



## In August

by Paul Laurence Dunbar

When August days are hot an' dry,  
When burning copper is the sky,  
I'd rather fish than feast or fly  
In airy realms serene and high.  
I'd take a suit not made for looks,  
Some easily digested books,  
Some flies, some lines, some bait,  
Some hooks,  
Then would I seek the bays and brooks.



Pastor Burke will be away Aug. 15-23. Contact Pastor Gerardo or Susan in the the office in his absence.

Rally Day, Sept. 8 after worship. See details on page 3.

UWF, Sept. 19 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. All the women of our church will be invited to a presentation by our own Brenda Birrell about her work as Program Director of The Global Uplift Project (TGUP) and Save A Girl. Lunch will be served. Reservations will be required. Stay tuned for details!❖

## Now Better Prepared for Emergencies

Centennial Endowment Funds (CEF) grant report

Steve Wood helped evaluate the church emergency response procedure document as part of a broader team effort on evaluating site security at the First United Methodist Church of Palo Alto. After reviewing the document, Steve was interested in improving and updating the emergency supplies stored on site.

Steve conferred with others and brought forward a specific proposal with equipment and supplies. He also identified a storage location and gained consensus on repurposing the location for emergency supply storage. Trustees supported the proposal and sponsored a CEF grant. The Emergency Supplies grant was approved in the fall of 2023 and Steve has now completed implementation.

The Emergency Supplies location is the outdoor closet in the play yard on Byron St. The emergency supply items include water, basic first aid supplies, flashlights, sanitary supplies and management, some food items, and a few tools. Thank you, Steve, for implementing this project!

It is a good idea to keep some supplies and water on hand where you live also. During a local emergency event, public resources will be limited.❖



## Pastor's Corner



## Dear friends,

Summer is upon us and as I write, the temperature is comfortably in the high 70s. Sitting at my desk, with the fan blowing, I feel grateful to be here. This month is generally quiet here at First Palo Alto UMC with local public schools beginning classes August 14th and 15th, as families and folks get back into the swing of things. Stanford starts the school year more than a month

later, while TRU school holds a week of summer sessions from August 12-16, before starting its fall semester August 29th right here at First Church!

This month's worship series, "First Palo Alto United Methodist Church at the Movies!" is a bit unusual. But I thought it would be nice to look at our religious and spiritual life through another lens, one that seems independent of the church.

Movies were initially created well over 130 years ago; the first films were quite short, a minute long or less, viewed by an individual using a kinoscope, a large box with a keyhole opening. By 1900, technical improvements made longer films possible as well as the ability to more easily project them onto a screen for a larger audience to watch at the same time. By the first decade of the 20th century, movies had become the most popular entertainment in all major cities and were becoming more common even in smaller towns and more out of the way locations. As a result, movies have been a significant part of our culture, as entertainment, as education, and at their best, as inspiration for more than seven generations.

I have selected two well-known films which you are probably familiar with for August. They are "The Wizard of Oz" and "Casablanca." In addition, two other films—"It's a Wonderful Life" and "The Empire Strikes Back"—will be the subjects of sermons later this year. All of these movies are classic, included on the 'best of lists from across the nation and around the world. Two of them were not terribly successful when first released (one did very poorly indeed) while the other two were big hits right away. Each feature strong characters and powerful stories that challenge and transform both the players and the audience who watch their struggles. All four use light as well as dramatic scenes, and use music to drive the story, from "Ding Dong the Witch is Dead" to "As Time Goes By."

Since we will not project these on the screen in the sanctuary, I encourage you to watch the films ahead of time. Find them at your local library or online at Amazon, Hulu, YouTube, or MAX. But if you cannot watch the films beforehand, don't worry. I will fill you in on the storyline each Sunday as we explore the gifts to be found in each of them.

Blessings,

*Pastor Burke*

This month we celebrate Silicon Valley Pride, held Aug. 24-25 in San Jose. 2024 is the 48th year of Silicon Valley Pride and a great time to celebrate with all our LGBTQIA friends.

Sunday, Aug. 25th begins with an 8:45 a.m. ecumenical worship at the First Unitarian Church, 160 North Third St., followed by the Pride Parade, 9:30 a.m., at Julian and Market. Festivities also take place at Cesar Chavez Park at 194 South Market.

Pastor Burke will be attending both events. Questions? Ask Pastor Burke! [svpride.com](http://svpride.com)





Photos by Ben Conway

## Picnics in the Park: The Place To Be in July

by Pamela Cutkosky

Whether the temperature was 92 or 75, it was always pleasant and shady at this year's Picnics in the Park at Mitchell Park. About 40 folks gathered to eat, relax, chat, and shoot off water rockets at our three Thursday picnics.

Many thanks ...

- To our grill chefs: Lucy Tompkin and Scott Thomas, Rick and Diane Allen, Pam and Mark Cutkosky, and Peter Colby.
- To our salad makers: Orlene Fingar, Pastor Karen Paulsen, Ruth Letts and Sylvia, Janet Nicholls, Pastor Burke Owens, Michele Conway, Linda Grossman, Mary Lu Wood, Lucy Tompkin, and Jim Eaton.
- To our dessert providers: Carol Kumer, Emily King, Patty Bellardo, Nancy Larson, Nancy Glaser, Sandra Wilson, and Penelope Spangler.
- To Steve Wood for his homemade soda and to Allen Wood for bringing his water rockets.
- To all who donated to help cover the costs of the picnics!❖



You won't want to miss Rally Day, Sept. 8, when we kick off our fall programming season at First United Methodist Church.

Out on the patio, enjoy a light lunch, visit display tables, and talk with committee representatives to learn what is happening in all our church ministries.

Discover something you want to help with? Signups gratefully accepted!

Date: **Sunday, Sept. 8** Time: **After worship** Place: **On the patio**



REV. DANIEL RICKETTS

After the July sermon about Methodism in America, I learned that Michele Conway's great-great-great-grandfather, Rev. Daniel Ricketts, served the church his whole life. He joined the Methodist Episcopal church at 16, served as class leader for five years, then as local pastor for 12 years, before becoming a circuit rider at the age of 40. He served for over 25 years in 13 different circuits in southeastern Ohio. Bless this saint for his faithful work and sharing the gospel!  
—Pastor Burke

**Did You Know?** August is the only month without holidays. But here are a few special days you can celebrate this month: Aug. 3: National Watermelon Day! Aug. 10: National S'mores Day! Aug. 6: National Water Balloon Day! Aug. 16: National Tell a Joke Day! (See page 10.) Aug. 22: National Be an Angel Day!



## August Worship Schedule At the Movies!

This month we are in the dog days of summer, when Sirius, the brightest star in the evening sky, rises before the sun. The weather is hotter and it can be nice to sit where it's cool, and watch a movie. But watching films does not have to be mindless entertainment! Generally, movies are stories and stories can help us understand our lives more fully, and can even bring us closer to God. Remember, the Bible is mostly stories, and look at how much we learn and realize as a result of its wonderful tales and teachings.

For August I have selected two outstanding films. Both are acknowledged as classics and are in the top 100 list of the American Film Institute. Each is registered as noteworthy by the Library of Congress. Most importantly, each has the power to inspire, to teach, and to entertain. So for a really, really, good show, watch the films ahead of time if you can and, even if you can't watch them, come to church this month!

I will be away the third Sunday of the month on vacation with Caroline and the fourth Sunday will find me at Silicon Valley Pride, leading an ecumenical worship service and taking part in the parade in San Jose. I am thankful that Rev. Karen Paulsen (Aug. 25) and Timothy Loewen-Elofson from Los Altos UMC (Aug. 18) will fill the pulpit in my place.

August 4	Holy Communion Sermon: The Wizard of Oz (1939 MGM) Scripture: Psalm 82
August 11	12th Sunday after Pentecost Sermon: Casablanca (1941 Warner Brothers) Scripture: Romans 8:1-9
August 18	13th Sunday after Pentecost Guest preacher: Timothy Loewen-Elofson, LAUMC Scripture: 1 Kings 2:10-12, 3:3-14
August 25	14th Sunday after Pentecost Guest preacher: Rev. Karen Paulsen Sermon: Feeding a Crowd Scripture: Luke 9: 12-17



## Take-Aways from Annual Conference

The 176th session of the California-Nevada Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church met June 7-10 this year in Sacramento. Clergy and laity from the United Methodist churches in Northern California and Nevada gathered together for this session. Rev. Burke Owens and designated lay members Diane and Rick Allen attended as representatives of the First United Methodist Church of Palo Alto.

Some take-aways from the Northern California-Nevada Annual Conference for our local church include:

- Pastor Burke Owens was reappointed to our church for the church year starting July 1, 2024.
- Pastor Sepuloni Feleunga of the Palo Alto First Tongan United Methodist Church was ordained as an Elder and a member in full connection.
- The conference recommends every church study the Social Principles approved by the General Conference after 12 years of worldwide input and revision.
- The conference recommends every church study the implications of the proposed constitutional amendments to regionalize the United Methodist Church. Our Annual Conference will be voting on these regionalization amendments in 2025.

The purpose of this annual meeting is to worship together, make decisions regarding conference budget and procedures, and celebrate milestones such as ordinations, retirements, and lives of clergy and spouses who have died in the past year. This year we had the additional joy of hearing about the May 2024 UMC General



Cheers for Another Year! Celebrating Pastor Burke's reappointment with cake on June 30 in Fellowship Hall. Photo by Diane Allen

Conference which met in April in Charlotte, North Carolina.

After worship June 30 at FUMCPA, Pastor Burke and Diane and Rick Allen presented a summary of Annual Conference activities. Emily Allen, a delegate to General Conference, presented some of the significant votes taken at the April worldwide session of General Conference. ❖

The Christ Church Cathedral Choir concert on June 30 was amazing! A joy to hear such divinely celestial music in our sanctuary from a choir formed 500 years ago. Many thanks to the Music Series team, as well as volunteers and office staff who assisted. Photo by Burke Owens



## A Celtic Prayer

Bless this church and those within

Bless our giving and receiving

Bless our words and conversation

Bless our hands and recreation

Bless our sowing and our growing

Bless our coming and our going

Bless all who enter and depart

Bless this church, your peace impart.

## Green Notes

by Nancy Olson

Here's a tasty way to fight climate change: prevent food waste!

In July 2021, 26% of Palo Alto's residential garbage was food that went bad and was thrown away. Preventing food waste saves more than landfill space—it is one of the top ways to reduce greenhouse gases. To promote programs that supported the city sustainability goal, the City of Palo Alto added a Compost program to the existing curbside garbage and recycling programs.

This new program made it easy for residents to dispose of unwanted, uneaten food as well as peels, shells, bones, food soiled paper, and yard debris. This material would then become high quality compost available free to residents for improving yards and gardens.

Unfortunately, many residents do not use this handy and environmentally beneficial program, instead continuing to put food related items into the "garbage." 135 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions are created by the food we never eat.

The United States throws away roughly 35% of our total food supply each year. It turns out one reason so much perfectly usable food goes to waste is the current patchwork of date labels used across different food products, which can often be more

*continued on page 8*

## Camp Firelight VBS: A Day Full of Fun, Faith, and Fellowship



by Pastor Gerry

Camp Firelight Vacation Bible School (VBS) was a great success, filled with laughter, learning, and lots of love. Seven wonderful children joined us, spending a memorable day exploring the theme "Trusting God in Every Situation."

Our day was filled with engaging Bible stories that brought to life powerful lessons of trust. We delved into the story of Jacob from the Old Testament, learning how he trusted God on his journey. In the New Testament, we learned about Jesus calming the storm, showing us that we can trust Him even in the scariest moments.

One of the highlights of the day was our water balloon games, which perfectly reinforced our lessons about trust. The kids had an absolute blast, and it was wonderful to see them working together, laughing, and supporting one another. This hands-on activity helped them understand that just like they needed to trust each other, we all need to trust God in every situation.

We enjoyed some delicious treats, including pizza and, of course s'mores that added a sweet touch to our camp experience. And what's a camp without a big tent? The kids had a fantastic time playing and bonding inside our big camp tent, making the day even more special.

Our young participants learned by heart the VBS theme verse, Psalm 56:3: "Whenever I am afraid, I put my trust in God." It was heartwarming to hear them recite this verse with confidence and joy, truly embodying the spirit of the day. (See VBS photos on page 7.)

### Thank You

None of this would have been possible without the help of our amazing volunteers. A huge thank you to teachers Pam Cutkosky and Juana Reynosa for their incredible work with the crafts, making each project fun and meaningful for the kids. We are also grateful to Rev. Ana Espinoza and Rev. Burke Owens for their assistance in all activities, crafts, Bible stories, and games. Special thanks to Mike McCartney for preparing the wonderful gift bags that the kids took home, filled with goodies and memories from the day, and Pastor Ana for bringing coffee to keep all the volunteers going.

Thank you to all the parents who trusted us with their children. Your support and trust mean the world to us, and we hope that your children had as much fun as we did.

Thanks to everyone for your support and prayers. We look forward to many more adventures and opportunities to grow in faith together. ❖



## Camp Firelight VBS

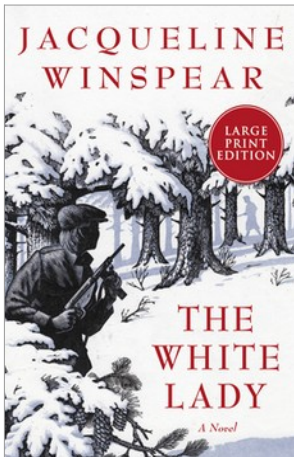
July 13, 2024

Photos by Ana Espinoza (top and right) and Burke Owens (lower two)



# Church Library Starts Large Print section

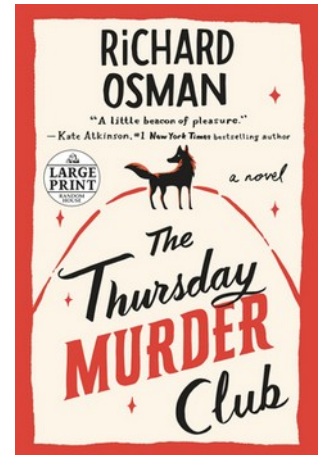
by Char Cutkosky



We're starting a Large Print section in the First Church library! Here are a few of the first books we've ordered for this new section:

*The White Lady* by Jacqueline Winspear (historical thriller)  
Former WWII spy Elinor White must use all her expertise to protect her community from violent London street gangs.

*The Thursday Murder Club* by Richard Osman (mystery)  
Four friends from the same retirement village form a true crime "unsolved mysteries" discussion club, but when a local developer is found dead, they must put their sleuthing skills to the test.



*The Women* by Kristin Hannah (historical fiction)

Follows a young combat nurse and her colleagues during the Vietnam War.

*Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus (historical fiction)

After struggling in the male-dominated field of 1960s chemical research, Elizabeth Zott creates America's most popular cooking program, demonstrating chemistry in the kitchen and challenging the status quo.

Do you have a subject or genre you'd like to see in the Large Print section? Email Char at [charlotte@firstpaloalto.com](mailto:charlotte@firstpaloalto.com). ❖

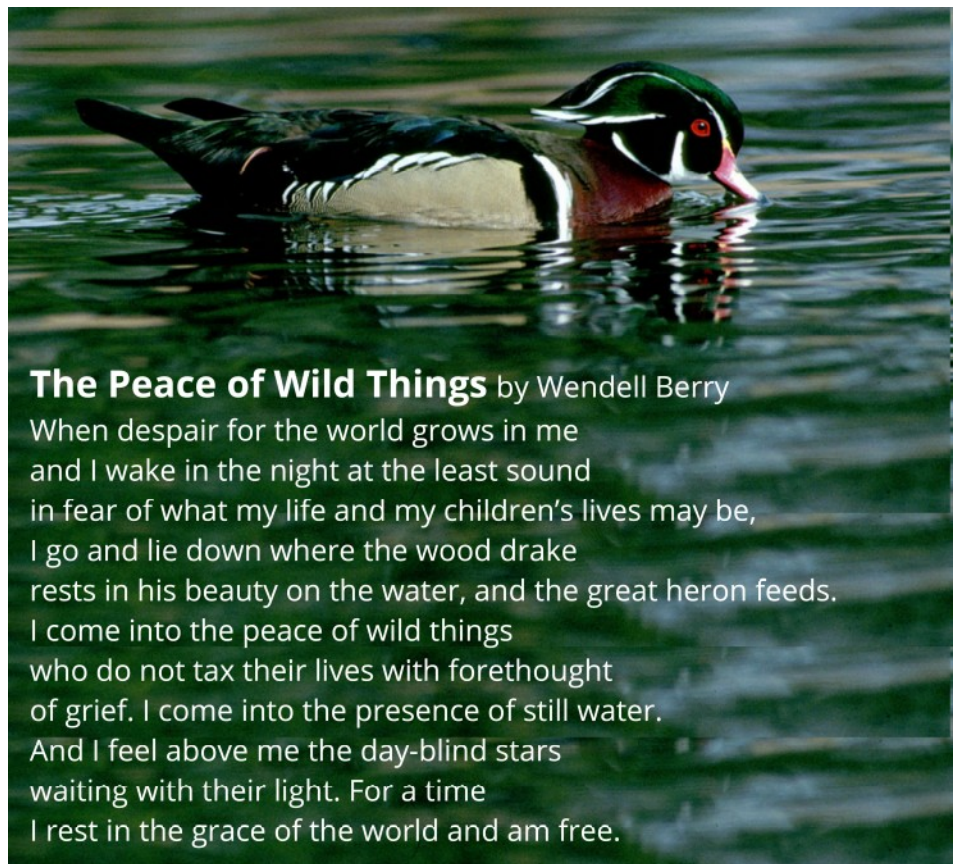
## Green Notes from page 6

confusing than helpful to the consumer. Think of how many different terms you see on food right now—*sell by*, *best by*, *use by*,  *freshest on*, *expires on*—and a handful of others.

In most cases, if not all, there is no indication that after such date, the food is still useable, safe to eat, and nutritious. If it isn't "pretty," it still makes a tasty stir fry or yummy addition to stew or soup. Search websites for recipes using leftover ingredients.

Help reduce food waste and you will be helping reduce greenhouse gases. ❖

Wood drake. Photo by Tim McCabe/SCS



## **The Peace of Wild Things** by Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world and am free.



# Hotel de Zink Has Another Successful Year at FUMCPA

by Nancy Glaser

Hotel de Zink has been hosted annually in our church each June for many years. The program has remained consistent since it started, except for the years of COVID. We provide sleeping space and meals for formerly homeless adults who are well on their way to an independent life. LifeMoves provides all the services needed for these participants to move forward with their lives.

Many people over the years have been served by the steadfast generosity of our church congregation and the First Tongan congregation.

Thank you to our volunteers who managed the program and made our annual hosting this year a big success. Thank you as well to all who provided the delicious and much appreciated evening meals and weekend breakfasts. Please know that your participation made a big difference in many lives.

**Weekly Team Captains:** Pam Cutkosky, Linda Grossman, Mike McCartney, Emily King

**Welcome Bags Preparation:** Nancy Olson, Brenda Birrell, Bernice Smoll, Caroline Owens, Debbie Krueger, Janet Nicholls, Kathy Haffner, Kathy Rose, Patty Bellardo, Ruthie Waters

**Trustee:** Steve Wood

**Staff:** Susan Stephens

**All Around Coach:** Pastor Burke Owens

**Meal and Breakfast Providers:** Alicia Breen, Azadeh Mokhlessi, Brenda Birrell, Carol Kumer, Diane Gainer, Emily King, Feleunga family, Gladys Kalas, Ifoni and Oliveti, Janet Nicholls, Karen Paulsen, Lou Bellardo, Lucy Tompkin, Lynn Gibbons, Marilyn Bauriedel, Mateaki group, Mele Kulu, Michele Conway, Mira and Mo, Orlene Fingar, Paea and Lina, Pamela Cutkosky, Paula and Tevita, Peter Colby, Phyllis Sherlock, Sandra Florstedt, Sandra Wilson, Sarah Kwon, Sonia and Heamapo, Stephanie Zeller, Suliana and Blue, Tim Crockett, Tongan Youth (twice!).❖



Ruthie Waters and Brenda Birrell delight in the discovery of a missing Eleanor Daley piece of music as they continue their summer effort to organize the two music libraries in the basement. Photo by Pamela Cutkosky

## CONCERT NOTES

On Aug. 24 at 3:30 p.m., the Northern California National Taiwan University Alumni Chorus

presents “Neither Rain nor Shine.” Under the direction of Fang Yushan, this year’s annual performance is part of a series of events celebrating the 60th anniversary of the founding of the National Taiwan University Chorus. Come and let the beautiful harmonies of the choir help you stop for a moment and remember your past and go forth living calmly in the world. Tickets available online at <https://buy.stripe.com/4gwdUTfs660p1oc5km>.❖



# AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES AND BIRTHDAYS



8/05 Mo Olson & Chris Friesen,  
24 years

8/03 John & Louise Pencavel,  
46 years

8/07 Christina Bellardo & Kyle  
Trammell, 14 years

8/08 John & Coral Baglin, 54 years

8/13 John & Elsa Nimmo, 47 years

8/14 Mark & Pam Cutkosky,  
42 years

8/15 Carl Herbert & Stacy Paz,  
20 years

8/16 Doug & Ellie Norris, 66 years

8/16 Jesse Fifita & Mele Teu-  
Fifita, 10 years

8/23 Deb & Christopher Martin,  
21 years

8/01 Alice Peterson

8/01 Jennifer Blackburn

8/01 David Blackburn III

8/01 Mere Bikai

8/02 Gabriella Herbert-Paz

8/06 Jim Van Horne

8/10 Linéa Stewart

8/11 Frank Rahn

8/12 Robert Day

8/12 Tim Breen

8/13 Griffin Camens

8/14 Sarah Perry

8/16 Allen Wood

8/17 Mike McCartney

8/20 Deb Martin

8/22 Carol Gleason

8/22 Denise Blase

8/23 Kathleen Martin

8/27 Debbie Anderes

8/28 John Duhring

8/28 Louisa King

8/29 Jeff Perry

## Back-to-School Laughs

Why was the arithmetic book so sad? *It had too many problems.*

What school supply is in charge of the classroom? *The ruler*

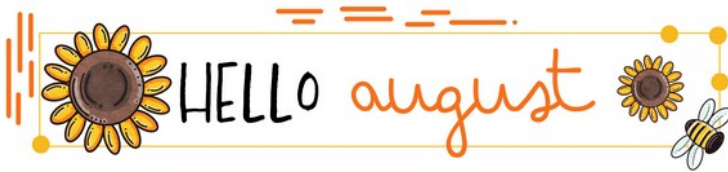
What do English teachers make for breakfast? *Synonym rolls*

Why doesn't the school library have a clock? *It tocks too much.*



The Finance Committee thanks you for your generous and gracious support and requests that you continue to keep your pledges current. Please direct inquiries to Lou Bellardo: [lou@bellardo.com](mailto:lou@bellardo.com).

June 2024 Income and Expense Summary (DRAFT)	June 2024 Actual	Actual YTD 2024	Budget YTD 2024	Budget Annual 2024
Income				
Total Member Giving	15,488	172,562	212,512	407,617
Total Income All Other Sources	21,092	145,932	125,912	273,189
Total Income	36,580	318,494	338,424	680,806
Expenses				
Conference Tithe	3,092	30,448	32,500	65,000
Council on Ministries	536	7,651	17,559	40,050
Staff Parish Relations	26,300	178,456	203,325	425,732
Office and Finance	2,008	8,825	9,981	20,100
Board of Trustees	21,645	94,768	107,347	176,150
Total Expenses	53,581	320,148	370,712	727,032
Excess (Deficit) of Income over Expense	-17,001	-1,654	-32,288	-46,226



Monday–Friday, La Comida, 11–1 p.m., ongoing

- 6 Staff Parish Relations, 7 p.m. (Zoom)
- 13 Trustees, 7:30 p.m. (Zoom)
- 20 Insights deadline for September issue  
Finance, 7:30 p.m. (Zoom)
- 27 Church Council (Zoom)
- 29 TRU School first day of classes

**From Pastor Burke ...**

I will be away Aug. 15-23. While I will occasionally check my emails, etc., please contact Pastor Gerardo for prayers and care, and contact Susan in the office with any church business needs. Thank you!



Our electronic giving page is always open! Give with a few clicks at [firstpaloalto.com/giving](https://firstpaloalto.com/giving) or text Give to 1-650-376-6784 for a link with instructions. Your generosity makes our mission possible. Thank you!

**Donate**

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

→ **Masks are recommended for in-person activities.** Some activities meet online via Zoom. See e-news for more details.

→ Church office hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Doors are kept locked. Please phone the office or ring the electronic door bell to be admitted. **Masks are recommended.**

**Sundays**

- 9:30 a.m. Summer Choir rehearsal
- 10:45 a.m. Worship, in person and live-streamed. Check [firstpaloalto.com](https://firstpaloalto.com) or Friday e-news for the link.
- 11:45 a.m. Snack 'n Chat
- 12:15 p.m. Couples Group (1st & 3rd Sundays)
- 5:00 p.m. Fellowship Friends (schedule varies)
- 6:00 p.m. Covenant Class (Zoom)

**Mondays**

- 7:00 p.m. Social Action movie discussions (Zoom) See e-news for details.
- 7:00 p.m. Fiume di Musica rehearsal
- 7:15 p.m. Bible Study (Zoom)

**Tuesdays**

- 9:50 a.m. Walking Group (offsite). See e-news.
- Noon Current Affairs fellowship (Zoom)

**Wednesdays**

- 7:00 p.m. Upstream Contemporary Worship (Zoom)

**Thursdays**

- 1:00 p.m. Call to Prayer

**Information for the next issue of the Insights newsletter is due August 20.** Photos of church events are accepted at any time. Include photographer's name, date of the photo, and a brief description of the event. Everything is subject to editing. Please send your submissions via email to Insights Editor Michele W. Conway: [insightsfirstpa@gmail.com](mailto:insightsfirstpa@gmail.com) or bring them to the church office. Thank you!



**FIRST PALO ALTO**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

## FIRST PALO ALTO UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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**Next INSIGHTS deadline: Aug. 20**

Palo Alto Festival of the Arts, August 2023  
Photo by Burke Owens

