



STEWARDS OF OUR CHURCH

United Methodist Church
of Westlake Village

Spring/Summer
2016

“With ourselves it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God.” (St. Mark 10:27)

“Stewardship”



Being good stewards is always about people and relationships. Yes, stewardship has to do with our financial resources, which can seem impersonal, but how we choose to spend that money is very personal. We know this about how our stewardship meets our concern for outreach and social concerns. We have just such a committee in our church, which strives hard to focus on avenues of service in our community and bring our attention to these. Yes, your

financial giving to the church helps support outreach but it “makes sense” when it involves us. One such example is our CROP Walk for hunger. Another is our Manna food program. Still one more is our feeding the hungry ministry at local community congregations. Everyone who puts some time into the “hands-on” part of these outreach programs comes back saying that they received more than they gave. It really is true! So, we need your continued financial support of our programs. However, don’t forget that when you

personally participate, it puts the humanity on the face of our giving. I pray that the next time you hear of one of our local opportunities to reach out into our community that you will make it a personal invitation to *you* to become involved and to help out. It makes a difference all the way around.

With you in the ministry of stewardship and outreach,

GARY

Trustees at Work

Completed projects in last 3 months:

- ◆ New AED
- ◆ Air Conditioning Circulating Pumps
- ◆ Heating Repairs
- ◆ Plumbing repairs
- ◆ Basic upgrades around the campus
- ◆ Roofing repairs
- ◆ Television in the WFR

Goals by year’s end:

- ◆ Upgrades to the Sanctuary
- ◆ Painting Alton Hall interior
- ◆ Patio coverings
- ◆ New phone system

Attendance

	October	November	December
4	276	8	366
11	213	15	289
18	200	22	280
25	282	29	247
			24 827
			27 carols

Wish List Ideas

Under \$500

- ◆ Tree trimming

\$501 - \$1000

- ◆ iPad - new or used - for the Christian Ed. Committee
- ◆ Hearing impaired devices for the Sanctuary

\$1001 - \$5000

- ◆ LCD Projector for the sanctuary
- ◆ New Computer Server for the office

\$5001 and over

- ◆ A/C for Alton Hall
- ◆ Carpet in the sanctuary

Any financial donations accepted

Treasurer’s Report

Fiscal YTD Income \$123,219

Fiscal YTD Expenses \$131,245

A Note from Finance: Rev. Brian Long



Rev. Brian Long

The Outreach and Social Concerns Committee would like to share with you the many ways your generous giving for 2015 has made a difference to those in need in our community and around the world. The 2015 church budget designated \$8,000 for mission giving. It is OSCC's responsibility to distribute these funds to organizations that serve those in need. The distributions from the 2015 budget were:

Adult Day Care	\$300	National Alliance on Mental Illness	\$300
Conejo Free Meal Program	\$300	School on Wheels	\$300
Conejo Valley YMCA	\$300	Our Community House of Hope	\$300
Triunfo YMCA	\$300	Conejo Free Clinic	\$300
David & Margaret Home	\$200	MA6 Oklahoma Worktrip	\$400
Food Share	\$300	Many Mansions Educational	
Habitat for Humanity	\$500	Vocational Needs Fund	\$300
Hospice of the Conejo	\$300	Many Mansions Holiday Gift Cards	\$500
Thousand Oaks Meals on Wheels	\$300	Claremont School of Theology	
Westlake Meals on Wheels	\$300	Scholarship	\$300
Villa Esperanza	\$300	Senior Concerns	\$300
Big Brothers/Big Sisters	\$300	Westminster Free Clinic	\$500
Kid City	\$300	Worldwide Fistula Fund	\$500

Highlighting Outreach & Social Concerns Committee: Steve Ames

With the focus to put Christian faith into action through service to the community, the UMCWV Outreach and Social Concerns Committee (OSCC) looks to reach the world with prayers, concern, time and financial support.

Heading up this effort are Chris and Kitty Soltow, co-chairs, who coordinate the committee's many opportunities to provide for those in need.



Chris & Kitty Soltow

Others on the committee are Sylvia Brandon, Alternative Christmas Gift Market chairperson;

Joanie Donalson, Manna steward; Cathie Loeb and Lisa Ross (she is stepping down in May), Conejo Valley Free Meal Program coordinators; Karen Kever, recording secretary; Linda Keithley, Blood Drive coordinator; Barbara Morse, Church Council representative; Kathy Bordner, Sheila Channing, Carolyn Cooper, Lynne Knebel and Margie Price.

"It's something I can and have been able to do over the years—to use my talents to get involved in some of the issues that many people face in society, whether it be hunger, housing, health care - and just try to be with others where I can help with a little bit of action," says Chris Soltow, retired, who taught middle school for 16 years in Los Angeles and Moorpark.

"We are the administrative committee for the outreach and missions program, of the UMCWV, but the members of our congregation

provide the time, talent and treasure to be the outreach program of the church," says Kitty Soltow, retired, who taught elementary school for 38 years in the Las Virgenes Unified School District.

"OSCC's job is to inspire, encourage, inform, and create opportunities for all groups and members of our congregation to participate in outreach and missions," she adds.

The committee selects one project to be highlighted each month in the Mission Moment. The purpose is to educate, develop awareness and gain financial support for the various projects.

"We have a variety of things upcoming," Chris Soltow says. The CROP Walk on March 6 was one. This year UMCWV had 43 walkers.



The committee is looking at

Highlighting Outreach & Social Concerns Committee: continued

ways to publicize the Conejo Valley Free Meal Program. Annual Committee projects also include Adult Forums, the Alternative Christmas Gift Market, backpacks and school supplies for Many Mansions students, a Blood Drive, Conejo Valley Free Meal and Winter Shelter Program and the Recycling Faire.

With reference to the Free Meal Program, Chris Soltow says it is another way of addressing hunger. "It's one of the ways that members of our church get face to face with people who are in need by serving meals to them," he adds. (UMCWV is responsible for the second Sunday of each month.)

UMCWV members participate at two locations in Thousand Oaks: St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, during April through November, and Temple Adat Elohim, including an overnight, during December through March. Men's Ministries, Women's Ministries, the choirs, youth, the Scouts and a variety of individuals, including the Gray/Barmasse and Shihabi families (each December), participate by doing something active: the preparing and serving of meals, or both.



The Manna Conejo Valley Food Bank's shopping cart, donated by Vons, is on the patio every Sunday to receive donations. Several times a year OSCC reenergizes it by passing out bags that include on each a list of the main items Manna is in need of at that time.

"This year," Kitty Soltow says, "part of the inspiration for targeting local hunger with Manna has been that Manna recently purchased a new facility in Thousand Oaks and we're hoping to have a capital campaign within our

congregation to collect extra funds for them." Manna will move from Crescent Way to a location on North Oakview Drive.

Additionally, the OSCC has been authorized by Church Council to work with Mission Area 6 (MA6) churches to start the process toward sponsoring a Syrian refugee family. See the March Covenant for details about a kick-off forum on Sunday, April 10.

In addition to UMCWV, the five other UMCs in MA6 are Malibu UMC, Moorpark UMC, Simi Valley UMC, St. Matthew's UMC of Newbury Park and UMC - Thousand Oaks.

In 2014, MA6 was part of a joint ministry team that worked on the installation of fencing, building new decks, gardening and other projects at homes in Moore, Okla. during a five-day work trip.

The idea for MA6 came from the North District, California-Pacific Conference, and our committee is the contact. Chris Soltow and Nancy Moravec are the representatives from UMCWV to the MA6 Council and OSCC.

"We're the ones who organize and publicize MA6 activities within our church," Chris Soltow says, "whether they are happening at our church or somewhere else." An example is the MA6 Praise Band Concert on June 4, the second one at Malibu UMC to raise funds for No More Malaria that is part of UMCOR (United Methodist Committee On Relief). UMCWV pledged to raise \$10,000 for UMCOR's No More Malaria on a three-year plan and we have achieved that."



Kitty Soltow says she enjoys making use of her skills and abilities

in a positive way, now that she is retired.

"I can use a lot of the same skills and abilities I used in my career" she says. "I have a passion for making a difference in our community and the world. This gives me an opportunity to feel that I am able to do that, and to make a difference."

Chris Soltow says, "My part is complementary to Kitty Soltow's."

In response, she says, "When Chris stated that his skills are complementary to mine, that was selling himself a little short. Chris is the heart and soul of this committee. I am good at organization, communication, promotion and motivation. But, Chris provides the vision and spiritual inspiration," Kitty Soltow adds, "He sees what needs to be done and what should be done. He is the one who continues to remind us as a committee and a church that there are difficult issues and problems to face in this world and that we as a church are called to follow the way of Jesus and 'love one another.'"



Hunger is one of the themes that OSCC is involved in right now. Besides the CROP Walk and the canned food drive, the committee is participating in the Oxfam America Hunger Banquet, in conjunction with the Christian Education Committee; an event will be provided on Sunday, March 20 at 5 p.m. by Food Share in Oxnard. "The Lord's Banquet" is the overriding theme of all the hunger programs at UMCWV this year.

OSCC serves as an advocate for peace and justice in social issues. The Peace Pole, which is a symbol of our church's continuing prayer that there be peace on earth, was an OSCC project.

In addition to supporting

Highlighting Outreach & Social Concerns Committee: continued

mission activities throughout the world and disaster relief, contributions also are made to many local agencies.

“It is a very important part of our mission to not just be collecting money,” Kitty Soltow says. “We are given a budget as part of the church budget. We are the stewards of that and our committee decides as a group where those funds will be distributed throughout the year.

Committee members speak during church services to relate Mission Moments and other programs, including the Alternative Christmas Gift Market, that raise money for programs we have chosen and feel are part of the mission of the United Methodist Church.

“That’s an important part of what we do,” Kitty Soltow says, “but

we also take very seriously the call to encourage all of our church members to participate in volunteering or serving or getting involved as board members in all kinds of ways.

“We have a church that has many, many, many members that do lots of good in our community. That’s part of our job, we think. We had an Outreach Fair last spring where we invited all of the groups that we have contributed to to come and encourage people to connect with them.”

These include Our Community House of Hope, Many Mansions, Meals on Wheels, Senior Concerns and the Westminster Free Clinic.

Chris Soltow says it’s been a positive experience to work with the people who are the beneficiaries of a

lot of the activities that outreach has sponsored.

Working with people on a common goal, such as working with others in the CROP Walk or when the churches come together for assembling the Haiti birthing kits or health kits, are rewarding events for all involved, as well as the benefactors.

Kitty Soltow says she feels that she is called as a Christian to do more than just be a Christian, but to work together with other Christians and to reach out to those in need.

“I see that as a very important part of my faith journey,” she says. “It’s not a job I do to keep busy. I’m motivated by my faith, and I think that’s important. It’s the mission of any Christian church. I feel honored to have the opportunity of fulfilling that mission.”

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The Focus Statement of Our Church

The United Methodist Church of Westlake Village is a caring Christian community that welcomes everyone to experience the loving embrace of God, nurtures one another, and reaches out to the community and the world through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

INVITE INVOLVE GROW SHARE

Serving the people of the greater Conejo Valley and beyond in ministry since 1969.

