

# FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH WORSHIP

Second Sunday of Advent • December 8, 2024

WE GATHER



WELCOME

Tricia Guerrero, Pastoral Associate

PRELUDE Concerto in A minor (J. S. Bach)

Ty Woodward, organ

\*PROCESSIONAL HYMN #209 United Methodist Hymnal — Blessed Be the God of Israel

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

Mira Pak, Lay Lector

A voice cries out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord!"

**Make God's paths straight.**

Every valley will be filled, and every mountain will be leveled.

**The crooked will be made straight.**

The rough and rocky ways will be smoothed.

**All will see the salvation of God.**

\*CHORAL ACT OF PRAISE

"Prepare Ye the way of the Lord."

\*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Mira Pak

*Please greet those worshipping near you.*

\*Asterisks indicate standing if you are able.

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Jamie Jones, Family Ministries Coordinator

#2233 The Faith We Sing — Where Children Belong

**This, this is where children belong, welcomed as part of the worshipping throng.**

**Water, God's word, bread and cup, prayer and song: This is where children belong.**

*As the congregation sings, all children are invited to come forward.*

## LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

Angie, Witney and Henry Seibold

Today, we light the Advent candle of peace, a reminder that God's peace comes through understanding and compassion. God calls us to be peacemakers, listening with open hearts.

**We will seek to understand, to hear one another, and to bring harmony where there is division.**

As we have lit this candle, may it remind us of our call to bring peace through understanding.

**May our words bring healing, and our actions promote unity.**

#217 UMH — Away in a Manger (verse 3)

**Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray; bless all the dear children in thy tender care, and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.**

*As the congregation sings, the children may go to Sunday School in Rooms 204 and 206.*

## OUR MISSION & COMMON LIFE

Tricia Guerrero

We give thanks for God's Creating Spirit that continues to give us life and lead us forward!

**Thanks be to God!**

## MOMENT FOR MISSION Alternative Christmas

Kendra Gorfitsky

\*HYMN #206 UMH — I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

## SILENT PRAYER AND PASTORAL PRAYER

Tricia Guerrero

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

## CHORAL RESPONSE

---

## WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

## THE GOSPEL Luke 1:57-79

Howard Wollitz, Lay Lector

The Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God!**

## SERMON "Benedictus – Zechariah's Song"

Rev. Greg Batson, Senior Minister

---

## WE RESPOND

### WE OFFER OUR GIFTS & OURSELVES

Mira Pak

*Your continued financial support of the church is now more important than ever. You may place gifts of cash or checks made out to "First UMC" in the offering plates as they are passed. You may also mail your gift to the church or drop it into the mail slot of our offices any day of the week. Or, you may also give online at [www.santamonicaumc.org/give](http://www.santamonicaumc.org/give), or mail checks through your online banking programs. You may continue to earmark gifts for our various mission projects. May God grow in us generous and joyful hearts. Thank you.*

### OFFERTORY

The Chancel Choir/Dr. James Smith, Music Director

Lo! How A Rose E'er Blooming (Hugo Distler)

Lo! how a Rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung, of Jesse's lineage coming, as men of old have sung. It came a Flow'ret bright amid the cold of winter, when half-spent was the night. Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind. With Mary we behold it, the Virgin Mother kind. To show God's love aright, she bore to men a Savior, when half-spent was the night. This Flow'r whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air, dispels with glorious splendor the darkness ev'rywhere. True man, yet very God! From sin and death He saves us and lightens ev'ry load.

### \*UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Howard Wollitz

**Loving God, in this Advent season, we bring our offerings with hearts open to your call. Just as John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus, may our gifts help prepare the way for your kingdom. Use these offerings to bring hope, justice, and transformation. Help us to look beyond the surface, to see your work in surprising places and people. Bless our giving, that it may shine with the presence of Emmanuel. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.**

---

## WE GO FORTH TO SERVE

\*HYMN #202 UMH — People Look East

\*BENEDICTION

Rev. Batson

\*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE From Heaven on High (J. S. Bach)

Ty Woodward

*Worship concludes with the Postlude music which prepares us to transition from worship to life in the world.  
You are invited to remain seated until the Postlude concludes, or to exit quietly.*

—**Welcome New Visitors!** We're happy you're here. You may fill out a Let's Connect Card found in the pew rack and place it in the offering plate, or sign in online: [www.santamonicaumc.org/im-new](http://www.santamonicaumc.org/im-new), or scan this QR code for the online form.



—**Children and Families on Sundays:** Families are invited to begin worship in the Sanctuary. Following the Children's Message, children are guided to Sunday School for ages 12 months through 5th grade in the Education Building. Parents with infants are welcome to worship in the Sanctuary or in the Family Zone in the Narthex.

—**Safe Sanctuaries®:** 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.

—**Flowers:** To order flowers to remember or honor a loved one for Sunday Worship service, go to: [www.santamonicaumc.org/flower-fund](http://www.santamonicaumc.org/flower-fund).

—**Give:** Your gifts help us grow our ministries today and into the future. Thank you for considering giving to the General Church Fund to support everything we do. You may give today during service, or other ways; by mailing payment, dropping by the business office, or securely through the online giving portal located on the website front page. Questions about financial gifts, or gifts of time? Give us a call anytime at the church office.

—**Prayer Quilts:** If there is a Prayer Quilt in worship, you are invited to pray over and tie knots on the quilt on the north wall of the Sanctuary, or call or email Sarah in the church office to request a tie be made on the quilt for you: Sarah Rold (310.393.8258), or [s.rolld@santamonicaumc.org](mailto:s.rolld@santamonicaumc.org). To request a Prayer Quilt for someone in need, go to: [www.santamonicaumc.org/prayerquiltministry](http://www.santamonicaumc.org/prayerquiltministry).

—**Prayer Requests:** The Prayer Chain is a network of persons who pray in response to prayer requests, and treat all requests as confidential. Request a prayer at any time. Go to: [www.santamonicaumc.org/prayer-requests](http://www.santamonicaumc.org/prayer-requests).

—**Westside Food Bank:** We collect food weekly for the Westside Food Bank. Bins are located outside the Sanctuary Sunday mornings.

—**Sunday Social Gathering:** Come say "Hello" and help yourself to coffee and donuts after worship in the Courtyard. Stop by the Sunday Welcome Table if you have any questions!

*Resident Bishop*  
**Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank**  
*West District Superintendent*  
**Rev. Dr. Siosaia Tu'itahi**  
*Senior Minister*  
**Rev. Greg Batson**  
[g.batson@santamonicaumc.org](mailto:g.batson@santamonicaumc.org)  
*Pastoral Associate*  
**Tricia Guerrero**  
[t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org](mailto:t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org)  
*Deacon Associate for Spiritual Formation*  
**Rev. Keri Olsen Paget**  
[k.olsenpaget@santamonicaumc.org](mailto:k.olsenpaget@santamonicaumc.org)  
*Business Administrator*  
**Christina Eddy**  
[c.eddy@santamonicaumc.org](mailto:c.eddy@santamonicaumc.org)  
*Congregation Care Associate*  
**Anne Premer**  
[a.premer@santamonicaumc.org](mailto:a.premer@santamonicaumc.org)  
*Music Director*  
**Dr. James Smith**  
*Organist*  
**Ty Woodward**  
*Office Manager*  
**Sarah Rold**  
[s.rolld@santamonicaumc.org](mailto:s.rolld@santamonicaumc.org)  
*Membership and Facilities Coordinator*  
**David Penson**  
[d.penson@santamonicaumc.org](mailto:d.penson@santamonicaumc.org)  
*Communications Director*  
**Tina Gage**  
[t.gage@santamonicaumc.org](mailto:t.gage@santamonicaumc.org)  
*Head Custodian*  
**Javier Espinoza**  
*Family Ministries Coordinator*  
**Jamie Jones**  
[j.jones@santamonicaumc.org](mailto:j.jones@santamonicaumc.org)  
*Program and Outreach Coordinator*  
**Brandon Searfoss**  
[b.searfoss@santamonicaumc.org](mailto:b.searfoss@santamonicaumc.org)  
*Preschool Director Emerita*  
**Dee Menzies**  
[d.menzies@santamonicaumc.org](mailto:d.menzies@santamonicaumc.org)  
*Co-Associate Preschool Director*  
**Dane Rold**  
[d.rolld@santamonicaumc.org](mailto:d.rolld@santamonicaumc.org)  
*Co-Associate Preschool Director*  
**Johanna Holman**  
[j.holman@santamonicaumc.org](mailto:j.holman@santamonicaumc.org)

God is real. God is love. ■ Together we can change the world.

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH of SANTA MONICA**

1008 Eleventh Street, Santa Monica, CA 90403 [www.santamonicaumc.org](http://www.santamonicaumc.org) · 310-393-8258





Today is the second Sunday of Advent. We invite you to celebrate the season, inviting new life to be born in you at this time when we need it most. It is the gift of God's grace, bringing salvation to all. This year for Advent, we meditate on each of the four Advent Candles: Week 1: Hope; **Week 2: Peace**; Week 3: Joy; Week 4: Love

On the following pages is a list of ways to engage and move through the holiday season. All events may also be found on the website:

[www.santamonicaumc.org/advent](http://www.santamonicaumc.org/advent)

## Christmas Concert



## Tonight! The First UMC Christmas Concert

The First UMC Music Department is pleased to present the annual Christmas Concert! Featuring: "Magnificat" by Gerald Finzi; "Jubilate Deo" by Dan Forrest; and the ever popular "Carols, Etc." Featuring the The Chancel Choir and guest singers; Santa Monica College Concert Chorale, Los Angeles Concert Orchestra; Mark Twain Alumni Ringers. Conducted by Ryan Brown and James Smith. No admission charges - freewill offering will be taken. Reception in Simkins Hall to follow performance.

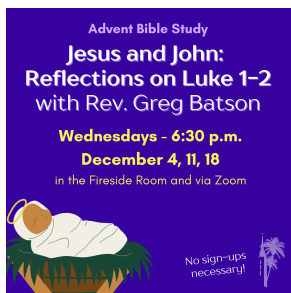
**Today, December 8, 4 p.m. in the Sanctuary**



## Angel Tree Project

Angel Tree Project will be in the Alcove for the next two Sundays, chaired by church member, Chris Ruud. This church/community project provides new household items to families of Family Place/Upward Bound House with new things for Christmas. Chris is excited that she has a table in the Alcove after worship to take sign-ups. If you worship online, or can't make it to church, please call or email Chris (310 393.3255, [chr10is@yahoo.com](mailto:chr10is@yahoo.com)) for info on what you can do to help.

**Sundays, December 8 & 15 in the Alcove (gifts due Dec 15)**



## Advent Bible Study with Rev. Greg Batson continues

Join Rev. Greg Batson for an in-person and online Advent Bible Study: **Jesus and John: Reflections on Luke 1-2**. Luke weaves the birth stories of John the Baptist and Jesus together, including the beautiful poetry of Mary's song (the Magnificat) and Zechariah's song (the Benedictus). The scripture runs parallel to the scripture of the Sundays in Advent during 10 a.m. worship. No sign-ups necessary. *Doors open at 6 p.m., grab your coffee and snack before class begins promptly at 6:30 p.m.*

**Wednesdays: December 11 & 18, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. in the Fireside Room, or Zoom**  
Zoom link on the website: [www.santamonicaumc.org/advent-bible-study](http://www.santamonicaumc.org/advent-bible-study)

# First UMC's ADVENT GUIDE



## December Mid-Week Recital

Listen to beautiful music this Advent Season! **Seraphour** (Emma Grace Roche, Melissa Birch, Dana Rouse, and Heidi Valencia Vass) is dedicated to the preservation and proliferation of the unaccompanied Sacred Music Canon - celebrating the female voice seeking that which is true, beautiful and good. Read quartet's bios:

[www.santamonicaumc.org/mid-week-recital-series](http://www.santamonicaumc.org/mid-week-recital-series)

**How to watch:** Website: [www.santamonicaumc.org/livestream](http://www.santamonicaumc.org/livestream)

• Facebook: @santamonicaumc • YouTube Channel: @SantaMonicaUMC

• The First UMC App: (Go to the App Store, search FirstUMC\_SM)

**Wednesday, December 11, 12:10 p.m. Livestream**

*Available to watch anytime afterwards on the above platforms.*



## Messy Church - Christmas Around the World

How will you be celebrating Jesus' birthday this year? Do you have an advent wreath or calendar? Will you decorate a tree or bake a cake? Will you attend a children's Christmas program? People all over the world celebrate the coming of the Messiah in many different ways. At Messy Church this month, we will look at the nativity story with fresh eyes and learn about the different traditions of Christians around the world in how they celebrate the birth of Jesus and the hope that it brings into the world.

**Saturday, December 14, 4 – 6 p.m. in Simkins Hall**



## Alternative Christmas: In-Person and Online

Christmas and gift-giving go together. The tradition started when the Magi came to the manger with gold, myrrh, and frankincense to laud the birth of Jesus. In the present day, gift-giving often seems to exist only for the benefit of retailers and other entrepreneurs. Each Advent, through the Alternative Christmas Fair, Mission Council gives us the chance to take "trade" out of tradition and to return to the spirit of gift-giving that impelled those three very wise men long ago – to rejoice in the birth of the Messiah. Mission Council carefully selects several local and global mission projects each year. You may make a donation as a gift to a friend or loved one, and send a card announcing your gift. View this year's missions at the Alternative Christmas Fair and on the website: [www.santamonicaumc.org/alt-christmas24](http://www.santamonicaumc.org/alt-christmas24)

**Sundays, December 15 & 22, after worship in Simkins Hall**

**Today's Moment  
for Mission**



## Blue Christmas: A Contemplative Advent Service

While the Advent/Christmas season is known as a time of joy, merriment, and excited expectation it can also include feelings of grief, loneliness, or maybe just the need to step away from relentless cheer. Our lives are complex. Advent and Christmas can be too. The Blue Christmas service, led by Rev. Keri Olsen Paget, is designed to hold the complexity of the season with gentle grace while in community. Come pray, soak in some lesser known Advent hymns, and light candles during a guided reflection.

**Sunday, December 15, 3 p.m. in Simkins Hall**



## Poinsettia Dedications

Beautiful poinsettias will grace our sanctuary for the December 24, 3 p.m. Christmas Eve Family service, and the 7 p.m. Candlelight Service. Order at the Sunday Welcome Table or in the church office, or online: [www.santamonicaumc.org/flower-fund](http://www.santamonicaumc.org/flower-fund). Each plant is \$15, and may be picked up after the 7 p.m. Christmas Eve service.

**Deadline to order is Tuesday, December 17**

---



## Advent Brunch

Save the date for a special Advent Brunch following worship on Sunday, December 22, hosted by Fellowship and Events. Activities will include seasonal crafts, caroling, and a special visit from Santa. Let's celebrate the season together! We also take time to highlight the Missions featured in the Alternative Christmas Fair, happening in the Alcove.

**Sunday, December 22, after worship in Simkins Hall**

---

# ADVENT SERVICES

## **Saturday, December 14: 4 p.m. Messy Church: Celebrating Christmas Around the World**

Celebrating the nativity story with fresh eyes and learning about the different traditions of Christians around the world. In Simkins Hall.

## **Sunday, December 15: 3 p.m. Blue Christmas: A Contemplative Advent Service**

Designed to hold the complexity of the season with gentle grace. Come pray, soak in some lesser known Advent hymns, and light candles during a guided reflection. In Simkins Hall.

## **Sunday, December 22: 10 a.m. Service of Lessons and Carols**

The annual worship service that tells the story of Christmas through Bible readings, carols, and hymns. In the Sanctuary. *(In-person and online.)*

## **Tuesday, December 24: Christmas Eve**

### **- 3 p.m. Christmas Eve Family Service**

A "No Muss, No Fuss" Christmas Pageant for all ages. Costumes will be available at the door for all children to participate. In the Sanctuary. *(In-person and online)*

### **- 7 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

Choir, Organ, Harp & Candlelight. In the Sanctuary. *(In-person and online)*

### **- 11 p.m. Christmas Eve Communion Service**

Join us in the Chapel for a contemplative Christmas Eve Service as we celebrate the arrival of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. We will reflect upon the mystery of the Incarnation, the Word made flesh, in song, prayer, and the sharing of Holy Communion. *(In-person only)*

*If you're celebrating with family and friends on Christmas morning, remember that you can access the worship services LIVE, or through the week ahead on these platforms: Our Facebook Page, YouTube, on the website, or the First UMC app.*

## THIS WEEK'S FEATURED ARTWORK

*The Birth of Saint John the Baptist*, by Artemisia Gentileschi (approx) 1635

In this rendition of the scene, Artemisia Gentileschi illuminates the humility and strength of the maidservants who marvel at the miracle of John's birth. John's elderly mother Elizabeth, who could not have children before becoming pregnant with John, rests in the shadows after labor. Sitting at a desk holding a pen in the dark left edge of the painting is his father Zechariah, writing the name "John." He was told of the pregnancy by an angel and silenced for doubting.

Artemisia's use of light and shadows points to Caravaggio's influence on her painting. She grew up with Caravaggio and other famous Baroque painters in her father Orazio Gentileschi's studio in Rome.



## Welcome to First UMC of Santa Monica!

Welcome to the worship, service, and fellowship of Santa Monica First United Methodist Church. First UMC is committed to a ministry that touches the lives of people in many significant ways. Through our worship and music, study opportunities, social groups, mission involvement and ministries of care, we proclaim the good news of God's love for all people. We also work to help make the world a better place in which to live, here in the communities of the Westside and around the world, and eagerly invite your participation in this beloved community. Our church has been a significant presence in the larger Santa Monica community for nearly 150 years.

### Stay Connected

To join in fellowship and ministry online, here's how to connect online. (QR code to website)



**First UMC website:** [www.santamonicaumc.org](http://www.santamonicaumc.org)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/santamonicaumc](https://www.facebook.com/santamonicaumc)

**Instagram:** @santamonicaumc

**YouTube:** @SantaMonicaUMC

**The First UMC App:** Go to the App Store, search FirstUMC\_SM.



### Giving Matters

There are many ways to contribute to the mission and ministry of First UMC. You may give online via the QR code on the right (Point your phone camera at the QR code and click on yellow link), via mail, or onsite through the church office mail slot. To learn more about ways to give, including the annual Stewardship campaign, Planned Giving, Tree of Life, support for the Music Program, and the flower fund, visit: [www.santamonicaumc.org/give](http://www.santamonicaumc.org/give)



### The First UMC App:

First UMC offers a free app - download it and give it a try! With the app, you can: • Participate in Sunday's service, in real time or anytime at your convenience, right from your smartphone or iPad. • Access our calendar of our events • Invite a friend to an event, or share info about a special program we offer. • Access an **audio/written Bible** with a built-in daily reading plan. To download the app, go to the App Store, search FirstUMC\_SM

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH of SANTA MONICA  
1008 Eleventh Street, Santa Monica, CA 90403 • 310-393-8258  
[www.santamonicaumc.org](http://www.santamonicaumc.org) • [info@santamonicaumc.org](mailto:info@santamonicaumc.org)   @santamonicaumc