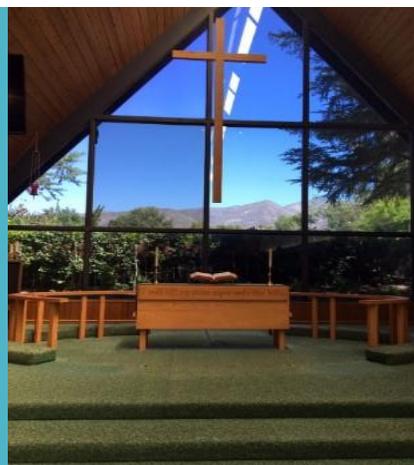


Ojai United Methodist Church

Staying in the Loop

April 18, 2021



“Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

(1 Corinthians 13:4-7, NRSV)

Pastor Jaime’s Mid-Week Devotions on YouTube

Below is the Youtube link for Pastor Jaime’s Mid-week Devotion from last Wednesday (April 14th). 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 14th):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pdiMf-zRos&t=1s>

Spend Every Sunday Morning with Pastor Jaime!

Below is the Zoom information for Sunday, April 25th’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: 896 7725 4550

To join by computer, click on the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89677254550>

Meeting ID: 896 7725 4550

Scriptures for Sunday, May 2nd: Acts 8:26-40; John 15:1-8

Church Chuckles



FAVORITE HYMNS OF DIFFERENT PROFESSIONS:

The IRS Agent’s Hymn: “I Surrender All”

The Pilot’s Hymn: “I’ll Fly Away”

The Gossip’s Hymn: “Pass It On”

The Shoe Repairer’s Hymn: “It Is Well With My Soul”

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

Repaving the Way... to Church!

With OUMC preparing to open for indoor services after a prolonged absence due to the pandemic, the Church Board has made the decision to proceed with finishing the repaving of the church parking lot!

The repaving project will help minimize the projected increase in insurance costs as well as protect our parking lot users from potential injury. This project is long overdue! Per the Church Board, the funds for the repaving will come from the money donated for the parking lot supplemented with money borrowed from the church investments. **The project will begin on April 19th with completion scheduled for April 23rd.**

Thank you to all that have contributed to our parking lot fund or who have worked on fundraisers where the funds have been contributed to the parking lot fund!



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: Estero Bay UMC (Morro Bay) and Pastor Stephen Meadors; Magnolia Park UMC (Burbank) and Pastor Chris Fracchiolla.

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...

There's a story about a preacher who was admirably regarded for always finishing his services right at noon. Then one Sunday, the *unthinkable* happened: he preached until 12:30p.m.! On the way out, one of his parishioners angrily inquired, "What *happened* to you? Why'd you preach so long?" The preacher answered, "For years I've always put a candy mint in my mouth as the service started, and I would tuck it away under my tongue. It was always gone exactly at noon. That way, I never had to look at the clock, or worry about what time it was. But this Sunday the candy mint didn't go away... and I finally realized that I had put a *button* in my mouth."

Preachers aren't the *only* ones who have to keep track of time. We *all* do. Calendars and clocks have become our "masters" in modern society. And, as slaves to allocated blocks of time we live at an increasing distance from the ancient but timeless understanding that each day, each moment, is an unearned gift from a gracious God, rather than a commodity to be traded or spent for something else.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 catalogs various seasons of life: 28 of them arranged in sharp contrast to one another, and yet each an undeniable part of human existence. For the writer of the book of Ecclesiastes, things are the way they are, set in motion by God. The universe unfolds according to its own inner logic and set of seasons.

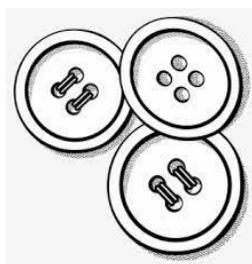
Only God knows why existence is set up the way it is. In the face of an inscrutable world created by an inscrutable God, no one should waste energy railing against life; instead, the writer advises, "The best thing to do is to be happy and enjoy yourself for as long as you can." That is theological advice at its practical best! Since there are so many things over which we have no control, it's wise to be happy, and to look for joy. In addition to not worrying about what we can't control and enjoying the gifts God gives us, Ecclesiastes' other prescription for life is that always and forever we are to stand in awe before God, from whose mighty acts, nothing can be added or taken away. God is the creator of time. God sets the rhythm of reality - the time to mourn, the time to dance, the time to gather in, and the time to let go.

Jesus said, "Love your enemies; do good to those who persecute you." *This* is the time - *now* is the time in our society - not to answer evil with evil, and ugliness with ugliness. This is the time for the reconciling love of God to be released into the atmosphere with new energy and life - through you and through me.

For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven. Yesterday is but a memory, and tomorrow but a vision. But today - *well-lived* - makes every yesterday a memory of happiness, and every tomorrow, a vision of hope." Amen!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Jaime



We're Making Our List... and Checking It Twice!

No, *not for Christmas gifts...* but for the projects we still need to complete as we prepare to open our church Sanctuary on Sunday, May 2nd, for in-person worship!

Even though our wonderful Trustees have worked many long days to complete a long list of projects in time for our “grand reopening,” there are still a few projects that need to be finished in the coming months. Some of those projects include:

- **Tuning the Sanctuary piano.** Even though we won't *initially* be able to sing hymns together, we can certainly enjoy Chris's beautiful music! (Estimated cost: \$200-\$400).
- **Deep cleaning the Sanctuary.** (Estimated cost: \$320-\$450).
- **Upgrading our technology and Sanctuary sound system** (e.g., the pastor's microphone). We want to ensure that our church family members that will continue to attend the worship services via Zoom will be able to hear the worship services as well as those of you who will be sitting in the Sanctuary! (Estimated cost: \$220-\$300).

If you would like (and are able) to **contribute donations** to some of these outlying projects, we would be very grateful! We want our “renewed” worship and church experience to be the best that it can be for *everyone...* so **let's do this together!** Many thanks, in advance, for any generous donation you are able to gift to the church for these important projects!

~ Springtime Prayer ~

*For flowers that bloom about our feet, for tender grass, so fresh, so sweet,
For song of bird, and hum of bee, for all things fair we hear or see,
Father in heaven, we thank Thee!
For blue of stream and blue of sky, for pleasant shade of branches high,
For fragrant air and cooling breeze, for beauty of the blooming trees,
Father in heaven, we thank Thee!*

Ralph Waldo Emerson



Got a question?

Seeking support or conversation?

Contact Pastor Jaime anytime!

Email:

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Cell: (303) 475-4990