



HOPE, JOY AND LOVE RISING

Cast~A~Net

First United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande OCTOBER 2020



Greetings,

Our “Relaunch Plan of Action”, recently submitted, was approved this week by the NORTH DISTRICT of the Cal-Pac Annual Conference. We appreciate their hard work in reviewing each congregation’s plans.

Let me tell you what this means and does not mean. It does not mean that we will be open this week, next week or soon. It DOES mean that we have been given permission by our UM District Leaders to open if and when our local church leaders (i.e. Trustees, Church Council, Pastor) are ready, willing and able to carry out the opening safely and well for the good of our people and the well-being of our congregation going forward. (This means with regard to health and safety, financial stability, sustainability of the pattern and design we re-open with, staffing etc.)

We are well on our way to re-opening safely. However, let me give you a realistic picture of the situation and sentiments of clergy leaders in our area. When asked by our Superintendent at this weeks’ Clergy Cluster ZOOM meeting (at which 13 Central Coast pastors were present), **“Do any of you have plans to re-open before the end of the year?”** no pastor said yes. Some have told their people that it could be as late as Easter. The pastor’s approval is the final approval needed for re-opening.

In my thinking, I have not wanted for AGFUMC to be the first or second off the starting block. However, when I mentally “take the temperature” of the clergy group, it is likely that we indeed may be among the first. I will not give the go-ahead until we are fully ready, truly able to meet the requirements, and all hands are on deck to accomplish this.

Right now, congregations have been given the *go-ahead* by our Bishop to meet outdoors in their parking lots or on patios. Stay tuned for updates and information in the weekly letters, videos and in this newsletter. I will supply you with information that will give you an idea what a service on the premises would look like right now, so that you can assess the value of such a service at this point in time for yourself. What we can do is quite limited right now. The “THOU SHALT NOT” list is long. Patience is a virtue. By now, we certainly have it! We can do this!!! The Peace of God is ours.

God Bless You,

Rev. Mary Birgelaitis

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Trustees' Report

Now that the Children's Center is opened, the Trustees are putting their attention to the opening of the sanctuary for church services.

We are following the CDC, SLO County and United Methodist District guidelines for church indoor meetings.

The pews will be marked off for 6' social distancing, arrows are being placed on the floor to mark the way to enter and exit the sanctuary.

Hand sanitization stations and thermometers will be at each entrance.

Extra assistants alongside ushers will help the congregation to carry out the guidelines well.

Only one person may be in the restrooms at a time.

Everything will be sanitized before, between and after each service.

New filtration systems have been purchased for the Children's Center and will also be purchased for the sanctuary.

These preparations will keep everyone safe and comfortable as we re-open. If you have concerns or questions, do not hesitate to call me or any member of the Trustees.

Dick Melsheimer,
President

Thank you all for your continued generous financial support of our Church during these difficult times. It is greatly appreciated. Your gifts help provide the resources we need as we prepare to open to worship together. Expenses are expected to be higher when we offer both video and in-person worship services. Our Church has been truly blessed by your generosity.

We are still seeking donations to help cover the cost of new furniture for our newly remodeled Narthex and to pay for the equipment needed for our video service.

Donations may be made on-line through our website or mailed to the church office. Please mark your check "Narthex" or "Video" if donating to one of the special needs.

Joel Anderson,
Acting Treasurer

From the Pastor

We are constantly reassessing what we are doing and need to do now. You will receive a survey at some point in the near future so you can weigh in with your thoughts and feelings on the timing of re-opening. We continue the Wednesday ZOOM meeting which has been successful and not-successful. It's a 50/50 proposition. It is a simple, informal, leaderless small group that checks in to chat. Seven months have taught me that ZOOM is not a favorite activity in our church! For the time being it IS a way to speak with one another in a group.

I would love for you to communicate with me via any of these communication tools, mbirgelaitis@gmail.com, 805 746-3480, or I can set up a ZOOM opportunity very quickly to speak with you one on one on camera. I can also speak with you outdoors on your own patio or mine. Let me know what would mean something to you. Tuesday through Thursday is chaos in my life, but Friday, Saturday and Sunday have possibilities!

*FROM YOUR LAY LEADER**Patti Melsheimer*

Should United Methodists be involved in politics?

Election time is coming. The newspapers and television are filled with information, opinions and rumors regarding this year's election. I receive an email from [The United Methodist News Weekly Digest of September 25, 2020](http://www.umnews.org) (www.umnews.org) each week. Last week's issue contained an article that I would like to share with you regarding the Methodist Church, voting and politics.

“The people called Methodists have been actively involved in social and political matters from their founding in 18th century England. Methodists were among the primary advocates for the abolition of slavery across the British Empire, the organization of labor unions to protect workers from dangerous working conditions, the ending of the debtors prison system, and the creation of new systems of care for poor children. Given this heritage, Methodists have continued to advocate for other social or political issues since that time - women's suffrage, temperance, civil rights, health care and care for the environment, to name a few.

Today our United Methodist Social Creed and Social Principles express our commitment to fully participate in building a more peaceful and just world. The United Methodist Church acknowledges that we are responsible to God for our social, economic and political life. The Church regards political participation as the privilege and responsibility of citizens. The Church asserts, “Scripture recognizes that faithfulness to God requires political engagement by the people of God”. “The strength of a political system depends upon the full and willing participation of its citizens. The church should continually exert a strong ethical influence upon the state, supporting policies and programs deemed to be just and opposing policies and programs that are unjust.”

The United Methodist Church also affirms an appropriate separation of church and state. United Methodists reject undue control or interference by either religious bodies or the state in the affairs of the other. “Separation of church and state means no organic union of the two, but it does permit interaction”.

The Church recognizes that individual members may hold varying views on social and political concerns. The Church notes in the Book of Resolutions, “You may find that your denomination's policies give you more ‘food for thought.’ Maybe you will agree with the denomination's position. On the other hand, you may disagree.” If you disagree with the Church's position, start by talking with your pastor. United Methodist members who feel strongly about an issue and seek to change a current statement or policy may petition General Conference to request action.

In this time of polarization around social and political issues, Christians may struggle to have positive dialogue with family, friends and congregation members. Political differences are sometimes experienced as unhealthy conflict, but can be experienced as grace-filled, charitable conversation. Begin with an attitude of compassion and curiosity. Practice active and respectful listening for understanding. Look for common ground as you clarify your values. Focus on what makes for the common good and not only your particular interests. Test what you say and how you say it alongside scripture, the Social Principles and Resolutions, and United Methodist tradition and history.” Remember, “that every person is a child of God. People are defined, ultimately, by their relationship with God -- not by the flaws we think we see in their views and actions”.



From the Editor: Are you aware that Carolyn Russell, our Sunday School Teacher, sends an email to our Sunday School kids each week? Although this was the lesson for the past week, I think you might enjoy seeing that the Sunday School is also learning about God’s miracles. This message is meaningful to us all.

Hello,

Today’s Bible story continues the story of God’s special relationship with Abraham’s family. God had already made a promise to Abraham. He and Sarah would be the “father and mother” of a whole nation of people! The only problem was that the couple had no children. Not only that, both were very old people. How could a couple like them give birth to a nation?

Genesis 18, tells us that Abraham was visited by three mysterious guests. Quickly, Abraham rushed to show the visitors hospitality. He had food prepared for them, water brought so that they could wash their feet, and offered them a place to rest before continuing on their way. After they had been fed, one of the men had a strange message.

In one year, Abraham and Sarah would have a son. Sarah, who was listening nearby, laughed at the news. How could someone as old as Sarah become a mother? But surprisingly, the mysterious visitor was right.

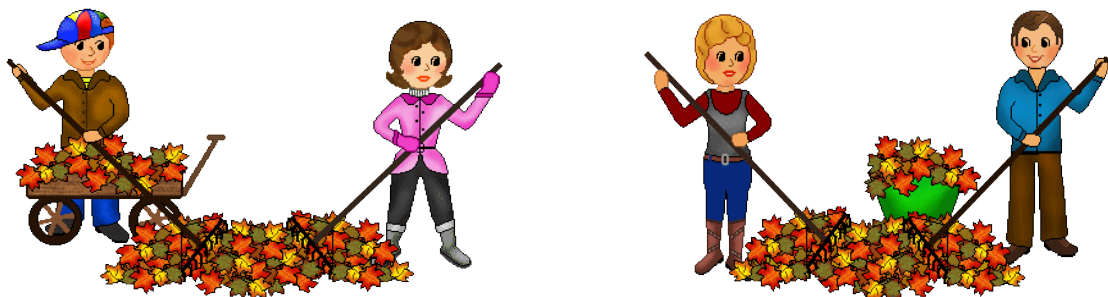
Were they wrong? Should Sarah have laughed? Genesis Chapter 21 helps us to understand that the visitors were, in fact, messengers from God. The news that Sarah would have a son wasn’t just a prediction, it was a promise! Does God keep his promises? Oh, yes! God promised Abraham and Sarah that they would have a son. Sarah gave birth to baby Isaac. This time, Sarah did not laugh!

Abraham and Sarah were a little closer to seeing God’s other promises fulfilled—that their family would become a whole nation of people and they would live in the land God had given them.

Who is in your family? Who is in God’s family? We are all in God’s family. God promises to take care of us. God always loves us. God loved Abraham’s family. God had a wonderful plan for them. God has a wonderful plan for all of us. Who are you thankful for in your family?

I hope you are all well. Hopefully, we will see one another soon. Please stay healthy, wear your masks and help one another!

**Love,
Ms. Russell**





“The organized unit of the United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.”



UMW IN QUILTING MODE!

OUTDOOR QUILT SHOW OCTOBER 18

Last month's Castanet reported that we planned to have a Quilt Show. Now we have the okay to move ahead with it. We will have an outdoor Quilt Show! It will be **Sunday, October 18**. I didn't realize how many talented quilters there are in our congregation. If you have quilts to display and have not already been contacted please call Gerry McGuire or Mary Hawkins. There will be a beautiful representation of quilters' work on display on the 18th for you to view. We will be outside in the fresh air. It will be like the traditional "airing of the quilts". We will, also, have some quilts and quilted items for sale.

Set aside Sunday, October 18, 12-3pm.

We will be observing social distancing and wearing masks.

Parking will be in the back part of the parking lot in the Pre-school area and on the street. Of course, it will be cancelled or postponed if we have rain (the wet kind) or if we have ash showers from the wildfires at the time of the show or if SLO County parameters for churches change. If this happens, check with us.

Please invite your friends and family.

We look forward to seeing all of you.

We miss you and love you.

The Holiday Boutique will be cancelled this year because of the Covid 19 restrictions.

There is a tentative possibility that we may have a Spring Boutique.



—submitted by Gerry McGuire

God-Is-Good with Jamie Foster

We have been so blessed to have the opportunity to meet with Jamie Foster, our church's Web Master and prior Choir Director, each Tuesday evening at 6:00 pm via the internet or phone. This class began on August 4, 2020 and runs through October 6, 2020. We are discussing the first two books of the Torah and Bible. We are using Dennis Prager's two new books, The Rational Bible Genesis and The Rational Bible Exodus as our texts.

This class has been so addictive to me! We have finished the first book "Genesis", beginning with Creation, the Garden of Eden, Noah's Ark, and Abraham through Joseph. These are all stories we have grown up with but, for me, the reading and hearing the stories through the Torah with clarifying translations of specific words from Hebrew history and culture has provided so much clarity and purpose to the books of the Old Testaments.

We are now beginning with Prager's second book, "Exodus", covering the Exodus and Moses, Parts 1 & 2, then concluding with the Ten Commandments. Jamie has class videos and slides online available on our church website, <https://www.worshipweekly.com>



These classes are just teasers, as Jamie says, due to our limited time on line each week! The preparatory reading and class time have been so enlightening.

Thank you, Jamie, for your time in preparing and providing this class for us.

—submitted by Kerren Brown



Our church provided the meal this past week for those coming to People's Kitchen to get their noon meal. For the last six months meals have continued to be served even through this period of distancing. Persons are not able to fellowship around the table together as in the past, but come by and pick up a bag with a generous meal and take it with them to eat where they wish.

Thank you for being part of this ministry. If you wish to financially support this ministry, you may do so by simply marking your gift for the People's Kitchen ministry.

—submitted by Judy Atwood

North District Covenant Prayer List
From District Superintendent, Rev. James Powell

Dear Church Leaders,

As I have been able to experience worship in all of our North District churches, I am so impressed with how you diligently pray for each other. For this unexpected delay of the return to in-person worship, I ask us to continue to pray for all.

- Healing for those infected and affected by Covid-19.
- Healing for those who have experienced racism.
- Healing for those who have been injured through hatred.
- Healing of the separation we have from the Lord's ways (Sin).
- Healing for the church that still awaits our time to gather for "in-person" worship
- Healing for the Body of Christ!

"...if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

—2 Chronicles 7:14

Peace for the Journey,
Pastor Jim

Pray for the continued mission of the UMC in the California-Pacific Conference: To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Prayer Date	Church/Ministry	Pastor(s)
October 4	North Hollywood First UMC	Pastor Steve Peralta
October 4	Santa Barbara: St Mark UMC	Pastor Cindy Huskey
October 11	Camarillo Korean UMC	Pastor Sang Yung Lee
October 11	Santa Maria First UMC	Pastor Bob Isip
October 18	Los Osos: Trinity UMC	Pastor Gilbert Stones
October 18	San Luis Obispo UMC	Pastor Rick Uhls
October 25	Altadena UMC	Pastor Andre Wilson
October 25	Oxnard Korean UMC	Pastor Chae Hon Nam

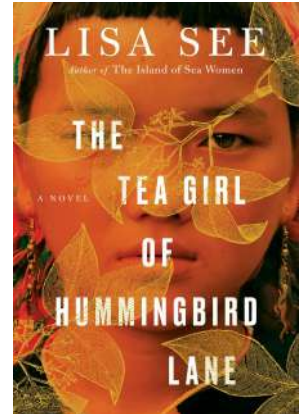




Enjoying Books At Home

The October UMW Book Club selection is The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane by Lisa See. Living in a remote mountainous area of China, families cultivate tea as they have for centuries. One day a stranger arrives introducing modern civilization and changes to their way of life. One of the few educated unmarried young women in the community gets pregnant and refuses to give up her child to be killed. The story revolves around both the mother and child searching for each other in the future.

Copies of this library book are available in the church office. After reading the book, please return it to the office by Thursday, October 22nd. We will not meet as a group to discuss it. Contact Patti Melsheimer if you have any questions.



submitted by Judy Leonard



PROGRAM MINISTRY

My dear church family,

I have ideas bubbling for when we can gather again, but in the meantime I'm doing well. Bailey and I are camping, spending time with those we love, while social distancing and wearing masks! Be well and be safe! Hugs, Sandy

Photo taken at Alabama Hill at base of Mt. Whitney. Dogs are Bentley (black) and Sweetie (orange) with Bailey in the middle.

submitted by Sandy Underwood

News from the Mission Team

by Judy Atwood, chair

MISSION TEAM: October 2020

Judy Atwood

MISSION HIGHLIGHTS:

1. God's Steadfast Love...in Action
2. God's Love in Action in Arroyo Grande
3. Special Giving Totals for 2020

1. GOD'S STEADFAST LOVE...IN ACTION

People like you have been agents of God's mission in the world throughout the last 80 years.

Before the novel coronavirus, 32-year-old Jenny Robins was struggling, but surviving. As a single mother of four young girls with a fifth on the way, Jenny supplemented her hard work with SNAP BENEFITS AND FAMILY ASSISTANCE. Then two misfortunes hit simultaneously, COVID-19 and hurricane-force winds. She was left, along with many others, without power for days in her home and at work. At the local Emergency Food Pantry, Jenny replenished staples, like bread, milk, and eggs. She re-stocked diapers, baby wipes, and other essentials. THANKS to people like you, an UMCOR Sheltering in Love COVID-19 Rapid Response Grant made it possible for Jenny to feed her children.

Through sheltering in Love grants, UMCOR has helped mitigate the effects of the corona-virus pandemic for tens of thousands of people. Recipients of 230 grants represent 43 US states and territories, and 43 nations.

Because of UMCOR, together, we help our neighbors. January—earthquakes in Puerto Rico, February—flooding in Mississippi, March—COVID 19 around the world, April—tornadoes across six states, May—Flooding in Michigan, June—tornadoes in South Carolina and flooding in Pennsylvania, July—Hurricanes in Texas and Mexico, August—explosions Beirut and storms in the US heartland.

If we had the information now for September it would likely include the fires in the west and the hurricanes and flooding in the south and east.

UMCOR's 80 year history is grounded in the teachings of Jesus Christ. Our mission is singular and clear: to alleviate human suffering.

Whether we respond to people suffering from the effects of war, civil unrest, hurricanes, wildfires, famines, or floods, we step in during times of crisis

to help individuals, families, and communities too overwhelmed to recover on their own.

No gift is too small. Your gift today, joined by the gifts of others, brings hope and healing to your neighbors here and around the world. When you give to UMCOR, 100% of your gift reaches its intended mission or ministry. You can mark your gift for UMCOR and send it with your regular giving to the church and it will be sent on your behalf. This information comes from the Global Ministries site.

2. GOD'S LOVE IN ACTION IN ARROYO GRANDE

Advent will be here before we know it. Something positive we can do right here as our own kind of UMCOR is to provide for those with hunger challenges in our area.

Let's start our own Advent countdown for 5 Cities Christian Women's Pantry on October 1 with filling a box or bag with an item each day for a drive by drop off at the church on SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25.



Suggested list: Cereal, Peanut Butter, Stuffing Mix, Boxed Potatoes, Mac & Cheese, Canned Fruit, Canned Tomatoes, Tuna, Dessert Mix, Applesauce, Canned Sweet Potatoes, Cranberry Sauce, Canned Beans, Crackers, Rice, Oatmeal, Pasta, Spaghetti Sauce, Chicken and Noodle Soup, Tomato Soup, Canned Corn, Canned Carrots, Canned Green Beans, Canned Mixed Vegetables.

Collect your items and drive through on October 25, and we will facilitate getting the food to the pantry. **WATCH FOR DETAILS.**



Many hands made much possible!

3. SPECIAL GIVING TOTALS FOR 2020

A THOUGHT FOR MEDITATION:

DON'T ASK GOD TO GUIDE YOUR FOOTSTEPS,
IF YOU'RE NOT WILLING TO MOVE YOUR FEET.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Jenna Moore Birthday 	2 Kerren Brown Birthday 	3
				4 18th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Val McClure Birthday 	5  Daisy Paredes Birthday Roger Sperling Birthday 	6
11 19th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST	12	13 Lorie Ford Birthday 	14	15	16	17 Diane Laughlin Birthday 
18 20th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Laity Sunday	19	20	21	22  Rose Ann Steiner Birthday	23	24
25 REFORMATION SUNDAY	26	27	28	29  Lila Anderson Birthday  Rebeca Avila Birthday	30	31 Mary Hawkins Birthday 



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Office Administrator:
 Frances Robertson
Website Manager: Jamie Foster
Choir Director: Julie Burns
Praise Team Director: Mike Clark
Choral Pianist: Dennis Eiler
Bishop: Grant J. Hagiya
District Superintendent:
 Rev. James Powell

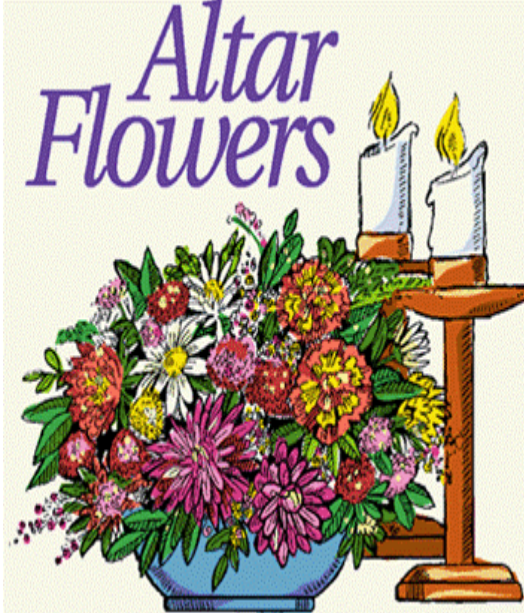
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PLEASE NOTE:

Layout Editor reserves the right to cut and edit articles to meet space limitations.



Altar Flowers

WOULD YOU LIKE TO ORDER FLOWERS FOR VIDEO WORSHIP?

Order flowers to honor or remember someone special. Your floral tribute will be placed on the altar as we record our mini-worship service on Sunday, and then if you can't swing by we will get those beautiful flowers to you.

We can order as usual from the GRAND BOUQUET like we always do when we gather in person, or Brad Bettencourt (long-time florist himself who actually owned a flower shop for years) will arrange some pretty Trader Joe's flowers to be used in the video.

Contact the office if you would like to do this.



- Jenna Moore.....10/01
- Kerren Brown.....10/02
- Val McClure.....10/04
- Daisy Paredes.....10/05
- Roger Sperling.....10/05
- Lorie Ford.....10/13
- Diane Laughlin.....10/17
- Rose Ann Steiner.....10/22
- Lila Anderson.....10/29
- Rebeca Avila.....10/29
- Mary Hawkins.....10/31



Have we missed **your** birthday? If so, it is not listed in our data base. Please contact the church office and we will be glad to add your birthdate to our monthly birthday list!

Hope, Joy & Love Rising



First United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande

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Visit us on the web at worshipweekly.com

Find us on Facebook at United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande
www.facebook.com/fumcag



• IN THIS • ISSUE

COVER STORY:

Rev. Mary Update

Trustees' , Treasurer's & Pastor's Reports....	2
"From Your Lay Leader".....	3
Sunday School.....	4
United Methodist Women	5
God-Is-Good video series, People's Kitchen..	6
North District Covenant Prayer List.....	7
UMW Book Club, Program Ministry.....	8
Mission Team News.....	9
Calendar.....	10
Flowers, Birthdays.....	11
Prayer Time.....	12

Children's Center Chronicle insert



**You are cordially invited to
DROP IN!
TUESDAYS**

between 10:00 a.m.
and 12:00 Noon

Sometimes there are only one or two people present and other times more. Nevertheless, the sanctuary is preserved as a place of prayer where you are remembered, the church is remembered and you can offer your prayers for friends, family and our world. So, you are invited to come in.

A simple sign in, a signed waiver on hand, a quick temperature check is all it takes to claim a spot in the pews to pray. Judy Atwood or Mary Hawkins will be there to meet you and usher you in. Brad Bettencourt will often be playing softly at the to set the tone for reflection and contemplation.

Consider coming. God will bless your time in this sanctuary.