HORIZONS

by Rev. Patricia Farris

March 15th marks the one-year anniversary of our new life during the pandemic. Remember how from one Sunday to the next we switched to online worship? Actually, online everything!

I’m really proud and grateful for how our staff and members have stepped up. We’re all learning new skills and new ways of doing things, improving week by week. Even as we all yearn to be back together in person, we will continue to keep safety and health as our top priorities. Please continue to mask up, keep a safe distance, wash your hands frequently—and reach out to the people you miss seeing. Those calls, emails, cards, texts keep us all connected and bring smiles to our faces. A care package dropped off on the front porch is a great idea!

In some ways, the pandemic has caused us all to withdraw and turn inward. It’s not just the masks and the distancing. It’s the uncertainty and anxiety about what’s happening and what’s going to happen, and about not knowing what the timeline will be for a new chapter to begin.

Our Lenten theme, “Opening Our Lives” is an invitation to take a deep breath and open our hearts to the presence of the Living God. It’s an invitation to open ourselves to the beauty, wonder, comfort and love of God’s kingdom that is all around us all the time.

This theme is taken from Opening Our Lives: Devotional Readings for Lent, written by Trystan Owain Hughes. It comes to us from the Bible Reading Fellowship in the U.K. and is the recommended book for Lent 2021 from the Archbishop of Wales.

Its opening prayer is found in the Introduction to our 2021 First UMC Lenten Devotional. May this be the prayer of our hearts this Lent:

“Loving God, in our sufferings and joys, in our relationships and daily lives, we ask that your kingdom come. Open our eyes to your presence, open our ears to your call, open our hearts to your love, open our ways to your will, open our actions to your compassion, open our pain to your peace, and, in doing so, open our world to your hope. In the name of Jesus, Amen.”

Re-Gathering Task Force Update

Our Re-Gathering Task Force met on February 10 to review the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling on church services in California as well as the latest statement on in-person worship from our bishop, Grant Hagiya.

In sharing thoughts and concerns, we all affirm how very much we miss worshipping together, singing together, and sharing a bagel and cup of coffee in Coffee Hour. Nevertheless, health and safety remain our primary priority. LA County is still in the “Purple Tier” category, meaning that COVID-19 is widespread with most nonessential business operations closed. Despite recent decreases in the current COVID-19 surge of cases and hospitalizations, COVID-19 transmission remains widespread here in L.A. County and in many states and countries. Additionally, COVID variants are more easily transmissible, and verification of the variant in L.A. County means residents and businesses must be extremely diligent adhering to all public health safety measures, including wearing face coverings, distancing from others, and handwashing.

After extensive discussion, it was decided that we will continue with our online only services at least through Easter. At that time, we will re-assess the statistics on the virus and variants in the community and other pertinent indicators, including levels of infection and hospitalization as well as availability of vaccinations. (cont. on page 7 >>)
**HOLY WEEK**

**Sunday, March 28 - Palm 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, via Zoom
2 p.m. UMYF Gathering
4 p.m. UMYF Gathering
5:30 p.m. Confirmation Class, via Zoom

**Tuesday, March 30**
7 a.m. Men’s Breakfast, via Zoom
2 p.m. & 7 p.m. Lenten Bible Study with Rev. Larry Young, via Zoom

**Wednesday, March 31**
7 a.m. Open Space Young Adults Soul Care, via Zoom
7 a.m. Open Space Adults Soul Care, via Zoom
4 p.m. UMYF Gathering
6:30 p.m. Online Mourners Thursday Worship, (Facebook, website & YouTube)
7 p.m. After Worship Online Community Gathering, via Zoom

**Friday, April 2 - Good Friday - Walk the First UMC Online Labyrinth Saturday, April 3**
11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Easter Hop-By Event, First UMC Courtyard (for details see page 3)

**Sunday, April 4 - Easter Sunday - Family Sunday, no Sunday School**
10 a.m. Online Worship Service (Facebook & website)
11 a.m. After Worship Coffee Hour, via Zoom

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**Flowers to go to home-bound seniors, go to:**
www.santamonicaumc.org/flower-fund.

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**Open Space Young Adult Ministry**

We are a young adult community that seeks to foster an open-minded culture where all are invited to spark deep conversation and find spiritual meaning in a safe and diverse environment. During Lent, we are following a devotional called “Bless the Mess” by The SALT Project. At its heart, Lent is a journey of transformation—and transformation can be messy. Through this journey, we will “bless this mess” as we travel with Jesus toward Easter morning. Spiritual practices such as caring for God’s creation, fighting for justice, and acts of reconciliation will help us connect with each other and the work towards repairing God’s world. For more information about Open Space or to join their weekly Zoom meetings, email: openspacesantamonica@gmail.com

Visit the website: www.santamonicaumc.org/Open-space
Facebook: OpenSpaceSM
Instagram: openspaceSM

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**Prayer for Haiti**

By Rev. Patricia Farris

As we offer our contributions to support Haiti Mission: Pennies for Peanuts, let us hold our mission partners in our prayers: ‘Caz’ Souffrant, Pastor Claude Victor, District Superintendent; Jean-Michel Brian, Guest House Manager, and David Dranger, Mission Volunteer Coordinator. We pray for God’s strength to lift them up to continue in leadership and service.

We pray that government leaders would protect and care for its citizens, that the people’s basic necessities be provided for (food, water, shelter, medical care, safety), and that Haiti’s most vulnerable people be protected, especially the children.

We ask, O God, that you keep these our brothers and sisters in our hearts, in our prayers, and in the outreach of our giving and care.

We pray in the name of Christ, who came to lift up “the least of these,” and unite us in purpose and love. Amen.

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**Haiti Mission Update:**

**Pennies for Peanuts**

by Todd Erlandson, Haiti Team Leader

As you all know, we have not been able to travel to Haiti in the past years, first due to civil unrest and travel restrictions, and this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. But in what time I am proud to say that our church has used earmarked funds to support the Methodist Guest House in Port Au Prince, send goats to Sabier, and most recently supply food relief to the people of Sabier. Since April our in-country team has purchased and delivered food packages monthly to supply 50 families with staples such as rice, oil and canned foods. These 50 families are just a small portion of those we support in Haiti.

We sent our last food supply drop this past November, but through meetings and discussions between our team and the community, we have identified an idea to help the people of Sabier be more self-sufficient and less reliant on our direct aid going forward.

Through research, the local team has identified peanuts as a valuable cash crop that requires little water to maintain, one of the greatest problems in Sabier. They have also identified ten of the most needy families with available land, and our plan is to supply them with resources for preparing the plots, and purchasing fertilizer and seed to grow a crop of peanuts, which can be sold for profit and also used to prepare the fields and purchase seeds for the next growing season.

From especially designated Haiti support funds, we have about half the required amount to supply the necessary supplies by February and March of this year. This is where you come in. We are currently running our Peanuts for Haiti campaign, asking for your donations, as well as our friends and neighbors, to raise the additional funds needed for this project.

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**Offerings During Lent**

**Gospel of Mark Bible Study with Rev. Larry Young**
The Gospel of Mark Bible study led by Rev. Larry Young continues on Tuesdays through Lent. Mark's Gospel is the earliest record of Jesus’ life and teachings, so it is the nearest in time to Jesus’ lifetime. You may still sign up for the class by emailing Rev. Larry at Lyoung@ljyoung.net, he will send you the Zoom link.

**Lenten Devotions**
The Spiritual Formation Council invites you to read your Lenten Devotional online. This year we focus on the theme “Opening Our Hearts, in our prayers, and in the outreach of our giving and care.”

SAL T Project. At its heart, Lent is a journey of transformation —and transformation can be messy. Through this journey, we will “bless this mess” as we travel with Jesus toward Easter morning. Spiritual practices such as caring for God’s creation, fighting for justice, and acts of reconciliation will help us connect with each other and the work towards repairing God’s world. For more information about Open Space or to join their weekly Zoom meetings, email: openspacesantamonica@gmail.com

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We are so grateful to all of you who have donated to Haiti relief through First UMC in the past as your generosity has built our available reserves. Please continue to be generous in your support of this project.

You can give at the church office, or through our website: www.santamonicaumc.org/haiti

Please keep our in-country team, Caz, Oxlent and Jakob, and the people of Sabier, Haiti in your prayers.

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**Re-Gathering Task Force Update**

Continued from page 1:

In the meantime, we will continue to create and share together in our beautiful and meaningful online worship services which are enjoyed by so many—members and visitors from the community, across the nation and around the world. Children, youth, and families will continue to participate online in Sunday School, Messy Church and youth group worship.

The Task Force members shared ideas for additional scenarios and possibilities as we move forward, step by step. As always, we welcome YOUR thoughts and suggestions: task.force@santamonicaumc.org.

Our prayers continue for healing, for significant reductions in the spread of COVID-19, and for the Holy Spirit to renew our strength and grow us in faith and service.
Confirmation 2021
by Tricia Guerrero, Pastoral Associate for Family Ministries

This spring, eight youth are making their way through Confirmation class. This is not a “class” with note-taking and tests. This is a chance to explore what it means to be Christian, United Methodist, and a Child of God. We prioritize it as a space for youth to ask questions, bring doubts, and authentically explore church and faith. When we ask together in community and dare to question what we think we know, we become stronger and find deeper meaning in the faith we find along the journey.

One special aspect of Confirmation is the Friend in Faith, someone in the church community with whom youth are paired and become pen pals, prayer partners and receive the gift of an intergenerational friendship. These wonderful Friends in Faith serve as tangible pen pals, prayer partners and receive the gift of an intergenerational faith we find along the journey.

This journey is a communal journey and each person in this church community is invited to pray for the confirmands along the way. Another favorite tradition is that each confirmand receives a prayer square that has been made by our Prayer Quilt Ministry and prayed over by the community during worship. This year, we will be offering a way for everyone to pray for the confirmands during worship on March 14 and 21. Stay tuned for more details. Visit: www.santamonicaumc.org/confirmation

Gavin Eddy & Michael Olsson
Kate Beckerman & Ann Wilson
Bryce Eddy & David Penson

March Coffee Hour
If you’ve never been to an after-worship “Coffee Hour” Sundays at 11 a.m., it’s never too late to give it a try. Say “hi” to some church friends and chat about the topic of the day.

March Special Coffee Hour: Sunday, March 14: St. Patrick’s Day Coffee Hour
Join Linda Diane Anderson and the Women of Action for a St. Patrick’s Day Coffee Hour! Take a St. Patrick’s Day online quiz with the group, sing along with some of your favorite St. Patrick’s Day songs, and, don’t forget to wear green!

All are welcome via Zoom: https://zoom.us/j/95709897528, Zoom ID: 957 0989 7528 Password: fumo.
*Have a computer but no camera? No problem! You can still attend. Contact Sarah Rold (s.rold@santamonicaumc.org) for more information.

Coffee hour on Sunday, February 21, with Todd Erlandson speaking about the Haiti Mission Pennies for Peanuts campaign.

Details

March 28: Palm Sunday
10 a.m. ONLINE Sanctuary Worship
The day we celebrate Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, featuring special music: a new arrangement of two traditional Palm Sunday hymns: “Ride On, Ride On in Majesty,” and “All Glory, Laud, and Honor,” arranged by Michael McClish, with a solo by Ryan Brown.

APRIL 1: Maundy Thursday
In the Christian tradition, Maundy Thursday is the day to imitate Christ as servant, living into our call to serve one another and remembering Jesus in the celebration of Holy Communion. This online service will be led by Open Space.

Thursday, April 1, 6-30 p.m. via: Facebook Live: www.facebook.com/santamonicaumc/live
First UMC website: www.santamonicaumc.org/livestream
Youtube: www.youtube.com/c/SantaMonicaUMC
Followed by:
7 p.m. After Worship Zoom Gathering

APRIL 2: Good Friday
Walk the First UMC Labyrinth Online. You may “Walk” in silence to listen to your breath, to look within, to find peace. Go to: www.santamonicaumc.org/labyrints

On-line Service of Lessons & Anthems
This service of Lessons & Anthems is an annual tradition, and it continues this year online. This is a solemn service, designed to prepare our hearts and minds for Holy Week. In word and music, we will remember the last days of Jesus’ life–his witness, his teaching, his faithfulness.

Sunday, March 21, 10 a.m. ONLINE Sanctuary Worship
This service of Lessons & Anthems is an annual tradition, and it continues this year online. This is a solemn service, designed to prepare our hearts and minds for Holy Week. In word and music, we will remember the last days of Jesus’ life–his witness, his teaching, his faithfulness.

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He has been a member of the Commission on Liturgy and Church Music of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles and has held leadership positions in several chapters of The American Guild of Organists. He’s been a Lecturer in Music on the faculty of the Bob Cole School of Music at CSULB. David York began playing the organ at age 16. After graduating with honors from the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington, David completed a Master’s Degree in Organ Performance at the University of Southern California. His teachers have included Edward A. Hansen and Ladd Thomas. David has been Director of Music at several churches in Southern California including First Presbyterian, San Pedro, St. Luke’s Episcopal, Long Beach and he’s currently Minister of Music at Lutheran Church of the Master in Westwood. He is Music Director at Temple Israel in Long Beach.

How to watch:
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/santamonicaUMC
- 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

More for information on all of these programs, go to www.santamonicaumc.org

March Ongoing Ministries via Zoom:
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- Open Space Young Adults Soul Care: Wednesdays, 7 p.m. via Zoom
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- Sunday School for Kids: Sundays, 9:15-9:45 a.m. via Zoom
- UMYF Youth Group: Sundays, 4 p.m.

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.

A look back at the 2019 Home Run for Kids

Corporation Care

The church office remains 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 home-bound folks, please contact Congregational Care Associate Anne Premer, a.premer@santamonicaumc.org, or call (310)393-8258 ext. 103.

Update your Emergency Contact Form

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Upward Bound House - Home Run for Kids Online: New Date!

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Deaths

We extend our deepest sympathies to the families and friends of these departed loved ones:
- Former First UMC office manager Nancy Perov, who died February 23. Nancy worked in the church office for over ten years and spearheaded what we now know as the Sunday Hospitality Table. She volunteered at the church years following and her dedication and genuine love of all will be missed. Condolence cards may be sent to the church office to be forwarded to family. Donations may be made to Jackie’s Purfect Match in honor of Nancy. Please make your check out to Jackie’s Purfect Match and mail to First United Methodist Church care of Sarah Rold. She will make sure they get to Jackie.
- First UMC member Elizabeth (Liz) Ann Marriott Lowery, who died February 16.

Congratulations

- Congratulations to First UMC member Eliana Pires on her recent engagement.
- Congratulations to First UMC member Anna Premer on her recent marriage.

PRESCHOOL CORNER

As seen in a Preschool Zoom window: 2 year old preschoolers learning that Mae Jamison was the first African American to travel to space. The collages are spaceship art.

Looking Forward

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The Sunday School kids created Valentines for their Faith in Action project, which were sent to home-bound First UMC congregants. Above left, Lauren and Julian Sweat with their creations. Above right, Valentines made by the kids and teachers.

Some scenes from online Youth Sunday, held January 31.

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How to watch:
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2. Contact Maili Marquand (maili@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 made 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.rold@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

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Zoom community moment: Listening Hearts Women’s Group, led by Tricia Guerrero.

HAPPENINGS

Happening this week:
- First UMC Youth Sunday Whole Hearted
- High School Seniors: A look back at the 2019 Home Run for Kids

Some scenes from online Youth Sunday, held January 31.

As seen in a Preschool window: 2 year old preschoolers learning that Mae Jamison was the first African American to travel to space. The collages are spaceship art.

PRESCHOOL CORNER

As seen in a Preschool window: 2 year old preschoolers learning that Mae Jamison was the first African American to travel to space. The collages are spaceship art.

Corner

The Sunday School kids created Valentines for their Faith in Action project, which were sent to home-bound First UMC congregants. Above left, Lauren and Julian Sweat with their creations. Above right, Valentines made by the kids and teachers.

A look back at the 2019 Home Run for Kids

A look back at the 2019 Home Run for Kids.
Confirmation 2021
by Tricia Guerrero, Pastoral Associate for Family Ministries

This spring, eight youth are making their way through Confirmation class. This is not a “class” with note-taking and tests. This is a chance to explore what it means to be Christian, United Methodist, and a Child of God. We prioritize it as a space for youth to ask questions, bring doubts, and authentically explore church and faith. When we ask together in community and dare to question what we think we know, we become stronger and find deeper meaning in the faith we find along the journey.

One special aspect of Confirmation is the Friend in Faith, someone in the church community with whom youth are paired and become pen pals, prayer partners and receive the gift of an intergenerational friendship. These wonderful Friends in Faith serve as tangible evidence of the church’s vow to support and nurture young people. They embody relational theology, in which relationships with others is a way that we can grow in our understanding of God. Friends in Faith, most importantly, are personal support for the Confirmand as they explore and decide for themselves their place in the church and their relationship with God.

This journey is a communal journey and each person in this church community is invited to pray for the confirmands along the way. Another favorite tradition is that each confirmand receives a prayer square that has been made by our Prayer Quilt Ministry and prayed over by the community during worship. This year, we will be offering a way for everyone to pray for the confirmands during worship on March 14 and 21.

Stay tuned for more details.

Visit: www.santamonicaumc.org/confirmation

Ethan Crawford & Michael Lamb
Bailey Nessel & Leigh Erlandson
Jojo Beckerman & Laurie Charchut
Rowan Kenefick & Whitney Hagan
Gavin Eddy & Michael Olsson
Kate Beckerman & Ann Wilson
Bryce Eddy & David Penson
Simona Snider & Molly Smith

March 20: Palm Sunday
10 a.m. ONLINE Sanctuary Worship
The day we celebrate Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, featuring special music: a new arrangement of two traditional Palm Sunday hymns: “Ride On, Ride On in Majesty,” and “All Glory, Laud, and Honor,” arranged by Michael McClure, with a solo by Ryan Brown.

APRIL 1: Maundy Thursday
In the Christian tradition, Maundy Thursday is the day to imitate Christ as servant, living into our call to serve one another and remembering Jesus in the celebration of Holy Communion. This online service will be led by Open Space.

Thursday, April 1, 6:30 p.m. via Facebook Live: www.facebook.com/santamonicaumc/live
First UMC website: www.santamonicaumc.org/livestream

Followed by:
7 p.m. After Worship Zoom Gathering

APRIL 2: Good Friday
Walk the First UMC Labyrinth Online. You may “Walk” in silence to listen to your breath, to look within, to find peace. Go to: www.santamonicaumc.org/labyrinth

March Coffee Hour
If you’ve never been to an after-worship “Coffee Hour” Sundays at 11 a.m., it’s never too late to give it a try. Say “hi” to some church friends and chat about the topic of the day.

March Special Coffee Hour:
Sunday, March 14: St. Patrick’s Day Coffee Hour
Join Linda Diane Anderson and the Women of Action for a St. Patrick’s Day Coffee Hour! Take a St. Patrick’s Day online quiz with the group, sing along with some of your favorite St. Patrick’s Day songs, and, don’t forget to wear green!

All are welcome via Zoom: https://zoom.us/j/95709897528; Zoom ID: 957 0989 7528 Password: fumc.

March 30: Easter Sunday
10 a.m. ONLINE Sanctuary Worship
Our celebration of Christ’s Resurrection, featuring a vocal sextet from the Chancel Choir, singing two anthems: “The Day of Resurrection” and “To The Lamb On The Throne,” with David Searfoss on trumpet.

For Peanuts campaign.

Confirmation and Friends in Faith

APRIL 3: Holy Saturday
IN-PERSON EVENT! EASTER HOP-BY
All are welcome to attend our Hop-By Easter event, hosted by First UMC Children and Family Ministries. Walk through stations in the First UMC Courtyard for fun and physically-distanced activities for Easter lovers of all ages.

• Featuring crafts bags, a single household family photo, a chalk mural and even a visit from the Easter Bunny.

• Drive by to pick up your bag, or park in the church parking lot and walk through the event to fully participate in each activity. Remember to wear your mask.

• Missions Council will also be hosting a food drive for the West Side Food Bank, so bring cans and dry goods to donate.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Easter Hop-By: Saturday, April 3, come anytime between 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. in the First UMC Courtyard

APRIL 4: Easter Sunday
10 a.m. ONLINE Sanctuary Worship
Our celebration of Christ’s Resurrection, featuring a vocal sextet from the Chancel Choir, singing two anthems: “The Day of Resurrection” and “To The Lamb On The Throne,” with David Searfoss on trumpet.

At print time, Holy Week event planning is in progress. Visit the website to check for up-to-date info: www.santamonicaumc.org
HOLY WEEK

**Sunday, March 28 - Palm 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, via Zoom
4 p.m. UMYF Gathering
5:30 p.m. Confirmation Class final class, via Zoom

**Sunday, March 29, Maundy Thursday**
7 a.m. Men’s Breakfast, via Zoom
2 p.m. & 7 p.m. Lenten Bible Study with Rev. Larry Young, via Zoom
10 a.m. Online Worship Service (Facebook, website & YouTube)

**Sunday, March 30, Good Friday**
2 p.m. & 7 p.m. Good Friday - Walk the First UMC Online Labyrinth

**Saturday, April 3, Easter**
7 p.m. After Worship Online Community Gathering, via Zoom
10 a.m. Online Worship Service (Facebook & website)
11 a.m. After Worship Coffee Hour, via Zoom

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**Flowers and Displays**
To donate to the flower fund, or to send flowers to go to home-bound seniors, go to:
www.santamonicaumc.org/flower-fund

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**Haiti Mission Update: Pennies for Peanuts**
by Todd Erlandson, Haiti Team Leader
As you all know, we have not been able to travel to Haiti in the past years, first due to civil unrest and travel restrictions, and this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. But in what time I am proud to say that our church has used earmarked funds to support the Methodist Guest House in Port Au Prince, send goats to Sabier, and most recently supply food relief to the people of Sabier. Since April our in-country team has purchased and delivered food packages monthly to supply 50 families with staples such as rice, oil, and canned foods. These 50 families surround the center of the community of Sobier, a location and population that so many of us are familiar with.

We sent our last food supply drop this past November, but through meetings and discussions between our team and the community, we have identified an idea to help the people of Sabier be more self-sufficient and less reliant on our direct aid going forward.

Through research, the local team has identified peanuts as a valuable cash crop that requires little water to maintain, one of the great problems in Sabier. They have also identified ten of the most needy families with available land, and our plan is to supply them with resources for preparing the plots, and purchasing fertilizer and seed to grow a crop of peanuts, which can be sold for profit and also used to prepare the fields and purchase seeds for the next growing season.

From specially designated Haiti support funds, we have about half the required amount to supply the necessary supplies by February and March of this year. This is where you come in. We are currently running our Peanuts for Haiti campaign, asking for your donations, as well as your friends and neighbors, to raise the additional funds needed for this project.

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**Offerings During Lent**
- Gospel of Mark Bible Study with Rev. Larry Young
  The Gospel of Mark Bible study led by Rev. Larry Young continues on Thursdays through Lent. Mark’s Gospel is the earliest record of Jesus’ life and teachings, so it is the nearest in time to Jesus’ lifetime. You may still sign up for the class by emailing Rev. Larry Young at lyoung@santamonica.net
- Lenten Devotions
  The Spiritual Formation Council invites you to read your Lenten devotional online. This year we focus on the theme “Opening Our Lives”.
- Gospel of Mark Bible Study: Tuesdays through Lent, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., (same class) via Zoom
- Lenten Devotions
  The Spiritual Formation Council invites you to read your Lenten devotional online. This year we focus on the theme “Opening Our Lives.”
- How to Keep a Holy Lent: Spiritual Practice Guide
downloadable card
You may still download a pdf of the Spiritual Practice Guide on the website:
www.santamonicaumc.org/lent

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**Re-Gathering Task Force Update**
Continued from page 1:
In the meantime, we will continue to create and share together in our beautiful and meaningful online worship services which are enjoyed by as many—members and visitors from the community, across the nation and around the world. Children, youth and families will continue to participate online in Sunday School, Messy Church and youth group worship.

The Task Force members shared ideas for additional scenarios and possibilities as we move forward, step by step. As always, we welcome YOUR thoughts and suggestions: task.force@santamonicaumc.org

Our prayers continue for healing, for significant reductions in the spread of COVID-19, and for the Holy Spirit to renew our strength and grow us in faith and service.
HORIZONS

by Rev. Patricia Farris

March 15th marks the one-year anniversary of our new life during the pandemic. Remember how from one Sunday to the next we switched to online worship? Actually, online everything!

I’m really proud and grateful for how our staff and members have stepped up. We’re all learning new skills and new ways of doing things, improving week by week. Even as we all yearn to be back together in person, we will continue to keep safety and health as our top priorities. Please continue to mask up, keep a safe distance, wash your hands frequently—and reach out to the people you miss seeing. Those calls, emails, cards, texts keep us all connected and bring smiles to our faces. A care package dropped off on the front porch is a great idea!

In some ways, the pandemic has caused us all to withdraw and turn inward. It’s not just the masks and the distancing. It’s the uncertainty and anxiety about what’s happening and what’s going to happen, and about not knowing what the timeline will be for a new chapter to begin.

Our Lenten theme, “Opening Our Lives” is an invitation to take a deep breath and open our hearts to the presence of the Living God. It’s an invitation to open ourselves to the beauty, wonder, comfort and love of God’s kingdom that is all around us all the time.

This theme is taken from Opening Our Lives: Devotional Readings for Lent, written by Trystan Owain Hughes. It comes to us from the Bible Reading Fellowship in the U.K. and is the recommended book for Lent 2021 from the Archbishop of Wales.

Its opening prayer is found in the Introduction to our 2021 First UMC Lenten Devotional. May this be the prayer of our hearts this Lent:

“Loving God, in our sufferings and joys, in our relationships and daily lives, we ask that you open our hearts and minds to your presence, to your peace and comfort, to your love and compassion, to your will, to your kingdom come. In the name of Jesus, Amen.”