

A decorative graphic featuring several green leaves and stems with small white flowers and clusters of tiny white berries. The graphic is positioned behind the main title text.

# *CELEBRATION OF* **GRATITUDE**

## *STEWARDSHIP 2024*

We rejoice for how God continues to be present and gracious in our lives!

God gives us so many reasons to celebrate with gratitude in a caring church community. We meet challenges. We explore new ways to work together. We serve people in our community every day. What a joy and privilege it is, to serve God by serving others.

As the Psalmist says: “Let us come into God’s presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to God with songs of praise!” (Psalm 95:2). Over this past year we have come together as a community of faith in truly remarkable ways that deserve to be celebrated.

Remember, that over this past year we have successfully launched our live-stream ministry and AV team, reaching out in essential ways for worship and witness to God’s love at work in the world. Most new people will find our church first online, and many of our current members benefit from worshipping online with us as well whether they are traveling, recovering, or home-centered. We give thanks to God and the many people who have helped to make all of this possible with their generosity of time, talent, and financial resources. We are committed as a church to faithfully serve people in new and innovative ways, in addition to many of the treasured ways we know and love so well.

Our Neighbor’s Pantry has continued to grow, serving now around 500 families every week with nourishing food from a variety of sources and partners. Second Harvest Food Bank continues to recognize the excellent work being done by the volunteer leadership who give countless hours to organize the food ministry, along with more than 90 volunteers from both our church and the broader community. As a result, we now have a refrigerated truck to use for food pick ups, gifted to us by Second Harvest, and regularly receive grants for this ministry that reflect its importance, excellence, and impact.

In addition, it is worth noting the fine efforts of our Finance Committee. These servant leaders have done valuable and important work to bring clarity to our budget for the work of ministry. They spearheaded our 'Building for Tomorrow' campaign to ensure that we can continue to address deferred maintenance issues along with making improvements for the purpose of hospitality and serving our neighbors well into the future. We celebrate the incredible generosity of this congregation to meet that fundraising goal, and the formation of a Fix-It-Team of volunteers who are working to defray costs by showing up and taking care of many of the projects that can be accomplished around our campus when we bring together our many talents and skills.

Given all that has happened over the past year, perhaps it is little wonder that our stewardship theme this year is "*A Celebration of Gratitude.*" We have so much to be thankful for as a church, and that is because of God's faithfulness, and your faithful response of generosity as a congregation. Therefore, in this time of year when we renew our commitment to support our church in 2024, it is good to celebrate, give thanks, and keep listening for God's call. We are strengthened by the examples of those around us in this faith community. What a blessing!

During the month of October, we are examining our call to 'give back' in gratitude for all that God has done in our lives. We are reflecting on the vows we make when we join the church - namely, to support it with our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness. We continue to affirm the vision of Anaheim UMC, that God is calling us to "reach out, serve, and invite with the love of Jesus Christ."

With your continued support, we seek to be a church where all are invited to experience God's life-giving love. Giving of your time and talents is a key way that the church thrives. Thank you for considering how you might connect with the church and community by using your God-given gifts, and growing in faith as we all seek to follow the Way of Jesus. We invite those who are able to give financially as well, and to prayerfully consider increasing their giving by a suggested 10%. This will help us fully fund next year's budget. Enclosed is a Stewardship Card where you can pledge your

greatly appreciated gifts. You can also submit a pledge online by going to our website and clicking the 'Celebration of Gratitude' image on the main page. We will collect these Stewardship Cards in the Church Office and also on **Thanksgiving Sunday, November 19th**. ***Please save the date for our Thanksgiving Sunday Potluck following worship that day***, coinciding with a Family Ministry service project to benefit Neighbor's Pantry.

Let us continue to celebrate God's gifts, and to be grateful, loving stewards who extend the hope of God to all. Below you can find personalized information for your prayerful discernment.

Thank you for all you give! Your giving is making a difference.

Bob Osborn, AUMC Finance Chair  
Pastor Jessica Stryko



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