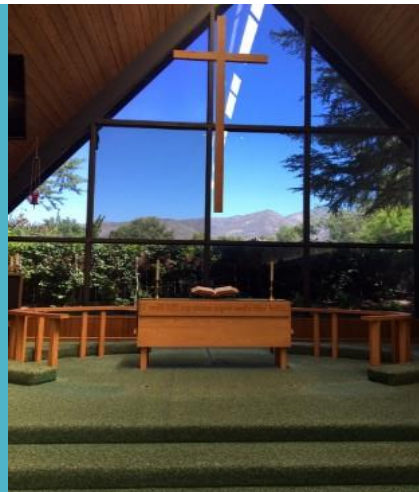


Ojai United Methodist Church

Staying in the Loop

February 28, 2021



*Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord:
though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow;
though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.*

(The United Methodist Book of Worship, pg. 325)

Pastor Jaime's Mid-Week Devotions on YouTube

Below is the Youtube link for Pastor Jaime's Mid-week Devotion from last Wednesday (February 24th). 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 24th):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9a1adEVMl4U&t=6s>

Spend Every Sunday Morning with Pastor Jaime!

Below is the Zoom information for Sunday, March 7th'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 you are prompted!)

Meeting ID: 823 3565 0090

To join by computer, click on the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82335650090>

Meeting ID: 823 3565 0090

Scriptures for March 7: Malachi 3:16; Matthew 5:21-24



SUNDAY, MARCH 7TH IS COMMUNION SUNDAY! In order to prepare for this service of Holy Communion, please remember to have a small glass of grape juice (or whatever beverage you have at home – e.g., apple juice, milk, iced tea, water) and a small piece of bread (a cracker or wafer will work, too) close by your computer when you attend our March 7th Zoom Worship service! Also - please print out the Communion liturgy or have it otherwise nearby so that you can participate in the service next Sunday. This liturgy will not be available on the computer screen during the worship service.

Lent: Time to discover your own path

Our Lenten journey is underway, 40 days of self-examination meant to deepen our relationship with God. Check out these ideas, from the **United Methodist Now** online newsletter, for finding your way through this holy season. (Cut and paste the looooooong weblink below into your browser)!

https://www.umc.org/en/content/40-days-of-lent-find-your-own-spiritual-path?utm_source=umnow&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=members&utm_content=40%20days02/22/2021&mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiTm1ZeU5qTmtNekkxWmpJeSIsInQjOiJRK09ZMjJzUnFmWTFwb2gwVDInaHU3RGc3NzN1eFVVOU0yVHhCUm02MUNEREdhM1wvQ0dXa29IS1NKWDRPK1IJS01OazRmUXRRb0tjNnpIQ3lTRnlzT083cjR0ZW5VTzVrNVRHaCtmaHE0SU4xUmpZb05DT2JjaURSSjA4YVN1U0YifQ%3D%3D

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS: SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

SERVE. *The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted many traditional ways you can serve others in your community. But we know God continues to command us to care for “the least of these.” This week, consider the special gifts and talents God has given you. How can you creatively serve your family, neighbors, and co-workers?*

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; the family of Bruce Smale (friend of the Tholl’s); 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); 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; 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: ReNew Mission (South Pasadena) and Pastor Sam Park; Burbank First UMC and Pastor Sam B. Kim.

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...

One of my favorite TV shows to watch is “*The Golden Girls*.” I think it’s clever and well-written. In one episode the mother, Sophia, informs her daughter, Dorothy, that it was time for Dorothy to “*learn the sauce*”; in other words, learn how to make the 100-year-old recipe for special sauce that had run in Sophia’s family for generations. As the story unfolds, we find out that each year a member of the family would add one special ingredient to the foundational sauce. And all the ingredients that were added to that foundational sauce were intended to *work together* to enhance and strengthen the sauce, through their own individual and unique flavor values.

That TV sitcom story reminds me of 1 Corinthians 3:10-11; 16-23. In his letter to the Corinthians, after nearly two years of building the church’s foundation, Paul tells the church that, “According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.”

God’s wisdom is the cross of Christ - and Paul’s work was aligned with that foundational reality. True wisdom wasn’t to be found in the power, eloquence, social standing, or cultural competition that seemed to enthrall the Corinthian church at that time. A building must fit its foundation, supported by it, and shaped to match it and Paul wisely built the Corinthian church on Christ - crucified as the church’s one foundation.

In his Letter to the Corinthians, Paul was stressing that the church is not just any building, but the temple of God, the place of God’s presence. Paul felt that the shared life of the community is indwelt by God. Paul’s focus was communal: it is the community of faith, the “*you together*,” that’s the holy place of God’s presence and glory. Authentically Christian spirituality is rooted in life together as the community of God’s people and rooted in the working of God within those very real human relationships.

Paul wanted the people within the Corinthian church to work together as a team. Each person possessed a different, yet complementary gift that, when used together, would build up the church. Paul asks, “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?” The way we live should be markedly different from the rest of the world. The church is more than brick and mortar; it’s also people. We are the church *together!* We are God’s temple with the Spirit dwelling in us.

Paul wanted the people to take a good, hard look at themselves and what they were doing. Were they encouraging one another in the faith, or were they fighting with each other? Were they building one another up, or tearing each other apart? According to Paul, God does not take lightly destructive behavior within the church. People who cause damage will be answerable to God. “For God’s temple is holy,” Paul writes, “And you are that temple.”

The church does not belong to itself, and it certainly does not belong to any other human, but to Christ alone. In verses 21 & 22, Paul tells us that that! He says, “All belong to us, and we belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.”

Sounds like a great “recipe” for Christian living, when we all add our own unique and beautiful “ingredients” to the church’s foundation - Jesus Christ. I don’t know about you, my friends... but I think it’s definitely time that *we all learn the sauce!* Amen!



Have a blessed week, dear ones - and *be a blessing to others!*

Pastor Jaime

Celebrate Lent... With a **PRETZEL!**

Pretzels are a popular snack year-round today, but they first became popular as a Lenten food for Christians in the seventh century. The word *Pretzel* is derived from a German word that means “little arms.” The twisted shape of pretzels is meant to resemble two arms crossed in prayer. Making Lent pretzels is a way to remember that Lent is a season of prayer.

Some traditions say that the earliest pretzels were rewards monks gave to their students for reciting their prayers correctly. But they ultimately became popular because of their simple ingredient list. The first pretzels were made with just flour, salt, and water.

Christians in the seventh century followed strict rules about what they could eat during the season of Lent. Meat, dairy, fats, and eggs were all off-limits from Ash Wednesday through Easter. Pretzels could be made with inexpensive ingredients that followed the Lent fasting practices of the time. This made them popular.

It was customary to give pretzels to townspeople who were poor on certain days of Lent. Consider making pretzels with your family or friends during Lent. As you make the pretzels, talk about what the shape of the pretzel symbolizes: that Lent is a time of prayer. Think together about how you can honor the practice of prayer. Before you eat your pretzels, say a prayer. Thank God for the food on your table and request God’s care for those who are hurting or hungry. Just as Christians did in the Middle Ages, you might consider giving some of the pretzels away as gifts.

Lent pretzel Prayer

Dear God, we ask you to bless these pretzels which we are about to eat. Each time we eat them may we be reminded that this is the season of Lent, a time of prayer. Help us to remember to pray for those who need our prayers each day. Keep your loving arms around us, O God, to protect us. In Jesus’s name, Amen.

(Courtesy: <https://www.faithward.org/lent-pretzels-recipe-and-pretzel-prayer/>)

New Address for Jim Newby!

Exciting things have been happening for our dear church family member Jim Newby! He recently *tyed the knot* with a lovely woman he met... in **Arizona**! Therefore, Jim is leaving Ojai to begin a wonderful new chapter in his life! Please feel free to send a note or card of congratulations to Jim and his new wife at Jim’s new address:

12666 S. El Camino Del Diablo
Yuma, AZ 85367



Got a question?

Seeking support or conversation?

Contact Pastor Jaime anytime!

Email:

Ojaiumcpastor@gmail.com

Cell: (303) 475-4990