



HOPE, JOY AND LOVE RISING

Cast~A~Net

First United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande JANUARY 2025

CHRISTMAS EXTRAVANZA PHOTOS FROM DECEMBER SIXTH!



Singers Carolyn and Dave!
Who can do better?



Magician Larry!



"Mop Lady" Mary!
as Carol Burnett



Astronauts Kent, Bernie, and Christina!



Cellist Roz!



Reindeer Doris!

From the Pastor:

January begins with a celebration of the Epiphany and Holy Communion, followed by a celebration of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan with an opportunity for all of us to renew the baptismal covenant as we begin 2025. During our pastor's vacation time at the end of the month we welcome familiar clergy friends to our pulpit, Rev. Rich Bolin and Rev. Ken Kaish. Holy Communion will be available at the 8:30 service each Sunday as usual since both pulpit guests are ordained clergy and are authorized to preside. As always, monthly Communion will be offered at our 10:30 a.m. service on the first Sunday of the month.

We hope you'll join us as we worship weekly, and if you've never been able to catch our Christmas Eve Service due to travels or nighttime driving, it's online at worshipweekly.com. Click SERVICES and look for December 24, 2024 and you can watch the video and take in the music of our praise team, choir members and soloists who were David Anderson, Julia Burns and Chloe Keith.





January 5, 2025 – EPIPHANY
SHINE, JESUS, SHINE
Isaiah 60:1-6, Matthew 2:1-12
Rev. Mary Birgelaitis, preaching

January 19, 2025 – 2nd SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY
BEING JESUS
Rev. Rich Bolin, pulpit guest

January 12, 2025 – BAPTISM OF THE LORD
FIRE AND WATER
Isaiah 43:1-7, Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
Rev. Mary Birgelaitis

January 26, 2025 – 3rd SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY
Rev. Ken Kaisch, pulpit guest



- | | | |
|--------------|---|---|
| Sun. Jan. 12 | Retirement Celebration for Frances Robertson
After both worship services |  |
| Sat. Jan. 18 | Bingo, Pizza and Prizes 5:00-7:00 PM \$20 |  |
| Sat. Jan. 25 | Piedras Blancas Elephant Seal
Viewing, Meet at Church at 10:00 AM. |  |
| Sun. Feb. 09 | Superbowl Chili Takeout
After second service \$20 serves 2 |  |

Dear Members and Friends at FUMCAG,

I am writing to let you know of my decision to retire from my position as Office Manager/Pastor's Secretary, effective January 17, 2025. After much consideration, I have come to the conclusion that it is time for me to begin the next chapter of my life and retire from the workforce.

It has been an honor and a privilege to work with such a talented and dedicated church membership, and especially with Pastor Mary Birgelaitis, over these ten years since I was hired in January of 2015. I am grateful for the members of the church I have met, friends I've made and worked with and for the friendships we have made together.

As I prepare to embark on a new phase of my life, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone at FUMCAG. I have had the privilege of working on the worship services and the events of the church. I was honored to help the church survive and even flourish in some unique ways during the COVID years.

Thank you again for the opportunity to work with you and I look forward to keeping in touch. I wish you all the very best.

Sincerely, Frances Robertson



Ring in the New Year!

Many of you have heard the Grande Ringers as they ring on the Third Sunday of the month from September through June. But have you considered being a part of the group? You may have noticed that we have half the ringers we used to have. We are blessed that the ones who are ringing currently are dedicated to ringing bells.

We would love to have more ringers. Our rehearsals are Tuesday and Thursday from 5:00pm to 6:00pm. While reading music is an asset we have had people



join and learn to read music on the fly. Our ringers are very adept at helping each other learn to play.

As hard as it is for me to believe, I've been directing the Grande Ringers since 2000! I appreciate all the ringers I've had the pleasure of serving. When COVID hit, it impacted our handbell choir immensely. We still haven't recovered. Yet our ringers play admirably!

If you have an interest in joining us, feel free to drop by and see if we would be a good fit for you. You may also contact me via the church office at 805 481-2692.



Leonard G. Lutz, Handbell Director

WORSHIP LITURGISTS



JANUARY 05

8:30 a.m.-----Joe Brown
10:30 a.m.-----Judy Leonard

JANUARY 19

8:30 a.m.-----Susan Thronson
10:30 a.m.-----Judy Leonard

JANUARY 12

8:30 a.m.-----David Beard
10:30 a.m.-----Nancy St. Laurent

JANUARY 26

8:30 a.m.-----Mary Thronson
10:30 a.m.-----Kent Unsworth

~ submitted by Carolyn Anderson

NORTH DISTRICT WEEKLY COVENANT PRAYER LIST FOR JANUARY 5 to JANUARY 26, 2025

Pray for the continued vision of the UMC in the California-Pacific Conference:

"Ending spiritual and physical hunger."

-- DS Reverend Garth Gilliam

Prayer week begins on:	Church/Ministry	Clergy Leader(s)
01/05/25	Bishop First UMC First German UMC	Pastor Kate Hunter Pastor Kurt Poland
01/12/25	Atascadero UMC Camarillo Korean UMC	Pastor Michelle Park Pastor Sang Yung Lee
01/19/25	Bethel Korean Mission Church First UMC of North Hollywood	Pastor Kisung Nam Pastor Krista Givens
01/26/25	First UMC of Pasadena First UMC of Pasadena	Pastor Angela Galanis-Price Pastor Mina Nau-Mahe

FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY

Our First Sunday of Advent with lunch and craft workshop was a lot of fun! Those attending had a good time and look forward to next year.



The Christmas Extravaganza Variety Show truly was memorable, with performances by talented people. The plays and skits hit our funny bones--the acting was superb, Larry amazed us with his magic tricks, Roz played her cello splendidly, and we all loved Carolyn and Dave's

rendition of "I Can Do Anything Better than You". Joel Anderson recited his very comical version of " 'Twas the Night Before Christmas", which is printed below! Thank you to all the actors and behind-the-scenes helpers for presenting a great show! We all went away happy and looking forward to the Holiday Season.

As we begin the New Year of 2025, on January 25, 11:00 AM we will take field trip to visit the Piedras Blancas elephant seals and possible lunch in Cambria. Carpool from the church leaving at 10:00 AM.

Look for a new schedule in February for more activities, including a trip to Uflora, a nearby flower-growing nursery.

---submitted by Gerry McGuire, Fellowship chair

'Twas the Night Before Christmas at the First United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande By Joel Anderson, with apologies to Clement Clark Moore

'Twas the night before Christmas & all through the Church
Not a creature was stirring, though I didn't really search.
The garlands were hung in the chancel with care
In hopes that a big Christmas crowd would soon be there.

The choir was nestled all snug in their pews
Ready to sing hymns, that Julie did choose .
With Brad at the organ and Mary in her stole
Christmas Eve service was ready to roll.

When out in the Narthex there arose such a clatter
I sprang from my seat to see what was the matter.
Away to the doors I flew like a flash
Trying to avoid creating a crash.

There in the Narthex, so blue and so bright
Where I beheld a most wonderous sight.
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But Mike and the Praise Band, plus his horses, oh dear!

The tall, talented guitarist, so lively and smart.
I knew in a moment it must be Mike Clark.
In cowboy hat and boots, so boldly he strode
As he leapt from the horse on which he had rode.

More rapid than eagles his singers they came,
He whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;
Sing Connie, Sing Chloe, Sing Pam, sing loud and on key
Play Dennis, Play Bob, Play Ian, Play sweet and wonderfully!

The choir joined into the singing so bold
Praise band and the Choir, they sounded like gold.
The Bells joined into this chorus with cheer
Ringing loud and with glee so everyone could hear.

The horses were neighing & braying and stomping their feet
In time with the music. It sounded so sweet.
The music they made was really quite grand.
Musicians and horses sounded like a hundred piece band.

And much to the Trustees utter delight
There was nary a horse pie, anywhere in sight.
But Rev. Mary was bothered and uptight
With horses in the Narthex on Christmas Eve Night.

So Mike sprang to his steed, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all rode like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim, ere he rode out of sight,
Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!



United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith seeks to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so that they can inspire, influence and impact local and global communities.

JANUARY 2025

UWF is announcing the formation of a new circle, designed especially for working women. It is set to start meeting in January. They will meet in the early evening. Time, day and place will be decided. If you are interested, contact Susan Thronson. Help us support the forming of this new group! Be one of the founding members.

With the New Year 2025 here, we can start those new years resolutions. You know where, you vow to broaden your sights, searching for hope and love in this world. Make this the year you step forward to join a UWF circle or group. Make some new friends and support the mission of our UWF, locally and abroad. Finishing off our 2024 year, checks were sent out to The First United Methodist Church Children's Center, Five Cities Homeless Coalition, Five Cities Christian Women Food Pantry, Captive Hearts and Oceano School to support their valuable programs.

Circles and groups: All women are invited to attend. To help you out, we have:

Mary, Martha Esther Circle meets on the last Wednesday of the month in the McMillen Room. Meetings resume in January.

Joy Circle meets the third Tuesday of the month, 3-5 pm in members' homes. Check with Kerren Brown for more information.

Sew And Sews meet every Tuesday in the McMillen Room at 10 until 1, bring a sandwich if you want to stay for lunch. We encourage those interested in quilting, crocheting, knitting and just plain visiting and sharing. To attend.

Book Club meets the 3rd Friday, in the library, at 10:30. Contact Judy Leonard for a book if interested.

--submitted by Gerry McGuire, UWF President chair

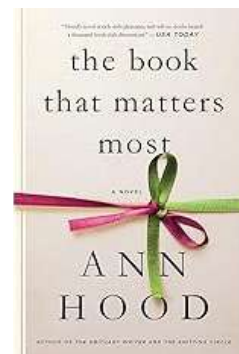


JANUARY 2025 UWF BOOK CLUB SELECTION: The Book That Matters Most by Ann Hood

The UWF Book Club will meet on Friday, January 17th at 10:30 a.m. in the church library to discuss The Book That Matters Most by Ann Hood. In this fictional story Ava joins a book club that has chosen to read a mysterious book from her childhood. This book had helped her deal with the sudden deaths of her sister and mother. Now she is dealing with another stressful event: her daughter has gone missing in Paris. The Book That Matters Most shows the healing power of literature in dealing with

love, loss, secrets, and friendship.

Everyone is invited to read the book and join in the discussion on January 17th. We will be using a library book kit so have plenty of books to share with readers. See Mary Whitson or Judy Leonard if you'd like to borrow one.



--submitted by Judy Leonard

Happy New Year!

What a joy to serve this congregation for the past nine and half years! We have accomplished good things together. We have six months to share between now and my mandatory retirement on June 30, 2025. It's time to enjoy ongoing activities and prepare to receive new leadership.

My retirement raises questions about the **process of appointing the next pastor** for the First United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande (FUMCAG). That process will unfold over a period of months between now and the end of June. Your leaders and I have begun the process of preparing for a smooth transition. Below you will find a summary of steps which will happen.

- **NOW** — please **begin praying for the process of choosing FUMCAG's next pastor**. Pray for our Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) as they will be working with the Bishop and District Superintendents to select my successor.
- **IN PROCESS** — the SPRC will communicate a **thorough and thoughtful description of FUMCAG**, and its **vision for the years ahead**. ***They will speak on behalf of the congregation in clarifying what is needed and desired in the next pastor.***
- **YOU CAN HAVE INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR SPRC MEMBERS** and let them know what you think the most important needs of the church are with regard to pastoral leadership. What gifts, graces and skills are needed to grow the church forward as the congregation moves ahead?
- **EARLY JANUARY** — The **Bishop will publish a list of all "clear openings"**. Clergy are welcomed to send suggestions of people they believe may be a good fit. A pastor may put their own name forward for consideration. The Cabinet will consider such information in their discernment process.
- **EARLY to MID-JANUARY** — **The bishop and the superintendents in California-Pacific Annual Conference will meet and spend time in prayer and conversation about which pastors to appoint to which congregations.**
- Your job is to focus prayer for the bishop and district superintendents as they are in the process of discerning whom God would have become FUMCAG's pastor.
- **LATE JANUARY to EARLY MAY** — **The District Superintendent will introduce the pastor designee to our SPRC** in a confidential meeting to confirm a good fit. As the currently appointed pastor, I am not directly involved in that meeting.
- **SOON AFTER THE MEETING WITH THE SPRC** — **An announcement of the new pastor will be made to our congregation** and a simultaneous announcement will be made at the current church of the incoming pastor. **The announcement has to remain confidential until it is announced to both congregations.**

- FOLLOWING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEW PASTOR there may be several months remaining prior to Annual Conference or a very short time depending on when the appointment is made.
- JUNE 2025 — **My last Sunday leading worship at FUMCAG will be around annual Conference time** which is June 11-14th.
- JULY 2025— **The new pastor begins July 1, 2025.** Typically, an incoming pastor is allowed several weeks to unpack, rest, and get acclimated to the church and community, and **starts preaching mid-July.** So, there may be a couple weeks of pulpit guests.

What about the next six months? We have a lot yet to accomplish and to celebrate.

- We are strengthening committees and launching new leaders.
- We are **revisiting church goals** and picking up pieces that fell away during the pandemic.
- We will plan **welcome celebrations** to connect the congregation with new leadership.
- We will create a new **pictorial directory to include new pastoral leadership and staff.**

This is **NOT a time to hit PAUSE.** I will not slow down and slide into retirement. Join me in making this an active, energetic time of planning and preparing together. We have everything we need to flourish: a superb and dedicated staff, solid lay leadership, and a well-cared for fully paid building.

Transitions can be fun and full of new possibilities. This promises to be a good thing for both FUMCAG and for me. I am excited to see what God has in store for you and for me, and I am confident that the next chapter in FUMCAG's life will be better than we can yet imagine. Let's make the most of the next six months!

With love and gratitude,



Pastor Mary Birgelaitis

Pastor's 2025 Vacation:

Wednesday to Wednesday
January 15th to 29th

Pastoral care coverage will be in place for emergencies.

Rev. Rich Bolin will cover this time period.

Please contact the office.



CONNIE ON PATROL

Story by Joel Anderson, Photo by Nan Lippitt

Connie Clark and her trusty steed Miss Cee regularly patrol the beaches of Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area and Pismo State Beach. The horse and rider are volunteer members of the Oceano Mounted Patrol which works closely with state park rangers. The mounted patrol provides the rangers with extra eyes to monitor park activities, can access back areas of the dunes that cannot be easily reached by other means, and are goodwill ambassadors. Almost everyone loves seeing the volunteer rangers on horseback, and many come up to talk or pet the horse. The horses have to go through a thorough certification process, be good with children and dogs, and don't mind going into the ocean. Connie has been active with the Oceano Mounted Patrol for many years. Volunteers on horseback have patrolled Oceano's beaches since at least World War II, when they watched for enemy

spies and submarines. Nowadays they watch for things like illegal campfires, loose dogs and people needing help. Next time you visit the beach you can watch for Connie and Miss Cee.

WEBSITE UPDATES

Please check out the latest updates to our church website: WorshipWeekly.com

Our webmaster Jamie Foster has added pages featuring pictures of our recent fun events including the Christmas Extravaganza, Christmas Crafts Fair, Christmas Eve Service UWF Boutique and the 140th Anniversary Celebration. Check out the **Recent Fun Events** link on the home page.

There is a link to the excellent video by Susan Thronson that was presented at our recent Charge Conference. The video reviews our new Mission Statement in conjunction with the many activities that take place in our congregation.

The home page lists upcoming church events. Please let Joel Anderson know if you would like an event or activity listed.

There are also links to our worship service videos, Cast-A-Net, weekly bullet+ins, our church's history, the Children's Center, on-line giving and much more. The "Find" tab brings up a powerful search engine. The search engine can be used to research past events, people or ??.

"DO YOU RECOGNIZE THIS PURCHASE" SCAM

Scammers send out an e-mail that looks like it comes from your credit card company asking if a certain large purchase was authorized, and to click or call if it was not authorized.

Of course you don't recognize it, the scammer made it up and wants you to click or call so they can defraud you. The e-mail looks legitimate because the scammers copy the card company's legitimate e-mail. Some clues that it is a scam: The legitimate e-mail will reference the last 4 digits of your card number. The scam e-mail does not. The card company's name should appear on the left of the @ sign in the senders e-mail address. The scammers may include the card company name on the right of the @ sign, but usually not to the left. Rather than click on the link and fall for their scam, check your account on the card company's web site. If you don't see the charge then you know it is a scam and can delete the e-mail. If you do see an unauthorized charge, call the number on the back of your card to report it.





News from the Mission Team



This is our team which served People's Kitchen on Dec. 31st, 2024: Frank Williams, Debbie Bradley, Evelyn Bradley, Dorine Bolterman, Hilary Henderson and Patty Williams.

We are sad to inform you that Priscilla Alquist resigned as Mission Chairperson. She will be missed.

We met on December 11, 2024, to discuss our agenda. We made casseroles for People's Kitchen December 30th and served approximately 60 people on December 31st.

Our Mission Team donated \$1,000 to each of the following organizations: 5 Cities Christian Women's Food Pantry, the People's Kitchen and the 5 Cities Homeless Coalition (5CHC).

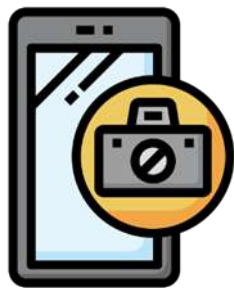
We are working on putting together information for the homeless so they will know which organizations are available and when. 5CHC has a warming center at 1023 East Grand Ave., Arroyo Grande, CA 93420. They pickup at certain locations in the late afternoon and take people back the next morning. Information is on their website.

Human Relations Day on January 19 is one of six churchwide Special Sunday offerings of The United Methodist Church. Human Relations Day calls United Methodists to recognize the right of all God's children in realizing their potential as human beings in relationship with one another. The special offering benefits neighborhood ministries through community Developers, community advocacy through United Methodist Voluntary Services and work with at-risk teens through the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program.

Human Relations Day reminds us of Dr. King's vision of the beloved community that speaks of loving every neighbor as ourselves. It calls us into "neighborhood," with all kinds of people in all kinds of places. We give thanks for those already working to bring the vision to reality and join together to continue this work of God's kingdom more fully.

Have a blessed 2025.

---submitted by Dorine Bolterman



COMMUNICATIONS TEAM WANTS YOUR PICTURES

The Communications team is creating an on-line photo library of the many activities that take place at our church. Photos are used on our website, in the Cast-A-Net, for publicity for upcoming events and will help document our activities for future generations. Please send pictures of both past and future church activities to Joel Anderson by e-mail or text or e-mail them to the Communications Team at FUMCAGcommunications@gmail.com.



January



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p align="center">Abbreviation Legend</p> <p>CH-Criswell Hall HR-Handbell Room #115 K-Kitchen L-Library Room #123 MMR-McMillen Room #113 PL-Parking Lot PS-Pastor's Study S-Sanctuary</p>			<p>1 NEW YEAR'S DAY</p>  <p>Church Office Closed for Holiday</p>	<p>2 9 AM Senior Exercise-CH 5 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal-HR 6:30 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal-S</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>5 8:30 AM Contemporary Worship Service 10:30 AM Traditional Worship Service</p>	<p>6 6 PM Gerry's Quilt Class-CH</p>	<p>7 9 AM Senior Exercise-CH 10 AM Sew & Sews-MMR 5 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal-HR 7:00 PM Board of Trustees-MMR</p>	<p>8 9 AM Church Work Morning -CH 10 AM UWF Steering-L 1:30 PM Mission Team-MMR</p>	<p>9 9 AM Senior Exercise-CH 5 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal-HR 6:30PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal-S</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>
<p>12 8:30 AM Contemporary Worship Service 10:30 AM Traditional Worship Service</p>	<p>13 6 PM Gerry's Quilt Class-CH</p>	<p>14 9 AM Senior Exercise-CH 10 AM Sew & Sews-MMR 11 AM Chair Yoga-CH 1:30 PM Finance Meeting-Library</p>	<p>15 9 AM Church Work Morning-CH 2:00 PM Church Council-MMR</p>	<p>16 9 AM Senior Exercise-CH 10:30 AM Staff Parish--PS 11 AM Chair Yoga-CH 4 PM Children's Center Board-MMR 5 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal-HR 6:30 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal-S</p>	<p>17 10:30 AM UWF Book Club-L</p>	<p>18 5-7 PM Bingo-CH Pizza and Prizes</p>
<p>19 8:30 AM Contemporary Worship Service 10:30 AM Traditional Worship Service</p>	<p>20 6 PM Gerry's Quilt Class-CH The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday Observance Church Office Closed for Holiday</p>	<p>21 9 AM Senior Exercise-CH 10 AM Sew & Sews-MMR 11:00 AM Chair Yoga-CH 1 PM Bible Study-CH 3 PM JOY Circle-at homes 5 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal-HR</p>	<p>22 9 AM Church Work Morning-CH</p>	<p>23 9 AM Senior Exercise-CH 11 AM Chair Yoga-CH 5 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal-HR 6:30 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal-S</p>	<p>24 11:00 AM Nominations-PS</p>	<p>25 11 AM Piedras Blancas Elephant Seal viewing-10 AM leave church to carpool</p>
<p>26 8:30 AM Contemporary Worship Service 10:30 AM Traditional Worship Service</p>	<p>27 4:30 PM-Communications- 6 PM Gerry's Quilt Class-CH</p>	<p>28 9 AM Senior Exercise-CH 10 AM Sew & Sews-MMR 11 AM Chair Yoga-CH 1 PM Bible Study-CH 5 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal-HR</p>	<p>29 9 AM Church Work Morning-CH 10 AM Mary-Martha-Esther-MMR</p>	<p>30 9 AM Senior Exercise-CH 11 AM Chair Yoga-CH 5 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal-HR 6:30 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal-</p>	<p>31</p>	

Meet Our CHURCH STAFF

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Praise Team Director: Mike Clark
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TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY



Bible Study

Facilitated by Nancy St. Laurent

Meets on
Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. In Criswell Hall

Next Bible Study book is:
CONTEXT

by Josh Scott
and begins on Tuesday, January 21

**Books are ordered and will be available
soon from Nancy.
All are welcome to join us!**



Alex Paredes.....01/04
Norm Henderson.....01/07
Marjorie Ott.....01/08
Michelle Richardson.....01/08
Carolyn Russell.....01/15
Nancy Baughman.....01/17
Elwood Hyden.....01/17
Natalie Weitkamp.....01/18
Jim Alquist.....01/20
Steve Gillean.....01/20
Judy Leonard.....01/22
Jordan Henderson.....01/29
Eileen Odom.....01/29
Mary Thronson.....01/29



WOULD YOU LIKE TO HONOR A LOVED ONE WITH FLOWERS?

Do you enjoy the beautiful flower arrangements placed on the altar on Sundays? Dates are available for Sunday morning flower dedications in upcoming months. Your floral tributes are welcomed and will be placed on the altar for both services on Sunday. You can pick up your arrangement after the second service.

Contact Frances in the Church Office

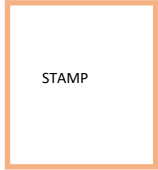
The cost for altar flowers is \$30.

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 birthday to our monthly birthday list!



First United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande

275 North Halcyon Road
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420 (805) 481-2692



Visit us on the web at worshipweekly.com

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

**JANUARY
2025**

SUNDAY HOSPITALITY SNACK HOSTS

- JAN 5 United Women of Faith
- JAN 12 Membership Care
- JAN 19 Fellowship Ministry
- JAN 26 Church Council

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Children's Center Chronicle

Mission Statement of the First United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande

The First United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande is a joyful, active and fun-loving faith community. We worship on Sunday mornings and offer opportunities for Christian growth, fellowship, health and increased well-being all week long. Members represent a wide range of theological and political views and commit to treating each other with love and respect in the midst of differences. We nurture spiritual growth and a deeper understanding of God's love in Christ as we work together to spread the love of God in our community and in the world.