



The Vine

March 2025

United Methodist Church
1031 Iowa Ave. Los Banos, CA 93635
E-MAIL Address: umclosbanos@gmail.com
Phone (209) 826-4181

Worship Service In-person 10:00AM Sundays
Service is also online Website: www.umclb.net
Sunday School following Children's Moment in Worship Service
Pastor Office hours: Tuesday-Thursday 10:00am-2:00pm
or call (510) 552-7240
Church Office Hours: Mon-Thurs 8:30 AM-12:00 Noon.
Please call the Secretary if you need time in the office.
Messages are checked Monday-Thursday.
Pastor: Rev. Ivoni Maama
Church Secretary: Lori Winters
<https://www.facebook.com/LosBanosUnitedMethodistChurch>



5 Tom Kaljian	15 Mark Walton
5 Olivia Hew	20 Delaney Wallace
13 Susan Younce	29 Kevin Ferreira
13 Stacy Betschart	30 Liam Walsh
14 Michael Bonillas	



18 Gregg & Juli Rice

February contributions total: \$ 8,523.62
In-Person Services for February 2nd (32) 9th (33) 16th (40) 23rd (41)

Vine Monthly Events for March

March

Important dates:

Monday, March 3rd -Centering Prayer 6 PM Zoom, contact Pastor Ivoni for details.

Tuesday, March 4th -AD Council 7 MP Zoom

Wednesday, March 5th- Ash Wednesday 7-9 AM Drive Thru in back parking lot, 11AM-1PM in Church and 5-7PM in Church

Wednesday March 5th - ☎ 10:00 AM (every Wednesday) there will be a Prayer/upper room conference call, everyone is welcome to join and share any concerns. the number is **(720) 843-2603 Access Code: 8941334**

Thursday, March 6th -Bible reading in the church office starting at 6 PM every week for 6 weeks

Sunday, March 9th- 11:30 AM we start making/packing lunch for the Homeless Ministry/Manna

Tuesday, March 11th – Trustee Meeting 6 PM

Wednesday, March 12th – SPRC Meeting 7PM Zoom

Saturday, March 15th – Cupcakes and Conversation. Women in Faith Retreat 10Am to 1 PM

Monday, March 17th – NOW Meeting 7 PM Zoom

Tuesday, February 18th – Craft Night 6 PM, we will be decorating mugs for the church

Wednesday, March 19th – Worship Committee 7 PM Zoom

Sunday, March 23rd - 11:30 AM we start making/packing lunch for the Homeless Ministry/Manna

Tuesday, March 25th -Finance Committee Meeting 7 PM Zoom

Bell Choir Has been changed, it is every Wednesday at 4:30 PM

If you need visitation for yourself or someone else please contact Karen Bonillas, Melissa Jones, Susan Younce or Ivoni Maama

At 12:00 noon please take a moment to pray for your pastor and church

On March 5th, we will begin a small group for the 40-day journey with (**The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren**). Please contact Pastor Ivoni for more information.

Don't forget Wednesday the 5th is Ash Wednesday. Pastor Ivoni will be in the back parking lot from 7AM to 9AM for drive thru service to make it easier for people who work.

Our Homeless Ministry/Manna is going great. We went out twice in February (2nd and 4th Sunday) and we passed out 50 lunches each time. If you would like to help make/pack lunches or go help pass them out, just let Ivoni or Lori know. We could always use some help.

- Centering Prayer has been moved to Monday evening at 6PM contact Pastor Ivoni for details.

On February 15th we started a 7-day fasting group. We had several members participate. We all had a partner that we met with once a day to share our thoughts and experiences. We broke fasting with a wonderful lunch on the 22nd. It was very interesting, and I think we all learned something from it.

Dear Family of United Methodist Church of Los Banos:

ASH WEDNESDAY
First Day of Lent



"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return".

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a season of forty days (minus Sundays) during which we prepare ourselves for the events of Holy Week and Easter. We start the journey of Lent with confession, pardon, and the imposition of ashes, a reminder of our mortality. Though this can often feel like a serious service, Psalm 51:1 says, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love." We begin Lent with the reminder that God's love is steadfast—it never fails. God's love is like a light that guides us home, ignites our bones, and fixes us, putting us back together for relationship with God and one another.

Please pray this prayer of c confessions with your family or someone on March 5th, the Ash Wednesday, beginning of Lent. We will follow the Lent season of forty days 40 days with the "The Purpose of Driven Life" by Rich Warren. Contact Pastor 'Ivoni for details.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*inspired by Psalm 51*)

On this first day of Lent we pause, look within, and examine our consciousness.

Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love.

Where we have neglected prayer, been apathetic in worship, found reasons to avoid generosity, or lacked compassion:

Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love.

Where we have colluded in the oppression of those who become invisible in their suffering and ignored on the streets:

Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love.

Where anxiety has eroded the gift of Your peace, and where we have cared too much about what others think:

Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love.

Words of assurance - As Lent begins, know that God understands how we struggle to stay open and compassionate. The invitation is not to focus on our inadequacies but on God's gift of grace and love which transforms our hearts and minds.

That gift is given to us again, here and now. Be encouraged. **Amen.**

There will be a Drive Through for the sign of the cross at the parking lot. You can sit in your car and will do the sign of the cross on your forehead and prayer. We will have coffee serve on your way out.

There will be a silent service in the sanctuary as well. Please come let us pray and worship our God and celebrate the everlasting love God has given us each day of our lives.

7am – 9am Drive Through at the Parking Lot

11am - 1pm Sanctuary

5pm - 7pm Sanctuary

Love and Prayers,

Pastor 'Ivoni

Administrative Council Highlights – February 4, 2025

The Ad Council met by Zoom conference on Tuesday, February 4, 2025 with six people present. The following items were discussed:

- **Nurture, Outreach and Witness (NOW).** There was a good turnout for the January 19 planning meeting, and we came up with about 15 ideas for new activities. The list was sent out by email, in *The Vine* and passed out on Sunday morning, and will be reviewed over the next few months. The Worship Committee is considering forming a Praise Team. It was agreed to take a survey about whether we should do the fireworks booth, and to get commitments to work in the booth if we proceed. Ivoni has plans for fasting, prayers, and Bible

readings. There was talk about a summer conference for youth. A new AA group starts meeting soon in one of our

classrooms. Trees are being trimmed, and the Free Methodist church is renting our sanctuary from 1pm-5pm on Sundays. Ivoni plans to meet soon about feeding the homeless. In December, the women sent food and gifts to a family in need, and took blankets to the nearby rest home. Shannan and Kerri will meet in the next month or so with VBS leaders. It was reported that the Youth scavenger hunt went really well.

- **Trustees.** Kevin Ferreira is the new Chair of the Board of Trustees. Jim and Melissa Jones have been doing a great job cleaning out the attic. The trustees will be meeting

each month on the second Tuesday mostly on Zoom, but in person once a quarter.

- **United Women in Faith.** The women will meet February 13 for a Valentine's card making craft, and on March 15 for a Cupcakes and Conversation retreat.

- **Staff-Parish Relations Committee.** Kathy will no longer be working with the youth. SPRC will start looking for a new Youth Director. As required by the Book of

Discipline, the Chair of SPRC and the Chair of Trustees are to do a walkthrough of the parsonage each year. Kevin, Ivoni and Susan will be setting up a time for this to take place.

- **Financial Report.** Our January income of \$12,072.16 was fairly good, but paid expenses were \$17,810.72, reducing the General Fund checking account from \$11,404.93 to \$5,666.37. The unusually high amount of payments involved about \$4,800 of one-time annual bills, including the music copyright license fee, software upgrade and license, a large down payment for our insurance renewal, and repair of an air conditioning unit in the classroom wing.

- **Pastor's Report.** Pastor Ivoni got no response to the Membership Class, so will contact people about it. A new Social Justice Committee plans to take food to the homeless on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. The New Year Fasting and Reading the Bible starts on February 15.

- **Upcoming Events.** Brief mention was made of the following upcoming events:

a. 2025 is the 150th Anniversary of Los Banos UMC. A committee will start making plans for this event.

b. **February 15** – New Year Fasting and Reading the Bible begins.

c. **March 5** – Ash Wednesday Drive through 7AM – 9AM

d. **March 5** – Ash Wednesday Quiet Time 11AM - 1PM & 5PM - 7PM

e. **June 23 - 27** – VBS week.

f. **June 27 - 30** – Annual Conference g. **June 28 - July 4.** - Fireworks Booth (maybe).

h. **Sept. 5 & 6** – Rummage Sale

- **Parish Care.** Prayers were requested for Don and Carley, Guadalupe,

Kimery, Donna Morris, Laura's father in-law, and Karen and Dan Bonillas.