



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

Nov 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



November 2025

From the Pastor

It was about two decades ago that I was told at an eye exam that I was developing “presbyopia,” a technical term that roughly translates to “old eyes that can’t focus close up anymore.” Now that I am actually old enough to deserve that diagnosis, I always keep my readers or my bifocals handy. My vision needs adjusting if I want to see anything up close with clarity. It isn’t just our physical eyesight that requires adjusting. Our outlook on life also needs correction. And just when we need it the most, we have a holiday this month to help.

We haven’t passed Halloween, and the stores are already brimming with Christmas trees. Later in the month shopping (for Christmas and otherwise) will kick into high gear on Black Friday. We will be bombarded with ads implying that our path to happiness involves buying more stuff than we already have. The “gotta shop” outlook aims our focus on what we lack and our “need” to get it. The trouble is we never have enough because possessions can’t really satisfy us. We always feel that we need more.

Fortunately, we have a holiday (and a spiritual practice) that can help correct our distorted vision, namely, Thanksgiving. The practice of giving thanks helps change how we see things. We can grumble because our roof has a leak and our car needs new tires, or we can be grateful that we have a house to sleep in and our own private transportation. These would be fabulous luxuries for many people around the world. We can complain about a rainy day spoiling our plans for an outing, or we can thank God for desperately needed rain.

We can be frustrated because a co-worker has an irritating habit, or we can be thankful that we have a job and thankful for the many pleasant characteristics of that co-worker. I used to have to drive frequently over a winding steep bit of road. Sometimes a less experienced driver would drive frustratingly slowly in front of me. I finally decided to assume that God had lovingly placed those drivers on the road to force me to drive at a safer speed and to thank God for my "guardian angels."

We are told in Romans 12:2, "do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind . . ." Adjusting our vision can help transform our mind, and giving thanks can help adjust our vision. So have a happy Thanksgiving and may giving thanks make you happy.

Yours in Jesus,



Pastor Jim

Know Your Church Family

Paul and Diana Brack became members of Madera United Methodist Church on Easter Sunday of 2023. They



had been attending this church since January 2020, after Trinity Lutheran Church in Madera closed and a group from their congregation came to be a part of our church family.

The Bracks were married May 16, 1981, and together they raised two beautiful daughters, Lacey Ann and Tiffany.

Diana has lived in Madera all her life. She has two older brothers and two older sisters. She attended Madison Elementary, Thomas Jefferson, and Madera High. She said, "I was a coyote."

Diana's first job out of high school was working as a dispatcher at Massetti Brothers, working the night shift. She then got a job at K-Mart on Howard Road, and worked there for a few years. She was department manager of the menswear department. She was working at K-Mart when she met Paul.

She later worked for Madera stationers. While raising her children, she began volunteering as an aide at Alpha Elementary. She liked it, and was told she could get paid for what she was doing.

Diana decided to go back to college to become a teacher. She was in her late 40s when she first

attended community college. She got the displaced homemaker grant, so she had to pay only for her books. She then went on to Fresno State, where she graduated in 2009 at age 50. "You're never too old," she said.

Her first teaching assignment was at Millview in 2010. "I got asked to do a long-term sub, and then went into kindergarten and worked there. Then, when they were condensing classrooms, they let me go and I got another job at Alpha," she said. She worked there until she retired. She taught girls' basketball, boys' basketball, and volleyball for a while. Then she went back into the classroom and did both. "I had the best class the last year, because they all seemed to get my jokes and they seemed to know where I was going with their training. It was great." She was a teacher for 15 years before she retired in 2024.

Paul grew up in a little town outside of Otis, Kansas. He was born in Larned, Kansas, because Otis was too small to have a hospital. His dad farmed, had cattle, and Paul lived on the farm until he was 18.

When he was a senior in high school, he decided to enlist in the service. His grades weren't very good, and he was eligible for the draft. "Either you had good grades and go to college or you take your chances with the draft, or volunteer," he said.

His dad had been in the U.S. Army. Paul and a friend got together and decided to enlist in the service. "We had no idea what we were doing," he said. The year was 1966. The Vietnam War had started. "They were starting to ramp up," he said. He was already 18, so he could enlist without parental consent. He went home to tell

his parents that he had enlisted with his friend.

"My mom cried," he said. His dad asked him what service branch. When Paul told him the Navy, his dad said, "Well, at least maybe you'll have a place to sleep that's not on the ground."

Paul enlisted in May, caught a train in July and went to Kansas City for his physical. He officially went into the service November 17th 1966.

Boot Camp was 90 days in San Diego, California. He was assigned the USS Horn at CVS 12 in Long Beach. The ship was getting ready to go to Vietnam. "I had no idea where Vietnam was or what was going on, because in high school I was having fun and I didn't pay attention to the news. I had no idea," he said.

"I had pretty good duty. I was in a supply division. We supplied the aircraft with parts. I did that for two tours, and at the end of the second tour we were headed from the Philippines to Japan. We heard we may be picking up Apollo 11. I had no idea what Apollo 11 was, and didn't really care," he said.

They got into Hawaii, went from Hawaii to Long Beach, and before they got to Long Beach, they were told they were going to pick up Apollo 11. On July 24, 1969, they picked up Apollo 11. Then, on November 24 they picked up Apollo 12.

After that, they began decommissioning in Birmingham, and Paul got out of the service on June 17, 1970.

And from there, he went to Washington, which was nice and wet and cool. He flew from there to Fresno. "It was 105 degrees in Fresno," he said.

Paul had family in Fresno, but decided to go back to see his dad. It was almost harvest time, so he went back to Kansas to help with harvest.

Eventually, he came back to California, where he stayed with his aunt and uncle and applied for Unemployment. He later looked for a job, and went to United Vintners to apply. It was on Friday. "They phoned me up on a Saturday and asked if I could come to work on Monday." It was September 1, 1970. He worked there for 47 years. The company changed hands about five times while he was there, and is now owned by Gallo.

"It was a good job," he said. "I found out years later that they were hiring the military people. They were getting a stipend from the government to hire veterans. And there were a lot of us out there at one point."

Paul has two sisters, both living. One lives in Parker, Colorado. The other sister lives in Great Bend, Kansas.

Paul and Diana like to travel and to go camping. They have been on several cruises. They like Viking Cruise Lines.

When asked about their church life, Diana said she was raised Pentecostal, but when she married Paul, she converted to Lutheran. Paul was a Lutheran his whole life, until Trinity Lutheran Church in Madera closed.

"To go out gracefully, David Brown led us through the process. We were able to take what money we had left and give donations," Paul said.

"The Methodist Church is a good group of

people," he said. "It's friendly, and we blended in quite well with them. It was just another family." The Bracks are happy to be a part of the church family of Madera United Methodist Church. It is a good blend.

Committee Spotlight – Church Council

According to the Book of Discipline, the church council is the executive agency of the charge conference. This means that between meetings of the Charge Conference, the church council is the group of leaders that guides and furthers the ministry of the congregation. At Madera United Methodist, our church council meets at 6:00 p.m. the third Tuesday of each month, with occasional exceptions. The council consists of the chairs (or their representatives) from each of our committees or affiliated organizations. This allows for an organized and coordinated approach to ministry.

We are so blessed that each member of our church council models good habits of personal devotion and discipleship, as well as outstanding leadership capabilities. In addition to the pastor's report, each month the council hears reports from UMW, Audio-Visual Team, Communications, Finance, Missions, Nurture and Care, Scouts, SPRC, and Trustees. Our goal is to envision, plan, implement, and evaluate effective ministry at MUMC. This is accomplished through discussion, compromise, and cooperation.

At the beginning of each meeting, time is provided for comments from the congregation. While the council cannot

discuss or make decisions about items not on the agenda, we are always happy to hear ideas and suggestions that may be discussed at a later time. Any member of church council is able to request that an item be added to the agenda.

Finally, thanks to our efficient church council secretary, all of our discussions and decisions are memorialized in the minutes each month. If you are interested in the business of the church, please feel free to attend any church council meeting and learn more about this process.

Alice Carter, Chair
MUMC Church Council

Charge Conference

Please mark your calendar to attend the Charge Conference on November 8 beginning at 9:30 am and is a joint meeting with Tranquility UMC. Agenda items include comments from DS Mary Maaga, celebration of highlights, membership report, election of church committee members, approval of 2026 clergy compensation packet and tips on how to develop a Ministry Action Plan (MAP). The Conference is open to all church members. Plan to attend!

Finance Committee

We are approaching the holiday season, and this month we celebrate Thanksgiving, a very special day to express our gratitude for what God has given to us, and what He has allowed

us to enjoy.

The scriptures are our guidelines for how to worship and honor God, and to express our thanksgiving for what He does for us. We are to be good stewards of what is His, and to be Disciples of Christ – for the transformation of the world.

The Bible's principles of stewardship are the inspiration of much of the generous giving in the world today.

All must give as they are able, according to the blessings given to them by the Lord your God. (Deuteronomy 16:17)

Your generous giving helps us to continue this ministry. You will soon have the opportunity to let the church know what you plan to give for the upcoming year. This time is very important in helping to budget for 2026. Please prayerfully consider your plan of giving.

For the month of September 2025:

Total Income	\$ 11,934.84
Total Expenses	<u>22,905.52</u>
Net Income (loss)	\$(10,970.68)

For the year 2025:

Total Income	\$ 180,366.82
Total Expenses	<u>208,493.08</u>
Net Income (loss)	\$ (28,126.26)

9/30/25 General Fund Balance	\$ 93,413.00
9/30/25 Restricted Fund Balance	\$ 78,013.30
9/30/25 Endowment Fund Balance	\$109,267.01

Our tithing to the conference is current. This

is our contribution to the United Methodist Church, and is used for global outreach.

As you remember your commitments for the upcoming year, also remember what you may want to leave the church from your estate. You may do this by putting one simple sentence in your will that says, "After all my bills are paid, I want 10 percent of my estate (a tithe) to go to Madera United Methodist Church."

Thank you for your prayers and your contributions to the church.

Nancy Simpson, Treasurer

Member Updates

Audrey Annonson passed away on October 20, 2025. She has been a member of Madera UMC since December 1979. Her memorial service will be November 7th at 10:30 am at Jay's Chapel with Pastor Jim officiating followed by graveside and a noon reception at the Vineyard.

The change of address for Glen and Jeanette Hunt is 1110 Overlook Drive, Susanville, CA 96130. Phones are Glen – 559-232-9413; Jeanette – 559-507-0593.

Christmas Potluck & Caroling

A Christmas Potluck is scheduled for December 13 beginning at 4:30 pm and is open to all members and this is a great opportunity to bring guests. Sign-ups are

available to bring soup, sides, main dish or dessert and we'll eat in courses in the Social Hall. The Martinez sisters will provide hors d'oeuvres.

In prior years we have held a progressive dinner within the church facility but we have outgrown the ability to continue with this format, so Missions is trying something a little different this year.



Hors d'oeuvres will be on the tables when you arrive and you're invited to mingle and greet one another as you enjoy the treats! By 5:00 pm we'll have the blessing of the meal and sit down to enjoy the soup course. Around 5:20 pm we will do one of those great, fun games Dianna prepares – really even those who don't like games had fun with the last ones! Then we'll move on to enjoy the potluck! After dinner, one final game then we will enjoy dessert and carols in the Fireside Room.

And we are saddened not to have Jeanette Hunt with us to play the piano, but we're thrilled Mike Varlas has stepped up and agreed to provide accompaniment for this fun and enjoyable part of our annual Christmas gathering.

Trustees Report

I'm excited to announce that, beginning the first part of November, a new irrigation system will be installed throughout the church campus. This will include new valves, all new lines and sprinklers, and two new controllers. Also included will be some new flowerbeds with weed abatement, river-rock, and buried drip lines. Weed abatement, river-rock and drip lines will also be added to the existing flowerbeds.

This project will include the entire area in the front and back of the church, as well as along the East side of the building and the area near the parking lot on the West side. All of the water will be cut off to the empty lot on the East side, where the basketball court and baseball backstop are located. This project will hopefully be completed before Christmas.

For safety purposes, all of the overhead lights in the classrooms are in the process of being reinstalled. The cooling system has been switched to heating.

The trustees report for the charge conference and the end-of-year facility usage report have been completed. The next regular meeting of Trustees is scheduled for November 4, 2025, at 5:00 pm in the Conference Room. All are invited and encouraged to attend.

Bobby Carter, Chair

2026 4th Sunday Lunch

We want you! There is a signup sheet in the sanctuary to sign up to host / hostesses 4th Sunday Lunches for 2026! And Guidelines are available. A big thank you to all the 2025 participants as we held very tasty, successful lunches and we look forward to filling out next year's calendar.

Of course, we'd love to see some new folks sign up and although the Guidelines might look intimidating, the experience is rewarding and not difficult if you involve friends and family! If you think you would like to host a lunch, please see Ginnie in the office or give her a call at 514-4482 and she'll be glad to review the requirements and answer any questions.

To finish out this year, Missions will be hosting a turkey dinner on the 23rd of November with all the trimmings and pumpkin pie for dessert! As always, we ask only for a donation, and each month's proceeds go to various church committees and outreach.

Our special thanks to those who have previously hosted. Let's be in thoughtful prayer asking for some new hosts / hostesses in 2026!

Food Distributions

Thank you for answering the call! The last couple of distributions we have had sufficient volunteers. It is greatly appreciated

if you would sign up on the sheet in the back of the sanctuary if you think you can help, so organizers are assured of enough assistants. Our agreement is that the Madera County Food Bank supplies the food, and Madera UMC provides the volunteers.

Volunteers assemble in the back parking lot between 8:15 and 8:30 as the truck arrives. The first task is usually to put items in bags for distribution and then these same volunteers put the items in the cars when the distribution starts at 9:00 am.

These tasks require at least 10 individuals but it's better if there are 12 to 15. And, of course, tasks are completed more easily and quickly when many people work together.

Sign up to join!



November Birthdays

11/ 2	Danyel Bissett
11/ 4	Joyce Martinez Lauren Garrison
11/ 5	Glen Hunt Jason Pasma
11/ 7	Jolene Stephenson
11/12	Paula Garrison Hannah Boehm Debi Brown
11/15	Roxie Hew Kathy Garrison

11/19	David Simpson
11/20	Linda Westcott Javier Valenzuela
11/21	John Hall Vivian Chicconi
11/22	Steve Hanson
11/23	Sally Frazier
11/24	Gordon Kennedy
11/25	Erica Gonzalez
11/25	Brendlee Bissett
11/28	Willie Long
11/29	Tina Long Lex Bufford

November Anniversaries

11/ 3	Gordon & Carol Kennedy
11/ 5	George & Rita Wilson
11/15	Steven & Heather Boehm

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



Greeters

11/ 2	Pat Galleano
11/ 9	Sue First & Bert Roper
11/16	Erica Gonzalez, Friends & Family
11/23	Bonnie Mazzoni & Muriel Lynn
11/30	Ginnie Sterling & Nola



11/ 2 Susan Miller
 11/ 9 Vivian & Mike Chicconi
 11/16 Ginnie Sterling & Nola
 11/23 4th Sunday Lunch – Missions
 11/30 Sue First & Bert Roper



11/ 2 Dianna & Doug
 11/ 9 Crystal & Eric
 11/16 Sue & Tiffany
 11/23 Dianna & Doug
 11/30 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.



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November 25, 2025 @9:00 am
Please send any Articles you would like in
the Grapevine by the date above



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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
2 10:00 am Worship Service Communion	3 6:45 am Prayer Group (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 5:30 pm Campfire (CR)	6 6:30 am Bible Study (Perko's)	7 7:00 am TOPS (CR)	8 7:00 am Scouts Pancake Breakfast 9:30 am CHARGE CONFERENCE
9 10:00 am Worship Service	10 6:45 am Prayer Group (CR) 4:00 pm Small Group (Cedar) 7:00 pm Scouts (SH-CR)	11 9:00 am Small Group (CR) 	12 5:30pm Nurture & Care (FR)	13 6:30 am Bible Study (Perko's)	14 7:00 am TOPS (CR)	15 UMW 9:30 am (CR)
16 10:00 am Worship Service 6:00 pm Community Thanksgiving Service at Central Valley Church	17 6:45 am Prayer Group (CR) 4:00 pm Small Group (Cedar) 6:00 pm Finance (CR) 7:00 pm Scouts (SH-CR)	18 9:00 am Small Group (CR) 5:00 pm Missions (FR) 6:00 pm Church Council (CR)	19 5:30 pm SPRC (FR) 5:30 pm Campfire (CR)	20 6:30 am Bible Study (Perko's) 9:00 am 55+ Food Distribution	21 7:00 am TOPS (CR)	22
23 10:00 am Worship Service 4th Sunday Lunch 30	24 6:45 am Prayer Group (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	27 	28 7:00 am TOPS (CR)	29