



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

Mar 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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March 2025

From the Pastor

Ashes to Fire

There is an interesting progression of symbols before and after Easter. Lent is the period of time leading up to Easter, and it starts with Ash Wednesday. We will have a service together with the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church at 4:00 p.m. that will include smearing ashes on our foreheads. Following the weeks of Easter we will celebrate the Day of Pentecost, with flames as one of the main symbols, representing the coming of the Holy Spirit on the followers of Jesus. Ashes first, then flames later – that seems backward. Ashes are usually what is left over after a fire has burned. It feels like it should be flames first, then ashes.

In our worldly experience fires generally burn out, leaving behind only ashes. Ashes are therefore a good symbol of destruction and death. Someday we will die, and our body will return to its basic elements. Ashes on the forehead remind us that we are not God, that we are fragile and limited, and that we depend completely on the eternal God.

The flames of Pentecost don't burn out leaving a pile of ashes. Spirit-filled Christians are like the bush that Moses saw burning but not being consumed. We burn with the fire of God's presence, but we are not destroyed.

But before we can burn with the Spirit's fire, we must experience a kind of dying. We must come to a point where we say, "I can't." "I give up trying to live my life by my own strength, my own wisdom, my own rules. I am vacating the driver's seat so that You, God, can steer my life." Ashes on the forehead represent surrender in the heart. The ashes come first because surrender comes before empowerment. The flames are not followed by ashes because the Spirit doesn't destroy us but recreates us.

In between the "I can't" of ashes and the "I can do all things" of Holy Spirit fire is the work of Jesus who died on the cross and rose again. May God lead us from ashes to fire.

Pastor Jim

Committee Spotlight – Finance

The role of the Finance Committee is to record and report the operating income and expenses, and to account for the receipts and disbursements of funds that are designated for particular purposes.

The finances of the church are important to all who attend and are involved in the church. So, financial reports are available for anyone who asks about the finances of Madera United Methodist Church.

Annual reports are made to the conference, and each month a tithe is sent to the California/Nevada conference. Tithing is the practice of donating one-tenth of one's

income. This is a spiritual practice that originated in the Old Testament, and our conference uses this practice.

Since 2014, churches are asked to tithe to the conference, rather than the prior apportionment conference giving. MUMC has been faithful in giving its tithes to the conference.

Each month a Report of Finances is presented to our local Church Council, which meets the third Tuesday of the month. The Finance Committee meets the day before Church Council.

At all monthly Finance Committee meetings, a packet of financial reports is distributed. The following reports are included in the packet:

- Overview of the past month
- Monthly income sheet, showing all contributions, broken down by type
- Comparison of income by month over the past three years
- Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)
- Statement of Income and Expense (Profit & Loss), showing monthly columns
- Statement of Income and Expense Budget vs Actual
- Details of Fund Balances (Designated Funds)

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend Finance Committee meetings which are chaired by Nancy Simpson, Treasurer.

The next Finance Committee meeting will be on Monday, March 17 at 6:00 pm in the Conference Room. Hope to see you there!

Know Your Church Family

As we greet one another in church and gather afterwards for refreshments, there is not enough time to learn about each other so we're doing a monthly feature to highlight a member.



This month we're highlighting our Church Secretary, Ginnie Sterling. A third generation Paso Robles native, she attended Fresno State in 1962, married and had children, Stephanie and

Keith were both born in Fresno.

Her career path has been unique and varied. She was raised on a farm where she changed sprinklers, mowed hay, delivered lambs and all the associated chores of a farm kid. She was a waitress in high school then moved to grocery checker, escrow officer and bank secretary after divorcing.

Ginnie, children and mother moved to Porterville in 1977 where she became an escrow branch manager. She married David in 1979 and went to work in a law firm working her way to paralegal. Her next employment was on-site construction job manager building a bridge in San Luis Obispo Co. She then

dispatched concrete trucks and has worked the longest as a paralegal for a new and used truck dealership.

She was working three jobs – Porterville Fair Manager, Main Street Manager and paralegal when she decided it was time to choose a career, and the choice was to pursue her passion for economic development and job creation. She worked for the Lindsay Chamber of Commerce and took the team to their All-America City (AAC) designation in 1995.

From Lindsay, David, Ginnie and Mom moved to North Fork where she was the Executive Director of the Community Development Council. After 2 years, this led to a job as the Special Projects Manager with the City of Santa Maria where she handled both economic development and grant writing. This also resulted in their AAC designation in 1998. All in all, Ginnie worked with 7 cities, including Fresno, to achieve AAC.

She wrote over \$10 million in funded grants for the City and one resulted in community-based policing neighborhood revitalization activities where she was introduced to the Mixteco people. Because of this, at the start of Christmas vacation 2002, she climbed into a Ford Aerostar Van with a family of six for a 52-hour trek to Santiago Yucuyachi Oaxaca Mexico where she spent 3 weeks observing the culture, history and activities of these indigenous people. The Santa Maria Times sent a reporter to document her trip and a three-part series with photos was published.



By this time, however, two grandchildren, Paige and Seth, were actively involved in school, sports and 4-H so in 2006 it was time to move back to the Valley to be closer to family and their activities. Ginnie worked from home as an independent grant writer. Granddaughter Nola was born in 2011. In 2012 she went back to work full-time for the Porterville firm who now owned the Fresno Peterbilt dealership. Tragically, she came home from her first day to find David had died in his sleep.

In 2024, at age 80 Ginnie finally quit full-time work to begin her “dream job” as MUMC church secretary! She is an avid reader, sports fan, especially baseball, and a Fresno Grizzlies season ticket holder since 2008. Keith is a live sports camera operator and sometimes works out of town so the bulk of any spare time Ginnie might have is taken up by shuttling Nola to and from various activities! She and Nola also enjoy cooking together. She has a total of 3 children, 7 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren, which is another story entirely!

Ginnie joined MUMC in 2012 and loves her church family. She currently serves as the Missions chair and is active at various other church events and activities. She began as the church secretary in November 2024 and does not see any other jobs in her future! However, she still today does occasional tasks for the owners of the truck dealership. As the longest tenured employee, she’s the only one who still knows where the bodies are buried!

Lent and Easter Activities

We will begin the Lenten season in the sanctuary with the March 5th Ash Wednesday Service beginning at 4:00 pm in cooperation with the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church.

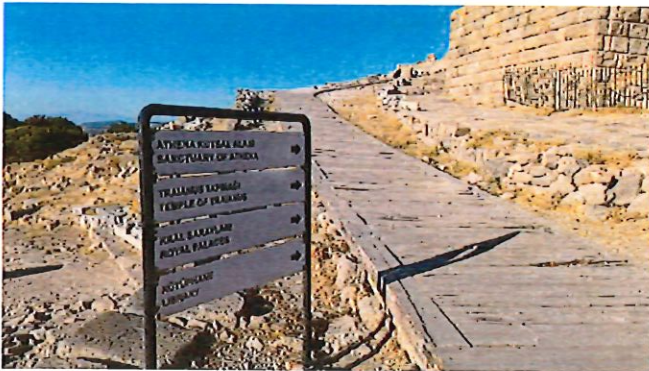
Again, we will host the April 13 Palm Sunday Community Worship Service in cooperation with the Madera Ministerial Association, and we will provide refreshments. Please let Ginnie know if you can provide a dessert for that evening.

There will be a Maundy Thursday Service on April 17 at 6:00 pm, and Holy Trinity Episcopal Church will coordinate the Good Friday Chant Service on April 18 beginning at noon.

April 20 Easter morning will begin with a 6:00 am Sunrise Service on the front lawn with refreshments afterwards; then we’ll have the regular service at 10:00 am. During Holy Week please bring Easter lilies for the Sunday service and silk flowers for the cross, anytime during office hours that week.

Just for Fun Potluck & Presentation

The Missions Committee will hold a potluck on March 29 beginning at 5:00 pm. Following the potluck David Bockelman, a member of The Well Community Church Fresno, will take us on his recent trip through Turkey, Greece and Rome. His trip focused on bringing scripture to life though first-hand experience in places the stories of Paul actually happened during his travels through the region.



Make plans to attend the March 29 potluck and be inspired and educated by David's presentation!

Landscape Plan – Part Two

Dear Church Members and Friends,

This is the second part of a four-part presentation about the Landscape Project that the Board of Trustees has for the front of the church. We encourage you to read it so that you will know our intentions.

Part One was the presentation that Bert gave to those who were present at the 4th Sunday Lunch on January 26th.

Part Two is this letter that was sent to all of those who received the Constant Contact, and now included in the Grapevine. The schematics of the two concept plans are attached after the calendar page. This letter contains some information about how they are similar and different. It will also explain where we are getting some of the money for this project.

Part Three will be a Survey Monkey survey to help us gather some information, likes, dislikes and ideas from the congregation.

Part Four will be a Fund-Raising Event to raise the funds for the project. We hope to raise the funds in a short time so that we can have the project completed this year.

Below are listed the same criteria and elements in both plans:

1. Both plans include leaving the large tree on the east side of the front. One other tree will be left in one of the plans. All the other trees and plants will be removed.
2. The soil will be removed to a depth of 2 to 3 inches and either hauled away or spread in the large area to the west of the church.
3. A commercial grade weed barrier will be placed on the ground and that will be covered with pea gravel and mulch in different areas.
4. A drip system will replace the ineffective irrigation system that we now have.
5. We will plant drought-tolerant and low maintenance plants.

We currently have approximately \$36,000.00 in restricted funds that are available for this project, so about 31% of the project is funded. The remainder of the money for the project will be raised by donations, and we will be looking into other possible funding sources.

The Artificial Grass Plan: This plan has dark green areas as either artificial grass or Bermuda Grass. The artificial grass costs a



little bit more but does not require water or mowing. The Trustees favor the artificial grass over the Bermuda grass. The artificial grass will be over a mound of dirt and sand to give it some definition and to add a little bit of elevation to the yard. In the first schematic the grey is rock and the long grey swath on the left side is a "dry riverbed" with boulders around it. The dark brown area is mulch. The different colored dots are plants that are drought resistant and are low maintenance. The area between the sidewalk that runs along the front of the church and the church building is half artificial grass and half plants. This plan includes the area surrounding the church sign and the strip from that area to go down in front of the office parking spaces. This plan leaves the large tree in the large area in front of the social hall. The bid on this plan is \$113,645 with artificial grass and \$106,564 with Bermuda grass. The Trustees prefer the artificial grass bid because it requires less water, and less money spent on a gardener to mow the Bermuda Grass. This bid is five months old.

The Tree Plan: This plan has 12 trees planted within the two main areas in front of the church, with some bushes and plants. The area is covered in rock/gravel. The area between the sidewalk that runs along the front of the church and the church building has plants with mulch. This bid does NOT include the area around the church sign or down in front of the church office parking spaces. This bid is over a year old and is for \$96,024. The Trustees looked at five six different bids and thought that these two were the most

reasonable with the parameters that were given to the landscapers.

When the Survey Monkey survey comes to you, please take the time to fill it out. The Trustees feel that since we are asking you to financially support this project, we would like to hear from you.

If you have any questions or thoughts after reading this and looking at the concept plans, please feel free to call either Bert Roper (559) 223-1613) or Bobby Carter (559) 760-9951). ***Both concept Plan drawings are attached.***

Relay for Life

Relay for Life is April 26 and 27 which is fast approaching! So far, the church has collected a total of \$545 which is a bit of a slow start compared to last year. The Church Relay Team is hoping that, as a church family, we can raise more money before the Kickoff.

Accordingly, we're trying something new! The Church Relay Team is inviting the community to join us for 4th Sunday Lunch on March 23. All the proceeds from that luncheon will be donated to Relay on behalf of the Church Team.

Church members will still make their donation to 4th Sunday Lunch as always and in addition, the Church Relay Team will be selling lunch tickets to community members for \$20. This is also an opportunity to bring new faces into the church, as well as a way to see how a dinner fundraiser might go.

March 29 is the Relay Kickoff Event in the CAPMC Conference Room at 1225 Gill Street from 10 am to noon. Plan to attend if you are able. See Dianna for more information on the presale tickets and to purchase luminarias.

Finance Committee Update

God is good! The Bible teaches us that God will always provide for our needs (Philippians 4:19). As we remain faithful to Him and trust in His words, we have no reason to worry about how our needs will be satisfied.

Our church has many faithful and loving people who work together for the Lord. It is wonderful to have such a compassionate congregation who is faithful to the promises of pledging and giving.

January was a good month for the finances of the church. We received the remainder of the Equitable Compensation Grant from the conference that we had expected in 2024. The amount was \$10,000, which greatly helped us at the beginning of the year, and we ended January with a nice net income.

For the month of January 2025:

Total Income	\$ 37,041.85
Total Expenses	<u>24,701.83</u>
Net Income	\$ 12,340.02

1/31/25 General Fund Balance	\$121,739.82
1/31/25 Restricted Funds Balance	\$64,073.89
1/31/25 Endowment Fund Balance	\$95,429.14

We have paid all tithes to the conference for 2025. Thank you for your gifts and your service to the church. Please continue to pray for our church.

Nancy Simpson, Finance Chair

Trustees Report

We would like to extend a big “thank you” to everyone for your help by completing facility use requests so that the church calendar reflects all the planned usage. This has been extremely beneficial to our custodian so that she can concentrate her efforts in the rooms as needed. Additionally, if you have reserved a room and your plans change so that you will be canceling, please notify the office so that the calendar may be updated.

Projects this month include the ordering of the signs for the interior doors of the church campus, repair of the urinal in the men’s restroom, and the office and conference room ceilings are in the process of being painted.

A new file cabinet and storage cabinet have been donated to the office by CAPMC, and the landscape committee is moving forward with a survey about the preferences of the congregation.

Again, we would like to remind everyone about a continuing issue. PLEASE check all doors anytime you exit the church (even if others are still in the building). The large wooden doors leading to the narthex and the door leading out to the courtyard from the



kitchen are often found open even though they have been locked. If the doors are not closed completely, the church buildings are left vulnerable.

The next regular meeting of Trustees is scheduled for March 4, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. in the Conference Room.

Bobby Carter, Chair

GCFA Annual Report

Our 2024 Annual Report to the General Council on Finance and Administration of United Methodist Churches was filed. MUMC had a 2% decline in membership due to deaths ending the year with 192 members. Our average in-person Sunday attendance was 74 and the report includes a break-down of membership ethnicity and gender.

We have three Small Groups meeting regularly and including Prayer Group these four have an average weekly attendance of 35. Member numbers are listed for Woman in Faith as 18 while we showed 55 members engaged in missions / community ministries.

In addition, the report includes lists of assets, expenditures and income. Anyone wishing for a copy of the MUMC 2024 Annual Report can see Ginnie in the office during regular office hours.

March Birthdays

- 3/ 1 Michele Foust
Bonnie Mazzoni
- 3/ 4 Aaron Perez
Eric Wiggins
Matt Otstot
- 3/ 5 Olivia Hew
- 3/ 6 Jeanette Hunt
Jenna Valencia
- 3/ 8 Dakota Goto
Rosalie Vaught
- 3/ 9 Cindy Thomas
- 3/10 Jack Thomas Otstot
- 3/11 Seth Janzen
- 3/12 Darren Maxfield
- 3/16 Patty Robbins
- 3/17 Judy Nombrano
- 3/18 Mason Anthony Ruiz
- 3/19 Dana Maxfield
Tiffany Hanna
- 3/20 Jaime McDaniel
Susan Miller
- 3/21 Judy Croom
- 3/22 Gary Foust
- 3/23 Dianna Combs
- 3/25 Valerie Frazer
Debbie Couvillion
- 3/27 Dan Maxfield
Judy Weber

March Wedding Anniversaries

- 3/13 Mark & Danyel Bissett
- 3/21 Glen & Jeanette Hunt

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



Greeters

- 3/ 2 Mike & Vivian Chicconi
- 3/ 9 Greg & Rosalie Robinson
- 3/16 Ginnie Sterling & Nola
- 3/23 Marie Combs
- 3/30 Pat Galleano

Coffee Hour Host/Hostesses

- 3/ 2 Sue First & Bert Roper
- 3/ 9 Diana Brack
- 3/16 Craig & Julie Flowers
- 3/23 4th Sunday Lunch – Dianna
Combs & Friends
- 3/30 Nancy Sherrod

AV Team Assignments

- 3/ 2 Martha & Fred
- 3/ 9 Crystal & Doug
- 3/16 Sue & Tiffany
- 3/23 Martha & Fred
- 3/30 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.



March 25, 2025 @ 12:00 noon
Please send Articles for the Grapevine by this date.



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The people of The United Methodist Church™

The Grapevine

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
						1 UMW Rummage Sale
2 10:00 am Worship Service Communion	3 6:45 am Prayer Group (CR) 9:00 am Crafts (CR) 4:00 pm Small Group (Cedar) 7:00 pm Scouts (SH/CR)	4 9:00 am Small Group (CR) 5:00 pm Trustees (CR)	5	6 6:30 am Bible Study (Perko's) 9:00 am Crafts (CR)	7 7:00 am TOPS (CR)	8
9 10:00 am Worship Service	10 6:45 am Prayer Group (CR) 9:00 am Crafts (CR) 4:00 pm (Cedar) Small Group 7:00 pm Scouts (SH-CR)	11 9:00 am Small Group (CR)	12 5:30 pm Nurture & Care (CR)	13 6:30 am Bible Study (Perko's) 9:00 am Crafts (CR)	14 7:00 am TOPS (CR)	15 9:30 am (CR) UMW
16 10:00 am Worship Service	17 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)	18 9:00 am Small Group (CR) 5:00 pm (FS) Missions 6:00 pm (CR) Church Council	19	20 6:30 am Bible Study (Perko's) 9:00am 55+ Food Distribution (PL) 9:00 am Crafts (CR)	21 7:00 am TOPS (CR)	22
23 10:00 am Worship Service 4 th Sunday Lunch- Proceeds to Relay for Life	24 6:45 am Prayer Group (CR) 9:00 am Crafts (CR) 4:00 pm Small Group (Cedar) 7:00 pm Scouts (SH-CR)	25 9:00 am Small Group (CR)	26 9:00 am Food Distribution (PL) 5:30 pm SPRC (CR)	27 6:30 am Bible Study (Perko's)	28 7:00 am TOPS (CR)	29 5:00 pm Just for Fun Potluck & Show (SH-FR)
30 10:00 am Worship Service	31 6:45 am Prayer Group (CR) 9:00 am Crafts (CR) 4:00 pm Small Group (Cedar) 7:00 pm Scouts (SH-CR)					

The Grapevine
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