

Ojai United Methodist Church

Staying in the Loop

March 7, 2021



“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.”

(1 Peter 5:6-7, NRSV)

Pastor Jaime’s Mid-Week Devotions on YouTube

Below is the Youtube link for Pastor Jaime’s Mid-week Devotion from last Wednesday (March 3rd). 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 March 3rd):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B65u7wzp6kw&t=1s>

Spend Every Sunday Morning with Pastor Jaime!

Below is the Zoom information for Sunday, March 14th’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: 874 1365 1187

To join by computer, click on the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87413651187>

Meeting ID: 874 1365 1187

Scriptures for March 14: Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:14-21

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS: THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

THANK. More than an expression, thankfulness is an attitude through which we can live out God’s blessings in our lives. Each day this week, thank someone in your life who has shown you God’s goodness in some way. How can you show God’s goodness to others around you?

Wilma Coke's Memorial Service - on Zoom

While we would all love nothing *more* than to celebrate our dear Wilma's life with much joy, love, singing, sharing of stories (*and lots of yummy food!*), current pandemic restrictions prevent us from doing that at this time. So, on **Saturday, March 13th, at 10:30 a.m.** we will be having an **outdoor Zoom Memorial Service for Wilma**. Wilma's family members will be the only ones attending in person. Later this summer, however, hopefully when County COVID restrictions loosen we here at OUMC, along with Wilma's entire community of friends, will be celebrating her life in the wonderful, gracious, and loving tradition of this church!

Below is the Zoom information for Wilma's Memorial Service. **Please note that there is a Passcode included in the login information for this service!** This information will be sent, via email, twice this week (with a live Zoom video link).

Wilma Coke's Memorial Service - Saturday, March 13th, 10:30 a.m.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83026778744?pwd=Sk5tUVVNeEILMWE2Z01wOTIBQ21LUT09>

Meeting ID: 830 2677 8744

Passcode: 148470

Or join by phone:

+1 669 900 9128

Meeting ID: 830 2677 8744

Passcode: 148470

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: Palmdale First UMC and Pastors Jim White and Jon Gentry; Knollwood UMC (Granada Hills) and Pastor Kalesita Tu'ifua.

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...

Whenever comic strip characters are torn between doing the right thing or the wrong thing, usually we see two tiny figures appearing over their heads or on their shoulders. One is an “angel” urging the person to do the *right* thing; the other a little devil - complete with horns and a pitchfork - tempting the person to do the *wrong* thing.

We're often caught in that dilemma or choice: to do the right thing, even at personal cost - or to do the wrong thing, because it's expedient and “easy,” or because we stand to gain something by it. Each one of us has faced that dilemma of having to choose, and we will continue to face it, because we are human. Even the great Apostle Paul struggled with those temptations. In Romans 7:15 he says, “*I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.*”

Isn't that our dilemma, too? We're *not* bad people who've sold our souls to the devil! We're the “good guys”! We believe in God and goodness and love and decency. We're part of the church - but we are *human*. While it's a wonderful thing to be human with God-given freedom to make choices, we are responsible for the choices we make.

Do you remember the 1950's TV game show, “To Tell the Truth”? The show featured a panel of four celebrities attempting to correctly identify a described contestant who had an unusual occupation or experience. This central character was accompanied by two impostors who pretended to be the central character. The celebrity panelists questioned the three contestants; the impostors were allowed to lie but the central character was sworn “to tell the truth”. After all the questioning, the panel attempted to identify which of the three challengers was telling the truth and was therefore the central character.

In a real sense, the Lenten season breaks into each one of our lives and asks each of us, “will the *real you*... please stand up?” And if we're honest, we'll look introspectively into our lives and evaluate the various roles we've played in various life situations. If we're honest, we'll acknowledge that our lives are a composite of good and bad; of strength and weakness; of generosity and selfishness; and of integrity and deceit. Like Paul, we don't always understand our own actions; often we fail to do the good - the Christ-like - and we find ourselves doing the very thing we hate.

So, will the real YOU... please stand up? Strengths and weaknesses, faith and doubts, grace and sins, dimples and warts! We are loved, even as we are - loved by the One who knows our full capacities and limitations; who understands our fears and failures; our open-heartedness and our self-centeredness; who understands our dilemma when we don't understand our own actions; when we don't do the good we want to do, but do the very thing we hate.

Writing in “*Alive Now!*” magazine, Dorothy Mosher wrote a prayer especially for people like us: “There is much in me, Lord, straining to be born; waiting to be poured forth, like new wine at a feast. But I hold back, because of fear or pride or anger. Loosen me up, Lord. Massage my soul with the fingers of your love... ‘til I am free to sing, to dance, to create, and to relate... to be truly myself.” In other words... the *real me*. Amen!

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

Pastor Jaime



A Statement of Faith of The United Church of Canada

We are not alone, we live in God's world.

We believe in God:

*who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others by the Spirit.*

We trust in God.

We are called to be the church:

*to celebrate God's presence,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.*

*In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.*

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

(The United Methodist Hymnal, #883)

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