



CHURCH CHATTER

Newsletter of Events and Information

What is Needed?

On Sunday, January 19, Jim Austin delivered a powerful sermon that resonated deeply. It brought to mind lyrics from a Rolling Stones song: “You can’t always get what you want, but if you try sometimes, you just might find you get what you need.” This reflection sparked a question: What does the Oakdale Community United Methodist Church truly need?

A Return to Worship

First and foremost, the church needs more people to gather in worship on Sundays. With the pandemic behind us and restrictions lifted, it is time to reestablish the healthy rhythm of weekly worship attendance. Worshiping as a community strengthens faith, energizes the spirit, and equips members to live in God’s love throughout the week. While the community has faced challenges and adopted Sunday activities like brunches, family gatherings, and sports in place of worship, it is a Christian duty to prioritize reconnecting with God and one another.

Everyone is encouraged to make worship a regular habit and to invite friends, neighbors, and former attendees back into the fold. At worship, especially at the communion table, all are united in Christ, and no divisions—be they political, cultural, or personal—matter. All are equal and beloved children of God.

More Hands to Serve

The church also needs more active participation from its members. A few individuals cannot carry the weight of the entire community alone. While love binds God’s children together, indifference can erode that unity. Members are urged to dedicate just one hour a week to help sustain the church's mission.

Opportunities to assist are plentiful: help in the office one day a week, write cards or letters, make phone calls, or contribute in other ways to improve communication and connection within the church. Every small effort counts in strengthening God’s community.

Financial Support for Sustainability

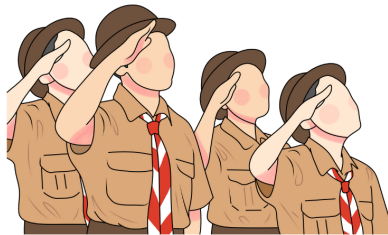
Finally, the church must remain financially viable. For the first time, Oakdale Community United Methodist Church is facing significant internal and external financial challenges. Monthly expenses—such as utilities, staff salaries, repairs, and maintenance—must be met to keep the church doors open and its mission alive.

This financial stability ensures the church can continue to provide a space for worship and carry out God’s work in the community. Members are encouraged to contribute and support the church’s ongoing needs, remembering the importance of collective effort.

As the saying goes, “If not me, then who? If not now, when?” With God’s blessing, every effort made today will sustain the church’s mission and ministry for the future. May the peace of Christ be with all members and their families.

Blessing to you . . .

Frank Remkiewicz CLM



Scout Sunday

February 9, 2025

Scouting Sunday is happening again, here on Sunday, Feb 9th. Scout Pack 365 will join us and assist in opening our worship service. Please come to the service that morning to welcome the scouts, their families for this event, and for the lunch that follows. The scouts have been very active in helping to keep our grounds clean and picked up. Let’s thank them.

Sunday Service Speakers



Sunday Services - 10am

February 2nd

DS Pastor Mary Maaga

February 9th

SCOUT SUNDAY

Pastor Jeff Holder

February 16th

Tracy Tennes

February 23rd

Pastor Jeff Holder

Meet a Member. . .



The Praise Team “tambourine man” is Jim Austin. Jim was born in Frankfurt, Germany, where his father was stationed while in the military. Although his family transferred back to the United States when he was just six months old, his childhood was shaped by the military lifestyle. They lived in numerous states until dad

retired in 1967, when the family settled in Riverside, California, his father’s hometown. Jim graduated from high school in Riverside and later earned a bachelor’s degree in accounting from Cal Poly Pomona. During his studies, he spent a year in an international business program at La Universidad Ibero Americana in Mexico City, an experience he cherished.

Jim began his career in public accounting in Orange County before joining PepsiCo, where he worked for 16 years. His role took him across the U.S. and internationally, with assignments in Spain, Germany, and Mexico. In 2001, Pepsi transferred him to Northern California, where he worked as Finance Manager for the San Francisco Bay Market Unit. After leaving PepsiCo, he worked for Foster Farms Dairy in Modesto for 9 years and has been with The Burchell Nursery for nearly 12 years.

He moved to Oakdale in 2001, building a house in Valley Home before relocating to town after his divorce in 2009. He has been deeply involved in CUMC in Oakdale since arriving. Recommended to Oakdale CUMC by his pastor in Winston-Salem, NC, he has served here as Lay Leader, Ad Council Chair, Staff Parish Committee, and currently Finance Committee Chairperson. His three sons—Michael, Jacob, and Joshua—all grew up attending CUMC. (Josh serves as our sound technician during Sunday services.)

His hobbies include riding his electric bike, traveling, photography, history, and classic cars. He owns a 1968 Plymouth Sport Fury convertible, a nostalgic “time machine” reminiscent of his teenage years.

Jim credits his military upbringing with fostering a love for travel and an appreciation for diverse cultures and people, which broadened his understanding of the world. Fluent in Spanish, he has participated in multiple mission trips to Guatemala, helping build homes for indigenous families living in poverty. He found the experience profoundly rewarding and returned five times.

The true joys of life are his family, friends, and the meaningful relationships that sustain him.

Quote for the Month

“We must find time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives.”

John F. Kennedy

In Memory of



Joyce (Thompson) Ichord passed away January 19, 2025, at the age of 89. She was born in Lexington, OK, and as a young girl moved with her family to California eventually settling in Oakdale. Joyce attended Oakdale High School where she met her husband Jerry Ichord. Together they raised three daughters, Candy, Cheryl, and Shelly and enjoyed 9 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren. Jerry and Joyce were married 68 years. A celebration of life is planned for February 28th at 12 noon at Oakdale Golf & Country Club.

Valentines Day

*“Let us always meet each other with a smile,
for the smile is the beginning of love.”*

Mother Teresa

Church Family

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

FEBRUARY

9th Judy Bradley

Rev. Dr. Mary Maaga, PhD

Guest Speaker Feb. 2nd

The Rev. Dr. Mary Maaga, PhD, our Central Valley District Superintendent (DS), will be our guest speaker the first Sunday of February. She started her professional service to the Lord as a Youth Director at Sacramento Japanese UMC in 1983. She earned a PhD in Religion and Society from Drew University in 1996.

Maaga served as a pastor in New Jersey and later in the California-Nevada Conference, where she revitalized struggling congregations. After stepping away from ordained ministry in 2003 following the death of her husband, she remained active in lay discipleship, focusing on writing, retreat leadership, life coaching, and outreach to vulnerable populations.

In 2017, with her children grown, she discerned a call back to ordained ministry, continuing her dedication to strengthening churches and making disciples.

As of July 1, 2024, Maaga was appointed as DS of the Central Valley District of the California-Nevada Conference overseeing 62 churches, spanning from Galt in the north to Tehachapi Valley in the south, and from Yosemite's gateway to the region between Highway 99 and Interstate 5.

We are honored to have our DS, Rev. Dr. Mary Maaga, as our guest speaker Sunday Feb 2nd. Please join us to hear her message.

Tracy Tennies

Guest Speaker Feb. 16th

Tracy Tennies was born in Oakland, California, and is one of seven siblings, being the middle child in a large family.

Raised in the United Methodist tradition, she was deeply influenced by her grandfather, a United Methodist pastor in the Western Pennsylvania and New York Conferences.

As a teenager, Tracy was highly active in the church. Although her focus shifted to her professional life for a time, she reconnected with the church in 2003 and has been actively involved ever since.

She has served in various roles and has been the Lay Leader of Holy Cross UMC in Stockton since 2018. Tracy currently serves the California-Nevada Conference as the Interim Certified Lay Minister (CLM) Coordinator.

Please join in welcoming Tracy Tennies as our guest speaker!

Meeting at Church.....

Join Carol Earl for an afternoon of ART here in her ART Room.



Art with CAROL

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Tuesday Afternoon
1:30 - 3:30pm

\$15 EACH SESSION

MORE INFO:
(209) 380-6288

CAROL'S ART CLASSROOM
IS LOCATED AT:
COMMUNITY METHODIST CHURCH
1480 POPLAR STREET
OAKDALE, CA 95361



Can you believe Lent starts next month! It's not too early to note that Ash Wednesday is just around the corner on March 5th. The first Sunday of Lent is March 9th. As many of you know, these directly precede Palm Sunday on April 13, Maundy Thursday on April 17, Good Friday on April 18, and Easter Sunday on April 20th. Please join us at the Escalon Church to gather and meet the members of this church for the Maundy Thursday to be held late afternoon/early evening at Escalon UMC. Exact time is to be determined.



Easter

April 20th