



Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church™

Officemaderaumc@gmail.com

The Grapevine

500 Sunset, Madera CA 93637 -

(559) 674-8704

**Dec 2024**

**Sunday Morning Schedule:**

10:00 am: Worship

**Office Hours:**

9:00 am - 12:00 pm Tuesday-Friday

**Phone:** 559-674-8704

**Contents**

**Pastor's Message**

**Finance News**

**UMW**

**Prayer Corner**

**Trustees**

**General**

**Announcements**

**Missions**

**Birthdays &**

**Anniversaries**

**Calendar**

December 2024

From the Pastor

What do you need to do to get ready for Christmas? We could all make lists that would include things like clean house, put up decorations, plan events, invite guests, shop for gifts, send greetings, cook, and play holiday music. Your list might vary a bit, but most of us have at least some of these things “to do” this often-busy month. As followers of Christ, what are some things we might want to do to prepare our hearts to worship Jesus at Christmas?

Our heart-preparation list will probably be somewhat the same and somewhat different than our holiday preparedness list. It is good that Thanksgiving comes just before Advent. Giving thanks to God is a good way to start anything, and an especially good way to prepare our hearts to worship. Music is also good for both lists. Be sure to include some sacred songs in your December playlists. I encourage you to let the Christmas decorations direct you heart to Christ – let the lights remind you of the Light of the World and rejoice that even unbelievers are putting up strings of lights that remind us of Jesus.

Sending cards and attending or hosting parties reminds me of a word I learned this year: “kinkeeping,” which refers to the effort required to keep in touch with all the relatives -- and it does take effort. I urge you, as a worshipper of Jesus, to make maintaining relationships a high priority. Keeping in touch with family and friends and especially with fellow believers is a way to follow Jesus who taught us to love one another. Christmas is a good excuse to make that call that you’ve put off for too long.

And finally, amidst whatever other holiday events on your calendar, be sure to include worship. Our Sundays in Advent will be filled with special music and our Christmas Eve Candlelight service is always a highlight. Sometimes our holiday rush can distract us from worshipping Jesus. I urge you this year to consciously let all the holiday “stuff” point you to the one we are celebrating.

Have a Blessed Advent,  
Pastor Jim

## Finance Committee

The holiday season is here, and it can be a hectic time. Many of us tend to get wrapped up in the chaos of shopping, baking, and doing other Christmas tasks in an effort to show our friends and family we love them. We know Jesus is the reason for the season. We know it’s not about presents and decorations. Yet we stress over what we “need to get done” before Christmas.

The idea of giving gifts at Christmas started with the gifts of the Magi, the wise men travelling from the East. They worshiped the Christ Child with gifts. (Matthew 2:11)

***“And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.*”**

Jesus didn’t need this “stuff,” but the act of giving to Him is symbolic of our caring for others. Seek out activities that honor Christ.

God always provides for us. The finances of the church during the year show that our expenses outweighed the donations received, but we are thankful for the annual givers who will give during the final months of the year. Our church building is 68 years old. In 2024, we had repairs that were more costly than what we had budgeted, and there was a rise in utilities. During 2025, donations from many of the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday lunches will go into our building maintenance fund, to help with repair costs.

For the month of October 2024:

Total Income	\$ 17,172.60
Total Expenses	<u>25,612.80</u>
Net (Loss)	\$ (8,440.20)

For the year of 2024:

Total Income	\$ 199,015.32
Total Expenses	<u>239,587.47</u>
Net (Loss)	\$ (40,572.15)

10/31/24 General Fund Balance.....	\$81,820.93
10/31/24 Restricted Fund Balance....	\$58,870.92
10/31/24 Endowment Fund Balance.	\$90,553.09

We have been faithful in paying our tithes to the conference, who uses them for work and ministry worldwide.

If you have not returned your Plan of Giving card for 2025, please remember to do so. Cards are available on the back table in the sanctuary if you need one. The church needs

your pledge, your promise to give back to God through the works of this church.

Thank you for your gifts and your service. And please continue to pray for the generosity of our church.

Nancy Simpson, Finance Chair

## **Holiday Mix-up Dinner**

This get-together, formerly known as the Progressive Dinner, will be December 14<sup>th</sup> at the Church but this year, the format will change slightly as all courses will be either in the Social Hall or Fireside Room. Enter the Social Hall and select your seat. Hors d'oeuvres will be brought to you by servers. Following hors d'oeuvres, first soup then salads will be served from the stage and/or tables along the side of the room and we'll mix-up! Sides and the entrée will be served from the kitchen end of the Social Hall. Dessert will be in the Fireside Room with caroling and Jeanette on the piano!

Hostesses for the courses are Dianna—Hors d'oeuvres; Erica—Soup; Mary—Salad; Ginnie—Sides; Denise—Desserts. Philip and Becky graciously provide the entrée and this year they are serving pork tenderloin.

Please contact one of the hostesses if you would like to assist with providing a dish. And make your plans to attend this wonderful holiday get-together for fellowship and fun.

## **MUMC Trustees Committee**

As usual, your Trustees have been hard at work maintaining the church campus. The required paperwork was also completed for the Cal-Nevada Conference prior to our Charge Conference last week.

David Eddy and Doug Baron changed all of the clocks in the church buildings from daylight savings to regular time.

The front entrance doors to the Narthex were refinished with a beautiful red oak stain, and sealed with satin, polyurethane by a local painter. They should last for many years. The back door of the pastor's office, leading to the courtyard, was also sanded, re-stained and finished with polyurethane by Trustee Vivian Chicconi and her husband, Mike.

The switch from chiller to boiler was successfully made, and all the thermostats were adjusted for winter weather. A step-by-step set of instructions, with photos, was prepared for future use.

Paul Brack installed special pads on the "sled bottom" chairs from the conference room so they could be used in the social hall without damaging the floors.

Two new hands-free towel dispensers were installed in the nursery restrooms; and the stopper rod was replaced in the sink in the men's restroom (at the back of the sanctuary).

A big “thank you” to Doug Baron and Fred Mossman, who have agreed to continue for another term on the Trustees. We would like to also welcome Julie Flowers to the Board of Trustees, effective January 1, 2025.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the Trustees who have served our congregation so effectively this year, and especially Carol Kennedy, who will be leaving the Board at the end of this year after having diligently served for six (6) years.

We are looking forward to working with our new church secretary, Ginnie Sterling, and continuing to work with Pastor Jim to make our church campus the best it can be.

The next regular Trustees meeting is scheduled for December 3, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. in the Conference Room.

Bobby Carter, Chair

**Food Distribution Reminder**

**Brown Bag** if for seniors 55+ who have prepaid and are on a list. This distribution is the first Thursday AFTER the third Monday and will be **December 19<sup>th</sup>** beginning at **9:00 am**.

**Regular distribution** is free to any Madera resident 18 or over on a first come, first served basis and is the LAST Wednesday of the month. However, December’s distribution will

be on **December 18<sup>th</sup>** at **9:00 am** because of Christmas.

Helpers are always needed and appreciated. Anyone wishing to volunteer is asked to come one-half hour early to help with assembly. Distribution is in the back parking lot. I am so thankful for our wonderful volunteers.

Sue First, Missions Committee

**December Birthdays**

- 1 Debbie Valencia
- 2 Samuel Curran
- 3 Michelle Long  
Kevin Sherrod
- 6 Ruth Beckman  
Ron Wood  
Jayden Taylor
- 11 Kyle Garrison
- 15 Margaret Potter
- 16 Doug Carpenter  
Stephanie Smith
- 17 Paul Martin
- 18 Mike Pasma  
Mary Waggoner
- 21 Tiffany Knoll
- 22 Kristina Pasma
- 26 Lee Blackstone
- 27 Tina Unti
- 28 George Beckman  
Fred Mossman

- 28 Bert Roper  
Caitlyn Janzen
- 30 Kris Hew
- 31 Phil Mayer  
James Young

**December Wedding Anniversaries**

- 9 Mike & Vivian Chicconi
- 16 Larry & Janice Lowder
- 17 Ron & Cindi Wood
- 19 Michael & Christina Ruiz
- 22 Ted & Pat McDaniel
- 29 Bobby & Alice Carter
- 31 Phil & Kay Mayer  
Jim & Tina Unti

If your Birthday or Anniversary is incorrect or is not listed, please call the church office so we can update our records.

**Greeters**

- 12/ 1 Pat Galleano
- 12/ 8 Kevin & Nancy Sherrod
- 12/15 Ginnie Sterling & Nola Rash
- 12/22 Bert Roper & Sue First
- 12/29 Dianna Combs & Marie Combs

**Coffee Hour Host/Hostesses**

- 12/ 1 Bobby & Alice Carter
- 12/ 8 Kevin & Nancy Sherrod
- 12/15 Geri Brown & Pat Galleano
- 12/22 Erica Gonzalez &  
Javier Valenzuela
- 12/29 Dianna & Marie Combs

**AV Team Assignments**

- 12/ 1 Sue & Tiffany
- 12/ 8 Alice & Bobby
- 12/15 Crystal & Doug
- 12/22 Sue & Tiffany
- 12/24 Martha & Fred
- 12/29 Alice & Bobby

**Online Giving**

This online giving portal may be accessed through our website at maderauc.org. At the Top of the opening page, there is a red "Donate" button, which will take you to our Online Giving site. There you will find various options.

You may also use our QR Code that will take you directly to our Online Giving site. Just open your phone camera and hover it over the QR Code. Then touch the pop-up that appears.



**December 27, 2024 @ 12:00 noon**  
**\*Please send Articles for the Grapevine by the above date.**



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<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
<b>1</b> 8:30 pm Bible Study (CR)  10:00 am Worship Service <b>Communion</b>	<b>2</b> 6:45 am (CR) Prayer Group	<b>3</b> 5:00 pm (CR) Trustees	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 6:30 am Bible Study (Perko's Café)	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> 8:30 am Bible Study (CR)  10:00 am Worship Service	<b>9</b> 6:45 am (CR) Prayer Group 4:00pm (Cedar) Small Group 6:00p Scouts (SH-CR)	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 6:30 am Bible Study (Perko's Café)	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> <b>Holiday Mix-up Dinner 4:30 pm</b>
<b>15</b> 8:30 am Bible Study (CR)  10:00 am Worship Service	<b>16</b> 6:45 am (CR) Prayer Group 4:00 pm (Cedar) Small Group 6:00 pm Scouts (SH-CR) 6:00 pm (CR) Finance	<b>17</b> 5:00 pm (FS) Missions  6:00 pm (CR) Church Council	<b>18</b> 9:00 am Food Distribution  6:00 pm (CR) Nurture & Care	<b>19</b> 6:30 am Bible Study (Perko's Café)  9:00am 55+ Food Distribution	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 9:30 am (CR) UMW  3:30 pm Scouts Camp-In
<b>22</b> 10:00 am Worship Service  8:00 am Scouts Out	<b>23</b> 6:45 am (CR) Prayer Group 4:00 pm (Cedar) Small Group 6:00 pm Scouts (SH-CR)	<b>24</b> Candlelight Service	<b>25</b> 	<b>26</b> 6:30 am Bible Study (Perko's Café)	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> 10:00 am Worship Service	<b>30</b> 6:45 am (CR) Prayer Group	<b>31</b>				



December 2024

Dear Church Family:

The Giving Tree for the families of the Madera County Superintendent of Schools Early Start Program is up in the narthex. The children who attend this school have minor to severe disabilities. The staff work closely with the families and recognize those truly in need.

Once again, we will be donating gift cards to the families rather than purchasing gifts for them. We have five (5) families this year which is a total of twelve (12) children. Last year, we give to 2 families with a total of 12 children.

We will purchase gift cards starting at \$25. If you wish to purchase a gift card or give money to purchase one, please take the envelope from the tree and return the envelope to Rita Wilson, Susan Miller or Denise Burns.

**All donations and gift cards must be received  
by Sunday, December 8, 2024.**

Special thanks to our Church Family for your generous and loving support of the Early Start families. These families will be truly blessed this Christmas.

Merry Christmas & God Bless,  
Rita Wilson

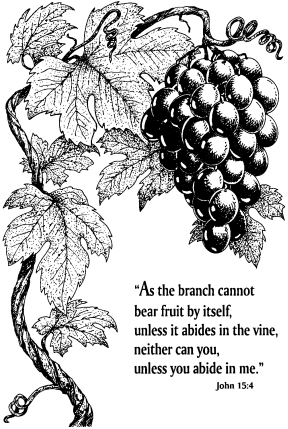




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"As the branch cannot  
bear fruit by itself,  
unless it abides in the vine,  
neither can you,  
unless you abide in me."  
John 15:4

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