

SENTINEL

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HORIZONS

By Rev. Patricia Farris, Senior Minister

As a new year begins, a new year also begins in the church calendar. We move from Advent and Christmas into the season of Epiphany. It begins with the arrival of the Magi at the manger, then moves through the baptism of Jesus and stories of Jesus' life.

It may be that the story of the long journey of the Magi following the light of the special star most captivates our imagination. They have studied the stars. They have heard the prophecy regarding a world-changing birth. They journey for months, following the star path, to find Jesus.

Epiphany is about the journey—setting out in faith, trusting, not totally knowing, moving forward anyway. It's about sharing the deep longing of the Magi for God to do a new thing in the world. It's about light and hope and the abiding promise in the starlit heavens.

A poem by M Jade Kaiser put it this way:

“Behold, the glistening sign of hope.

A distant but shining star is
cupped by the darkness
that holds gently our future.

Do we dare to wonder where it leads us,
or choose the path we know?

The Holy has painted possibility
across the night sky.

It flickers with potential,
trembles with vulnerability,
shimmers with beauty, still.

Come, seekers.

The journey is before us.

A new day is born.”



So, come seekers! Let's journey together in hope into this new year and live into the beautiful future that God is preparing even now.

JANUARY HIGHLIGHTS

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Ongoing Ministries**
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JANUARY ON-GOING MINISTRIES

- **Men's Bible Study** Tuesdays, 7 a.m. via Zoom
- **Open Space Young Adults** Jan 17, 7 p.m.
- **Listening Hearts Women's Group** Jan 17 & 31, **Coffee and Connect:** 10 a.m. Literati Cafe (12081 Wilshire Blvd, LA, CA 90025); Jan 10 & 24, 6:30 p.m. via Zoom
- **Prayer Quilt Ministry** Third Saturday of the month: Meeting January 20, Room 300
- **The Chancel Choir** Rehearsals on Thursdays 7:40 p.m. in the Choir Room
- **Blood Pressure Screenings** Sunday Jan 28, after worship in the Fireside Room
- **Nursery Care** Sundays: 9:30 - 11 a.m. Room 204
- **Sunday School for Kids** Sundays, 10 a.m. in Room 206, for ages 2 and up.
- **UMYF Youth Group** Meets on Sundays, 6-8 p.m. Youth Lounge

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

WORSHIP IN THE SANCTUARY

We worship on Sundays at 10 a.m. in-person in the Sanctuary each week. Masks are optional, but always acceptable and welcome. If you feel ill, please choose to worship from home online.

COMMUNION SUNDAYS

Berneice Southcott prepares the Communion elements before worship, with the help of Congregation Care Associate **Anne Premer**. **Mary Crawford** and **Rose Kujawa** help take care of the elements after worship. Thank you all for your service!

WORSHIP ONLINE

We offer several options for participating in online worship. You may join in the service Livestream in real time or later at your convenience on these platforms: Sundays 10 a.m. Worship Online LIVESTREAM on:

- **Website:** www.santamonicaumc.org/livestream

After worship: www.santamonicaumc.org/sunday-service-archive

- **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/santamonicaumc/live
- **YouTube Channel:** [@SantaMonicaUMC](https://www.youtube.com/@SantaMonicaUMC)
- **The First UMC App:** (download from the App Store, search FirstUMC_SM)

Let us know if you need assistance in joining online.

LISTENING HEARTS WOMEN'S GROUP

Listening Hearts is a group for women of all ages, grounded in the practices of sacred listening, prayer and reflection. We gather both in person and online. We meet for coffee and community at Literati Cafe on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month at 10 a.m. We also gather on Zoom for meditation and prayer, a topic for discussion, and sharing with one another on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome to join! Contact Tricia Guerrero to learn more: t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org

January Meetings: Jan 17 & 31, Coffee and Connect: 10 a.m. Literati Cafe (12081 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90025); Jan 10 & 24, 6:30 p.m. via Zoom

OPEN SPACE YOUNG ADULTS

A place of community for "youngish" adults (loosely in your 20's, 30's... even 40's!). We seek to journey alongside one another in spiritual discovery, growth, and belonging. We gather monthly for conversations and connection.

January meeting: January 17, 7 p.m. off-site

YOUTH MINISTRY

Youth Group meets weekly, and is open to all 6th - 12th graders in the community. They gather on Sunday evenings in the Youth Lounge for dinner, games and a program or topic for discussion and reflection.

Meets Sundays, 6 - 8 p.m. in the Youth Lounge



Holiday gatherings with Open Space (above) and Family Connection caroling in the Courtyard (right)



JANUARY AT-A-GLANCE

HAPPY
New Year's

Mon, Jan 1 **New Year's Day**
Fri, Jan 5 **Labyrinth/Chapel open**
Sun, Jan 7 **Epiphany Sunday/ Holy Communion/
Baptismal Renewal**
Wed, Jan 10 **January Mid-Week Recital**
Fri, Jan 12 **Jerry Wollman Memorial**
Sat, Jan 13 **Paul Eugene Ballmer Memorial**
Sun, Jan 14 **Moments for Mission with UMCOR /
All Church Faith in Action Project w/UMCOR**
Mon, Jan 15 **Martin Luther King Jr., Day**
Fri, Jan 19 **Ken Baird Memorial**
Sat, Jan 20 **Spirit Sisters Retreat / Prayer Quilt
Ministry Meeting**
Sun, Jan 21 **Bill Buxton talk: "Finding Purpose and
Identity in God through Times of Physical and
Cognitive Illness and Challenges"**
Sat, Jan 27 **UWF Game Day**
Sun, Jan 28 **Youth Sunday / Girl Scout Cookie sales /
Blood Pressure Screenings**

WALK THE LABYRINTH & CHAPEL OPEN FOR PRAYERS

The Labyrinth is open every first Friday of the month from 1 p.m. - 3 p.m., in Simkins Hall. If you've never walked the Labyrinth before, there are printed instructions to help with your walking meditation. For those unable to walk, we have finger labyrinths. A finger labyrinth is similar to a full sized labyrinth you would walk except it is on a much smaller and more portable scale. The First UMC Chapel will also be open for prayers that day from 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Friday, January 5, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. in Simkins Hall and the Chapel

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. We invite you to prayerfully prepare for worship on January 7 together, in-person and online. If you are participating 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.

January 7, 10 a.m. In-Person and Online worship



JANUARY MID-WEEK RECITAL

The January Recital features:

Jeff Greif, tenor; Hui Wu,

piano. Jeff Greif is a recitalist, specializing in Lieder and other art songs



new and old, and choral singer and soloist. In 2019, with pianist Hui Wu, he performed in "A Night of Art and Opera: Tales of Hoffmann," which featured the art of John August Swanson.

Visit the website to view past recitals:

www.santamonicaumc.org/mid-week-recital-series

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

Facebook: @santamonicaumc • YouTube Channel :

www.youtube/c/santamonicaumc • Website:

www.santamonicaumc.org/livestream • The First

UMC App: (To download, go to the App Store, search FirstUMC_SM)

ALL CHURCH FAITH IN ACTION

Family Ministries will host an all-church service project after church on Sunday, January 14, during Coffee Hour to benefit UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief). Through an assembly line process, we will package hygiene kits that will be given out by the United Methodist Church as part of relief efforts around the world. This event will be sponsored through a generous grant given to the Youth Ministry for service opportunities.



Sunday, January 14, after 10 a.m. worship

SPIRIT SISTERS RETREAT

The Spirit Sisters, led by Paster Dorothy Bimber Worley, are holding an annual All-Day January Retreat. They study scripture, pray, reflect, sing together, and get to know Jesus and each other better. They "seek out to live out Jesus' Great Commandment to love with every fiber of our being." All are welcome. For more information, please contact Pastor Dorothy (626)826-8301.

Saturday, January 20, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. in the Fireside Room

FLOWERS

To order flowers to remember or honor a loved one for Sunday Worship service, go to: www.santamonicaumc.org/flower-fund.



Open dates: January 14, 21, 28

SPECIAL TALK WITH DR. BILL BUXTON

We welcome First UMC member Dr. Bill Buxton for a special talk after worship on Sunday, January 21, on the subject “Finding Purpose and Identity in God through Times of Physical and Cognitive Illness and Challenges.” Bill is a Neurologist at Providence St. John’s Health Center, and the Pacific Neuroscience Institute in Santa Monica, and is currently in the Master of Divinity program at Duke University.

Bill says, “While our society often views loss of memory and other cognitive abilities as a loss of part of one’s self, the Bible tells us otherwise. At every life stage, we always have the same breath of life and are every bit as much human as when we are children and young adults. We will be talking about ways those with memory disorders can maintain their sense of self and engage in meaningful activities and interactions with others. We will also discuss practical ways friends and family members can encourage them.

While the main focus will be on those with cognitive challenges, the message also applies to those with any differences in abilities, whether cognitive or physical.”

Sunday, January 21, after 10 a.m. worship in the Fireside Room

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH GAME DAY

The UWF are excited for their annual Game Day! ALL are welcome for an afternoon of Scrabble, Bridge, Mahjong, Rummikub tiles, fun and fellowship, with proceeds supporting the missions of UWF.

\$10 entry fee, includes pie!

**Saturday, January 27, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
in Simkins Hall**



YOUTH SUNDAY

Come and join us for Youth Sunday on January 28! It will be a meaningful worship experience as our youth will plan and lead worship, including our seniors who will be giving their sermon reflections. We look forward to what they have to share with us about their faith journey! Then plan to stay for Coffee Hour hosted by the Youth Ministry - visit with the youth, parents and the Youth Council, and purchase your favorite Girl Scout cookies to support our Girl Scouts.

Sunday, January 28, 10 a.m. worship

The UMYF Youth Group meets on Sundays at 6 p.m. in the Youth Lounge. All 6th-12th graders invited!

BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS

The Health Ministry Council hosts Blood Pressure screenings once month. We are grateful to this ministry for their continued care of the congregation!

Sunday, January 28, after worship, in the Fireside Room

LAY LEADERSHIP 2024

We thank all of the Lay Leadership team for their dedication and continued service into 2024.

Lay Leader Team: Todd Erlandson, Leigh Erlandson, Jocelyn Hicks-Garner, Michael Lamb, Molly Smith, Glenda Martinez

Fellowship & Events: Sandra Jones

Finance Committee: Kim Defenderfer

Health Ministry: Debi Jenkinson Wong

Historical Records: Leslie Nordby

Nominations & Leadership Development: Cindy McQuade

Loans & Scholarships: Mira Pak

Missions: Jocelyn Hicks-Garner

Parking: Chuck Kearsley

Prayer Quilt Ministry: Sue Payne and Maile Marquand

Planned Giving: Russ Whittenburg

Seasonal Displays: Mike Eskridge

Spiritual Formation: Cindy McQuade

Staff-Parish Relations: Dick Crawford

Trustees: Vern Busse and Phil Flanders

United Methodist Women: Robin Henning and Karen Ing

Youth Ministry: Adam Guerrero

Methodist Foundation of Santa Monica: John Youngman

REGISTER NOW! KIDS NIGHT OUT

Kids Night Out is back in February! While parents enjoy a well-deserved night out, children are provided a safe and fun evening of games, activities and crafts, pizza dinner, and a movie with our trained childcare team.

When: Friday, February 2, 4 – 8 p.m.

Where: First UMC Santa Monica, Second Floor Education Building

Cost: \$35/child + \$15 for each additional sibling

Ages: 2 years – 5th grade

Register **now** on the website:

www.santamonicaumc.org/kids-night-out

First UMC takes the safety of the children and youth very seriously.

We follow Safe Sanctuaries®

practices, which is our

commitment to the physical

safety and spiritual growth of all of our children, youth, and adults.





CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to First UMC member **Lauryn Wilson** and Chase Chapman on their wedding, held December 15.

BAPTISM

Vaughn Charlotte Vinson was baptized by Rev. Patricia Farris on Sunday, December 17.



DEATHS

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

- First UMC member **Audrey Jean Ojala Rogers** died Sunday, December 3, 2023.
- First UMC member Chris Reagh and husband Gordon on the death of his mother **Valentine Hilda Reagh**, who died December 4, 2023.
- First UMC member Ilsa Wollman on the death of her husband **Jerome Wollman**, who died December 5, 2023.

MEMORIALS

- A memorial service for **Jerome Wollman** will be held Friday, January 12, at 1 p.m. in the Chapel.
- A memorial service for **Paul Eugene Ballmer** will be held Saturday, January 13, at 1 p.m. in the Chapel.
- A memorial service for **Ken Baird** will be held Friday, January 19, at 1 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

THE FIRST UMC CHRISTMAS CONCERT

If you were not able to attend the First UMC Christmas Concert on December 3, or if you came and want to see it again, you may watch the concert at any time on our YouTube channel! Featuring Haydn: Te Deum; Vaughan Williams: Fantasia on Christmas Carols; and the ever popular Carols, Etc. With the Chancel Choir and guest singers, orchestra & Mark Twain Alumni Ringers. Go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ceeYBuqHL9k>

Or visit the website: www.santamonicaumc.org/music-theater



THANK YOU COMMUNITY!

- Thanks to **Mary Crawford**, the Spiritual Formation Committee, and to all who wrote an Advent Devotion. Also thanks to those who recorded audio devotions for the last week of Advent. You may still access the written devotional booklet: www.santamonicaumc.org/advent.
- Thanks to **Jocelyn Hicks-Garner** and the **Mission Council** for organizing December's Alternative Christmas for two Sunday's during coffee hour with information about the mission projects. And thanks to all who supported Alternative Christmas! By making a donation in the name of a loved one, your gifts helped our eight chosen mission projects to continue their much-needed work.
- Thanks to **Chris Ruud** for her **20th year** organizing Angel Tree Project. Chris organized gifts to fill **26** laundry baskets with new household items to provide the families of Family Place/ Upward Bound House with new things for Christmas. Many thanks to all the community members who purchased and wrapped gifts for this mission.
- Thanks to **Mike Eskridge and the Seasonal Display Committee** for providing the beautiful poinsettias and seasonal displays in the Sanctuary during Advent.
- Thanks to **Javier Espinoza, Dan Nessel, and Sandra Jones** for setting up our beautiful creche in the Courtyard.
- Thank you to **Rev. Larry Young** for his online Psalms Bible Study class. Read Howard Wollitz' "A Journey Through the Psalms" appreciation for Rev. Larry's classes in the December 2023 Sentinel here: www.santamonicaumc.org/church-newsletter
- And to all the **incredible volunteers** who stuffed envelopes and sent out mailings, decorated tables, visited folks in hospital and at home, opened their homes for holiday gatherings, ushered for worship services and the concert, volunteered at the Westside Food Bank, and more, we THANK YOU!

REV. KERI OLSEN PAGET

As was announced at our recent Church Charge Conference, we are pleased to share the news that the **Rev. Keri Olsen Paget**, our Deacon Associate, will be joining our staff in January in a part-time role in the area of Spiritual Formation, and assisting worship leadership two Sundays per month. We talked with Keri to find out more about her hopes for her expanded role here at First UMC:

Hello Keri! We're excited to hear you'll be spending some more time in the new year with us! Can you tell us a little bit about what you'll be working on?

“In conversations with Patricia, we thought it would be helpful to add more opportunities to the congregation for how they explore their spirituality. I'll come in and get to spend more time with the congregation to listen to ways that people would like to connect with God and themselves, and I'll think about creating new programming and opportunities around that. Some of the initial ideas revolve around working with the Labyrinth group on the first Friday of the month - to be present and available during that time. I'm also interested in creating workshops where people can engage in prayer and meditation through painting, mandalas, and dance, and exploring what it really means to be in connection with God in our hearts, mind and body. We are also exploring responding to the losses that we've had in the community, where we might offer opportunities to connect with grief and offer care. These ideas won't happen all at once, but I'm excited to begin and see how things progress, and possibly discover new ideas that might come up along the way.”

Thank you Keri! We look forward to the unfolding of this new ministry in the life of First UMC!

HAITI MISSION UPDATE

Haiti Team leader **Todd Erlandson** reports that ...”since Pennies+ for Haiti, we have completed 2 additional storm damaged roofs and purchased and distributed 20 goats in Sobier.” And, “Good news that Caz Cardiny, our manager in Haiti, has received papers for his family to move to the states. They will be moving to Louisiana not far from New Orleans!”

IN THE COMMUNITY

39TH ANNUAL REV. DR. LUTHER KING JR., CELEBRATION

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Westside Coalition is a nonprofit organization comprised of a diverse group of volunteers in partnership with the City of Santa Monica, and others whose mission is to promote the ideals of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., including unity, equality and justice for all people. The organization seeks to inspire the community to continue his work through an annual celebration on the National Holiday honoring the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This year's event will be held January 15, celebrating the theme “Stop the Hate, Start the Healing,” with keynote speaker Lisa Holder, a nationally recognized, award-winning trial attorney with specialized expertise in equal protection, education equity, employment discrimination, constitutional policing, and international human rights law.

National Holiday Celebration: Monday, January 15, 9 a.m.
SCG-USA World Peace Auditorium, 525 Wilshire Blvd., SM
For more info, visit: <https://www.mlkJrwestside.org/>



WINTER BEREAVEMENT GROUP

Are you grieving the loss of a loved one? You don't have to do it alone! St. Monica Catholic Church sponsors a 10-week peer support group that is co-facilitated by at least two bereavement ministers, who have also lost loved ones, and have received training to effectively and sensitively facilitate the group.

Zoom Orientation on January 11

For more info and to register:
<https://stmonica.net/ministries/pastoral-care/berereavement>



Community Photos



The First UMC Christmas Concert was held on Sunday, December 3, to a packed audience in the Sanctuary. To watch the video, see page 5 for info.



The Youth and counselors had fun ice-skating (left), and at their annual Christmas Party (right)



PRESCHOOL CORNER



The Advent Brunch was a wonderful community event! Dorothy Nichols led the All Community Theater players in singing carols, and there was a special visit from Santa!

The Preschool held its annual Christmas Concert in the Sanctuary

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF SANTA MONICA



Scan to visit
the website



@santamonicaumc

1008 11th St.
Santa Monica, CA 90403
310-393-8258



FIRST UMC OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday - Friday 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.,
and by appointment

Pastoral care by appointment only:
310-393-8258, enter ext. 1



REQUEST A PRAYER QUILT

Led by **Sue Payne and Maile Marquand**,
the Prayer Quilt Ministry offers Prayer Quilts
to those in need. To request a quilt:

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 and Sue Payne at:
prayerquilts@santamonicaumc.org. (**Prayer quilts may
only be requested and sponsored by members of the
First UMC congregation.**) 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, where you may
tie a prayer knot during in-person worship, or view the
quilt on the Livestream.



The next meeting date is Saturday, January 20.

Contact info@santamonicaumc.org if you would like to
volunteer. Prayer Quilt Ministry on the website (includes
the 20th Anniversary Celebration video):

www.santamonicaumc.org/prayerquiltministry

LOOKING FORWARD TO FEBRUARY

FEB 14: Ash Wednesday / Lent begins

FEB 18: Seminar: *Smarter than a Scammer - Scam and
Fraud Self-Defense Workshop*

Please join Miles McNeeley, LCSW from Wise & Healthy
Aging, in an interactive discussion on scams and fraud.
This workshop will help participants to identify scams,
report instances of fraud to law enforcement, and learn
tools to help combat scammers. This discussion will
include a live question and answer session to address
participant's concerns.

FEB 25: The 12th Annual Home Run for Kids