

# The Outlook

WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

"Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors"

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Anne Schlesinger, Pastor

June 21, 2023

## 10:30 a.m. Worship on Facebook and In-Person

June 25: Genesis 21: 8-21, Matthew 10: 24-39, "Tell it in the Light"

July 2: Genesis 22:1-14, Matthew 10: 40-42, "Quenching a Thirst"

July 9: Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67, Matthew 11: 16-19, 25-30 "Taking the Yoke"

Anne Schlesinger, preaching

## ♫ A Note from the Pastor

***See, I am doing a new thing!***

***Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?***

***I am making a way in the wilderness***

***and streams in the wasteland.—Isaiah 43: 19***

Isaiah 43:19 was the scripture theme for the 175th Session of California/Nevada Annual Conference (ACS) attended by Rev. Alice Oberg, Bill Blair, Linda Ramirez, me, and over 900 other United Methodists. It is always a joy for me because I get to see hundred of friends and colleagues I see only once a year. This year was especially joyful because 1. I didn't have to drive to Sacramento for the second year in a row, and 2. I got to participate in the ordination service. There was a lot of work accomplished as well, including the "fixing of appointments." Each year clergy is appointed to church, and I am pleased to be able to serve Bakersfield Wesley another year.

The legislative work included a variety of items ranging from business we do every year, such as approving the conference budget, to an item requesting our action on an event less than a week old. Some of the work was easy and happy, other work was necessary but quite difficult. You can view the entire legislative packet here, (<https://calnev-email.brtaapp.com/files/acs+2023+legislative+packet.pdf>) minus the two "late items" which will be part of the report below. I will share the highlights.

We adopted the Core Teams recommendation of a Conference vision statement: "Following Jesus, Thriving in Community, Healing the World." Some of that healing, however, included some churches in our conference disaffiliating from the denomination. It is hard when healing includes broken relationships. We approved all six of the requests for disaffiliation. The following churches will leave the denomination on August 1, 2023: Anderson Trinity UMC, Firebaugh-Mendota UMC, Montague UMC, Riverdale

UMC, and Weldon UMC. Battle Mountain UMC will disaffiliate as of December 1, 2023. Four other churches in our Conference have closed due to shrinking membership and shrinking revenues: Jamestown UMC, Kerman UMC, Lindsay UMC, and St. Paul's UMC in Vacaville have closed. One delegate reminded the conference that the United Methodist Church grew from planting small churches and asked leadership to dream up effective methods for keeping small churches open. Bishop Dyck referred that recommendation to the core team. The recommendations to approve church closures and disaffiliations were presented on the same day were heard a report from CONAM, the Conference Committee on Native American Ministries. This committee looks into the government schools that took Native children from their homes in the 19th and 20th centuries, trying to eradicate Native culture. Although the extent of Methodist involvement is not well documented, it is clear that our church has at least some culpability. These discussions were very difficult and were followed by some time of lament.

In happier news, under direction of the Core Team, conference approved the creation of the Conference Committee on Children and Family Ministries with the intention of creating a culture of welcoming children and families at every level of church life. We made recommendations to go to the next General Conference—still called the 2020 conference, but slated to happen April 23 to May 3 next year in Charlotte, North Carolina. These recommendations call on the General Conference to keep LGBTQIA+ members, clergy, and their allies safe from harm until the language in The Book of Discipline is changed to allow them to serve God safely without facing trial for performing marriages or serving in ways that are denied in the 2016 Discipline. Another recommendation asks that discriminatory language be removed from both The Book of Discipline and from The Social Principles. Further, another resolution to be sent to General Conference suggests that Regional conferences be established to develop a structure that can tailor ministry to reflect cultural contexts. Another resolution titled “Resolution on Addressing the Rising Tide of Bigotry and Hate Crimes” calls on each one of us to “dedicate ourselves to building a more inclusive, equitable, compassionate, and respect-filled church and society” using resources and assistance available from agencies such as United Methodist General Commission on Religion and Race, the General Board of Church and Society, and the General Board of Discipleship. There were also two resolutions in response to climate change. One directs us to study several documents that give us ability to make demonstrable changes that will be good for the environment. I would like to encourage us all to engage in an all church study of these documents to equip us to do our part.

Finally, in one of the late items we expressed concern as an institution for the dehumanizing treatment of lying to asylum seekers and sending them to California under false pretenses. We also commended the individuals and organizations that received these immigrants with compassion. This resolution calls on all of us to be proactive in “offering services and pastoral care to refugees arriving at the borders of California.” The other late item was a recommendation sent by the Tongan Mission to the core team to establish a Conference Committee on Tongan Ministries separate from the Committee on Pacific Islander Ministry to focus on the specific needs of the Tongan community while maintaining “a common table” to partner with other Pacific Island communities in the conference. Those were the major legislative items approved by this

year's ACS.

Of course, we also spent time hearing reports of various committees, we honored retiring clergy and welcomed both ordained and licensed clergy in our midst. The Conference Claimants' Endowment Board bestowed upon the Board of Pensions a check for two million dollars, and presented another check for over \$100,000 to the Retired Clergy Association. Wonderful blessings! We were also blessed with very rich and meaningful worship services Thursday and Saturday evenings as well as Sunday morning. Our Sunday worship service celebrated Juneteenth. I will share a small part of that in our worship next Sunday, and Bill Blair will share his ACS report on Sunday as well.

In other news, the fencing to protect the church buildings is due to be completed later this week. Please prayerfully consider making a donation to help cover the cost of the fence. We have been spending several hundred dollars every week on window repairs. Please keep Wesley in your prayers.

I am very thankful for the mild weather of late, but I do expect summer to hit Bakersfield eventually, so I remind you all to stay hydrated.

Many blessings,  
Pastor Anne

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## ***Prayers***

### **We pray for those in need of healing—body, mind and spirit:**

- Steven—continued healing from meningitis
- Tish—healing and encouragement
- Bonney—healing and pain relief
- Jenifer—strength, mobility and hope
- Linda T.
- Baby Jacob recovering from heart surgery and patience and hope for his parents.
- Linda's cousin Rita
- Timmy M.
- Ian B. injured his back

### **We pray for those who are grieving:**

- For the family and friends of Marian Troyer, who passed away on Monday at the age of 100.

### **Travel mercies:**

- For all traveling to graduations this season, especially Nick and Lisa, Laura and Michael
- For all traveling to and from Annual Conference
- Rose, Stella and Barbara traveling together
- James and Toni and all the students returning from a wonderful 8th grade trip to DC

### **We pray for other needs:**

- Prayers of protection of the church buildings and campus
- For peace in Ukraine, and relief to flood victims
- Migrants at the borders
- Mirabel from Cameroon lost her asylum case. She has 30 days to appeal and needs a good immigration attorney
- For all who are grieving
- All children in foster care
- The homeless community and all people who have been displaced.
- We pray for safety for clerks, baristas and others who deal with customers who are angry
- Linda T and her mother continue to struggle with connection
- Prayers for families struggling with disagreements
- Peace and justice in all cases surrounding the indictment of our former president. May people act with wisdom and care, and may justice prevail
- For better air quality for places suffering from wildfires
- Protection for firefighters
- For a revived bell choir at Jerry's church: support, guidance and courage for Jerry and all involved
- Kristyn taking

exams for her teaching credential

**In gratitude, we remember and praise God for our abundant blessings...**

• For the blessing grandchildren • Sherry is grateful for the healing that her dog Max has experienced • We give thanks for Linda T and Alvisa C who faithfully write cards to church family for their needs and for their celebrations • Sherry experienced some intense pain, but now she is better and grateful for healing • We are grateful for Terry and all that she does • Mandi has been suffering from ear pain—we are grateful for God's healing blessing and continue to pray that she does not have a recurrence. • James' and Gueneviere's wedding anniversary—the blessing of family • Thank you, God for people like Mr. Dunlap, a stranger traveling behind Bonney when she had her car accident. He pulled over and held her hand until the ambulance arrived. He was a great comfort to her. • Tiffany G. will begin teaching Kindergarten next semester • Anne's brother Robert's 75th birthday.



The Wesley family expresses their sympathy to Lisa Bradley in the death of her mother and Wesley constituent, **Marian Troyer** on June 12, 2023.

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*Next Outlook deadline is July 10th.*

***Happy July Birthday to.....***

2	Austin Cusator
8	Lisa Strobel
24	Kelly Strobel
28	Sarah Balzer
29	Barbara Knowlton
31	Donna Adams

***Happy Anniversary to...***

1	Doug and Carolyn Anglin
18	Dell and Marcia Whitten
26	Bob and Martha Covey

