Son, I wonder from which angle we will see the story this Sunday.

There are those who will see it from the youngest son's view. They were lost, and now are found. They were in "a far country" and were welcomed home. They were ashamed, and now have life. If you are in this group, then no one needs to explain this parable to you. You have lived it.

There is a second group, for whom this story is most painful. These are the ones who have had prodigal sons and daughters. These are the parents, and grandparents who have had their hearts broken with the pain of seeing their child leave home and throw his or her life away. You are waiting for them to return home. If you are in this group, then no one needs to explain this parable to you either. You know the father's heartache, his desperate desire for his son to come home again.

Then there is a third group of people. And those are the "eldest sons." I would guess that in most churches there are far more "eldest sons" than younger ones. We like to live our lives with certain order and decency. We are

cautious; we are not prone to wild acts of impulsive behavior. We are very careful in our sin. In general, while we're all for "love" and "grace," we do not approve of the younger brother or the father in this story. If you find yourself in the third group, well, you're in good company. In fact, when Jesus told this story, it was this group he was addressing. He was responding to critique from the highly respected religious leaders of the age – the scribes and Pharisees – who criticized him for letting people off far too easily. Eating with sinners and tax collectors was seen as more than an act of generous hospitality. It was equivalent to approving of sin. Many of us can relate to their outrage.

As you prepare for this Sunday's message, please consider the following: Who do you relate to most in the Parable of the Prodigal Son at this time? What keeps you from returning home to your loved ones? Guilt or failures? Are you like the older brother angry at the prodigal sons and daughters and gracious fathers? Are you still waiting for someone to return to your life or home or church? What is God saying to you at this time? Who are the lost here?

Bottom line is that just as there are many angles from which we see this story, there are many ways to get lost in this troubled world. But the Good News is that the story doesn't end with Lost, it is always Lost and Found. That you can always go home. Come on home to the Heavenly Father so that you can be found again and begin again, so that we can sing again, "I was once lost but now am found, was blind but now I see."

See you at church,
Pastor John

March 31 is UMCOR Sunday



LENTEN STUDY CONTINUES - All are welcome

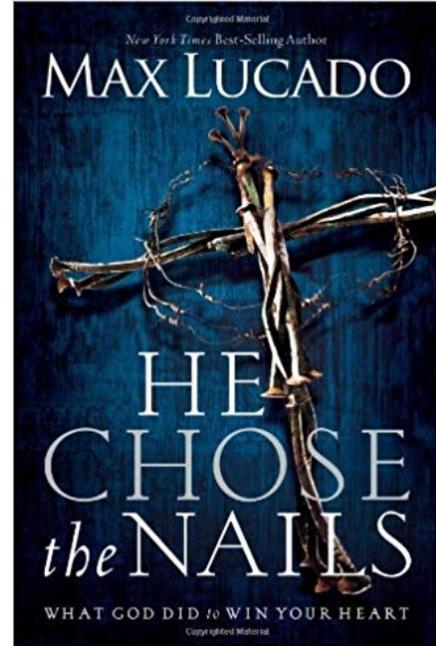
There remain two sessions of this video/book discussion based on Max Lucado's *"He Chose"*

the Nails".

You are welcome to attend either the Sunday class at 12:30 p.m. (after church, led by Laura Marlow) or Thursday nights at 7:00 p.m., led by Pastor John), even if it's your first time! Both classes meet in the Wesley Room and childcare is available on Sundays.

Schedule remaining:

March 31 & April 4 He Chose to Love Us Forever.
April 7 & 11 He Chose to Give Us Victory.



ORDER YOUR EASTER LILY NOW

Rose Cole is taking orders for Easter lilies - on the patio!

\$9 each.

Sign up and dedicate your lily to a loved one. They will be used to grace the sanctuary for Easter morning, after which you can claim your plant and care for it at home.

EASTER WEEK PLANNING

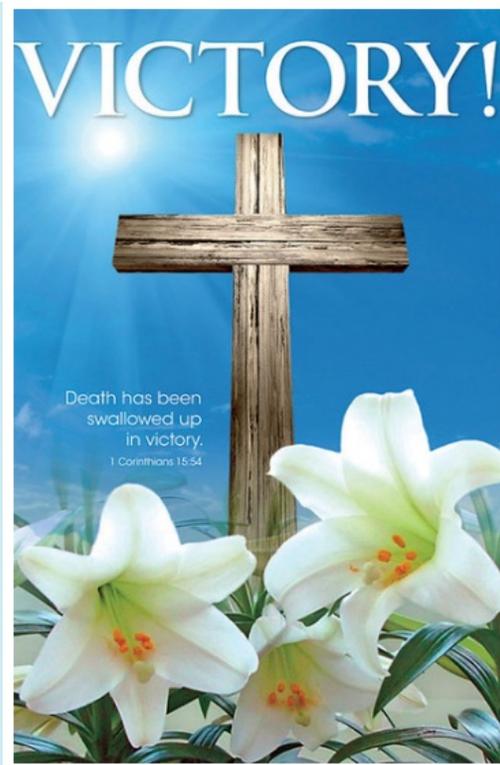
In the works, thus far!

PALM SUNDAY - April 14:
10:00 a.m. Worship service with Children's "Palm Sunday Reenactment" and Music

MAUNDY THURSDAY - April 18:
7:00 p.m. Service with Communion and Choir (youth participating, stay tuned for details)

GOOD FRIDAY - April 19:
7:00 p.m. Tenebrae Service "Nails of the Cross"

HOLY SATURDAY - April 20:
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Messy Church and Easter Vigil*



* see more below

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EASTER SUNDAY! - April 21

Easter Service of Resurrection with Choir Cantata "Journey of Hope", children and youth participating

Following Easter Worship Service, be on the lookout for hidden eggs and fluttering butterflies?!

....more to follow as it develops!

Following that asterisk...

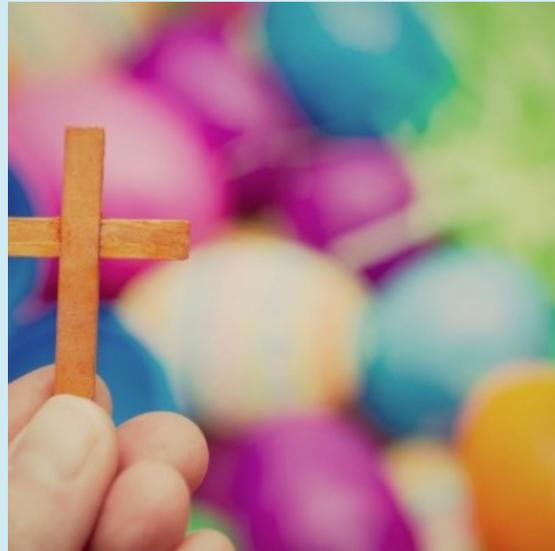
* Messy Church and Holy Saturday Vigil!

Theme: God's Easter Surprise! En Espanol: Sorpresa de Pascua de Dios

Date: Saturday, April 20, 5 PM

What to Expect: Messy Church "Surprise" Activities, Easter Egg Hunt, Dinner, and Holy Saturday Vigil!

Come and Celebrate a night of faith, family, and community!



VISIONING AT UMCTO

UMCTO TALENT SURVEY What are your gifts and talents?

God calls each of us to share in ministry through our gifts of time and talents. Please take a few minutes to complete this brief survey by clicking on the link below and share with us how you wish to serve our church.

There are also paper copies of the survey in the church office, by the way.

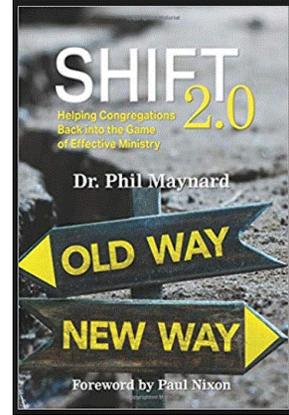
[SURVEY](#)



SHIFT 2.0 at UMCTO

Read the book and mark your calendars for May 5!

Church members are encouraged to read *Shift 2.0* by Dr. Phil Maynard. Copies of the book are available in the church office.



Then, mark your calendars for May 5. North District Superintendent Jim Powell will be at UMCTO to preach, then teach a study on *Shift 2.0* after church. The class will be held in the Wesley Room and lunch will be provided.

Call the church office to register.

KIDS CHURCH NEWS

I want to thank everyone for all the cardboard donations! I have enough to not only make my jeep, but lots of safari animals as well!

On April 13 (Saturday,) I want to have a work party to build those things...10am to 1pm in Dickerson, or outside.

So I need many hands and backs and imaginations and smiles! Bring your glue guns and paint will be needed, too. Anyone got some old Army green paint laying about? Or browns, greens, black, gold..."bring me your tired, your poor, your congealing paint cans yearning to breath free..." sorry, wrong poem.

Anyway, I'll provide food and drinks!

Oh, and.....I need plastic eggs! Millions of them for Easter Sunday...
....as well as Easter grass.

Just drop any off in the church office or see me on Sundays.

Thank you for all your support and love...Amy





YOUTH NEWS

Important Confirmation Notice!

In order to accommodate end of school year activities and graduation, confirmation will be postponed. Stay tuned for the new dates. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Youth Night Out on April 6th

Meet Up at Church @ 6:30 p.m.

Contact Dani St Clair for more information.

~ Girls Night is at Five07, hot chocolate provided, bring money for extras.

~ Boys Night is a surprise!

Get Ready for Summer Camp!

For more info visit: <http://www.calpacumc.org/summercamp/> to find out all about these two options:

Camp Wrightwood

JR High (Grades 6-9): July 14-20, 2019

SR High (Grade 9-Graduated Senior): July 7-13, 2019

Camp Lazy W

JR High: July 14-19, 2019

SR High: July 21-27, 2019

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Save the Date!!!



UMW & UMM Celebration Dinner

May 4th
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Dickerson Hall

Childcare provided.
(Will advise about reservations later.)

United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men invite you to a dinner to celebrate Nancy Mahannah's work at a center for people with disabilities in Brazil. Many years ago UMM contributed a van to this center.

Come and hear how this center, started by Nancy's friend in the Peace Corps, has been the hands and feet of GOD in Brazil.

Contact: Barbara Marshall

CROP WALK 2019 RECAP!



Congratulations to our Leader Mike Ambrose, who once again led the charge for the Conejo Valley Crop Walk!

He sends these tallies for all to see...check out the report [HERE](#).

UMCTO stepped up despite the rainy day, as did others as over 250 walkers showed up and raised over \$34,000, (once all donations are counted).

Mike continues to seek ways to grow the publicity, participation, bottom line and FUN for this ministry, so if you have ideas or want to volunteer, contact Mike!

IN CASE YOU'RE INTERESTED - THIS
(from Cal-Pac Conference)

Early Response Team Training 2019 @Murrieta

Date: Saturday, April 27, 2019

Location: Murrieta United Methodist Church (24652 Adams Ave, Murrieta, CA

92562)

Cost: \$40 (includes light lunch, manuals and background check)

Registration Deadline: Friday, April 26, 2019

Early Response Teams (ERTs) fill specific needs in the early days after a disaster, such as cleaning out flood-damaged homes, removing debris, placing tarps on homes and otherwise helping to prevent further damage, while providing a caring Christian presence. To be eligible for an ERT team, participants must take the 8 hour Basic Class ERT.

[Learn more](#)

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