



HOPE, JOY AND LOVE RISING

Cast~A~Net

First United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande

FEBRUARY 2021

Love & Lent

On this, my first day back in the office after two weeks away, I am not yet waxing poetic, so I defer to the Apostle Paul with the beautiful words of I Corinthians 13 to set the scene for Valentine's Day and a Lenten Season filled with love.

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

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.

*Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, * but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.*

An Ash Wednesday Service is not in the cards for 2021, so on the heels of Valentine's Day we will launch the Lenten Season on the First Sunday of Lent, February 21st. All season long we lift up love and focus on the sacrificial love of God demonstrated in Christ Jesus. Thanks be to God for the victory that is ours in Christ. It's good to be back! May Blessings of Love & Kindness come to You!

Rev. Mary Birgelaitis



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A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER

Though our Thanksgiving and Christmas offering fell short of plan, overall stewardship is above plan, and above where we were at this time last year. We have a very generous and supportive congregation! Thank you!

Some have expressed concern about the weekly letter we send out. Your leaders see it as a necessary part of staying connected when we are unable to meet in person. As we are now spending less on meeting for worship and programming, there are funds available for the weekly letter and video. We have received donations to offset the cost of both. Many members have responded generously with financial support by sending their tithes and offerings in the return envelopes enclosed in our letter. Some donate weekly, some monthly, some quarterly, some annually, some whenever the Spirit moves them. Others use the secure giving portal at our website www.WorshipWeekly.com. However you give, we thank you!! If you do not use the return envelopes or prayer cards, please feel free to slip them through the slot in the door of the Church office and we will "recycle" them.

Below you can see the certificate issued to our Church thanking us for our support and commitment to continue God's work in the world.

~Joel Anderson
Acting Treasurer





From the editor: The January 24th message to her students from Carolyn Russell, our Sunday School Teacher, is about Jesus meeting with Nicodemus and his teaching about God's interest in people's good hearts. This is a message for all of us.

Hello,

Our story today continues about Jesus. Jesus' ministry had begun. His early miracles included turning water into wine, casting out demons, and healing people. John 2:23 says that "many believed in his name when they saw the signs he was doing." Jesus likely spent a large part of His day teaching. When the day was done, He spent time alone or with His disciples. One night, a man named Nicodemus approached Jesus.

The story brings us into their conversation. Pharisees, or the religious leaders of the time, were big-time rule followers. Many Pharisees did not understand the words of Jesus. They felt challenged by what Jesus had to say. This story is about one religious leader, Nicodemus, who decided to talk more with Jesus so he could understand what God wanted him to do. Nicodemus held to the belief that if a person was a law-abiding Jew, he would be accepted by God. Jesus gave Nicodemus a lesson that would turn his belief system on its head. He met with Jesus at night, because the other leaders did not like Jesus.

Jesus was a carpenter (Mark 6:3), so the religious teachers likely assumed He didn't know theology. But

they had seen Jesus' miraculous signs in Jerusalem. Nicodemus had to conclude, "You are a teacher who has come from God" (John 3:2).

Nicodemus finds out from Jesus' conversation that God looks at people's hearts. Jesus uses the opportunity to teach Nicodemus about who really comes from God. To come from God means to be born of God. What does this mean? Jesus is more interested in Nicodemus's heart. Knowing God isn't about having all the right answers. It is about a real and growing relationship with God.

By learning about God and Jesus, we can find out how God wants us to live. Caring for one another helps us to have good hearts full of love for one another. God looks at our hearts. He looks at our actions which are guided by our hearts. When we follow the ways God wants us to be, God can see our good hearts. What are some ways to have a good heart?

Remember, God gave his only son Jesus to us! When we follow his word and believe, we can be born of the Spirit. We can enjoy the rewards of eternal life.

Keep safe! God is watching over us and helping us. Help one another by wearing your masks, washing your hands and keeping your distance from one another. God is with us daily. He sees our good hearts.

Love,
Ms. Russell



This is a thank you for the Fall Food Drive.



*Dear First United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande,
Thank you so much for the food and cash donations to the Five Cities Christian Women's Food Pantry. It will help us continue to provide nutritious food for our neighbors in need.*

~Patti Melsheimer, 5CCW

North District Covenant Prayer
from District Superintendent, Rev. James Powell



Family of God,

I offer this prayer with perspective.

God of all,

We cry out, how long O Lord. You patiently love us and hold us near.
We have suffered this past year. You have sent yourself– incarnate– to suffer for us.
We see others who need medical care. You see all and care for the heart, mind, body and soul. You care for everyone, every nation, every region of the globe.
Open our eyes to see everyone as you see them. Open our minds to know you are present– always. Open our hearts to love beyond our capacity.

In the Name of Jesus Christ,
Amen.

Peace for the Journey,
Pastor Jim

NORTH DISTRICT WEEKLY COVENANT PRAYER...February 7—February 28, 2021

“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)
February 7, 2021	Ventura: First UMC	Pastor Erin MCPhee & Pastor Matt McPhee
February 7, 2021	Fillmore: Bardsdale UMC	Pastor Bethany Carpenter
February 14, 2021	Simi Valley UMC	Pastor Andy Mattick & Pastor Camille Mattick
February 14, 2021	Newbury Park: St. Matthew’s UMC	Pastor Stan Ferguson
February 21, 2021	Thousand Oaks UMC	Pastor Anna Mulford
February 21, 2021	Chatsworth West UMC	Pastor Karen Murata
February 28, 2021	South Pasadena: ReNew Mission	Pastor Sam Park
February 28, 2021	Burbank First UMC	Pastor Sam B. Kim



“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.”



One year ago we celebrated **UMW Sunday** in person in our beautiful church sanctuary. Advance forward in time one year, and you see a very

small group of us social distancing in the sanctuary to video the UMW service and presentation. We usually recognize outstanding individuals in the church and UMW in person, but this year that took place either virtually or on the porch of the recipients.

So much for surprise!

We are most delighted to recognize three individuals this year. Each of them has given of themselves humbly to the well-being of our church, UMW circles and the community. So without further ado, I recognize **Adeline Bottorff, Peg Gallop, and Margaret Coombs**. They have advanced our missions, each in their own talented ways. Be sure to tune into the Sunday video for February 7.



Adeline Bottorff-directory photo



Certificates & pins to honorees



Margaret Coombs with UMW president Mary Hawkins



Peg Gallop with daughter Peggy Sue

Last year through our UMW fundraising efforts, \$2,000 was given to our FUMC Children’s Center, \$1,000 to the Five Cities Homeless Coalition, and \$1,000 to the Oceano Elementary School. All this is made possible by the loyal efforts and creativity of the women of this church. The Virtual Tea and The Quilt Show did wonders for keeping up our fundraising with the Pre-COVID expectations. Thank to you all!

Looking ahead to the future, UMW women have planned many activities, socially distanced, as usual. Drive throughs seem to work for us, so we’ve planned some more. These are: Chili Sunday, Easter with surprises, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, and a Bingo event.



In that spirit, we will be having a special Valentines’s Sunday Drive through with so many hearts for you. We will be looking for you on Sunday, February 14th, between 10:00 am and 12:00 noon at the Church. Come for your Valentine Goodie Bag!



We are a light for the future. God’s light will see us through.



You are invited to come into the sanctuary on Tuesdays between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 Noon to offer prayers for friends, family and our world.

A simple sign in, a signed waiver on hand, a quick temperature check is all it takes to come. Judy

Atwood or Mary Hawkins will be there to meet you and usher you in. Brad Bettencourt will often be playing softly at the organ to set the tone for reflection and contemplation.

Sometimes there are only one or two people present and other times more. Nevertheless, the sanctuary is a place of prayer in which you can pray in your familiar church environment.

**SANCTUARY OPEN FOR PRAYER
TUESDAYS
Between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 Noon**

PROGRAM MINISTRY

Dear Church Family,

Didn't we all think this would be over by now? Don't know about you, but I wanna hug you all in person! Did you know it's possible to social distance while camping? If you have a four-legged friend it's very doable but if you have a friend who also likes to camp and is a responsible social distancer and mask wearer, that makes it much better! I sold my little 10-foot camper and my dear friend BG Perrigey and I are purchasing an RV! (Remember, Bob Underwood is a Marriott man.) So that's the life of your Program Ministry co-chair!

BG whips up a camping meal while Sandy photos the events.



BG's "FOXY" and Sandy's "BAILEY" also enjoy the camping amenities!

submitted by Sandy Underwood

A Message from Maddy

Thank you to the First United Methodist Church Congregation. Many of you were able to contribute to the Friends of the Children's Center Campaign during the months of November and December in 2020. During our recent campaign we raised \$24, 585. With the wonderful donations that came in and continue to come in, it has allowed AGUMCC to continue its ministry while adjusting to the many challenges that COVID-19 has brought to us this past year. It is because of the wonderful community we live in that we were blessed to receive such wonderful donations.

The Friends of the Children's Center was created in January of 2019 and has helped the Children's Center continue its ministry of quality child care to families and excellent early childhood education to children in our program.

It is never too late to make a difference in a child's life.

If you or someone you know would like to give a one-time donation or become a monthly sponsor, visit www.agumcc.org and click on the link for the "Friends of the Children's Center". Then use the donation button. It is safe and easy. For more information, please contact me at 805-481-2223.

Sincerely,

Maddy Quaglino, Director

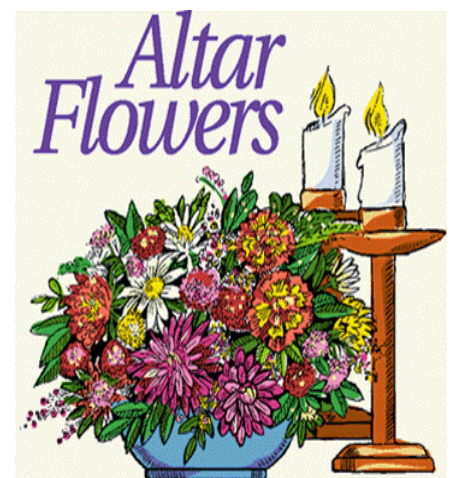


WOULD YOU LIKE TO ORDER FLOWERS FOR VIDEO WORSHIP?

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 it 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.

Please contact Frances in the Church Office who is the liaison with the Worship Team to make these plans.



FROM YOUR LAY LEADER

Patti Melsheimer

I have been “cleaning out” during this “stay at home” time of the pandemic, as I think many of you have. I have discovered some interesting items that I didn’t realize I had saved. One such item is an article that my mother saved from the April-May, 1979 issue of Modern Maturity! After reading it I feel it is still relevant today.

The article is titled, “**16 ways to make your life better and leave the world better when you go**” by Sister Martha Mary McGaw. Here’s a summary for you.

“We all love to be remembered, don’t we? We hope we will be, right now and in the years to come. Life is special. Time is short. We want to transcend both. If we hope to be remembered, the best thing we can do is to be ourselves, our best selves. That will make us worth remembering. Suppose you wrote your own obituary today. Would you be satisfied with what you had to say? If not, remember, it’s not too late. You can do something about it. The script for your life is still being written. And you are the author. So what can we do about this? Here are a few thoughts you can add to your own.

* **Make the world more beautiful.** You are someone else’s environment. Let others into your mind and heart. Share your thoughts and dreams with enthusiasm. Joy is to life what sunshine is to plants.

* **Do your self proud.** Be active. Express yourself in and by the things you do. Learn something new every day.

* **Stay awake and be glad about it.** If you wake up at 3 a.m., so what? Go walk in the garden, do your exercises, pray, or write a poem. Constructive wakefulness is better than worrying about insomnia.

* **Ask yourself questions every day.** Why was I created? What do I expect to put into life? What are my **immediate goals, today, tomorrow and next month? What is my ultimate goal?**

* **Give as many gifts as you can.** It’s a lot of fun to give money and the things money can buy. But don’t think the rich have a corner on things to give. Good conversation, rapt attention and love are far more valuable things to give.

* **Keep in touch.** Write a letter, send an email, make a phone call. Doing so is sharing yourself. The important thing is to do it.

* **Plant trees.** You can plant a real tree in your yard or you can plant your family tree on paper.

* **Keep a journal.** Include special events, dreams, trips, thoughts, funny stories. If you can’t bear the thought of writing, you could make tapes (or a video)! When you start writing, you’ll remember more and more interesting details.

* **Develop many talents.** It’s never too late to do those special things you’ve always wanted to do.

* **Invest your money in people.** Scholarships for students, living expenses for writers, capital for inventors. You’ll find that it really is more blessed to give than to receive.

* **Be a perennial.** Perennials keep on blooming year after year.

* **Be a dreamer.** Every good thing in the world was at one time only a dream. Dream your own great dreams. Your dreams may come to pass. After all, we’ve figured out how to walk on the moon!



News from the Mission Team

by Judy Atwood, chair

MISSION TEAM: February 2021 Judy Atwood

MISSION HIGHLIGHTS:

GOD'S STEADFAST LOVE...IN ACTION

As I continue to reflect on the past and think about the future and Christ and His mission and my part in it, I thought of another quote that has been with me for some 50 years.

*"Live simply so that others may simply live.
You must be the change you want to see in the world."*
Mahatma Gandhi



While I was traveling with a group of United Methodist Deaconesses in 1971, we visited the place in India where Gandhi lived. It was a very simple room with his sleeping mat and as I recall a book or two and maybe another item or two.

His life modeled simplicity, nonviolence and compassionately helping people. (If you are looking for a way to spend three hours while you are spending time at home, check out the film "Ghandi".)

On this trip we saw the living spaces of people in different countries. We learned how they live in ways that are different from the ways we live, certainly with a lot less consumption of the world's resources.

As we were eating breakfast in Hong Kong, our speaker was helping us understand the lives of those living there. I remember a statement that he made which remains with me today. "What you eat for breakfast in the United States has an effect on the rest of the world."

This may be on my thinking about the second part of the quote: What changes do I need to make so that I can see the changes in the world that I would like to see?

These changes are not easy. We don't live in isolation, even though right now it seems like we do. I hope that I can spend some time right now finding ways to affect the world positively. How do we teach ourselves to want less and to buy less? How do we determine how many things we need, as opposed to how much we want? How can we include others in ways that our lives become more equal in income, health needs, education? The list grows.

Sharing some of our abundance with UMCOR is one way to be in mission and ministry with others around the world.

Finding a way in our community to share the love of Christ is another.























What challenge are you willing to take to help create change?



**A THOUGHT FOR MEDITATION.
DON'T ASK GOD TO GUIDE YOUR FOOTSTEPS,
IF YOU'RE NOT WILLING TO MOVE YOUR FEET.**

FEBRUARY



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Margaret Coombs Birthday 	2 Devin Paredes Birthday  Matthew Williams Birthday 	3 Bob McGuire Birthday  Barbara Reineke Birthday  Isabella Russell Birthday 	4 Guy Oates Birthday 	5 Betty Ashton Birthday 	6 Mark Moore Birthday 
7 Fifth Sunday in Epiphany Betty Johnson Birthday 	8  Wayne Huggins Birthday	9	10  Mike Johnson Birthday	11	12	13
14 Transfiguration Sunday UMW Valentine's Day Drive-Through at the Church 10am-12 noon	15 	16	17 	18 Frances Robertson Birthday 	19 Irene Kliesch Birthday 	20
21 First Sunday in Lent	22  Maddy Quaglino Birthday	23 Leonard Lutz Birthday 	24	25  Micelle Paredes Birthday	26	27
28 Second Sunday in Lent Chloe Keith Birthday 						

Meet Our
CHURCH STAFF

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Lay Leader: Patti Melsheimer
Office Administrator:
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Website Manager: Jamie Foster
Choir Director: Julie Burns
Praise Team Director: Mike Clark
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PLEASE NOTE:

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

*Thank You from
the Department of
Social Services for your
Angel Tree gifts*

Dear UMC Congregation,

I received a very kind thank you letter from the Department of Social Services from L. Christopher Cothard, Administrative Services Division Manager, regarding our generous contribution for the Angel Tree gifts this year. I am quoting some of the lines that Mr. Cothard wrote to me:

“Thanks to members of our community like you, more than 6,000 toys, items of clothing sundries, as well as gift cards, were collected. Dozens of gift cards were distributed to children who might otherwise have received nothing for Christmas. 1,748 children received gifts this year.”

“The willingness of members in our community to give to those in need touches all of us.”

“I wish to personally thank each and every individual and organization that worked so hard to make this a joyous holiday season for our families.”

If you need it for your records, our tax ID number for your contribution is 95-6000939.”

I also want to thank each person who provided gifts for these foster care and other children in our community. We do have an amazing, caring and generous congregation.

Thank you and
God Bless you all,

~ Jan Treat



special
people
are
born in
february

Margaret Coombs	02/01
Devin Paredes	02/02
Robert McGuire	02/03
Barbara Reineke	02/03
Isabella Russell	02/03
Matthew Williams	02/03
Guy Oates	02/04
Betty Ashton	02/05
Mark Moore	02/06
Betty Johnson	02/07
Wayne Huggins	02/08
Michael Johnson	02/10
Frances Robertson	02/18
Irene Kliesch	02/19
Maddy Quaglino	02/22
Leonard Lutz	02/23
Michelle Paredes	02/25
Chloe Keith	02/28



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 birth date to our monthly birthday list!

Hope, Joy & Love Rising



First United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande

275 North Halcyon Road
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420



Visit us on the web at worshipweekly.com

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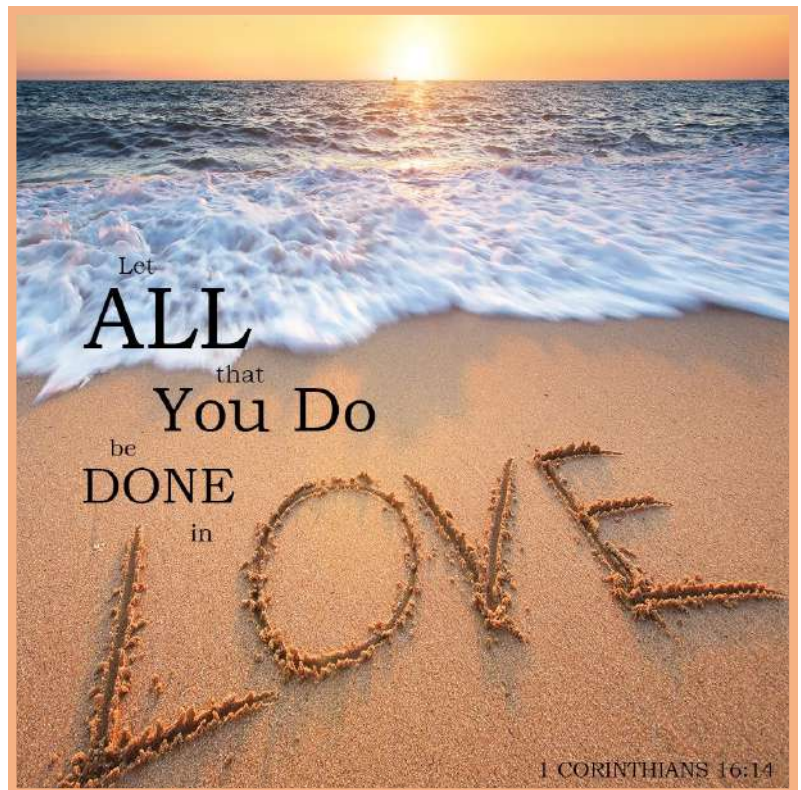
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Children's Center Chronicle



1 CORINTHIANS 16:14