

THE MESSENGER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF RIVERSIDE, 4845 BROCKTON AVE., RIVERSIDE, CA 92506 (951) 683-7831

HOW CAN WE SING THE LORD'S SONG IN A STRANGE LAND? A Message from Rev. J. T. Kim

I remember that Boney M's song "*Rivers of Babylon*," which had been released in the late 1970s. It was popular for many years when I was in college and in the military in South Korea. At first, I loved its unique melody and dynamic beat, and then realized that this song's lyrics were based on Psalm 137.

This Psalm is a lament over the destruction of Jerusalem and their humiliating life of the Babylonian exile.

**By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept
When we remembered Zion.
(Psalm 137:1, NKJV)**

Probably, many of us might feel that our pandemic life is like an "exile" in some ways. Since the lockdown last year, it has been an unusual and strange life for everyone. That is why this lament speaks out to our hearts.

The British theologian and professor N. T. Wright writes, in his recent book entitled,



God and the Pandemic, that we are indeed lamenting over everything in our disrupted lives:

"In a time of acute crisis, when death sneaks into houses and shops, when you may feel healthy yourself

but you may be carrying the virus without knowing it, when every stranger on the street is a threat, when we go around in masks, when churches are shut and people are dying with nobody to pray by their bedside — this is a time for lament" (p. 53).

COVID-19 guidelines have been updated frequently, and I know everyone is tired and almost burned out due to this "exile." With the good news of the vaccines that are being rolled out, we start not only to see a ray of light of hope but also to feel anxious in still waiting. However, our own church member and Medical Doctor Richard Rajaratnam, at the last United Methodist Men's Zoom Gathering, advised us with caution: **"We are not out of the woods yet."**

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My Beloved Church Family and Friends:
I urge you, even implore you, to be patient and hopeful until everyone can safely come back to the sanctuary for in-person gatherings. We are now in the process of transition, and we are on our way.

The exiled Jews wept and lamented, **“How can we sing the song of the Lord in a strange land?”** (Psalm 137:4, New Life Version). We may be still living in this **“strange land,”** not knowing how much longer. However, just as almost all Psalm’s laments eventually turned into the songs of gratitude and praise, I believe we can still sing the song of the Lord in this **“strange land,”** in our more creative and caring ways with your beautiful voices and loving hearts.

Yes, you and I strongly affirm that we are resilient and faithful people of God who are living with the faith in the Resurrected Christ -- always and anywhere! Thanks be to God!

Love and Blessings,
The Rev. J. T. Kim, Pastor

**“FOLLOW JESUS, LOVE
PEOPLE, CHANGE THE
WORLD”**



*In Honor of Kristin Beals, Jonathon,
Melissa and Josie Williams
In Memory of Steve, Denny, and
Doug Beals
by Pat Beals*

*In Memory of Shut-ins
by Hilda DeSilva*

*In Memory of our Son, David
by Bill and Lynn Ashworth*

*In Memory of our Loved Ones
by Roy and Cheryl Riggs*

*In Honor of the Lovekin Family and
the Othon Family
In Memory of Richard Williams and
Laurie Williams
by Pat Williams*

*In Honor of Family and Friends
and in Memory of our Departed Angels
by Paula Kaufhold*

*In Memory of our Parents,
Ed and Norma Laird
and Jim and Sherrie Sargen
by Greg and Lisa Laird*



**UNITED METHODIST WOMEN
APRIL EVENTS**

ALL MEETINGS ARE VIA ZOOM
Invitations will be sent by email prior to the meeting. If you would like to attend and haven't received an invitation please contact Pam Conlin 951-237-5470.

**Almond-Wesleyan Circle - Monday
4-12-2021 at 1:00pm**

**UMW Executive Board Meeting -
Wednesday 4-14-2021 at 1:00pm**

**UMW Meeting - Wednesday
4-21-2021 at 1:00pm**

**Citrus Circle - Tuesday 4-27-2021
at 7:00pm**

UMW Meeting

April's UMW program will be given by Margaret Berger and is called "Persistence in Mission." Please plan on attending.

Compassion in Action

The United Methodist Women teamed up with Church and Society/Missions to provide 48 of these hygiene kits to the United Methodist Church Immigration Rapid Response Team for use near the border between the U.S. and Mexico. Thanks to Lyn Knowles and Cindy Qualtieri for taking the initiative.

"Love does no wrong to a neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

Romans 13:10





United Methodist Women Call for Specific Acts to Promote Racial Justice

The United Methodist Women of First United Methodist Church of Riverside, California, are responding to a call to focus attention on creating racial justice within the community. They seek to examine and dismantle racist systems that persist despite attempts to reform them.

A recent UMW meeting featured Lyn Knowles talking about a webinar about the injustices of mass incarceration. It included a short excerpt from the documentary “13th” by filmmaker Ava DuVernay.

“We had so much reaction to it,” Lyn Knowles said. “We watched very little of it, but spent a good bit of time following the meeting talking about the prison/industrial complex. It was the first time some of the ladies had ever seen a breakdown of incarceration by race.”

The evidence of racism infects our history, from historical redlining practices that divided neighborhoods by color to bank policies that offered home or farm loans to whites but not to people of color. The legacy of those practices multiplies across the generations so that white families tend to build up wealth.

Listen to God’s stirrings as we pray for a church that does not perpetuate white supremacy.

Take action:

- Watch the documentary “13th” by Ava DuVerney, about the 13th amendment and the criminal justice system.
- Read *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo.
- Sign up for action alerts at www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/action.
- Remember that racism is a deeply embedded system of laws and traditions. It is not just a “a few bad individuals.” It impacts all of us.
- Talk to children about race. Buy them books and movies and toys that celebrate many cultures.
- Don’t shy away from conversations about race.
- Examine the assumptions and traditions that might be a barrier to the church reflecting the demographics of the community.
- Support our pastor when he speaks about racism from the pulpit.
- Act intentionally to advocate for equal housing, employment and medical care, as well as equal voting rights.
- Question whether your education left some things out. Seek out new knowledge and model for your children how you wrestle with difficult issues.

Based on a press release by Yvette Moore of the United Methodist Women



UNITED METHODIST MEN'S MEETING

Come Meet Mateo Mamea

The next meeting of the United Methodist Men is scheduled for Sunday, April 11, at 11:15 AM, following the worship service. Our featured speaker will be Mateo Mamea, who has recently joined the staff at FUMCOR as the Director of Children's Ministry and Young Family Outreach Programs.

Mateo will introduce himself and outline his plans for this important ministry at our church. He will update us on his current studies at the Claremont School of Theology and his plans for seeking ordination in the United Methodist Church. We'll get to learn more about his family, including his wife Nidia and Mr. Fizziwig (their new puppy).

The meeting will take place via Zoom, and Pastor Kim will e-mail a Zoom link to the entire congregation prior to the event. Please plan to attend and welcome Mateo and Nidia to our church!

UMM SILENT AUCTION

UMM plans to hold their 2021 Silent Auction this year in May via the internet. If you wish to donate an item, we will arrange to pick it up for you. Just call either Ron Bayer (951) 313-0950 or Daryl Salmon (951) 788-4348. More details will follow, but just know that all FUMCOR Members will be e-mailed the list and photo of each item available for purchase. The bids will be taken by phone and updated during the month of May, and the winning bidders will be notified at the beginning of June.

Proceeds are designated for scholarships for the college-bound members of the congregation. We thank you for your support!





MAY ANNIVERSARIES

Ruben & Robin Renteria 18
 Tom & Tina Fletcher 30

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Sarah Overton-Fraser 1
 Bob Banks 2
 Lynn Ashworth 4
 Margie Baillod 4
 Samuel Britain 5
 Dave Cudney 5
 Emma Speir 8
 Clay Kirkwood 9
 Cindy Lonsdale 10
 Miletta Updegraff 10
 Lee Ann Salmon 12

Jennifer Mahl 13
 Rebel Harrell 15
 Joan Roberts 15
 Roger Murray 17
 Erika Noble 17
 Jonathan Bales 18
 Karen Wilson 18
 Derrick Austin 19
 Genette Sizer 20
 Chandra Roberts 21
 Kasey Cole 23
 Silvie Updegraff 25
 Beth Waddell 25
 Ann Huntington 27
 Jocelyn Williams 27
 Bessie Ridley 30

FUMCOR STAFF

Pastor: Rev. J.T. Kim
Office Manager: Becky Ruiz
Secretary: Stephanie Chandler
Choir Director: Yvonne Flagg
Bell Director: Gayla Lonsbery
Organist: Robert Phillips
Preschool Director: Karen Wilson
Youth Director: Steve Grimes
**Children's Ministry & Young
 Family Outreach Director:** Mateo Mamea
Custodial Manager: Jesse Ruiz
Campus Supervisor: Brad Tomlinson

First Church Riverside has active committees making decisions about missions, church property and finances, the worship experience and fellowship groups. Come be part of the work of the church!

