



GOOD NEWS!

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2019

THE NEWSLETTER OF MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, CLOVIS
"THE MISSION OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IS TO MAKE DISCIPLES OF JESUS
CHRIST FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD."

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Ash Wednesday March 6th

Join us at 6:30 pm on March 6th as we will honor the beginning of Lent in a service of worship and imposition of ashes.

Special music will be provided by the Chancel Choir and the Bell Choir.



Lenten Study 2019

When you can't see the road ahead, do you feel lost and alone? Do you wish you had a group of companions willing to wander with you? Welcome to the Dark Wood. As you journey through the unknown, you may feel tempted, lost, and uncertain. Though commonly feared and avoided, these feelings of uncertainty can be your greatest assets on this journey because it is in uncertainty that we probe, question, and discover. This is a book for anyone who feels awkward in their search for God, anyone who seeks to find holiness amid their holy mess, and anyone who prefers practicality to piety when it comes to finding their place in this world.

This study will be available during our Adult English Language Sunday school, each Sunday at 10:00 in the library.

Special Called General Conference

The General Conference of 2016 asked the Bishops of our denomination to lead us to find a way forward in our denomination for our global church to cease struggling with issues around human sexuality.

For more information on this see the article on page 7.

Discipleship Training

Our Annual Conference is hosting a training for Discipleship Making on February 23. Registration at 8:30 am and will include lunch. We have invited nearby UM congregations to join us at MUMC to link into the training through video conference. We will be testing an interactive video conferencing software, and enjoying discussing the training with each other and with guests from our sister churches. Please let the office know by January 19 if you plan to attend the training.

December January Birthdays

Birthdays will be celebrated on the 4th Sunday, Feb 24th and March 24th, at 12:15 pm in the Fellowship Hall.



| | | |
|----------|-------------|-------|
| Khan | Yang | 02/01 |
| Jake | Stoddard | 02/02 |
| Pat | Long | 02/04 |
| Lucy | Elgin | 02/09 |
| Julie | Film | 02/09 |
| Peter | Yang | 02/15 |
| Ron | Zastovnik | 02/16 |
| Jennifer | Lee | 02/19 |
| Dorrie | Osback-Rose | 02/19 |
| Xia | Cha | 02/20 |
| Xai | Chang | 02/20 |
| Iona | Mears | 02/20 |
| Jennifer | Yang | 02/22 |
| Nao | Lee | 02/25 |
| Heidi | Markland | 02/25 |
| Teri# | Scott | 02/26 |
| Linda | Lee | 02/27 |
| Susan | Lee | 02/28 |
| Sonny | Uwaoma | 02/28 |
| Denise | Mattocks | 02/29 |



| | | |
|----------|-------------|-------|
| Jim | Scott | 03/02 |
| Tonnah | Fang | 03/03 |
| Bonnie | McCarty | 03/03 |
| Nou | Xiong | 03/05 |
| Xeng | Vang | 03/07 |
| Kim | Williams | 03/09 |
| Pa Ngia | Yang | 03/10 |
| Rich | Bonzo | 03/11 |
| Kisha | Xiong | 03/14 |
| Kathryn | Cabrera | 03/16 |
| Kindra | Snow-Walker | 03/16 |
| Chee Nou | Vang | 03/20 |
| Sharlene | Sautter | 03/30 |

Agape Ministry of UJCC Event

UJCC Agape ministry and the Fresno Chapter of the Japanese American League presents

Marsha and Aiden Aizumi.

March 31, 2019 at 1pm

136 N Villa , Clovis CA.

Two Spirits, One Heart: Mother, educator, and LGBT activist Marsha Aizumi shares her compelling story of parenting a young woman who came out as a lesbian, then transitioned to male. *Two Spirits, One Heart* chronicles Marsha's personal journey from fear, uncertainty, and sadness to eventual unconditional love, acceptance, and support of her child who struggled to reconcile his gender identity. Told with honesty and warmth, this book is a must-read for parents and loved ones of LGBT individuals everywhere. Q&A with Marsha and Aiden Aizumi to follow. For more information contact UJCC (559) 322-0701



FAT TUESDAY

March 5th is Fat Tuesday, the day before the beginning of Lent (Easter is April 21st, one of the

latest dates to be celebrated) The 3rd annual Fat Tuesday celebration will be at Lucy Elgin's house with Fran Shellenberger co hosting.

We are planning Jambalaya, Fran's recipe from Louisiana, Save the date and watch for the time; we prefer reservations.



Fresno Interfaith Scholar Weekend



March 1-3, 2019
Rev. Dr. Thandeka

The Interfaith Scholar Weekend in 2019 will be held March 1-3, 2019, with our featured scholar being the Rev. Dr. Thandeka, a Unitarian Universalist Scholar. Her topic will be: "Liberal Faith's Death and Resurrection in 21st Century America".

Since 1998, the Fresno Interfaith Scholar Weekend has brought a renown scholar from one of the represented religious traditions to Fresno for a weekend of lectures and events on topics of interest to interfaith audiences. Each year, Interfaith Scholar Weekend is a remarkable experience in adult religious education, offering not only the opportunity to hear the lectures, but also to engage in dialogue both with the scholars and other participants.

During the weekend participants also gain spiritual enrichment from learning and worshiping together with people from varied faith communities, for example, joining in Friday evening prayers at the Islamic Cultural Center or Torah study at Temple Beth Israel. The Scholar preaches at one or more of the participating Christian churches on Sunday morning, giving the opportunity for participants to experience that congregation's worship as well.

Started by Community United Church of Christ and Temple Beth Israel in 1998, the Fresno Interfaith Scholar Weekend now includes sponsors from a wide variety of religious traditions, including Muslim, Sikh, Lutheran, Episcopal, United Methodist, Catholic, and Unitarian faith communities. Still other faith communities and institutions participate as co-sponsors.

Second Sunday Lunches

Opportunities for Fellowship! Second Sunday lunches provide an opportunity to have a delicious lunch in our own Fellowship hall. No reservations needed, no tipping, only 5 dollars, no tax either.

Christians, especially Methodists have always enjoyed sharing food together and are famous for their Potlucks but this food is already prepared for you. Be sure to join us.

Second Sunday Lunch - **February 10th** is sponsored by Wesley Circle. It will be a delicious Mexican meal of Enchiladas, Rice, Salad and a surprise dessert for Valentines Day.

Second Sunday Lunch for **March 10th** is sponsored by WWD. It will be a Baked Potato Bar, with all the trimmings and of course dessert.

UMW News

February:

4TH: 2 Pm Executive Board

11th: 7 PM Susanna Circle

12th: 12:00 PM Unit Julie & Lucy
 Serve

27^h: 2 PM Wesley Circle

March:

4TH : 2 Pm Executive Board

11th: 7 PM Susanna Circle

12th: 12:00 PM Unit Fran & Barbara
 Serve

27^h: 2 PM Wesley Circle



Strategic Planning



Produces 3 goals for MUMC's year in ministry.

The Church Council met on January 13 and 27. A part of their work in these meetings was to contemplate where the congregation is currently and where the congregation believes God would like us to go.

According to the Book of Discipline, "The mission of the United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

Some current realities that were lifted up are:

- ✦ our membership has been in a long, slow decline for decades
- ✦ the current ministries of MUMC are ALL good, and doing good work for Jesus, and also
- ✦ there is much fatigue in doing the ministries we currently have

The three goals agreed upon will take the congregation on a first step toward improving the overall health and vitality of the congregation and its ministries.

1. Revitalize our hospitality ministries for the purpose of growing the congregation by at least one member per year in each of the English Language Ministry and the Hmong Language Ministry.

(Discussion of possible ways this could be done included: having an organized & intentional "Greeters Ministries," revamping or replacing the "blue card," having fellowship time after all worship services, and more.)

The wording "growing the congregation by at least one member" is an intentional effort to reverse the trend of decline. The concept of growing needs to account for all those who move away, pass away, or walk away. Growing needs to be the "net" number at the end of the year.

Why did the goal mention "in each the ELM and HLM? Because there have been several years in which the HLM gained several members, while the ELM gained zero members. The goal is intended to acknowledge that growing the congregation by making disciples of Jesus Christ is the work of the entire congregation.)

2. To find the intersection between the congregations' passions and the deep needs of the surrounding community.

(This process will require a little more time, and may even reach out to other congregations in our Circuit, as our "surrounding communities" often overlap.)

3. Before the end of March 2019, every ministry of MUMC will conduct a ministry audit to assess if all aspects of our current ministries are aligned with the mission of the UMC, and to assess if there are some practices that might be adjusted to make the ministries be more closely in alignment with the goals.

(An assessment tool is being developed to help ministries engage in this process. Shout out to our United Methodist Men and our WWD Etc. Ministries for beginning this work already!)

**Let us hold these goals in prayer,
that God's guidance will lead us all to a place of
greater vitality and deeper relevance.**

Finance Report

We Did It!

After struggling all year to get out from under the large bills we pay at the beginning of the year, we actually came out in the black at the end of the year.

The General Fund figures turned out like this:

November Balance: -\$2,325

December Income: \$37,005

December Expenses: \$28,101

December Balance: \$6,579



Not only that, but we paid our Conference Tithes IN FULL, plus giving \$1,200 toward Second Mile Giving.

Our goal is to have a December balance so we can pay bills such as health, property and workers' comp insurance premiums, which usually leave us with a deficit for several months near the beginning of the year. This healthy December balance will help cover some of these bills, but not all.

In addition to paying our bills, we collected and paid gifts to other causes. Our Thanksgiving offering provided \$3,524 for the Conference Disaster Fund to assist wildfire victims and our Christmas offering gave \$867 to the Thomas Food Project in Haiti. We sent about \$2,500 to the Conference for various causes including Global Migration, Puerto Rico and UMCOR. We gave six goats to Heifer Project and \$729 to Liberia.

Our General Fund budget for 2019 estimates an income of \$253,550 and expenditures of \$254,758. This leaves a deficit of only \$1,208 that we can hope to raise during the year.

The total of our Estimates of Giving for 2019 is \$142,020. Fewer people have pledged than last year, but most plan to give more. The 2018 total was \$149,099 but only \$137,696 of that was actually received. We hope that all of the 2019 estimates will be paid in full.

Most of the rest of the budget is funded by non-pledged contributions, groups who share the use of our buildings, the Thrift Store, grants, and the Boutique.

We are grateful to everyone who helped with our mission and ministries last year and hope for another wonderful year of serving God in our community and the world.

FUMUL

(Friends of United Methodist University of Liberia)

The work of FUMUL is to support the University in all ways possible, which includes such far-reaching programs as helping to bolster the UM education system the trains students for the university and supporting the UM hospital in Ganta that is a training ground for the UMUL nursing program.

We are excited to announce that Pastor Janette will be able to travel to Liberia in March. In the ten days she will spend in the country she will be touring the university and several schools for children and youth. She will have a chance to visit the hospital in Ganta, and take some medical supplies. She will visit deeply rural areas, as well as in the urban capitol of Monrovia. She will have a chance to meet our partners in this ministry, and will be better able to interpret to those of us "state side" the challenges being faced and how our we can best respond.

Pastor Janette will take as much luggage as possible filled with items to leave in Liberia. The Department of Education of the Liberia Annual Conference is recommending that the best donations would be paperback children's books with pictures and other general school supplies (pencils, notebooks, etc.). Any and all donations would be highly appreciated.

MUMC: your opportunity to donate to this effort is coming on March 10 & March 17, 2019. (The first two Sundays of Lent.). Suitcases will be placed in the narthex to receive your donations. One or two items per person will surely fill the suitcases! That being said, feel free to donate generously!! Donated items which cannot be packed and taken on this trip will be shared with our neighborhood elementary school, which also has students in need.

Please begin to pray NOW for the trip: for all that can be accomplished, for safe travels and good health.



Special Friends

SPECIAL FRIENDS share a special place for those that serve members of our Church and some of their friends by their willingness to help in many ways and have pleasure in doing so. Our ways may be small but they are always done with a smile, love and we hope in the spirit of serving Jesus.

If you ever find the need of some help and just a little TLC let us know. You can do so by dropping a note in our box at the office or by calling the church office and they will put a note in our box. WE DO NOT SHARE ANY INFORMATION WITH OTHERS. We only wish to aid you, comfort you and give you a lift in some way.

No Matter where we are Jesus is always with all of us, if we allow Him to be he is the true Light of our world.

Psalm 34:1

"A man who does what is right and good may have many troubles. But the Lord takes him out of them all."

Service for December and January:

| Calls | Cards | Visits | Transportation | Misc. | Letters |
|-------|-------|--------|----------------|-------|---------|
| 41 | 99 | 47 | 16 | 1 | 12 |

Green Team News - Chocolate

If you plan to buy chocolates for Valentine's Day, please consider the following brands:

Alter Eco, Divine, Endangered Species, Equal Exchange, Shaman, and Theo Chocolates.

These companies receive an "A" rating from Green America for their ethically and sustainably sourced cacao. If you can't find these, there are other ethically sourced chocolate companies not on Green America's list. As a lesser alternative, Mars and Nestlé have the next highest score on Green America's list at "C+".

According to the US Department of Labor, more than two million children in West Africa work in hazardous conditions on small cacao farms in West Africa where the families earn less than \$1 per day.

Alter Eco works closely with its co-op farmers, supporting their communities. Divine Chocolate is owned by the farmers who share in the profits and have a voice in the company. Equal Exchange seeks to build long-term partnerships that are economically just and environmentally sound.

Several of the brands listed above can be purchased at Sprouts or online. Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, or other local stores may carry them.

Happy New Year!

I simply love a new year. As a habitual list-maker and self-improvement junkie, this is the season of shiny, new planner pages and goals for the next twelve months. My personal goals are nothing original, but I can't wait to see what we, as a church, accomplish this year!

Sometimes, though, instead of setting new goals, it's a good idea to step back from the task at hand to re-visit some old goals. You may have heard the story of the family pot roast recipe that had been handed down from Grandma. The recipe required chopping the last two inches of the roast before cooking. After doing this for several years, the husband and wife finally wondered how this step made the roast so darn tasty. When they called Grandma, the answer was simple, "Not a thing. My pot was just too small for the roasts my butcher carried."

As I stop to ask myself why I've set certain tasks for myself in my personal life, we've been invited to conduct the same examination of our church-related tasks. This can be scary, but it can also be exciting and renewing. In many cases, I believe that we'll find that the tasks still meet the goal, and that the goal is fitting for our congregation. In others, we may find that we've been working too hard towards something that doesn't match the goal – cutting off the last two inches of pot roast, so to speak.

I'm excited that we are on this journey together, and I truly can't wait to see what's in store for us.

Jamie Belt



Grace and peace be with you all!

We are currently in the midst of a worship series, inspired by the work of Dr. Marcia McFee, that acknowledges the reality that there are times when we may feel far from God, times when we are blanketed in sadness, times when our spirits seem mired in the sludge of life. The worship series focuses on a different spiritual discipline each week, with homework to practice to help us redirect our focus to God's abundance, grace and love.

During this series I have been experiencing a deep joy that has carried me through the days.

This morning i woke up with a deep dread. I woke up a little later than usual, so reversed the order of my morning routine to get "some stuff" done, with the promise to myself to do my spiritual disciplines as soon as the tasks were complete. As I continued my morning routine, I was becoming morose. The dread was increasing. Those couple of urgent tasks to do seemed overwhelming. I reached out to God, and an amazing thing happened:

God reminded me of my homework!

Unlike homework assignments given by classroom teachers, I need to do the homework assignments along with everyone else.

I remembered the prayer from our first week:

Lord of Light, shine on me.

Giver of Light, You shine a radiant joy into the darkness of life.

Open my heart to the brightness of your glory that I may find the light of your love in all I do. Amen.

I remembered the special song I have been singing since our focus on the discipline of music. My song is, "How Can I Keep from Singing?" What is your song?

I remembered this week we are to laugh every day! I remembered some of the jokes Andy Hansen-Smith has posted daily on his Facebook page.

Guess what?! It worked! The dread receded. The veil hiding life's beauty was rolled away. I was able to breathe deeply again.

I do not know where the dread came from. I do not know if it was a premonition, or spiritual warfare, or leftovers from a bad dream. But I do know that, whatever the day holds, Jesus is with me and will see me through.

Thanks be to God for this precious assurance!

-js

Special Called General Conference

The General Conference of 2016 asked the Bishops of our denomination to lead us to find a way forward in our denomination for our global church to cease struggling with issues around human sexuality.

The Bishops appointed a task force that took 2 years to develop 3 options that seemed to be the best ways for the denomination to move forward. Beginning February 23 a special called General Conference will be held in St .Louis, MO, where over 800 delegates from around the world will gather to address the topic at hand. While there is only one topic for this gathering, it involves 78 pieces of legislation to be considered, and the delegates are required to complete their work by the end of business on February 26.

Here is an URL to videos conversations developed by UM News representing various perspectives on "Seeing a Way Forward."

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/seeing-a-way-forward>

Let us hold the Special Called General Conference in our prayers. Let us hold ourselves in prayer, as well. May the work of the Holy Spirit within our lives and within the work of this important conference be unfettered by human

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UMM CAKE AUCTION



On Sunday February 3rd, at 11:00 am the United Methodist Men will be auctioning off Sports themed cakes (or just great tasting cakes without a theme). All men of Memorial UMC are members of the UMM so won't you please consider donating a cake (or 2) or cupcakes, either homemade or store bought.

Please call Darren Williams at 485-9515 if you have any questions. All cakes/cupcakes should be at the church by 10:45am on Super Bowl Sunday, February 3.

Heart Healthy Day



Healthy Heart Day will be MARCH 16th, immediately following the UMM breakfast.

The day will start with AED and CPR training. We are so fortunate to have the AED - defibrillators. Celerina Carlos will be leading the CPR training. Representatives from all the services should plan on attending. There will be a speaker at Lunch, sharing information on the new recommended Blood Pressure guidelines. This is important for all to know. Lunch will be Potluck, or just plan on attending, there is always plenty of food. There will be flowers and hearts and probably some heart games. Plan on attending, it will be a great day, sponsored by the Parish Nurses.