



Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church™

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The Grapevine

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August 2025

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Sunday Morning Schedule:

10:00 am: Worship

Office Hours:

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

Phone: 559-674-8704



August 2025
From the Pastor

Ten minutes. One of the recommendations passed at our Annual Conference Session at the end of June came from “Climate Justice Ministries Task Force” encouraging each person to spend “at least ten minutes each day in mindful connection with Creation – outdoors if possible.” I thought at first that this might sound funny to folks in our congregation which includes farmers who spend most of their working hours outdoors working with growing plants and animals. Even if you aren’t a farmer, most of us drive past agriculture in action anytime we go anywhere. Many of us spend hours each week working in our garden or yard. Many of us are consistent in taking exercise walks outdoors. Ten minutes seemed like a small goal. But perhaps the key phrase is “mindful connection.” Many of us have connection with the outdoors, but are we mindful?

Mindfulness might take the form of thankful prayer when we see an amazing sunset, but I think the main element is **taking notice** of the things around us. Do we notice the birds singing, and pay attention to which ones make which sounds? Do we notice when the crepe myrtle is budding, then blooming, then going to seed?

I joked as I was scooping up dog poop in the yard, wondering whether this counted toward my ten minutes. I concluded it did. Though the main part of the task isn't that pleasant, it does make me walk all over the yard. As I scan for the "Easter Eggs" I notice the condition of the grass, and where the sprinklers don't cover. I notice the bushes and flowers in the beds around the yard. I notice the effect of water and weather and insects on the decomposition of what I'm scooping.

If I lived in an urban area I might have to go to a park to have as much connection with creation as I find in my own yard. Sometimes I take my breakfast on the patio, just to be outside. In the cool of the evening, we often spend time sitting outside before heading to bed. It isn't usually an intentional spiritual experience, but there is something about noticing our natural surroundings that connects us to our Creator.

You might make some of your connection by petting your cat or tending your houseplants. Noticing the stars, and whether the moon is full and whether the sky has clouds and even how hot it feels when we get into the car are all ways we stay connected. May our eyes be opened to notice God's creation and may that awareness help us see that our powerful God is with us always.

Yours in Jesus,



Pastor Jim

Know Your Church Family



Denise Burns has been a member of Madera United Methodist Church for 15 years and was active in the church before she joined.

Denise was born in Jarrow on Tyne, England, which is a small little area near the city of Newcastle. Her dad was a

Canadian and had been in the Canadian Navy and was transferred just before World War II to the British Navy. While in the British Navy he met Denise's mother, a British subject. They got married.

After the war, there was no housing available for them in the north of England, so the couple was living with her grandparents in England when Denise was born. Because it would be quite some time before they would be able to move into their own place, they decided to immigrate back to Canada where all his family was.

So, at the age of eight months, Denise crossed the Atlantic Ocean for the first time. Her mother got pregnant with Denise's brother, Donald. She was home sick, so back across the Atlantic Ocean, they went again. Denise's brother was also born in England.

Although both of them were born in England, they were never British citizens. Their father

had registered the children as Canadian citizens born abroad. Their mother took the children back and forth between Canada and England, and by the time Denise was three years old, she had crossed the Atlantic Ocean three times. She started school in Canada, but when she was eight years old, her dad decided he could do better in California. He had come to during the war and liked it here.

When she knew that the family was moving to California, Denise was excited. "I'm thinking Disneyland and the ocean," she said. "I was nine, and we moved to Fresno. No Disneyland, no ocean. Big surprise." They lived in Fresno until she was 15, and then they moved to Bonadelle Ranchos.

"And there was nothing, I mean literally nothing out there," she said. "We had a five-party line and could not get a telephone until someone else built on the street and wanted a phone. Fifteen is not a good age for that, so this was not a happy moment," she said. Leaving her friends and fun behind was hard for Denise.

She started school as a sophomore at Madera High. "People there had been going to school together since kindergarten. Everybody had gone to the one and only junior high." So, making friends was difficult.

She met her husband, Bill, when she was 17 in algebra class. They were married a year after they graduated from high school. They had two daughters, Nanci and Nichole, who were both raised in Madera, went to college and

now have degrees.

Bill and Denise were married 36 years before he died of cancer. He was sick for two years.

Denise worked for Madera Unified School District, for 32 years, as a Special Education aide, primarily third and fourth grades. She started at Madison, and after they built Alpha, she worked there. Then, the teacher she was working with wanted to go back to Madison, so Denise went back to Madison. Two years before she retired, she went back to Alpha and also substituted some at Martin Luther King and Jefferson, when she was off-track.

After Denise retired, her older daughter, Nanci, felt she would be bored in retirement. Nanci had a friend who had taken a class to get community hours, and she suggested this same activity for her mother. She said, "Mom, you'd love to be a part of this. You're walking dogs. You're helping save animals."

So, that started Denise on a long-time volunteer basis with Fresno Bully Rescue, a no-kill shelter for pit bull type dogs. Throughout the time she was involved with them, she adopted four dogs, ones who were older and could not find homes. She already had a dog at home, so it was an interesting combination. The shelter moved to Sanger, and Denise didn't want to drive there, so she quit and started volunteering at the Madera Animal Shelter.

Meanwhile, she also volunteered with the American Cancer Society, specifically with

Relay for Life. She had been involved with Relay for a while, but after Bill died, 22 years ago, she became more active.

She was not a member of MUMC at that time, so she was part of the Alpha team at Relay. As she was getting involved in the church, she realized they had a team. She had already been doing the luminarias, and soon became the one in charge of them. She did that for 16



more years, and finally knew she needed help. Denise continues to help with the luminarias, but Dianna Combs became interested and took it over.

Denise was involved in this church for some time when she joined in May 2010. Shinya Goto was pastor at the time. She became the Sunday School teacher with Judy Sagouspe. "I absolutely loved it! I had never planned on working with children again," she said. "Shinya was a kick. We would meet with him, and he had so many ideas. It was so much fun." She didn't quit teaching Sunday School until there were no kids, "I would stand there by Carl, in the back of the church. When a child came in, I'd say, 'Do you want to come to Sunday School? Would you like to light the candles?' It was like I was a child," she said.

Mary Long and Denise worked with Children and Youth, and began Trunk or Treat, which was originally Marlene Lee's idea, and now it's well-known in Madera. "We're proud of it. We love it. And people have been just amazing to

support it," she said.

Denise Burns and Shirley Sudduth are the only original attendees of what is now known as the "Poker Table Gang," a small group that now gathers on Monday evenings at Cedar Creek. "John (Sudduth) is the reason I was in a small group. He and Shirley started it. When the small group diminished to only the three of them, Denise started going to the Sudduth's house. "We ended up at the poker table," she said. She is still a part of that same small group, although it is a much larger group now.

Since she has been a member of this church, Denise has served on the Children & Youth Committee, Trustees, SPRC, Missions, Finance, and the Nominating Committee. She also is a regular volunteer for our Food Bank distributions at the church, and she works at the Food Bank every Monday, packing the Brown Bags for the 55+ distributions.

Committee Spotlight – Scout Troop 116

Scouts BSA is a traditional scouting experience where youth ages 11-17 can have amazing adventures in the great outdoors, develop a love of service by volunteering in their community, boost leadership skills through fun and exciting challenges, and create memories of a lifetime!



As leaders, Scouts are taught to listen carefully to the ideas of their peers, to be fair, flexible

and organized, to follow up on assignments, delegate when necessary, be quick to encourage or praise for a job well done, to know when to ask for help, to accept criticism as a gift, and most of all, to have fun!

The Scout slogan is **Do a Good Turn Daily**. That means to do something to help others each day without expecting anything in return. It implies that Scouts learn to do their part in caring for the community and the environment.

Scouts learn about sports, crafts, science, trades, business and future careers as they earn merit badges. There are over 135 merit badges covering a variety of subjects from archery and wilderness survival to environmental science to robotics to cooking and theater – there's something for everyone!

The Eagle Scout award is the highest rank available. It is a prestigious and rewarding accomplishment known for the work and dedication required to achieve it.

Former Scouts serve on the boards of global corporations, walk the halls of the White House, and have been known to go hiking on the moon occasionally. Lessons learned in Scouting prepare all its members to make moral and ethical decisions throughout life.

David Eddy says, "Troop 116 is one of only a few remaining church sponsored troops. We are small but mighty and are always interested in securing new members."

Picnic at the Garrisons

Mark your calendar for Wednesday, August 20 beginning at 5:30 pm for another fun time of food and fellowship at the Garrisons Annual BBQ and Picnic!

The Garrisons will provide the main course, and attendees are asked to bring sides, salads or a dessert along with your favorite lawn chair, which is optional as there are some chairs available, and your bathing suit, which is also optional unless you're going to swim!

The address is 19380 Panoramic Drive – take Road 27 / Lake to Club Drive. This has become an annual event, and a good time of food and fellowship is always enjoyed by all!

Heart of California Book Faire



of the Madera County Library

The Friends of Madera County Library Heart of California Book Faire will be held on August 23 at

Madera UMC featuring author discussion panels, author readings and, of course, book sales.

According to organizer Susan Pennell, "The goal is to bring readers to the event from all over Central California. It is a chance to get to know authors up close and personal and listen to passages from selected books.

Interested authors and illustrators can register on Friends of the Madera County website." <https://friendsmcl.org/2025-hocbf-info/>

Everyone is encouraged to mark your calendar to attend what is guaranteed to be a great event for both authors and readers alike – and it's right here at our Church! Admission is free.

Finance Committee

“The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it; the world, and all who live in it.” (Psalms 24:1)

We belong to God, and everything we have is His. He claims us as His own, and He loves us. He taught us to love, and to be loving toward Him and towards others. Generosity is one way we show our love toward others. “You can give without loving, but it is impossible to love without giving.” (Richard Braunstein)

Our church family is generous in so many ways. The love of the people at Madera United Methodist Church is so evident through their prayers, commitments, outreach, and contributions. When there is a need, this church finds a way to fill the void and help.

The finances of the church for the year are currently in a loss position, but we are still able to pay the bills and provide services for the Lord’s work. In just a few months, we will again have a Stewardship drive for all of us to make a pledge commitment for 2026. It is time to begin thinking and praying about your pledge for next year.

For the month of June 2025:

Total Income	\$ 17,039.40
Total Expenses	<u>21,972.74</u>
Net Income (loss)	\$ (4,933.34)

For the year 2025:

Total Income	\$ 122,539.04
Total Expenses	<u>137,590.37</u>
Net Income (loss)	\$ (15,051.33)

6/30/25 General Fund Balance \$101,681.03

6/30/25 Restricted Funds Balance \$ 68,241.76

6/30/25 Endowment Fund Balance \$105,435.04

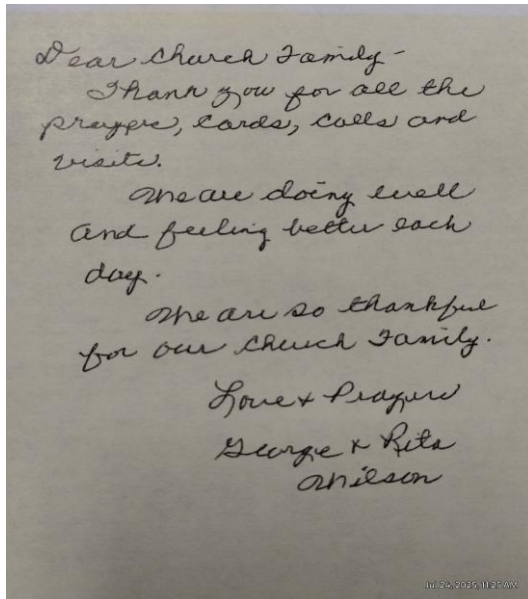
Our church also pays tithes to our conference, and we remain faithful in our giving. Thank you for your prayers and your contributions to the church.

Nancy Simpson, Treasurer

Madera UMC Prayer Warriors

The dedicated group that gathers every Monday morning at 6:45 am in the Conference Room are truly the backbone of our Church! Eight to ten individuals meet at this time to pray for each and every one of us.

The card below from George and Rita Wilson demonstrates how much the cards and calls are appreciated by those being prayed for.



All are welcome to attend Prayer Group. Prayer requests can be submitted during Sunday worship services or by placing a card in the box outside the office door at the west end of the building.

Central Valley Rally Wrap-up

There were 100 attendees representing twenty churches from the Central Valley District in our sanctuary and Social Hall on Saturday, July 19th. And there was significant toe tapping and clapping when the Mariposa Blue Grass Band performed! It was a great show of support with singing, sharing and devotion.

DS Mary Maaga outlined her priorities for the upcoming year including the Ministry Action Plan or MAP which entails doing work in our neighborhood to make disciples of Jesus Christ

for the transformation of the world. Four representatives of district churches shared programs they have implemented regarding community outreach projects.

The action steps include surveying the neighborhood within a mile of our Church to determine five (5) things the surrounding community needs in order to thrive. This can be accomplished by circulating a survey, holding a town hall, publishing an article in the local paper asking questions, and asking on Facebook. Gather Information! DS Mary says, "Just because a need is big do not fail to include it on your list if you are hearing about that need over and over. Take seriously that our God has placed you right where you are right now right at this time! Your DS is your prayer warrior and your cheerleader!"

Trustees Report

The trustees continue to work to solve our irrigation problem; David Simpson has been working with various contractors in an attempt to make the needed repairs.

David Simpson repaired the urinal in the men's bathroom at the rear of the sanctuary. He also cleaned the aerator screens of the sink faucets. Fred Mossman coordinated the servicing of the pipes for the chiller, making the air conditioning more efficient. The remodel of the restroom near the Fireside Room has been completed.

Love INC is organizing a work party to clear out unneeded items and furniture, that belong to them, from the warehouse/shed. Pastor Jim and I will also be evaluating the church's items that are being stored there.

We continue to find doors left open or unlocked, and lights and air conditioning left on when there is no one in the church building. We ask for your assistance in turning off the lights and timers. Also, any time you leave the building, please check the door (even though it is locked, it may not close completely – pull on the door!).

Lastly, I would like to remind everyone that events at the church need to be reserved through the office by completion of the proper documentation.

The next regular meeting of Trustees is scheduled for September 2, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. All are invited to attend.

Bobby Carter, Chair

Bathroom Remodel

If you haven't already done so, ***check out our new and improved restroom near the Fireside Room!***

We have had the need for a handicap, wheelchair accessible restroom here at MUMC for many years. The bathroom facilities at the rear of the sanctuary allow for wheelchair access once an individual is inside;

however, the doorways leading into the facilities are only 30 inches wide, so they do not accommodate all wheelchairs.

The bathroom facility off the Fireside Room has needed an update due to substantial damage to the ceiling, plus rusting stall dividers. The exhaust fan was also no longer operational, and the light fixture in the hallway adjacent to the bathroom, when properly covered, did not allow for the upper cabinet doors to be opened completely.

After several months of discussions with church members, it was determined to update the bathroom. A local contractor was contacted who gave an estimate of \$6,000 for the labor to perform the updates. Trustees discussed this at their March meeting and came to the decision that the work could be accomplished by our volunteers.

At the April meeting, Church Council unanimously approved the remodel of the bathroom adjacent to the Fireside Room. Planned work was to remove the metal stalls and remove one toilet. The sink, light fixture and flooring would also be replaced. It was important to the trustees that it be a complete update, rather than a simple fix of widening doors and removing a toilet.

Trustees also understood that it was important to the congregation that the storage closet outside the bathroom remain intact.

The job was taken on by Fred Mossman, David Simpson and Bobby Carter. Fred led the deconstruction and structural improvements, and Bobby and David tackled the finish work. There was also substantial repair to the ceiling which had been damaged years before when the roof had leaked. Lastly, a new LED light fixture was installed in the hallway, which clears the upper cabinets. Alice Carter, Sue First, and Bert Roper researched, chose and purchased the lighting, fixtures, mirror and paint. By donating the labor, trustees were able to keep the costs under \$2,000. It took a little more than three weeks, and we would like to thank the congregation for their patience.

We would also like to thank Nancy Simpson and Mary Long for their promptness in reimbursing the volunteers for purchases made in support of this project. We hope you find the restroom is now clean, updated, beautiful and functional.

Food Distribution – Needs Volunteers

The Madera County Food Bank provides products for two monthly distributions at our Church. On the fourth Thursday of each month there is the Brown Bag delivery. This is for seniors 55 and older, requires an application and has a \$5 monthly fee which must be paid in advance. The August distribution will be on the 21st and begins at 9:00 am in the back parking lot.

The regular distribution is first come, first served on the last Wednesday of the month. This month it's August 28 beginning at 9:00 am. This distribution is free for any Madera resident 18 years or older who provides proof of residence.

Your help is always needed, wanted and welcomed! We need at least 10 people to assist with each distribution. Volunteers are asked to be in the back parking lot at least half an hour early because food often needs to be bagged or divided prior to distribution and table and canopy set-up is required.



We always appreciate our wonderful volunteers and are always looking for willing assistants. There is a sign-up sheet at the back of the sanctuary for anyone wishing to take part in this community outreach project or talk to Sue First or call the office if you have any questions. "We have been short of volunteers the last couple months, so we're hoping some new faces will join our dedicated group for a couple hours either Thursday or Wednesday – or better yet . . . BOTH!", Sue First says.

Thank You from Special Olympics

Dear Friends:

Thank you for your donation in the amount of \$600 to support Special Olympics Northern California.

Thanks to donors like you, Special Olympics Northern California can continue to change lives through inclusive sport, health and educational programs – all free of charge. The power of sports and the life lessons that they can teach – teamwork, accountability, sportsmanship and respect – are just a few of the qualities that our athletes can translate into everyday life. Sports also has a unique way of bringing us together, regardless of ability, to create unified communities. We appreciate you as part of our Special Olympics family!

Thank you again for choosing to support Special Olympics Northern California.

Sincerely, Donna Romero, Vice President
Donor Web Mgmt & Family Services

Thank You from Doors of Hope

During the spring, we placed a Baby Bottle Bank in the Narthex, and our church raised a total of \$55.43 in the bottle. UMW contributed \$200 to Doors of Hope in April.

Doors of Hope is a faith-based organization, helping young families with parenting needs.

Nine churches participated in this year's fundraising project, the Baby Bottle Campaign.

Doors of Hope is very grateful for the support received from this community.

Thank you for your donations to Doors of Hope.

August Birthdays

8/ 1 Gracelynn Flowers
8/ 4 Sue Thornton
8/ 6 Rick Capo
8/ 7 Beryl Ravisconi
8/ 8 Cade Sherrod
8/ 9 Ginnie Sterling
8/12 Jonathan Wiggins
8/15 Julie Flowers
8/20 Clay Garrison
8/21 Caleb Sherrod
8/22 Wayne Miller
David Jones
8/28 Dorothy Peard
Diane Maxfield
8/30 Rebecca Janzen

August Wedding Anniversaries

8/ 4 Doug & Margaret Potter
8/12 Dan & Diane Maxfield
8/19 Clay & Paula Garrison
8/22 Carl & Chris Janzen
8/24 David & Geri Brown
8/26 Steve & Patty Hanson

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

Greeters

8/ 3 Jennifer & Joyce Martinez
8/10 Ginnie Sterling & Nola
8/17 Carol & Gordon Kennedy
8/24 Bonnie Mazzoni & Muriel Lynn
8/31 Nancy & Kevin Sherrod

Coffee Hour Host/Hostesses

8/ 3 Carol & Gordon Kennedy
8/10 Ginnie Sterling & Nola
8/17 Alice & Bobby Carter
8/24 4th Sunday Lunch – Erica &
Sebastian Gonzalez w/
Javier Valenzuela
8/31 Dianna Combs & Natalie

AV Team Assignments

8/ 3 Crystal & Eric
8/10 Dianna & Doug
8/17 Sue & Tiffany
8/24 Crystal & Eric
8/31 Dianna & Doug

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.



August 27, 2025 @ 12:00 noon
Please send Articles for the
Grapevine by this date.



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