



First Word

Post Office Box 565

Dinuba, California 93618

559-591-0746

<https://palmumc.org>

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS—HOLY WEEK

“Then Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword back into its place.’ “ –Matthew 26:52

We are about to enter Holy Week. As believers in Jesus, this is the story at the center of our faith. In many ways it is an all too human story, filled with jealousy, pride, betrayal, and failing to live up even to our own expectations of loyalty to Jesus. Yet this story is holy, because Jesus enters it. He too is human, but resists human urges to take revenge or even fight back. He reprimands a follower who tries to defend him with a sword.

This part of the story tugs on my heart today as the nation is reacting to the news of yet another school shooting this week. I confess that I have not been entirely diligent in my Lenten disciplines, forgetting for several days in a row to collect the coins from the directions on the calendar that I invited you to also follow for Lent, then playing catch-up. But the news has not let me forget to contemplate gun violence, as more instances of mass shootings, including school shootings have happened over these weeks. It sickens me that this is true.

It makes me think, we have failed. So many people consider themselves Christians in this nation, yet instead of telling one another to forgo the weapons, so that no more lives are taken, the opposite happens. Yes I know there are bills and ideas of legislations to reduce the ammunition magazines, increase the background checks, make certain kinds of arms illegal like they were before. But all of that feels like chipping away at a glacier with a nail file. Our culture is in many ways tied to violence as the answer, for example saying, to stop a bad guy with a gun you need a good guy with a gun. We have completely forgotten Jesus' reprimand- put that (weapon) away.

But that is the good news of the gospel. We fail. We fail to keep up with the goals we set for ourselves, we sin, we over-imagine our ability to remain loyal to Jesus and fail again.

And God steps in. And God saves us, anyway. God sends us a savior who tells us to put our weapons away, who takes our all too human violence within himself and transforms it, shows us the way of new life. Shows us that death does not have the final say, but God does, in the Resurrection. I believe this good news. I know that in the end, God's ways of life will win out. But I also know for the here and now, it does not bring back the innocent lives needlessly and tragically taken by completely preventable gun violence.

I also believe God calls us to work for God's ways to come about, and the Spirit has been given to us to do just that. So perhaps this season is one to pick up the nail file and start chipping away at that glacier.

May the joy of the resurrection be with you beloved, and may you have the Spirit's empowering to act however God is calling you, on behalf of Life.

-- Pastor Michelle

JOYS AND CONCERNS AMONG OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Please continue to pray for cancer warriors Jacob dela Montanya, Gerard Laquerriere (friend of Pat D.), Linda Gourley (friend of Mary Esmay), Phil Martzen, Isaac (Robert's co-worker), Joe Takeda, John Lown (Andy's father-in-law), Alicia (Brent Sadahiro's friend), Mark Delosantos (friend of Winnie), Jennifer (Clifton) Washington, Chase Glosier, and Tammy Campbell.

Please keep Phyllis Martzen, Jon Clifton, Janice Serios, George Martzen, Carol Rossi-Christianson, Jamie Campbell; Rosalinda Vasquez and family; Winnie, Christine, Richard and Diane Cadiente; Bonnie Morimoto (Liz's cousin), Sivani Lloyd (Mary Esmay's sister), Marcia Williams, Myriline Dogba, Miyeko Cabello, Dianne Young's sister Connie Greenwald, Ruth Kurihara, Terry McKittrick, Bette Crawford, Sandy Hansen, Bill Allen; firefighters, first responders, and health care workers; military personnel, teachers, Dinuba Youth for Christ, refugees, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Puerto Rico, Taiwan, Syria / Turkey, migrants, our country, and Open Gate Ministries in your prayers.

Congratulations to Adelaide Clifton who is expecting a baby brother in July !! Also to Mom and Dad, Andy and Sarah Clifton.

NEWS BITS FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL 2023

ALL 10:00 am IN-PERSON SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES ARE LIVE-STREAMED VIA FACEBOOK. **As we worship in-person, masks and social distancing protocols will be observed out of consideration for the safety of all. Facebook Livestream will be available; see Page Four. Following indoor, in-person services, Coffee Hour snacks will be served in the Social Hall.**

(Church location—438 West Tulare Street; corner Tulare & "P" Streets, Dinuba)

<https://www.facebook.com/PalmUMCDinuba/videos/>

Grace Groups meet on Thursday 3:30 PM every other week via ZOOM, young adults on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 5:00 PM, and Spanish Grace Group on 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 5:30 PM via conference call; in-person Grace Group meets in the church building following worship one Sunday of the month. **For more information contact Pastor Michelle by phone or email.** Old Testament Bible Study convenes on Thursdays via conference call. Ad Council will meet Thursday, April 20, at 5:00 PM on ZOOM.

All-Church Work Day will be Saturday, April 1, 9:00 AM .

Communion will be celebrated on Sunday, April 2, Palm Sunday.

Good Friday service will be held at Palm Church on April 7, 12:00 noon.

April Tobans Susan Yoshimura, Marian Clifton, Ruth Fujinaga, Janice Serios and Dianne Young will serve Coffee Hour on Easter Sunday, April 9, and Birthday Sunday, April 16.

Norma Lozano will serve as Worship Leader on April 2; Philip Martzen will serve on April 16 & 30; Liz Sasaki will serve on April 9 & 23. THANK YOU !!

Join us for "Messy Church" monthly inter-active inter-generational creative worship experience on Saturday, April 15, at 4:30 PM ; masks required for indoor activities. Meal will be provided. Theme is "Love Your World." Co-Leaders are Dianne Young & Melanie Mizuno.

Resurrection Sunday will be celebrated on April 9 with egg-hunt for kids, "Flowering of the Cross," Lenten Offering collection, Coffee Hour, and group photo. (Everyone is asked to PLEASE donate 2 dozen hard-boiled dyed eggs or filled plastic eggs. Also fresh flowers.)

Ikebana Flower Show & Boutique will be held Saturday, April 29, 2:00-4:30 PM.

April birthdays will be celebrated on Sunday, April 16, during Coffee Hour !!

New directories are coming out in May; please let Marian know of any changes.

WAYS TO COMMUNICATE WITH PASTOR MICHELLE

(805) 233-5796

michelle.magee@cnumc.org

My cell phone continues to be the best way to reach me, and please know that you can call me; I would love to hear from you !! Let me know how I can pray for you and if you would like a visit !! (I will continue to wear a mask indoors for the foreseeable future, and I have received the Covid Vaccine.) Mondays continue to be my day off. Please check out our website and Facebook page !!



palmumc.org

facebook.com/PalmUMCDinuba

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

1—Indri Magee 🐱, Jeff Fukushima 2—Desiree Domingo
5—Patricia Martzen 9—Miles Yada 11—Chin Cheak Yu Martzen
12—Cherry Cadiente 13—Pablo Róvere 14—Linda Thomas
15—Paige Mesias 17—Amy Kiritani, Valeria Rodriguez
19—Duane Abe, Frances Leibert 24—Barbara Miller
26—Isaac Godinez 28—Chelley (McKittrick) Gary
30—James Hanada, Scott Shaver



United Methodists can contribute to relief and recovery efforts in Turkey and Syria through the [United Methodist Committee on Relief \(UMCOR\)](#) ; International Disaster Response and Recovery Fund, Advance # 982450; P.O. Box 9068; New York, NY 10087 Donations may also be made toward California flood relief at UMCOR ; California /Nevada Disaster Response Fund ; P.O. Box 980250 ; West Sacramento, CA 95798

Lenten Offering for Winnie's brother, Pastor Leonardo Bactad, Jr, church-planter in the Philippines, will be collected on Easter; it should be designated "Lent Special Giving."

Spare Change Offering for the Local Benevolence Fund has been resumed on every Communion Sunday !! Look for the can at the front of the church on April 2 !!

HANKUS NAGATA AT HER 100th BIRTHDAY PARTY FEBRUARY 26

AIKO TAKEDA AT HER 95TH BIRTHDAY PARTY MARCH 19



LISTEN AND VIEW PALM CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICES
AT 10:00 am ON FACEBOOK LIVESTREAM

[or you can watch a previously recorded Sunday service.](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/PalmUMCDinuba/videos/>

- ▶ If you get the Log-in Window, Click on "Not Now."
When the Live Video appears, click on the red **LIVE** button.

Please leave a Facebook comment or an "Emoji," or a "Like," for attendance purposes marianclifton@verizon.net . THIS IS IMPORTANT !!

GOD AT WORK IN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP !!

Our Ad Board approved continuing the scholarship of funds for books for students at Wilson School for a second school year !! Your generous giving has made it possible; and the students, staff and teachers greatly appreciated it last year. We will again be donating \$250 per grade level, TK/K—6, for a total of \$1750. Donations to the Wilson Scholarship Fund should be designated as Wilson School support.

Additionally, the school's volunteer and visitor protocols are now the same as they were before COVID, so we can resume our reader partner program and start our teacher helper program !!

For more info on any of this, contact Pastor Michelle.

2023 PALM CHURCH ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL **

**Susan Yoshimura---Education Chair, SPRC Chair, Ad Board Chair,
Annual Conference Lay Delegate Alternate

**Jerry Munson—Finance Chair

**Dianne Young—Financial Secretary, Missions co-Chair

**Arthur Anderson—Treasurer

**Marian Clifton—Missions co-Chair, Recording Secretary, Palm Leaf / First Word Editor

**Philip Martzen—Trustees Chair

**Pastor Michelle Magee—Nominations Chair

**Norma Lozano—Worship Chair

Dianne Young—Messy Church co-Leader

Melanie Mizuno—Messy Church co-Leader

Sandy Hansen--Webmaster

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." John 1:1-5