



Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church™

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The Grapevine

500 Sunset, Madera CA 93637 -

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May 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



May 2025

From the Pastor

This May begins with the National Day of Prayer. What a start! I am happy to be in a community that places such emphasis on prayer. We have a well-attended prayer breakfast and also a senior prayer lunch. Throughout the day we travel throughout the town to pray for various agencies and missions on-site. I'm impressed by the turnout at school offices, law enforcement headquarters, social services offices and ministry sites of folks eager to join in prayer for what they do to make our community better.

It is always a good thing to pray for our nation. We have great wealth and power and great opportunity to be a force for what is good and fair. We often disagree on exactly what is good and fair or the best policies to get there, and so we need prayer for how we work together. Our leaders are always in over their heads. We can never understand all the outcomes of our decisions, and so we need to pray for guidance.

We also turn to God in prayer for the immediate needs of ourselves and loved ones. Sick people need healing. Folks are struggling financially. Addiction traps so many. People we care about are far from God. We have requests that we care about deeply, and so we pray.

I believe one of the most important aspects of prayer is to remember to whom we are praying. Jesus used the illustration of a child who asks his father for a fish – Jesus said, “the dad isn’t going to give him a snake, is he?” The point is that a good parent wants to give good things to his or her child. God loves us very much and wants to give us good things. When we pray, remember that God is for us. We don’t have to beg him to be kind to us. God is eager to bless. We don’t always understand why the tough things happen, or why our prayers don’t always get answered the way we had hoped, but we know that God is good. We know that God has good plans for us, and the best part of that plan is the loving relationship where we keep growing closer to God.

When we remember who God is, it makes us all the more eager to pray; asking him for help and just spending time in conversation. I’m so glad that our loving God is listening.

Yours in Jesus,



Pastor Jim

Committee Spotlight – Missions

The Book of Discipline states the purpose of missions is to guide the congregation to spread the gospel message of God’s love through witness and service in the community and the world. And to have a plan for mission service opportunities for all ages and all stages

of faith so that people live as Christian disciples transforming the world.

The Madera UMC Vision Statement is Celebrating Christ by Serving All and the Missions Committee adopted the Serving All as its Vision Statement. The two goals of the Missions Committee are (1) Connect to work being done by other groups; and (2) Involve the congregation in projects in the community and around the world.

To this end, the Missions Committee develops an annual Action Plan at the beginning of each calendar year designating projects with a responsible party and a timeline. For 2025, Missions projects include quarterly Just for Fun events, two Blessing Bag deliveries, food distributions, 4th Sunday Lunches, John Nilsen concert, Spring Fling and Fall Festival, Relay for Life, Women’s Retreat, Sunday School classes, Trunk or Treat, Heifer Sunday, Early Start Giving Tree and other events and activities.

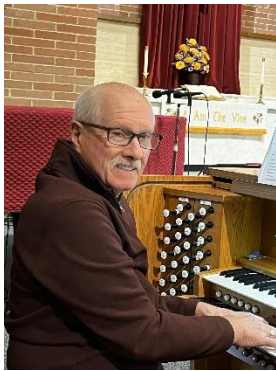
The key to the success of Missions is the enthusiastic and dedicated participation of its members. Individual members take responsibility for implementation of the various activities, then others join in to assist making lighter work for everyone.

The goal of the Missions events and activities is, of course, evangelism and sharing the Christian message and ultimately to bring in members. This is accomplished by handing out flyers during food distributions for our Easter and Christmas services, having a Prayer Table at the Spring and Fall events as well as

Relay for Life. The challenge in 2025 is finding more ways to provide outreach opportunities at all other events.

Missions is open to all members and friends of the Church. Meetings are on the 3rd Tuesday of each month beginning at 5:00 pm in the Fireside Room. If you are someone who likes to be involved and get things done, then Missions participation is for you. Come join us on May 20th and see how you can contribute!

Know Your Church Family



Mike Varlas, Our Organist

Mike Varlas has been the organist at MUMC since July 2024. He and his wife, Tresa, are a treasured addition to this church family. "I'm enjoying being here," Mike said. "I'm becoming a better musician because now I've got some music to play and some people who want to hear it."

He started playing the organ when he was 14. "I don't like to sing, but I love the sound of the organ," he said.

When he was a teenager, his pastor was an old theater organ lover, and he would take Mike to play an organ. That started his

interest in organs.

Mike was born in Oakland, California, at the Oak Knoll Naval Hospital. His dad was in the Navy, but got out shortly after Mike was born and moved his family to his hometown in Findlay, Ohio. Before the end of the winter, Mike's mom gave Dad an ultimatum. She said, "I'm going back to California. You can come with me if you'd like."

They moved back, and lived in Alameda. then moved to Hayward, where Mike attended elementary school through the third grade. They moved closer to his dad's office in San Leandro, and stayed there until Mike graduated from Pacific High School in 1968. After high school, he knew the draft board was looking for 18-year-old men, so Mike decided to join the Navy. He was first stationed in Whidbey Island, Washington. "I spent three years, 10 months and one day in the Navy and never spent a day on a ship," Mike said. He was in an anti-submarine warfare squadron.

Mike deployed to Japan for six months, and had detachments in Vietnam. While in Japan, he had a change of home ports from Washington to Barbers Point, Hawaii.

"They paid us to live off base," he said. "So, three of us rented a condo right on Makaha Beach. It was great."

Mike went to the Philippines for another six months and again, spent more time in Vietnam, at Cam Ranh Bay. He said about once or twice a week, the Viet Cong would lob a few mortar shells in on them, just harassing them.

Afterwards, he was transferred to shore duty at North Island in San Diego working as a

supply technician. There he finished his tour. While he was in the Navy his parents moved up to Petaluma. "But I still found them," he said. He moved there and went to Santa Rosa Junior College.

"That's where I met Tresa, at the church where my folks were going," he said. They married in April of 1974.

In August, Mike got on with the San Diego Police Department. "That was not the best career for me," he said. "I just didn't have the street smarts. The gangs were just starting. It was getting dangerous, and we had two little girls." During the time he was on the police force, four of his buddies were killed on duty. "That kind of soured me," he said.

So, Mike went back to college. He first went a couple of semesters at Point Loma Nazarene College, and started taking organ lessons there. He met the organ builder, and landed a job for three years, building pipe organs. "It was a labor-intensive job and it didn't pay well, so I decided to look elsewhere and went into teaching," he said.

He graduated from San Diego State with a degree in psychology, but got his teaching credential at Point Loma, Nazarene.

Alvin Stansell, from Madera, was an assistant superintendent and human resources at MUSD. He belonged to the Nazarene Church in Madera, and would come down regularly to Point Loma to recruit. "We hit it off," Mike said. He interviewed at Sugar Pine Continuation High School in 1984, and got the job.

"I'm pretty sure it is because I had law enforcement background," he said. He taught at Sugar Pine until it closed, then went to

Furman.

Meanwhile, Tresa had gone back to school to get her math degree and was teaching math at Thomas Jefferson.

"Martin Luther King opened up and she was transferred there," Mike said. "They had a history teacher opening, so I grabbed that and we were at the same school for five years. It was kind of fun. We'd ride in and commute together. It was great because we had the same gripes. We could get that all done on the way home and the rest of the night was nice."

Because he was almost 35 when he began teaching, he needed to add something to his retirement, so he went back to Fresno Pacific, and got his administrative credential.

In 2000, he took a job as assistant principal at an elementary school in Merced, then became an assistant principal at a middle school, and later principal at an elementary school. He retired in 2009 as principal at Hoover Middle School in Merced. "And I haven't looked back," he said.

Tresa stayed at MLK until she retired. Mike said, "She was in the same classroom for 19 years."

Mike was the organist in the church in Sebastopol, near Petaluma after he got out of the Navy.

When he left law enforcement, he became an organist at the Baptist Church in San Diego. After moving to Madera, he was organist at Peace Lutheran Church in Fresno, for about three or four years, then at First Armenian Presbyterian Church in Fresno for six and a half years.

He said they were lovely people, but they

liked the praise band, and kind of tolerated the organ. So, he resigned.

“Two days after I turned in my resignation, I got a phone call from Willie Long. He said, ‘Hey, I want to retire. You interested in the job?’ I said, yeah.”

Mike and Tresa celebrated 51 years of marriage in April. They have two daughters, Sarah and Elisabeth.

Sam and Sarah Huckabee are the owners of Huckabee’s Heating and Air Conditioning. They live in Madera Ranchos with their 21-year-old son, Cody, who is taking courses at Fresno Community College in the auto program and welding.

Their other daughter, Elisabeth, lives in Sparks, Nevada, and works in a medical facility, studying to be a radiology technologist. She is married to Darrin Cody and has two sons, Dylan and Tyler. Darrin is the manager of DeVons Jewelers, and their son, Dylan, is 21 and works with his dad at the jewelry store. Mike said, “That kid can sell anything.”

Both Dylan and Tyler are musicians. Dylan plays the French horn, and is with a couple of ensembles. Tyler has taken up playing the cello. Both of them play the piano.

Landscape Plan – Part Three

This is the final reminder to complete the Survey Monkey questionnaire if you have not already done so. The survey will determine which of the two plans receives the most congregational support or if one or both plans need to be modified or if the Trustees proceed with the project at all.

If you need a paper-copy to complete, please call the Church Office. If you have any questions or thoughts on the landscape plan itself, please feel free to call either Bert Roper (559) 223-1613 or Bobby Carter (559) 760-9951.

Spring Fling

Final preparations are underway for the May 10th 4th Annual Spring Fling. The event begins at 9:00 am on the front lawn and goes until 2:00 pm. There will be numerous craft and food vendors outside while inside UMW will be selling pies, cakes, jellies, cookies and other items and there will be a Prayer Table.

There will be various home and décor items available in the Social Hall for a drawing. Tickets are purchased and placed in bags for the desired item then a drawing for the item is held toward the end of the festivities. Madera Special Olympics will be the beneficiary of the funds from the drawings.

Limited vendor booths are still available but hurry and contact Miss Erica at 559-871-4540 or the Church office at 559-674-8704 for an application. We hope you are planning to attend and participate in this great community outreach opportunity.

Women’s Retreat

On May 17th Rev Ella Luna-Garza will inspire all with her presentation based on 2 Corinthians 3:3 entitled “Love Letters.” The interactive

and educational event will be in the Fireside Room from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm and lunch will be provided at no charge. The event is sponsored by the Missions Committee.

Rev Luna-Garza says, "Our job as disciples of Christ is to help the world see the church and the church see the world and somehow bring those two things together so that we are indeed making a difference in community."

All are welcome. Please call the Church office 559-674-8704 to make a reservation so we'll know how many we'll have for lunch. Join us and be motivated by her thought-provoking message.



Finance Committee Update

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." (Psalms 24:1)

We are God's children, and He loves us. We belong to Him, along with the world in which we live; and it is wonderful to know that God is in control of our lives. There is never a time when God is not present with us, blessing us continually. We can rely on His great love and goodness.

One of the ways we show our love and trust for our gracious God is to offer to Him our sacrifices of tithes and offerings. For all the blessings He give us, He asks very little in return.

We are thankful for the generosity of those within our church family who care about the ministry of this church.

For the month of March, the expenses were higher than the income, so we ended the month with a loss, but the first quarter ended with a net income.

For the month of March 2025:

Total Income	\$15,885.22
Total Expenses	<u>23,986.03</u>
Net Income (loss)	\$ (8,100.81)

For the year 2025:

Total Income	\$74,443.19
Total Expenses	<u>70,518.07</u>

3/31/25 General Fund Balance	\$115,216.98
3/31/25 Restricted Funds Balance	\$ 64,445.92
3/31/25 Endowment Fund Balance	\$ 99,882.64

We have paid all tithes to the conference for 2025. Thank you for your prayers and your contributions to the church.

Nancy Simpson, Finance Chair

Trustees Report

The East driveway of the church has been repaired by the Madera Irrigation Department (MID) and will soon be reopened. We appreciate the quick response of MID in this repair/replacement.

David Simpson, together with Fred Mossman and Robert Combs, coordinated the replacement of the evaporative cooler and thermostat in the kitchen.

A new deadbolt has been installed on the door to the furnace/equipment room. Fred Mossman, Mike Chicconi, and David Eddy replaced the light fixtures in the marquee so that the entire sign is now lit.

Fred Mossman also designed and built a stand to hold the lights that will light up the outside of the large stained glass window during Walk to Emmaus and on Christmas Eve.

David Eddy and Bobby Carter are in the process of painting curbs and parking stops/blocks. The window frames on the East side of the sanctuary have been scraped and painted, and the sun screens will be replaced.

Please note that the single door leading out from the Social Hall can only be opened from the inside at this time; it cannot be unlocked from the outside. Please use the kitchen door or the doors leading to the office to enter the Social Hall.

This is your last chance to complete the Survey

Monkey on Constant Contact to voice your opinion(s) regarding the landscape plan. We really want to hear from you.

The next regular meeting of Trustees is scheduled for May 6, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. in the Conference Room. All are invited to attend.

Bobby Carter, Chair

May Birthdays

5/ 1 Bill Hoffrage
Erica Robbins
Melissa Wilson
5/ 3 Keith Pasma
Heather Boehm
5/ 4 Philip Janzen
5/ 6 Dorothy Nishimoto
5/ 7 Tom Thornton
5/ 8 Diana Brack
5/10 Shirley Sudduth
5/11 Jennifer Goto
Mike Boehm
5/13 John Eddy
Rosalie Robinson
Henry Lewis
5/17 Brandon Jones
5/18 Scott Lowder
5/19 Susan Wilson
5/20 David Potter
Candy Talley
5/22 Dennis Janzen
Jeremy Thornton
5/23 Erik Wood
5/25 Nola Rash
5/26 Martha Mossman



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May Wedding Anniversaries

5/ 6 Tom & Tammie Boehm
5/16 Paul & Diana Brack
5/27 Fred & Martha Mossman

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

Greeters

5/ 4 Erica Gonzalez & Javier
Valenzuela
5/11 Ginnie Sterling & Nola
5/18 Dianna Combs & Natalie
4/27 Geri & David Brown

Coffee Hour Host/Hostesses

5/ 4 Tammie & Tom Boehm
5/11 Ginnie Sterling & Nola
5/18 Alice & Bobby Carter
5/25 4th Sunday Lunch – Scouts

AV Team Assignments

5/ 5 Sue & Tiffany
5/11 Crystal & Doug
5/18 Martha & Fred
5/25 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.



May 26, 2025 @ 12:00 noon
Please send Articles for the
Grapevine by this date.



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The Grapevine

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