

# Los Altos United Methodist Church



In 1950, the United Methodist Conference appointed Charles W. Cox to begin a church in the city of Los Altos on some beautiful property, owned by the Conference, across the street from Rancho Shopping Center on Fremont Avenue. In August, eighty people were gathered under the oak trees (approximately where the church office is situated today), a pulpit was built and, with folding chairs, they began services. As it became colder, services were held in the Los Altos Theater on Main Street.

These founding members raised money to build the first building by picking and drying apricots and selling them. The old Social Hall was the first building (Creekside Center now stands in that spot) and was used for church services, Sunday School and fellowship. Then the Sunday School building was constructed (where the library and classrooms are now) followed by the parsonage. The parsonage was razed during the major building campaign of 1998 when the new Music room and Live Oak room were built along with a new driveway and parking area. Another part of the major building campaign of 1998 was the Children's Center that was built to accommodate up to 300 preschool children.

The church was called "The Community Church of Los Altos." We have always been open to the community, sharing our space and opening our doors for all to enter and have the opportunity to be part of our church community.

In 1968, the name of the Methodist Church was changed by the General Conference to United Methodist and we became the "Los Altos United Methodist Church." We remain a church that reaches out and now have become a regional church with people attending from Morgan Hill to San Mateo, from Santa Cruz to Fremont.

We have had just a few Senior Pastors in our 60+ year history. Reverend Charles (Chuck) Cox served here for 19 years, Reverend Myron Herrell was here for 9 years, Reverend John Dodson was here for 21 years, Reverend Mark Bollwinkel for 15+ years, Reverend Mariellen Yoshino for 3 years, and Reverend Kathi McShane has been our Senior Pastor since July 1, 2017.

In July 2019, through the process of merger, LAUMC became a two-campus church, with a second campus in downtown Mountain View, at the corner of Hope and Mercy Streets. Plans for full use of this site are still in process, but we know we want it to be a vibrant center for community life, serving people, bring people together across differences of all kinds.

Los Altos UMC offers multiple worship services each weekend. These services enable the church to offer a variety of worship times and styles, including both traditional and contemporary.

## What is the Journey?

LAUMC began in 1950 as the dream of a few Los Altos citizens for a community church. Could our courageous and sacrificing founding mothers and fathers have ever dreamt that their community church would become what it is today?

Today, LAUMC has approximately 2400 members, 2500 constituents, worship attendance includes 500 in person with another 250-300 each week online in retirement facilities and in other locations, a \$2.4 million operating budget and is one of the Northern California leaders in the United Methodist denomination. We are a group of people defined by an ever present restlessness to do more. It is not enough for us to have experienced the power and love of God's grace and possibility. We want to share that with others. We want to share it with the world.

It's not enough for us to enjoy the privileges and prosperity of our life in Silicon Valley. We are not comfortable knowing that one in four children in California live in poverty, or that thousands of children will die every day of hunger and malnutrition-related diseases around the world. We reject violence as a solution to our problems. We seek to become *changemakers*—a people inspired by the compassion of Jesus to be part of God's dream that all of our overlapping and intersecting communities will become places where *everyone* can flourish.

We are trying to live our faith out in three specific ways:

By making and sustaining our **Connections**—with God, with each other, with our neighbors

With actions that stretch toward a wider **Compassion**

By practicing **Courage** and taking meaningful risks

The original Methodist mission statement of John and Charles Wesley in 18th century England was: "To reform the nation and . . . spread scriptural holiness over the land." The mission of the United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ *for the transformation of the world*. For us, faith is both a deeply personal experience and an influence that moves us beyond ourselves, out into the world to make a positive difference.

When you join this church, that is what we hope you want for yourself as well. We believe the Journey into life as God intended us to live it will bring you great joy, great challenge and great meaning.

Here you are at the start of the journey. And we're glad to be on it with you.