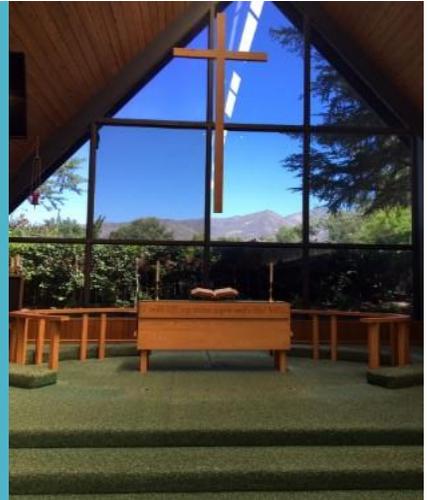


# Ojai United Methodist Church

## Staying in the Loop

May 2, 2021



*“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God - not the result of works, so that no one may boast.”*

*(Ephesians 2:8-9, 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 28<sup>th</sup>). 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 28<sup>th</sup>):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qk32I1oRXto&t=1s>

### Spend Every Sunday Morning with Pastor Jaime!

Below is the Zoom information for Sunday, May 9<sup>th</sup> 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: 816 4414 4439

To join by computer, click on the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81644144439>

Meeting ID: 816 4414 4439

Scriptures for Sunday, May 9<sup>th</sup>: Proverbs 31:10-31; Luke 10:38-42

### Are You Smarter Than the Average United Methodist?

Calling all moms - and their children! In honor of Mother’s Day next week, you are invited to take a short quiz to test your knowledge about motherhood and some of the women who shaped The United Methodist Church! Just click on the link below (and remember - **no cheating allowed!**)



<http://ee.umc.org/what-we-believe/are-you-smarter-than-the-average-united-methodist-mothers-edition>

## ***The History of Mother's Day!***

Celebrations of mothers and motherhood can be traced back to the ancient Greeks and Romans, who held festivals in honor of the mother goddesses Rhea and Cybele, but the clearest modern precedent for Mother's Day is the early Christian festival known as "Mothering Sunday."

Once a major tradition in the United Kingdom and parts of Europe, this celebration fell on the fourth Sunday in Lent and was originally seen as a time when the faithful would return to their "mother church"—the main church in the vicinity of their home—for a special service.

Over time the Mothering Sunday tradition shifted into a more secular holiday, and children would present their mothers with flowers and other tokens of appreciation. This custom eventually faded in popularity before merging with the American Mother's Day in the 1930s and 1940s.

(Courtesy: <https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/mothers-day>)

***Happy Mother's Day, Dear OUMC Women!***

### **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); Steve Marks (Michael Marks' brother, suffering from heart problems); 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); Linda Margeson, Brenda Nelson, and Bob Murphy (Marie Forrest's cousins); Jesse Rusch; Katie (friend of Soni Wright); Carol Longhom; Aleena (granddaughter of the Dennis's); Linda Harris; Laurie King.

**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:** Christ Our Savior UMC (Quartz Hill) and Pastor Ken Gardner; Lompoc First UMC and Pastor Joy Price.

**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...

We love God. That's a pretty definite "pre-requisite" for being Christian, isn't it?! While we may not believe the same things or share the same theology, we all agree that we adore God, devote our lives to God, and live for God. Yet, here's the curious part: we've never actually *seen* God! Or *have* we?

What does God look like? One day, a kindergarten teacher was observing her classroom of children as they were working on a drawing assignment. As the teacher got to one little girl who was drawing diligently, she asked the little girl what her drawing was. The girl replied, "I'm drawing God." The teacher paused and said, "But no one knows what God looks like." Without missing a beat or looking up from her drawing the girl replied, "They will in a minute."

So, we all love God, but none of us really know what God looks like. You might say that we *have loved* - and *continue to love* - God not at "first sight"... but before first sight!

First John 4:7-21 tells us that "God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them." That means we are capable of "love before first sight," too. Before a baby is born, do we say we'll have to wait to see the baby first, before we decide if we love him or her? Of course not! You don't love your children because of what they've done or what they could do. You love them simply for who they are: *yours*. You loved them "before first sight." Can't we imagine this might be the same experience God has when God "holds" us? God doesn't love us because we do things for The Holy Spirit or because of our great feats and accomplishments. God doesn't love us because we're always good. God loves us because we are God's - despite it all, and through it all.

First John 4:20-21 remind us that "Those who say, 'I love God,' and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not have a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also." No one ever said loving our brothers and sisters was going to be easy, but it's something we, as Christians, are called to do.

I guess, when we think about it, we *do* know what God looks like. God looks like LOVE! I'll bet we can all draw that, can't we? Amen!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Jaime



## What Are a Few of YOUR Favorite Things?

Besides *raindrops on roses* and *whiskers on kittens*... what are some of **YOUR** favorite things? Specifically... what are some of your favorite things that *you like to do at church?*

As we look forward to slowly opening our Sanctuary and church campus for more and more activities in the future, we want to know what events/activities you would like to see be revived! Are you a Bingo buff? A fan of bake sales? Are you craving arts & craft fairs? Let us know! **Please contact Pastor Jaime via phone, text, or email - or drop us a note at the church** and let us know what things you would like to see be a part of our worship and fellowship time again when we receive the “thumbs up” from our County and Conference! Thank you! We’re looking forward to hearing from you soon!



### **News About our Weekly Newsletter!**

Now that our church has opened its doors for in-person worship and more opportunities for us to come together as a church family have become available, **our wonderful and hard-working church staff members** are *busy little Church Mice!* We’re welcoming back our building renters, putting more activities and events on our church calendar, and finishing up the last of our re-opening building projects!

It also means that the way we do our church mailings will change just a bit. **Every week**, a bulletin for the upcoming Sunday will be **emailed** to those of you for whom we have email addresses. Our homebound church family members will be receiving a special mailing **once a month** so that we can stay connected to them and assure them that we love and care for them even though they aren’t able to join us physically - or virtually - for worship. And we will **mail out a quarterly newsletter** packed with fun and interesting church activities and information to **all of our church family members!**

If you have an email address and would like to be added to our email mailing list, please call the church office and let us know! These changes will take place beginning next week!



**Got a question?**

**Seeking support or conversation?**

**Contact Pastor Jaime anytime!**

**Email:**

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

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