



The Vine

May 2020

United Methodist Church
1031 Iowa Ave. Los Banos, CA 93635
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YouTube: Link available on our website weekly
Website: **umclb.net**
Phone (209) 826-4181
Address Service Requested

Worship Service: On YouTube

Church Office Hours: Office closed but secretary can be reached by leaving a message on church phone. It will be checked daily.

Pastor: Rev. Jim Garrison

Church Secretary: Cassie Wolf-Miyamoto

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

1 st	Germaine Wiley	3 rd	Martha Hardy
12 th	Gerry Rogers	13 th	Carter Cardenas
14 th	Jodie Battle	15 th	Kerri Michel
17 th	Tyler Simmons	19 th	Haley Simmons
20 th	Taetum Cardenas	20 th	Jayda Cardenas
23 rd	Olivia Patrick	25 th	Brian Hepworth
26 th	Susan Ramsey	29 th	Steve Battle
30 th	Jacob Barton	31 st	Susanna Hepworth

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY !

21st Laree & Gerry Rogers
21st Godfrey & Kathleen Zaunbrecher
28th Brian & Susanna Hepworth

April contributions total: \$ 4,846.00

Attendance online for April: 5th (119) 12th (94) 19th (74) 26th (61)



From the Pastor – May 2020

Why is all this happening? All around the world people are suffering from the effects of COVID-19. Some are suffering the loss of loved ones. Some are suffering physically from the disease itself. All of us are suffering from the economic and personal effects of sheltering in place. An almost universal response to suffering is to ask, “Why?” Some people try to answer the “why” of COVID-19 by blaming someone or some group for negligence or even for elaborate conspiracies. But others take the question higher, and wonder why God allows this to happen (or even cause) this to happen.

In response to this question I would like to share an excerpt from a letter by Dr. Timothy Tennent, the president of Asbury Theological Seminary (where Kathy and I were students). He writes:

“All sin traces back to the free will decisions made by Adam and Eve, and we continue to affirm their rebellion through our own sinful acts. Paul teaches that sin came into the world through the Fall, and our subsequent joining in that rebellion has “subjected the world to bondage” and that “the whole creation is groaning . . . up until the present time: (Romans 8:20-22). If it were not for sin, there would not be murders, terrorists, viruses, or any other signs that we live in a broken world.”

“God’s answer to the problem of evil is not to give us some amazing theological resolution or an intricate philosophical formula but rather to enter into the world not in power but in weakness and vulnerability. This is how God addresses the root of this problem – us. We are in rebellion against God and the whole world is reeling. Jesus alone has taken on all this sin and pain. To look into the face of the crucified Jesus is to understand the heart of God. The cross is God’s answer to human pain. He doesn’t give us an answer – he bears the pain for us.”

We have just celebrated Good Friday and Easter. We have looked into the face of Jesus on the cross and shared the excitement of the resurrection. God doesn’t always give us answers to our questions, but He answers our need. He is our answer. May we find all we need in Him.

Pastor Jim



Frequently Asked Questions:

Q-When will the church reopen?

A-We don't know yet. We are relying on guidance from health officials and conference leadership. We may "open" gradually.

Q-What about Vacation Bible School?

A-We will not be having a regular VBS this year. Even if it were permitted, it probably would not be a good idea to cram 250+ kids and staff into the sanctuary and classrooms. We are looking at some kind of at-home alternative for this year (I know, it just won't be the same without the hugs).

Q-What about the finances of the church?

A-Money is frequently tight anyway, and income is down from regular Sunday offerings and from rental fees from groups that use the facilities. Your faithful giving through the mail or online is vitally important at this time. We have applied for a grant through the Payroll Protection Plan that would help offset some of this shortfall, but there is no guarantee we will receive these funds. We are continuing to pay all of our employees. At least our utility bills should be lower!

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Masks - Dear Church Family,

Juli Rice and I (Kathy Garrison) have been making face masks, now required for anyone entering a store in Los Banos. Do you need one? Let me know if you do, and we'll get some made. We have plenty of fabric, but we are running short of elastic (1/4 inch) and seam binding. If you have either of these materials to donate to this project please let us know.

Kathy Garrison

(209) 620-2766

jkgarrison@att.net

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This Message Just came in from the Bishop of The United Methodist Church:

Bishop Directs Church Buildings to Remain Closed Through May

The following is taken from a message from our bishop, Minerva Carcaño:

While we continue the sacred work we are called to, it is clear that we must do so with our California-Nevada church buildings closed. Not our ministries stopped, but our buildings closed. After careful analysis of virus reports from state and local government and public health officials in Nevada and California, I am directing California-Nevada churches to remain closed throughout the month of May. Our conference staff team will also continue to shelter in place and work remotely from home.

We will continue to monitor the virus trends and data in the coming weeks and make another assessment of sheltering in place at the end of May.



Newsletter - Dear Fellow Family in Christ,

Communication is part of what holds us together as a congregation. Our monthly newsletter, *The Vine*, is an important part of that communication. We are now posting the newsletter on our church website (umclb.net) and will be emailing the link to our members whenever a new issue is published. We will still print and mail copies for whoever would like hard copies. Would you like to go "digital only" or would you still like to also receive a paper copy in the mail?

The "digital only" option saves time and costs of paper, printing and postage. An additional advantage of digital is the ability to include better photos and being able to locate past issues.

Some people are more likely to read the paper copies, and some will be more likely to read the online version. You know your own habits. We want you to see the newsletter each month, so we ask you to respond to this letter with your preference (digital only - or paper by mail) to the church office. Thank you to all who have already replied. Cassie

Special Thank You to Cindy Garrison

On Easter Sunday, Cindy made a virtual flower cross so we could still have a flower cross for the church. Take a look!





Scrip Tip of The Month

Even though we are temporarily not meeting on Sunday mornings, the scrip program is definitely not out of business! The Great Lakes Scrip Company plans to stay open, due to "its essential role as a supplier to the financial services industry." This means that as it now stands, we can order gift cards and have them delivered here in Los Banos. So – you can continue to support our church by participating in the scrip program, as we all try to work together to get through these very challenging times.

We presently have roughly \$4,000 worth of scrip on hand, including gift cards for **Save Mart, Wal-Mart** and **Target, Chili's** and **Denny's**, most fast food and pizza restaurants in Los Banos, and several gas stations. Currently, we can also order almost any items that are listed on their web site, www.shopwithscrip.com. Please take a look at the full list of the hundreds of participating vendors in the scrip program, and then contact Gregg or Juli Rice at (209) 826-1027 or (209) 761-2737, or by e-mail at grice@inreach.com to see what we can do for you.

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Easter Lily List



Given By:

- Bud & Susan Ramsey
- Jim & Kathy Garrison
- Jim & Kathy Garrison
- Gregg & Juli Rice
- Gregg & Juli Rice
- Carl & Jolanda Phillips
- Carl & Jolanda Phillips
- The Martin Family
- The Martin Family

In Memory of:

- Elijah Ramsey-Clarke
- Doris Wright
- Doug Garrison
- Paul & Ruthetta Goddard
- Stan Rice
- Marianne Elsa
- Bob Phillips
- Leon Martin
- Jane E. Martin



The Martin Family

Helen Jones Taylor

Given By:

Larry & Germaine Wiley

Larry & Germaine Wiley

In Honor Of:

Germe & Minne Trotter

Guy & Georgia Wiley



Please keep praying for our leaders, pastors, first responders, hospital staff and all families affected by this pandemic. We are wanting to be warriors for Christ and show his love during these trying times. Keep in mind God is with us through it all.



If you need help or wish to have prayers, please contact the church office, phone line is checked daily, or call the secretary or Pastor using the numbers provided in your church directory. Thank you.