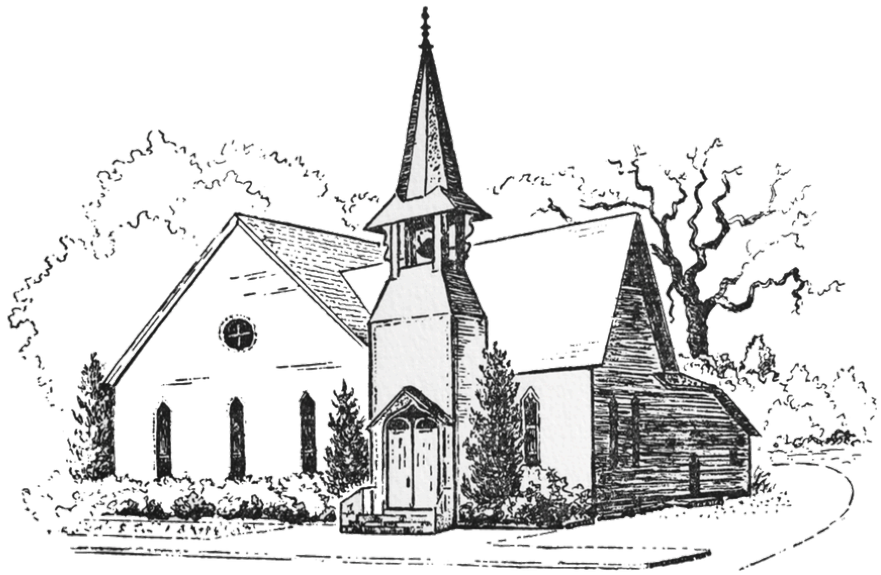
# GOOD NEWS

## Worship Fully. Love Boldly. Welcome All.

*The Newsletter of Morgan Hill United Methodist Church*



## ADVENT 2026

*By Rev. Dr. Linda A. Holbrook*

November and December bring us the season of advent and Christmas. We all get busy with parties, celebrating, decorating, shopping, baking, and catching up with friends. This is all good, and in addition to all the activities let's remember a few things related to being a Christian.

1. Simplify this season and focus on what is important. Busyness seems to be part of our culture and life. Busyness shows up in so many ways in our lives. For most of us it is difficult under normal times to find time for a devotional, a prayer time, or to read Scripture. We have trouble finding time to share in conversations with those we care about. Advent seems to be normal "super-sized." There are more events, more food, and more tasks to complete.

Christ calls for us to have two connections; first to God and second to our neighbor. So, I invite you to find an advent devotional and spend a few minutes each day remembering the connection with God and neighbor. And just maybe find time to share a cup of coffee or a lunch with a friend that you haven't seen in two or more months. Renew your time with God and with those you care about.

*Continued on page 2*

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## ADVENT 2026 - Continued

2. Give generously. This is also the season of giving. In the book of Acts (20:35) Paul reports that Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” My experience is that the people of this church don’t need to be reminded of giving generously. You are some of the most generous people I have met. In this season you might want to complete your estimate of giving for this year, support our Christmas giving, or make a special gift to something where you have passion.

You might also think of giving of your time. Volunteer for our Sharing the Bounty, taking food to a member who needs a meal, or finding a community service that needs your help. Time is our most precious resource and I guarantee that whatever you give, will be returned tenfold.

Finally, remember that the reason for the season is Jesus. We wait for the birth of the Messiah, the one who redeems all of creation. Come celebrate this season with your church family. Join us on Sundays and Christmas Eve.

Enjoy the Advent and Christmas season with great joy!




## STAY CONNECTED

*November & December at a glance*

### STUDIO COLLECTIVE STUDIO INSPIRE

RENEW | CREATE | GROW

- Inspire: Nov. 8 - 12-1:30p
- Collective: Nov. 15 - 12-1:30p
- Table Talk: Dec. 6 - 12-1:30p

### PRAYER AND WORSHIP

REFLECTION

- Centering Prayer Nov. 18 - 7pm
- Christmas Eve Service Dec. 24 - 5pm

### COMING UP

- Stewardship Commitment Nov. 8
- Interfaith Thanksgiving Nov. 22 - 3pm
- Advent Begins Nov. 29

## PASTOR'S PROSE

# *Stewardship*

*By Rev. Dr. Linda A. Holbrook*



We are starting our annual stewardship campaign. Stewardship campaign fills me with lots of emotions. I remember many years ago before I was tithing. I knew I wanted to tithe; I just didn't see any way that I could. Then I was able to refinance my home and the reduction in mortgage payments allowed me to give more money to the church. I was able to tithe.

I also have some nervousness because I know congregations are not fond of stewardship campaigns. I have been told by some of the people in my churches that "the church is always asking for money." I have had people ask if I am tithing; making sure the pastor is doing what they are asking others to do. And some are "technical specialists" asking if the tithe is for all the nonprofits they give to or if tithing is before or after the taxes, they pay. One person even challenged me that the tithe is found nowhere in the Bible.

In reaction to these comments, I have tried to make sure that all giving to the church is meaningful. General giving is estimated from the stewardship campaign and any other giving is for a specific purpose. And I make sure I am tithing each year.

I decided some years ago, that the stewardship campaign would be a time when I would pause and remember what I am thankful for. I am thankful that God called me to leave the business world and attend seminary and that I have the privilege to serve a congregation. I am thankful for the people who attend each church and support the church. I am thankful that I can tithe to whatever church I am serving.

I also decided that I would pause during this campaign and name my hopes for the church I was serving at the time.

Morgan Hill UMC is an amazing church. People are generous with their time, their skills and talents, and their financial resources. People at MHUMC genuinely care about the people who are part of this fellowship, and take time to make everyone feel welcome.

My hopes for this church are several. First, I pray that each individual feels the call of discipleship. Many are already doing exactly what they are called to do. Many others are actively searching for their call. We serve many people with the ministries we have in place, and my hope is that we continue to find new opportunities to help others. My hope is that we can continue to be a voice that stands for the "least of these" and that we identify where injustice is happening. Finally, in the stewardship campaign this year may we find faith, hope, and love and apply those to our lives as we complete our pledge cards for 2027.

# PASTOR APPRECIATION

## *October Appreciation Month*



*Rev. Dr. Linda Holbrook, Evelyn Kane*



*Rev. Marian Luce, Janet Braslin*



*Rev. Cathy Coates*

In October, MHUMC celebrated Pastor Appreciation by honoring Rev. Dr. Linda Holbrook and the ministry she shares with our congregation. We also recognized retired pastors Rev. Marian Luce and Rev. Cathy Coates, we are grateful for the gifts they have shared with MHUMC and for their lasting connections to our church.

# STEWARDSHIP
## *and Commitment Sunday*




Each fall we take time to examine stewardship; what stewardship means and how we can support Morgan Hill UMC through our stewardship. The formal definition of Stewardship is the careful, ethical, and responsible man- agement, protection, or oversight of something entrusted to one's care. There is environmental stewardship, financial or corporate stewardship, and of course we are concerned with biblical and theological stewardship.

Our theme this year is Faithful, Hopeful, and Loving. We are called to be faithful in the midst of our everyday lives and to grow in our faith through study, being a part of a community, and through our inner spiritual lives. We are called to be hopeful, always remembering that Christ gives us hope that even in the darkness, there is light. And we are called to be loving with everyone we meet. Christ calls us to love our neighbor as ourselves, and this love is lived out in our actions.

Sometimes we ignore the second part of Jesus' command to love our neighbors as ourselves. We are to take care of ourselves. Parker Palmer says, "Self-care is never a selfish act—it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have." During this time, please take care of yourself. Know what you need and ask for it. This year as we are reflecting on our own stewardship, be thinking about how you are doing with your faith, your hope, and your love.

This year our stewardship sermons began on October 25th and our commitment Sunday will be November 8th. You were sent a letter and a pledge card in the mail. If you didn't receive the card, please call the office. If you have questions, or want to discuss please contact our pastor, Linda.


let's gather
PLEASE JOIN US FOR AN
Interfaith Thanksgiving Service
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22 AT 3:00 PM
CONGREGATION EMETH
17835 MONTEREY RD
MORGAN HILL
Light refreshments served
PLEASE BRING A CANNED FOOD DONATION
OF A PROTEIN, FRUIT, OR VEGGIE
CELEBRATING ICSC 10TH ANNIVERSARY
Interfaith CommUNITY of South County
Interfaith Clergy Alliance

# MHUMC ENDOWMENT

## *An Investment in Our Church's Future*



We are in the season of stewardship during which we consider giving and planning targets for the year ahead. We will use your pledges of tithes and offerings to develop a balanced budget for 2027 to meet the expenditures of 2027.

As you consider your pledges, please additionally think about how you may be able to help planning for our little church in the years ahead. Morgan Hill UMC's Endowment Fund exists to build a firm foundation for events we cannot yet anticipate. Though only three years old, the Endowment Fund has nearly reached our $50,000 goal for 2026. Your gifts of any size to the endowment will help ensure that future congregations and generations continue to worship in our little church. As a demonstration of the usefulness of this fund, we have used some of the endowment income for small projects that benefit the congregation and/or the community. We are pleased to announce another round of grants of $1,000 or less that address unbudgeted needs. The 2026 application form can be found here.

These small projects serve as an example of how this church might meet the needs we cannot now anticipate in the years, decades, and — God willing — the centuries ahead. Please prayerfully consider whether you can, separately from your pledge, give any amount toward our bold investment in the future of MHUMC.

# CENTERING PRAYER

## *November 18th at 7 pm*

The term centering prayer is sometimes used to describe any prayer that centers us and ground us in God. Centering prayer is also thought of with contemplative prayer. During the first sixteen centuries of Christianity, contemplative prayer was the understood goal of Christian spirituality. Today many Christians refer to centering prayer as a prayer that is wordless, imageless, and wholly contemplative.

No one invented centering prayer. Thomas Keating, a Cistercian priest, calls centering prayer as the "deep calling to the deep." He wrote, "Silence is God's first language; everything else is a poor translation." Teresa of Avila called centering prayer "the prayer of Quiet."

The intent of centering prayer is to be in the presence of God. If you find this prayer challenging, know that God honors your intention and honors it. You may feel as

## CENTERING PRAYER continued

though you aren't really praying. Keating says that many of the benefits of centering prayer are reaped in insights, revelations, well-being, and commitment to action that come at times when you are not in prayer. Be patient and non-judgmental with this prayer. Above all, be gentle with yourself. Many Christians who discover this style of prayer find a freedom in their spiritual life that they did not know before centering prayer.

The steps are:

Find a comfortable position.

Choose a word that fits your image of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit. Any word will do. For this session this is your sacred word.

Ask the living presence of Christ to become real to you in this time of centering prayer.

Say your sacred word to yourself silently. Allow your word to be the only thought in your mind. Other thoughts will come and go, but gently return to your word, silently repeating your word to yourself in a relaxed way. If another thought comes into your head, simply acknowledge it and go back to your word.

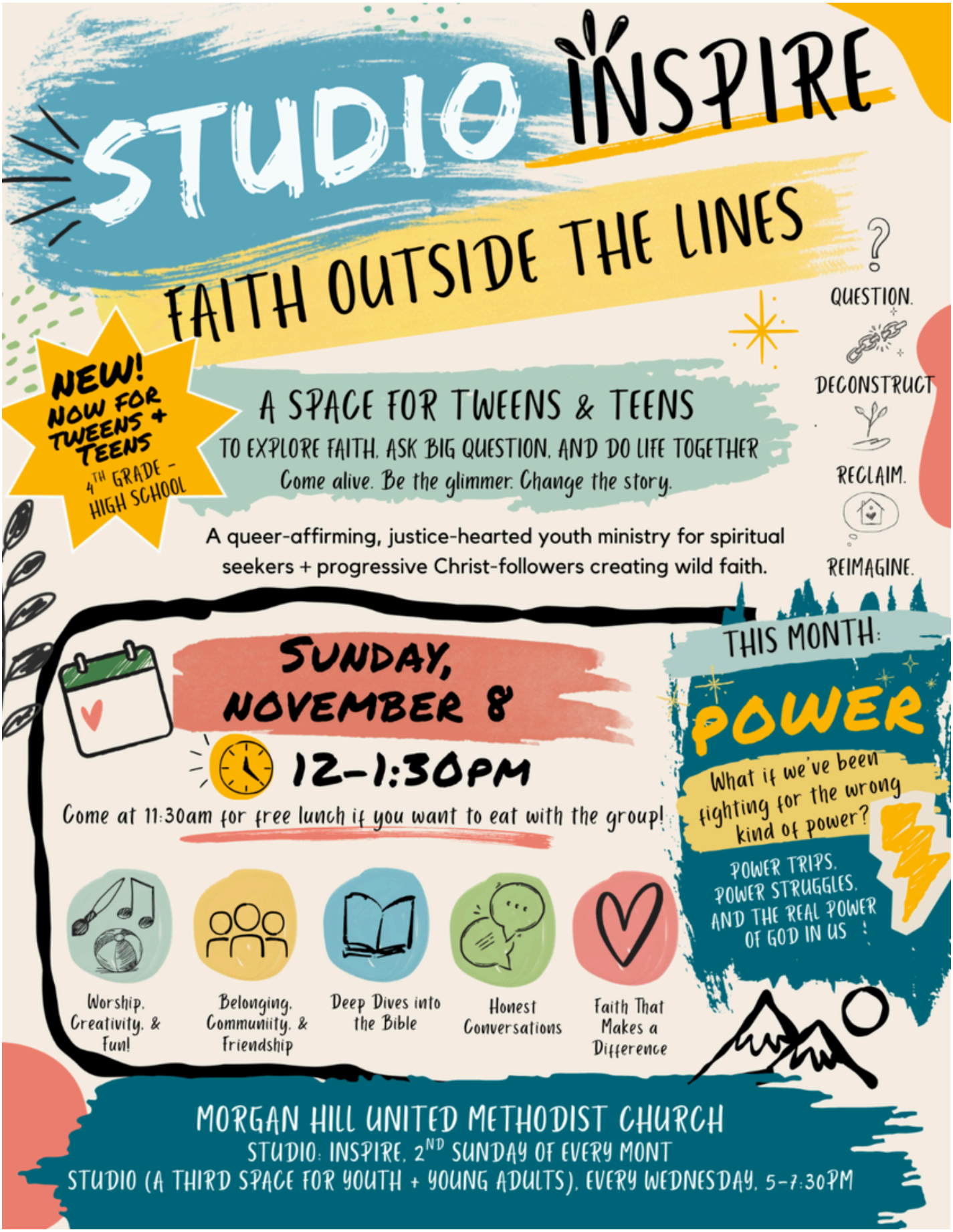
When the time is over, end this centering prayer by thanking God for this silence and presence. Silently say any words that you longed to say to God during your prayer time.

Centering prayer can be done in groups, and we will hold a session on Centering Prayer on November 18th at 7 pm.

Whether you have done centering prayer many times or this is your first time, you are invited to join the group. We will go through all the instructions and sit in silence for 20 minutes.

Later, you may choose to spend some time reflecting on and writing about your experience. What was the experience like for you? What was the most difficult part? What part of the prayer seemed effortless? What was going on in your mind? What were you feeling? Did you feel closer to God as a result? Was the time you chose too long or too short?




STUDIO INSPIRE
FAITH OUTSIDE THE LINES
NEW! NOW FOR TWEENS + TEENS
4TH GRADE - HIGH SCHOOL
A SPACE FOR TWEENS & TEENS
TO EXPLORE FAITH, ASK BIG QUESTION, AND DO LIFE TOGETHER
Come alive. Be the glimmer. Change the story.
A queer-affirming, justice-hearted youth ministry for spiritual seekers + progressive Christ-followers creating wild faith.
QUESTION.
DECONSTRUCT.
RECLAIM.
REIMAGINE.
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8
12-1:30PM
Come at 11:30am for free lunch if you want to eat with the group!
THIS MONTH:
POWER
What if we've been fighting for the wrong kind of power?
POWER TRIPS, POWER STRUGGLES, AND THE REAL POWER OF GOD IN US
Worship, Creativity, & Fun!
Belonging, Community, & Friendship
Deep Dives into the Bible
Honest Conversations
Faith That Makes a Difference
MORGAN HILL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
STUDIO: INSPIRE, 2ND SUNDAY OF EVERY MONT
STUDIO (A THIRD SPACE FOR YOUTH + YOUNG ADULTS), EVERY WEDNESDAY, 5-7:30PM

## STUDIO COLLECTIVE

New Forms. More Possibilities.
Same Wild Vision!

Sometimes the Spirit invites us to change course - not because the vision has changed, but because we're discovering new ways to bring it to life! We're following that Spirit-led invitation into an exciting new chapter for Studio Youth Collective, with new Sunday gatherings and more ways to belong!

STUDIO COLLECTIVE is no longer just for youth - it's for queer folx and allies of all ages who want to practice the brave and messy art of coming alive together and changing the story of trauma for our world and ourselves!

Studio Collective is a trauma-transformative space for all love-hearted, joy-rewilding justice-seekers to:

- Form transformative community
- Be real about religious and spiritual trauma
- Get wild about reimagining life-giving theologies and relationships with God, one another, our earth, and ourselves

Engage our whole selves - body, mind, heart, and spirit - in meaningful learning, creative practices, deep connection, brave impact, and delightful adventure and play!

Our new Sunday rhythm will offer three ways to come alive immediately following the morning service:

- STUDIO: Table Talk (First Sunday of Each Month) - Fun and fearless conversations around a shared meal for teens and adults of ALL ages to question harmful theologies, reclaim what is sacred, and reimagine and re-create liberating and life-giving faith! First gathering: December 6
- STUDIO: Inspire (Second Sunday of Each Month) - Faith, belonging, and brave questions for tweens and teens. Next gathering: November 8
- STUDIO: Collective (Third Sunday of Each Month) - Creative and reflective experiences for older teens and emerging adults through Kindle, Create, Flow, and Breathe. First Sunday gathering (moving from Wednesdays): November 15

### COMING SOON!

More about our official launch dates and details for each gathering will be announced! We can't wait to see what the Spirit brings to life together through Studio Collective - a space for rewilding faith, practicing the brave and messy art of coming alive together, and transforming the story of trauma for ourselves and our world!

# SUNDAY SCHOOL

## Young Generations Sunday School Gets Brave and Bold in September and October!



Throughout the months of September and October, students at Morgan Hill dove into deep and brave questions with play, creativity, conversation, prayer, and Bible study to discover how common beliefs that many Christians hold may not find their source in scripture.

During September, we asked, “What does God really think about people of other religions - or no religion?” We found examples of Jesus lifting up and loving people of all traditions without requiring agreement with a set of doctrinal beliefs and learned how God was always surprising people with how expansive Their love is!

To this end, we made octopus stuffies to remind us that you can’t box God in, learned about sacred practices in other religions that help deepen our own love for one another, and created compasses that help us test different beliefs to see if they pass the “4LF Test”: do they deepen love, give life, liberate rather than harm, look like Jesus, and grow good fruit? We concluded the month with a special Slime Day, facilitated by a local educational professional!

In October, we got super-brave during “Spooky Season” by asking, “What is hell? Does God really send people there?” We learned that the Bible doesn’t actually have a lot to say about hell and that most of the ideas we have about hell are ways that humans have tried to fill in the blanks about the big



questions of life. What we can learn from the Bible is that whatever hell may be, it is the experience or feeling of being separated from love, and this can happen in this life and on this very earth with the ways we treat one another. What is more, the Bible promises that nothing can separate us from the love of God, even if we feel outside of love, and that God has promised to make all things new. God's love never quits!

Through the story of the rich man and Lazarus, students became acquainted with ways that God's love is both survivor-centered, protecting Lazarus and restoring him to thriving, and also bent towards transformative justice, working to change the rich man towards love. We created a mural of our ideas about hell and our imagination of what things will look like when God makes all things new, had deep discussions, made pumpkin crafts, and navigated a wild maze that helped us understand what makes the divide that people think of as heaven and hell. Finally, we concluded the month with a "Sacred Halloween Party," where we played games, heard a fun Halloween story, and made magic potions to make the world better, braver, sillier, or more wonderful!

Stay tuned for more stories of brave questions and courageous kids next time!



## OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

*Providing visionary leadership and faithful oversight, ensuring our ministries and mission continue to grow in love and service.*

Pastor, Rev. Dr. Linda A. Holbrook
Administrative Asst., Bettie Anderson
Minister of Young Generations, Dr. Haley Feuerbacher
Children's Education, Jeannie Clayton, Megan Richardson
Finance Team Leads, Wendy Ringo, Marilyn Pifer
Lay Leaders, Denise Melroy, Megan Richardson
Annual Conf. Rep., Trish Catalano
Prayer Team, Megan Richardson
Membership Secy., Janet Ohene-Nyako
Mission/Outreach Co-Chairs , Cathy Coates, John McCotter
Newsletter Editor, Bettie Anderson
Website Editors, Denise Melroy, Bettie Anderson
Nominations & Leadership Dev. Chair, Rev. Dr. Linda A. Holbrook
Staff-Parish Relations Chair, Carol Frazer
Treasurer, Wendy Ringo
Trustees President, Darcy Foster
Worship Team Lead, Denise Melroy

*The Leadership Team meets the second Sunday each month after Worship. All are invited to attend!*

# THE BOOK OF JUDE

In the last newsletter we began a series on some books of the Bible. This time I am giving a short summary of the book of Jude. The book of Jude is the second to the last book of the Bible, and we rarely hear much from the book of Jude.

The book of Jude was written either by the brother of Jesus or someone using the name of Jude. In the early church, it was not uncommon to use the name of a person with authority so that the book would be treated credibly. The commentaries I read presented reasoning for Jude being the author and also someone using the name of Jude. The conclusion was that it is likely that this letter was written by the brother of Jesus.

Jude was likely written during the mid first century. This comes from the implication that the original converts of the church are still living, its use of the Jewish Christian apocalyptic stance, and the use of the Epistle of Jude (which was written in the mid first century).

The letter was written to an unspecified church or a group of churches. While the exact location is not known it is likely to be Palestine, Egypt, or Asia Minor. The church or churches are probably Jewish Christian because Jude quotes Jewish documentation and Jewish traditions without explaining, assuming that the people are familiar with the documents and traditions.

> *"contend for the faith" (Jude 1:3)*
>
> *"keep yourselves in God's love" (Jude 1:21)*

Jude was written because some "intruders" have come to the church and taught doctrines at variance with the apostolic traditions of the church. These newcomers have relied on the teachings of hospitality for unworthy financial gain. These newcomers also taught that freedom in Christ relieved a Christian of ethical responsibility. The original gospel said that was a perversion of grace. Thus, Jude is concerned with the moral implications of errant doctrine.

Jude reminds us that Christians owe obedience to Christ as Lord for his work in their salvation. Christians are to work for the spiritual good of all, to pray for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to obey God, and to live with the expectation that Jesus will return during their lifetimes.

The book of Jude contains only one chapter. Verses 1-2 are the letter's prescript. Verses 3-4 are a petition to contend for the faith; the original gospel they were taught. Verses 5-16 offer proof that the false teachers are ungodly and subject to judgement. Verses 17-23 are instructions on how to respond to false teachers. Verses 24-25 are the closing.

# CAROL SWARTZ MEMORIAL MEDITATION GARDEN

## *Dedication and Blessing*







On October 11th, friends and loved ones of Carol Swartz gathered together for the dedication of the Carol Swartz Memorial Meditation Garden. Pastor Linda read a special dedication and blessing over the area, and friends shared their memories of Carol.

# CELEBRATING OUR CHURCH FAMILY

*November & December Birthdays*

### November

3 Helen Davis
4 Charles Paratore
5 Owen Melroy
6 Susan Cole
10 Jackson Clayton
28 Megan Richardson

Happy Birthday!
Wishing you a blessed year ahead!

### December

2 Nancy Domnauer
10 Margaret Hazen
19 Claire DeGolyer
23 Adrianna Saffell
24 Jacob Ringo
25 Mary Richardson

# COMMUNITY EVENTS

HACIENDA VALLEY MOBILE ESTATES
275 Burnett Ave, Morgan Hill 95037

10TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BOUTIQUE

Presented by the Scrapbooking Club

Saturday, November 7th 10am – 4pm

FROM OUR HOUSE TO YOURS








Come on out and see the wonderful items made with love by our Hacienda Valley Residents. Everything from Holiday Wreathes, Candles, beautiful handmade Jewelry, crocheted blankets, wood burned crafts, Diamond Painted items, and much, much more. We are also having a bake sale, delicious handmade cookies and bars. These delicious treats always sell out fast.

Lunch (served at noon): $3.50 Hot Dog, Chips, Iced Tea or Water












## COMMUNITY EVENTS - Continued

Morgan Hill Holiday Lights Parade
Saturday, December 5, 2026
5:30 PM - 6:30 PM
17000 Monterey Road, Morgan Hill, CA, 95037



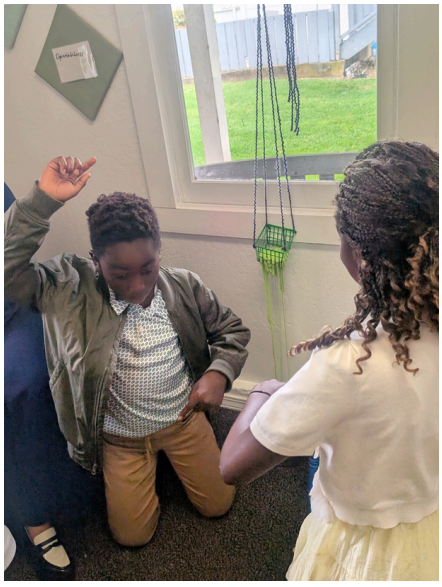
The Holiday Lights Parade returns to downtown Morgan Hill! Invite your friends and family to enjoy this hometown holiday celebration with a Christmas tree lighting and parade on Monterey Road, from Main to Fifth, with floats, cars, local clubs, youth sports teams, and even Santa himself!

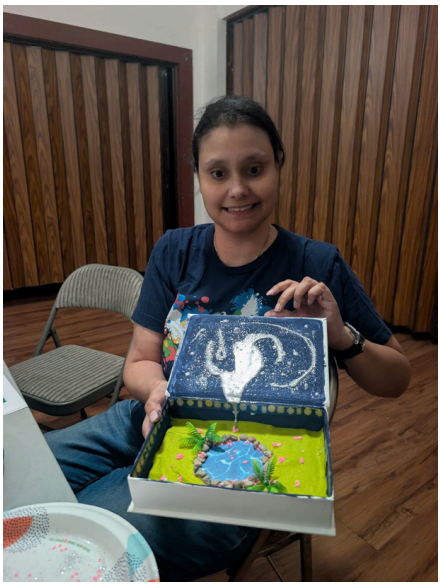
## REFLECTIONS

### *Studio:Inspire & Studio Youth Collective*











# Quilt Show





# Fellowship



Dave and Janet received a large bucket of fancy, long stemmed white roses to share with our church family. Neighbor, Bess, received one hundred fresh cut white roses for her eightieth birthday. Husband, Paul helped her to divide a big bunch of roses to share with us. The timing was perfect for we were preparing a birthday party celebration after church for John Armstrong. We had an Autumn bouquet with roses for the altar plus a rose for each person in attendance. Miracles never cease.





## JOIN US - SUNDAY 10 AM

**Worship Fully. Love Boldly. Welcome All.**

*Morgan Hill United Methodist Church* *www.mhumc.com*

## You Are Welcome Here!

As a Reconciling Congregation, we celebrate God's welcome to us and to all people, including any who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender and their families. At Morgan Hill UMC, your friendship is valued and safeguarded. You are accepted for who you are. You have a home.

*Reconciling Ministries Network* *www.rmnetwork.org*