



Community United Methodist Church
1480 Poplar Avenue - Oakdale, CA 95361
Office: 209 847-7777

DECEMBER 2022

Pastor: Jeff Holder
Cell: 209 840-7939

CHURCH CHATTER

Monthly Newsletter of Events and Information

The Reason for the Season

Advent 2022 is now officially here. Thanksgiving has passed, and just how quickly that happened still confounds me. Christmas is 4 weeks away. We are now all racing like the wind to get the baking done. To get Christmas decorations up both inside and outside the house. To get all our Christmas present shopping done, don't forget the time needed to wrap and even the extra time needed to mail all those things to family and friends. I am particularly jealous of those who have mailed out their Christmas and Season greeting cards to everyone. That project is tough for me to get done, but then I tend to procrastinate until there is no time left (just ask my taxman).

This is the first real Advent we will experience since the pandemic which, in my opinion, creates an additional rush. It also creates a very special opportunity for our OAKDALE Methodist family. Advent is a time of joyful anticipation. We await the coming of Jesus Christ as a tiny baby resting in a manger in swaddling clothes. In a very short time, the day we celebrate the birth of the Christ child will have come and gone. We will continue our headlong rush into Epiphany and then Ash Wednesday, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and Ordinary times and POOF! The year has once again passed us by.

So here is my suggestion. Let's take this Advent one minute at a time, one hour at a time, one day at a time, one week at a time. Let us reflect on what gifts we can bring not only to the crib but to Our Lord. And we should focus on gifts that will last Christ forever. Never mind the things that need batteries, or that fade with time but gifts that will stand the test of time. Let's make this the year we give Christ the gift of our mind, our body, and our soul. How do we do this? Glad you asked. We start by committing to Christ to faithfully worship God the father, God the son, and God the Holy Spirit every Sunday. After all, it is the Lord's day. That should demonstrate above all else we have committed Christians in need of God's love and help. Next, we commit to a daily routine of prayer. Even a quick good morning God, good afternoon Jesus, good night Holy Spirit is something we can all do. And to help that along coming in late January we will begin Wednesday evening Prayer and Praise. Join us, and become a team member. Then there are the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are gifts given to us in anticipation of God's "return on investment" in each of us. Remember the parable of the ten talents? The servant receives ten talents from the master. The master goes away and when the master returns the servant returns the ten talents plus ten more. A reminder that God will always give better than He got. That kind of commitment allows our group of Christians to go into the world growing the love of Christ in our community. And then there is a need to commit to building Christ's community through service. The pandemic has created a crushing need for so many things that are begging to be done. Re-launching the Esther Group, the Men's group, ushers, and greeters. Building the Praise team. Renewing Bible Study and the study of our uniquely Methodist traditions. Building the Rescue Mission service and a ride-sharing program for Sundays and other times. invigorating our coffee hour and monthly meal get-together. There is a need for a day or two of office support and a need to help in the leadership of all these programs and more. We should commit to all of this using Epiphany as a marker point to be sure and get going.

The year-round commitment can continue in the form of a check-up during Lent. The time of reflection will provide the ability to review our commitments and through Easter Re-double our efforts. By Pentecost and into Ordinary times we put our shoulders into the commitment of gifts we give to Jesus. Come, Christ, the King Sunday, 2023, we have all, together, as the Oakdale Community United Methodist Church not only conquered the pandemic but brought Christ into the real focus of our lives.



Frank Remkiewicz
Certified Lay Minister

MARKET PLACE ON POPLAR

1st Saturday of each Month

Booth Space \$20

January 7th - 8am to 4pm

Feb 4th - Mar 4th - April 1st - May 6th - June 3rd - July 1st - Aug 5th - Sept 2nd - Oct 7th

Contact Nancy Podolsky for more info (209) 606-5432 or CraftFairInfo@yahoo.com

End of Year Giving for 2022

As the year draws to a close, it has been a challenging year for CUMC with several necessary expenses not on the general budget. CUMC can only exist to the degree its members pledge & participate in the work of the church. Below are items identified in need of funds

- HVAC units - Still paying off installed unit with others near end of life
- Update/renew lighting in sanctuary & Johnston Hall with LED includes lift rental
- Pruning of large trees on property which have not been done in years-need to hire a company
- Renew basketball court asphalt & install new backboards so youth can again use for games

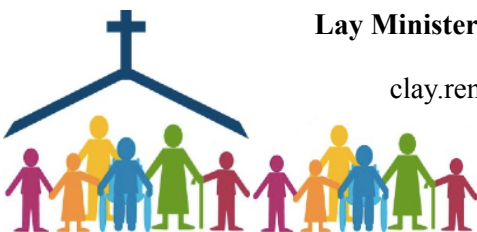
Reference on your check the project you would like your donation to go towards. Thank you for considering end of year giving. For more info on any project, contact Pastor Jeff (209) 840-7939

CHURCH INFORMATION

Email: cumcOakdaleAdmin@gmail.com

Lay Minister: Frank Remkiewicz
(209) 630-1882
clay.remkiewicz@gmail.com

Pastor Jeff Holder:
(209) 840-7939
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MARKET PLACE MEALS

COME and SHOP (rain or shine) or COME and EAT!! Our own Lee Merritt is cooking up food to eat at the event or ready for carry out to eat at home or share with a friend. No need to cook dinner on first Saturday of the month.

Despite the rain & cold weather at our first event, all vendors seemed happy with sales and several will be back.

All Market Place booth fees and earnings from the church booth, go toward building & yard maintenance fund. It will be a great place to sell items no longer needed or used.

December

- Laura Tower 3rd - Jessica Gorman 3rd
- Donna Dambacher 7th - Diane Sanders 9th
- Joyce Ichord 13th - Herb Williams 15th
- Carol Earle 25th - Michael Austin 27th
- Margie White 29th



CALENDAR of EVENTS

Meetings here at the Church

Canoeing Spiritual Group	Tues Zoom Mtg 6:30pm
TOPS Weekly Classes	Mondays - 8:30 am
Scouting Night	Mondays - 6pm
Alanon	Mon 7pm/Thurs noon/Fri 6pm
Life & Grief Support w/Pastor Jeff	Tuesdays 1pm
Addiction Ministry/Hand in Hand	Thursday 7pm
Art Classes w/Carole Earle	Tues/Thurs 9:30am/Tues 1:30
Oakdale Garden Club	3 rd Tues 10am
Market Place on Poplar	1 st Sat 8am-4pm

Quote for the month

"You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.."

Kahlil Gibron

Christmas Decorations

SANCTUARY & JOHNSTON HALL

Thank you Judy, Margie, Julie, Jeanne, Jeff, Ann, Donna, Doug, Becky Williams, and Lee & family for decorating the church for the holiday season.



In Memory



Phyllis Pottle passed away on November 20th at the age of 91½. She had 2 daughters & 2 sons, 6 grandchildren, and 3 great grandchildren. Phyllis was a dedicated and involved member of CUMC; tracking the history of the church, organizing and holding quarterly rummage sales for years, and more. A celebration of life will be planned and held in January.

SHARE this newsletter

with Family and Friends; they might want to join in or know what is happening at church.

POINSETTIAS

A \$15 donation (marked on your check) will bring a poinsettia into the church to decorate on Sunday 12/18. At the end of the service, you can take your poinsettia home to enjoy or leave in church to enjoy on Christmas Sunday. Judy needs funds by 12/13 so she knows how many to pick up.



BIBLE STUDY GROUP

by Pastor Jeff



Pastor Jeff is leading a Zoom Bible Study on Tuesdays @ 6:30pm Call for a Zoom link if you are interested in attending: Pastor Jeff (209) 840-7939.

BASKETBALL COURT

by Nancy Podolsky

We now have a functional basketball court. The weeds were removed, the cracks were filled, a couple of coats of slurry seal applied, newly painted lines, and two new back boards/hoops are ready to install.

This resurfacing is a *short term fix* to the BBcourt as it really needs a new asphalt base. The church was contacted by a youth group wanting and needing a place to have organized basketball games. Since we are a "community" church, we want to encourage and utilized our facility for community events. Any additional funds are appreciated for the BB court project - just note on your donation. Thank you for considering a donation to this project.

CALLING ALL PRAYER WARRIORS

We have a congregational prayer group. If you would like to volunteer or requesting prayers, please call Frank (209-603-1882)

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS



Be a host after church for a great time for friendship/fellowship. If you or can be a host, please **contact Judy Bradley** (209 985-3590) It is less effort to prepare food if working together with someone else. *After*

church coffee time will only happen if there is someone signed up to host.

WHY A CHURCH COVENANT?

Greetings to you all. I have been preaching and talking a lot about a call to covenant together for our church. A covenant is a **two-way promise, the conditions of which are set by God**. When we enter into a covenant with God, we promise to keep those conditions. God promises us certain blessings in return. It is a two-way promise.

All of us, as followers of Christ, have entered into a covenant, ultimately from God. God promises us salvation if we love God and love others as ourselves. Of course, we have also committed ourselves as the body of Christ to work together as a congregation. So far, so good?

The problem becomes the degree to which we are committed to loving others, and the degree to which the church is willing to serve the needs of our community. While our church has endured splits in the past, and undergone many demoralizing changes, we find ourselves to be in a time where we no longer work together for the betterment of our community, and our numbers have dwindled. The oldest generation of members is passing on.

Most of us have seen the further church decline that has taken place as a result of the pandemic. Whether we took it seriously or not, no one disagrees that it has exacted a toll on our faith community, which cannot be ignored.

Since new members don't generally show up at our front door, we are at a loss as to how to turn the tide. What worked in other decades doesn't seem to work anymore. Over two thousand years ago, John the Baptist knew what to do.

He popped up in the wilderness, outside of Jerusalem, far away from the Roman soldiers, and Herod. Looking like a rugged incarnation of Elijah, he preached about the One who was to come. The One to come was to bring a new covenant, where mercy and justice for the poor would be practiced by all the people.

He called the Jewish establishment, and the Jewish people to renew their dedication to loving others, and creating peaceful world, where the people and the underserved would be elevated. The keepers of the law were to break their hypocritical practices, and humble themselves.

It was not a movement to overhaul the government. As a matter of fact, it wasn't a political movement at all. Then, as now, it was a deeply spiritual movement of baptism and renewal, putting the followers of the Messiah into the position of changing the world, one person at a time. This is what became the church.

Now the fact is, we can reverse none of the unfortunate things that have already happened to our church. We can, though, rededicate ourselves as involved church members, daily seeking to reach our community. Only by deeply uniting in a true covenant with Christ, can we be strong enough and effective enough to rebuild this church in the Spirit of God's mercy and love, starting with our worshiping together regularly.

No one will join a church if, when they do visit, only 6 to 10 people can be found worshiping. We must be a dedicated, cooperative group, working together, using our skills and keeping our promises, in order to save our church. Lately, many of you have heard my call to covenant, and your covenant efforts are already growing our numbers, and our outreach. I see hope, and peace on the horizon, and I am very grateful.

You will all eventually be receiving a covenant to read and sign. We are the church. You are the church. We are the church together. I call you into covenant for this 2022 – 2023 year. We can only grow if we do this together. Every one of us. Please join with me. Most of you are already generous givers. Now, I ask you to give of yourselves, your time, your talents, skills and gifts.

Have questions? Call me or ask me in person. I'd be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Gratefully,
Pastor Jeff