



# The Messenger

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## Church Staff

Dr. Frank Trotter  
senior pastor

Debbie Gara  
associate pastor

Allison Mark  
associate pastor

Stephen Gothold  
director of music ministries

Ae-Kyong Kim  
church organist

Timothy Sun  
business manager

Diane Garner  
office manager

Ruth MacPherson  
librarian

Livingstone Zan  
minister of welcome & sexton

Marcus Chone  
Steve Guerrero  
maintenance staff

Michael Lindsey  
camp manager

**First United  
Methodist Church**  
500 E. Colorado Blvd.  
Pasadena, CA 91101  
Tel: 626.796.0157  
Fax: 626.568.1615  
[www.fumcpasadena.org](http://www.fumcpasadena.org)

## Our Witness: A Message from Your Pastors

My mother called me on the phone within the first six months of serving my first full-time church. “Frank, Jr.,” she said, “are you tithing yet?” I was more than a little bit put out. I said, “Mom, I’ve just graduated with a lot of seminary debt. I had to borrow a lot of money to complete my Master of Divinity degree, and even more to finish my Doctorate. God will understand if I don’t tithe right away.”

There was something of a long pause. Then she said, very quietly, “Frank, Jr., there are no excuses in the kingdom of God. If you’re going to model what you want your congregation to do, you’ve got to do it yourself.” There was an even longer pause on my end before I finally said, “Mom, you’re right as usual. I’ll do what I know God wants me to do.” And I’ve given a tithe of the salary that each of the churches in my career has given me – back to that same church.

There is a joy in giving to God that I can’t really explain to you if you don’t already have it. But I can assure you that I have it, and I can doubly assure you that it feels great – even in the midst of the troubled times our church faces today. It’s the most troubled financial time in my lifetime, in fact. But you know what? The times don’t change my commitment to give God what I know I should – 10% of everything I make on an annual basis.

Bottom line? “Thanks, Mom. You were right...as usual!”

I pledge to God and you that I will give a tithe of everything I make to First United Methodist Church in Pasadena during the year of our Lord, 2009. Dr. Frank Trotter

Designer jeans, \$80; Nintendo (the first version), \$100; Sunday Offering...Priceless.

I grew up a teenager in the 90s...a teenager who wasn’t allowed to watch MTV, buy brand name clothing, or have my own car. I was sooooo deprived! (Well, that’s what I thought at the time!) There was also that issue of allowance. As a kid, my parents would give me and my sisters \$3 a week. Three measly dollars, but I never thought to account for the food that was always on the table, the roof over our heads, the clothes, the toys, the annual summer vacations—as a kid, you just don’t think about that stuff. But the money was ours...WITH the stipulation that we had to put \$1 of our allowance in our pledge envelopes EVERY week to fulfill our tithe for the year. At first I didn’t understand, but the lesson my parents were teaching us was that we were already given so much, that the least we could do was to give back to God. It was a chance for us to reflect on how much God had blessed us with and how we could give back an apportionment of our weekly allowance to the church—a portion meant for others.

In retrospect, it was a blessing to have parents who wanted to teach and instill in their children fiscal responsibility and good stewardship. The Z. Cavaricci jeans went out of style the very next season, the Nintendo game system was quickly outdated and replaced by Sega Genesis, Playstation, and now Wii, but the dollar amount we learned to save and share for our Sunday offering is something that I will remember how to do for a lifetime. God’s gifts to us are priceless.

Rev. Allison Mark

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## ACAC Christmas Gifts & Stockings

November 23<sup>rd</sup> kicks off the fifth year of our Adopt a Child Abuse Caseworker (ACAC) Christmas gift and stocking program for children served by our local Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Feedback from Deidre, our “adopted” caseworker, and children receiving the gifts and stockings, illustrates how much they appreciate your kindness.

Please help brighten a child’s holidays again this year by selecting a gift information card during Coffee Hour at the ACAC table starting Sunday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>. All you have to do is buy a gift and bring it back unwrapped by Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup>.

Anne Johnston is once again making stockings for the children’s Sunday School families to fill for a child on the list. Families with children in this age group can pick up a stocking and information card at the ACAC table. This is a wonderful project for the whole family.

Whether you choose to buy a gift or fill a stocking, the ACAC program is one of many ways we can show how much we care for children in our area. Thank you for supporting the foster care children in the ACAC program. If you have questions, please contact Pam Burns at (818) 551-9006.

## SAVE THE DATE LADIES! We need your imagination!

A small and motivated team has formed, and we have begun the imagination process for the next FUMC Women’s Retreat. Inspired by a theme of exploring friendships throughout our lives, we will focus on “Building Bridges between Generations of Women.” This retreat is for young women grade 9 through 99<sup>th</sup>. We have also chosen a date well in advance, October 16-18, 2009.

There is much that is yet to be determined, and much that we want all who are interested to decide and create to make this a retreat for all. We need to decide together: where the retreat will be held (Sky Meadows or a retreat center) as well as the activities, focus and many dynamics beyond the program times.

SO, please join us in a...

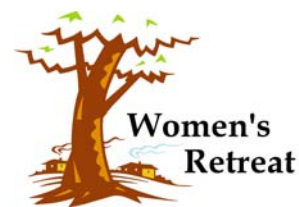
Women’s Retreat Imagination Day

Thursday, January 15, 2009

Church Lounge; 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

A light dinner will be served.

Please contact Debbie Gara at [dgara@fumcpasadena.org](mailto:dgara@fumcpasadena.org) or Allison Mark at [amark@fumcpasadena.org](mailto:amark@fumcpasadena.org) to let us know you can come so that we can prepare accordingly.



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## UNITED METHODIST MEN

Jay Cohen has been the bugler at Santa Anita, Hollywood and Fairplex Parks since 1987. You likely saw him in the very popular movie, *Seabiscuit*. Jay gives a wonderful program and he is “on board” for UMM’s Tuesday, November 25th dinner meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Since starting at Santa Anita Park, Mr. Cohen has traveled to a total of 15 tracks in 8 states and Tokyo, Japan, as a guest artist, playing the “Call to Post” over 80,000 times!

His love for music began professionally as a band director in New Jersey before moving West. In addition to *Seabiscuit*, Jay has been in many other movies and over 30 television shows.

Look, too, for a special appearance in uniform from our resident equestrian expert, Don Zimmerman.

Please call the Church Office at (626) 796-0157 to RSVP! See you on Tuesday, November 25th, at 6:30 p.m. sharp.

## THIS & THAT... Especially for November

by Ruth MacPherson

Be aware, there is a calendar of library topics published monthly on our church's website. These same suggested topics, known this month as *On This Day in November*, can be found in our 3 church library centers. On display are books relating to these monthly topics.

From the Junior Library, we have at least 18 picture books for Thanksgiving. You fourth graders can use our books on the history of California Missions and the Gold Rush days for your reports and projects. This month is a good time for youth and older children to read the *Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis.

November is time to appreciate how we got our Bibles and their various translations. Visit our reference books about church and Bible history, and check out a biography or related book about noted November birthday persons.

Our library periodicals aren't often mentioned, but specially collected for this church library to keep us informed of current events that have importance to our lives. *Circuit West's* November issue has a front page article about Bishop Mary Ann Swenson's celebration at our church with pictures of Tongan choirs and drummers performing. An informative November article about how and why the U.S. has bad relations with Iran is in a new subscription, *The Smithsonian*. (See also the August issue of *National Geographic*.) November's *National Geographic* informs us that Borneo's rainforest is in danger. UMW readers who read about current news that affects our church's missions, usually from *Response* or *New World Outlook*, should also consider a secular magazine, *Americas*. Its issues are richly informative about peoples of Central and South America, but written from a Latin viewpoint.



We hope to see you Sundays - in between classes, worship, lunches and programs.

Happy Thanksgiving!

## REGISTER FOR YOUTH ALIVE

(Youth Grades 9-12)

Hey YOUTH! Are you interested in signing up for the California-Pacific Conference-wide YOUTH event of the year? Well, Youth Alive 2009 will take place February 14th to 16th at the Riverside Convention Center and Marriott Hotel. The theme for the conference is "Diakonos: How May I Serve You?" Youth from all over the Conference will be focusing on how to be servants for Christ in the world and will provide concrete ways for youth to be in service.

In addition to meeting new youth from our Annual Conference and building relationship with others, there will be worship, Bible study and workshops. The conference registration deadline is January 1st and registrations received after January 1st are subject to a \$50 per person late fee. (No registrations will be accepted after January 15th.) For our FUMC Youth who RSVP BEFORE December 25th, you will receive a VERY SPECIAL DISCOUNTED rate for the conference...so SIGN UP NOW! See Allison if you have not received a registration form! Check the event out on the web at [www.myspace.com/calpacyouthalive](http://www.myspace.com/calpacyouthalive) or connect on Facebook by searching "Events" for "Youth Alive 2009."

## Rose Parade Grandstand Seating

Tickets for grandstand seating for the 120th Rose Parade are now available through the Church Business Office. The discounted price is \$60 per seat with parking passes available at \$28 per car. Please contact Tim Sun to secure your tickets either by calling him at (626) 796-0157 or by emailing him at [tsun@fumcpasadena.org](mailto:tsun@fumcpasadena.org).



## Holiday Homes Tour

Methodist Hospital presents the 54th Annual Holiday Homes Tour and Tea House

December 5, 2008  
9:00am to 8:00pm

This year's Holiday Homes Tour will feature three lovely homes in the area. The Tea House will be held in Ayers Hall at the Arboretum of Los Angeles County, 301 North Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia. Complimentary tea, coffee and a pastry will be served as you browse with friends through the vendor and craft displays.

Brochures available in the Church Office.

## Our Witness *continued from page 1*

### A Dickens' Christmas

Give Us a Listen

Sponsored by the Arts and Theatre Arts Committees, a dramatic reading of Dickens' *A*

*Christmas Carol* with music will be held in the Chapel on

December 5th and 7th. The December 5th performance will be at 7:30 p.m. and the December 7th performance will be at 6:00 p.m.

Between Advent Workshop and the 6:00 p.m. performance, a light dinner will be offered first come, first served—location to be announced.



One way of explaining or defining stewardship is the management of God's household. Along with money, it is the way we manage gifts, talents, resources, time and energy.

As a child, my model of stewardship was that the United Methodist Church received a large share of all of the resources of my family. I was raised as a PK (preacher's kid) with very positive experiences in the various churches my dad served in California and Arizona.

My deeper understanding of our stewardship of money, however, developed more fully later in my life. Over the years, I heard the explanations and witnesses of what tithing was about and I thought I understood the concept, but not really. For too many years, I thought that it would work to have the attitude of "after I pay the bills and get this and that" (which I could always justify), I would give what was left to the church. I would *try* to commit a certain amount and didn't always give that amount because after I had paid for my first priorities, it was not there. So, I'd play the game of telling myself I would do it better the next month.

During the years that my first husband, Steve, was sick and dying of A.L.S., I gained a profound understanding of the gift of God's grace through and in *all* circumstances. While the church and my call to ministry had been strong, I was challenged at a much deeper level, and I personally experienced the miracles and the healing of God's grace and abundant giving during this time in radically new ways. It is hard to explain, but I often think that if not for my faith tested and met through the church and God, I might still be living in darkness.

It was in that deeper realization and experience of giving and grace that I realized that my not giving to God the first of my financial gifts meant my vocation of servant ministry was off balance. I am all about an organized life (or faking it) so I always make lists and prioritize my time. In my giving God

what was left, I was giving God the message that my blessings from God were first to be used for what *I* wanted and next, maybe, for God. I was hurting myself, my faith and God.

When Dan and I were married, we committed to tithing, or giving 10% of our net income, along with our commitment and vows to one another for the rest of our lives. It is our covenant with one another and God. We get behind some months but it is always paid by the end of the year. In addition, we choose special outreach opportunities that come along particularly when disaster strikes and our United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) gives us each the opportunity to channel funds to persons who happened to be in a place we were not and their lives turned upside down. The balance and wholeness this has added to life cannot be put into words. It is a discipline and a commitment, not to the church, but to God.

Last night I attended a Conference-wide stewardship event hosted by our church. The program featured several witnesses by clergy and lay representatives from churches around our conference.

When you hear numerous stories from and about people who give generously of their gifts in this way, it doesn't take long to recognize some very common themes, nor does it take long to begin to realize some essential aspects of good stewardship of our lives and our money. Here are just a couple of those themes that I heard expressed in various ways:

**The commitment and discipline of giving generously brings great JOY.** You can see and experience this over and over as people share their stories and the miracles. After all, we are responding and acting the way that God created us, and discovering more fully who we are, brings joy!

**Only as we fully recognize and understand the fact that all we are and have**

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## Our Witness *continued from page 4*

are gifts of God, are we able to understand the call to stewardship in our lives. This is really essential, and it took me years to absorb (and I still am). With this recognition, we are giving to our source through the work of the church locally and in the world.

When we commit ourselves to God and

God's call in our lives, there are blessings beyond what we previously believed possible.

I challenge all of us to move forward with faith and trust, and give more than you thought you could or think you can, in many ways in your life. You will be blessed. Thanks be to God.

Rev. Debbie Gara

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## ATTENTION SHOPPERS – The CHRISTMAS MARKET RETURNS Holiday Gifting Made Easy!

The "Market" returns to First Church November 30th, December 7th and 14th.

This will be an opportunity for you to purchase gifts that keep on giving. We will offer shares of services that reach out to those in need – health care for children in need, support for the homeless, those with



HIV-AIDS to name a few. In addition, Third World Handarts, Ten Thousand Villages, and Erich and Irmgard Frey will bring a bazaar of beautiful and unique, handmade gifts from third world countries available for purchase that benefit the artisans who made them. Please keep these upcoming dates in mind.



The Towne Singers invite you to attend  
*Carols 'Round the Towne*

A choral concert of favorite holiday carols  
conducted by Beth Richey.

Sunday, December 7th, 4:30 p.m.

Special reduced rate for PFUMC members:

\$15 at the door, \$12.50 in advance,

\$8 children (10 years & under)

For advance ticket sales, call

(818) 952-7402 or (626) 233-2466.

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### Reaching Out...

Margo Johnstone, a long-time FUMC member who is now living in Ventura, was recently diagnosed with metastatic ovarian cancer. She is now at home under hospice care. Cards are always appreciated and may be sent to 1708 Tanager #102, Ventura, CA 93003.

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### Advent Workshop - December 7th

Please consider contributing your evergreen trimmings and branches to our wreath-making table! You can bring your greens to the Cloister before church or before the Workshop on December 7th. We welcome traditional pine, holly, and juniper as well as Southern California accents such as eucalyptus, hopseed, potocarpus and whatever else you would like to contribute!

We also need cotton fabric, solid color or with small design (no stripes), that would be good to use for fabric ornament wreaths. Christmas colors are great, but other bright colors would be good too. Small pieces will work well.

Also, an afternoon of creativity really stirs the appetite and we would love to receive

plates of homemade treats to set out for hungry crafters! Bring any donations to the kitchen on the day of Workshop. Thank you!



Sunday School  
**Big Red  
Barrel  
Donations  
for  
December**

MOISTURIZING  
CREAM and  
CHAPSTICK



# Light from the Catacombs

by Pat Mann, FUMC Archivist

## Questers

Questers will be having their Christmas party Friday, December 12th, 6:00 p.m. at Coco's Restaurant, Colorado at Michillinda. Please make your reservation by December 1st with Chuck Williams at (626) 795-3657. Cost is \$35.00 per person. Bring a gift for a teenager marked "boy" or "girl" for Friends in Deed.

## Aldersgate Fellowship

Members and guests of Aldersgate Fellowship will enjoy their annual Christmas dinner and program Friday, December 12th, beginning at 6 p.m. in the Church Lounge.



## The Secret Phone Call

Our Embassy in Iran knew that something was going to happen but Washington made no plans. Four days later, we were invaded by terrorists. All were blindfolded and became hostages. The Khomeini regime backed these radicals and no progress was made for their release.

Two U.S. Methodist ministers and a Catholic priest flew to Teheran, were blindfolded and taken to the Embassy library which was full of cameramen. They were allowed to bring the Easter service to only three or four at a time. Many were forbidden as punishment.

After our aborted rescue attempt, the hostages were scattered so that their locations were unknown and we were told that they would be killed if we used force. One of these hostages was Gary Lee, 37, ten years as a U.S. foreign service officer. He told of groups of three to five that would talk about Christ and his part in all of this. "It would take a miracle to save us!" Did miracles still happen? A dove flew down and landed on the windowsill and



flew away. Was this a message of hope? After a year, these hostages began to fear that we had forgotten them.



Rev. George Mann received an anonymous phone call representing an organization. Would he deliver a message to Rev. Earl Lee, pastor of First Nazarene Church in Pasadena? The Lees were so appreciative to

hear from their hostage son, Gary, after 444 days. The 51 hostages were released to find that the miracle had happened. Not only had they not been forgotten, but it had brought us together as a nation.



Ironically, Rev. Phineas Bresee had served First Methodist Church, Pasadena, in the late 1880s and later founded the Nazarene Church.



## A LETTER



Dear Jesus,

The other day I was reading a book about you and a conversation you had with your friends. You told them, if they gave a glass of water to someone thirsty, they gave it, in fact, to you. Really? Does that mean that you have so much compassion for every person on earth that you feel their thirst and know the relief of a drink?

If that's true, then are our Union Station Dinner Teams serving dinner to you on Sunday

evenings? Are you actually looking out of the eyes of the homeless and saying thanks with their voices? Is it you we are meeting there? Sometimes it kind of feels that way.

Oh, and can I ask you for a favor? Could you encourage some others to join us on the teams? We sometimes need more cooks – and you know who would really love doing it. Just have them call Wanda Gae (282-4011) or Elaine (755-0801). That would be great. Thanks, Jesus.

# Stewardship Message

by J.P. Harris  
Stewardship Committee Co-Chair

Consecration Sunday is once again upon us. This is the annual event that focuses on our giving thanks to the Lord for all that has been given to us. It allows us the opportunity to demonstrate our love of the Lord and our thankfulness for the gifts we have received.

The past year has been a challenge for FUMC and for its individual members. Retirement accounts have shrunk, investment returns gone negative, our Foundation's investments generating lower returns than anticipated. Yet despite these setbacks and challenges, we should all be thankful for what we have. Now is not the time to be cautious or afraid, but bold and confident. It is in the Lord's grace that we can take comfort that the Creator will guide us through and, in that, I have total faith.

This Sunday, Bishop Grant Hagiya will lead and inspire us all to take stock in who we are as Christians and demonstrate to the Lord how much we are indebted for all we have been provided. For despite these troubling and uncertain times, we can be thankful and take heart in the fact God will continue to provide for us. There is no better time to demonstrate extravagant generosity, to dramatically show our faith in our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Regular, systematic giving is the best way to maintain your faithfulness. Remember, for Christians, the act of giving demonstrates our awareness and thankfulness for the gifts we

have received and our willingness to give back to God a small portion of what He has so generously given. We are all on the same path, but at different points. Many in our congregation currently tithe and those numbers have grown. But that does not mean you must tithe. The point is to begin the journey by identifying what percentage of your income you wish to give back regularly to the Lord and be disciplined, as in disciple, in your giving.

Robert Schnase states in *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*, "People who give generously to the church do so because they genuinely desire to make a positive difference for the purposes of Christ and because they want to align their lives with higher purposes. They give in response to the Spirit's urging and feel a soul-sustaining satisfaction in the sense of meaning and connection that comes with generosity. They give because they love God, love the church, and desire to grow in love of neighbor."

Stewardship focuses on the spiritually powerful truth that it is not the church's need to receive that motivates the giver but the Christian's need to give. Please give prayerful consideration to how you will demonstrate your thanks to God for all that you have been given.



## Help Needed!!

The Shepherds Visitation Committee is preparing Thanksgiving Gift Bags for the members of our congregation who are unable to be with us in worship due to illness or disability. Assistance is needed to deliver the gift bags during the week before Thanksgiving. If you are able to deliver a gift bag they will be available in the foyer in front of Fellowship Hall on Sunday, November 23rd during the Consecration Sunday luncheon.



Thanksgiving  
Gift Bags

## California Wildfires: How You Can Help

The devastation of the on-going California wildfires is overwhelming...especially for those who have been directly affected by them. The Conference has an established Disaster Relief Fund to receive contributions that can be distributed to those in need. You may make a contribution to this fund through the church by designating "Fire Relief" on the memo line of your check.



# NOVEMBER-DECEMBER

## FUMC CALENDAR of EVENTS

22	4:00pm	Organ Recital by Ae-Kyong Kim	Sanctuary
23		Consecration Sunday	
	10:00am	Worship/Bishop Grant Hagiya	Sanctuary
	11:30am	Thanksgiving Luncheon	Fellowship Hall
24	7:00pm	Christian Believer	Adult Lounge
	7:00pm	Jesus in the Gospels	Church Lounge
25	7:00pm	Adult Ministry Committee	Church Lounge
	7:00pm	Committee on Lay Leadership	Conference Room
26	6:30pm	Library Committee	Library
27		Happy Thanksgiving!	Church Office is closed.
28		Day after Thanksgiving	Church Office is closed.
30	11:15am	Christmas Market	Fellowship Hall
	11:45am	Girl Scout Troop 529	Rooms 200 & 300
12/01	7:00pm	Christian Believer	Adult Lounge
	7:00pm	Jesus in the Gospels	Church Lounge
	7:00pm	Theatre Arts Committee	Youth Lounge
02	7:00pm	Reconciling Committee	Fellowship Hall
03	9:00am	Homeless Prevention Program	Great Hall
	6:00pm	Board of Trustees	Church Lounge
	7:00pm	Home Group/Elaine Enzminger	Off-site
04	6:30pm	Dicken's Christmas Rehearsal	Chapel
	7:00pm	Simply Christian Adult Study	Church Lounge
	7:15pm	Home Group/John Evans	Off-site
05	7:30pm	Dicken's Christmas Performance	Chapel
07	1:00pm	Advent Workshop	Fellowship Hall
	4:30pm	Towne Singers' Christmas Concert	Sanctuary
	6:00pm	Dicken's Christmas Performance	Chapel

## Weekly & Ongoing FUMC Events

<b>SUNDAYS</b>	
9:00am	Sunday School for all ages
10:00am	Sunday Morning Worship
11:30am	Youth Handbell Choir
5:30pm	Youth Choir Choir Room
6:45pm	UMYF Dinner & Program Fellowship Hall
<b>TUESDAYS</b>	
10:00am	Social Services Great Hall
7:00pm	Boy Scout Tr. 27 Scout Room
7:30pm	Adult Handbell Rehearsal Bell Room
7:30pm	AA Meeting Adult Lounge
<b>WEDNESDAYS</b>	
10:00am	Foundation Office open 'til 6:00pm
7:00pm	Young People's AA Meeting Adult Lounge
7:30pm	Adult Choir Rehearsal Choir Room

## FUMC Prayer List

Please remember persons on our prayer list in your regular prayers...

*We lift up to God these prayers for healing...*

Wayne Brubaker	David Pierce
Rev. Catie Coots	Crystal Powers
Patrice Daniels	Lee Rahn
Gary Dunlap	Hazel Rice
Soledad Jolo	Rev. Manick Samuel
John Kearney	Norm Schmidt
Edna Laird	Kathy Summers
Lois Lawson	Cherry Walther
Phil Lussier	Jan Wentz
Bronnie McNabb	Elizabeth Wittry
John Moran	Rev. Michael Yoshii
Janet Oderkirk	

*for comfort:* the family of Albert Buonassissi, the family of David Parker, Mary Davis and her family, the family of Almir Wacha, Russell Walker

*for safety:* Doe Hain Jamall and her family

*for the resolution of conflict:* for the people of Afghanistan, Darfur, Georgia, Iraq, Kenya, Pakistan, Sudan, Tibet, Zimbabwe, Israel and Gaza.



**First United Methodist Church**  
500 East Colorado Blvd.  
Pasadena, CA 91101

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Tel: 626.796.0157  
Fax: 626.568.1615  
www.fumcpasadena.org