



ABOUT THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH:



The ‘theology’ of ‘Avatar’

“Avatar” can best be described as a remake of “Dances with Wolves,” the 1990 Academy Award-winning best picture starring Kevin Costner. The core themes are the same. In fact, Cameron has admitted that “Dances with Wolves” inspired his space epic. Both stories are about a military man loyal to the United States of America.

Gradually though, both begin to question the objectives of a country they are dedicated to serving. Their country selfishly condones raping and pillaging of innocent “natives” on land it has no sovereignty over. Such a revelation is extremely disturbing in both movies, which portray U.S. military forces as ruthless, cruel and oppressive.

An underlying theme amidst the techno-spectacular presentation of “Avatar” is social justice. Natives are declared “hostiles” because they resent the U.S. invasion. The powerful feel justified in rolling over weaker enemies to achieve self-serving goals.

There is a theological dimension to “Avatar.” Cloning is an important plot device, which should cause reflection on creation.

The tribal folks prayed to something called “Elwe.” Their worship resembles the mass assemblies I used to witness in Southeast Asia of Buddhists who appealed to the higher power for discernment and enlightenment.

I appreciated the tenderness of the worshippers’ adoration. This is especially so considering that religion as we know it here on planet earth today sorely lacks that.

Devotion to a monotheistic deity hasn’t stopped the wars here, of course, so I figure why not be open to something new, especially with all the deceitful foreign policy this tired old clergyman has seen in his lifetime.

The church must not relinquish its authority to blind patriotism and bless the nation’s military conduct. As Christians, we are called to see beyond our own self-interest and use a moral imperative to critique the established order. We must stand against that established order if its policies contradict the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Might does not make right. We are called as Christians to stand between powerful sources that cause powerlessness in others too weak to defend themselves. Caring for the last and the least among us is not only good citizenship but is, in fact, Christianity to the umpteenth degree.

For entertainment purposes I thoroughly recommend sees “Avatar,” especially in 3-D and, if possible, on an IMAX screen.

As Christians we are called to turn our swords into plowshares and study war no more. “Avatar” should prompt us to question how we live with ourselves when we are confronted with being the aggressors, fomenting war for scurrilous purposes.

Rev. Jack Copas, D-Min. UM clergyman for 33 years within the Greater New Jersey Conference and serves as the conference’s Disaster Relief Coordinator, (edited from his article in General Board of Church and Society publication: *Faith in Action* 1/27/10)

Words from your District Superintendent

I greet you in these wonderful opening weeks of a new year. The weather has been wet and cold with the promise of water to our parched land. We are moving toward the end of the season of Epiphany and into the mystery of Lent. Those 40 days of introspection, of literally growing in our faith, for the word itself comes from the Latin *lenctum*, which means to lengthen. To lengthen or more precisely to grow.

It is in that spirit that your two superintendents, your lay leader Paul Hampson and DCOM leader Rick Young gathered the lay leaders of our district on Saturday February 6 at Lodi UMC. And wow, are those folks at Lodi terrific in making anyone feel welcome.

Through a series of presentations by your superintendents and lay leadership, we began to discover the talented folks that you have selected to be the lay leaders of your local congregations and to find common ground, mutual support, shared resources and a renewed sense of vision. For far too long we have functioned like distinct and isolated maintenance organizations—maintaining buildings, organizational structures and a way of doing the same old, that all too often has a way of stifling the spirit of God rather than opening to its potential.

With a great deal of enthusiasm, prayer, listening, remembering, sharing, collaborating, and committing to each other, our entire group was able to lay groundwork for our shared ministry together. We look for a revitalized District Council on Ministries, led by the laity of our churches. We look to bring the blessings of our shared commitment to Christ to each and every person in our churches and beyond.

In the weeks and months to come, you will begin to hear more of how your clergy AND lay leaders are reaching out and calling out to us all into a renewed relationship with our faith and with our neighbors. A new season is upon us, made real by the laity of our churches taking their rightful place as the ministers and leaders of our movement. Lengthening, growing, becoming all that God intends for our Christian movement to become. Come, be a part of God’s wondrous grace. See you soon, Jerry Smith nsdistumc@sbcglobal.net



Florin Community Career Center

Are you unemployed, underemployed or simply working in a dead-end job? Do you find it easy to get a job but hard to keep it! Do you work to live or live to work? Let us help you discover your hidden potential. Our mission is to provide a personal, warm and inviting environment that is encouraging and


Services:

- Individual career counseling.
- Emphasis on career and life integration
- Workshops (resume clinic, job search, interviewing strategies)
- Academic advising
- Computer Lab & basic training
- Interested? Please call (916) 424-1600 or email florinccc@gmail.com

New Pastor Orientation
For: Pastors, committee chairs, treasurers, financial secretaries, financial clerks.

Led by : Diane Knudsen, Conference Treasurer
 9:30AM to 12:30PM
Wednesday, Feb. 24th Wesley UMC in Fresno
Saturday, March 6th Japanese UMC in Sacramento

To register: call Cindy at the Delta District Office (916) 374-1501 or email: deltadist@calnevumc.org

 **Prayer Calendar**

Feb 21 Sacramento St. Marks UMC
 Feb 28 Sonora UMC
 Mar 07 Linden UMC
 Escalon UMC
 Mar 14 Sacramento Oak Park UMC
 Sacramento Tongan Fltshp
 Mar 21 Stockton St. Mark’s UMC
 Mar 28 Elk Grove UMC

➔ **UM WOMEN**
www.cnumw.org/deltacnumw

DELTA DISTRICT CALENDAR

Feb 15 Presidents Day, Conf. Ctr. closed

Feb 17 District Cmte on Ordained Ministry Conference Ctr., W. Sacramento 9:00-4:00

Feb 18 Sacramento United Methodist Union Rio Linda UMC, 10:00AM to noon

Feb 26 Furlough Friday, Conf. Ctr. closed

2010 Annual Conference:
 Wednesday, June 16 thru Saturday, June 19 at the Sacramento Convention Center.

Lay Speaking Classes:

Hermeneutics: led by Lay Speaker JoJene Landon on Saturday, March 20, 2010 from 9:00AM to 4:00PM (fee \$25 includes lunch)

Lead Worship led by Lay Speaker, Jim Landon on April 17, 2010 from 9:00AM to 4:00PM (fee \$25 includes lunch)

To register: Call the Delta District Office at (916) 374.1501 or email deltadist@calnevumc.org

Opportunities for a short-term Mission Trip

Participate in a United Methodist Volunteer in Mission trip. Below is a list of trips planned for 2009. These trips are sponsored by local churches but open to volunteers from any church.

Nicaragua, Nueva Guinea (March 2010) Epworth UMC Berkeley; International - Educational & Connectional

Louisiana, Dulac (Mar 13-19, 2010) First UMC in Reno; Hurricane Recovery - Construction Team

Guatemala (March) First UMC Modesto; International

Utah, Salt Lake City—UMCOR West Supply Depot (April 5-9) U.S. Construction & Multi-Generational Connectional Team

Hawaii, (Early Spring) Santa Rosa First UMC; Young Adult Team

California, Martinez (2010) CA-NV Conference; Construction Team

California, Kings Beach (June) Multiple Teams, CA-NV Conference; Construction Team

Jamaica, (June) International Construction Team

Nicaragua, Nueva Guinea (July) Epworth UMC in Berkeley; International Educational/Connectional Team

Utah, Salt Lake City—UMCOR West Supply Depot (July 25-30) U.S. Construction & Multi-Generational Connectional Team

Guatemala (July 30 - Aug. 8) Concord UMC; International Medical Team

Contact UVMIM office at 916-374-1582 or email us at: umvim@calnevumc.org or our website: www.cnumcvim.org

One Great Hour of Sharing March 14, 2010

Join United Methodists everywhere by participating in this special offering that supports UMCOR's vital work. Your gifts lay the foundation for UMCOR to seek justice and mercy for suffering people everywhere.

Be assured that when catastrophes cause suffering, your church, impelled by Jesus' love and compassion, will be in the lead to ease the

Come join us for a day with Bishop Robert Schnase, author of the Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations who will be at the Nevada-Sierra District's Leadership Training Day on **Saturday, March 6, 2010 at South Reno UMC.**

The cost is \$20 until January 31, 2010, after that it goes up to \$25. Sign up now! Contact Audrey at the Nevada-Sierra District Office to register;

phone: 775-786-2332 or

email: nsdistumc@sbcglobal.net

Sexual Harassment Hotline 916-374-1569



Attend the February SUMU meeting on Thursday, February 18 from 10:00AM until noon at Rio Linda UMC, 6th & M St. in Rio Linda.

Sacramento United Methodist Union

2010 Summer Camps (Save these dates)

Monte Toyon Camps: July 11-16

Toyon Kids Camp - Camp Quest - Toyon LIT

Lodestar Camps: July 18-24

Super Kid Camp - Super Camp - Lodestar LIT

Lodestar Sr. High Leadership: July 31-Aug 6

Other Camps:

Adult & Family Camp - June 20-27

www.cnumc.org/camping

2010 Youth Worker's Retreat, Valley of the Moon, Glen Ellen, CA April 30-May 1, 2010

*Education *Networking *Fellowship *Support

Stockton Grace UMC is seeking an organist/pianist for approximately 5 hours per week \$400 per month salary. Job includes playing for Sunday morning service and once a week choir rehearsal. Call Grace UMC in Stockton at (209) 464-6121. Office hours are 8:00AM to 12 noon, Tuesday through Friday.

Side-by-Side Ministries: Drop off candles, writing journals, bibles, cross necklaces or rosaries for the Side-by-Side Ministry to the homeless at the Delta District Office of the CA-NV Conference Center located at 1276 Halyard Drive in West Sacramento

UMCOR West Director, The Rev. Brian Diggs available to Speak to California-Nevada Churches.

UMCOR West in Salt Lake City, Utah is the newest UM Committee on Relief depot and was strategically placed to provide a worldwide mission opportunity for those of us in the Western Jurisdiction.

Last year Diggs was asked to speak to congregations in the Rocky Mtn, Pacific Northwest, and Yellowstone annual conferences. He welcomes an opportunity to outline this new and exciting ministry for churches in California and Nevada. He is willing to tailor his presentation (in terms of time) to the needs of your church.

To arrange for a visit, contact Rev. Brian Diggs directly at the UMCOR West Office

1479S 700W
Salt Lake City, Utah 84104

or;

Email: westdepot@umcor.org

Phone: 801.973.7250

Fax: 801.973.7916

Valentines Day,



Sunday, February 14th

I love u

Presidents Day.



Monday, February 15

Conference Center will be closed

Prayer *Death and eternity*

Know that the Lord cometh and that today you shall see his glory, and there shall be in that day a great light . . . O Lord, I trust in thee, O Lord in eternity, I shall not be confounded.

I believe . . . in the life eternal.

Amen

(From the Book of Common Prayer)



Cindy's Chat: The delta district office (alive and well, I'll have you know) is a busy place this time of year (rephrase: a "busier" place...) with the anticipation of appointment season upon us. The phone keeps a ringing and the emails never stop, snail mail's coming faster and the files are on top. People coming and going, in and out, makes an administrative assistant want to shout. That would be me shouting; thank you all for keeping me so busy (did I just say that) and making my job a never-ending story, different every-

Bread of Life is now accepting applications for 3 year internship in the Art of

Spiritual Direction which begins in September 2010. Application deadline is March 15, 2010. Forming spiritual directors in the greater Sacramento area since 1998 and these individuals now serve in churches, homeless ministries, jails, hospitals and every conceivable setting where people seek deeper relationship with God. A wide range of persons—ordained and lay, men and women—have completed this 3-year program.

All information is available from <http://www.breadoflife.org> or contact Sandra Lommasson, co-Director of Bread of Life at 916.648.1803 or 650 El Camino Ave., Sacramento CA 95815

day, always interesting, learning, teaching, giving, listening and, my favorite of course, talking to you!

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916-374-1501 Fax: 916-372-5527

Cindy Buna, Admin Asst.
Email: deltadist@calnevumc.org

Jerry Smith, DS north delta
Mariellen Yoshino, DS south delta

Rick Young, DCOM Chair
Paul Hampson, Lay Leader Chair
Katy Houghton, SUMU President
John Kimbell, CES President

Send Ideas, contributions, and announcements to the Delta District Office at the above address. Deadline is the 5th of each month for distribution on the 10th.