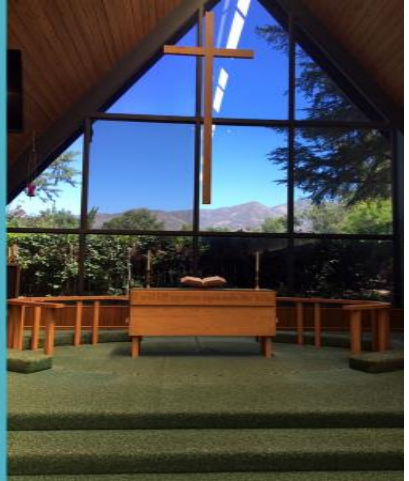


Ojai United Methodist Church

Staying in the Loop

January 3, 2021



*“Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.”*

(Isaiah 60:1, NRSV)

Spend Every Sunday Morning with Pastor Jaime!

Below is the Zoom information for Sunday, January 10th's online Worship & Fellowship gathering. It will also be sent via email later this week:

To join this Zoom gathering by telephone, dial:

+1 669 900 9128

Meeting ID: 873 7573 5056

To join by computer, click on the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87375735056>

Meeting ID: 873 7573 5056

Scriptures for January 10th: Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11



The Virtual “C.A.P. Cap” is Going Around!

As we have done in years past, we are once again passing around C.A.P.'s (Ojai's Community Assistance Program's) donation cap to help raise funds for feeding our community's homeless.

Your generous donations will be sent to C.A.P. to help purchase food items (in conjunction with additional food donated by churches and other organizations) and to help pay for the delicious meals that Linda Aldous and Carol Longhom prepare on behalf of our church for dinners on the second Monday of each month.

If you would like to make a monetary donation, please write “C.A.P.” in the memo line of your check so that we know to earmark your gracious gift for this specific purpose. Thank you so much!

We Need YOU on Our Team!

The OUMC C.A.R.E. Team is back at work, reaching out to our homebound and shut-in members in fun, creative, and safe ways to let them know that they are loved and have not been forgotten! If you would like to participate in the C.A.R.E. Team, let Pastor Jaime know!

“I thank my God every time I remember you...”

Dear Beloved Ojai UMC Church Family,

I wanted to take a moment to thank you all for your very gracious and kind monetary Christmas gift.

Each and every one of you have been so kind, gracious, and welcoming of me since the moment I stepped foot into our beautiful community - and our beautiful church - six months ago. While I genuinely consider the wonderful friendships I have made here, and the abundant love you have shown to me and each other as my true gifts, please know how very humbled and grateful I am for this additional gift. All of you are very precious to me and I am still so completely grateful to God for bringing me to you and allowing me the honor, privilege, and pleasure of serving God and our community with you!

Thank you, again, for your very thoughtful and gracious remembrance. I stand with the Apostle Paul and, from my heart, declare with him: *“I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now”* (Philippians 1:3-5).

Pray Unceasingly...

Although we are not currently able to gather in person to worship or pray, we most certainly can still pray together! As the Apostle Paul wrote in his Epistle to the Romans (Chapter 8), *“Nothing can separate us from the love of God through Christ Jesus.”* Prayer connects us all, as God’s Children. And nothing can ever separate us!

This week let us be in prayer for each other and for our dear brothers and sisters listed below.

For strength and health: Wilma Coke (recovering from a broken foot); Diana Criger (recovering from a recent seizure); Joan Hager (recovery from a recent back injury); Pastor Rachel and Nick (and precious son Hunter David); Linda Margeson (Marie Forrest’s cousin); Monyeen (Art Harris’s daughter-in-law); David & Barbara Mark (health and financial issues); Franco (neighbor of the Tholl’s); Vince Burgio (Jean Ball’s son-in-law); Ryan Hayes (Monica’s husband); Marilee Sherman; Jeane & Michael (Jennie Leidig’s niece and her husband); Donna (Taundra Roddick’s mother); Melinda Snider (friend of Laurie King); Lisa (Doreen’s niece); Katie (friend of Soni Wright); The Dick MacIntosh family; Marilee Sherman; Carol Longhom; Aleena (granddaughter of the Dennis’s); Linda Harris; Laurie King; Linda Aldous; Casey Roddick; Jesse Rusch; the unemployed seeking financial security; Stella Lorraine Preston; Pauline Malos (living at The Artesian); Joel (suffering from COVID symptoms); Richard (dealing with challenging, hard times); Jeff (going through life difficulties).

Our homebound friends: Lorayn Nelson, Robin Chambliss, Bob Unruhe, Norma Mitrany, Elaine Nelson, Allen Spencer, Lynn Hernandez, Jeanne Keyser, Pauline Larwood.

For our Covenant Churches: Pearblossom Community UMC and Pastor Glen Hoskins; Saint Andrew UMC (Santa Maria) and Pastor Eric Scott.

For our Church Leadership: North District Office; Rev. Jim Powell; staff and district leaders; Cal-Pac Conference; Bishop Grant Hagiya; staff and conference leaders.

Other prayers:

All those effected by COVID-19; all people in the work field battling and working with COVID-19 head on; all who are quarantined; all who are alone in hospitals; all who are facing financial issues due to loss of jobs and/or unemployment; all who are feeling anxious and uncertain; all who are navigating how to remain connected with loved ones; Immigrants and their families; a sense of community among students; our UMC Denomination; Veterans—those serving and their families; Ojai’s Homeless neighbors; the continued actions of justice in the Black Lives Matter movement; the young people who are demanding change with respect, peace, and their powerful voices; for the mental health and stability of all people during these trying time...

GOD... IN YOUR MERCY... HEAR OUR PRAYERS. AMEN!

From the Pastor's Desk...



Dear Friends and Family of Ojai UMC,

I recently received a copy of a short story called *The last burro*, from a friend of mine. The author of this story is Baxter Black, DVM. It offers a very unique and creative perspective on the Christ Child's birth. I wanted to share it with you now. See where this story takes your imagination, heart, and soul!

The last burro

He was the last burro left in the dusty corral.

His two companions had been sold by the man. They were younger, stronger and finer looking even by burro standards, which are quite high. They were worth more and brought more money which was what the man needed.

Pickin's were slim. Every evening the man would stake the last burro out down below the spring to graze. During the day he went with the man and packed mud or water or rocks or wood.

One morning the man fed him a small bowl of grain. This continued for several days until the morning the man brushed him down, bobbed his tail and trimmed his long whiskers. Next thing he knew, the burro was blanketed and fit with a pack saddle. Two panyards were hung over the frame and a thick pad was laid between the forks.

The burro watched with his wise burro eyes as the man led the woman out to the hitch rail and gently lifted her up on his pack saddle. The man shouldered his own pack, picked up his walkin' stick and clucked to the burro.

The burro was old but he carried the load as easily as an old man milks a goat. From memory... automatic. As he walked down the road he passed his two younger, stronger companions. They were hitched to a water wheel and strained in their harness as they walked round and round. 'Better this than that,' thought the last burro.

They walked all day. It was the cool season, his hooves were hard as iron. The woman balanced well.

The second day the woman got off and walked a while. The man tied his pack on the saddle and they walked on. As the days went by the woman got off more and more often and they'd stop to rest for a while.

They arrived in a town late one night. The man went into a house. The woman waited. Momentarily the man returned and led the burro around back to the stable. The burro was glad to get the saddle off. He was watered, tied in a far corner and fed some grass hay.

The burro watched as the man put a blanket in one of the stalls and laid the woman down. Time passed. Later in the night the woman walked out carrying a man-child and laid him in a hay manger.

The burro slept, as old men do, with one ear cocked. He saw the sheepmen come, he heard the singing. He'd heard it before. The burro had worked the sheep camps.

Next morning the man fed and watered the burro and left. While he was gone the woman picked up the man-child and brought him to the burro. She raised one of his tiny hands and stroked the burro's soft nose. She, herself, patted the burro's neck.

On the trip back home the woman and man-child rode on the burro's back.

As the years went by the woman would bring the growing man-child out to the corral and hold him up or set him on the burro's back. She would talk man-talk to the child. And when the burro got too old to work the man-child would come and stroke his nose and give him a handful of grain.

One day the burro could no longer get up. He became frightened. The woman and the grown young man came to the corral and held his head in their laps. They patted his rough coat and stroked his soft nose. Eventually the burro closed his eyes. He felt a teardrop on his face. It was the last thing he ever felt.

Wishing you Warm and Happy New Year's Blessings!

Pastor Jaime

“The Journey of the Magi” - by T.S. Eliot

‘A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For the journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter.’
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:
A hard time we had of it.

At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,
And three trees on the low sky,
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,

Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins,
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: we were led all that way for
Birth or death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and
death, but had thought they were different;
this Birth was hard and bitter agony for us, like Death
our death,
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.

VERSE TO REMEMBER

*“Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is great: He was revealed in flesh,
vindicated in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among Gentiles, believed in
throughout the world, taken up in glory” (1 Timothy 3:16, NRSV)*



Got a question?

Seeking support or conversation?

Contact Pastor Jaime anytime!

Email:

Ojaiumcpastor@gmail.com

Cell: (303) 475-4990