

Pastor's Update 2024 – JANUARY

Pastor Brandon's E-Mail: RevBOffice@gmail.com

Epiphany: Where God Shows Up!

In the art of the early church holy characters have halos or a nimbus: angels, Jesus, Mary, and the saints, for example. Perhaps as you review year 2023 there are persons whom you might “halo”, because, in their own way, they showed up as a form of God’s love for you. Halos are indicative of a holy encounter, I think, and not so much a crown to separate the “holy” and “unholy” among us. Also, I think others must bestow them upon us or at least recognize that, in that moment, we have shown God’s kind of love to them. So, let me suggest that in 2024, we allow our faith to make us available for God to love others through us - to be merciful, kind, generous, truthful, and bold, if needed. I believe haloed and hallowed ones offer a glimpse of God’s love in THIS world by not giving into despair when our circumstances and the daily news often trends in that direction. Just keep reminding yourself and everyone that, despite what or who shows up on social media, television, in ours or another’s government, that, indeed, THIS IS the world that God loves enough to invest in us all that the universe offers. So, let’s show up with love no matter what. Who knows? Perhaps, we will catch a sudden glimpse of your own halo in the eyes of another! Deep peace, now and always, – *Pastor Brandon*

2024 Church Leadership Training - Online

Attention – Administrative Church Officers!

January 20th – 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM

Register Here by January 15th: <https://calnev-reg.brtapp.com/2023ChurchLeadersTraining71>

As we navigate these challenging times, it is crucial to stay informed and equipped to ensure the smooth functioning of our church. In light of this, the California Nevada Annual Conference is hosting the **Church Leaders' Training on Saturday, January 20, 2024, from 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM via Zoom**. This event will provide essential information and updates that will be beneficial for the effective operation of our church. The training will commence with a joint session to overview our conference vision and values. Following that, there will be specific training tracks tailored for lay leaders/administrative board chairs, SPRC/PPRC, treasurers and finance committee members, trustees, and nominations committee members.

We strongly encourage your attendance and extend the invitation to both new and returning church officers, committee members, emerging leaders, and others who may be contemplating serving in the church. This training presents an excellent opportunity for everyone to stay informed and equipped for the tasks ahead. To register for the event, please click [here](#). If you find yourself unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict, we still encourage you to register, and we will ensure that you receive the recordings when they become available. The deadline for registration is January 15.

TOWN HALL

Topic - Davis UMC in 2024: The Road Ahead

3rd Sunday, January 21st – 11:15 AM

I initiated these 3rd Sunday “town hall” gatherings in July 2022 as a conduit for conversation about our life as a faith community, especially as we continued to grapple with ministry matters impacted by COVID. On this Sunday – January 21st – we will consider our 2023 Finances and how they will factor into our 2024 DUMC Ministry Budget. And, as a teaser, there may be a bit more to share regarding other DUMC developments ;o)

WORSHIP SERVICES

NEW SERMON SERIES: "Becoming the People of God"

January 2024

Each worship service is "live streamed" unless stated otherwise.

SUNDAY 7th "Becoming the People of God" – COMMUNION

First Reading: Genesis 1. 1 – 5

Focus Scripture: Mark 1. 4 - 11

We are on a constant journey of becoming as we travel a path that we share with faithful followers in the Hebrew and Early Church scriptures, guided by the divine Love who forms us individually and communally into the people of God. Remember your baptism. It isn't just an empty ritual for Sunday mornings. It is a way of living that keeps our eyes open for the descending doves of the Spirit. It is a choice that we can claim to embrace the possibilities in front of us instead of the doubts within us. It is an opportunity to know that we are loved and claimed and that whatever darkness is hiding away in our past or our hearts need not define us anymore. It is a family we've entered, who will run with us as we search for what we are looking for, and who will avoid saying "told you so" when we realize what we are looking for has been with us all the time.

SUNDAY 14th "Becoming the People of God"

First Reading: I Samuel 3. 1 - 10

Focus Scripture: John 1. 43 - 51

Maybe the lesson here is that we shouldn't make assumptions. When we look around at our community, we think these folks want nothing to do with us. They don't care about our message. They won't want to belong, to connect. So, we don't bother because we know how it will go. But perhaps Samuel and Nathaniel have a different message. Keep speaking, keep inviting, keep telling your story. Who knows who is really listening?

SUNDAY 21st "Becoming the People of God" - followed by our "Town Hall"

First Reading: Jonah 3. 1 – 5, 10

Focus Scripture: Mark 1. 14 – 20

One of our constant questions when addressing a biblical text is, "Who are we in this story?" If we're honest with ourselves, we can't help but identify with Jonah. Maybe this is our story too. And it is good to be honest enough with ourselves to admit that. But the real call of the book of Jonah is to be more like the God who sent him; the one who believes in second chances; the one who doesn't give up issuing the invitation, even when the response isn't what was hoped. We ask again and again; we invite again and again. We make ready, roll out the carpet, and focus on hospitality again and again. That's what it means that God didn't give up on Jonah. We don't give up on one another and on the community around us. We are in the business of making disciples who make disciples.

SUNDAY 28th "Becoming the People of God"

First Reading: Deuteronomy 18. 15 - 20

Focus Scripture: Mark 1. 21 - 28

Sometimes our call is to silence the demonic voices. And the best way to do that is to present a better narrative. We are to tell a better story about how the world can work in God's kin-dom, how the church can represent a better way of being the kin-dom of God. Sometimes shouting and pointing fingers just raises everyone's blood pressure. It might be better to bring healing to a broken world with kindness and gentleness. It's not avoiding confrontation with evil but refusing to play the same games. We do so by walking in the way of Jesus.

Congregational Care

Over the course of time and with the changes that we encounter, which includes our recovery of community since COVID isolation, it is easy to lose touch with the names and faces once familiar to us. The list below includes some of those names. If you believe the information below to be incorrect or need updating, please contact me or our Davis UMC office with the correct/updated information. Let us continually pray for one another, send cards, emails, make calls, and remain in connection with them and/or their loved ones.

Home Care

See church directory for contact information.

Joe Archer

Jerry Beaman

Atria Covell Gardens

1111 Alvarado Avenue, Davis California 95616

Betsy Marchand – *Memory Care*

Melody Moore

Jan Tackett

Calmia Place

4220 Calmia Place, Davis, California 95618

Beverly Ballard – *Memory Care*

Carlton Senior Living

2726 5th St, Davis, CA 95618

Ted Dill

Carol Holmes

Oakmont of East Sacramento

5301 F Street, Sacramento, CA 95819

Philip Kurien

University Retirement Community

1515 Shasta Dr, Davis, CA 95616

Brian and Louanne Horsfield

Bob Medearis

Jane Smythe

Ken and Diane Wagstaff – *Memory Care* (Diane)

Responding to Christian Nationalism

Save January 20, 2024 and register now for a conversation on Christian Nationalism.

Christian Nationalism is a troubling ideology that seeks to merge Christian and American identities. It distorts both the Christian faith and America's constitutional democracy.

Using material provided by Christians Against Christian Nationalism, this workshop will provide a description of, discuss biblical responses to, and outline how to stand up against Christian Nationalism.

Join WMJM leaders as they talk with Jerry Gale, a member of Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church in Minneapolis Minnesota on January 20 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m (Pacific). [register now!](#)

Gathering of Spiritual Leaders

Asbury UMC - Livermore, CA January 23rd – 25th

Pastors do not hold membership in any specific church; rather, we hold membership in the conference where we were ordained – in my case, the California-Nevada Conference. Mandatory annual “gatherings”, like this one, allow bishops, district superintendents, pastors, and spiritual leaders to strengthen their professional/collegial bonds and skill sets. So, as we meet this month, please hold us in your prayer as we deliberate on our work in the face of historic changes in our faith tradition, our denomination, and in our conference. Though I will be among colleagues and on the conference agenda, I remain available to you those days by email (revboffice@gmail.com) and/or phone (209-923-0110).



January 19, 2024 – 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM

January 20, 2024 – 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM

Vets Memorial, 203 E 14th St., Davis, CA 95616

Register Here: <https://www.fbcdavis.org/marriage-conference-2024>

Two counselors who work for Community Counseling Associates in Davis are presenting this workshop based on the deeply researched work from **The Gottman Institute**. I highly recommend this event as it will provide some leading-edge wisdom and practices that have proven particularly effective for couples (married or not!) navigating conflict or looking to enhance their relationship. This is a great value!

If you have questions, please contact Pastor Brandon.