HOPE, JOY AND LOVE RISING Cast~A~Net First United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande MARCH 2025

THE JOURNEY TO EASTER BEGINS

Time marches on. Can you believe it's the third month of the year already? What a year it's proving to be! Transitions aren't easy for any of us. My heart goes out to the entire congregation as we walk through important staff changes together.

We've celebrated 10 wonderful years shared with Frances Robertson, our church secretary, and wished her well with a great celebration on January 12, 2025. Then again, we gathered to say goodbye to Julia Burns as "staff" on February 23, 2025 as she stepped down from 18 blessed years as our Chancel Choir Director and Music Director. We pray for each of them and we greet them in a new way.

Frances who is a member of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, will not forget us, nor we her. She has already popped in to visit a couple times and we are grateful and always happy to see her. So, look for her. I'm sure she'll visit us.

Julia will be among us in the near future. With a little hiatus and time away to take a deep breath, regroup, and hopefully restore, she will be present among us as the faithful church member and friend she has always been before taking

on so many important tasks as a member of our staff.

We are grateful for their time among us and appreciate all they have contributed to life, health and "fun" of the church. These are spirit-led women with sensitivities, compassion, kindness and skill sets that have blessed us along the way.

As we enter the season of LENT, let's not be dismal and sad but glad. We will celebrate the love of God in Jesus and follow his journey to the cross in a hope-filled and positive way. The sermon series is titled A SEASON OF "YESES". We say YES to Jesus, YES to the cross and because of the power to love he gives us by the Spirit, we say YES to life!

These titles I had hoped to preach in March of 2020 when COVID turned our lives upside down. I had worked ahead on a trajectory that year that I didn't get a chance to preach. I offer this series to you for 2025. Though the world around us is topsy-turvy we who are anchored in the love of God in Christ are right on course and on THE WAY. What a joy it will be to share another Easter together.

Love to All,

Rev. Mary Birgelautis

A Season of "YESES!"

Ash Wednesday
March 25, 2025 6:00 PM
"YES TO THE JOURNEY"
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
(Be reconciled to God)

First Sunday in Lent
March 9, 2025
"YES TO STILLNESS"
Luke 4:1-13
(Jesus prays in the wilderness)

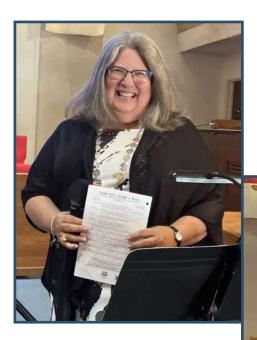
Second Sunday in Lent
March 16, 2025
"YES TO HEALING"
Luke 13:31-35
(Jesus heals in spite of consequences)

Third Sunday in Lent March 23, 2025 "YES TO GROWTH & CHANGE" Luke 13:1-9 (Jesus teaches – The Fig Tree) Fourth Sunday in Lent
March 30, 2025
"YES TO SINNERS"
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32
(Jesus preaches with a parable, - The Prodigal Son)

Fifth Sunday in Lent
April 6, 2025
"YES TO SACRIFICE"
John 12:1-8
(Jesus receives a costly anointing)

PALM/PASSION SUNDAY
April 13, 2025
POWERFULLY LONELY, YET NEVER ALONE
Luke 19:28-40

EASTER SUNDAY April 20, 2025 AND GOD SAID "YES" Luke 24:1-12



Celebrating
Julia Burns'
18 Years
Of
Music Ministry

Gracing FUMCAG with her gifts of Directing, Leadership, Love, Laughter and her beautiful voice!

May the new adventures begin for you and Lee, and we will see you soon?



CONSIDER OUR FUTURE

The purpose of Legacy Giving is to provide future resources for our church. When human beings with finite lifetimes are transformed by the power of Christ, our horizons become larger than this life. Our compassion extends not only around the globe as we serve those in need, but to our children and children who will come after us. We want to give in ways that ensure that a loving congregation will be here for them.

Without legacy givers of the past the First United Methodist Church of Arroyo would likely not be here today.

Legacy giving paid for the debt on the original church building in the 19th century. Legacy giving helped the church survive the Great Depression. Legacy giving allowed our existing Sunday School buildings and Sanctuary to be built. Legacy giving has paid for needed repairs and upgrades to our campus. More recently, if it were not for Endowment funds our church would have had great difficulties in surviving the period between 2011 and 2015 when we faced a decline in income.

Everyone has different values, so there are a wide variety of giving options.

Some prefer to give a lump sum that can be used for whatever needs arise or may be directed to a very particular need in the church. That was the case with the Trustees Portion of the Don McGuire Fund. That has now been fully utilized for various improvement projects and major repairs that benefited the church.

Others prefer to establish an endowment that throws off a stream of funds far into the future that can be used as needs arise in the future. Endowments can be either unrestricted or restricted. Unrestricted endowments include the Paul Smith Fund and the Ballaugh Fund, whereby the income and appreciation maybe used for the needs of the church that are approved by our Endowment Board. These funds have been critical to the life of our church. Without the unrestricted endowments we would not have been able to establish and sustain our Children's Center or pay for many of the major repairs and maintenance needed to keep our facilities in top condition.

Restricted Endowment Funds can be used for purposes established by the donor, such as Missions or Education. Our Restricted Endowment funds include the Sanborn Fund, the Don McGuire Mission Fund and the Wizemen Fund. These funds provide most of the financial resources for our Mission team. Without these endowment funds we would not have been able to continue our support of the People's Kitchen, our Covenant Missionaries, the 5 Cities Homeless Coalition, the Five Cities Christian Women Food Pantry and others. The Everett Lee Taylor Endowment Fund provides scholarships to our young members.

There are multiple ways to establish your own legacy, including outright gifts, Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD) from an IRA, Charitable Gift Annuities, Charitable Trusts, Donor Advised Funds and Estate gifts. Please consider what our church means to you and what you can do to sustain it for future generations.

Gifts can include appreciated stock, real estate or cash.

You are invited to learn more about giving options in a presentation by Rev. John Woodall of the California Pacific United Methodist Foundation on Sunday, March 16 at 4PM in Criswell Hall.

Please consider what our church means to you and what you can do to sustain it for future generations.

WORSHIP LITURGISTS



MARCH 2

8:30 a.m.----Joe Brown 10:30 a.m.----Debora Bradley

MARCH 9

8:30 a.m.— Sharon Roemer 10:30 a.m.— Priscilla Alquist

MARCH 16

8:30 a.m.----- Mary Throndson 10:30 a.m.----- Barbara Reineke

MARCH 23

8:30 a.m.----Susan Throndson 10:30 a.m.----Nancy St. Laurent

March 30

8:30 a.m. — David Beard 10:30 a.m. --- Carolyn Anderson

~ submitted by Carolyn Anderson

FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY

On Saturday, March 15, 1 pm a tour of the Morro Bay Natural History Museum will educate us. Then we will take a walk through the Bay State Park. It's a .7 of a mile, accessible loop. The Museum is child friendly. \$3 per adult and free under 17. We will leave the church parking lot at 12:15 or meet at museum at 1pm.

Friday, March 28 a tour of the Mighty
Cap Mushroom Farm in Paso Robles is
scheduled. A 45-minute guided tour is
set for 11 am. You will see how
mushrooms are grown in Paso Robles.
There is a \$20 fee per adult and \$10 for
each child 13 and under. Sign up soon,
as there is a limit of 15 people on tour.
Meet at church at 10am or meet at farm
at 11am. Must register by March 23 as
there is a limit of 15 people.

Sunday, March 30, Movie- Academy
Award nominated, "Conclave". The
movie "Conclave" features Ralph
Fiennes, Stanley Tucci, and John Lithgow.
Fiennes, as Cardinal Lawrence, finds
himself at the center of a conspiracy
while overseeing one of the Worlds'
most secretive events- selecting a new

Pope. 4pm. Criswell Hall. *Free, including* popcorn and other refreshments.

<u>Cabrillo High School Aquarium Tour in</u>
<u>Lompoc</u> is scheduled for **Thursday, April 3**. Admission is a free-will donation. To carpool meet at church at 12:55, or meet at Aquarium at 1:45pm. Aquarium is located at 4350 Constellation Road, Lompoc.

PCPA, Marian Theatre, Santa Maria is performing the Play, "Something Rotten". Plans are to go Sunday, July 20th. *If you are interested please let us know by June 15th*.

Saturday, June 21st will be a possible date for a return visit to the beautiful Gardens of Scott and Bob. If you missed it last year, put it on your calendar now, you won't regret it.

---submitted by Gerry McGuire, Fellowship chair



United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith seeks to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so that they can inspire, influence and impact local and global communities.

Tuesday, February 18, we had a memorial service to honor and remember one of our devoted members, Betty Stephens. Thank you to all those that helped with the food and preparations. And prayers and sympathy to her beautiful family.

A new circle, is forming especially for working women and those looking for an early evening circle. If you are interested, contact Susan Throndson or leave your name with Gerry McGuire or Mary Hawkins. Be one of the founding members.

On Superbowl Chili Sunday February 9, we cleared \$323, after our expenses, for our charities.

Coming up in March we will celebrate UWF Sunday. Stay tuned for more information.

Looking ahead to May 10, the annual tea will be held. A fashion show is in the planning. This is one of our most well attended events, mark your calendar now.

<u>Circles and groups: All women are invited to attend.</u>

Mary, Martha Esther Circle meets on the last Wednesday of the month. We are studying a book on Mosses.

Joy Circle meets the third Tuesday of the month, 3-5 pm in members' homes. Check with Kerren Brown for more information.

Sew And Sews meet every Tuesday in the McMillen Room at 10 until 1, bring a sandwich if you want to stay for lunch. We encourage those interested in quilting, crocheting, knitting and just plain visiting and sharing.

Book Club will meet 3rd Friday, in the library, at 10:30. Contact Judy Leonard for a book if interested

-submitted by Gerry McGuire, UWF President

Do you have neat handwriting?

Finance team needs someone with good penmanship to write notes to donors to thank and acknowledge special gifts to our church. Work can be done entirely at home and does not require attendance at any meetings. The church has note cards. If you are interested, please contact Joel Anderson or Rev. Mary.



March 2025 UWF BOOK CLUB SELECTION: <u>The First Ladies</u> by Marie Benedict

On March 21, 2025 the UMW Book Club will meet at 10:30 A.M. in the church library to discuss The First Ladies by Marie Benedict. This intriguing story follows the unlikely friendship of two strong leaders in the civil rights movement—First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and black activist, Mary McLeod Bethune.

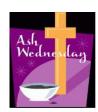
Although they came from different social backgrounds, they shared a passion for fighting for justice and equity. Their strong friendship enabled

them to endure special challenges in their personal lives as well.

This month, readers will need to check out a library book or purchase a new or used copy of the book. If you are interested in joining the group, we encourage you to do so.

--- submitted by Judy Leonard

ASH WEDNESDAY The Beginning of Lent Wednesday, March 5th 6:00 PM SANCTUARY



A brief worship opportunity begins the season of Lent on Ash Wednesday, March 5th in the sanctuary. We will sing some songs, listen to the words of the "Invitation to a Holy Lent", and receive the symbol of ashes either on the forehead or hand as a reminder of the commitment we make to observe this season. We continue the Christian disciplines we practice all year long---prayer, reading scripture, study, attendance in worship, serving those in need and living out love with friends, family and everyone we meet. In so doing, we honor Jesus who in his own life did all these things to the glory of God to the very end.

It's Time to Apply for the 2025 ELT Scholarship

It's that time of the year when college-bound students apply for scholarships. Our church is fortunate to be able to award Everett Lee Taylor Scholarships again this year. Everett Lee Taylor Scholarship applications will be available on-line (www.worshipweekly.com) and in the church office beginning in March. The purpose of this scholarship is to help support deserving United Methodist students who will be enrolled in accredited universities, colleges, or technical schools during the 2025-2026 school year.

Only students who are or have been active participants in the Arroyo Grande First United Methodist Church may apply. Graduating high school seniors must include letters of recommendation as well as a high school transcript with their completed applications.

Returning college students will need to provide a college transcript but are not required to submit letters of recommendation. Students may apply for this scholarship more than once as long as they have maintained a minimum 2.5 GPA in their college work.

The completed application with required attachments must be turned in to the church office by May 15th. Everett Lee Taylor Scholarship recipients will be announced in early June. Recipients will be recognized in June (date to be announced) at both church services. Scholarship checks will be given to recipients upon proof of registration in Fall, 2025 college classes.

So, if you would like to be considered for an ELT Scholarship, please submit a completed application by May 15th. *Contact Judy Leonard with any scholarship questions*.

Report from the Trustees

At the February meeting, Trustees elected a new President, Dave Anderson! Dick Melsheimer served as President for several years and was ready to step aside for a new person to take charge! In addition, Jack Cuddy was elected Vice President. Please share any concerns regarding the church with Dave or Jack.

The Trustees are still pursuing solutions to our very old heating system! They are getting bids for several different config-

urations of heating systems. The landscaping of the front entrances has been finished. And Dave Bolterman completed the cover for the parking lot sump drain. They are now working on refinishing the benches for the Children's Center.

If you have keys to any part of the church and no longer have a need for them, please turn them into the church office or to Dave. We don't want to order more keys unless we have to!



Dearest Church Family,

I don't know how to thank you for allowing me the privilege to be your music/choir director for the past 18 years. It really has not felt like work....at least most of the time.

There are so many people to thank, and I plan to send you each an individual note, but for now, collectively, I just want to thank all of the choir, Dennis, Brad, and Kerren our Librarian who takes such care with the music; SPRC and our new Lay Leader Carolyn for throwing this shindig together so quickly. And of course, our beloved Rev. Mary B. who has been such a gem in working beside these past 10 years. And to Bob Underwood who took a chance on me as director 18 years ago.

Wow! What a sendoff you threw me. There were so many special moments. My favorite was the amazing song you all performed so well for me. And Mary Whitson, you may have found your 3rd career in song rewriting. The food and cakes were amazing and such wonderful memories with the decorations. Thanks for finding those, Mary Hawkins.

I won't be away long from the church. We will see what God has planned for me next. Remember that God will always make a way, and it truly is a Wonderful World. I'm grateful for each and every one of you parishioners. Keep singing and making a beautiful song for the Lord.

Very Humbly yours,

Julia Burns Fonseca







HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

Church Council voted to acquire a new, modern hearing assistance system. The system cost is \$2,221.07. Though this is a major need, we do not have funds budgeted, so are asking members to contribute towards the system.

Many of our members suffer from partial hearing loss. As our congregation ages, probably more will. Some use hearing aids. Many do not, but have trouble hearing parts of the sermon, readings and announcements. We need a new hearing assistance system to support the worship experience of our members and guests.

Our existing hearing assistance system is antiquated. It works by broadcasting a low power FM radio signal to modified transistor radios. This system allows for FM, Wi-Fi and Blue Tooth connections to hearing devices. It is popular with many churches and is being successfully used at The Harvest Church in Arroyo Grande. Kent and others tested it there and said it had excellent sound quality. Multiple types of hearing devices may be used with the system including ear buds, or a Neckloop with a plug. The new system will vastly improve our worship services for those that need it.

Please give generously to this important project. Mark your check or offering "Hearing".

WEBSITE UPDATES

Please check out the latest updates to our church website: worshipweekly.com

Our webmaster Jamie Foster has added pages featuring pictures of our recent fun events including the Christmas Extravaganza, Christmas Crafts Fair, Christmas Eve Service UWF Boutique and the 140th Anniversary Celebration. Check out the **Recent Fun Events** link on the home page.

There is a link to the excellent video by Susan Throndson that was presented at our recent Charge Conference. The video reviews our new Mission Statement in conjunction with the many activities that take place in our congregation.

The home page lists upcoming church events. Please let Joel Anderson know if you would like an event or activity listed.

There are also links to our worship service videos, Cast-A-Net, weekly bulletins, our church's history, the Children's Center, on-line giving and much more. The "Find" tab brings up a powerful search engine. The search engine can be used to research past events, or people



Part-time Church Secretary 25 Hours Per Week

Qualifications include: Experience working with Microsoft Word and Publisher. Contact the Church office or Mary Hawkins.

Experience Required: A minimum of five years of increasingly responsible secretarial experience.

The detailed job description and application are also available at: SLOJOBS.COM



The Mission Team had guest speakers Janna Nicholes and Stephanie LeBlanc from 5 Cities Homeless Coalition. They informed us that they now have a warming center at 1023 East Grand Ave. in Arroyo Grande. This fully staffed facility will provide unhoused neighbors refuge from the elements during inclement weather. The center opens when the weather forecast is 38 degrees or colder, or there is a 50% or greater chance of rain overnight. We will post additional information on our Mission bulletin board in Criswell Hall. Information for all of the services provided will be posted along with ways you can contribute.

On January 7, strong Santa Ana winds in Los Angeles County caused wildfires to spread rapidly in multiple communities. Thousands of homes and businesses were destroyed, as well as multiple local United Methodist Churches. Preliminary assessments of the damage is underway. UMCOR has awarded two solidarity grants to the California-Pacific Annual Conference to undergird their immediate relief efforts. This includes evacuee support like

food and essential supplies as well as support for volunteer efforts and other relief activities. The Mission Team contributed \$2,000 to the Cal-Pac UMC North district for the LA fire victims. Our congregation has contributed almost \$10,000 for the relief.

UMCOR Sunday will be celebrated on March 30th this year. UMCOR was established by our church in 1940 and stands for the United Methodist Committee on Relief. This offering for UMCOR Sunday underwrites UMCOR's administrative costs. This allows UMCOR to use 100% of all of the funds to be given for further humanitarian responses and recovery efforts directly to communities in need.



Submitted by: Frank and Patty Williams,

Mission Team Co-Chairs



COMMUNICATIONS TEAM WANTS YOUR PICTURES

The Communications team is creating an on-line photo library of the many activities that take place at our church. Photos are used on our website, in the Cast-A-Net, for publicity for upcoming events and will help document our activities for future generations. Please send pictures of both past and future church activities to Joel Anderson by e-mail or text or e-mail them to the Communications Team at FUMCAGcommunications@gmail.com.

		M	ARC ₁	4		
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday 1
		4	_		-	
2 8:30 AM Contemporary Worship Service 10:30 AM Traditional Worship Service	3 6 PM Gerry's Quilt Class-CH	9 AM Senior Exercise-CH 10 AM Sew & Sews- MMR 11 AM Chair Yoga- CH 1 PM Bible Study-CH 5 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal-HR	9 AM Church Work Morning -CH 6:00 PM Ash Wednesday Service-S	6 9 AM Senior Exercise-CH 11 AM Chair Yoga-CH 5 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal-HR 6:30PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal-S	7	8
9 8:30 AM Contemporary Worship Service 10:30 AM Traditional Worship Service	10 6 PM Gerry's Quilt Class-CH	9 AM Senior Exercise-CH 10 AM Sew & Sews- MMR 11 AM Chair Yoga-CH 1 PM Bible Study-CH 7:00 PM Board of Trustees-MMR	9 AM Church Work Morning-CH 10 AM UWF Steering-L 1:30 PM Mission Team-MMR	9 AM Senior Exercise-CH 11 AM Chair Yoga-CH 4 PM Children's Center Board-MMR 5 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal-HR 6:30 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal-S	14	15 Morro Bay Leave church parking lot at 12:15
16 8:30 AM Contemporary Worship Service 10:30 AM Traditional Worship Service St. Patrick's Day Celebration	17 6 PM Gerry's Quilt Class-CH	18 9 AM Senior Exercise-CH 10 AM Sew & Sews- MMR 11:00 AM Chair Yoga- CH 1 PM Bible Study-CH 1:30 PM Finance-L 3:30PM JOY Circle 5 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal-HR	19 9 AM Church Work Morning-CH 2:00 PM Church Council-MMR	20 9 AM Senior Exercise-CH 10:30 AM Staff ParishPS 11 AM Chair Yoga-CH 5 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal-HR 6:30 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal-S	21 10:30 AM UWF Book Club-L	22
23 8:30 AM Contemporary Worship Service 10:30 AM Traditional Worship Service 30 - Movie: Conclave	24 4:30 PM- Communications- 6 PM Gerry's Quilt Class-CH	25 9 AM Senior Exercise-CH 10 AM Sew & Sews- MMR 11 AM Chair Yoga-CH 1 PM Bible Study-CH 5 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal-HR	26 9 AM Church Work Morning-CH 10 AM Mary- Martha-Esther- MMR	9 AM Senior Exercise-CH 11 AM Chair Yoga-CH 5 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal-HR 6:30 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal-	28 11:00 AM Nominations-PS Mushroom Farm Tour Leave church parking lot At 10 am	29



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Find us on Facebook at: United
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TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY



Facilitated by Nancy St. Laurent

Meets on
Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. In Criswell Hall

Books are ordered and will be available soon from Nancy. All are welcome to join us!



WOULD YOU LIKE TO HONOR A LOVED ONE WITH FLOWERS?

Do you enjoy the beautiful flower arrangements placed on the altar on Sundays? Dates are available for Sunday morning flower dedications in upcoming months. Your floral tributes are welcomed and will be placed on the altar for both services on Sunday. You can pick up your arrangement after the second service.

Contact the Church Office to sign up.

The cost for altar flowers is \$30.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

3/2 Carina Avila
3/7 Lucy Jacob
3/7 Julie Wise
3/11 Carolyn
Anderson
3/12 Marilyn Balster
3/13 Pat Wiemers
3/15 Art Gary
3/20 Toni Harvey
3/25 Pam Garza
3/25 Arletta
Truesdale
3/29 Ann Wilson



Have we missed **your**birthday? If so, it is not listed in
our data base. Please contact the
church office and we will be glad
to add your birthday to our
monthly birthday list!



First United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande

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STAMP

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Find us on Facebook at United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande www.facebook.com/fumcag

MARCH 2025

SUNDAY HOSPITALITY SNACK HOSTS

MAR 2 TRUSTEES

MAR 9 MEMBERSHIP CARE

MAR 16 FINANCE

MAR 23 NOMINATING COMM

MAR 30 WORSHIP TEAM



COVER STORY

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Children's Center Chronicle

Mission Statement of the First United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande

The First United Methodist Church of Arroyo Grande is a joyful, active and fun-loving faith community. We worship on Sunday mornings and offer opportunities for Christian growth, fellowship, health and increased well-being all week long. Members represent a wide range of theological and political views and commit to treating each other with love and respect in the midst of differences. We nurture spiritual growth and a deeper understanding of God's love in Christ as we work together to spread the love of God in our community and in the world.