



# The Chimes

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## Modesto Church of the Brethren

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Interim Pastor: Michael Fletcher

Ministers: Every Person in the Congregation

*Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together.*



## Patriotism and Idolatry

A couple of months ago there was a lot of news and controversy regarding professional football players taking a knee during the national anthem before games. This raised a number of questions for me that I think should have been a part of the discussion, but seemingly were seldom, if ever, addressed. Here are some of those questions with my reflections from several months worth of consideration:

*Is standing at attention for the national anthem patriotism or empty symbolism?*

I come down on the side of empty symbolism, real patriotism means getting involved on some level to make your nation a better place. By that standard, kneeling for the anthem might have started to call attention to an issue, but at some point it too becomes empty symbolism.

*Why do people, including our president, make a big deal about how disrespectful it is to kneel in protest, but never mention the concession stands that continue to sell their products during the playing of the anthem?*

Maybe we value the dollar more than our nation.

*Why is it that somewhere around 98 percent of the time we hear the national anthem is at sporting events?*

I have no idea, I cannot logically connect sports and patriotism and sometimes wish the anthem wasn't always played at sporting events.

*When does patriotism become idolatry?*

This is of course the most important question and also the hardest one to answer. I think there is a very thin line separating the two and that there should be some allowance for differing understandings. But, when Jesus says that the greatest commandment is to love God with our whole being and to love our neighbors, there isn't much room for beliefs and practices that diminish others. When our nation's actions come at the expense of others, a patriot can choose who to stand with, a Christian cannot.

Jesus calls us to carry a cross and follow him. Crosses are heavy, probably too heavy to carry while carrying a flag.

## From the Pastor's Desk



### My Schedule

January 2-5 - Working from my home in La Quinta.  
January 8 - In office 8:30 to 11:30  
January 9 - Pastor's Sabbath  
January 10-12 - In office 8:30 to 11:30  
January 15 - In office 8:30 to 11:30  
January 16 - Pastor's Sabbath  
January 17-19 - In office 8:30 to 11:30

Please feel free to schedule other appointments by contacting me by email at [mfletch21625@aol.com](mailto:mfletch21625@aol.com) or by phone at 313-303-1227. Texting is ok, but please identify yourself when you do text.

### Upcoming Study and Fellowship Opportunities



**Wednesday Evening Bible Study:** Beginning on January 10, I will offer an overview of the New Testament as a Bible Study on Wednesday nights at 5:00 in the library.

**Talk Around the Table: Following Faith Bites** from 7:00 to 8:00 we will continue to have a time of conversation for anyone who desires to join in. January 10 our topic will be "Taking the Bible Seriously (and Progressively!). January 27 we'll see what news stories are trending and pick one to discuss.

**Coffee and Conversation:** After a December break, our Coffee and Conversation will begin again on the 2nd Saturday of each month at 9:30 in the Gathering Place. Our

topic for January 13 will be: Can the Church Leave the Building?

In addition I'd welcome suggestions for other gatherings of this type.

### Sermon Snippets



January 7 - Ecclesiastes 3:1-13 - For Everything There is a Season - A new year is an opportunity to take a step back and reflect on where we are in life and where we are headed in the future. This is true for organizations, like a church, as well as individuals. Let us consider what season of life we're in and what that means for us as individuals as well as where God might be calling us for the future, especially in 2018.

January 14 - Luke 15:11-32 - Jesus' Short Stories: The Prodigal Sons - Jesus used short stories, usually called parables, as his primary teaching tools. We often learn these stories as children and never really consider the complexities of these stories. One example is that the story we'll look at this Sunday is usually referred to as the Prodigal Son, despite the fact that the story begins by saying "there was a man who had two sons." Are we missing something?



## HOLD IN GOD'S LIGHT



Sarah Glass passed away on December 27<sup>th</sup> at 2:20pm. Please keep Jeff Glass and Carole Greathouse and families in your thoughts and prayers. Services are as follows:

Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup> 4-8pm Viewing as Salas Brothers on Scenic Drive in Modesto

Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup> @1pm short graveside service at Acacia Cemetery on Scenic Drive in Modesto

Saturday, January 27<sup>th</sup> @ 1pm a celebration of life at the church.

Please keep in your prayers Nancy Bupp, in hospice care, Syl, helping to care for her, and Libby, Dan and Trish Galt's daughter, with a cancer diagnosis. Be mindful of those who have lost loved ones in the past year, and be with any who are experiencing illness or pain.

### From the Bupps

Dear Church Family,



The Bupps want to thank-you for the expressions of love and the supportive prayers you have surrounded us with and offered on our behalf. We ask that you continue to hold us in your hearts and pray especially for the peace that only God can give, for the strength to remain faithful in dark hours, and comfort as we move through life, finding joy and beauty in everyday miracles.

We have been blessed with phone calls, short, prearranged visits, letters and cards. It is indeed humbling to see and hear your outpourings of love for both of us.

We in turn pray for the congregation of the Modesto CoB as it undergoes this time of challenge and change, praying for your faithfulness to discern the will of God for the church which has been and continues to be the important focus of our lives.

Sylvan & Nancy

“Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world’s grief. Do justly now. Love mercy now. Walk humbly now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it.” The Talmud

## MCOB YOUTH JANUARY SCHEDULE!!



### January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018:

Are you ready for the new year? At this meeting we will discuss our own personal goals for the new year and also give the youth an opportunity to see what they would like to do as a group in 2018. Got any big ideas for MCOB youth group? Come prepared to listen and contribute to the growing list of awesome MCOB youth tradition. This meeting will be in room 1 from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Of course, there will be lunch provided so come hungry and ready to dive in.

**January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018:** This meeting will be all fun and games literally! We will be doing things from get to know you games, charades and giant jenga. If you have any fun games

which can include more than 6 players feel free to let me know and bring them along. This meeting will be here at the church from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

As always feel free to have your friends tag along! We are always looking to add new members to our youth group and we need you the youth to help us accomplish this goal! If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to Tera either by email ([Tera@modcob.org](mailto:Tera@modcob.org)) or phone (209-596-9737) I look forward to this new year with all of you!!!

## PEACEFUL PINES 2018 SCHEDULE



Summer 2018 Camping Dates -  
Theme: **Beyond Belief!** The Universe of God

Opening Camp	May 25 - 28
Women's Retreat	June 8 - 10
Gourmet Cooking Camp	June 15 - 17
Discovery Camp	June 28 - July 3
Jr/ Jr High/ Youth Camp	July 15 - 20
Family Camp	July 20 - 15
Closing Camp	Sept 7 - 9

Make plans now to spend some quality, inspirational time at Camp this summer!

## PIANO RECITAL



On Sun., Jan. 14, at 4:00 p.m. there will be a piano recital in the sanctuary at MCOB. The theme for the recital will be "Hello Winter & Farewell Holidays" with presentation of both winter literature & Christmas pieces on piano. Following the recital will be a goodies & punch reception in the Narthex area.



## Family Promise Hosting Week!

Our next Family Promise hosting week begins Sunday, January 14. Be looking for the signup board in the Narthex, and choose your hosting task! This time, the Unitarian cooks will provide dinner only three days out of the week, so please sign up for dinner on the other three nights!

## Senior Ministries Native Plants



Be sure to mark **January 25<sup>th</sup> at 12 pm** on your calendars for a delicious lunch prepared by Karen Cosner for just \$7.00 a person and a wonderful presentation by **native plant specialist Jim Brugger**. His presentation will educate us on why it is important for us to use native plants in our own landscaping. He will also explain why using some non-native plants can be a problem. Jim says that Modesto should be very proud of a prime example of our very own native plant project, located along a walking path and native garden across from the La Loma Jr. High School on Encina Ave. Come and enjoy!



### **The Gershwin Concert Experience**

"This is the official, Gershwin-Family authorized multimedia concert event, celebrating the ingenious music and legacy of brothers George and Ira. Three incredible singers and musicians, including celebrated pianist Richard Glazier, will remind you of why the Gershwins will forever be the most beloved and respected songwriting team in history." **Gallo Center for the Arts Sunday, February 25, 2018 at 4 p.m.** Tickets are \$23 per person. Give cash or check (made to Modesto Church of the Brethren, Senior Ministry on the memo line) to Margaret Johnson by January 21.



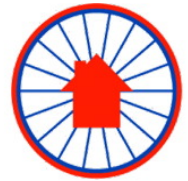
*MESSENGER* renewal time is here. This is our denominational magazine and an important resource for information, spiritual study and inspiration. It also keeps us aware of happenings throughout the country - at home and abroad.

I will be at a table in the Narthex with renewal forms etc. the following Sundays: 1/7, 1/14, 1/28. Or send your check to the church office marked *MESSENGER* renewal in the Memo line.

The price remains the same: \$14.50 - one year. (\$27 for two years).

Thank you and 'happy reading'.

Romy Mueller, *Messenger* agent  
209 526-5999



**Bike & Build**

**Bike and Build** was founded in 2002 by Marc Bush. After leading a cross-country Yale Habitat Bicycle Challenge, Marc was inspired to expand and improve their idea. The mission of B&B is "through service-oriented cycling trips, Bike & Build benefits affordable housing and empowers young adults for a lifetime of service and civic engagement."

For several years, Modesto Church of the Brethren has been hosting B&B riders for one or two nights while they spend a day in Modesto helping to build or remodel with Habitat for Humanity. Recently our Witness Commission has been contacted by B&B representatives to help recruit riders from the West Coast. Young adults between the ages of 18 through 26 at the start of the summer are eligible to apply. In 2018, you're eligible to ride if you were born between May 1, 1991 and May 1, 2000. If you know any eligible persons, encourage them to go to <https://bikeandbuild.org/prospective-riders/apply/> to learn more.

It isn't necessary to be an expert bicycle rider to join B&B; training is built into the program. What is required is considerable fundraising. Eighty-two percent of the money raised goes to the affordable housing agencies that the riders help along their route and also helps fund the riders' expenses as they ride. Part of the riders' expenses buy each rider a new state-of-the-art road bicycle, which they keep if they finish the ride. A Bike & Build cycling trip is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, but alumni of many of the trips remain active with B&B long after their ride. ~Luella Cole for Witness

# The Condensed Calendar

## **Monday-**

**Happy New Year!**  
**Office Closed**

## **Tuesday-**

Pastor's Sabbath; Pastor Michael in La Quinta until January 6.

## **Wednesday**

**NO Faith Bites**

## **Thursday-**

## **Friday-**

## **Saturday-**

8:30 AM Retreat for board members, search committee & commission members  
12 Noon Board meeting

## **Next Sunday-January 7<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Sunday School-Jr. High to adult  
*(Infant to 5 years welcome in the nursery with Shaun and Kelly!)*

11 am Worship

## **IN THE NEAR FUTURE**

January 9<sup>th</sup> 7 pm John McCutcheon Concert

January 13<sup>th</sup> 9:30 am Coffee & Conversation

January 14<sup>th</sup> 4 pm Piano Recital-Linda Bustle

January 14<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Family Promise Hosting

January 20<sup>th</sup> 7pm 24<sup>th</sup> Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration, MJC East Campus

January 25<sup>th</sup> Sr. Ministries event-presentation by Jim Brugger