



#sierramadrestrong

FEBRUARY 2025



# THE TRYLON

SIERRA MADRE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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## Firestorm – January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025



*Pastor Jae took this photograph – looking north on Michillinda Avenue at Montecito – the corner of our parking lot.*

## A Message from PASTOR JAE

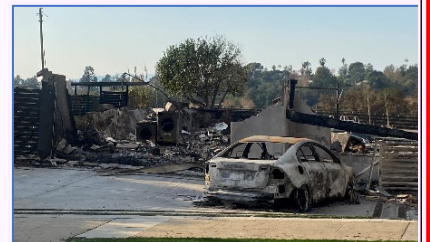
### *“Through the Fire, Together in Faith”*



Recently, our community faced a disaster that shook us all—the wildfires that swept through our neighborhoods, Altadena, North Pasadena and Sierra Madre, leaving behind a trail of destruction and grief. It began on the evening of January 7 in Eaton Canyon in the San Gabriel Mountains, and quickly spread with the windstorm. As soon as the evacuation order was issued, there was no time to linger—we had to leave our homes behind, grabbing what little we could and praying for the rest. The fire has burned approximately 14,000 acres. An estimated 9,400 structures — homes, schools, houses of worship and businesses — were destroyed, resulting in at least 17 deaths. It’s hard to put into words the emotions of these past days, but let me share a glimpse of what I witnessed.

On Wednesday morning after the fires hit us, I made my way back to church, my heart weighed down with concern. Driving through Altadena and Hastings Ranch, the devastation was overwhelming. Some houses had been reduced to ashes. As I made my way through familiar streets, searching for the homes of our fellow church families, my heart ached at the sight of such devastation. Yet, I also found moments of unexpected relief—many houses stood miraculously untouched.

I felt a deep need to check on Joe and Peggy’s home. As I approached, the devastation around them was overwhelming. The house next door had suffered severe fire damage, and the homes just westward all burned down. But then there it was—Joe and Peggy’s house—standing, unharmed. I was deeply relieved.



Then, as I stood there at a loss, torn between sorrow and thankfulness, I noticed one of the neighbors standing before a smoldering house. She was wrapped in a blanket and introduced herself as Michelle. Her home was gone.

It struck me how raw moments like that can feel. Michelle, standing in front of her burned-down home, seemed to have already shed all her tears. She spoke calmly, as if she had come to terms with her loss. Meanwhile, I found myself struggling to hold back my tears. Perhaps it was the weight of witnessing such profound loss. Moments like this show us how human we really are—the weight of loss, the fragility of life, and the surprising strength some people show in the face of devastation.

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How do we move forward from this devastation? What immediate actions do we need to take for relief and recovery? Thankfully, World Central Kitchen stepped in for free lunch. In response to the do-not-drink tap water notification alert, our church also stepped in, working in partnership with Pasadena Frist United Methodist Church for clean water supplies. Our church volunteers welcomed visitors, offered listening ears, and created a small post of service and listening. It was a busy week, and most of us felt exhausted—but in that exhaustion, we found blessing. God turned our church into a place of hope in the middle of this fire crisis. I am thankful. I am proud.

*"Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing'" (Matthew 25:34-35).*



What do you think truly matters in times of crisis? What would you hold onto in moments of real challenge? Maybe this is a time to pause and reflect. Standing together with them, we learned what we are to be. What I saw and experienced was more than just a community—it was the kingdom of God in action. In times of challenge, the true essence of the church was revealed. I saw again why God calls us to build community—because the Bible, the kingdom of God is the very heartbeat of Jesus' ministry.

*"Bear one another's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).*

This is the conviction that I learned. In loss and challenge, the kingdom of God comes alive when we care for one another. As we rebuild, let's be that community—bearing burdens, sharing hope, and shining His light. This is what it means to be the body of Christ. In the ashes, we found purpose. In the darkness, we became light. This is who we are. This is what we do. I am grateful.

Standing together in Christ,

Pastor Jae Lew

## **FEBRUARY Lectionary Readings:**

February 2	Isa. 1: 2-9; 1 Cor. 13: 1-13; Luke 4: 21-30
February 9	Isa. 6: 1-8; 1 Cor. 15: 1-11; Luke 5: 1-11
February 16	Isa. 17: 5-10; 1 Cor. 15: 12-20; Luke 6: 17-26
February 23	Gen. 45: 3-11, 15; 1 Cor. 15: 35-38, 42-50; Luke 6: 27-38

## **PSALMS for February:**

February 2	Psalm 71: 1-5
February 9	Psalm 138
February 16	Psalm 1
February 23	Psalm 37: 1-11, 29-40

## **Pastor Jae's Sermon titles and Worship scripture for January**

February 2	Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany <i>"Feeling Unworthy?"</i> Jeremiah 1: 4-10
February 9	Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany <i>"From Shallow to Deep"</i> Luke 5: 1-10
February 16	Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany <i>"Building on Solid Ground"</i> Luke 6: 17-26
February 23	Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany <i>"From Pain to Purpose"</i> Genesis 45: 4-8



**Coming March 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**Fat Tuesday on Sunday**  
**breakfast – after Worship**

## SARAH CIRCLE BOOK CLUB

The **February** meeting will be held on Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, at 12:30 p.m. at the residence of Sally Follett.

**This was posted on Facebook by Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank,  
kindly shared by Rev. Sharon Snapp-Kolas!**

Dear Preacher,

This past week I drove into Altadena to see the church, Altadena UMC. As I walked around the front edges of the property, I saw the devastation that comes when a town is burned down. My heart paused at grief for a bit as I stood there. So much ministry and so many gospels.

Messages have been proclaimed from this place. I did my best to hold back the tears, though my heart and soul was filled with silent tears.

A guard came by and asked if we were ok. I let him know this was my church. I told him I was the bishop, not the pastor, but that didn't seem to matter, just holding on to the words: "This is my church."

And he said, "I'm sorry for your loss." He stood near and listened, and comforted, and kept us safe. He gave us as much time as we needed.

As we were getting ready to leave I noticed a sign that was hung on the wall to the side parking lot entrance. It said:

Chartered 1886

"By faith, we've come this far.

With hope we are trusting in God's promise for the future."

The sign survived the fire. It is a message of hope for the future of this church to the people who lost their town. We trust. We know of God's promises. And we know Who holds the future.

Tomorrow you will be speaking a prophetic word of hope and justice to God's people gathered around the world. They are thirsty to hear it. They are hoping for the promise of a better day, a kinder, more loving way to be community. You are there for just this moment so don't hold back now! God has given you the words, the pulpit, and the people. So let it rip! I will be praying for you in your very important role in society.

Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank  
(Posted January 25, 2025)



# WORLD CENTRAL KITCHEN COMES THROUGH!



Sally Follett doing an excellent job directing traffic!

Yang Lew, Jill Schofield, Ann Dechairo Marino and Cindy Crismer, hard at work!



We collect food donations on the first Sunday of every month, to be distributed to local food banks.

## Please Note:

The food banks to which we send your donations **will not accept** food in opened containers or with expired 'use by' dates. Please just throw them away rather than bringing them to First Sunday.



## Generosity is found in all generations!



Shown here at left with his mother Yojin Kim, Atticus went through his toy box and gathered toys to give away at the food truck / donation center.

The little girl at right was very downcast until Pastor Jae called her over and offered her a new doll. He got a smile!



At left, seems like a deep conversation, with Jill Schofield, Yang and Shirley Lew and Ann Dechairo Marino



World Central Kitchen is a charity founded in 2010 by Chef José Andrés, who travelled to Haiti after the devastating earthquakes to feed the survivors. It is an A+ rated charity according to CharityWatch, which spends 96% of donations on programs rather than overhead, and can raise \$100. from a \$2.00 donation.

## HOME CARE AVAILABLE

**Maria Luna**, a member of our church, is available. She does personal care for women or men. No housework, and no less than 5 hours a day.

Maria's contact info is in your church directory, or you may contact Pam in the church office to get in touch with Maria for her rates and services.



**Sarah Circle**  
**Book Club meets**  
**on Fourth Fridays**

**Sally Follett's**  
**house**



Eaton fire rises over hill behind Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center in Sierra Madre. Jan. 7, 2025  
(Courtesy photo by Father Febin Barose, CEO and director of Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center.)

## CARD CREATION

meetings will be announced.

Call Sally Follett if you want to meet her individually to make cards.



## Celebrating FEBRUARY Birthdays

- 2 Rose Hernandez
- 9 Amy Crismer  
Tracy Crismer
- 18 Millie Mittleman
- 19 John Snyder-Walkiewicz
- 27 Jonathan Nieto



**The Church**  
**Office is open**  
**Monday through**  
**Friday from 9 am**  
**to 1 pm. You**  
**can also contact**  
**us at our email**  
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**“I can do all things through him who  
strengthens me.” Philipians 4: 13**

# February 2025 SUNDAY

## Sierra Madre United Methodist Church

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MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

**Abbreviations**  
LL = Library Lounge  
SH = Sierra House  
SHCR = SH Conference Room  
HH = Hartzell Fellowship Hall  
WC = Wesley Chapel

	27	28	29	30	31	1 <b>MEN'S PANCAKE BREAKFAST - LL - 7:30 a.m.</b> <b>CAF POTLUCK</b>
2 Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany 9:30 a.m. - Worship 11:00 a.m. - Coffee Fellowship	3 HAPPY NATIONAL GOLDEN RETRIEVER DAY! 	4	5  WESTERN MONARCH DAY	6	7 	8 
9 Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany 9:30 a.m. - Worship 10:30 a.m. - Coffee Fellowship 	10	11 	12 	13	14 	15
16 Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany 9:30 a.m. - Worship 10:30 a.m. - Coffee Fellowship	17 Church Office Closed 	18 <b>FINANCE COMM.</b> 4:00 p.m.	19	20 	21	22 
23 Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany 9:30 a.m. - Worship 10:30 a.m. - Coffee Fellowship	24	25 	26	27 	28 <b>SARAH CIRCLE</b> 12:30 p.m. <b>Sally's House</b>	1