



The Vine

January 2020

United Methodist Church
1031 Iowa Ave. Los Banos, CA 93635
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Phone (209) 826-4181
Address Service Requested

Worship Service **9:30 AM**
Infant and Pre-school Care **9:30 AM**
Sunday School: **9:40 AM**

(Following Children's Moment in Worship Service)

Church Office Hours: Mon - Thurs. 8:30 AM–11:30 AM

Pastor: Rev. Jim Garrison

Church Secretary: Cassie Wolf-Miyamoto

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

1 st	Jean Bright	4 th	John Machado		
8 th	Jerry Davis	8 th	Charlene Martin		
13 th	Jennifer Knight	14 th	Jim Garrison		
16 th	SanDee Rooney	19 th	Donna Morris		
20 th	Jeff Brubaker	21 st	Noah Cardenas		
26 th	Melissa Jones	29 th	Gideon Moffitt	31 st	Mackenzie Ferreira

HAPPY ANNI VERSARY TO YOU!

16th Jim & Jean Willis

19th Robert & Rhonda Cardenas

24th John & Helen Machado

December contributions total: \$ 11,203.00

Attendance for December 1st (68) 8th (77) 15th (77) 22nd (91) 29th (59)

Administrative Council Highlights – January 7, 2020

The Ad Council met in the Fireside Room on Tuesday, January 7, 2020 with six people present. The following items were discussed:

- **Nurture, Outreach and Witness (NOW):** New Chairman Bud Ramsey plans to hold regular meetings of the NOW team, once a workable day is identified. The Los Banos Memorial Hospital gave a second \$2,500.00 donation to Manna Ministries, making a total of \$5,000.00 for the year. A meeting of the participating groups will be held soon to set up Manna's calendar for the year.

The hospitality schedule has been adjusted to identify separate tasks (providing snacks, serving them, and cleaning up afterwards) each week, so that volunteers won't need to commit for everything for a full month at a time. The children did a very good job with the Christmas program. Bud took video of the production, and will try to post it online. We hope to make improvements to the church's website this year.

Tawny and Susanna are teaching the Sunday school classes, and have acquired a 52-week curriculum. The homeschool coop is using our facilities on Mondays and Tuesdays, and their final meeting for the school year will be on Monday, June 1. To minimize the impact on the UMW rummage sale later that week, June 4-6, coop members will be asked to help set up the tables, chairs and other items as needed for the rummage sale.

We have received a request to use one of our rooms for three days of state testing for approximately 20 students of Inspire Charter School, in late March or late April. The Ad Council agreed that the Fireside Room should work for this purpose, and referred the matter to the Trustees to set the conditions and fee schedule for the room rental.

- **Trustees:** We haven't heard back yet from American Music in Fresno about the problem with the sound board in the sanctuary. The church telephone system was largely fixed by Dennis Morris and his grandsons, but there is currently no service to the Fellowship Hall. A

pest control firm recently completed an inspection of the sanctuary, and found no termite damage.

- **UMW:** The annual Christmas party on December 10 went very well, and the rummage sale will be June 4-6.
- **Staff-Parish Relations Committee:** Our new pianist, Christine Pefanco, began on January 5, and did very well.
- **Treasurer's Report/Finance Team:** Our General Fund income for December was \$14,044.47, plus a transfer of \$12,133.50 from Designated Funds. Paid expenses were \$23,568.32, including the final balance due for medical insurance. The checkbook balance was \$4,436.39 as of December 31, and there were no unpaid bills

We tithed \$6,600.00 in 2019, which was about 5.5% of our total income, well short of the 10% goal for all member churches of the denomination. We paid our full 10% obligation in 2018, but last year's collections were down significantly, with total income for 2019 roughly \$15,000 less than in 2018. The Finance Team is looking at ways to control expenses, but the vast majority of costs are for payroll, utilities and insurance, without much leeway. Some thought is being given to fundraising efforts, such as the scrip program, and we have just received information on how the church can participate in the Amazon Smile program.

Jim has downloaded the forms and begun working on year-end statistical reporting to the Annual Conference, due by February 15.

- Prayers were requested for the following **People in Need:** Darrell Henley, Suzanne and Ed Kusters, Jim Willis, Karla Scott, and Kimberly Dickens.
- **Pastor's Report:** Jim will be in Livermore January 28-30 for a Gathering of the Orders, and will be involved in a Walk to Emmaus in March. He said he felt it was too early in the process for us to spend much time on the recent report on the potential split of the United Methodist Church, which will be taken up at the General Conference in May.

From the Pastor

Happy New Year! In Spanish we wish people a “prosperous” new year. If you are more spiritually inclined, we might wish people a “blessed” new year. What makes a year happy, prosperous and blessed? Some of those things are unknown events out of our control; like whether we might suffer an illness, or whether the economy goes up or down. But many of the things that will make us happy, prosperous and blessed are things affected by our actions and choices. There are portions of the Bible that spell out clearly some of the things that we can do (or avoid) that will tend to create a happier life for us. The Ten Commandments tell us not to steal, murder or commit adultery. A lot of misery would be avoided if everyone only followed those three instructions. The book of Proverbs is mostly short, clever sayings giving practical wisdom for living like: “work hard if you want to succeed,” “don’t cheat in business,” and “stay faithful to your spouse.” Proverbs also includes spiritual advice like: “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” I don’t think that means we should be afraid of God, but rather that we should take God with the utmost seriousness. We should care most about following and pleasing God. Jesus reinforced this idea when they asked him what was the most important commandment, and Jesus answered by quoting from the book of Deuteronomy saying, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart. . .” Jesus said that if we are wise, we will not only hear his teachings, but will actively apply them in our daily living. If we do that, Jesus said, we will be like a wise man who builds his house on a firm foundation. Wisdom isn’t something that you have to be a genius to understand. Wisdom is putting God first and doing things God’s way. If we are consistently living a life where God is our priority and authority, where we nurture our relationship with God and do what God says, then our life will be happier if only because we will have fewer self-inflicted sorrows. May we all live wisely in 2020 and enjoy God’s blessings.

Yours in Jesus

Jim

Pastor Jim

We collected \$ 135.00 at the Christmas Eve candlelight service, which is being used to purchase Domino’s Pizza gift cards, to be given to the First Priority youth groups at the local high schools. First Priority youth groups try to encourage others by demonstrating Christ’s caring and talking about how their faith guides them in everyday life.

Note: We are still accepting Plan of Giving cards from church members who have not yet turned one in. If you have lost yours there are more in the narthex or contact the office and one can be sent to you.

January 5th is our turn to serve for Manna Ministries, please if possible, come out and help. Manna was blessed in December to once again receive a generous gift of \$ 2,500 from Sutter Health Inc. This truly is an outpouring of love for our community! Many thanks!