

Messenger Newsletter

First and Grand Ave
United Methodist Churches
Porterville, CA

July 2021

Worship and Mission

by Pastor Tom Buratovich

I have spent many hours enhancing the experience of worship for God's people. I also believe in the mission of the church-to make disciples of all people from all nations that transform our immediate circles of influence and ripple outward to the world.

What I have always had a hard time discerning is the order. Do worship and mission happen together, simultaneously? Does one give way to the other? Is the order important?

After a lot of prayer and reading a very helpful book I have concluded that it is. Mission came before everything else for God. God had a mission before anything else. Think of the ignition system of your car. It provides the spark that leads to the whole engine running. The mission of God is the spark that got the system of worship running. When there was nothing and no one to worship God, God had a mission to change that.

Because God is Trinity God's mission was never an "I" but a "we" mission. Mission came from the Trinitarian family. The Trinitarian family had a mission to grow their family, a family made for worship.

God's mission was, is, and will be to make all people, things, and systems receive his glory and reflect it back like a high-quality mirror. Before anything could worship God, however, God had to create it. Stars

were created to sing together and the angels were created to shout for joy - that is in the Bible (Job 38:7). Read Psalm 148 and you discover all the things God created.

God had a mission to make worshipers before there could be worship. However, in the church today worship comes first. When this happens, we put the majority of our energy into producing good worship rather than fueling mission. We want to make worshipers to do the mission rather than making missionaries to create worshipers. I believe we have this backwards. Let us look at some examples from the Bible.

God appeared to Abraham with a promise to bless and the command to go and turned Abram's family from idol worshipers to the living-God worshipers. God appeared to Moses with the same promise and command and turned Israel's worship from the gods of Egypt to the God of their fathers. God chose David by anointing with oil and chose him as Israel's king to turn Israel for worshiping Canaanite deities to worshiping Yahweh in Jerusalem. God anointed Jesus to heal his people as a result they glorify God in amazement. God directed Jesus to die to redeem and sanctify people for his possession and praise.

"This is love: not that we love God, but that he loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." (1 John 4:10) Much of the church today acts like we do our worship part if God does his mission part. But worship does not happen because God is on a mission; worship happens because a human being obediently partners with God in his mission. The Great Commission was an invitation to Jesus' disciples to partner with God in his mission. Their response in the next verse was to worship him.

So, what exactly does this mean for our churches? What can we do to pursue a compelling mission that will break forth in worship?

First, it means the fuel of the

**Sunday
Worship Services**
Grand Ave • 9:30 a.m.
First UMC • 11:00 a.m.
Children's Sunday School
at both Services

Sunday, July 18
VBS Celebration
One Combined Service
10:00 a.m. at Grand Ave

Youth Ministry

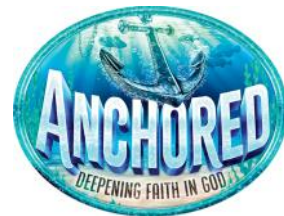
The summer months are in full swing and things are heating up. For most students, the best thing about summer is that there is no school. The downside of that situation is that some students may find that they have too much time on their hands, and they desire for something interesting and fulfilling to do. We are excited to announce some fun and exciting events coming up in the Children's Group and the Youth Group that will fill that extra time our students have and at the same time bless our students with learning about Jesus love for each of them and learn about God's Word.

On July 15, 16, and 18 the Children's Group will host a combined Vacation Bible School. This is a great opportunity for parents to bring their children to Grand Avenue for fun Biblical activities that will enrich your children with the joy of Christ. There will be music, crafts, games, and all sorts of fun to be had. There are two ways to sign your child up for Vacation Bible School. One way is to Contact our Children's Director Melody and she can make sure you get the registration forms delivered to you either by email or in person. Another option we have is the First and Grand Avenue offices where registration forms are available for pick up. Once the registration forms are filled out, simply give them to Melody or me and your child is all set for an awesome event. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the church offices.

The Youth Group is excited to announce that we will be back to meeting in-person beginning **Monday, August 2 at 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.** and will continue to meet each Monday that follows. We will gather in the Fellowship Hall at

Grand Avenue and will have evenings of fun games, fellowship, and discipleship! Our youth will have the blessings of deepening their faith through *The Bible Study* curriculum, which is a year long study of the New Testament. I am really looking forward to this opportunity for our youth to gather in-person. We are blessed to have been able to meet online during the last year, but we are ready to be together again.

For all parents who may have concerns regarding the pandemic and what steps we are doing to protect our students and parents, we are following the CDC guidelines. All vaccinated individuals are not required to wear a mask, but if wearing a mask is your preference, please feel free to do so. We are continuing to clean and disinfect



all areas where we gather, following our cleaning protocol. If you have any concerns, please contact me.

Please join me in praying for all students and volunteers who will be attending Vacation Bible School and our youth events. May God, in His amazing and beautiful ways, bless each student and volunteer, steering their hearts towards Jesus, and help us see our identity through Him. May you all be blessed.

God is Love,
Ryan Ridenour

Mission and Worship... • continued from page 1 *by Pastor Tom Buratovich*

church is the vision not the worship service which constantly has to wow people for fear they get bored and go elsewhere.

It also gives us guardrails when we define The Great Commission. Jesus did not say, "Go into all the world and make church attenders baptizing them in the name of small groups and teaching them to volunteer an hour a week."

We gather weekly but scatter daily. The Porterville Methodist churches embody being a force in the community not about a weekly event in our building. Our ability to be a church that makes a difference in the lives of the people of our city and the church that simply meets on Sundays is contained in our ability to implement a vision that passionately describes what God has done and provides us with an enormous optimism and hope we could not be more excited to imagine.

I am not describing programs because it is harder to change our thinking which will take the biggest effort. Our future depends on making this cognitive leap. Come with me from the lower room to the upper room. Come with me to an expectation that ministry starts with mission.

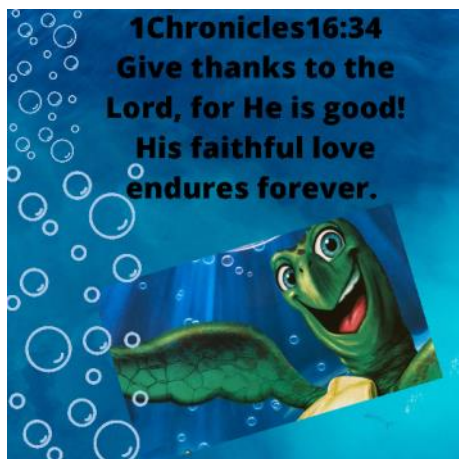


Summertime

Well, here it is. The “time” we have all been waiting for “Summertime”. With such excitement, we look forward to summertime because we know it is a “time” of freedom. Freedom from being tied down to our daily lives. The hum-drum of every day life seems to fade away as we look forward to outdoor Family BBQs, cold juicy watermelon, homemade ice cream, a cool dip in the pool, and vacation. Yes, vacation and adventure. Many of us, take a much needed wonderful vacation, just in time to escape the heat.

This year Grand Ave and First Church will be coming together on **July 15 and 16** for a much needed vacation in the cool blue waters of the ocean to present Anchored, our VBS. Then, **on Sunday July 18, we will worship together at Grand Ave at 10:00 a.m. for a combined service to enjoy our VBS Celebration.**

Anchored is an under-the-sea adventure like no other. We will be enchanted by the under-water sea life as our Bible Buddies will help us learn our Bible Point that God is faithful. On this two-day adventure, we will visit two different Bible Stories. The first day, we will embark on an adventure with Paul as he encourages others through a storm and a shipwreck. It will be exciting to put ourselves into the



story and feel what it might have been like to have been there with them. On the second day, our Bible buddies will teach us why Jesus died on the cross and that he was resurrected.

Along with our Bible stories, we will sing lots of fun songs, make sea crafts, play games, and hear stories of special things a couple of children are doing in their lives, to make a difference in the world. We will also take home a very special lunch.

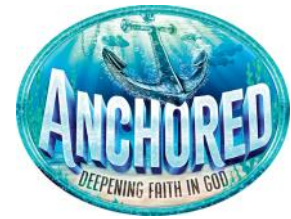
I'm sure, being an under-the-sea adventure, there will be a few special guests that will come our way, also. Isn't that always the way it is in the ocean? You never know who will be swimming around. I hope you decide to bring your children, grandchildren, neighborhood kids and come and find out.

VBS is a fun and exciting way to teach children of all ages about God. The fun times that children take away from VBS will stay in their heart's forever. It is not just about coming to a “Summertime” Church activity, it is about planting the seeds of God's word, in a fun way, so that children will build their own testimony of God for themselves. Once the seed is planted, it is always there. That is what we want to do, touch their lives and plant seeds so that they may know God for themselves and find out what a faithful God, He is.

Anyone who wants to be a part of this event, is welcome. We always need volunteers. There are many ways to help. If you have ever wondered what Children's Church is up to, come and join us at this enchanting Under the Sea adventure. Come renew your spirit and plant a few seeds of your own, in your heart.

Blessings,
Melody Burkhart

VBS



July 15 & 16

9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

At Grand Ave UMC

Sunday Program on July 18

10:00 a.m. at Grand Ave

Come make a huge splash with us at Grand Ave as we dive deep into our faith and discover the unwavering love of God. First & Grand Ave are combining efforts for an under the sea experience like no other. Contact Melody or the church office for registration information.

Can't wait to sea you!

Trophies Needed

We are looking for trophies for a display at one of the Bible Stories at VBS. If you are willing to let us borrow them please call Melody Burkhart or Ann White. Thank you!



Rejoicing in God's Creation

By Judy Lowery

*“God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.
And there was evening; and there was morning—the sixth day.”*
Genesis 1:31 NIV

Our five little garden beds are becoming packed with growing veggies: tomatoes, sugar snap peas, bush beans, iceberg lettuce, green peppers, egg plants, broccoli and brussel sprouts. The beans and brussel sprouts were started inside the house, from seeds planted in tiny containers.

When we transplanted them into the beds, and later added vegetables that were more mature, we tried to put the ones that would eventually take up the most room with a few that wouldn't spread out so much. Actually, a few took up more room than expected and are crowding out the smaller plants, like the green peppers that are now being overshadowed by the large leaves of the brussel sprouts.

It's always exciting when the harvesting starts. The lettuce never did form heads; however, its leaves are very tasty and have been the basic ingredient of several salads. Only two broccoli plants have produced so far...enough broccoli for one night's dinner. It would have cost less to just buy packaged broccoli at the store; but it was fun watching them grow.

Same with the large tomato plant. So far there have been only two ripe tomatoes, but there are many more on the way! Of all of the veggies planted thus far though, the sugar snap peas have done the best, growing upwards, intertwining their stems and crowding out everything else in the 4x4 bed.

We've already enjoyed fresh steamed peas, with more to come. Fresh vegetables taste much better

than canned or frozen, especially when it comes to peas. I remember how my mom tried to convince my little sister, Jan, that peas were really good by calling them “little green bubbles” and even hiding them in a piece of folded bread with butter, like a green pea sandwich!

To this day Jan still doesn't like peas, claiming that she even picks them out of chicken pot pies! Maybe if she had been involved in planting and harvesting the peas rather than eating them from a can, she would have developed a taste for them.

Al has always had good success with growing peas, even having such a surplus that he was able to sell them at a roadside vegetable stand in Porterville. Of course, he planted four long rows each about 20 feet long with only 5 or 6 inches in between each plant. What we've planted will be plenty for the two of us.

As I was shelling peas one night before dinner, I thought about the efficient packages they come in. Their pods are sturdy, waterproof and hard to open, affording good protection from the elements, birds and insects. Inside the pod, each pea is connected by a small stem, packed together tightly besides several others all the same size and shape. An engineer with a packaging major at a university couldn't have designed it any better!

God's wisdom and creative design can be seen in all of creation and even in the “packaging” of the food we eat.

When you are husking the next ear of corn, take a good look at the way the individual husks are tightly wrapped around the kernels on the cob. Otherwise more of the corn we eat would be wormy!

In the Old Testament book of Proverbs, the voice of wisdom speaks about the wonder of God's creation as from the mouth of a skilled craftsman: “I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth. Then I was the craftsman at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind.” (Proverbs 8:27-31 NIV)

This same God uniquely designed and created each of us. Just think, He took great delight in His creation...and He takes great delight in us, His children. As we surrender to His plan for us, we become the people He created us to be. May we live in such a way that He will proclaim, “It is very good!”



Garden Peas

July 2021 Prayer Calendar

Thursday, July 1 - Pray for safe travels for our congregations this summer.

Friday, July 2 - Pray for our church families.

Saturday, July 3 - Pray for the Clothing Closet at First UMC. Clothes are available by appointment. Contact Ann White for information.

Sunday, July 4 - Pray for a safe Independence Day. Pray for Worship Services at Grand Ave UMC at 9:30 a.m. and First UMC at 11:00 a.m.

Monday, July 5 - Pray for the week as we encounter many different situations.

Tuesday, July 6 - Pray and reflect on 1 Peter 1:8 *"You love Him even though you have never seen Him, though you do not see Him, you trust Him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy."*

Wednesday, July 7 - Pray for the Online Bible Study beginning at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom. Email Pastor Tom at tburatovich@gmail to join.

Thursday, July 8 - Pray for all the members of the church committees.

Friday, July 9 - Pray for Pastor Tom as he completes his sermon for this Sunday Worship Services.

Saturday, July 10 - Pray for the Greeters for Worship Services tomorrow.

Sunday, July 11 - Pray for Worship Services today at Grand Ave UMC at 9:30 a.m. and First UMC at 11:00 a.m.

Monday, July 12 - Pray for Melody and Ryan as they plan for Vacation Bible School.

Tuesday, July 13 - Pray and reflect on 2 Timothy 4:17 *"But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed*

and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth."

Wednesday, July 14 - Pray for the Online Bible Study beginning at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom. Email Pastor Tom at tburatovich@gmail to join.

Thursday, July 15 - Pray for the kids and teachers as they start **VBS** today from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Friday, July 16 - Pray that the kids have a great time today at **VBS** from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Saturday, July 17 - Pray and reflect on John 20:29 *Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed."*

Sunday, July 18 - Pray for the **VBS Worship Service** today. **Both churches meet together at Grand Ave UMC at 10:00 a.m.**

Monday, July 19 - Pray and meditate on Galatians 5:22-23 today. *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."*

Tuesday, July 20 - Pray for all the church prayer groups today.

Wednesday, July 21 - Pray for the Online Bible Study beginning at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom. Email Pastor Tom at tburatovich@gmail to join.

Thursday, July 22 - Praise God for all of our many blessings!

Friday, July 23 - Pray for our community of Porterville.

Saturday, July 24 - Pray for the decisions that will be made for the future of our churches.

Sunday, July 25 - Pray for Worship Services today at Grand



Ave UMC at 9:30 a.m. and First UMC at 11:00 a.m.

Monday, July 26 - Pray and read John 14:5-6 *"Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way? Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

Tuesday, July 27 - Pray for the Praise Team as they prepare for Sunday Worship Service.

Wednesday, July 28 - Pray for the Online Bible Study beginning at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom. Email Pastor Tom at tburatovich@gmail to join.

Thursday, July 29 - Pray that we can find an area in our church and our community to use our gifts.

Friday, July 30 - Pray for the ones in our congregations who are ill and the ones who are recovering.

Saturday, July 31 - Pray and reflect on 1 John 3:1-3 *"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like Him as is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure."*



JULY Birthdays

First UMC

- Joan Pharis • July 1
- Bill White • July 2
- Lou Ellen White • July 6
- Lua Woffinden • July 9
- Ann White • July 10
- Joy Leach • July 13
- Bobbi Ernst • July 13
- Linda Young • July 16
- Garrick Burkhart • July 24
- Sonja Jett • July 25
- Bob Falls • July 29
- Deane Rhoadarmer • July 30

Grand Ave UMC

- Linda Brown • July 6
- Edna Takakjian • July 8
- Lynn Egorov • July 9
- Steve Bartlett • July 11
- Barbara Smith • July 13
- Erlinda Lipumano • July 15
- Robin Galloway • July 21
- Frances DePaoli • July 24
- Sue Wright • July 29
- Brooke Borges • July 30

Announcements

VBS

Our combined VBS is July 15 and 16 • 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. at Grand Ave. On Sunday, July 18, join us for one 10:00 a.m. Worship Service at Grand Ave to celebrate VBS. Please contact Melody or the church office for registration information. VBS decoration day is July 7.

Clothing Closet at First

The FUMC Clothing Closet is **open by appointment in July**. Please call Ann at 559-920-0977 for more information.

Tithes and Offering

Please continue to support your church through tithes and offerings during the summer months. Thank you for your generosity.

Wednesday Online Bible Study

The Online Bible Study meets 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. each Wednesday. We continue studying I John. All are welcome to join us. Contact Pastor Tom for a link to the zoom online meeting, tburatovich@gmail.com.

Church Yard Sale

Thank you to all who helped and shopped at the Grand Ave Yard Sale this spring.

Next Newsletter Deadline

Please send information for the Messenger Newsletter to Judy at judy.bur87@gmail.com. The deadline for the August 2021 Messenger is **July 20**. Thank you.

First United Methodist Church Grand Ave United Methodist Church

Weekday Meetings are via Computer Connection

- www.grandavenue.org or
- www.facebook.com/PortervilleFUMC or
- www.facebook.com/GrandAvenueUMC

View Past Worship Videos on Vimeo

<https://vimeo.com/grandavenueporterville>

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*
- 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

*First United Methodist Church
344 E. Morton Ave.
Porterville, CA 93257*