

Shaking It Up (the literal edition)

You might have heard that we had a bit of an earthquake (6.1 on the Richter scale). Anything around 6 and you're likely to feel it, and this one was shallow, which meant more of us were shaken.

Me? As a gal who grew up in California, I woke up briefly, knew it was an earthquake (the vibrating and noisy thing), but it wasn't so big that I jumped out of bed and turned on the TV. I just went back to sleep (which these days is a blessing). I can't speak for the cats, my guess is that they freaked out more than I did.

At alarm time, I turned on my clock-radio, realized that it was earthquake coverage, so maybe this was a bigger deal than I thought. Five minutes in, the announcer says that my church, First United Methodist Church of Vallejo, has had bricks falling off one side of the building. Ok, now you've got my attention.

Still, it look a bit to get the fog cleared, but I managed to call one of the nearest members, who told me her husband and a few of the guys were down at the church to clean up. Which they did well, making sure to put up tape and other safety precautions so folks wouldn't get hurt if/when there is an aftershock. By the time I arrived (which was just when all the roads were back open, thank goodness), all that remained was a bit of vacuuming in the Sanctuary for worship.

This is the damage that we experienced:



Yeah, that's a whole chunk of facing brick gone. The church is actually not a brick building, it's wood (that's good in earthquake country), with a shell of bricks covering it.

I got one more minute of fame again (apparently briefly on a local TV station, [interviewed in the LA Times](#)), and now in the middle of working to coordinate repairs.

We were very, very lucky. A church one block down was red-tagged and they will have to pull

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down the bell tower because it is so dangerous. None of our members were injured, although some lost glass items.

To the north, Napa is reeling. Our counterpart Methodist church in Napa has at least \$1 million in damages because a wall of the Sanctuary separated from the rest of the building. Many businesses are shut, homes are in disarray, utilities being restored.

One irony for me was that I had bought two more Earthquake backpack kits on Friday to give as Christmas gifts (a Living Social coupon I had to use up by that date). If you don't have a bigger kit at home and another in your car, and a few items at your place of work, now is the time to get started. [I like this company here in San Rafael](#), but please, get prepared!