



The Vine
March 2024

United Methodist Church
1031 Iowa Ave. Los Banos, CA 93635
E-MAIL Address: umclosbanos@gmail.com
Phone (209) 826-4181

Worship Service In-person 10:00AM Sundays
Service is also online Website: www.umclb.net
Sunday School following Children’s Moment in Worship Service
Pastor Office hours: Tuesday-Thursday 10:00am-2:00pm
or call (510) 552-7240
Church Office Hours: Mon-Thurs 8:30 AM–12:00 Noon.
Please call the Secretary if you need time in the office.
Messages are checked Monday-Thursday.
Pastor: Rev. Ivoni Maama
Church Secretary: Lori Winters
<https://www.facebook.com/LosBanosUnitedMethodistChurch>



- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 5 Tom Kaljian | 15 Mark Walton |
| 5 Olivia Hew | 20 Delaney Wallace |
| 13 Susan Younce | 29 Kevin Ferreira |
| 13 Stacy Betschart | 30 Liam Walsh |
| 14 Michael Bonillas | |



18 Gregg & Juli Rice

February contributions total: \$ 32,880.12
In-Person Services for February 4th (41) 11th (37) 18th (46) 25th (49)

Vine Monthly Events for March



Important dates:

Sunday, March 3rd - Youth Group Today

Wednesday, March 6th - ☎ 10:00 AM (every Wednesday) there will be a Prayer/upper room conference call, everyone is welcome to join and share any concerns. the number is **(720) 843-2603 Access Code: 8941334**

Wednesday, March 6th -Centering Prayer 7 PM Zoom, all are welcome.

Thursday March 7th - Mom's bible study 6 PM in the Fireside room on Thursdays, ending March 24th. All women are welcome.

Tuesday, March 5th- Ad Council 7 PM Zoom

Tuesday, March 12th -Trustee Meeting 6 PM in person or Zoom

Wednesday, March 13th - SPRC Meeting 7 PM Zoom

Thursday, March 14th - United Women of Faith 1 PM Lunch at Round Table Pizza

Thursday, March 14th – Craft Night, I would like to try to do this once a month, this month we will be doing rock painting. Bring your acrylic paints and some paint brushes.

Sunday March 17th -Short meeting after church 11:15 for all men to talk about starting a Men's group.

Monday, Marh 18th- Now Meeting 7 PM Zoom

Tuesday, March 26th ☎ Finance Committee 6 PM Zoom

Thursday, March 28th – Seder Meal at 6:30 PM in the fireside Room. Please sign up.

Friday, March 29th – Good Friday Silent Service from 12 to 7 PM. Come anytime and stay as long as you want. There will be Stations of the Cross set up.

Sunday, March 31st – Sunrise Service at 7:00 AM and Easter Worship service at 10:00 AM

Don't forget at 10:00 AM (Every Wednesday) there will be a Prayer/upper room conference call, everyone is welcome to join and share any concerns. the number is **(720) 843-2603 Access Code: 8941334**

Bell practice is every Wednesday at 4:30

Easter Sunday is March 31st and we will be having our annual Easter Egg hunt for the children. If you would like to donate Candy or ? to fill the eggs it would be appreciated. You can drop off at the office or give to Kerri/Shannon on the next couple of Sundays.

We had another wonderful fundraising lunch. Please consider volunteering for future lunches, they make a difference. You can partner with other families to share in the work. Please feel free to contact Roxanne Hew or Pastor Ivoni with any questions.

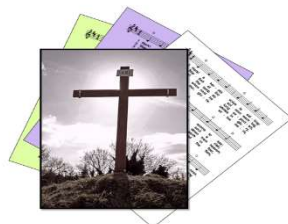
March 14th the United Women of Faith will be meeting at Round Table Pizza in the SaveMart parking lot. We will be meeting at 1 PM please bring a donation for lunch and your Bible. We will be playing a game that you will need your bible for, we can bring a couple extra if you forget. All women are welcome, hope to see you there.

We are starting a Centering Prayer 7 PM Zoom, all are welcome. If you cant sleep at night if you are having probleems with anxiety or feeling overwhelmed please join us. Find your peace. The link will is 892 6508 9453 pass code is 742102 or let me know and I will send the link.

We are starting a craft night. I would like to try to do this once a month, this month we will be doing rock painting. Bring your acrylic paints and some paint brushes. If you have any Ideas for a craft let me know, I am sure we have some talented people at out chruch.

Please joun us for Good Friday Silent Service from 12 noon to 7 PM. There will be Stations of the Cross set up in the Fireside Room and Sanctuary. Please come anytime and stay as ong as you want.

We will be having Easter Sunrise Service ouside the Sanctuary at 7:00 AM, There will also be regular Easter Service at 10:00 AM and an Easter Egg Hunt after service.
Don't forget to bring your flowers to decorate our Easter Cross.



Administrative Council Highlights – February 6, 2024

The Ad Council met by Zoom conference on Tuesday, February 6, 2024 with eight people present. The following items were discussed:

- **Nurture, Outreach and Witness (NOW).** The NOW Committee met on January 15 and had no major problems with a request by LB Memorial Hospital to use our Fellowship Hall kitchen in August and September while major work is done at their kitchen. Ivoni did some outreach with food and drink for local homeless people. No dates have been set for the rummage sale, but VBS will be the week of June 17-21. Roxanne will be away for much of February so there will be no Sunday school for about a month. Lori wants to hold a weekly craft evening. Susan Younce will provide the initial last Sunday after-church lunch, on February 25. NOW meets next on February 19.
- **Trustees.** Chris Foxworthy will fix some items in the parsonage soon. The oven in the Fellowship Hall will be checked as one side reportedly does not fully heat up. The Trustees will meet in person on February 13, with a Zoom option. The security camera that was in the Fireside Room kitchen has finally been relocated, giving a much better view of the classroom wing. Our contract with Comcast for phone and internet service expires in March, and we will switch to AT&T, which now has faster, cheaper fiber optic cable service available to our church site.
- **United Women in Faith.** The women meet on February 8 to share a soup and salad lunch and a white elephant gift exchange. The next meeting is March 14.
- **Staff-Parish Relations Committee.** We received over 15 applications for part-time youth director, but unfortunately, none of them appear to have any experience with children or church activities, so SPRC is pondering its next steps.
- **Financial Report.** The General Fund collections for January were \$13,808.23, and paid expenses were \$15,121.86, leaving a checkbook balance of \$1,098.46 as of January 31, with unpaid bills totaling \$494.08. After the January 2 Ad Council meeting, Gregg directed Cathie to make a payment of \$2,700 for our 2023 tithe to reach the 10% goal for the year, trusting that collections would continue to be as good as in December and January. The state's minimum wage increased from \$15 to \$16 per hour on January 1, resulting in a wage increase for one of our employees.
- **Upcoming Events for 2024.** Ivoni will meet with a small group to consider dates for social, educational and fundraising events for the year. Ivoni is planning two silent services on Ash Wednesday, from noon to 1:00, and from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Written instructions will be provided for individual silent prayer and meditation in the sanctuary, followed by her serving communion and imposing the sign of the cross. She is also working on suggestions for daily or weekly prayers during Lent.
- **Parish Care.** Prayers were requested for Diane Moon, Jean Willis, Kimery, Guadalupe, Ted, Fay Davis, Dan and Karen Bonillas, Charlene, and several members of Ivoni's family.
- **Pastor's Report.** Ivoni has been visiting or calling several members of our church family each week, including Jean Willis, Carl and Jolanda, Don and Carley, and Eileen Sorensen. For the shut-ins, she generally serves communion. She asked to be made aware of anyone else who could use a visit from her.

Dear Los Banos, United Methodist Family:

Greetings! Welcome to the 2024 Lenten Season with these words from Prophet Joel 2:13

“Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.”

These words from Prophet Joel are so perfectly encapsulate what the Lenten season means for us Christians, now and in times past. Even we often associate the Lenten season with a sense of giving something up, of sacrifice, which makes sense, given the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness being tormented by the devil, we forget what got Jesus through those unimaginably tough 40 days.

Maybe we focus so much on the pain, the suffering, the hurt, that we don't always see the mercy, the steadfastness, and the love of God, even in circumstances that are nearly unfathomable. It is ultimately because of God, in God's abounding, steadfast love, that Jesus can make it through those 40 days, and from that place of deep connection to God, begin his public life of ministry.

Let's pause for prayer and during the silent of our heart. We ask God to help us to feel his presence and give us the eye that we can see the ear that we can hear the needy of our brothers and sisters in need, to change our own lives and the lives of our communities. Friends we are in our own wilderness every day. Let's pause for prayer and ask God to help us overcome all the temptations, struggles, turmoil, pain, sufferings. That we are dealing with physically, mentally, financially, and spiritually daily those are our wilderness.

My prayers are with you all my lovely family of Los Banos UMC. May we all journey with God in this Lenten Season. Don't forget you are not alone. We as family are walking side by side and with our God Jesus Christ, Our Redeemer.

Blessings,

Pastor 'Ivoni

A NOTE FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Over the past few weeks, our church has benefited greatly from two extraordinarily generous financial gifts.

First, Wilma Ditter, who passed away on October 18, 2023, named the United Methodist Church of Los Banos as a major beneficiary of her will. As a member of our church for about 30 years, and Collections Secretary for at least half of that time, she knew how important it was for the church to have adequate funding to perform its mission. Since she had no relatives nearby, in many ways we served as her family, and she loved us just like family. As a reflection of that love, and as directed by her will, Wilma's estate recently gave a **\$25,000.00** check to the church, which has come at a crucial time for us. We have many fond memories of what she did for us for so long, and now have yet another reason to be thankful for having had Wilma as a member of our family for so long.

The second large gift, which we received in late February, was an unexpected donation of **\$5,000.00** from The Morning Star Packing Company in support of our Vacation Bible School. As many of you may be aware, VBS benefited for nearly ten years from \$5,000 annual donations from Roberta Howard and her estate. This has enabled us to present our highly-acclaimed program for children from all over Los Banos at no cost to them. We were informed last July that the Howard family's \$5,000 donation would unfortunately be the last, as the estate's funds have now been depleted. In light of this, Hans Younce, a retiree of Morning Star, applied on behalf of our VBS for a community grant from Morning Star – and it was approved last month! We are very grateful to Morning Star and to Hans, and we now have enough funds on hand for our VBS program in 2024 and 2025. There's a little more to the story (you can ask Susan Younce for details), but this has been a real answer to prayers, and a further indication that God works in mysterious and wonderful ways!



If you would like to purchase a lily to decorate our Sanctuary for Easter, please fill out the information below.

COST IS \$15.00

IN HONOR OF

IN MEMORY OF

YOUR NAME:

Your Lilies can be taken home after the Easter Service.