



# Messenger Newsletter

*First and Grand Ave  
United Methodist Churches  
Porterville, CA*

## The Power of Community

*by Pastor Tom Buratovich*

*June 2022*

Watching a person walk a tightrope is thrilling and tense. We witness a feat of balance, concentration, and precision that few can master. In the church we do something similar. We attempt to accomplish a feat of balance between cultural assumptions of our day, the word of God, and the witness of the church.

This is difficult. It requires us to be humble, open, yet committed completely to Jesus.

I had the privilege to gather with Grand Ave to help gain clarity and discern the issues at hand. I love gathering with such beautiful people in both churches and yet these discussions are bound to feel awkward with emotional moments.

Many wonder about the future of both churches. The answer depends on the desires of the majority. I believe our futures include working together in some form. People either love this idea, are neutral, or may be less than thrilled.

In the spirit of full disclosure, I would like to tell you my thinking. You may agree or disagree, but we should hear each other.

Both Methodist churches are a testimony to the sacrificial giving that models the beautiful love of Christ. There are stories of people donating a year's salary, sold stocks, and other valuables to make church buildings and grounds a reality. They are beautiful stories that make up our heritage. These stories testify to the wonderful work when God touches a human heart when there is an

inspiration to accomplish a vision of changed hearts.

We have built our buildings. We have maintained them. We fix them when they break. We feel a strange connection to them because of this interaction - and yet, we do not own them.

### **The Trust Clause**

While it may seem odd that we built, paid for, maintain, fix, and occupy our buildings, the reality is we do not own them. United Methodism began in England among the poor where the pooling of resources among several groups allowed them to buy a building so that groups could plan strategically as their numbers grew. The Trust Clause protected the continued use of buildings to spread the gospel. It also relieved the poor from assuming an unsustainable financial burden.

That concept was beautiful. It empowered local groups to come together and have a central gathering location. The Trust Clause in the UMC today is an institutional tool of survival.

If Porterville Churches decide to join the Global Methodist Church, this part of the Methodist family does not have a Trust Clause. Churches will own their buildings.

### **Bishops**

In our present system, bishops are appointed for life and rule with absolute power and are accountable only to other bishops. Unfortunately, this is too much influence and not enough accountability for any

human institution let alone the Church of Jesus Christ. Christians are called to live in accountable communities - accountable to God and to one another.

The Global Methodist Church does have bishops, but they are termed. They are not appointed for life and upon completion of their term, they return to service in the local church.

### **The Institution**

Our world is changing so fast, and the need to adapt has become a crucial skill. Pivoting and changing your strategy used to be a leap year event. Today, the system of the UMC is so big, so layered, so departmentalized, it can not respond quickly and staggers under enormous financial overhead. This burden is taken on by fewer churches giving less dollars. The present system is unsustainable. However, changing the system to become flatter, lighter, and nimbler requires department heads and bishops to give share power. This is possible, but not likely.

The Global Methodist Church will be much more streamlined. It is flatter, decentralized, and it allows local churches to make decisions to carry out their mission. There will be no commissions, extra agencies, and layered conference departments. The conference will exist to equip the local church and nothing more.

In an organization that empowers people, structures are

*Continued on Page 2*

# Youth Ministry

*"being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."* Philippians 1:6

Dear Graduates,

When you read this, many of you would have already put on your cap and gown, gathered with your classmates with deep excitement about what is to come next, and proudly walked across the stage as you receive your hard-earned diploma. You are most likely filled with mixed emotions. On the one hand you are joyful that this part of your journey in education has concluded. You had some fun and challenging experiences throughout grade school, played sports or participated in band, and made friends who you pray will be by your side for the rest of your lives. On the other hand, you may be worried about that gnawing inside of you that is always reminding you that this is not the end, but instead is the beginning of your next chapter in life.

Some of you will be going into high school next school year. This is a fun and challenging step in your education process. I encourage each of you to allow yourselves to be open to the new adventures that await you. You may want to try a new sport, join the band, start a club or become a member of an existing one. Whatever it is that you choose, remember that we are told in God's Word that, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." This verse in Philippians tells us that our strength to accomplish goals that line up with God's will for our lives comes from Christ. The same Jesus that fed the hungry, healed the sick, and died on a cross and rose from the grave, blesses each and every believer with the strength we need to get the job done. Isn't that amazing? So, get out there, be confident in the Lord, trusting in Him to be all you need to

be to reach your full potential.

For those of you who have graduated high school and are venturing into your college career or joining the work force or military, many options await you. At this age, a majority of your decisions about school and work are not permanent and you may change course many times over until you find the special place where you are confident the Lord has desired you to be. What I say to you is this, enjoy the journey, learn from your mistakes, and never allow yourself to settle for less than God has planned for you. Each of you were created by God on purpose and for a purpose. In Proverbs we read a valuable verse that I want you to remember on your journey, Proverbs 16:3 instructs us to, "*Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.*" If your life and decisions you make in your future are focused on Jesus and His work in your life, you are set up for success in a way that is beyond financial and worldly, you are on a Heavenly mission that can impact everyone on your path. Memorize this verse and repeat it to yourselves often, it's truth will

bless you. I am excited for your future.

We all here at Grand Avenue UMC want to share with each graduate how proud we are of your accomplishments. Many of us have been praying for you for many years and will continue to do so. Remember, no matter where you go or where you lay your head, you will always have a home at Grand Avenue. Blessings.

God is Love,  
*Ryan Ridenour*



## ***Congratulations Graduates***

### **High School**

Shirley Gutierrez  
Phoebe Mora  
Alejandro Martinez

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Promotion**

Sam Ruiz

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Promotion**

Carly Ruiz  
MaKenna Garcia

## **The Power of Community continued from page 1 by Pastor Tom Buratovich**

flatter. People feel their contribution is felt, needed, and appreciated.

I do not want to portray our choice as a silver bullet. It will still be our task to reach a community that we have struggled to meet effectively. We have a choice and we should honor whatever choice we make. The UMC has had moments where part of it has split off, and it led many times to a correction. Even if we had to leave our building and meet in park, I would hope that we would have the same sense that God is with us. We are the church not because of the building but by the presence of God's Spirit and that Spirit swelling in power when we gather. We will continue to walk the tightrope of faith, obedience, and peace as God mends the very fabric of our souls and our hearts together.

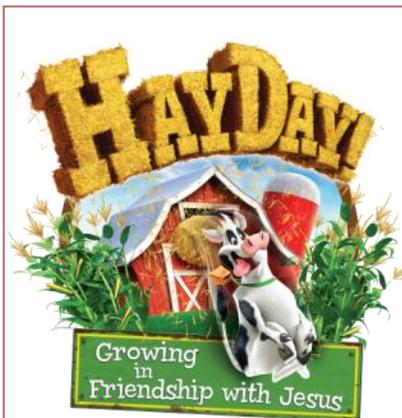
# HayDay VBS

Yay! June is here. “Yay” rhymes with “hay” and what does that mean? It means that it is VBS time. Yay! VBS is this month!!! June 16 and 17, Thursday and Friday, VBS will be held at Grand Ave Church from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.. There will be a VBS Sunday Celebration on Sunday June 19, at Grand Ave at 10:00 a.m.. At the same time, we will also have a Father’s Day Celebration.

HayDay VBS is a farm themed VBS. We are going to have a lot of fun down on the farm learning about how Jesus will always love us. We will look at two stories from the Bible about some men that made some mistakes, but even though they did, Jesus never stopped loving them. These stories show us that even if we make mistakes, Jesus is not going to stop loving us either.

The story of Zacchaeus is the first day. Zacchaeus was a tax collector. He did not always do the right thing. His tax collecting was always more profitable for himself. When he decided to change his life, Jesus was right there for him. Jesus helped him and forgave him for his wrong doings. Most of all, Jesus showed Zacchaeus that He loved him. That means that He loves us too, when we do wrong. Yay! Jesus will always love us!

On the second day, we will learn about Peter. We will follow him through the last days of Jesus’s life. Christ knew, and told Peter that he would deny Jesus three times before the rooster crowed, and he did. Peter was filled with guilt, but Jesus forgave him before Peter even denied him. Jesus showed Peter how much He loved him and that no matter what, Jesus would always love him. Yay! Jesus will always love us!



**VBS • June 16 and 17  
at Grand Ave**

**Sunday Celebration**  
June 19 • 10:00 a.m.  
*Combined Service  
at Grand Ave*

Along with these wonderful Bible stories, there will be beautiful praise music. We will have so much fun singing and dancing, while praising God. This is always a great time to get our wiggles out, so we can prepare for the Bible Stories each day.

We will also have a heap of fun at Hog Wild Games and at Farm Fun Crafts. These two activities are always so much fun. After these are over, we will go to Friendship Finale to sum up the days events. On our way home, we will pick up a lunch to go. Yay!

If you would like to be a part of this event, volunteers are always

needed. Please contact me We always need help decorating before the event, help with the event, and help cleaning up afterwards. If you have never attended a VBS, I would encourage you to come out and enjoy this event with us. I think that you will be so glad that you did. It is such an exciting time to be with the children. To see their faces light up with excitement while learning about Jesus and to hear them say how they know that,

“Jesus will always love us.” Yay!

Blessings,  
*Melody Burkhart*  
Children’s Sunday School

## ***Grand Ave UMC Trustee Happenings***

The Trustees are still looking for a church member to fill a vacant position on the Board of Trustees. If you are someone who would like to serve your congregation while helping to maintain our campus we would love to have you join us. We currently meet once a month on the third Monday via zoom at 10:00 a.m. Please contact Ryan or Ray H for details.

Beginning June 5, the Trustees will be looking for help relocating furniture and John White’s belongings from three classrooms and one office in preparation for Sequoia Christian Academy to redecorate and prepare those rooms for their upcoming school year. They are planning to paint, put up new blinds, new white boards, and possibly new flooring. They will begin setting up their classrooms on July 15 with school starting August 4. I will be unavailable until July 9 so please contact Ryan if you can help. Thank you, *Ray Holdsworth*

# Patience in Waiting

By Judy Lowery

“...And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father...” In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Colossians 1:10-12a NIV

When someone mentions not feeling well, having a pain in the right side, what immediately comes to mind? Appendicitis attack?

Our grandson Nate told Al that his legs felt wobbly and that his side hurt one Friday morning when Al showed up to take Nate and his brother Elliot to school. Before leaving, Al suggested that he text or call his mom, which he did. She gave him permission to stay home that day.

Later that afternoon, his dad took him to the pediatrician and then to emergency. Well, it *was* his appendix. Nate was scheduled for surgery; however, it kept getting delayed. He finally had a laparoscopic appendectomy on Saturday morning, with three small incisions in his abdomen.

Nate’s parents, Chris and Shanda, were relieved when he was finally discharged Sunday afternoon. They were scheduled to fly to New York city Monday morning, something that had been planned for weeks ahead of time. Needless to say, the emergency appendectomy was a big surprise!

Shanda was beginning a clinical trial at the Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and would be staying in New York City for five weeks. Chris had planned on spending that first week with her. They had arranged for different families to host both boys while they were gone—friends with school-aged children who would be able to take Nate and Elliot to school, sports and other activities.

Plans changed though with Nate’s surgery. The doctor’s orders were for him to get plenty of rest and not have any strenuous activity for two weeks. This meant no tennis team or matches among other things. It was very disappointing for him.

Instead of spending the first couple of nights with his friend Ben, he came to our house on Monday morning. Nate hoped to go back to school on Wednesday. However, we did not feel that he was strong enough to return to a full day at school and after checking with his parents, decided to have him stay home one more day. More disappointment!

Al and I explained that we only wanted the best for him. But it was hard, especially when he started feeling better. So, we thought Wednesday should be a trial day, getting up early and getting ready just like he would on a normal day—except we changed the time from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. Too early for grandparents.

Would he be able to stay up the whole day, with no lying down on the sofa?

By the evening, he was still feeling good and seemed to have more energy than previously. Nate was happy to hear that he could return to school on Thursday morning. Afterwards he’d be able to go home with a friend for two nights, until his dad picked him up on Saturday morning.

One little crinkle was that he wasn’t supposed to lift anything



heavy. Now what to do about Nate’s backpack that was filled with books, a laptop computer, gym clothes, and various other items? The idea of having a rolling backpack didn’t go over very well.

With a look of resignation on his face, he and I sat down together at the computer at the beginning of the week and found a black one that was acceptable. At least I thought it would work just fine. The backpack was to be delivered on Wednesday afternoon. Perfect!

When it arrived, he emptied out his regular backpack and decided what to take in the rolling one, which was a bit smaller. Al and I wondered if he would use it at all, not wanting to look different from the other kids. We encouraged him to follow the doctor’s orders.

There are a number of situations in life when we have to wait patiently for something, whether it’s recuperating from surgery, waiting for someone to call, a job to open up, a baby to be born, a prayer to be answered... Waiting is difficult!

Dear Lord, give us the wisdom to know your will and the patience to wait for your perfect timing.

# June 2022 Prayer Calendar

**Wednesday, June 1** - Pray for the Bible Study via Zoom from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. **If you would like to join, please email Pastor Tom at [tburatovich@gmail.com](mailto:tburatovich@gmail.com).**

**Thursday, June 2** - Pray for the teachers and students as they enter Summer Break. Pray for all of the graduates who will enter a new chapter in their lives.

**Friday, June 3** - Pray that we can reflect on the Bible verse: Proverbs 11:25 - *A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.*

**Saturday, June 4** - Pray for the Clothing Closet workers and attenders as they seek to give witness to the Gospel by providing clothes and hopes to those in need.

**Sunday, June 5** - Pray for Sunday Worship Services.

9:30 a.m. at GAUMC

11:00 a.m. at FUMC

**Monday, June 6** - Pray that God will help us this week as we maneuver through different situations.

**Tuesday, June 7** - Pray for all of the church committees who will meet this month.

**Wednesday, June 8** - Pray for the Bible Study via Zoom from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

**Thursday, June 9** - Pray for our church families today.

**Friday, June 10** - Pray for Our Conference as Annual Conference begins.

**Saturday, June 11** - Pray for the Greeters who will welcome all through the church doors.

**Sunday, June 12** - Pray for Sunday Worship Services.

9:30 a.m. at GAUMC

11:00 a.m. at FUMC

**Monday, June 13** - Pray for the ones from our churches who are ill and rehabilitating. Pray for strength and healing.

**Tuesday, June 14** - Pray and reflect on John 8:12 *“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world, Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

**Wednesday, June 15** - Pray for the Bible Study via Zoom from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

**Thursday, June 16** - Pray VBS and those who attend. May they see Jesus in our church.

**Friday, June 17** - Pray VBS and those who attend.

**Saturday, June 18** - Pray for the Praise Team as they prepare for Sunday Worship Services.

**Sunday, June 19** - Pray for our **combined VBS Celebration Service at 10:00 a.m.** at Grand Ave. Thank God for fathers. **Happy Father’s Day!**

**Monday, June 20** - Pray that we can reflect on bible verse Matthew 7:7 *“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”*

**Tuesday, June 21** - Pray and reflect on 1 Corinthians 13:1 *“If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.”*

**Wednesday, June 22** - Pray for Melody and Ryan as they prepare activities for the children and youth of our churches.

**Thursday, June 23** - Pray for Pastor Tom as he does the Walking Devotions on Tuesdays and Thursdays that can be viewed on the website and on Facebook at Grand Avenue UMC and Porterville FUMC.

**Friday, June 24** - Pray for the ones of our churches who are travelling. Pray for safe travels.

**Saturday, June 25** - Please pray and reflect on Bible verse: *“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”* Romans 8:18

**Sunday, June 26** - Pray for Sunday Worship Services.

9:30 a.m. at GAUMC

11:00 a.m. at FUMC

**Monday, June 27** - Today, pray for all the many blessings in your life.

**Tuesday, June 28** - Take a moment and spend time in nature if possible and pray and thank God for his beautiful creation.

**Wednesday, June 29** - Pray for the Bible Study via Zoom from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

**Thursday, June 30** – Praise God for His faithfulness.



**Summer  
WORSHIP  
SCHEDULE**

***SCE Sundays  
in July and August***

**Save Church Energy!**

**In July and August First and Grand Ave and will meet together on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m.**

In July, both congregations will meet together at First UMC.

In August, both congregations will meet together at Grand Ave UMC.



**First UMC**  
Donita Roulsten • June 4  
Paulette McFarlin • June 17

**Grand Ave UMC**  
Lorraine Fleming • June 2  
Shirley Gutierrez • June 5

### **Thank you**

Thank you to Ray Rodarte, Bill Means, and Steve Bartlett for all your help with cleaning up the downed Pistachio tree limb in front of the Sanctuary. As usual you folks are awesome on such short notice. Thanks again.

*Ray Holdsworth* for the Trustees.

### **First United Methodist Church Grand Ave United Methodist Church**

[www.grandavenue.org](http://www.grandavenue.org) or  
[www.facebook.com/PortervilleFUMC](https://www.facebook.com/PortervilleFUMC) or  
[www.facebook.com/GrandAvenueUMC](https://www.facebook.com/GrandAvenueUMC)

**View Past Worship Videos on Vimeo**  
<https://vimeo.com/grandavenueporterville>

## Announcements

### **Clothing Closet at First UMC**

Clothing Closet will be open at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, June 4 and by appointment during the month. Call Ann 559-920-0977 for more information. Thanks to all who have made time to help.

### **Celebrant Singers In Porterville • July 10**

On Sunday, July 10 Celebrant Singers will join our combined 10:00 a.m. Worship Service at First UMC. Hear inspiring music and help send them off on their mission to Poland. Invite a friend!

### **Operation Christmas Child**

Dear GAUMC and FUMC family,  
National collection week for Operation Christmas Child is less than 6 months away! We were abundantly blessed with a record number of shoeboxes received last year, 1645! Due to current supply chain situations, we encourage you to plan ahead in terms of gathering items for your shoeboxes. Samaritan's Purse has delivered hundreds of the shoeboxes packed in 2021 to children in the Ukrainian refugee camps. Thank you for your support of, and participation in Operation Christmas Child!

Abundantly Blessed, *Kathy Chavez and Diana Perry*

### **Next Newsletter Deadline**

Please send information for the Messenger Newsletter to Judy at [judy.bur87@gmail.com](mailto:judy.bur87@gmail.com). The deadline for the July 2022 Messenger is **June 20**. Thank you.

#### **Grand Ave Staff**

**Senior Pastor** • *Rev. Tom Buratovich*  
**Director of Youth Ministries** • *Ryan Ridenour*  
**Children's Director** • *Melody Burkhart*  
**Worship Administrator** • *Judy Buratovich*  
**Treasurer** • *Rodel Lipumano (Position Open)*  
**Custodian** • *The Congregation*

#### **First Staff**

**Senior Pastor** • *Rev. Tom Buratovich*  
**Counseling Center Director** • *Joy Semple*  
**Administrative Assistant** • *Melissa Sutherland*  
**Music Coordinator** • *Christine Klippenstein*  
**Children/Custodian** • *Melody Burkhart*

#### **Grand Ave Office Hours:**

**Monday–Thursday**  
9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

**Phone:** 559-784-3791

**Fax:** 559-784-3798

**info@grandavenue.org**

**www.grandavenue.org**

*Grand Ave United Methodist Church  
776 W. Grand Ave.  
Porterville, CA 93257*

#### **First Methodist Office Hours:**

**Monday–Thursday**  
9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

**Phone:** 559-784-4232

**pvfumc@ocsnet.net**

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344 E. Morton Ave.  
Porterville, CA 93257*