

Where
New Life
Starts

SENTINEL

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH of SANTA MONICA

The online Advent Devotional emails began on the first Sunday of Advent, November 29. It's not too late to sign up to receive your daily emails. Go to: www.santamonicaumc.org/advent-devotional. 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 "Where New Life Starts." Here are a few excerpts from this year's writings:



Paul's certainty of God's continuous grace and peace through

Christ is just the reminder we need in this messy, difficult, sometimes heart wrenching world. This grace and God's faithfulness do not negate the realities of our experience, but rather give us strength to make our way through them together.

– Rev. Keri Olsen Paget

...In our quiet listening, may righteousness grow within us as new life, setting us in the way of your footsteps. Amen.

– Laura Farrand

This year we need to remember the strength God gave us to make it through 2020... to find the simple joys that proved not even a global pandemic could break the spirit of God's people.

– Molly Smith

Horizons

by Rev. Patricia Farris

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all..." Titus 2:11

Christ was born into our world in a time when darkness hung over the land. It was wintertime and the longed-for Messiah seemed to tarry...

God had other plans, promised to us of old! A star lit the sky. A baby was born. The shepherds rejoiced. The angels sang. The grace of God appeared in human flesh and everything was made new. And all the earth was glad as healing and salvation came to all.

This is where new life starts, for our weary world and for each and every one of us. We reset our spiritual clocks and make time for new dreams, daring, even in the midst of the pandemic, to envision new possibilities for deliverance and wholeness. We open our broken hearts to the healing grace of God, who opens the way to peace. God's peace comes to us as a healing balm, a reassuring promise and presence. Embraced in this healing love, we open our hearts, our lives, our souls, with anticipation and with hope. This is where new life starts.

I invite you to celebrate the season, inviting new life to be born in you in this time in which we need it most. It is the gift of God's grace, bringing salvation to all.

My Christmas prayer for each of you is that you will find in this season a renewed sense of God's love and healing presence in your life, new life bringing light and joy to you and yours. For in the Christ Child is born the fullness of life, joy, and peace for all. This is where new life starts.

Patricia Farris
Senior Minister

First UMC Creche

Come by the church campus during the month of December to view the annual Creche scene. This year, additional decorations were provided by Mike Eskridge to make the area even more special. We also thank Dan and Cooper Nessel, Javier Espinoza, and Ben Ing for the installation.

Thanks to Allan Walker for his beautiful photograph of the creche taken in 2010.



DECEMBER Calendar

OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT THIS MONTH

Tuesday, December 1 - *Alternative Christmas begins on the website*

7 a.m. Men's Breakfast, via Zoom

Wednesday, December 2

12 p.m. - 2 p.m. Sanctuary Open for Prayer (*canceled for Dec*)

7 p.m. Open Space Young Adults Soul Care, via Zoom

Thursday, December 3

6:30 p.m. Listening Hearts Women's Group, via Zoom

Sunday, December 6 - *Second Sunday of Advent • Holy Communion*

Faith in Action

9 a.m. Sunday Morning Walks (*canceled for Dec*)

9:15 a.m. Sunday School for Kids, via Zoom

10 a.m. Online Worship Service (Facebook & website)

4 p.m. UMYF Gathering

Tuesday, December 8

7 a.m. Men's Breakfast, via Zoom

9:30 a.m. Prayer Chain Conference Call

6 p.m. Methodist Foundation Meeting, via Zoom

Wednesday, December 9

12:10 p.m. December Mid-Week Recital, (Facebook & website)

12 p.m. - 2 p.m. Sanctuary Open for Prayer (*canceled for Dec*)

7 p.m. Open Space Young Adults Soul Care, via Zoom

Sunday, December 13 - *Third Sunday of Advent*

9 a.m. Sunday Morning Walks (*canceled for Dec*)

9:15 a.m. Sunday School for Kids, via Zoom

10 a.m. Online Worship Service (Facebook & website)

4 p.m. Grief and Graces with Rev. Olsen Paget, via Zoom

4 p.m. UMYF Gathering

Tuesday, December 15

7 a.m. Men's Breakfast, via Zoom

Wednesday, December 16

12 p.m. - 2 p.m. Sanctuary Open for Prayer (*canceled for Dec*)

7 p.m. Open Space Young Adults Soul Care, via Zoom

Thursday, December 17

6:30 p.m. Listening Hearts Women's Group, via Zoom

Saturday, December 19

4:30 p.m. Messy Church Christmas, via Zoom

7 p.m. ACT presents, "Christmas Choir," via FB Livestream

Sunday, December 20 - *Fourth Sunday of Advent • Service of Lessons and Carols (Part 1)*

9 a.m. Sunday Morning Walks (*canceled for Dec*)

10 a.m. Online Worship Service (Facebook & website)

11 a.m. Online Coffee Hour, via Zoom

4 p.m. UMYF Gathering

Tuesday, December 22

7 a.m. Men's Breakfast, via Zoom

9:30 a.m. Prayer Chain Conference Call

Wednesday, December 23

7 p.m. Open Space Young Adults Soul Care, via Zoom

Thursday, December 24

4 p.m. Family Christmas Eve Worship Service (Facebook & website)

Friday, December 25 - Saturday, December 26 - *Church and Preschool campus closed*

Sunday, December 27 - *First Sunday after Christmas • Service of Lessons and Carols (Part 2) Family Sunday - no Sunday school*

9 a.m. Sunday Morning Walks (*canceled for Dec*)

10 a.m. Online Worship Service (Facebook & website)

11 a.m. Online Coffee Hour, via Zoom

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

HOW TO PARTICIPATE ONLINE **Sundays 10 a.m.**

You can participate in the service in real time or later at your convenience. **WHEN: Sunday 10 a.m. Sanctuary Worship** Go to the **First UMC Facebook Live page** (@santamonicaumc), or watch the Sunday service the following week ANYTIME:

www.santamonicaumc.org/livestream, Or on the **First UMC YouTube page**: www.youtube.com/c/SantaMonicaUMC, where you can find recordings of past services.

Worship Services in December:

Sunday, December 6: Second Sunday of Advent

Advent Services continue the tradition of lighting the Advent Candles. Special music with oboe, cello and organ trio.

Sunday, December 13: Third Sunday of Advent

Advent Services continue the tradition of lighting the Advent Candles. Special music by the Chancel Choir Quartet with organ, piano and trumpet accompaniment.

Sunday, December 20: Fourth Sunday of Advent

Part 1 of the Annual Service of Lessons and Carols. Special music with harp and organ.

Thursday, December 24, 4 p.m. Family Christmas Eve Service

Celebrate through worship with Christmas carols, re-telling the Christmas story, and rejoicing together! Presented by the First UMC Youth.

Sunday, December 27: First Sunday after Christmas

Part 2 of the Annual Service of Lessons and Carols. Special music with solo Offertory and organ.

December Ongoing Ministries via Zoom or In-Person:

- **Men's Breakfast/Bible Study:** **Tuesdays, 7 a.m. via Zoom**
Meeting this month: Dec 1/8/15/22/29
- **Sanctuary Open for Prayer (In-Person):** *Canceled for December due to Covid restrictions.*
- **Open Space Young Adults Soul Care:** **Wednesdays, 7 p.m. via Zoom**
Meeting this month: Dec 2/9/16/23
- **Listening Hearts Women's Group, with Tricia Guerrero:** **1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month, 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.**
Meeting this month: Dec 3/17
- **Sunday School for Kids:** **Sundays, 9:15-9:45 a.m. via Zoom**
Meeting this month: Dec 6/13/20
- **Grief and Graces: a sacred space for weary souls, with Rev. Keri Olsen Paget:** **2nd and 4th Sunday of the month 4 p.m. via Zoom**
Meeting this month: Dec 13
- **Sunday Morning Walks with Jocelyn Hicks-Garner (In-Person):** *Canceled for December due to Covid restrictions.*
- **UMYF Youth Group:** **Sundays, 4 p.m.**
Meeting this month: Dec 6/13

For more information on all of these programs, go to

www.santamonicaumc.org



ALTERNATIVE Christmas 2020

Alternative Christmas - ONLINE

Sponsored by the Mission Council, the Alternative Christmas Fair is a way to support mission projects and programs in the community and around the world, by giving a financial gift in the name of a loved one. Each donation (\$5 minimum) comes with a e-card with the gift information. Share the SPIRIT of Christmas!

This year we celebrate Alternative Christmas on the website from December 1-15. Fill out the Giving Form online, then you will receive a receipt via email with your donation.

The 2020 Projects are:

- Harvest Home
- Upward Bound House
- SFV Refugee Children's Center
- Wesley Foundation of UCLA
- Children's Youth & Family Collaborative (CYFC)
- InnerChange
- Actions of the Heart
- Operation Gratitude
- The People Concern
- Haiti Missions

To view a slideshow of each project, and to find the Giving Form,
Go to: www.santamonicaumc.org/acfair

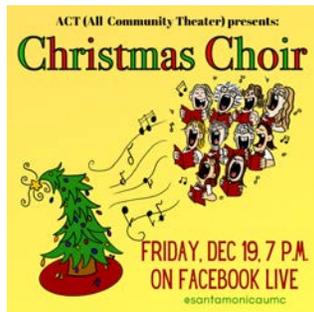
Coffee Hour with Missions Council

Join Jocelyn Hicks-Garner, Missions Council chair, as she hosts After Worship Coffee Hour to discuss the Mission Projects of the Alternative Christmas Online Fair.

December 6 & 13, 11 a.m. via Zoom

Go to: <https://zoom.us/j/95709897528>

Zoom ID: 957 0989 7528 Password: fumc



ACT presents: "Christmas Choir" on Facebook Live

ACT(All Community Theater) and Ben Ing present "Christmas Choir," a hilarious homage to a church choir, whose members are there for just about every other reason than to sing, (in

contrast to our outstanding First UMC music program and Chancel Choir which we so look forward to hearing again in person!) The play features some of ACT's best actors in their ZOOM debuts. The show was written by Pat Cook, with direction by **Ben Ing** and **Dorothy Nichols**, and features First UMC members: **Emily Payne, Linda Diane Anderson, Carol Reich, Kendra Gorlitsky, Cindy McQuade, Wynn Battig, Jack Fry, Chris Reagh, Carmen Herrera, Sarah Rold, Dan Nessel, Michael Lamb**, Mark Labella, and with the very active help of understudies, **Larry Young** and **David Penson**.

The Story: Ten disgruntled choir members rehearse for their church's Christmas concert under the direction of a little league football referee,

December ONLINE Mid-Week Recital

Our December Mid-Week Recital features **Calico Winds, wind ensemble**. Calico Winds is taking wind music to the forefront of the chamber music world by artfully reinventing the conventional wind quintet. They chose the name "Calico" to reflect the many colors and textures offered by the instruments of their ensemble. The group blends top-notch playing, great music and an appealing atmosphere, their repertoire incorporating a wide variety of classical music. "They cross all the style lines and get away with it." (Los Angeles Times).

Calico Winds have delighted audiences across the country, touring to more than half the fifty states, including numerous cities throughout their home state of California. Said of their program, "The artists played in perfect balance with each other, each contributing lovely tone quality and flawless intonation. An unusually fine and beautiful program...played with rock-solid competence and interpretive flair. It was a fantastic evening of music." (The Times Herald, Olean, NY)

For a more complete bio, go to:

www.santamonicaumc.org/mid-week-recitals.

How to watch:

- **Facebook** - Search @santamonicaumc. Be sure to "follow" our page.
- **YouTube Channel** - www.youtube.com/c/SantaMonicaUMC

Subscribe to our channel and adjust your notification settings to your preference.

- **Website** - View the recital on the Livestream page:

www.santamonicaumc.org/livestream.

ONLINE Mid-Week Recital: Wednesday, December 9, 12:10 p.m.



whose only qualification is that he owns a whistle. As the rehearsal progresses we learn the reason each member is there – and it isn't to sing. A sarcastic cameraman attempts to take pictures for the program as the group begins spinning out of control. Thankfully, their young, new pastor arrives and gives them some much-needed perspective.

When asked why he decided to tackle creating a Livestream video production, Ben Ing says, "In a time of isolation, I thought it would be important to bring our ACT members together to create a sense of community for them, and to share with our church members this entertaining project. The play "Christmas Choir" appealed to me because of its large cast, its humor, and its strong Christian message. Doing it livestream seemed the only safe way to do it, and so I decided to take on the ZOOM technical challenge and see if we could make it work. As entertaining as it is ending up to be, the most important thing for me is how much fun the cast has had in experiencing the use of this new "venue." Thanks to Ben, Dorothy, and all of the cast, for bringing some Christmas cheer to us! We can't wait to see the show.

Airs Friday, December 19, 7 p.m. on the First UMC Facebook Live page (@santamonicaumc).

December Messy Church via Zoom!

It's time for some messy fun together! Join us for a Zoom Meet-Up as we will tell the Christmas story together and prepare for the baby Jesus to be born into our hearts this Christmas. All are welcome! We will share Zoom details and coloring pages you can download ahead of time in our Messy Church email. To sign up for the monthly email, go to: www.santamonicaumc.org/messychurch, or contact Tricia Guerrero (t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org) for more information.



Saturday, December 19, 4:30- 5:15 p.m. via Zoom

Prayer Quilts - How to Request

During this time of Covid-19, the Prayer Quilt Ministry has created a new way of continuing to offer Prayer Quilts to those in need:

1. Talk to the intended recipient.
 - Ask if the person is willing to be prayed for and to receive a quilt.
 - Ask what specific prayers are wished for.
 - There is no charge for the quilt – it is a gift of love.
2. Contact Maile Marquand (maile@rugbooks.com) or Sue Payne (sue.f.payne@gmail.com).
3. Select the quilt if some are already made, or suggest colors if one is to be selected for you.

Once the quilt selection has been made, First UMC will display the quilt in the Friday Community Email, and also during Sunday 10 a.m. Worship. You may call or email Sarah in the church office to request a tie be made on the quilt for you; she will let you know the requested prayers: Sarah Rold (310.393.8258), or s.rolld@santamonicaumc.org, Prayers will be collected Tuesday – Friday of the following week, and the prayer knots will be tied by the church staff.

www.santamonicaumc.org/prayerquiltministry

Prayer Requests

The Prayer Chain is a large network of persons who pray in response to prayer requests. Members of the Prayer Chain treat all requests as confidential. You may send a prayer request to the church at any time, and our Prayer Chain will be notified. Go to www.santamonicaumc.org/prayer-requests.

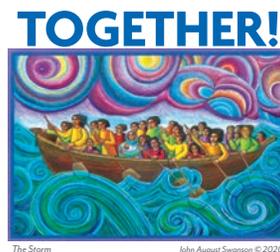
Flowers

We thank Mike Eskridge for the beautiful flowers and seasonal displays in the Sanctuary. To donate to the flower fund, or to send flowers to go to home-bound seniors, go to: www.santamonicaumc.org/flower-fund.



Stewardship 2021

On Sunday, November 22, we celebrated Thanksgiving/Consecration Sunday during online worship. It's not too late to turn in your pledge - you may pledge online at: www.santamonicaumc.org/stewardship, mail your pledge card, or, stop by the church office on Wednesdays from 12 - 3 p.m. to drop the card off in person. Thank you!!



FIRST UMC Community

Births

• **Sidney Lucas Atherton** was born September 29 to parents Caitlin and David Atherton.

Congratulations

• Congratulations to **Rev. Dorothy and Robert Worley** on their 60th Wedding Anniversary.

Thank You!

• Special thanks to **Debi Jenkinson Wong** and the **First UMC Health Ministry** for helping to spread the word about the Drive Thru Flu Vaccine Clinic hosted by Mt. Olive Lutheran Church on November 7. 62+ vaccines were given that day!

• We thank First UMC member **Chris Ruud** for her years of service with Angel Tree Project. This year would have marked her 18th year providing homeless families at Upward Bound House with much-needed household items. With Covid restrictions this year, the project is put on hold, but Chris looks forward to picking up again next Christmas.

Church Charge Conference - A Success!

Thank you for a wonderful Charge Conference on Sunday, November 15. This annual event is always a blessing and this year was no different, even though we gathered in a new way via Zoom. Thank you for helping us celebrate the year's ministry accomplishments and look ahead to where God is calling us for next year. Look out 2021!



PRESCHOOL CORNER

We give special thanks for special funding this year through the pandemic.

The **Rotary of Santa Monica** granted the school \$3,500 for supplies which were used during the offsite instruction in April, 2020. Each child received an at home art box filled with whimsical goodness to create art while online with their school friends. School resumed June 22 and additional supplies were purchased.

Connections for Children has granted two grants totaling \$16,866 for preschool supplies from Senate Bill 89 Early Learning Care and Response Funds. These supplies helped provide PPE equipment for teachers and children, as well as maintenance supplies to ensure a very safe learning environment.

We are in gratitude for our partners. We couldn't do this without you!

Celebrations!

Giving Thanks for the United Methodist Women

For the first time since the early 70s, and due to the current Covid restrictions, the **UMW Christmas Bazaar** has been put on hold for this year. For decades we've enjoyed their home baked goods, casseroles, peanut brittle and handmade crafts. We'll certainly miss the fun this year. Fortunately, the women are graciously sharing their delicious Peanut Brittle recipe for us to make over the holidays! We look forward to celebrating the holidays in person next year. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the UMW. Enjoy!



Scenes from years past with the UMW

UMW's Famous Peanut Brittle

Combine the following ingredients in a large saucepan over medium to high heat:

- 1 1/2 cups of sugar
- 1/2 cup White Karo syrup
- 3/4 cup water + pinch of salt

Stir constantly till the candy thermometer reads 232 degrees F.

When it reaches 232 degrees, add the following:

- 1 1/2 cups of raw Virginia Peanuts
 - 2 tbsp butter
- Reduce the heat to simmer, stirring constantly (about 20 minutes) until the temperature reaches 300 degrees F. Remove from heat.

Add immediately:

- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp vanilla

Stir quickly (about 12 revolutions) Then, pour onto a buttered cookie sheet and quickly spread 4 ways toward edges of the cookie sheet so it won't be too thick (the thinner the better).

Cool to room temp or until brittle breaks up. Store in cool airtight containers (bags).

DO NOT REFRIGERATE.



enjoy!



Thank you for participating in our Food Drive/5k Walk for the Westside Food Bank!

Your generous donations will go to help neighbors who are experiencing food insecurity during

this challenging year. In addition to this, the First UMC team has also raised over \$9,000 through the 5K Virtual Hunger Walk! These funds will go directly to the Westside Food Bank's efforts to feed and support those in need this winter. Thank you for spreading the faith and joining together to support our community! We give thanks for **Martha Ross**, who initiated the food drive project, and to **Russ Wittenburg**, team captain for Team First UMC's 5K walking group. Both have provided such great leadership!

From **Molly Smith**, (right, front) part of Team First UMC, as posted on Facebook:

"I have been incredibly lucky to never worry about having food on my table. I've never had to pass on a meal because I couldn't afford to grab a bite wherever I was. I have always taken for granted the ability to pay \$10 to have someone bring me a \$4 boba. Yesterday I completed the Westside Food Bank Virtual 5K Hunger Walk for those who don't know where their next meal will come from. I walked because food is a necessity of life that too many people have to go without. I walked because luck shouldn't be the only reason someone gets to eat. Together we can work to end hunger."



Haiti Mission

We love our partner community in Sobier, Haiti! This connection reaches across the world and has gifted us the chance to support with love, prayers and food during this difficult year. We are grateful to all who have donated towards Haiti relief efforts. In October we distributed the 4th set of food packages that feeds 50 families in Sobier. Your donations have made it possible for us to faithfully support Haiti since April. Visit the website to read more about the First UMC Haiti Mission. www.santamonicaumc.org/haiti

John August Swanson Interview

Don't miss Rev. Patricia Farris' interview with John August Swanson about his newest art piece, "The Storm," based on Mark 4:35-41. John shares early sketches of the piece, as well as thoughts about what inspired him. Thank you John, for your thoughtful interview that we will treasure always.

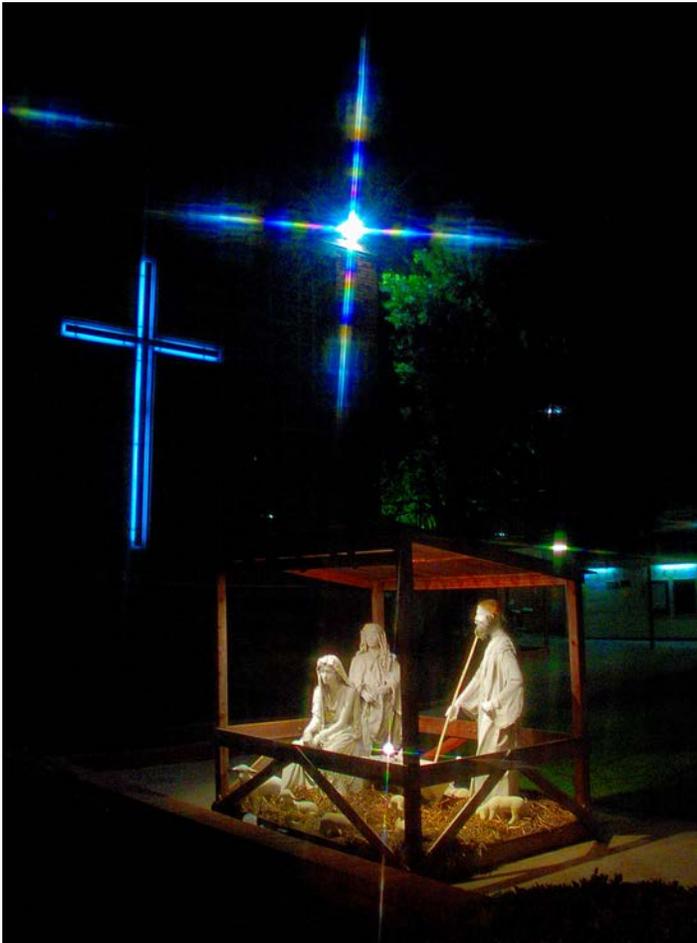


Go to: www.santamonicaumc.org/livestream

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The First UMC Creche

Photo courtesy AllanWalker