

Coming Events

Sunday, October 9

The sermon series, Cut to the Core, begins, reflecting on how love of God, self, and others is the very **core** of our Christian faith.

Sunday, October 30

We begin a 4-week sermon series, Method in the Madness, exploring the foundation of what it means to be a United Methodist congregation.

Sunday, November 6

Plan to enjoy good food and great fellowship as we gather for our first **Cooperative Parish Congregational Checkpoint**. Learn about our progress to date on key milestones and the blended ministry process. We will gather that evening at 5:30pm at the Mission Viejo campus for a pot luck dinner in Shepherd Hall, followed by presentation from the Cooperative Parish Leadership Team. Child care will be provided. Watch your weekly newsletters for more information.

Cooperative Parish Leadership Team

Pastor Craig Brown
Pastor Sarah Heath
Pastor Russ Jacobson
Kris Andreasen
Michelle Buessing
Jeff Hulbert
Terrie McComb
Jan Newton
Susan Patcha
Jean Riggs
Paul Russert
John Schoettger
Ann Shimizu
Cal Shores
Billy Stempson

An Update from Pastor Craig

With the advent of the fall season, the level of activity at both Santa Margarita and Shepherd of the Hills continues to increase. While this is normal in the life of any church, it seems to be at even more of a fever pitch in 2011. We, in this cooperative parish, are exploring new territory. Not many churches have attempted to do what we are doing and with great success! Let me share some stories!

Youth kick off at both campuses have gone very well. Over fifty youth at both campuses participated in this Year's kick off. Pastor Sarah, David Enger and I are making the final touches on our joint Confirmation Class for both churches.

The Santa Margarita Congregation was able to complete their capital campaign. Before the end of October all of the loans on the Santa Margarita campus will be current and back on schedule.

Worship attendance is rising at the Santa Margarita campus. New energy and new enthusiasm is bringing a sense of new life in our congregation.

Over fifty families have signed up for our Preschool Chapel with Your Children on October 8 at the Mission Viejo campus. This evening "chapel time" is for both kids and their parents. It will be a great outreach to our preschool parents.

You can see, GREAT things are happening as we move forward in our Cooperative Parish relationship. Continue to pray as we explore new ways of serving in ministry and breaking new ground for the Kingdom of God.

FAQs: Answering Your Frequently Asked Questions

Why do we not publish the schedule of who is preaching on Sunday?

Worship is an expression of love for God. That means that God is at the very center of our worship at both campuses. What the music will be, who will be leading the prayer and who will be preaching are all secondary to the fact that truth. In a multi-site ministry, the rotation of preachers is critical to vary the "spiritual diet" of those who hear. Commitment to a singular preacher makes fulfilling the mission of the church difficult.

Speaking as a primary preacher (Pastor Craig), I always cringe when folks ask if I am preaching next week. My internal response (the one I don't say) is why should it matter? So why withhold the preaching schedule? It keeps our focus on God and our weekly spiritual preparation for worship. It does not enable those might only come to worship because of who is preaching or those who stay away because of who is preaching. Every voice has a message. The church needs to hear the diversity of those voices.

SMUMC Completes Successful Capital Campaign and More!

When we entered into the Cooperative Parish covenant, one of the most critical milestones for our future was defined as an \$87,000 capital campaign for the Rancho Santa Margarita campus. A successful campaign to raise these funds would allow SMUMC to bring all of their loans current, to insure our ability to continue operation of the church in that location and to secure a strong financial foundation for our future as a unified church. We are pleased to announce that this amount was raised – *plus another \$4,000!* The leadership of SMUMC did an outstanding job of raising awareness and communicating progress throughout the campaign. We have been truly blessed by the generous hearts and spirit of everyone who has contributed so faithfully in these difficult and uncertain economic times.

October 2011

Blended Ministry Process Work Continues

The development of blended practices and ministry programs are a key part of the Cooperative Parish transition, in anticipation of our unification as one church. The purpose of this process is to align programs, resources, and communication to strengthen the ministry and engagement of current and potential disciples at both locations. Because of the unique needs and characteristics of each existing congregation, it is expected that the programming and ministry opportunities offered at each location may be different from one another - even after the anticipated merger - with additional shared opportunities bringing individuals from both churches together.

In the month of August, leaders from SOTHUMC and SMUMC initiated this effort using a multi-step process to insure careful consideration of unique and shared needs, as well as to leverage new opportunities for engagement, effectiveness, and growth. The first five steps identify "what" the ministry programs will look like in the Cooperative Parish relationship and post-merger as one church in two locations. The plans for each ministry area will be presented to the entire congregation during the Congregational Checkpoint meetings, which are planned for November, February, and April.

November 2011: We expect to present plans for Adult Nurture & Care, Outreach and Missions, Worship Logistics, Human Relations & Diversity, and Prayer Ministry.

February 2012: We expect to present plans for Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Adult Discipleship, Communications & Publicity, and Lay Leadership.

April 2012: We expect to present plans for Family Ministry, Worship Arts (including Music Ministry and Visual Arts), Koinonia/Welcoming/Fishing Pool Events, Endowments, and Memorials.

You may have already been asked or will be asked by team members to give input about existing or planned church ministries and programs. We encourage everyone to actively participate in this process, and to provide open, honest, and constructive feedback to the teams leading this process. Everyone has a vested interest in the development of the strongest and most effective ministry programming we can offer our congregations and our community. If you have an idea, a need, or something that has been placed on your heart for our unified church, now it the time to speak up and tell us about it!

The November Congregational Checkpoint is scheduled for Sunday, November 6, at 5:30pm at the Mission Viejo campus. Dinner will be a pot luck – more information coming soon. If you have young children, please contact either church office by October 31 to register your kids for child care/activities during the presentation. We will complete the meeting by 7:15pm.

We also ask that you keep everyone working on the Cooperative Parish transition in your prayers, so that we can authentically answer God's call in this community and beyond. If you have any questions about the blended ministry process or about the work of an individual ministry area team, please contact a member of the Cooperative Parish Leadership Team.

Upcoming Messages for October and November

October 9	Cut to the Core: Love of God	2 Corinthians 12:7-10
October 16	Cut to the Core: Love of Self	Isaiah 65:17-19
October 23	Cut to the Core: Love your Neighbor	Romans 13:8-10
October 30	Method in the Madness: Grace & Perfection	1 Peter 5:5-11
November 6	Method in the Madness: Quadrilateral	Luke 5:16-26
November 13	Method in the Madness: Holiness & Structure	2 Thessalonians 3:6-13
November 20	Method in the Madness: Acts of Mercy & Community	Matthew 25:31-46

Our Guiding Principles

To insure the success of this process and to build the unified community required to live out our call as one church, we will endeavor to conduct all discussions, activities, and tasks within the following guidelines:

To actively seek the council of the Holy Spirit through prayer in all activities and decisions, so as to glorify God and build a more effective ministry in his name, not our own.

To respect the thoughts, ideas, traditions, and opinions of all, inviting the active participation of members of both congregations.

To preserve the best practices of our individual church cultures, ministries, and programs in order to build the most effective unified faith community.

To create an inclusive environment for discussion, recognizing that everyone in both congregations has a place in this process and beyond.

To communicate openly and honestly, caring enough to speak up and confront concerns in a constructive manner.

To resolve conflicts by focusing on our shared objective and on our ultimate mission: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Questions, Comments, or Concerns?

Contact Terrie McComb (tlmccomb@men.com) or a member of our Cooperative Parish Leadership Team