



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

Jan 2025

Sunday Morning Schedule:

10:00 am: Worship

Office Hours:

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

Phone: 559-674-8704

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January 2025

From the Pastor

Happy New Year! It's a common greeting at the first of this month, but we aren't always happy about things that are new. We miss the old things and the familiar ways. Anything new requires adjusting and learning, and sometimes we don't want to expend that much energy. I will likely have to replace some of my electronic devices in the near future. Even though they will be "new and improved" I won't immediately know how to make them operate. "New" does not always equal "happy."

Our Christian life pushes us in two directions in terms of "newness." On the one hand our eternal God is "the same yesterday, today and forever." On the other hand, God's mercies are "new every morning." God is constantly renewing the church and bringing new life to hurting hearts. In the midst of swirling change, we can find stability in the Solid Rock whose truth and love endures forever. We can also find the creative power to adapt to the opportunities of a new day. Part of following Jesus is growing, becoming more like Christ every day – that's change.

May we enter into this new year with the assurance that God's love and truth will never change, but that God will help us when we need to change. May we enter into this new year with anticipation that God will be doing wonderful work. May God give us eyes to see and hearts to rejoice in the new things God will do in 2025.

Pastor Jim

Bishop Visits Central Valley Circuits

Bishop Sandra K. Olewine joined Central Valley District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Mary Maaga for a tour of the Central Valley District. The two traveled over 500 miles, meeting with 52 clergy in all 8 Central Valley District Circuits.

These gatherings were a time to share stories of joy, struggle and hope, to share visions and ask questions. Of the visits, Bishop Olewine said, "We prayed and laughed and feasted together. I am grateful to these pastors for making time in a very busy season to spend a few hours with me to help me learn about ministry in this region of the Annual Conference. There is much for which to give thanks and to celebrate."

"The Central Valley has big cities, small towns, and rural outposts. She got a sampling of them all and experienced the diversity of our pastoral leadership. It was fun to show her around, and nearly all the clergy and CLMs took time out of their busy Advent schedules to be in attendance. I continue to be deeply moved by the dedication of our Central Valley leaders, clergy and lay," said Rev. Dr. Maaga.



Finance Committee

I was just thinking about how fast the New Year came. **2025! WOW!** For many people, the turn of the year is a great time to make a new start. That's why so many people make New Year's Resolutions.

January is the time when most of us try to make improvements in *our own* lives. We make commitments, in hopes that we will follow through, but it takes a concentrated effort to keep these commitments, these promises to *ourselves* – lose weight, exercise, improve spending habits.

It is the commitments that we make to God that really matter, anyway. In Psalm 51:10-11, David prayed to ask God to renew his spirit: ***"Create in me a clean heart, O God; restore within me a sense of being brand new. Do not throw me far away from Your presence, and do not remove Your Holy Spirit from me."***

Commit to making a difference at home, in the workplace, in your community, and in your church. Pray daily for a renewed spirit.

November looked much better for the finances of the church. We are thankful for the annual givers who came through during the month of November, which gave quite a boost in our financial reports. Because we continue to have expenses each month, our yearly totals are still at a loss, but December is a time for giving, and our Christmas giving will bring us up. God will always provide.

For the month of November 2024:

Total Income	\$ 63,704.08
Total Expenses	<u>26,963.91</u>
Net Income	\$ 36,740.17

For the year of 2024 through November:

Total Income	\$262,719.40
Total Expenses	<u>266,551.38</u>
Net (Loss)	\$ (3,831.98)

11/30/24 General Fund Balance	\$120,062.42
11/30/24 Restricted Fund Balance	\$60,172.68
11/30/24 Endowment Fund Balance	\$90,553.09

We have been faithful in our tithing to the conference.

If you have not returned your pledge card for 2025, please remember to do so. 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.

Please continue to pray for the generosity of our church.

Nancy Simpson, Finance Chair

MUMC Trustees Committee

Outside lights were set-up on the perimeter of the sanctuary by Fred Mossman, Pastor Jim, and Bobby Carter, in order to light up the stained- glass windows on Christmas Eve. It made for a nice ambiance during the candle lighting.

The locks on the outside trash receptacles have been removed at a savings of \$47 per month.

The leak in the roof of the sanctuary has been repaired.

Trustees Bert Roper and Vivian Chicconi coordinated a signage project for the church campus, the first phase of which has been completed on the front glass doors. The second phase will be identification of the interior doors.

Trustee Fred Mossman, along with his wife, Martha, replaced the fluorescent lights on the East side of the sanctuary with LED tubes, and we are in the process of replacing the lights on the West side of the sanctuary as well.

Vice-chair, Bert Roper, received bids and is coordinating the cleaning of all of the carpeted areas of the church, as well as both sides of the pew pads in the sanctuary. This will be accomplished the first few days in January. We would like to thank in advance the volunteers that have been recruited to assist with moving of furniture and large items as needed.

Finance chair, Nancy Simpson, and Trustees Vice-Chair, Bert Roper, will be heading up a capital funds campaign to raise money for the landscape project.

All of the long-term facility use agreements are being updated for 2025. We would like to remind everyone that any room usage needs to be requested in writing to the office, so that

the pastor and the trustees chair are able to approve and schedule events. This will ensure that the rooms are properly reserved and prepared.

As a reminder, all church members are welcomed and encouraged to attend any Trustees meeting. The next regular meeting is scheduled for January 7, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. Elections will be held for the Trustee positions of Secretary, Vice-Chair and Chair for 2025 year at that time.

Bobby Carter, Chair

Heartfelt Thank You from Staff!

Jim and Kathy want to give a warm "thank you" to all who contributed to the Christmas gift for us. We are also grateful for the prayers you lift on our behalf throughout the year.

Dear Church family,
Thank you for the nice Christmas gift. I have enjoyed being a part of the worship team these past few months and look forward to continued service. It is a joy to be part of a church that is so warm, caring and accepting, one that is filled with people who are living out their faith in real and practical ways.

Blessings to all, Michael Varlas

We are extremely grateful for the generosity of our congregation and send a huge thank you to all who contributed to the monetary gifts we each received. You are awesome and we love and appreciate you all!

Dianna, Erica & Ginnie

A Thank You From Love INC

A thank you was received thanking Madera UMC for providing space for the Furniture Ministry and through the funds provided by special donation. Pastor Jim has recently joined the Madera Love INC board of directors.

Madera UMC Committees 101

Beginning in February, one Church committee will be featured in a newsletter article. This is being done in the hope that Church members will gain a better understanding of the function of each of our committees and with the ultimate goal of increasing participation and membership on our various committees. These include Trustees, Church Council, UMW, SPRC, Nurture & Care, Missions, Scouts, Audio-Visual, Communications and Finance. An article on Child Care will be included as well.

Vital Signs Reporting

Each week Madera UMC is required to enter our worship attendance and professions of faith into the Vital Signs database. In addition, we are asked to report the number of small groups, unduplicated small group participants, mission/outreach efforts and offerings. During 2025 an effort will be made to capture accurate numbers for reporting in these categories as well as for weekly online attendance and support of missions around the world, like our Rise Against Hunger event. Ginnie will be reaching out monthly for

numbers to report so please be ready with accurate responses.

4th Sunday Lunch

In January, Ginnie & Family will be hosting brunch on the 26th. Vivian & Mike will host February with Dianna & Friends providing the food for March and Carol & Gordon in April. The Scouts are scheduled to provide lunch in May and the Nurture & Care Committee will host June. This is a fun time of food and fellowship so plan to attend on the 4th Sunday immediately after Church. Donations are accepted and appreciated. Selected 2025 lunch proceeds will go to the Church Building Maintenance Fund while others will benefit specific charities or Church committees.

Ginnie Sterling, Missions

Condolences

Former church custodian Richard Torres passed away on 12/26/24. Irene Flemming with the Food Bank is his sister. Prayers of comfort for the family and friends.

Members Lost in 2024

In 2024, we lost four members of our congregation. We remember our deceased sisters and brother Dora Pierotti, Richard Wilson, Doris Potter and Betty Robbins.

Estate Planning and RMDs

Remembering your church in your estate

This is a brand-new year, and it is a good time to think about estate planning. We all have something to pass on to others when we leave this world, and whether you are a young person or an older adult, you need to think about how you want to distribute what you have so that others can benefit. We don't know when our final moment will come, so it is never too soon to make those plans.

Your church can be a beneficiary of your estate or a life insurance policy. If you have not already done so, consider naming Madera United Methodist Church as a beneficiary.

Sometimes churches receive property, such as land or a building, a vehicle, or other tangible asset. This is often difficult for a church to accept. Although the donor may think it is thoughtful and generous, it sometimes causes more issues than benefits. Monetary giving is usually more beneficial for the church.

That said, our building is in constant need of attention. If you are planning to give to the church as a beneficiary, you might consider designating some of your giving to the Building Maintenance Fund.

Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) and contributions to the church

If you have an individual retirement account (IRA) and you have reached the age for which you are required to distribute annually some of your account (called a Required Minimum

Distribution, or RMD), you may give some or all of this distribution to the church, with greater tax benefit than if you gave to the church from other accounts.

This is called a Qualified Charitable Distribution. A qualified charitable distribution (QCD) is a distribution made directly by the trustee of your individual retirement arrangement (IRA), other than an SEP or SIMPLE IRA, to certain qualified organizations. The total QCDs for the year can't be more than \$100,000.

If all the requirements are met, a QCD may be nontaxable. This means it will not be reported as income, and because it will not be in your income, it cannot be reported as a deduction on your Schedule A. However, this is a greater tax benefit than what a Schedule A deduction will give.

Some people in our church family have already taken advantage of this benefit. If you would like to hear more about it, contact the administrator of your IRA.

Get to know your church family

How well do you know the individuals in our church family? Each Sunday, we greet one another in church and gather afterwards for refreshments, but there is not enough time to learn about each other during this short visit after church.

Many of the people in our congregation are retired, and we have a variety of professions represented, including teachers, farmers, accountants, secretaries, and business

owners, to name just a few.

Often, we don't know a lot about people until after they have passed, and the obituary tells us who they were.

Beginning with the next Grapevine, we will profile people in our church family, either as individuals or as a couple. We will honor ones who are living, and some who have passed.

So, stay tuned and read your Grapevine. The next person profiled could be you.

January Birthdays

- 2 Landon Jones
- 6 Nathan Perez
- 10 Dianna Marsh
- 11 Steven Boehm
- 12 Helen Ford
- 14 Jim Garrison
- 16 Chris Martinez
- 18 Wayne Robbins, Jr.
Amelia Jones
- 20 Fred Treat
- 21 Nancy Simpson
- 22 Audrey Aanonson
- 23 Amy Treat
- 27 John Charles Pasma
- 28 Cheryl Blackstone
Sebastian Gonzalez
Crystal Wiggins

January Wedding Anniversaries

- 2 Curtis & Katie Pasma
- 12 Wayne & Patty Robbins
- 30 Gary & Sue Foust

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

Greeters

- 1/ 5 Ginnie Sterling & Nola
- 1/12 Geri & David Brown
- 1/19 Carol & Gordon Kennedy
- 1/26 Pat Galleano

Coffee Hour Host/Hostesses

- 1/5 Joyce & Jennifer Martinez
- 1/12 Geri Brown & Pat Galleano
- 1/19 Candy Talley & Sue Thornton
- 1/26 4th Sunday Lunch – Ginnie & Family

AV Team Assignments

- 1/5 Sue & Tiffany
- 1/12 Crystal & Doug
- 1/19 Martha & Fred
- 1/26 Sue & Tiffany

Online Giving

This online giving portal may be accessed through our website at maderaumc.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.



January 24, 2025 @ 12:00 noon
Please send Articles for the Grapevine by this date.



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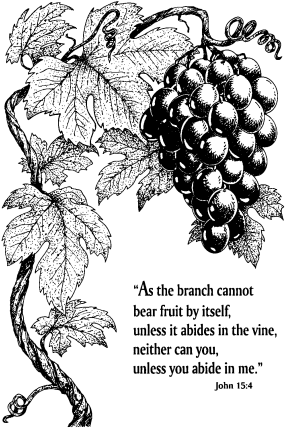
<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
			1	2 6:30 am Bible Study (Perko's)	3 7:00 am TOPS (CR)	4
5 8:30 am Bible Study (CR) 10:00 am Worship Service Communion	6 6:45 am Prayer Group (CR) 9:00 am Crafts (CR) 4:00 pm Small Group (Cedar) 7:00 pm Scouts (SH/CR)	7 9:00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



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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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