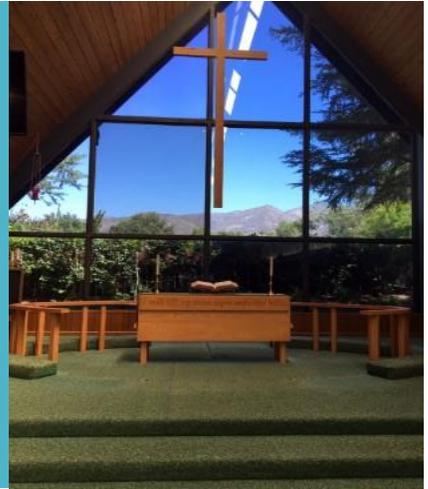


# Ojai United Methodist Church

## *Staying in the Loop*

March 21, 2021



*“I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.*

*Do you believe this?”*

*(John 11:25-26, 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 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 March 17th):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gpFxUk3eGLY&t=3s>

### **Spend Every Sunday Morning with Pastor Jaime!**

Below is the Zoom information for Sunday, March 28<sup>th</sup>’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: 880 5426 0780

To join by computer, click on the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88054260780>

Meeting ID: 880 5426 0780

Scriptures for March 28: Zechariah 9:9-10; Mark 11:1-11

### **JOURNEY TO THE CROSS: FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT**

**REFLECT**. *Living a full life requires change and adaptation. We’ve all experienced a lot of that within the past year! During this week, reflect on this season of Lent so far. What have you learned about God? Yourself? Others? How do you feel as Easter and Jesus’s ultimate sacrifice draw near?*

## Ojai UMC Re-opens Sunday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>!

*The day we've all been waiting and praying for is here!* We have received permission from our District Superintendent, Rev. Jim Powell, to reopen our Sanctuary for in-person, limited capacity worship on Sunday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 10:00 a.m.! (We will continue to gather at 10:00 a.m. as opposed to going back to our old worship time of 10:15 a.m.)

The “limited capacity” mandate from the County of Ventura and our Cal-Pac Conference means that 25% of our total congregation (47 people) will be allowed in our Sanctuary at one time (the maximum capacity for our Sanctuary is 188 people).

In order to comply with all CDC, State, County, and Cal-Pac Conference regulations, when coming onto our campus and the Sanctuary for worship:

- Everyone must wear a mask (even if you've been fully vaccinated).
- Seating will be six feet apart (family groups and individuals).
- No congregational singing, chanting, praying, or recitations will be allowed during our worship services. (*But not to worry - we have come up with very creative ways to keep our in-person services sacred and worshipful!*)
- No Coffee Fellowship following worship (no food or drink are allowed on the church campus (except for the pre-packaged Communion elements).
- Everyone who wants to attend worship in person will be required to call the church office and make a reservation.

More detailed information will be forthcoming on how our exciting re-opening rollout!

### 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 Lyle Stevenson (Nancy Dennis' brother); Jennie Leidig (recovering from a bad fall and pneumonia); Linda Aldous (recovering from back surgery on March 16<sup>th</sup>); Kevin Ball (Jean Ball's grandson, who suffered a stroke); Greg (friend of Angie, Lee Criger's daughter, recovering from brain surgery); Brandon (brother of Linda Aldous & Carol Longhom's friend diagnosed with cancer); Brenda Nelson and Bob Murphy (Marie Forrest's cousins); Jesse Rusch; Lisa (Doreen's niece); Katie (friend of Soni Wright); Carol Longhom; Aleena (grand-daughter of the Dennis's); Linda Harris; Laurie King; Stella Lorraine Preston.

**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:** Chinese Mission (South Pasadena) and Pastor Timothy Ting; the Cal-Pac North District Office and Pastor Jim Powell, Pastor Mary Dennis, staff, and leaders.

**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...



In Exodus 35:20-22, we read: *“Then all the congregation of the Israelites withdrew from the presence of Moses. And they came, everyone whose heart was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, and brought the LORD’s offering to be used for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the sacred vestments. So they came, both men and women; all who were of a willing heart brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and pendants, all sorts of gold objects, everyone bringing an offering of gold to the LORD.”*

Offerings to God come in all different shapes, sizes, and presentations! There is no gift too small to offer to God. The only factor that plays into our ability to give is our willingness to do so.

When our church joyfully reopens our Sanctuary for in-person worship services on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, those of you who have been away for the past year will be pleasantly surprised by all the work that has been done! Over the last several months, some of the projects that have been completed are: new gutters were added to Peterson Hall and to the office wall; new stucco was added to the office wall, the pastor’s office wall, and the Fireside outside wall; new benches were added to the Memorial Garden to replace the previous benches; several eucalyptus trees were topped between Noah’s Ark and the doctors’ offices while several smaller trees were removed between the dentist’s office; the juniper bushes along Maricopa Highway were removed; the eucalyptus trees by the shed were trimmed and a pine tree was removed in that same area. Additionally, several plumbing issues in the bathrooms were addressed, and a large supply of cleaning items, gloves, and masks were purchased.

However, there is still much work yet to do: putting new carpeting in the church and pastor’s offices; tuning the sanctuary piano prior to our opening day; upgrading our church computers to continue to offer Zoom worship services for those who are unable to attend in person, and more. As you can imagine, with our building users not being able to continue to rent space in our church for over a year - and our traditional fundraising activities grinding to a halt - the money is coming in much more slowly than it is going out!

As we prepare to reopen our church in our “new normal”, we want to ensure that our buildings and ministries continue to be supported by a firm foundation. Therefore, I humbly and respectfully ask that you consider making a financial “resurrection gift” to the church during this blessed Easter season. Unlike the Exodus scripture above, I’m not asking for your *“brooches and earrings and signet rings and pendants, or all sorts of gold objects”*! What I am hoping for, however, is that your *“heart will be stirred”* and *“your spirit is willing”* to make a donation in whatever amount you are comfortably able.

As we emerge from the pandemic darkness of this past year, we will all be true Resurrection People eager to go out into our community and spread the Good News of the Risen Christ! We want to ensure that our church building remains strong to continue to serve families, neighbors, friends, and community members in the many ways for which our beloved church is known.

I deeply appreciate your prayerful consideration of making a gift to the church at this time. Should you decide to do so, a special offering envelope has been included in this regular mail mailing.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, believed that giving is rooted in the very nature and activity of God, whose nature is love, which is the emptying of oneself on behalf of others, the giving of life, abundant and full life. Grace, God’s unmerited love poured out to humanity supremely in Jesus Christ, is who God is. Love for God, therefore, inevitably involves giving of oneself to God and the neighbor. One cannot love and fail to give!

Thank you, dear church family members, for the life-giving gifts of your presence, prayers, financial support, service, witness, compassion, and love throughout the years!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Jaime

## ***Good Friday: A Service of Shadows and Lament: April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7:00 PM***

***“Christ himself bore our sins in his body on the tree.  
That we might die to sin and live to righteousness.”***

*(The United Methodist Book of Worship, pg. 362)*

Our name for the Friday before Easter, "Good Friday," is most likely related to the English and the Dutch, the only two languages that use this term, which etymologists say is likely an alteration of the Germanic word, "Goddes," meaning "God's" or "Holy." That term does not mean "good." The day is called Holy Friday in nearly all other languages in the world.

Good Friday, or Holy Friday as most of the rest of the world calls it in their languages, proclaims God's purpose of loving and redeeming the world even in the face of human rejection and cruelty through the cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ. It is a day that is holy and makes us holy because God was drawing the world to God's self in Christ. (*Courtesy: <https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-where-did-good-friday-get-its-name>*).

Let us join together, as a church family and Body of Christ, for **a Zoom Good Friday Service on Friday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 7:00 p.m.** (You will be sent the Zoom information below via regular email).

### ***Good Friday: A Service of Shadows and Lament***

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83716227366>

Meeting ID: 837 1622 7366

Dial by your location

+1 669 900 9128 (don't forget to press the # key when you are prompted!)

Meeting ID: 837 1622 7366



***Got a question?***

***Seeking support or conversation?***

***Contact Pastor Jaime anytime!***

***Email:***

***[Ojaiumcpastor@gmail.com](mailto:Ojaiumcpastor@gmail.com)***

***Cell: (303) 475-4990***