



## TULARE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

OPEN HEARTS - OPEN MINDS -

OPEN DOORS

# THE MESSENGER

## June 2020

[tulareunitedmethodistchurch@gmail.com](mailto:tulareunitedmethodistchurch@gmail.com)

[tulareumc.com](http://tulareumc.com)

### Our Mission Statement:

To Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World



Allison Byerley likes to say that she was born a Methodist. Her parents, Floyd and Marie Byerley, adopted her from the Methodist Mission Home in San Antonio in November 1962 when she was just seven days old. Two years later they would adopt her sister Lisa. Allison grew up in Houston with her sister, living in the same house in the southeast part of the city. She attended college, graduating from Rice University in 1985.

After college, she went to work in the Information Technology industry. She began as a consultant with Andersen Consulting and then worked as a programmer with Enron. In 1989, Enron outsourced most of their IT professionals to EDS and Allison worked with them until 1999 when she

left to serve as a student pastor and complete seminary.

Allison served her first church in East Texas, near Tyler. After graduating from Perkins School of Theology in 2001, Allison spent a year in England and served as a pastor in the British Methodist Church in the village of Liphook, a village about 50 miles south of London in Hampshire County. Upon returning to the US, Allison served as an associate pastor in northwest Houston for five years. In 2007 she was appointed to FUMC Jefferson and Smithland UMC in northeast Texas and in 2013 she moved to Hawkins, TX.

In 2017, Allison moved to the California-Nevada Annual Conference, serving as pastor in Mariposa, gateway to Yosemite National Park. Allison felt God calling her west and the fruit she has seen in Mariposa confirmed the Spirit's leading.

Allison is not married and does not have any children. She does have nieces. Her sister has two stepdaughters, both married with young children, and twin teenagers Haley and Marissa. You'll hear a lot about the twins. They are successful college students and competitive swimmers.

Allison is proud of them!

In 2019, Allison made contact with her birth families. Her mother and an aunt visited in October, and Allison plans to meet the rest of her maternal family this July.

Allison loves animals and has cats and dogs. Come by and meet Kinsey, Toby, Casey, Colby, and Bailey.

Allison likes movies, is a needlework artist, and loves to read. She also loves Mexican food and is looking for recommendations for good places to eat in Tulare County.





## Mary's Musings

Oh how I have loved serving TUMC! It's hard to believe how quickly the past three years have flown by. In many ways it feels like I have been here a lot longer. I will always cherish each and every one of you, and will lift up a prayer every time you come to mind. I am excited over what the future will hold for you as you grow to love Pastor Allison Byerley. Believe me, it won't take long. I love her dearly myself already. The Lord Jesus brought me to you in your need three years ago, and now your mission and ministry have grown to the extent that you require a full-time in-residence Pastor. I am proud of you for making it possible through your giving for the Bishop to appoint such an experienced and gifted Pastor in Allison Byerley. Together, you will build on what we have been doing during my appointment.

Prayer travels where phone calls, texts, emails, and visits cannot. I will count on your prayers as I begin to serve the people of Galt. Yes, it's true, as of July 1 we are counting on all of you not to reach out to me, and I promise I will not reach out to you – when you feel the urge to connect with me, I am asking that you reach out to Pastor Allison instead. When I feel the urge to connect with you, I promise I will reach out to someone at Galt UMC. At first this may make you sad, maybe even mad, but I know that in a short time it will become natural, and you will thrive. Your thriving in the grace, love, and mercy of Almighty God is all I've ever wanted for you. That, and to be bold in proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. Pastor Allison will lead you in that boldness. She will also take really good care of you.

Blessings of Comfort and Joy,  
Pastor Mary

p.s. Who else has noticed the curious place that we left off in Acts of the Apostles at our final No Barriers Bible Study? We had no way of knowing then that it would be the last time I would be teaching Scripture on Monday nights. That final night we studied Acts Chapter 20: Paul's farewell to the Ephesians after serving among them for THREE YEARS. Strange and completely fitting. While I grieve not being able to finish teaching Acts of the Apostles, ending at that point gives me closure. Thank you Lord!

p.p.s. As you look at my new photo, I want you to notice the fabric on the stole Neva Stevenson made for me. It is batik that I purchased in West Africa over 30 years ago. My husband Boikanyo wore many yards of it as a King's costume for Epiphany. For me, this fabric represents faith, love, and Christian connection across time and distance. Those connected by this fabric are always bound together in Christ's love.



Pastor Mary's last day as our Pastor will be Sunday June 14<sup>th</sup>. She will leave the church at 5:30. Pastor Allison will begin July 1<sup>st</sup>. In case of pastoral emergency between June 15<sup>th</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup> please contact Stephen Leader Claire Grant at (559) 303-6514 or (559) 686-8993.

June 21<sup>st</sup> Preacher: Bob Duncan

June 28<sup>th</sup> Preacher: Greg Smith



# STEPHEN MINISTRIES

## Caring During the Pandemic

**Eric Gong:** During this time of uncertainty and not seeing each other on a regular basis it's never been more important to reach out to members of our congregation. As Stephen Ministers it's important that we give hope and words of encouragement to those who need it the most. I've been finding calling one another on the phone and praying helpful during these changing times. It's been so helpful that often times it's my favorite time of the week. Hearing those recognizable voices on the phone telling me they are in good spirits and hopeful puts a smile on my face. I along with so many others physically miss worshiping in person and seeing those who I love. It's been difficult but we will overcome this and be stronger in faith because of it. I spend the 10 o'clock hour each Sunday listening to Christian music, praying, reading scripture and thinking about those who are on my heart. I pray a mighty blessing that we all soon will be able to meet again in person, praise our Savior and love one another. May God be with you and bless you each and every day!

**Dolores Marcelino:** Being able to talk on phone or text members from church has been a blessing. To be able to reach out and listen to their feelings, emotions and sometimes their worries. For me it also helped take my mind off situations in my life with sick family members. As some of the people I called wanted to see how my family was doing. I felt we got closer and made new friends. Praying for them in the end was something that made them feel more connected to God as if being in church and feeling more at ease. This experience has made me realize I made a good choice becoming a Stephen Minister. The importance of church for me is fellowship and staying connected.

**Bob Duncan:** Our Stephen Ministry training taught us to be Christ-centered as we walk with our care receivers through their trials and difficulties. To say that we're living in circumstances that are beyond our human control is an understatement. We may not understand why this is happening, but God is in control and He knows what each of us is going through and what each of us needs. Share your troubles with Jesus. Trust that His heart will ache with yours and believe that through the insights these hardships bring God is equipping you to do His work by helping others tomorrow.

**Claire Grant:** Upon reflecting on these last months of sheltering, I am grateful for the opportunity to become "telephone friends" with several members of our congregation. Through these weekly chats I feel I have developed a real feeling of connection that I don't believe I had previously. I feel a sense of "gathering in" that has sustained me during this time of crisis. These conversations have helped me draw on my own faith and our church has been a beacon that has guided me during this difficult time. The frequent emails from Pastor Mary have kept me focused on the needs and prayer concerns of our congregation. The Easter Season Devotional Guide with its Soul Focus questions challenge us with thought provoking insights. I thank God for this church and for our Pastor who has led us spiritually through this strange time. We do not know just how the future is going to unfold. So much seems to be beyond our control. I am convinced that all the concerns we have have been placed in the right hands and that as we emerge from this crisis and gain perspective we will be able to see how God has guided through these difficulties.

**Steve Gong:** The past few months of outreach have been quite remarkable. With the current pandemic affecting everyone some have weathered the crisis better than others. Those that reside at care facilities are lonely because of visitation restrictions, but some are making adjustments. Those that are in their own homes are also feeling lonely and some are making adjustments better than others. The amazing thing about making phone contact with these wonderful people is that the Holy Spirit lifts both of our spirits up. You can tell that from the tone of their voice and mine. After missing my call one week, one of my regulars called me instead and “checked up” on me! What a blessing!

**Robin Dung:** When I first drove up to our church after learning the doors would need to temporarily close, it made me a little sad. This has been my church home since I was born. After Pastor Mary asked if Stephen Minister' could help with keeping our family connected I felt a fire being re-lit. The doors may be closed but church is still happening. Keeping connected with all of you has helped us all. It has provided reassurance that even though we may not see each other's faces we feel each other's love. The greatest commandment of all LOVE.

## **Worship During the Pandemic**

### **Spreading the Word**

#### **By Tino Galicia**

It's Saturday 3:30 PM I have a rendezvous with destiny. We meet; my four fellow devotees, the bell ringer, the organist, the musician, the preacher and me the photographer. During this time of coronavirus with its social distancing we resist our urge to hug and shake hands. After a distant oral greeting we form a wide loose circle and pray. Catalina unlocks the organ practices a few chords. She nods signaling that she is ready. I setup my tripod and camcorder. Suddenly the sanctuary reverberates with sweet angelic music. My heart and soul are lifted to heaven. I look around at all the empty pews, I miss you guys. Next Cassel the bell ringer is all set. He strikes the familiar three gongs. Then Landes plays the guitar and sings sweet gospel hymns. They make me so happy. He then reads today's text. Next Pastor Mary delivers the sermon. Though I have to concentrate on the light, the audio levels, focus and framing the shot I am deeply moved and motivated to do better and reach higher. My soul is drawn closer to my living God. I feel privileged to be here and be part of this group. I must now do my part to record, process and upload the video on Facebook and YouTube. It will be viewed and enjoyed by our members and other people on the worldwide web.

### **Praising Our Lord**

#### **By Landes Dung**

Blessings My Dear Brothers and Sisters! I pray all is well with all of you as we near the end of this sheltering in period. I would like you to join me in praising our Lord and Savior. Why? Because He was able to take this pandemic attack from the evil one and physically and spiritually strengthen each and every one of us in a completely new and unexpected way. God has been with us all the way. Showing us that each obstacle that evil sends our way, God has an amazing solution that challenges us to stay faithful and trust Him. These past few weeks God has literally taken me out of my comfort zone to show me that no matter what, God can be glorified and the gospel can be shared in new and exciting ways. Think outside the box of previously normal thinking and ask God to show you what new and exciting way HE can use you to bless others. Just ask and seek in your Bible, Upper Room, Daily Bread or other online daily devotionals. Listen and HE will reveal answers. Thanks and God Bless You, Brother Landes Dung



Sunday school packet materials and cards have been distributed for 8 weeks, since March 29, 2020. Linda V. and Robin continue to make packets and distribute them on Sunday morning. Some deliveries have been

made and now we are mailing out some of the cards. The following is **Robin Dung** insightful views on this important ministry: “What I think is the best thing about the Sunday School Packet Material disbursement is the homeless people stopping by and getting things for their children, who live with them or with relatives. They seem to want to give their children the gift of learning about God. I remember one mom saying she had an eleven year old who loves art work and will be so excited to get this. The people getting breakfast are also giving names and phone contacts of children. We may or may not ever see these kids but, if it’s an offering of love and welcoming to God’s love every week, it’s well worth the extra work!”

Another thought provoking view comes from **Linda Vaughan**: “The goal of handing out packets on Sunday is to let the children know they aren’t forgotten! Whether it is a parent that goes to our church or a homeless parent, we offer them a packet of encouragement to take to their child. The children we don’t know, Robin gets their phone number and gives it to Bonnie. Then, she will call them. Linda G writes notes of encouragement to put in the packets and she had mailed notes telling them we miss them and they are loved. Whatever, the number of packets or notes or calls, it is all about sharing God’s Love!!! Only God knows the impact of these seeds and how they grow.” The members of the educational team need to be commended for their time creating the packets, Linda V, buying all the cuddly teddy bears and generous gifts and treats that she has purchased and handed out. Thank-you to Robin for all of the creative packets and networking with parents of future Sunday school children and youth. Also, thank-you **Bonnie Thiele** for quickly purchasing on Amazon a multitude of dry erase pens to be given to children with a plastic sheet for homemade easel writing while doing their homework. Bonnie has also made phone calls about Sunday breakfast, Monday evening meals, and opportunity to pick up packet and cards. As **Linda Galicia** made the cards for each child and places a proverb verse, an inspirational quote within the card, she also writes notes of encouragement, hope, and love. Each card is prayed over while writing them. While Linda G was giving her granddaughter, Giuliana her card on Sunday, Giuliana was pleasantly surprised with the self-addressed envelopes and turned to her mother and said, “See Mom! All of the church loves me and misses me!” When Linda G heard this comment from her 5 year old granddaughter, she knew all this work was worth-while! It gave her a glimpse of what all the children might think while receiving their packets and cards.



## Delayed Goodbye to Pastor Mary

By Bob Duncan, SPRC Chair

As Pastor Mary's appointment to TUMC draws to a close, a committee was formed to brainstorm some ideas for a going away celebration. Before the committee met, I contacted District Superintendent Debra Brady and asked whether we could meet in the church in groups of ten, with appropriate social distancing, to say our goodbyes. DS Brady denied that request but proposed an alternative. In light of the circumstances we're in, the Conference is going to allow pastors who are leaving their churches in July to return at an unspecified time in late summer or fall for proper goodbye celebrations. Knowing this and considering the logistical difficulties we'd face planning a celebration when we're supposed to stay away from each other, our committee decided to postpone our goodbyes and the formal presentation of any going away gifts until we can do them in a more conventional way on the date to be set by the Conference. I realize that some of you may find this unacceptable and will independently choose to do something right now for Pastor Mary, whether that's a call, a card or a letter. What our committee decided is what we're going to do, collectively, as a church, and has no bearing on what the Holy Spirit moves you to do on your own. Please know that Pastor Mary will place any cash gifts you give her into the offering plate. She has said she would be grateful for any donations in her name to UMCOR, our outreach programs, or any other local programs that support the homeless.

By Evelyn Benson, Finance Chair

While we have heard that other Churches are having financial difficulties during the pandemic, I am happy to report that TUMC is financially stable. Because you have been giving your support, we are able to pay our bills and payroll including funding our fulltime incoming Pastor.



*Congratulations! Now, go out there and change the world!!*



## Scholarship Awards

By Cheryl Santos, Chair

The TUMC Scholarship Committee has awarded **Danella Hill** and **Jayla Gray** each a \$500.00 scholarship. Once we are back to worshipping together we will recognize them in front of the congregation.

Danella Hill plans to attend Stanislaus State University to earn a degree in history and her teaching credentials. She wants to teach History at the secondary level. Jayla Gray also plans to attend Stanislaus State University. She wants to major in liberal studies and become an elementary teacher here in Tulare. Both girls have been very active in the life of our church. **We are proud of you!**

## Graduates

**Seniors:** Jayla Gray, Danella Hill, Anthony Gonzalez

**8<sup>th</sup> Graders:** Nelice Gonzalez, Sierra Amador, Ryland Crook, Nakayla Suarez

## Joining the youth group in July:

Dawson Diaz, Isaiah Gray, Ava Reynolds, Daniel Castellanos



## Birthdays and Anniversaries

1 Megan Bankston	21 Sunday Poston
1 Heione Tautuaa	21 Exavian Castro
2 John Tucker	11 Brenda Brown
3 Lewis Marcelino	25 Troy Garrett
5 Stuart Hitchcock	25 Cali Shelley
8 Patty Colson	26 Sierra Amador
11 Paul Brown	27 Landes Dung
14 Pat Perry	28 Julia Summers
16 Jeffrey Chavez	30 Dave Summers
19 Megan Beltran	<b>30 Ron &amp; Linda Vaughan</b>



Words cannot express how much we appreciate and love the beautiful hand quilted banners made by Bobbi Moore. Thank you Bobbi for your gift to Tulare UMC the banners will enrich always.  
Lynnda Boswell, Worship Chair

### The New Normal at TUMC

Now that we have figured out how to be the Church in the midst of pandemic, our Administrative Assistant Lynnda Boswell is going back to her regular work schedule. She has been putting in many extra hours and days to keep us all connected. Thank God for our Lynnda Boswell! We would not be as healthy as a TUMC family without her. We are going back to keeping scheduled Church Office hours. Our office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 9am – 1pm. If you need to come by the Church Office for any reason, please wear your mask. It is important that we (yep, including the Pastor) refrain from contacting Lynnda outside of Church Office hours unless it is an emergency. (Note from Pastor Mary: We do NOT want to burn Lynnda out before the pastoral transition, do we??)

### Youth in Leadership

Special shout out to **Anaya Gray** for serving on the Staff Parish Relations Committee and being among those people who interviewed Pastor Allison for her position as our Pastor. Anaya offers insights and perspectives in this leadership position that are necessary for the health of our Church.

We also want to thank **Exavian Castro** for his service to our community through his position on Outreach. The teams that provide breakfast on Sunday morning and supper on Monday evenings have been able to count on Exavian's hard work and loving kindness nearly every week.

These two young people are confirmed young people in our Church and their enthusiasm for the Lord is inspiring!

**TULARE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**228 W. Kern Ave.**

**Tulare, CA 93274**

Return Service Requested

PHONE

(559) 686-8523

OFFICE HOURS

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

9:00am – 1:00pm



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

**The people of The United Methodist Church®**

**CALIFORNIA-NEVADA CONFERENCE of the UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**Bishop Minerva Carcaño**

**Debra Brady, District Superintendent**



**TULARE UNITED  
METHODIST CHURCH**

**Pastor Mary Maaga**

Marcelo Escarzaga,

Pastor of Hispanic Ministry

Lynnda Boswell,

Administrative Assistant

Landes Dung,

Music Coordinator/Director

Catalina Daggett, Organist

Andrew Summers,

Technical Services Director

Max Muhlenbrock, Custodian

Julia Summers,

Events Coordinator

**July Messenger articles are due by Sunday June 14<sup>th</sup>**