



Messenger Newsletter

First and Grand Ave
United Methodist Churches

November 2019

The Missing Piece

by Pastor Tom Buratovich

We were so close. We had worked for days on this 1000-piece puzzle and finally neared the time of its completion. We had a handful of pieces left and began to ceremonially put them in. When we had no pieces left, we looked up at each other and stared at the completed puzzle minus one piece which stared at us.

We could not find the last piece. We looked everywhere, in the box, on the floor, under the box, around the table, on the other tables, and short of taking apart the house we could not find it. Every time we walked by the puzzle it would beckon us to find its missing member.

The only complete part of the puzzle was that it was completely incomplete. We would not be happy. Our universe would not be set right. The space-time continuum would remain out of balance until we found that missing piece.

Many of us can testify that Christ was the missing piece in our lives before he found us. Seasonally we try to mimic this dance of lost and found through some wonderful events.

The month of November will be a stewardship month. It is appropriate to talk of gratitude, generosity, and how this applies to finances and our relationship with the Lord. In my own life, money has so easily gotten in the way of serving Jesus and kept me from experiencing a true freedom that some experience when they give their money to the Lord. I hope you will explore this with me!

November is the month of our annual **Charge Conference**. Think of this event as the missing piece for our churches that await their fulfillment. We report to the churches our blessings, our barriers, our failings, and our sincere cry to God to grant us the grace for a triumphal new year. In addition, we get to eat great food cooked by great people from great churches. It is a strange feeling to complete one of these for me. I feel a great moment of satisfaction when it is done. Please consider joining us on **Sunday, November 17, 4:30 p.m.** at First UMC, Porterville. It is a potluck so please bring your favorite dish.

The next **Sunday, November 24**, we have an outreach to our families. At 2:00 p.m. in the social hall of First UMC, we will show the movie *The Emperor's New Groove*, enjoy root beer floats, and a very cute craft. The perfect pre-Thanksgiving event to attend. This event is so important in our life because it represents a way for us to be the church to our own people and to visitors.

Think of these outreaches as tools. The tool helps you accomplish something that would be very difficult or impossible without it. To get a nail into a piece of wood is next to impossible without a hammer. It is impossible with your hand and much harder with a rock, but with a hammer it becomes possible and even easy.

The outreach is like a tool. We have the outreach as a tool to engage our people, visitors and be the church to them. We need to show them the love of Jesus and invite them into the life he offers through the church.

Finally, **Sunday, December 1 at 2:00 p.m.**, we will hold our **Service of Remembrance**. The Service of Remembrance is for those who have lost loved ones recently and find the holidays difficult to endure without them. We provide this time to acknowledge the loss and journey through it together as a community who grieves but grieves with the hope of resurrection, restoration, and reunion. The service is a special highlight for me personally and I pray God will gather a great many people who will benefit from it. Now is the time to begin to talk to friends and family who would benefit from the service to attend.

We finally found the missing piece of the puzzle. It was under a pile of papers that we had failed to investigate previously. The puzzle was complete, and we savored the moment of its completion.

Savor the moments of our completion as you consider participating with us and our end of the year events.

Events for First and Grand on First Methodist Campus

Nov. 17 • Charge Conference • 4:30 p.m.

Nov. 24 • Movie Night • 2:00 p.m.

Dec. 1 • Service of Remembrance • 2:00 p.m.

Dec 24 • Christmas Eve Service • 6:00 p.m.

Youth Ministry

After three months of attending our programs and putting in the much needed work to accomplish their class goals, the students in the **Teach One to Lead One Program** and **The Parent Project** will graduate on Wednesday, November 13 at Grand Avenue. The graduation will take place at 6:30 p.m. in the Fireside room. I personally invite each of you to attend this wonderful event to celebrate the accomplishments of our students. This is a great opportunity to meet the families in our programs and to reach out to them and invite them to our church services or one of our events.

The journey us mentors have taken with our students the past few months has been quite the adventure. We have been blessed to meet new parents and their children and we are honored to show them a new way of life, which they allowed us to do. Through our programs we have developed relationships with our students that have brought us joy and encouraged us throughout our time together. We celebrated victories with each other and evaluated the times where we failed and thought of new ways to conquer these difficult situations. We all know that change can be difficult, but is necessary for personal growth. Our programs do require change in habits, language, actions and beliefs. Our students embraced the challenges of change that we presented them with and have shown a diligence to live out this new way of life. Each student that will graduate this class term made important life-giving changes that will stay with them long after they receive their diploma. It has been an honor to teach this class of graduates.

I want to thank Robin Galloway for stepping up and being my go-to mentor during this class term. Your love of Jesus is evident in your words and actions that you bless our students with each class. Thank you for supporting me in my outreach efforts. I also thank Joseph Sanchez for coming to our program and helping me with the games and for being a positive influence on our students. Your positive attitude and willingness to help our students was beautiful to witness.

If you would like to learn about becoming a mentor for either the **Teach 1 to Lead 1 program** or **The Parent Project** or are interested in how you may play a part in our outreach efforts, please contact me. We are in need of individuals who are interested in making positive change in our community through working with Families in need of our help. Please pray and ask God how He can use you in our outreaches.

God is Love,
Ryan Ridenour



"Mega Sports Camp"

VBS is December 16-19

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Grand Ave Campus

We invite all seasoned people to share their talent and experience with the children coming to VBS at Grand Ave in December. Our hope is to fill the halls and rooms of our church with young people to hear the Good News of the Gospel that Jesus is our Rescuer. There is no charge to attend VBS. Kids will come ready for sports, singing, learning, praying, running, jumping, finding their God groove! Contact Ryan Ridenour for more information. Pray for the kids who will attend and who you will invite.

Operation Christmas Child

The 2019 OCC season is underway!

We encourage you to prayerfully consider packing several shoeboxes or donating items for shoeboxes this year. Remember to not include: glass, liquids, heavily scented items, military figurines, gum, candy, food, hand sanitizer, or lotion, etc.

It is recommended that all packaging be removed before



placing items in shoeboxes. We will have a donation box at Grand Ave in the

Sanctuary foyer for all OCC donations. May God bless you as you pack a simple shoebox filled with gifts of love. At First Methodist, please talk with Melody about filling shoeboxes.



In His Service,
Donna Schmutz
Collection week is November 12-19.

A Welcoming Church Family

By Judy Lowery

"All of the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all of the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." Acts 2:44-46 NIV

When a community service project was held one Sunday following the worship service, many people in the congregation stayed to participate. Volunteer help was needed with the upkeep of a house and garden used for outreach in a neighboring town and also with a church in downtown Detroit.

The cinder block walls in the basement of our church building also needed scraping before a new coat of paint could be applied. In addition, a room formerly used for storage needed to be cleared out and an unused bathroom prepped so that it could be repainted.

As people went in different directions, a few of us stayed behind to work on scraping the cinderblock walls of the basement and bathroom. I volunteered to scrape the walls of the bathroom along with a young fellow, who will be called "Roj" in this account.

We had met previously, chatting after church one Sunday. Roj had recently moved from India for employment in the States. It seemed as though he was very well educated, had a good job and was adjusting well to life here. However, with his family still in India there must have been times when he felt lonely.

Our conversation picked up where it had left off as we scraped the old cinderblocks and then repainted them with a sealer, trying not to spill too much paint on our clothes.

I wondered if he grew up in a Hindu home and he replied that

yes, his family was Hindu.

"Well, how did you happen to become a Christian?"

"Oh," Roj responded, "but I am not a Christian. I am Hindu."

"So, what brought you to our church?" I asked puzzled.

"A missionary who came to our village invited me to church. He said I would always be welcome there. When I came to America, I decided to do what the missionary told me and that is how I came to this church."

That was certainly brave on his part. "Well, do you feel welcome here?"

He assured me that he did and was even coming to the mid-week service regularly. We continued talking, first about the Bible and then about stories that he had learned from Hinduism, while finishing up the walls.

When the job was done, we cleaned up before leaving, happy that there were only a few spots of paint on our clothes. It was a good afternoon—great being part of the service project and wonderful getting better acquainted with Roj.

The fact that he found our small church to be friendly was encouraging. His desire to be part of a close community was strong enough to overcome shyness or fear of the unknown.

With this experience in mind, a few days later I had another interesting

conversation with a shopper at the local supermarket who was pushing her cart down the cereal aisle looking intently at the shelves.

"I don't know what I'm looking for, but I'll know it when I see it," she commented.

"That is going to be hard," I said laughing, "Especially if you don't know what you are looking for."

It turned out that a coworker had shared a granola bar with her. "It was the best one I've ever tasted!" she said emphatically. "I want more!"

Just then, she found the right box. "This is it!" she said, as she dropped it into her cart and continued on with her shopping.

Having tasted it once she came back for more, like Roj, who was inspired by the missionary in his village to search for a church home. Hopefully, he will say, "This is it!" and come back for more!

Dear Lord, may those who are searching be drawn to Your sweetness and love through the Holy Spirit. Help us to be a welcoming church family! In Jesus' name, Amen.

For more photos and information, please visit www.goodnewswithjudy.blogspot.com



November 2019 Prayer Calendar

Friday, November 1 - Pray as we start a new month and a new season.

Saturday, November 2 - Pray that we can invite someone to church tomorrow.

Sunday, November 3 - Pray as we come together for Sunday School, Children's Church and Worship Services.

Monday, November 4 - Pray for the Youth Group that will meet at 5:30 p.m. at GAUMC this evening. Pray for the youth of our community.

Tuesday, November 5 - Pray for the ones who are unable to make to the Worship Services due to sickness or rehabilitation. Pray for healing and strength.

Wednesday, November 6 - Pray for the *Parent Project* that starts at 4:30 p.m. and *Teach 1 to Lead 1* at 6:30 p.m. Pray for the youth, parents and mentors that are involved.

Thursday, November 7 - Pray for the Praise Team as they prepare for Sunday Worship Services.

Friday, November 8 - Pray that we can reflect on this Bible Verse today *"And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns."* Philippians 1:6.

Saturday, November 9 - Pray for the Greeters' for tomorrow's Worship Services. Pray for all who walk in the Church doors that they will feel welcomed.

Sunday, November 10 - Pray for the Sunday School, Children's Church, Youth Group and Worship Services.

Monday, November 11 - Pray for the Veterans of our community who have served in the military for our country.

Tuesday, November 12 - Pray for the GAUMC Finance Committee Meeting at 6pm.

Wednesday, November 13 - Pray for the At-Risk Ministries Graduation at 6:30 p.m. It is the Graduation of *The Parent Project* and *Teach 1 to Lead 1*. Pray for these kids and parents that they will be able to apply what they learned into their lives.

Thursday, November 14 - Pray for the ladies who attend the Women's Bible Study that begins at 5:00 p.m. at GAUMC.

Friday, November 15 - Pray that we can remember that *"I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."* Philippians 4:13.

Saturday, November 16 - Pray for Ryan Ridenour, Youth Director as he plans lessons and activities for the youth of our community.

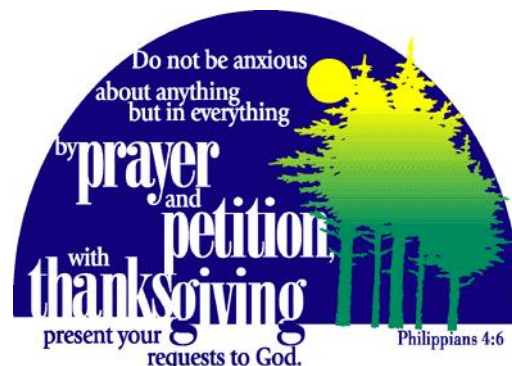
Sunday, November 17 - Pray for Church Worship Services today. Pray for the **Charge Conference and Potluck** that will take place at 4:30 p.m. at FUMC. Pray for all involved. Pray for safe travels for the DS, Debra Brady who will conduct the Conference.

Monday, November 18 - Pray for the Youth Group that will meet at 5:30 p.m. at GAUMC. Pray that the Youth Group will be touched by the Holy Spirit.

Tuesday, November 19 - Pray for the ladies of Linda Circle who will meet today at 11:00 a.m. at GAUMC.

Wednesday, November 20 - Pray for the homeless in our community. Pray that they may find a meal and shelter.

Thursday, November 21 - Pray for the GAUMC Trustees Meeting at 6:00 p.m.



Friday, November 22 - Pray for Pastor Tom as he completes his sermon for Sunday Worship Services.

Saturday, November 23 - Pray for our congregations to experience revival, restoration, and renewal.

Sunday, November 24 - Pray for the Sunday School, Children's Church, Youth Group and Worship Services. Pray for the Lunch Fellowship that will take place at 11:45 a.m. Pray also for the family outreach at First Church.

Monday, November 25 - Pray for the start of a new week as we all deal with all different situations.

Tuesday, November 26 - Pray for safety for all who are travelling this holiday weekend.

Wednesday, November 27 - Pray that we can reflect on this Bible verse *"give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."* 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Thursday, November 28 - On this Thanksgiving Day, pray and thank God for giving us the gift of life.

Friday, November 29 - Pray that we can find unity with one another and work together in Christ's name.

Saturday, November 30 - Pray for FUMC as they prepare for Worship Services tomorrow.

Announcements

Charge Conference • November 17

The *Annual Charge Conference* with our District Superintendent, Debra Brady, is Sunday, November 17 at 4:30 p.m. Both Methodist congregations will share a potluck at First Methodist Church. Bring your favorite dish to share! All are invited and encouraged to attend.

Movie Night November 24 at 2:00 p.m.

Everyone is invited to First Methodist on Sunday, November 24 at 2:00 p.m. for a Movie, Craft, Hotdogs and Root beer Floats. The movie is *The Emperor's New Groove*. Please call the office for more information 784-4232.

At-Risk Ministries Graduation

On Wednesday, November 13, at 6:30 p.m. at Grand Ave, you are invited to join us to celebrate the graduation of our students from The Parent Project and the Teach One to Lead One program.

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 each week.

November Newsletter Deadline

Please send information for the Messenger Newsletter to Judy at judy.bur87@gmail.com. The deadline for the November Messenger is **November 18**. Thank you.

Service of Remembrance • December 1

The *Service of Remembrance* is for those who have lost loved ones. We invite you to come and remember those we have lost and look forward to the future. This service Sunday, December 1 at 2:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary at First Methodist.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Tuesday, December 24 • 6:00 p.m.

At First Methodist Church

We will have one Christmas Eve Service at First Methodist Church this year for Porterville Methodist congregations. Make plans to join us for an inspirational service celebrating the birth of Jesus. Invite family and friends to join you.

Clothes for the Needy

The First Methodist **Clothing Closet** is open on the first Saturday of every month. We are open November 2 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.

Trunk or Treat Thank You

Thank You to all who helped with our recent Trunk or Treat Outreach. We were blessed with donations and helpers. Continue to pray for those who attended.



Over 30 vendors
and local artisans!

P.E.O. PORTERVILLE CHAPTER FU
PRESENTS A

HOLIDAY MARKET

AND SOUP & SALAD LUNCHEON

Nov. 2, 2019
10:00am - 3:00pm

Grand Avenue United Methodist Fellowship Hall
776 W Grand Ave Porterville CA 93257
Email portervillepeoFU@gmail.com for more info

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. Loving Solutions

Thursdays

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

Grand Ave Methodist Calendar

Tuesday, November 12

6:00 p.m. Grand Ave Finance Meeting

Tuesday, November 13

6:30 p.m. Graduation

Sunday, November 17

4:30 p.m. Charge Conference at FUMC

Tuesday, November 19

11:00 a.m. Linda Circle

Thursday, November 21

9:00 a.m. First SPRC Meeting - at Grand Ave
11:00 a.m. Combined SPRC - at Grand Ave
5:00 p.m. Grand Ave SPRC Meeting
6:00 p.m. Trustees Meeting

Sunday, December 1

2:00 p.m. Service of Remembrance at FUMC

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

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, November 2

1:00 p.m. Clothing Closet

Sunday, November 17

4:30 p.m. Charge Conference at FUMC

Thursday, November 21

9:00 a.m. First SPRC Meeting - at Grand Ave
10:00 a.m. Combined SPRC - at Grand Ave

Sunday, November 24

2:00 p.m. Movie *The Emperor's New Groove*
Craft, Hotdogs, Root Beer Floats

Sunday, December 1

2:00 p.m. Service of Remembrance at FUMC



Happy Birthday!

Elon Wright • November 77
Rodelyn Smith • November 8
Dorothy Anderson • November 15
Nancy Nevels • November 26

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 Morell
Organist • Donita Roulsten
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

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344 E. Morton Ave.
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