

# Messenger Newsletter

*First and Grand Ave  
United Methodist Churches*

*March 2020*

## The “Method” of Methodism

*by Pastor Tom Buratovich*

A quick glance at the Methodist Church today might lead someone to conclude that the method part of Methodism is spending a lot of energy talking about doctrine, organization, structure, clergy deployment, and a host of other issues.

These are important, in fact some vitally important, but the method that Methodists became known for, and even mocked for, was a method of accountable discipleship that occurred in class and band meetings. These meetings were where people “watched over one another’s soul in love.” It was where sin was confessed, confronted, and forgiven. It was where the curriculum was the state of a person’s spiritual life, with the goal to grow deeper in “holiness of heart and life.”

We have since replaced these meetings with Bible studies, Sunday schools, men’s groups, women’s groups, ministry groups, and any other group that gathers for common purposes. These are well and good, but they can make us consumers of information and not participants of transformation. They can often make us comfortable and satisfied with knowing about God rather than experiencing the risen Christ.

As the Methodist Church is poised to enter a new season of life, we should search for ways to begin

a new season the spiritual life as well. We can use the season of Lent to join with accountability partners and concern ourselves with “watching over one another’s soul in love.”

I challenge all of us to be in prayer that we might be in practice of a method that makes us proud to be Methodist.

### **Lent**

Our journey to the empty tomb began on Ash Wednesday, February 26 and ends on Easter Sunday, April 12. It is a journey culminating at a summit which lead to another, and another vista. We take with us what we learned and incorporate it into our life and relationships.

In the same way a diver emerging to the surface finds the light, field of vision, and pressure becoming more favorable, so our spirits become more attentive to the Word of God and work of Jesus as we grow in our insight and wisdom within our circumstances.

Both Methodist churches will participate in Communion every Sunday during Lent. Please use this time to ask the Lord how can grow in knowledge and wisdom, grace and holiness.

### **Reimaging Our Method**

Our city has experienced tragedy with the loss of the library in the lives of faithful firemen at the hands of misguided youth. I

cannot think of a better reason to work with parents whose children are on the path to making similar choices. We literally are saving the city one family at a time. And yet, some still slip through our fingers. It pains me when parents sign up for our class and then do not attend. They are the ones who end up needing it the most. They are the ones whose children end up in the paper extolling the unfortunate acts of foolishness that caused others and our city harm. However, we have a plan. We do not simply feel we can incarcerate our way out. We do not think there are some irredeemable kids in the mix. We see them all as children of God, infinitely valued, deeply loved and cherished. And though they do horrible things that raise the ire of many, me included at times, but was not given to the notion that they are worthless and beyond help.

We will continue to work with parents, children, adolescents, to give them hope. We will continue to open our doors to all people that we might be a light to them. We will continue to clothe the naked through the living closet and feed the hungry through the sack lunch. All these activities will inform our worship.

### **Our Formation Plan**

Having survived The Effective Ministry 360° (EM360) process, the formation plan committee has identified four goals that crystallized through our extensive discussion.

*Continued on page 5*

# Youth Ministry

The youth of Grand Avenue would like to say a big thank you to everyone that participated in our bake sale. Whether you baked goods for the youth to sale, or purchased the delicious baked goods during our sale, or if you did both, the youth and I are very grateful for your support. Your continued support has provided countless opportunities for our youth to have experiences to fellowship with other youth and most importantly, to grow closer to Jesus through our outreaches, Bible studies, and trips. Thank you all.

Recently, I was speaking with a group of youth from my Monday night youth group and during our conversations, there was a theme that was catching my attention. Time and again, no matter the topic of conversation, we ended up talking about stress and anxiety. The youth shared various examples of why they are experiencing the stress and anxiety and it was concerning, but not anything I haven't heard before. Many of the youth were overwhelmed with school and trying to get the best grades they can in hopes of being accepted into a college they desire to attend, some were anxious regarding their homelife and the state of the relationships between those living in the home, and a few students were dealing with the ramifications of negative health habits within their family and the pain that comes with it.

During these conversations I listened intently, wondering what I could do to alleviate some of the stress and anxiety my youth were experiencing. This is a common

response. We adults want to simply fix the problem because many of us have been through the trials ourselves. There's nothing wrong with that, our intentions are good, but sometimes the youth don't want to hear our solutions, they simply want us to listen until they are ready for our help.

When working with youth, I have discovered that many times when they are facing trials, if you simply allow them to share their emotions without prejudice or a personal agenda, and try to understand their situation without making the conversation about yourself or trying to make the youth into a mini version of who you are, the youth will immediately feel better and then be open to any ideas of healing you may suggest. This is because listening with love and grace provides an avenue of trust and vulnerability that youth are searching for. When the youth have shared their feelings and they trust that you honestly care about their wellbeing, this is now a great time to share the love of Jesus with them and true healing begins.

If you would like to experience an interaction or two with youth from our community, I invite you to attend our Monday night youth group. We meet each Monday at 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall and we have an evening of sports, silly games, and Bible time. I'm sure the youth would love to see you. Blessings to you and yours.

God is Love,  
Ryan Ridenour

## ***Family Activities Sundays • 2:00 p.m. At First United Methodist***

*Everyone is welcome to attend upcoming Family Activities at First Methodist. We look forward to providing a place for our church family to invite families in the community to join us.*

### ***March 15 • 2:00 p.m. Family Game Night***

Come join in the fun of Board and Card Games. We will enjoy playing games together and eating Nachos. Our focus is on being a team players, learning new skills and challenging our brains to learn new strategies.

### ***April 12 Easter Sunday***

**6:30 a.m.**

**Sunrise Service at Murry Park**

**10:00 a.m.**

**Worship Service at Grand Ave**

**11:00 a.m.**

**Potluck Brunch and Egg Hunt**

Invite your family and friends to join you for Easter Worship at Grand Avenue UMC!



***For more information about  
Family Activities at First UMC,  
please contact Melody 359-4483.***

# Bless All Nations

By Judy Lowery

*"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'" Matthew 28:18-20 NIV*

In January, the members of Pleasant Valley Chapel in Springville said "good-bye" to their pastor, Craig Price, as he retired from a long career of pastoring. Retirement in this case however was to be the beginning of a new venture, something he had wanted to do for many years...become a full time missionary!

Missions had been Craig's passion since the 1980's when he helped smuggle Bibles into communist ruled Eastern Europe. Since that time, he has been able to travel to many other countries with the good news of Jesus.

For several years, he has been involved with "Gleanings for the Hungry" in Dinuba, California, helping prepare bags of dehydrated soup mix and dried fruit to distribute around the world. "Gleanings" is a service outreach of Youth with a Mission (YWAM), a faith-based organization that began in 1960 with three far reaching goals: evangelism, helping those in need and training missionaries.

The Dinuba base is also a location for a YWAM Discipleship Training School that offers a three-month program to prepare people for the mission field. Craig had thought about signing up for the training program in 2018 and was ready to go, when the Lord told him to wait. There was unfinished business to take care of first.

After much prayer, Craig decided that this was the year to enroll in the Discipleship Training School. However, when he joined about a dozen other people on the first day of class, serious doubts

began to enter his mind. For one thing, he was unable to hear his classmates as they shared their personal testimonies.

A note on his application that he was hearing impaired had been overlooked and he felt increasingly left out. By the end of the day he was discouraged, wondering if he had "missed the boat again." He remembers feeling like he was "being choked out by the enemy."

When the rest of the group met for dinner, Craig took his plate into another room and ate alone. The thought of leaving crept into his mind. But while he sat eating dinner and reading the assigned book, the Lord again spoke to his heart with the words from Matthew 20:28, "I didn't come to be served, but to serve." Peace and joy came back as the darkness fled. Yes, he was in the right place!

The Lord confirmed his decision many times during the rest of that first week. On Thursday when the instructor prayed over each person, once again Craig felt Him saying "You're here on purpose, because this is where I want you to be."

When they sang "In My Father's House I have a place for you" during their time of worship together, he responded with tears... and great joy. Craig knew without a doubt that this was the Lord's timing and that he was right where God wanted him to be. "What a blessing!" he says emphatically.

Upon finishing three months of training, Craig will be going to Columbia to work with refugees

from Venezuela and later on to another YWAM base in Peru. There will be translators going along with the team; and two 40-foot-long shipping containers of food produced at "Gleaning for the Hungry" will also be sent to Columbia from Dinuba.

Craig is hoping for opportunities to preach, but will most likely be teaching, evangelizing and taking other teams on outreaches. With 1,300 YWAM bases all around the world, he doesn't know where he will be after the training and mission trip to South America are completed. Wherever it might be though, he has the assurance that he is exactly in the place where God wants him.

"Bless all nations!" This is the Lord's will for His church and a strong desire in Pastor Craig's heart. "We are called to be witnesses to all nations," he says, emphasizing the word "all."

Thank you for carrying out the Lord's commission, Pastor Craig. You are inspiring!

If anyone would like to contact Craig Price, his email address is: [blessallnations@aol.com](mailto:blessallnations@aol.com)



Pastor Craig Price

For more information, please visit [www.goodnewswithjudy.blogspot.com](http://www.goodnewswithjudy.blogspot.com)



# March 2020 Prayer Calendar

**Sunday, March 1** - Pray for the Sunday School, Children's Church, Youth Group and Worship Services as we all come together in God's name. Pray also for our combined meeting at 12:15 p.m.

**Monday, March 2** - Pray for the Youth Group that will meet at 5:30 p.m. at GAUMC.

**Tuesday, March 3** - Pray for our community, for their hearts to be lifted in prayer and praise.

**Wednesday, March 4** - Pray for Teach 1 to Lead 1, and the Parent Project, for the mentors, kids and parents involved. May they apply all they learn.

**Thursday, March 5** - Pray for the children and youth of our churches. May they come to know Jesus

**Friday, March 6** - Pray for Pastor Tom as he completes his sermons for Sunday Worship Services.

**Saturday, March 7** - Pray for Clothing Closet at FUMC at 1:00 p.m. Pray for the volunteers and the recipients.

**Sunday, March 8** - Pray for Sunday School, Children's Church, Youth Group and Worship Services.

**Monday, March 9** - Pray for the Youth Group that will meet at GAUMC at 5:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, March 10** - Pray for the GAUMC Finance Committee Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, March 11** - Pray for our at-risk ministries, the choir, bell choir, and Wednesday Bible Study. May they gain insight, wisdom and holiness.

**Thursday, March 12** - Pray for the combined SPRC meeting at 12:00 p.m. as they discuss the Formation Plan.

**Friday, March 13** - Pray that we can invite someone to attend Sunday Worship Service.

**Saturday, March 14** - Pray for the Greeters' that will welcome all who come through our churches' doors tomorrow.

**Sunday, March 15** - Pray for the Sunday School, Children's Church, Youth Group and Worship Services. And the family game night outreach.

**Monday, March 16** - Pray for FUMC as they prepare for Sunday Worship Service.

**Tuesday, March 17** - Pray for the ladies who will attend Linda Circle meeting at 11:00 a.m.

**Wednesday, March 18** - Pray for Teach 1 to Lead 1 and all who are involved.

**Thursday, March 19** - Pray for the Trustees Meeting at GAUMC at 6:00 p.m.

**Friday, March 20** - Pray that we can read Romans 8:39 *"Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

**Saturday, March 21** - Pray for the Praise Team as they prepare for Sunday Worship Service,

**Sunday, March 22** - Pray for Pastor Tom as he leads Worship Services today.

**Monday, March 23** - Pray as we go through this week, that we will know God is with us.

**Tuesday, March 24** - Pray for the ones in our church families who are ill or who are rehabilitating. Pray for strength and wellness.

**Wednesday, March 25** - Pray for our at-risk ministries, the choir, bell choir, and Wednesday Bible Study. May they gain insight, wisdom and holiness.

**Thursday, March 26** - Pray for the ladies who will attend Women's Bible Study at 5:00 p.m. at GAUMC.

**Friday, March 27** - 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."*

**Saturday, March 28** - Pray as we continue our Lenten journey. Pray we will be inspired to have a closer relationship with God.

**Sunday, March 29** - Pray for Sunday School, Children's Church, Youth Group and Worship Services.

**Monday, March 30** - Pray that the homeless and hungry of Porterville will be able to find shelter and food.

**Tuesday, March 31** - Pray that we can remember the bible verse Psalm 56:3 *"When I am afraid, I put my trust in You."*



## Announcements

### *Clothes for the Needy*

The First Methodist **Clothing Closet** is open on the first Saturday of every month. We are open March 7 from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. for those in our community in need. Greeters and volunteers are welcome to help distribute and engage visitors. Donations of gently used clothes are always welcome.

### *Easter Sunday Choir Rehearsal*

Easter Choir rehearsals begin Wednesday, March 11 at 7:00 p.m. Contact Christine Klippenstein for more information. All are welcome to join the choir for Easter Sunday.

### *First UMC Church Wide Yard Sale*

The First UMC Yard Sale is April 4. Please bring donation items to church at any time.

### *Grand Ave Church Wide Yard Sale*

The next Grand Ave Yard Sale is May 1 and 2. Please bring small donation items to church at any time. Join us for pricing on Wednesdays 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

### *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 April 2020 Messenger is **March 19**. Thank you.

## The “Method” of Methodism

*Continued from page 1*

First, we wish to help congregations rediscover/revitalize evangelism as a practiced value. This means providing teaching, training, and praying to this end. Please ask God to give us a passion and desire to share our faith with our community.

Second, we wish to develop and implement a follow-up process with those attending outreach activities that will foster an ongoing relationship. This is something we have talked about and suspected for a long time and it is time for us to intentionally step forward and make this a priority. People can visit our churches and come to our activities repeatedly. If we do not connect with them, and continue to invite them, our lack of retention will continue to frustrate us.

Third, we wish to establish a clear and accessible pathway for discipleship. Mature Christians that have a depth of insight and knowledge are better able to make a difference in their spheres of influence. We will seek to facilitate training and form a structure that is accessible to all who seek to grow spiritually.

Finally, we want to develop stronger relationships with all Porterville Methodist churches. We need to regularly pray and know how to pray for Grand Ave., Porterville First, and Vida Nueva.

Let us re-examine our method, reimagine our evangelism, and be transformed by the renewing of our spirit into the image of Jesus!

### *Sermon Video*

Watch a video of the sermon during the week or share a link with a friend. Pastor Tom's sermons are posted on [www.grandavenue.org/sermon-video](http://www.grandavenue.org/sermon-video) each week.



**April 9, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.**

*First and Grand Ave will join together for  
One Maundy Thursday Service  
on the First UMC Campus.*

**Easter Sunday, April 12**

**6:30 a.m. Community Sunrise Service**

*at Murry Park—Behind the Pool*

**First and Grand Ave will join together for  
One Easter Worship Service and Brunch on the  
Grand Ave Campus.**

**10:00 a.m. Easter Worship**

*at Grand Ave UMC*



**11:00 a.m. Potluck Brunch  
and Egg Hunt**

## Grand Ave Methodist Weekly Schedule

### Sundays

8:30 a.m. Sunday School • Fireside Room  
9:30 a.m. Worship Service • Sanctuary  
5:00 p.m. Youth Bible Study

### Mondays

5:30 p.m. Youth Group

### Wednesdays

4:30 p.m. Parent Project, T1L1

### Thursdays

10:00 a.m. Prayer Group  
5:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study (2nd & 4th)

## Grand Ave Methodist Calendar

### Tuesday, March 10

6:00 p.m. Grand Ave Finance Meeting

### Thursday, March 12

12:00 p.m. Combined SPRC at First Church

### Monday, March 16

11:00 a.m. Church Council

### Tuesday, March 17

11:00 a.m. Linda Circle

### Thursday, March 19

6:00 p.m. Trustees

### Sunday, March 22

10:30 a.m. Lunch Fellowship

## First Methodist Weekly Schedule

### Sundays

9:30 a.m. Bible Study  
11:00 a.m. Children's Sunday School  
11:00 a.m. Worship Service  
12:15 p.m. Coffee Fellowship

### Tuesdays

10:00 a.m. Morning Watch Prayer Group

### Wednesdays

6:00 p.m. Handbell Rehearsal  
7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal  
7:30 p.m. Bible Study

## First Methodist Calendar

### Saturday, March 7

1:00 p.m. Clothing Closet

### Thursday, March 12

12:00 p.m. Combined SPRC at First Church

### Sunday, March 15

2:00 p.m. Family Games

### Happy Birthday!

Amy Buratovich • March 1  
Hope Overholt • March 4  
Judy Buratovich • March 6  
Maxine Itzenhauser • March 15  
Garrett Borges • March 15  
Sandy Young • March 16  
Liam Fleming • March 18



## Daylight Saving Times Begins Sunday, March 8

Turn your clocks  
ahead one hour on  
Saturday night.  
*Don't be late  
for church!*



### Grand Ave Staff

Senior Pastor • *Rev. Tom Buratovich*  
Director of Youth Ministries • *Ryan Ridenour*  
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*  
Organist • *Donita Roulsten*  
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*