



CHURCH CHATTER

Newsletter of Events and Information

The Meditations of a Retiring Minister

Tonight, I am sitting up in my home study, reading the scriptures for the final 5 sermons I'll preach before I retire from active ministry. It's quiet. Life is so fast-paced and late in the evening is the kind of time when the whisper of the Spirit can most easily be heard.

Cars are garaged, darkness swallows the deafening sounds of midday, and I can stretch out time, considering what message is most needed at the local church. Jesus speaks to my heart saying, "Don't worry. You know what to preach. The sermon is already written for you. All you need to do is arrange the words." I knew that, but somehow I needed Jesus's soft encouragement to start writing.

Jesus is there for us, you and me, when we take the time to meditate on him. When we doubt ourselves, he is there to remind us that we are to love ourselves. His love never fails. Need a sermon? He is there to help. Now my pen is moving...

Oh, how we need the renewal that resurrection brought the Apostles! Jesus was gone from the tomb and only the women who had faithfully followed him knew all the observable details. Where did he go? Then, Jesus returned, in some way unrecognizable, fried fish for them and broke bread. The disciples were stunned. How could this be? The Son of Man died, disappeared from the tomb, and is now back cooking fish. It just boggles the mind.

The disciples came to understand that wholeness wasn't just something conferred upon the woman who had been bleeding for twelve years. Wholeness was a way of becoming, expanding, and living. In God, all things are possible. Everything is a miracle until we accept its validity. Living into that fact is just as hard for us to understand today as it was for the disciples back then. But with practice, they learned.

Deeper faith and love drew them ever closer to the heart, where Jesus dwells within all of us. Jesus has always been there to help us discern next steps. To learn God's love, we must focus on the now moment and choose our steps carefully. This is the general path to wholeness.

We know we are in a time of great upheaval in a world where everyone wants their own legacy. We have lost our oneness. We are a collection of individuals who bicker, judge and belittle. Who will be king of the hill? Fear, pain, and hatred are toxic, and yet, folks spread it around like incense. How we need a resurrection to be the people we were created to be! We need to shatter the darkness with the light of a new day!

Yes, we may have been broken, but being broken is not meant to be a permanent condition. In the Aramaic translation of the Lord's Prayer, we get a broader understanding that we are to breathe together with God. The ultimate oneness is when we all breathe together with the Almighty. We all have a role to play, like a beautiful symphony. Our loving hearts make the most beautiful music. Wholeness, and love are the instruments. Eternity is the time allotted us for endless harmonies.

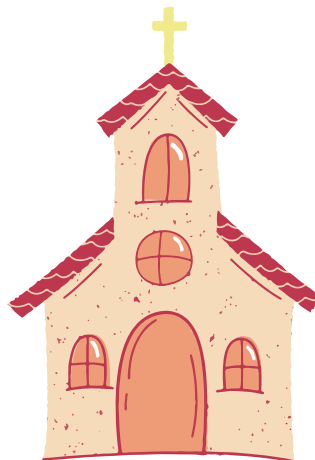
We need a resurrection and the light of a new day. Jesus will be there until the end of the age to tell you, "Don't worry. You know what to do. I will be your guide."

I must put my pen down now... Dawn is coming in a few hours. I want to be ready. How about you?
May God's peace be with you.

Grace and Peace . . .
Pastor Jeffrey Holder



Sunday Service Speakers



Sunday Services - 10am

May 4th

Pastor Jeff Holder

May 11th - Mother's Day

Pastor Jeff Holder

May 18th

Jim Austin

May 25th

Val Matapea

June 2nd

Pastor Jeff

Meet a Member. . .

Judy Bradley is the LONGEST - standing member of our church—by several months—having been part of our community for decades. She was born in Oakdale after her parents moved from Lodi in 1949 to open Chicous' Family Shoe Store. Her



brother, Rev. Bob Chicou, is a retired Methodist Minister.

As a student at Oakdale High School, Judy was head of the Future Business Leaders and active in the Rainbow Girls. Her faith life began early as a member of the Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF) and a traveling Gospel Singing Group that performed throughout California in Methodist churches.

Judy's involvement with the Rainbow Girls eventually led her to join the Order of the Eastern Star in 1973—making her a dedicated 52-year member. She has served in many roles, including liaison representative to West Virginia (2011–2014) and deputy grand matron, during which she traveled 36,000 miles in one year for state and international duties. Locally, she remains active in both the San Andreas and Escalon Chapters (now consolidated with Oakdale) and currently holds office in both.

It was at an Eastern Star installation that she met her husband, Larry Bradley. They were married for 15 years before his sudden passing in 1992. Judy has one stepdaughter.

Professionally, Judy was the receptionist at A.L. Gilbert Co. for 43 years. Even after retiring, the company asked her to return part-time to help stabilize operations—she still works there one day a week.

Judy enjoys travel, quilting, and sewing. She participates in a volunteer group in Escalon that creates pillows, lap quilts, scarves, and caps for cancer patients. Though she has had to scale back her travel due to knee pain, her spirit remains strong.

At church, Judy continues to serve faithfully. She is currently our financial secretary, a trustee, and a member of the nominations committee. She also volunteers regularly in the church office.

We are deeply grateful for Judy's lifelong dedication and the many ways she continues to bless our church family.

Transition Team

A team is planning for a farewell event for Pastor Jeff's retirement June 29th and welcoming of new Pastor Mark Buenafe and family beginning of July. **Mark your calendars NOW to be in church then and not away on vacation.** The June newsletter will have all the details.

Holy Communion: Part 1

by Frank Remkiewicz

Have you ever gone hungry for a day or two? When I was in Vietnam, occasionally, when we were out, a resupply would not arrive on time. We might end up a day, sometimes two, without any C-rations. It became difficult to concentrate, let alone accomplish any work.

If, as Christians, we are to be about God's work every day, why do we eat only once a month? Is the Service of the Word enough to keep us strong? What can we as Methodists draw on to provide strength every day? Folks, we have the Service of the Table, also known as The Lord's Supper and Holy Communion.

John Wesley used to receive Holy Communion four or five times a week. Wesley once described the Lord's Supper as "the grand channel whereby the grace of his Spirit was conveyed to the souls of all the children of God." Wesley believed that the grace in and through the sacrament of Holy Communion was active in conviction, repentance and conversion, forgiveness, and sanctification. Wesley knew that Holy Communion is a powerful means through which Divine Grace is given to God's people. Wesley's sermon entitled "The Duty of Constant Communion" emphasized the role the Lord's Supper plays in the lives of all Christians. It is through the Service of the Word and the Service of the Table that we as Christians can receive the gift of grace and, through that gift, the strength to carry His work into our community.

NEXT TIME: HOW DID WE GET HERE?



Church Family

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

May

4th Jim Austin 5th Julie Riveria
28th Connor McCurdy

Thank You Pack 365 and Love Oakdale . .

As part of the LoveOakdale event Saturday, April 26th the scouts and MANY of their family members came to the church. They mowed the meadow and field, cut down 2 dead trees, cleaned out the WHOLE shed, cleaned up the basketball court, put up 2 new backboards and hoops (compliments of Pastor Jeff a couple of years ago), built 3 outdoor tables for us all to use in the meadow area, and HAULED away a couple of trailers of prunings along with a couple of trailer loads of junk from the shed. Doug & Nancy were also there helping the crew with the shed clean out. We are blessed to have the Scouts help us maintain the church property.



Attention Seniors Come June 11, 2025 - 9am to 1pm

OAKDALE SENIOR INFORMATION DAY



Stanislaus Senior Foundation
Partnering with the
Gladys L. Lemmons Senior Center



Complimentary shuttle service by
Astoria Senior Living
from the Oakdale Senior Center

June 11, 2025, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm
Gene Bianchi Community Center
110 S. 2nd Ave. Oakdale, CA 95361

- Services Information
- Health Screenings
- Prize Drawings
- Lunch Provided
- Exercise Classes
- Local Programs