



Palm UMC



February 2024

First Word

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<https://palmumc.org>

### PASTOR'S PONDERINGS—ASHES TO ASHES, DUST TO DUST

"Teach us to number our days." These words come from Psalm 90, a Psalm Terry McKittrick had chosen for his memorial service. It is an honest reminder of our mortality. We do not know how long we get to be on this earth. The tone of the Psalm is one of wonder before God's power and sober contemplation of just how short human life is, in comparison to eternity- "for a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night."

Even so, it seems to our human minds that just fourteen years is much too short for a human life, as we've recently heard Lexi Rodriguez, Katherine's daughter, was hit by a car while crossing the street in Carson City where they relocated to a few years ago, on January 28. (For those who don't know, Katherine and her family were very active at Palm Church before they moved away.) Our hearts break at the sudden loss and such a beautiful young soul being snuffed out too soon. In these situations we want someone to blame, we want to know "why"-- the hardest thing is that often there is no "why," just the fact of our frail human lives, that we are mortals and never know how much of this gift of life we will get to enjoy. That is the reason each year we worship on Ash Wednesday, recognizing that for each of us this will happen, we will be turned back to dust.

But that does not mean life is meaningless or useless-- far from it !! Psalm 90 concludes with a plea to God to have compassion, to satisfy us with steadfast love, for wisdom, for happiness in the days we have, and for God to bless us in what we set out to do. Numbering our days isn't so that we become depressed about how short life can be- but that each day we will live centered in God's grace and live in the ways God wants us to, cherishing our loved ones, giving thanks for our blessings, doing our best to be fair and just and generous before our time runs out. The brevity of life helps us realize just how precious it is. And out of God's love we are able to live, and live well, have joy even among the sadness.

As we pray for Lexi's family, friends and schoolmates, often doing something to make a difference helps us to find meaning in tragedy-- here are some concrete options you are invited to consider:

Katherine and her family have set up a petition for flashing pedestrian lights at the intersection where Lexi was killed that you can sign online at [https://www.change.org/p/implement-a-pedestrian-light-at-the-intersection-of-carson-street-and-nye-lane?recruiter=630468386&recruited\\_by\\_id=c1861c10-a85f-11e6-b0ec-65a153cb8d80&utm\\_source=share\\_petition&utm\\_campaign=share\\_for\\_starters\\_page&utm\\_medium=copylink](https://www.change.org/p/implement-a-pedestrian-light-at-the-intersection-of-carson-street-and-nye-lane?recruiter=630468386&recruited_by_id=c1861c10-a85f-11e6-b0ec-65a153cb8d80&utm_source=share_petition&utm_campaign=share_for_starters_page&utm_medium=copylink)

There is also a GoFundMe to help cover costs for Lexi's funeral at-- [https://www.gofundme.com/f/lexi-rodriguez?utm\\_campaign=p\\_cp+share-sheet&utm\\_content=facebook\\_cta\\_control&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=facebook](https://www.gofundme.com/f/lexi-rodriguez?utm_campaign=p_cp+share-sheet&utm_content=facebook_cta_control&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook)

And if you would like to send a card you can ask Marian or Pastor Michelle for their most recent address.

Please also join us on February 14 at 11:00 AM for our Ash Wednesday service, combined with Reedley First and taking place at Palm Church. If you can't be there I invite you to take time that day to consider God's goodness and the preciousness of life in prayer. And that now in life, and in death, God is always our dwelling place. (Psalm 90:1)

--Pastor Michelle

Pastor Michelle Magee

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

## **JOYS AND CONCERNS AMONG PALM CHURCH FAMILY**

Please continue to pray for cancer warriors Rosa Elias (friend of Lisa Delgado), Linda Gourley (friend of Mary Esmay), Jim Bulls, Robert's co-worker Isaac, Brent Sadahiro's friend Alicia, Liz's cousin Grace Arifuku, Jon Clifton, Jennifer (Clifton) Washington, Chase Glosier, Reggie (Conway) McLean, and Tammy Campbell.

Please keep Kathy Lamb, Phyllis Martzen, Carol Rossi-Christianson, Jamie Campbell, Rosalinda Vasquez and her family, Ramon Oyervidez, Liz's cousin Wayne Morimoto; Marcia Williams, Miyeko Cabello, Dianne Young and her sisters Denise and Connie, Arthur Anderson's family, Dianne's mother-in-law MaryJane Young, Joe and Ruby Takeda, Melissa Rodriguez, Sandy Hansen, Lupe Gonzales; firefighters; health care workers; teachers, refugees, Ukraine, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Taiwan, Israel and Palestine, our country, and Open Gate Ministries in your prayers.

**Average Sunday Worship attendance for January 2024 was 32 !!**

Deepest condolences are offered to friends and family of Rev. George Martzen, who transitioned to the Life Eternal on Tuesday, December 19, in Alhambra, California. Graveside Service at Dinuba Smith Mountain Cemetery will be Friday, February 9, 2023, 11:30 AM, followed by lunch at Palm Church.

Sincere sympathy and love are extended to family and friends of bright, shining star 14-year-old Lexi Rodriguez, who died on Sunday, January 28, in Carson City, Nevada.

## **PALM CHURCH NEWS BITS FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2024**

**ALL PALM CHURCH SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES ARE LIVE-STREAMED VIA FACEBOOK; WORSHIP BEGINS AT 10:45 am. REEDLEY FUMC SUNDAY WORSHIP BEGINS AT 9:00 am EXCEPT WHEN COMBINED, AND IS BROADCAST VIA YOUTUBE LATER.**

Reedley FUMC is located at 1461 East Eleventh Street, corner "E" Street.

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

<https://www.youtube.com/@reedleyfirstumc4393/videos>

As we worship in-person, masks and social distancing will be encouraged out of consideration for the safety of all. Facebook Livestream will be available; see Page Four. Following indoor, in-person services, Coffee Hour refreshments will be served in the Social Hall. (Palm Church location—438 West Tulare Street; corner Tulare & "P" Streets, Dinuba)

Grace Groups meet on Thursday 3:30 PM every other week via ZOOM, young adults on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month at 5:00 PM, and Spanish Grace Group on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays at 5:30 PM via conference call; in-person Grace Group meets every other Wednesday, 10:00 AM, at 780 Harvard in Dinuba. Old Testament Bible Study convenes on Wednesdays at 11:00 via conference call. Ad Council will meet Thursday, February 15, at 5:00 PM on ZOOM.

Join us for "Messy Church" monthly inter-active inter-generational creative worship experience on Saturday, February 17, at 3:30 PM. Co-leaders are Dianne Young & Melanie Mizuno; please let them know if you will be able to help !! Theme is "Let Us Love One Another."

Norma Lozano will serve as Worship Leader on February 4; Philip Martzen will serve on February 11 and 25; Liz Sasaki will serve on February 18.

February Tobans—Norma Lozano, Taye Abe, Marcia Williams, Kathy Lamb, and Cathy Yada -- will serve Coffee Hour on Birthday Sunday, February 11 !!

**PALM CHURCH ANNUAL SOUP, SANDWICH, AND DESSERT LUNCH TO BENEFIT OPEN GATE MINISTRIES WILL BE HELD WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 11:00 am—1:00 pm !! SOUP SELECTIONS INCLUDE CHICKEN NOODLE, MEATBALL, CLAM CHOWDER, AND MEATLESS NAVY BEAN. TAKE-OUT, DINE-IN, OR DELIVERY LUNCH IS \$10.00. CONTACT DIANE DOMINGO FOR DELIVERY, 643-6008. CONTACT MARIAN OR DIANNE YOUNG TO HELP.**

Wednesday, February 14, we will hold a short combined Ash Wednesday service at 11:00 AM at Palm UMC.

**WAYS TO COMMUNICATE WITH PASTOR MICHELLE**

**(805) 233-5796**

[michelle.magee@cnumc.org](mailto:michelle.magee@cnumc.org)

[palmumc.org](http://palmumc.org)

[facebook.com/PalmUMCDinuba](https://facebook.com/PalmUMCDinuba)

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, giving portal, and Facebook page !!

I have received reports of text messages and emails going out in my name asking people to purchase gift cards on my behalf for others. This is a scam. Please know that I would not ask you to do that. We have many official funds to help our neighbors that you can give to; not through gift cards !! Please check the cell number or email of anything suspicious to see if it lines up with my contact information.

--Pastor Michelle



**FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

- 1—Tom Magee, Elisenda Espitia
- 3—Donna Sadahiro 4—Michael Kurihara
- 5—Andy Fern 6—Andy Clifton
- 8—Iris Yamagata 9—Winnie Cadiente
- 10—John Vilorio, Matthew Shaver
- 11—Diane Domingo
- 12—Ricky Pipkin 14—Mark Shaver
- 17—Joe Takeda 18—Judy Hernandez
- 25—Colleen Gray 27—Jessica Serios



Donations of general interest books for the Little Free Library **OR** canned, bagged, or boxed **non-perishable** food items for the Little Free Pantry may be brought to Palm Church any Sunday. Donations of winter-wear for the Reedley FUMC Little Free Coat Closet may be brought to either church any Sunday.



**P.4.**

LISTEN AND VIEW PALM CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICES  
AT 10:45 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](mailto:marianclifton@verizon.net) 834-5135 THIS IS IMPORTANT !!

**GOD AT WORK IN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**

Our church is supplying scholarship funds for books for students at Wilson School for a third school year !! Your generous giving has made it possible; the students, staff and teachers greatly appreciate it. Every grade level receives \$250 for books for students to have, at the teacher's discretion. If you would like to give for the next school year to be able to continue, donations should be designated as Wilson School support. We would love to be able to increase the amount for upper grades as the chapter books are more expensive.

We have re-started the Wilson Reading Partners program this semester, offering extra reading support to selected first graders one hour a week. We would love to have more volunteers join !! (Contact Pastor Michelle or the Wilson school office for a volunteer packet.) Palm Church also “adopted” a Wilson School family with three children, mother and grandmother, for Christmas. We want to bless our neighborhood by partnering with the school, and we ask that you continue to pray for Wilson's staff, students and families.

**2024 PALM CHURCH ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL\*\***

\*\*Susan Yoshimura---Education Chair, SPRC Chair, Ad Board Chair,  
Annual Conference Alternate Lay Delegate  
\*\*Jerry Munson—Finance Chair and Financial Secretary  
\*\*Dianne Young—Missions co-Chair  
\*\*Arthur Anderson—Treasurer  
\*\*Marian Clifton—Missions co-Chair, Recording Secretary, Palm Leaf / First Word Editor  
\*\*Philip Martzen—Trustees Chair, Annual Conference Lay Delegate  
\*\*Pastor Michelle Magee—Nominations Chair  
\*\*Norma Lozano—Worship Chair  
Dianne Young—Messy Church co-Leader  
Melanie Mizuno—Messy Church co-Leader  
Sean Stephens—Webmaster

**“And whatever you do, do it heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.”  
Colossians 3: 23-24, NKJV**



# MESSY CHURCH PHOTOS









