

SENTINEL

vol. cxliv, no. 10

December 2019



HORIZONS

As we enter into the season of Advent this year, we are blessed by the work of John August Swanson in his "Festival of Lights." John says: "it is a dark night with a star-filled sky.

Tiny lights are seen on the distant hillsides, gradually becoming figures carrying candles as they come closer to the foreground of the painting." John imagines the stars touching the hills, the children in the procession reaching to bring the light of the stars into the world, bringing peace.

We are grateful for this beautiful season in the church year when we are drawn by the candles' lights to remember that "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never overcome it," as the Gospel of John proclaims. The candles in the Advent wreath and the candles we will light together on Christmas Eve all witness to the birth of Christ, bringing light and life to all.

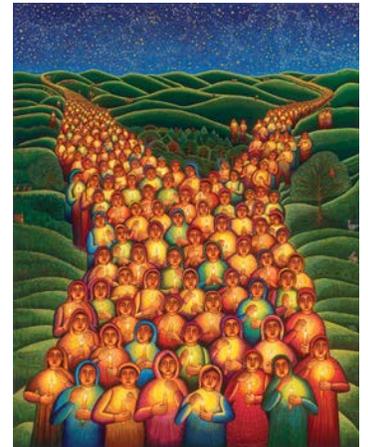
This is a time of deep darkness in many parts of our world. Still, God comes to be with us. God's light is given, that we might become people of the light, people who travel together in the light toward the light who is God. How we need God's light to come to us and

transform us from within, that we might be light-bearers who, with the children, witness to hope and peace.

Amidst all the busy-ness of the season, I encourage you to calm your mind and nurture your soul. Ponder the Advent devotionals. Delight in the music of the season. Find some moments of prayer, silence, worship, fellowship, service, and giving—the spiritual practices that form us from the inside out into those who live with the deep assurance that Christ is the Light of the World.

May the light of Christ shine in you.

Patrice Janis
Senior Minister



CHRISTMAS 2019

Lessons & Carols

SUN DEC 22 - 10 a.m. The annual worship service of music and word.

simple church: Blue Christmas

SUN DEC 22 - 5 p.m. A contemplative service for those experiencing grief.

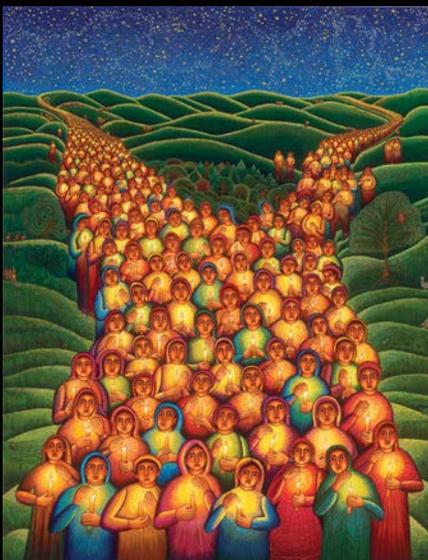
Christmas Eve Family Service

A "No Muss, No Fuss" Christmas Pageant for all ages. Costumes will be available at the door for all children to participate.

TUES DEC 24 - 4 p.m.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

TUES DEC 24 - 11 p.m. Choir, Organ, Harp & Candlelight



FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS
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DECEMBER Calendar

Sunday, December 1 - *First Sunday of Advent • Holy Communion*
Advent Devotionals available

11 a.m. Alternative Christmas Fair, Simkins Hall

11 a.m. Angel Tree Project, Alcove

11 a.m. UMW Mini Bazaar, UMW Workroom

Tuesday, December 3 - *UMC Giving Tuesday*

7 p.m. Open Space Monthly Gathering, Off-site

Saturday, December 7

9 a.m. Christmas Concert Rehearsal, (*open to the public*) Sanctuary

Sunday, December 8 - *Second Sunday of Advent*

11 a.m. Alternative Christmas Fair, Simkins Hall

11 a.m. Angel Tree Project, Alcove

11 a.m. UMW Mini Bazaar, UMW Workroom

7:30 p.m. Christmas Concert/Reception, Sanctuary/Simkins Hall

Friday, December 13

4 p.m. Preschool Christmas Concert, Sanctuary (*All are welcome, note time change from last year*)

Saturday, December 14

4:30 - 6 p.m. Messy Church, Chapel/Simkins Hall

Sunday, December 15 - *Third Sunday of Advent*

11 a.m. Free Blood Pressure Screenings, Alcove

11 a.m. Alternative Christmas Fair, Simkins Hall

11 a.m. Angel Tree Project, Alcove

11 a.m. UMW Mini Bazaar, UMW Workroom

3 p.m. Labyrinth Open for Walks, Simkins Hall

6 p.m. UMYF Christmas Party, Fireside Room

Friday, December 20

5:30 p.m. Parents Night Out/Kids Fun Night, 3rd Fl. Ed. Bldg.

Sunday, December 22 - *Service of Lessons and Carols • Faith in Action*

10 a.m. Service of Lessons & Carols, Sanctuary

5 p.m. simple church: Blue Christmas, Chapel

Tuesday, December 24 - *Christmas Eve*

4 p.m. Christmas Eve Family Service, Sanctuary

11 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, Sanctuary

Wednesday, December 25 - **Saturday, December 28**

Church and Preschool campus closed

Sunday, December 29 - *First Sunday after Christmas • Covenant Renewal Service • Family Sunday (no Sunday school)*

Tuesday, December 31 - *New Year's Eve • Church campus closed*

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Wednesday, December 11

7 p.m. Methodist Foundation Meeting, CR-A

SUNDAYS-AT-A-GLANCE

9 a.m. Lectionary Scripture Discussion, Fireside Room

9:30 a.m. Nursery Care, Room 204

9:30 a.m. Chancel Choir Warmup, Choir Room

10 a.m. Worship, Sanctuary

10:10 a.m. Sunday School, Education Bldg.

11 a.m. Fellowship, Simkins Hall in The Shelby Center

5 p.m. simple church, Chapel

6 p.m. UMYF Meeting, Youth Lounge

Advent Devotional 2019

The Spiritual Formation Council invites you to pick up your Advent Devotional at the Sunday Hospitality Table or in the narthex starting on the first Sunday of Advent, December 1. The devotional is written by First UMC members and provides a wonderful opportunity to share Advent with family and friends. This year's theme is "Pay attention. Be Astonished. Tell about it." Sign up to receive the daily email devotionals: www.santamonicaumc.org/advent



Poinsettias

Beautiful poinsettias will once again grace our sanctuary for the Lessons & Carols Christmas Eve service, and Christmas Eve Family and Candlelight Services. Order at the Sunday Hospitality Table or in the church office. Each plant is \$13, and may be picked up after 11 p.m. Christmas Eve service. **Deadline to order is Sunday December 15.**

UMW 2019 Mini Bazaar



The UMW Mini Bazaar is open! Don't miss the UMW's famous peanut brittle, baby and toddler blankets, fine jewelry, ornaments, handcraft items, sachets, dilly dips, delicious casseroles and more, sold in the UMW Workroom. All proceeds benefit the missions and ministries supported by the UMW.

UMW Mini Bazaar: Sundays: December 1, 8, and 15, 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. in the UMW Workroom

Angel Tree Project

First UMC church member Chris Ruud is organizing her 17th year of the Angel Tree Project—a community effort to provide homeless families at Upward Bound House with much-needed household items. Stop by the Angel Tree table during Coffee Fellowship on Sunday mornings in Simkins Hall to sponsor a gift. Then return the wrapped gift back to the church office by Sunday December 15. For questions, contact Chris Ruud: chr10is@yahoo.com.



Sundays: December 1, 8, and 15, 11 a.m. in the Alcove

Alternative Christmas

Missions Council has the antidote for "Black Friday"—the Alternative Christmas Fair. Each year, Missions Council prayerfully selects local and global mission projects. You may make a donation to any of the projects as a gift to a friend or loved one, and send a card announcing your gift.

Sundays: December 1, 8, 15, 11 a.m. in Simkins Hall



Share the spirit of Christmas with
ALTERNATIVE Christmas



Sunday Flower Orders: Available dates for flowers in the Reredos or Narthex at press time: **December 8, 22, 29.** Order at the Sunday Hospitality Table or online: santamonicaumc.org/flower-fund.

UMC Giving Tuesday

On December 3, United Methodists will once again come together to support the work of Advance missionaries and projects on UMC #GivingTuesday. Consider supporting a project in an area you care about, such as disaster response and relief, food and agriculture, church development, education, health, and more. For a complete list of projects, visit: www.umcmmission.org/Give-to-Mission

Open Space Monthly Gathering

Open Space is an inclusive faith experience for young adults (20s & 30s-ish). We meet in the community and in homes for brave conversations about faith and life. Join us for our Monthly Gathering, a time for friends, food, and open and honest reflection on the intersections between faith and the world. We will provide a round of pizza or appetizers, you provide the conversation. Follow us on Instagram and Facebook: @OpenSpaceSantaMonica. Contact Nathan Oney for more details: n.oney@santamonicaumc.org.

Tuesday, December 3, 7 p.m. Off-site

First UMC Christmas Concert

First UMC's Music Ministry Director Dr. James E. Smith conducts *A Christmas Celebration*, featuring Gerald Finzi's *In Terra Pax*, and Franz Schubert's *Magnificat*, for Choir and Chamber Orchestra, and the annual *An Evening of Carols, Etc.* with audience participation. Ty Woodward, organist, will be joined by the Mark Twain Ringers directed by Ron Theile, and spoken words will be read by Rev. Patricia Farris. Suggested donation at the door is \$20, seniors and children under 12, \$10. Don't miss this yearly event which, for many, sets the mood for the coming Christmas season.



*For those who can't attend Sunday night, you may observe the Concert rehearsal Saturday morning (December 7) at 9 a.m. at no charge. Carols and readings rehearsal begins at 11 a.m. *Out of courtesy to the musicians please no cell phones; families with babies/small children may listen from the Narthex.*

Sunday, December 8, 7:30 p.m., in the Sanctuary, reception to follow in Simkins Hall

Preschool Christmas Concert

All are welcome to watch the Preschoolers perform their Annual Christmas Concert in the Sanctuary. *Note new time this year, with show time starting at 4 p.m.*

Friday, December 13, 4 p.m., in the Sanctuary



Messy Church – Messy Advent

At Messy Church, we grow in our relationship with God and with one another through crafts, activities, music, and stories of God's love. **December's Theme: "Messy Advent."** Advent is a special time of year, yet also very busy, as we get ready for Christmas. Jesus is at the heart of it all and so we set aside time at Messy Church this month to prepare ourselves to make room for the baby Jesus to be born into our hearts this Christmas.

Saturday, December 14, 4:30 - 6 p.m. Simkins Hall/ Chapel



Parents Date Night & Kids Fun Night

This month's theme - Christmas! While parents enjoy an evening out (and finishing up that last minute Christmas shopping) children are provided a safe and fun evening of games, activities and crafts, pizza dinner, and a movie with our trained childcare team. For questions, please contact Tricia Guerrero, Pastoral Associate for Family Ministries: t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org or 310-393-8258 (ext. 104). Register here: www.santamonicaumc.org/date-night-2019.

Friday, December 20, 5 - 8 p.m. 2nd Floor Edu Bldg.

simple church presents: Blue Christmas

Grieving is hard at Christmas time. If you are experiencing the loss of a loved one, a separation, illness, or other cause for pain, it may seem that you are alone while everyone else is experiencing the joy of the season. But the Christmas story itself is full of pain and loss. The Blue Christmas service is for everyone who might not be feeling up to the cheeriness of other holiday celebrations, aiming to make space for grief, meeting it head on, and perhaps finding some hope. If you or someone you know are in need of this space apart, please join us for a time of worship.

Sunday, December 22, 5 p.m. in the Chapel

2019 Pledge Contributions Due!

The end of the year is coming. Some of you have said you will be out of town in the last days of the year. You may always contact Christina Eddy (c.eddy@santamonicaumc.org) to arrange your giving at this busy time of year. Our church office is closed December 25 - December 30, but special arrangements can be made.

- Give at one of these remaining worship services Dec 1, 8, 15, 29.
- Mail your check postmarked by 12/31/2019.
- Contribute online at santamonicaumc.org/give.
- Use your bank's bill pay system.
- If giving stock or funds managed by a broker, ask for a transfer to be completed by 12/31/2019.
- Bring your gift to the church office.
- Lastly, if you are paying in January for the 2019 year, be sure to date your check 2019 and mark your check "prior year fulfillment."
- Giving statements will be prepared and mailed out Friday, January 10, 2020.

Thank you for making a difference in countless lives in our community and around the world.

Celebrating 10 Years: Cakes for a Cause

by Tricia Guerrero, Pastoral Associate for Family Ministries

A little more than 10 years ago, members of the Youth Ministry Council lounged on the sofas in the Youth Lounge as they previewed the schedule for the coming months. “Is there anything else we would like to do?” the youth leaders asked the kids.

Shelly McCammon, a senior high youth, had an idea that she had seen work successfully at her school: a bake sale, with the proceeds going to support a particular cause. And Shelly had a particular cause in mind - *LifeStraws for Africa*. Here was the kicker: the members of the congregation would bake the cakes! They would buy cake mix, bake cakes and cupcakes, and bring them to church. Then the youth would frost them, decorate them, and sell them back to the congregation. They also realized that they had the perfect captive audience: hold the bake sale on the day of the annual Church Charge Conference.

While the process has changed a little along the way—the youth now bake the cakes and cupcakes—and those who first started this cause are now graduated out of UMYF, with a whole new generation of youth that have taken their place—the heart of Cakes for a Cause has

remained. The youth choose a cause they care about each year, and through baking, decorating and selling cakes and cupcakes at Church Charge Conference, they raise money for this cause. Through this important ministry, our youth learn that their faith makes a difference in the world and that they have a loving community who will support the causes they care about.

UMYF made over \$700 from that first Cakes for a Cause in 2009. Since then we have consistently raised around that amount each year, totalling thousands of dollars going towards a variety of causes. This year we give to **UMCOR**, the United Methodist branch of relief and recovery work around the world. As we celebrate ten wonderful years of Cakes for a Cause, we pause to give thanks for this important ministry the youth lead our church in each year. We also remember Shelly for the joy and light she brought to the youth community, and we give thanks for her legacy of mission and service through Cakes for a Cause.



Cakes for a Cause throughout the years:
in 2009...



in 2013...



and 2015.

FIRST UMC

COMMUNITY

We Honor

• the First UMC **Partnership with God Group**, (formerly called the Double Rings Group). They met in Room 101 weekly on Sunday mornings from 1951 - 2019. They honored God and the church through their fellowship and service.

Congratulations

• to **Rev. Keri Olsen Paget** who achieved recognition as an Associate Certified Educator of Clinical Pastoral Education.

Thank You!

• to First UMC member **Russ Whittenburg** for representing the church at the 29th Annual Westside Food Bank Hunger Walk. Because of Russ' efforts, First UMC was awarded “*Top Fundraising Congregation*” on the day of the race. Thank You Russ!

Haiti Update

by Nathan Oney, Pastoral Associate

As the Christmas season comes upon us and we begin to fix in our minds those who are in need of hope, we encourage you to be in prayer for the people of Haiti. Due to an ongoing political crisis, the country faces severe food and medicine shortages, the Guest House has ceased operations, and UMYM is no longer supporting Haiti as a mission destination due to the risk of violence. For these reasons, we will be unable to return to our Haitian siblings in the near future. We do not know when the situation will change, and it is difficult to receive accurate, up-to-date information. Because of this congregation's heart for Haiti, we are currently seeking ways to support the people in this hour of dire need, including partnering with other Methodist churches in creating a temporary relief fund with support and oversight of organizations on the ground. Our prayer is that the leaders of the country bring a swift end to the crisis for the sake of the people.



Happenings



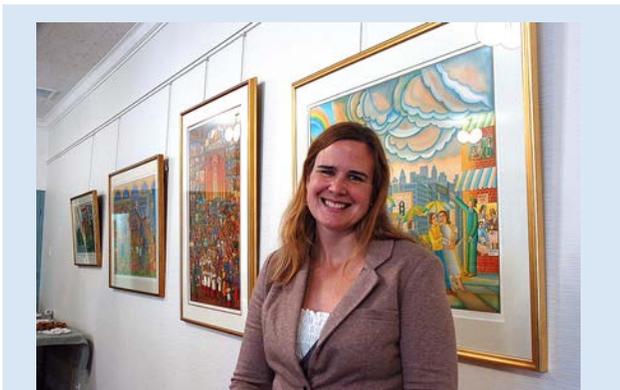
The "I See A New Church" Round Table Discussion, held October 20.



The United Methodist Women (and volunteers!) make peanut brittle to sell at the UMW Mini Bazaar.



The annual Church Charge Conference, held November 10 (above). The Youth, led by Tricia Guerrero, (below left), prepped and decorated cakes and cupcakes, then held their annual Cakes for a Cause bake sale during Charge Conference (below right).



Amy Flanders celebrates the opening of a selection of pieces by John August Swanson in the Fireside Room. The artwork is from the private collection of her mother, Meg Flanders. The exhibit is being held in Meg's memory.



At the Church Charge Conference, Rev. Patricia Farris awarded First UMC member Jerry Brown, (above, and with wife Margaret, right) a Special Recognition award for his years of service keeping the written history of First UMC. Jerry recently wrote the book, Be The Hope! The Story of First United Methodist Church of Santa Monica, which was presented to the congregation at Charge Conference.

Lay Leadership Team and "I See a New Church"

The lay leadership team of Michael Olsson, Jocelyn Hicks-Garner, Sherry Erlandson and Todd Erlandson invite you to email your comments, questions and ideas to: leadership@santamonicaumc.org. To read the I See a New Church Statement from the Lay Leadership team presented at Charge Conference, go to: www.santamonicaumc.org/new-church, or pick up a copy at the Hospitality Table.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
of SANTA MONICA

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Church Office Hours: Tues - Fri, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Chapel Open for Prayer: Tues - Fri, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.

WORSHIP: SUNDAYS IN DECEMBER

DECEMBER 1

10 a.m. Sanctuary Worship

First Sunday of Advent

Holy Communion

Homily by Rev. Patricia Farris

5 p.m. simple church

reflections by Nathan Oney

DECEMBER 8

10 a.m. Sanctuary Worship

Second Sunday of Advent

Sermon by Rev. Patricia Farris

5 p.m. simple church

reflections by Nathan Oney

DECEMBER 15

10 a.m. Sanctuary Worship

Third Sunday of Advent

Sermon by Rev. Patricia Farris

5 p.m. simple church

reflections by Nathan Oney

DECEMBER 22

10 a.m. Sanctuary Worship

Service of Lessons & Carols

5 p.m. simple church: Blue Christmas

reflections by Nathan Oney

DECEMBER 29

10 a.m. Sanctuary Worship

First Sunday after Christmas

Covenant Renewal Service

5 p.m. simple church

reflections by Nathan Oney



ONLINE

Visit the Advent page on the website to get informed about events of the season, including the First UMC Christmas concert, Lessons & Carols, and the Christmas worship services. You may also sign up for the Advent Devotional, to receive a daily email devotional:

www.santamonicaumc.org/advent