

**Finances:**

Receipts for November - \$2,823.71

Disbursements for November - \$3,144.36

**January Birthdays:**

2<sup>nd</sup> Zoey George

11<sup>th</sup> Nancy Broersma

**January Anniversaries**

28<sup>th</sup> Dean and Venecia George

**NEWSLETTER**

**CADILLAC  
SOUTH COMMUNITY  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

11800 47 Mile Rd.

Cadillac, MI 49601

(231) 775-3067

[www.scommunityumc.org](http://www.scommunityumc.org)

**January 2025**

**Worship 9:00 a.m.**

**Pastor Karen Sorden**

Email: [ksorden@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ksorden@sbcglobal.net)

Cell Phone: 231-282-0433

Downtown Cadillac Office Phone: 231-775-5362

Office Hours at Cadillac UMC: Monday-Thursday, 9:30am - 1:00 pm.

Sabbath Day: Friday

*Vision Statement*

*We are a family united by God's love: serving, sharing, and growing together.  
It is our mission to call people into a relationship with Jesus Christ.*

Dear Sparkle-Seeking Saints,

January 24, 1848, marks the beginning of the California gold rush when James W. Marshall accidentally discovered gold near Sutter's Mill in Coloma, CA. It created quite a stir, as you can imagine. The real rush began, however, when President James K. Polk made an announcement about it later in the year. It is estimated that 300,000 people seeking their fortune arrived in California between 1848 and 1855. They were called "forty-niners" because the initial onslaught of miners arrived at the beginning of 1849. In the beginning, gold could literally be picked up off the ground. In addition to many Americans, immigrants from Europe, Latin America, Australia, and Asia arrived by boat and covered wagon.

Unfortunately, the California gold rush is one of the more violent periods in American history. Once the initial boom was over, vigilantism reared its ugly head, and militia groups began to attack new arrivals, particularly Asians and Latin Americans. It is estimated that one in twelve immigrants died due to the efforts of the vigilantes. All of this pales in comparison to the treatment of Native Americans in California during this period. The governor of the new state of California called for the extinction or removal of all Native Americans. A bounty was placed on the scalps of Native Americans to encourage increased vigilante activity. This bounty was paid for men, women, and children. One aspect of the vigilante activity and movement to eradicate the Native American population was the enactment of laws to enslave and traffic in Native American labor. All of this was made legal by the government of California.

The sparkle of gold drew much of the world to California, only to have that sparkle tarnished by greed and hatred. As we prepare to celebrate Epiphany on January 6th, we are reminded of another sparkle that attracted seekers so long ago. This attraction led toward a different kind of gold rush which has spread love not hatred.

In Matthew 2:1-12 we read of wise men from the East who came to Jerusalem seeking "the child who has been born king of the Jews." They had seen "his" star and traveled to Judea to "pay him homage." These wise men proved to be upsetting for King Herod who attempted to enlist their aid in locating the child foretold by the prophets. The wise men found the babe but returned to their homeland rather than share their findings with Herod. The result of the actions of the wise men was the order to massacre of all male children under the age of two by Herod. This was done out of fear of losing his kingdom. The violence that ensued grew out of greed and hatred.

Fear, greed, and hatred have always found a way into God's creation. Jesus came into the world to show us a better way. The sparkle of the star that the wise men followed is just as lustrous today as it was then. The value of gold rises and falls with the human desire to grow wealthy. Our Lord's star remains bright as each of his disciples share the brilliance that is God's love. I pray that as you reflect on the Christmas season that will end with Epiphany January 6, and look forward to the New Year, you will remember that the gift of love is the greatest gift of all. And, wise people still seek him.

Sparklingly,  
Pastor Karen