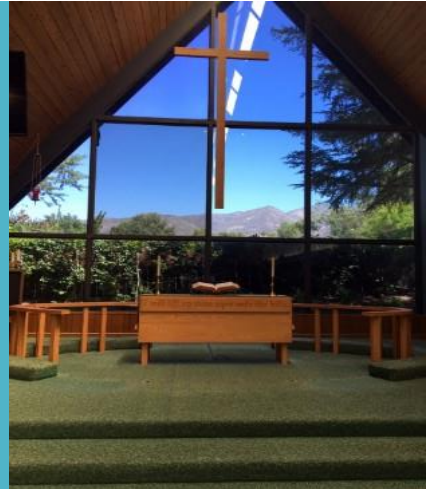


Ojai United Methodist Church

Staying in the Loop

February 21, 2021



“For the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and humans have no advantage over the animals; for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are from the dust and all turn to dust again.”
(Ecclesiastes 3:19-20, NRSV)

Pastor Jaime’s Mid-Week Devotions on YouTube

Below is the Youtube link for Pastor Jaime’s Mid-week Devotion from last Wednesday (February 17th). This video devotion is also posted on OUMC’s Facebook Page.

Simply click on the link below and it should take you right to the video! Or copy this link and paste it into your Internet browser.

Pastor Jaime’s Mid-Week Devotion (from February 17th):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqM54lZ0BNM&t=2s>

Spend Every Sunday Morning with Pastor Jaime!

Below is the Zoom information for Sunday, February 28th’s 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 (don’t forget to press the # key when prompted!)

Meeting ID: 817 1479 2411

To join by computer, click on the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81714792411>

Meeting ID: 817 1479 2411

Scriptures for February 28: Jeremiah 33:2-3; John 10:14-16; 27



Church Chuckles

What do they call pastors in Germany?

German Shepherds!

Courtesy: <https://www.makeitclearnow.org/re humor.html>



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

Guess what’s going around again?! 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. Thanks so much!

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS: FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

PRAY. *Prayer is God’s invitation into conversation. It’s our way to be thankful, bring our needs and desires to God, and offer up prayers on behalf of others. Use this week to read and pray the Lord’s Prayer, then create your own prayer you can use throughout Lent.*

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: The family of Wilma Coke; Lyle (Nancy Dennis’ brother, suffering from Multiple Myeloma); the family of Monyeen Harris; Brandon (brother of Linda Aldous & Carol Longhom’s friend diagnosed with cancer); Larrilyn Bangs (recovering from Covid); Diana Criger (recovering from a recent seizure); Joan Hager (recovery from a recent back injury); Brenda Nelson and Bob Murphy (Marie Forrest’s cousins); Jesse Rusch; Pastor Rachel and Nick (and son Hunter David); David & Barbara Mark (health and financial issues); Ryan Hayes (Monica’s husband); Marilee Sherman; Jeane & Michael (Jennie Leidig’s niece and her husband); Donna Gross (Taundra Roddick’s mother); Lisa (Doreen’s niece); Katie (friend of Soni Wright); Carol Longhom; Aleena (granddaughter of the Dennis’s); Linda Harris; Laurie King; Linda Aldous; Casey Roddick; Stella Lorraine Preston; Pauline Malos (living at The Artesian); Joel (suffering from COVID symptoms); Richard (dealing with challenging, hard times).

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: Thousand Oaks UMC and Pastor Anna Mulford; Chatsworth West UMC and Pastor Karen Murata.

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 times...

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

From the Pastor's Desk...

Have you ever asked someone a question, and then as soon as the words came out of your mouth, you thought to yourself... “*Oh boy, that was a really SILLY question to ask!*”? You may be asking a question that someone else thinks is silly, but you genuinely don't know the answer and you need the correct information. So... should we not ask the question and assume that we know the answer, which turns out to be wrong? Or should we ask the question, no matter how silly it seems, because we really want to get to the truth?

In the Bible, Jesus asks many questions in the four gospels – 307 different questions, to be exact! Some of his questions are deeply profound, while others are probing. But sometimes Jesus asks questions that almost seem a bit silly. For instance, in Luke 18:35-41: “As Jesus is approaching Jericho, a blind man was sitting on the side of the roadside begging. When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, ‘Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.’ Then he shouted, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet; but he shouted even more loudly, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’”

What do you think? Was that a silly question? I mean, if you are blind, isn't what you want most of all to have your sight restored? Does Jesus even have to ask? The answer is *yes!*

Most of us have a tendency to assume that we know what another person needs or wants, particularly if that person is dealing with some kind of challenge or disability. Perhaps what the blind man wanted, more than anything else in the world, was something other than the restoration of his sight. He might have responded to Jesus' question by saying, “I most want to be reconciled with my father,” or “I want to share my life with someone.” One of those, or something else entirely, might have been his deepest yearning. You will only know if you ask. Jesus knew that. So, when Jesus asked, “What do you want me to do for you?” he was showing respect for the man. He was not presuming to know what he wanted; he was asking. And, maybe more importantly, Jesus was *listening*.

I would invite you, the next time you are acting as the face and hands of Jesus Christ, preparing to offer genuine loving pastoral care to someone here in our community, to consider asking the “silly question,” as Jesus did, to find out how to most caringly and authentically minister to that person.

Have a blessed week, my friends - *and be a blessing to others!*

Pastor Jaime



What is Lent? And Why Does It Last Forty Days?

Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten*, meaning “lengthen” and refers to the lengthening days of spring. The forty days represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan and preparing to begin his ministry.

Lent is a time of repentance, fasting, and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by new converts and then became a time of penance by all Christians. Today, Christians focus on relationship with God, growing as disciples and extending ourselves, often choosing to give up something or to volunteer and give of ourselves for others.

Sundays in Lent are not counted in the forty days because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter." This is why you will see the designation "Sunday in Lent" rather than "Sunday of Lent" in the naming of these Sundays. On each Lord's Day in Lent, while Lenten fasts continue, the reverent spirit of Lent is tempered with joyful anticipation of the Resurrection.

(Courtesy: <https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-what-is-lent-and-why-does-it-last-forty-days>)

A Lent Quote from John Wesley and an Idea for a Lenten Discipline: “All that a Christian does, even in eating and sleeping, is prayer, when it is done in simplicity, according to the order of God, without either adding to or diminishing from it by his own choice.” (John Wesley, from *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*)

Lenten Discipline - Think upon something ordinary that you do every day, and think about God while doing it, in a way that ties into what you're doing. Or think of a place you come to regularly, and each time think where Christ might be in this place, what Christ might do there, or what you might be led to do for Christ.

VERSE TO REMEMBER

*“Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.”*

(Joel 2:13)



Ojai United Methodist Church

Got a question?

Seeking support or conversation?

Contact Pastor Jaime anytime!

Email:

Ojaiumcpastor@gmail.com

Cell: (303) 475-4990