

Ojai United Methodist Church

Staying in the Loop

April 25, 2021



*"I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God,
to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God,
which is your spiritual worship."*

(Romans 12:1, 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 21st). 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 21st):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_doy5J8XW2k&t=1s

Spend Every Sunday Morning with Pastor Jaime!

Below is the Zoom information for Sunday, May 2nd' 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: 867 0104 3838

To join by computer, click on the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86701043838>

Meeting ID: 867 0104 3838

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

Connecting to God... Through Turtles!

Meet a United Methodist pastor who lives out her faith by educating others about the miracles of God's creation!

You can find her story here:

https://www.umc.org/en/content/earthkeeper-pastor-saves-turtles?utm_source=umnow&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=members&utm_content=turtle%20turtle04/19/2021&mkt_tok=MDc4LUpYUS02NDMAAAF8iPmxZm20_ZOFMP_ZxrksmWd4l-1lnRsDHC6wwVuBHuAbt9M2JIwRTgEy7HyT510aK5H-fQd5Jf5L5LbZqFQDpGDtw3S9UJDFz8N-mVX1JaXxTw

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!

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: John Sherman (health issues); 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); 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 Loraine 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: Friendly Valley Community UMC (Newhall) and Pastor John Wang; Lancaster UMC and Pastor Greg Pittman.

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 the Gospel of John, Jesus reveals his identity to his followers through a total of seven statements that start with "I AM." They are: **The Bread of Life** (6:35), **The Light of the World** (8:12), **The Gate** (10:9), **The Resurrection and Life** (11:25), **The Way, Truth and Life** (14:6), **the True Vine** (15:1), and **The Good Shepherd** (10:11).

What *are* the characteristics of a good shepherd? A good shepherd always stays with his sheep (as an FYI, I'll be using the male pronoun here, but it most certainly includes females as well!). A good shepherd knows to always keep the flock moving so it doesn't overgraze one place; a good shepherd continually leads the flock to green pastures. A good shepherd might speak to his sheep in the same way we speak to babies: in gentle, soothing tones. Perhaps the good shepherd would even sing to his sheep... maybe because he likes to sing and because the sheep don't seem to be disturbed by it!

The good shepherd leads from behind, and his sheep are reassured as he encourages those who are straggling, assisting those who are injured or sick, directing those who cannot find food, helping the unfortunate, the lame. They have learned to trust that their good shepherd is with them every day, and they seem to know that the good shepherd values their lives more than his own.

The Bible tells us that the Lord is our Shepherd. Jesus picks us up when we fall down, mends our broken spirits, feeds our famished lives, supports us when we are limping along, and sings to comfort our spirits. Like a good shepherd, Jesus never leaves us. And as Jesus leads us from behind, he invites us to do the same for others.

When we lead from behind, nurturing and supporting, caring for them as God has cared for us; when we work for their safety and security; when we do not refuse to help, but support them in using their own best instincts, we honor the One who is our Good Shepherd exalted in Psalm 23... the One who leads us beside still waters and restores our soul; the One who leads us on right paths; the One whose rod and staff comfort us so that we fear no evil; the One who prepares a table for us in the presence of our enemies; the One who anoints us so that our cup overflows.

There's a story about a little girl who recited Psalm 23 in church one Sunday. She began, "***The Lord is my shepherd... that's all I want.***" She may have mixed up the wording, but she sure got the theology right! The Lord is our Shepherd... that's *all we want* - and *all we need!*

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Jaime



Holy Communion is THIS SUNDAY - MAY 2ND!

For those of you who will be attending worship on Zoom: please remember to print out the Communion liturgy or have it otherwise available for worship service when you log on this Sunday. Don't forget to have your Communion elements with you, too!

For those of you who will be attending worship in-person: your Communion liturgy will be placed on your chair in the Sanctuary along with your pre-packaged Communion elements. **You DO NOT need to bring your own Communion elements from home!**



Kids' Thoughts About the Bible...

The following statements about the Bible were written by children and have not been retouched or corrected:

- The seventh commandment is thou shalt not admit adultery.
- A Christian should only have one spouse. This is called monotony.
- Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark.
- The first commandment was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple.
- Then Joshua led the Hebrews in the battle of Geritol.
- Solomon, one of David's sons, had 300 wives, and 700 porcupines.
- Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption.
- Jesus enunciated the Golden Rule, which says to do one to others before they do one to you.

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



Got a question?

Seeking support or conversation?

Contact Pastor Jaime anytime!

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