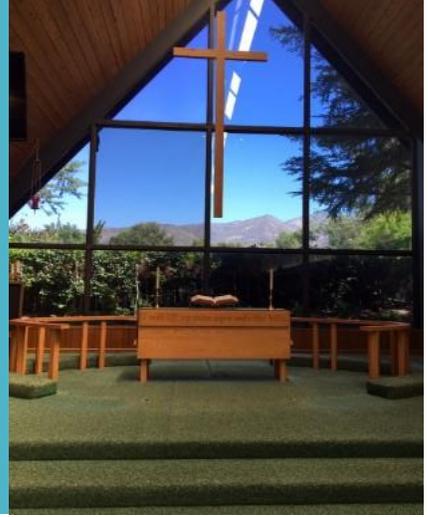


Ojai United Methodist Church

Staying in the Loop

April 11, 2021



*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
By his mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”*

(1 Peter 1:3, NRSV)

Pastor Jaime’s Mid-Week Devotions on YouTube

Below is the Youtube link for Pastor Jaime’s Mid-week Devotion from last Wednesday (April 7th). 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 April 7th):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUABtTtE0_g&t=1s

Spend Every Sunday Morning with Pastor Jaime!

Below is the Zoom information for **Sunday, April 18th’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 3856 3504

To join by computer, click on the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88038563504>

Meeting ID: 880 3856 3504

Scriptures for Sunday, April 25th: Psalm 23; John 10:11-18

Church Chuckles



CHURCH BULLETINS:

- Ladies Bible Study will be held Thursday morning at 10. All ladies are invited to lunch in the Fellowship Hall after the B.S. is done.
- The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday morning.

REMINDER: Make your reservations for May 2nd Sunday Worship Service!

Sunday, May 2nd is about **THREE WEEKS AWAY**... and our beautiful Sanctuary will be open for in-person, limited capacity Sunday morning worship services!

If you would like to attend an in-person worship service (from May 2nd on), please remember that **everyone must make a reservation prior to physically coming to church.**

To make a reservation, **please call the church office OR contact Pastor Jaime (via phone call, text, or email) BY 12:00 NOON on the THURSDAY right before the Sunday worship service you would like to attend.** Be sure to tell us how many people will be coming with you (and therefore seated next to you), and whether or not everyone in your “party” has been doubly (or fully) vaccinated. Please also remember to bring your mask with you to wear during worship service (even if you have been doubly/fully vaccinated).

We look forward to having our church family together again in worship and thanksgiving!
And remember - our Sunday morning worship service time is 10:00 a.m. (rather than 10:15!)



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: Bob Rusch (recovering from bronchitis); Steve Marks (Michael Marks’ brother, suffering from heart problems); 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 16th); Kevin Ball (Jean Ball’s grandson, who suffered a stroke); Greg (friend of Angie, Lee Criger’s daughter, recovering from brain surgery); The family of Kathy Pickett (friend of Valerie Tholl’s who passed away from cancer); Linda Margeson, Brenda Nelson and Bob Murphy (Marie Forrest’s cousins); Jesse Rusch; Lisa (Doreen’s niece); Katie (friend of Soni Wright); Carol Longhom; Aleena (granddaughter 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, Pauline Malos, Lynn Hernandez, Jeanne Keyser, Pauline Larwood.

For our Covenant Churches: La Cañada UMC and Pastor Karin Ellis; Pacoima First UMC and Pastor Lydia Waters.

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...



Some of the most interesting and memorable stories come from the most unexpected topics - such as *scars*. There's a story behind every scar. Some of the stories are painful; others are funny. Yet without exception, every scar serves as a visible reminder of wounds we've incurred. Jesus Christ is a prime example.

The scars of Jesus remind us that we cannot simply skip from the celebrations of Palm Sunday to Easter morning. The scars help us remember the dark days between the two and the suffering Jesus went through as atonement for our sins and to fulfill God's new covenant. Christ suffered on the cross and endured unimaginable pain for us. His is the greatest scar story ever told.

When I have the privilege of serving Communion each month, I "tear" the bread - it's never cleanly pre-cut beforehand. I believe the bread *shouldn't* break in an effortless, neat, symmetrical way, because the cross was not simple and tidy. The cross was messy! Christ suffered tremendously. And because Christ's body was hard to break, the bread should be hard to break, as well.

The scars of Jesus tell us something else. They serve as visible reminders that in addition to being fully divine, Christ was indeed fully human as well. Jesus felt deep pain, and through his resulting scars and resurrection, we are able to feel deep redemption. We are able to feel hope and renewal. This is the predominant reason why Jesus wanted the disciples to see his wounds, so that they could understand the hope the scars represented (see John 20:19-31).

What if Jesus had appeared to the disciples without scars? They would not have been able to trust that this man was truly their risen Lord, the one who died on the cross. They would've also questioned whether Jesus was fully human as well as fully divine. It would make us question if Christ truly understood the human pain and suffering we go through. The scars of Jesus are crucial to our faith.

The image of the risen Christ with wounds in his hands and his side reminds us when we suffer we don't have a God who stands at a distance but rather one who entered fully into the reality of our pain. When we suffer, we know that Christ can say, "I've been there, and I have the wounds to prove it."

Let the scars of Christ become scars of hope for us as we deal with our own wounds in life. May we be brave enough to share our vulnerabilities with one another and, in doing so, experience that same type of transformative moment - the move from fear to joy - that the disciples had when exposed to the scars of Jesus. Instead of hiding our scars, let us show them proudly and say, "Look and see where God has redeemed me."

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Jaime



CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!



If YOU would be interested in working in the church office a day or two a week, and if you have something special you would like to help with, please contact Pastor Jaime or call the church office! **WE NEED YOU** - and would greatly appreciate any way in which you would like to serve!



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!

~ Scripture to Remember ~

“Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases;
yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.”

(Isaiah 53:4-5)



Got a question?

Seeking support or conversation?

Contact Pastor Jaime anytime!

Email:

Ojaiumcpastor@gmail.com

Cell: (303) 475-4990