Senior Minister
HORIZONS
by Rev. Patricia Farris

For New Year’s Eve, why don’t we all get noise-makers and little horns and stand outside and ring in the new with giddy enthusiasm and joy? We are more than ready, aren’t we? The gift of a New Year! Thanks be to God!

I know that for some months more, we know not how many, it will feel like “same-old, same-old” as we work together to beat back the virus. At the same time, we know different. We know a lot more about this virus than we did ten months ago. We know a lot more about ourselves, about our courage and resiliency. We know a lot more about the strength we draw from God and from one another. We know a lot more about how precious life is and how deeply we are knit together in one fabric of life and love.

We are dreaming now of new possibilities. We are dreaming of a world made new, of hope restored. We commit to loving more widely and deeply. We are determined to live into God’s new future with hope and joy.

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all.” (Titus 2:11). The grace of God has appeared bringing healing, wholeness, safety, deliverance, assurance and restoration. Here’s to a New Year! Life made new. Community made whole. The future being born here and now. Thanks be to God!

BAPTISMAL RENEWAL

Each year as a new year begins, we enjoy the renewing of our baptismal vows as a time to recommit our lives in the example of Christ Jesus and receive a fresh out-pouring of the Holy Spirit. This year, I invite you to prayerfully prepare for worship on January 10 together online. Prepare a small cup or bowl of water which will become for us a source of new life. This is the water that refreshes life, nurtures growth, and offers new birth. We give thanks to God!

Sunday, January 10, 10 a.m. Online Worship

YOUTH SUNDAY

Save the Date for Youth Sunday on January 31! The youth will lead everything in worship from reading scripture to sharing their musical talents and leading us in prayer. The Seniors will be giving their sermon reflections this day as well. Following worship, you can join the Youth Group at coffee hour to congratulate them, ask questions and hear more about the Seniors plans for the future.

Sunday, January 31, 10 a.m. Online Worship, Coffee Hour hosted by the Youth at 11:00 a.m.
**JANUARY Calendar**

**OCCASIONS TO CONNECT THIS MONTH**

- **Friday, January 1** - New Year’s Day, church campus closed
- **Sunday, January 3** - Epiphany Sunday - Holy Communion

**Sundays 10 a.m. Worship Service**

- Throughout the month: 10 a.m. Online Worship Service (Facebook & website)
- 11 a.m. After Worship Coffee Hour, via Zoom
- 4 p.m. UMYF Gathering

**Monday, January 4**

- 9:30 a.m. Prayer Chain Meeting, via Conference call

**Tuesday, January 5**

- 7 a.m. Men’s Breakfast, via Zoom

**Wednesday, January 6**

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

**Thursday, January 7**

- 6:30 p.m. Listening Hearts Women’s Group with Tricia Guerrero, via Zoom

**Sunday, January 10** - Baptismal Renewal

- 9:15 a.m. Sunday School for Kids, via Zoom
- 10 a.m. Online Worship Service (Facebook & website)

**January 13**

- 9:30 a.m. Prayer Chain Meeting, via Zoom

**Saturday, January 16**

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

**Sunday, January 17**

- 9:15 a.m. Sunday School for Kids, via Zoom
- 10:00 a.m. Online Worship Service (Facebook & website)
- 11 a.m. After Worship Coffee Hour, via Zoom
- 4 p.m. UMYF Gathering

**Monday, January 18** - Martin Luther King Jr., Day

**Wednesday, January 13**

- 9 a.m. Men’s Breakfast, via Zoom

**Thursday, January 21**

- 6:30 p.m. Listening Hearts Women’s Group with Tricia Guerrero, via Zoom

**Friday, January 22**

- 7 a.m. Men’s Breakfast, via Zoom

**Saturday, January 23**

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

**Sunday, January 24**

- 9:15 a.m. Sunday School for Kids, via Zoom
- 10 a.m. Online Worship Service (Facebook & website)

**January 27**

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

**Monday, January 28**

- 9:30 a.m. Prayer Chain Meeting, via Conference call

**Wednesday, January 27**

- 7 a.m. Men’s Breakfast, via Zoom

**Thursday, January 28**

- 9:30 a.m. Prayer Chain Meeting, via Conference call

**Saturday, January 30**

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

**Sunday, January 31** - Youth Sunday

- 9:15 a.m. Sunday School for Kids, via Zoom
- 10 a.m. Online Worship Service (Facebook & website)
- 11 a.m. After Worship Coffee Hour, hosted by the First UMC Youth, via Zoom

**January 3**

- Special thanks to the UMW for sharing their Peanut Brittle recipe in the December issue of the Sentinel. First UMC Congregation Care Associate Anna Primer (above left) cooked up several pounds of brittles, as did First UMC member Bemeise Southcott. They both encourage everyone to try out the delicious recipe!

**January 4**

- Tumarah Shabeer, Pastor Associate for Family Ministries (upper left) used Messy Church Christmas via Zoom on December 19. It was such a hit that Messy Church will continue to meet monthly on Zoom starting in February.

**January 6**

- Special thanks to Jocelyn Hines-Garner and the Missions Council for organizing this year’s Alternative Christmas online event, and for hosting two coffee hours with discussions about the mission projects. And thanks to all who made a donation—making a donation in the name of a loved one, your gifts helped our ten chosen mission projects to continue their much-needed work during these times.

**January Ongoing Ministries via Zoom:**

- **Men’s Breakfast/Bible Study:** Tuesdays, 7 a.m. via Zoom
- **Open Space Young Adults Soul Care:** Wednesdays, 7 p.m. via Zoom
- **Listening Hearts Women’s Group, with Tricia Guerrero:** 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month, 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.
- **Sunday School for Kids:** Sundays, 9-15-9:45 a.m. via Zoom
- **Grief and Graces with Rev. Keri Olsen Paget:** 2nd & 4th Sundays, 6 a.m. via Zoom (last meeting Jan 24, due to Rev. Keri’s maternity leave)

**UMYF Youth Group:** Sundays, 4 p.m.

For more information on all of these programs, go to www.santamonicaumc.org

**Messy Church News**

Messy Church began at First UMC in 2016, and since then has provided families with young children a way to worship together and find a place of belonging during this particular life stage. Messy Church has been described as “church that is relaxed, welcoming, and a place of connection.” Each session explores a Biblical theme through activities, crafts, games, music, story and prayer. As “sheltering-in-love” practices began last spring, we established Messy Church at Home through a monthly email with everything you need to bring messy fun and faith into your home. Our priority was to equip families with resources to connect with God for worship and prayer in easy and accessible ways. As we moved towards the holiday season, we decided to try another new idea: Messy Church on Zoom: Messy Christmas!

After having a ton of fun in December, we are now excited to announce monthly Messy Church on Zoom, starting in February! We will gather on Zoom monthly to continue building community, a place of belonging, and sharing our messy faith together. More details to come!

If you would like to be added to the Messy Church email list to receive updates, go to: www.santamonicaumc.org/messychurch to sign up.

**Alternative Christmas 2020**

Thanks to Jocelyn Hines-Garner and the Missions Council for organizing this year’s Alternative Christmas online event, and for hosting two coffee hours with discussions about the mission projects. And thanks to all who made a donation—making a donation in the name of a loved one, your gifts helped our ten chosen mission projects to continue their much-needed work during these times.
Haiti Mission Update by Todd Erlandson, Haiti Team Leader

As you all know, we have not been able to travel to Haiti recently, but we have been using earmarked funds to support the people of Sabour, most recently in the form of monthly food relief. We have continued our supply of food in November and December, but meetings between our in-country team and the community have identified an idea to help them to be more self-sufficient going forward.

Through research, we have learned that peanuts are a valuable cash crop that requires little water to maintain. Our plan is to supply select families with resources for preparing the land, fertilizer and seed to grow a crop of peanuts that will be sold for profit and used to prepare the crops for the next season. We have about half the funds required for this project currently. We intend to run our “Pennesi for Haiti” campaign in the New Year, asking for continued donations from the congregation, friends and neighbors to raise the additional funds.

We are so grateful to all of you who have donated to Haiti relief through First UMC in the past. Please continue to keep the people of Haiti, and our in-country team, Caz, Jakob and Oweis, in your thoughts and prayers.

www.santamonicaumc.org/haiti

Ty Woodward (left), David Searfoos (center) and Stephen Billington (right).

NEW: Mid-Week Recitals 2021 Dates

February 10: Aram Barsamian, baritone and piano
March 10: Ruth Searfoos, piano
April 14: Kevan Torfeh and Friends (Tomas Galko and Anna Kastuchek, violins, Kevan Torfeh, cello, James Smith, organ and piano)
May 12: David York, organ

Stewardship 2021

Thank you to all who have generously pledged for 2021. If you haven’t yet had the opportunity to commit to giving in 2021, now is the time! Support from each member is needed. Every Gift Matters. www.santamonicaumc.org/stewardship-

Credo: Confirmation

by Tricia Guerrero, Pastoral Associate for Family Ministries

Confirmation is an opportunity for 6th-8th graders and any other youth interested, to explore and learn more about Christianity as a religion and personal faith. As we grow into young adults in the church, we are invited to ask ourselves these important questions: “Where do I belong?” and “What do I affirm?”

Confirmation is a chance to explore what it means to be a Christian, a United Methodist, and a Child of God. It is not a “class” with note-taking and tests, but time to ask questions, bring doubts and explore faithfully.

Confirmation will meet on Zoom each Sunday in February and March for an hour. It will be similar in youth group in that we will focus on a topic each week through interactive games, activities and discussion time. If you’re wanting to participate, email Tricia at: t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org.

Lay Leadership 2021

While we are unable to celebrate the Lay Leadership team in worship this year, we thank them for creating new ways to serve in 2020, and look forward to 2021.

2021 Leaders:

Lay Leader Team: Todd Erlandson, Sherry “Leigh” Erlandson, Michael Otson, Jocelyn Hicks-Garner

Fellowship & Events: Sandra Jones

Finance Committee: Kim Defenderfer

Health Ministry: Delo Jenkins-Wong

Historical Records: Leslie Nordby

Nominations & Leadership Development: Cindy McQuade

Loans & Scholarships: Mira Pak

Missions: Jocelyn Hicks-Garner

Parking: Chuck Kearnley

Prayer Quilt Ministry: Sue Payne & Maile Marquand

Planning: Rus Whittemberg

Seasonal Displays: Mike Esridge

Spiritual Formation: Mary Crawford

Staff-Parish Relations: Dick Crawford

Trustees: Vonn Busse

United Methodist Women: Betty Storm

Youth Ministry: Adam Guerrero

Methodist Foundation of Santa Monica:

T. Guerrero@santamonicaumc.org
Community

Deaths
We extend our deepest sympathies to the families and friends of the departed loved ones:

• to First UMC members Bob Wilson, Tom and Paula Wilson, and the Wilson family in the death of Marion Wilson.
• to First UMC member Coni Carbon in the death of her sister Christy.
• to First UMC member Jerry Brown in the death of his brother Jim in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Thank You for Advent Offerings

• Thanks to Mary Crawford, the Spiritual Formation Committee, and to all who wrote an Advent Devotional. Also thanks to Tricia Guerrero and David Penson for their audio readings for the last week of Advent. You may still read and listen on the Advent Devotional webpage: www.santamonicaumc.org/advent-devotional.
• Thanks to Dr. Jim Smith for providing us with the tracks to the 2019 Christmas Concert. We missed many of our in-person traditions in 2020, especially our annual Christmas Concert with beautiful music and carols. You may still hear the concert on our website, and view the program: www.santamonicaumc.org/christmas-concert-2019.
• Thanks to David Penson, Adam Guerrero and Ty Woodward for providing us the First UMC Virtual Sanctuary for the Advent season. More info coming soon on a second Virtual Sanctuary video for the New Year.

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

Electronic ringer during installation (above), Javier ringing the bell manually with rope (right).

PRESCHOOL CORNER

The First UMC Preschool families donated Christmas toys for the Boys & Girls Club of Santa Monica. Thank you to all the families for your generosity and for going the “extra mile” during the holiday season.

www.santamonicaumc.org/preschool

Congregation Care
In light of the reinstated Safer-At-Home orders, the church office is closed to the public. However, you may always feel free to leave a phone message (310-393-8258). The phone messages will be forwarded to us and we will respond as promptly as possible. The Pastoral Care line (310-393-8258 and enter extension 1), will still be available for people to leave a message requesting care.

If you have any questions, need assistance, or would like to volunteer to help with our homebound folks, please contact Congregational Care Associate Treesa Guerrero at treesa@sanctuarysanta.org. You may also leave a message on the Congregational Care line (310-393-8258 and enter extension 103).

New Steeple Bell Ringer Installed
In the month of December an automated bell ringer was installed in the Church steeple. First UMC can now systematically program when the bell will be rung, rather than having to hand ring the bell, as First UMC’s Javier had always done on Sunday mornings.

Our Spiritual Life Survey
Each month we will lift up a resource for spiritual growth for you to explore. Find the one(s) that work best for you. Here’s one on 7 Tips for Coping from the Michigan Conference of the UMC:

1. Exercise (take a walk, jog in place, stretch)
2. Vent (write a letter to God expressing your frustrations. Read the Psalms or Book of Lamentations.)
3. Take control (create daily disciplines and routines—prayer, Bible reading, making your bed)
4. Connect with others (write cards and letters, pick up the phone, use FaceTime and ZOOM to connect with family, friends, and small groups)
5. Give of yourself (find ways to give at your time, talent and treasure to support others in need)
6. Pursue happiness by expanding your mind (read new books, try new things, learn something new, notice the beauty of God’s world, sing out loud!)
7. Pray (for yourself, others, health care givers, those working on a vaccine, for schools, parents, students, and children)

Spiritual Life Survey Summary
by Rev. Patricia Farris

"For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you.” — Isaiah 54:10

Last Fall we distributed a Spiritual Life Survey to hear “how it is with your soul,” as John Wesley would have put it, as we move through these months of the COVID-19 virus together. Thank you for your responses.

As we might expect, you report a range of experiences. Some report a deeper prayer life, others a sense of distance from God. Many are inspired and sustained by our online worship services, others find it hard to engage. Some find support in online groups and Bible Studies, others have too much ZOOM with work and school to want to add on more. Some are doing fine, others seek new spiritual practices and study.

There are also things we all are experiencing—missing family and friends, missing our fellow worshippers and the people we usually sit with, missing the fellowship of in-person Coffee Hour and other groups, missing the choir and singing hymns together in worship. And we are all experiencing some disorientation as our daily routines are disrupted, as we grow tired of wearing masks and of physical distancing, as we try and accept not knowing what the timeline on all this will be and what life will be like on the other side.

Let me make a couple observations and recommendations. ALL these responses and experiences are normal and “OK.” There is no one way to live through this, just as there is no one way to experience grief and loss. And so, rest easy with where you are and what you are feeling. Let’s hold one another in prayer. We pray for those who feel alone, afraid, or stressed. We pray that we might sense the assurance of God’s abiding presence with us through it all. We pray that we might feel nudged to reach out and connect with others, through calls, cards, short porch visits, and online.

If there specific resources that would be helpful to you, let us know, be they regarding food, finances, counseling, small groups, study groups, or spiritual support. You can request prayer or a Prayer Quilt. You can join our online worship, walk our Labyrinth, or experience our Sanctuary online at any time. Check out these opportunities on our webpage: www.santamonicaumc.org.

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.
2. Ask if the person is willing to be prayed for and to receive a quilt.
3. Ask what specific prayers are wished for.
4. There is no charge for the quilt — it is a gift of love.
5. Contact Maile Marquard (maile@rugbooks.com) or Sue Payne (sue.s.payne@gmail.com).
6. 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 Rad (310.393.8258), or a rabbi@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.
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If you have any questions, need assistance, or would like to volunteer to help with our homebound folks, please contact Congregation Care Associate Anne Premer: a.premer@santamonicaumc.org, or (310)393-8258 ext. 103.

For Santa Monica Community Resources, including newly added info from the People Concern, (who believes no one should have to live on the street or in a violent household) including a list of Helpful Resources, and list of Santa Monica local laws, visit the website: www.santamonicaumc.org/care.

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We are not alone. God is with us.
Two Year Anniversary of Livestreaming

We celebrate that January marks the second anniversary of First UMC hosting Livestream recordings of the Sunday 10 a.m. worship service. The first worship service listed in 2019 on our YouTube channel was January 27, 2019. While recording the Mid-Week Recitals started in 2018, with mixed results of the sound cutting in and out, recording the Sunday morning service was an opportunity to fine-tune the process and make it better and better. What started on a small video recording device called Mero, precariously placed on a tripod in the middle of one of the pews, has been developed and refined in the past two years to include new permanent cameras and internet hard-wired into the Sanctuary. Sanctuary lighting has also been updated and improved.

When Safer-at-Home orders were put into place in March of 2020, Sunday morning worship services have since been recorded on Saturday mornings, with Adam Guerrero serving as technical director. Adam edits the video later that day, inserting smooth transitions, and placing lyrics on-screen for the hymns while Ty Woodward is playing organ, or while members of the Chancel Choir are singing. On Sunday mornings, Adam then “plays” the video on Facebook Live, where all can come and participate in worship together online, and comment on the comment wall to greet one another. Service recordings are also uploaded to our website each Sunday morning, and on our YouTube channel so that anyone can watch and participate at anytime. And, Mid-Week Recitals have also benefited from the new recording equipment, and can be enjoyed with amazing sound quality anytime on our website and YouTube channel.

Viewership of both the Sunday morning service and the Mid-Week Recitals has expanded to a worldwide audience with this technology.

We give thanks to Adam for his service and guidance in implementing all of these capabilities, every step of the way. We also give thanks to Dennis Payne, and DavidPerson, for their assistance and efforts in making all of this possible.

While recording the worship service developed out of a need to continue offering the service to folks to participate from home, First UMC will continue this offering even when we can all meet again in the Sanctuary. We thank God for the opportunity to be able to share the word of God in this ever-expanding, far-reaching way.

Thank You!
by Tricia Guerrero, Pastoral Associate for Family Ministries

During Preschool Chapel each week, I have the privilege to gather with our preschool kids to share a Bible story and enjoy a little bit of fun together. One of the great tools I’ve inherited is a beautiful set of felt pieces and felt board cards for telling Bible stories. Our Sunday School teachers have been using these for decades. The visuals go a long way in helping kids to better listen to the Bible stories. Young adult and teachers have been using these for decades. The visuals go a long way in helping kids to better listen to the Bible stories.

Haiti Mission Update
by Todd Erlandson, Haiti Team Leader

As you all know, we have not been able to travel to Haiti recently, but we have been using earmarked funds to support the people of Sabò, most recently in the form of monthly food relief. We have continued our supply of food in November and December, but meetings between our in-country team and the community have identified an idea to help them to be more self-sufficient going forward.

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We are so grateful to all of you who have donated to Haiti relief through First UMC in the past. Please continue to keep the people of Haiti, and our in-country team, Caz, Jakob and Ousell, in your thoughts and prayers.

NEW: Mid-Week Recitals 2021 Dates

February 10: Aram Barsamian, baritone
March 10: Roberta Toczydlowski, piano
April 14: Kevan Torfeth and Friends (Tomasz Golka and Anna Kostyuchek, violins, Kevan Torfeth, cello, James Smith, organ and piano)
May 12: David York, organ

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ONLINE Mid-Week Recital: Wednesday, January 13, 12:10 p.m.

ONLINE Mid-Week Recital:

Mid-Week Recital.

Molly Smith for your faithful service to our church and Preschool!

set of felt pieces so long ago. A sacred family tradition that helps us to was responsible for creating our first telling Bible stories. In working on the project, she found out that her successfully completed our first set of beautiful new felt pieces for

During Preschool each week, I have the privilege to gather on Sunday morning, and on our YouTube channel so that anyone can

All are welcome via Zoom: https://zoom.us/j/95709957528; Zoom ID: 957 0995 7528; Password: Fumes. “Have a computer but no camera? No problem! You can still attend. Contact Sarah Rold (s.rold@santamonicumc.org) for Fridays for the Sunday gathering.

Our January 2021 Mid-Week Recital features Ty Woodward, organ; David Searfoss, trumpet; Stephen Billington, trumpet. First UMC organist Ty Woodward joins forces with long-time First UMC guest musicians David Searfoss and Stephen Billington in their first Mid-Week Recital. To read the full bios of each musician, and to watch past recitals, go to: www.santamonicumc.org/mid-week-recitals.

How to watch:
- Facebook: Go to www.facebook.com/santamonicumc/live
- YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/c/SantaMonicaUMC
- Subscribe to our channel and adjust your notification settings to your preference. You may also watch past recitals on our YouTube channel.

- Website: View the recital on the Livestream page:
  www.santamonicumc.org/livestream.

Lay Leadership 2021

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Confirmation is an opportunity for 6th-8th graders and any other youth interested, to explore and learn more about Christianity as a religion and personal faith. As we grow into young adults in the church, we are invited to ask ourselves these important questions: “Where do I belong?” and “What do I affirm?”

Confirmation is a chance to explore what it means to be a Christian, a United Methodist, and a Child of God. It is not a “class” with note-taking and tests, but time to ask questions, bring doubts and explore faithfully.

Confirmation will meet on Zoom each Sunday in February and March for an hour. It will be similar in youth group in that we will focus on a topic each week through interactive games, activities and discussion time. If youth are wanting to participate, email Tricia at: tguerrero@santamonicumc.org.

January ONLINE Mid-Week Recital

Our February 2021 Mid-Week Recital features Ty Woodward, organ; David Searfoss, trumpet; Stephen Billington, trumpet. First UMC organist Ty Woodward joins forces with long-time First UMC guest musicians David Searfoss and Stephen Billington in their first Mid-Week Recital. To read the full bios of each musician, and to watch past recitals, go to: www.santamonicumc.org/mid-week-recitals.

How to watch:
- Facebook: Go to www.facebook.com/santamonicumc/live
- YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/c/SantaMonicaUMC
- Subscribe to our channel and adjust your notification settings to your preference. You may also watch past recitals on our YouTube channel.
- Website: View the recital on the Livestream page:
  www.santamonicumc.org/livestream.

ONLINE Mid-Week Recital:

Wednesday, January 13, 12:10 p.m.

Stewardship 2021

Thank you to all who have generously pledged for 2021. If you haven’t yet had the opportunity to commit to giving in 2021, now is the time! Support from each member is needed. Every Gift Matters.

www.santamonicumc.org/stewardship,

Gracious God, bless the days that lie before us in this New Year, that we may experience a deeper sense of your presence. Bless the lives that we offer you now, that we may be a blessing to others. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.
January Ongoing Ministries via Zoom:

- **Men's Breakfast/Bible Study:** Tuesdays, 7 a.m. via Zoom
- **Open Space Young Adults Soul Care:** Wednesdays, 7 p.m. via Zoom
- **Listening Hearts Women's Group, with Tricia Guerrero:** 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month, 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.
- **Sunday School for Kids:** Sundays, 9:15-9:45 a.m. via Zoom
- **Grief and Graces with Rev. Keri Olsen Paget:** 2nd & 4th Sundays
- **UMYF Youth Group:** Sundays, 4 p.m.

For more information on all of these programs, go to www.santamonicaumc.org

Messy Church News

Messy Church began at First UMC in 2016, and since then has provided families with young children a way to worship together and find a place of belonging during this particular life stage. Messy Church has been described as “church that is relaxed, welcoming, and a place of connection.” Each session explores a Biblical theme through activities, crafts, games, music, story and prayer.

As “sheltering-in-love” practices began last spring, we established Messy Church at Home through a monthly email with everything you need to bring messy fun and faith into your home. Our priority was to equip families with resources to connect with God for worship and prayer in easy and accessible ways. As we moved towards the holiday season, we decided to try another new idea: Messy Church on Zoom! Messy Christmas!

After having a ton of fun in December, we are now excited to announce monthly Messy Church on Zoom, starting in February! We will gather on Zoom monthly to continue building community, a place of belonging, and sharing our messy faith together.

More details to come!

If you would like to be added to the Messy Church email list to receive updates, go to: www.santamonicaumc.org/messychurch to sign up.

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Celebrations (cont.)
For New Year’s Eve, why don’t we all get noise-makers and little horns and stand outside and ring in the new with giddy enthusiasm and joy? We are more than ready, aren’t we? The gift of a New Year! Thanks be to God!

I know that for some months more, we know not how many, it will feel like “same-old, same-old” as we work together to beat back the virus. At the same time, we know different. We know a lot more about this virus than we did ten months ago. We know a lot more about ourselves, about our courage and resiliency. We know a lot more about the strength we draw from God and from one another. We know a lot more about how precious life is and how deeply we are knit together in one fabric of life and love.

We are dreaming now of new possibilities. We are dreaming of a world made new, of hope restored. We commit to loving more widely and deeply. We are determined to live into God’s new future with hope and joy.

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all.” (Titus 2:11). The grace of God has appeared bringing healing, wholeness, safety, deliverance, assurance and restoration. Here’s to a New Year! Life made new. Community made whole. The future being born here and now. Thanks be to God!

BAPTISMAL RENEWAL

Each year as a new year begins, we enjoy the renewing of our baptismal vows as a time to recommit our lives in the example of Christ Jesus and receive a fresh out-pouring of the Holy Spirit. This year, I invite you to prayerfully prepare for worship on January 10 together online. Prepare a small cup or bowl of water which will become for us a source of new life. This is the water that refreshes life, nurtures growth, and offers new birth.

We give thanks to God!

Thank you to the First UMC Youth Group for leading the Christmas Eve Family Worship service.

YOUTH SUNDAY

Save the Date for Youth Sunday on January 31! The youth will lead everything in worship from reading scripture to sharing their musical talents and leading us in prayer. The Seniors will be giving their sermon reflections this day as well. Following worship, you can join the Youth Group at coffee hour to congratulate them, ask questions and hear more about the Seniors plans for the future.

Sunday, January 31, 10 a.m. Online Worship, Coffee Hour hosted by the Youth at 11:00 a.m.