

SENTINEL



HORIZONS

BY REV. GREG BATSON

Happy New Year! We begin the year in worship with the celebration of Epiphany. Observed on January 6th, Epiphany marks the conclusion of the Christmas season. It is derived from the Greek word meaning “manifestation.” In this case, it is the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles as the Messiah. The Bible story associated with this holiday is the visit of the Magi who travel to Bethlehem to welcome and honor the Christ child, bearing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Matthew 2:1-12). We will reflect upon this story and its meaning for us in worship on January 5th.

The following Sunday we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord. In three of the gospels (Matthew, Mark & Luke), the baptism of Jesus by John in the Jordan River is recounted. As the baptism occurs, the heavens open, the Holy Spirit descends in the form of a dove, and the voice of God proclaims “You are my Son, the Beloved” (Luke 3:22). We will remember and renew our own baptisms on this Sunday, January 12th, as we recommit ourselves to the work that Jesus calls us to do.

As always, there will be numerous opportunities to put your faith into action this month. Please note the invitation to help assemble hygiene kits for distribution by our United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) on January 19th. It is a great way to begin the new year in ministry following the example of Jesus.

ALL CHURCH FAITH IN ACTION

We are excited for the second annual all-church Faith in Action Service Project in honor of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Through generous donations at the Alternative Christmas Fair, we have purchased supplies in bulk for **500 UMCOR Hygiene Kits**. We welcome help from all ages to assemble the hygiene kits!

Sunday, January 19, after worship in Simkins Hall



Scenes from last year's Faith in Action project



WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS BRUNCH

There is a custom, rooted in Ireland, of celebrating Epiphany (January 6, which brings the Christmas season to a close) as Women's Christmas. Called Nollaig na mBan in Irish, Women's Christmas originated as a day when the women, who often carried the domestic responsibilities all year, took Epiphany as an occasion to celebrate together at the end of the holidays, leaving hearth and home to the men for a few hours. Celebrated particularly in County Cork and County Kerry, the tradition is enjoying a revival.



Whether your domestic commitments are many or few, all women connected to First UMC Santa Monica are invited for a Women's Christmas Brunch on Friday, January 3 at 11:30 a.m. This time will offer an opportunity to pause and step back from whatever has kept you busy and hurried in the past weeks or months. As the Christmas season ends, this is an occasion both to celebrate with friends and also to spend time in reflection before diving into what this new year will hold. We will reflect and share through poetry and art offered in the Epiphany spirit. Mindful of those who traveled to welcome the Christ child and who returned home by another way, we will turn our attention toward questions about our own journey.

Brunch will be provided with a suggested donation of \$5 to help cover the cost. RSVP with Tricia, including any dietary restrictions, at: t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org.

Women's Christmas Brunch - Friday, January 3, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. in the Fireside Room

The Labyrinth and Chapel will also be open for prayer following the brunch from 1-3 p.m.

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. Finger labyrinths are also available! The First UMC Chapel will also be open for prayers.

Friday, January 3, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. Simkins Hall, Chapel

THE 90+ BIRTHDAY CLUB

Each month after worship, during coffee hour, we acknowledge our cherished members who are celebrating their 90+ birthday that month with a birthday cake and song. This acknowledgement is more than just a celebration of age; it's an opportunity for fellowship and connection, allowing us to learn from the rich life journeys of our seniors. We look forward to seeing you there as we uplift and honor the lives that have shaped our community!

Sunday, January 5, after worship: celebrating Jack Fry



Celebrating Yvonne Dodd's 94th Birthday on November 10

JANUARY ONLINE MID-WEEK RECITAL

The first of the 2025 Online Mid-Week season features **Althea Waites**, piano. Internationally acclaimed pianist Althea Waites has concertized extensively throughout the United States, Europe and Asia as a brilliant soloist, chamber musician, and collaborative artist. In addition to performances on concert stages around the world, she has also participated in numerous festivals as a soloist, collaborative pianist, and ensemble coach, including Aspen, Tanglewood, the Yale Summer Festival at Norfolk, the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, the Idyllwild Arts Festival in Southern California and as guest artist for the National Arts Festival at Makhanda on the Eastern Cape of South Africa.



To read complete artist's bio, visit the website:

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

How to watch the Livestream:

- Facebook: [@santamonicaumc](https://www.facebook.com/santamonicaumc)
- YouTube Channel: [@SantaMonicaUMC](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSantaMonicaUMC)
- Website: www.santamonicaumc.org/livestream
- The First UMC App: (Go to the App Store, search FirstUMC_SM)

You may view past recitals on these channels as well.

Wednesday, January 8, at 12:10 p.m., online

February Mid-Week Recital: February 12
Erin Wood, soprano, and Philip Hoch, organ

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 12 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.

Sunday, January 12, during 10 a.m. worship

LAY LEADERSHIP 2025

Join us for worship on January 12, as we will lift up and thank all of the Lay Leadership team for their dedication and continued service into 2025:

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: **Jill Obery Dodd**
- 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**

SPIRIT SISTERS RETREAT

The Spirit Sisters, led by Pastor Dorothy Bimber Worley, are holding an annual All-Day January Retreat with the theme "Living Fully In God's LOVE," in preparation for the Season of Lent. Women are encouraged to come at 8:30 a.m. for coffee, tea, juice, and donuts. Please bring your own lunches; beverages and dessert will be provided. All women are welcome!

RSVP: Pastor Dorothy (626)826-8301
Saturday, January 18, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Fireside Room & Chapel



UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH GAME DAY

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

\$10 suggested donation, includes pie!

Saturday, January 25, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. in Simkins Hall



Scenes from last year's Game Day

Youth at First UMC



YOUTH SUNDAY

Come and join us for Youth Sunday on January 26! 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!

Sunday, January 26, 10 a.m. worship

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

CONFIRMATION CLASS

As our young people (youth) grow into young adults in the church, they are invited into a confirmation experience to ask these important questions: "Where do I belong?" and "What do I affirm?" Confirmation Class is a chance to explore what it means to be a Christian, a United Methodist, and a Child of God. It is also a sacred time for youth to ask questions, bring doubts and explore faithfully what it means to be a follower of Christ in the 21st Century. At the end, they are affirmed in worship as they are received into the community through their own decision. All youth in grades 6-12 are welcome. Contact Tricia if you have questions or for more information:

t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org

Classes meet: February 2/9/16/23, 9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. in Room 203

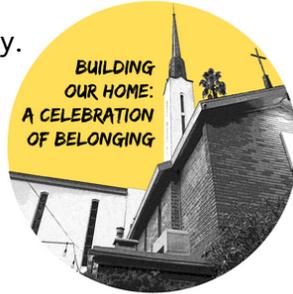
Confirmation Sunday:
March 2, during
10 a.m. worship



STEWARDSHIP 2025

Thank you to all who have generously pledged for 2025. Pledge Commitments are still due! We are \$50,000 from plan and need your help in fulfilling stewardship commitments to BUILDING OUR HOME. If you haven't yet had the opportunity to commit to giving for 2025, now is the time! It is such a special year as we celebrate 150 years in 2025. Your gifts help every ministry in every possible way. From worship, to congregation care, to local and world outreach, and youth, families and children. Thank you for making a difference in our community and around the world.

www.santamonicaumc.org/stewardship



MESSY CAMP: A CELEBRATION OF FAITH, SCIENCE, AND CURIOSITY BY JAMIE JONES, FAMILY MINISTRIES COORDINATOR

The Presbyterian Association on Science, Technology and the Christian Faith (PASTCF) asked Jamie Jones to write about her experience leading Messy Camp last summer.

"I recently graduated from UC Berkeley with a bachelor's degree in molecular cell biology with an emphasis in biochemistry, biophysics, and structural biology, and now I currently work at the First United Methodist Church of Santa Monica as their Family Ministries Coordinator. To say I love the science world is an understatement. While I was growing up, I struggled with navigating my faith journey, and how our world can have so many ways of telling the story of how the world works and operates. My parents both had strong beliefs about their faith but, luckily, never pushed their beliefs on me. They allowed me to explore and ask questions. And my faith community at the First UMC of Santa Monica, allowed me to explore that natural curiosity and celebrate my perspective. As I grew up and now work to support children, youth, and families on their own faith journey, I quickly realized how hard it can be to figure out what faith and religion can mean to an individual...." To read the article, visit:

<https://santamonicaumc.org/messy-camp>



Jamie Jones leading Messy Camp

IN THE COMMUNITY

40TH ANNUAL REV. DR. MARTIN 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. They are excited to hold their 40th Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Celebration with the theme "Celebrating Women of the Civil Rights Movement: Let's Make Real the Promise of Liberty and Justice for All." The keynote speaker will be **Sonya Young Aadam**, CEO of the California Black Women's Health Project. A Community Involvement Fair immediately follows the celebration.



National Holiday Celebration: Monday, January 20, 11 a.m.

John Adams Middle School Performing Arts Center, 2425 16th Street, SM CA 90403

Additional Community events:

- MLK Freedom Celebration and Breakfast presented by the Santa Monica Area Interfaith Council Theme: "Legacy of Hope, Continuing the Dream." Calvary Baptist Church-Carter Hall, 1502 20th Street, SM, CA 90404

Friday, January 17, 2025, 8 a.m.

- Santa Monica Symphony Orchestra Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Concert. Guest conductors Gary Pratt and Charles Dickerson partner with the Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles (ICYOLA). Barnum Hall, 600 Olympic Blvd. (On Santa Monica HS campus), SM, CA 90405

Saturday, January 18, 2025, 3 p.m.

For more info, visit: <https://www.mlkrwestside.org>

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. First UMC will display the quilt in the Friday Community Email, and 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 18, 9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m., Room 300.**



Contact info@santamonicaumc.org if you would like to volunteer. www.santamonicaumc.org/prayerquiltministry

Community News



BIRTHS

- **Everett Harrison Dewald** was born December 2, 2024, to First UMC members Lindsay and Spencer Dewald.

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 **21st 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, Patty and the Eskridge Family (The Seasonal Display Committee)** for providing the beautiful poinsettias and seasonal displays in the Sanctuary during Advent.
- Thanks to **Dan Nessel and Todd Erlandson** for setting up our beautiful creche in the Courtyard.
- Thank you to **Chuck Kearsley, Jon Ward and Adam Guerrero** for setting up the First UMC scene at the City of Santa Monica Nativity Scenes.
- And to all the **incredible volunteers** who stuffed envelopes and sent out mailings, decorated tables, visited folks in hospital and at home, ushered for worship services and the concert, volunteered at the Westside Food Bank, and more, we **THANK YOU!**

THE FIRST UMC CHRISTMAS CONCERT

If you were not able to attend the First UMC Christmas Concert on December 8, or if you did see it in person but want to see it again, you may watch the concert at any time on our YouTube channel! Featuring "Magnificat" by Gerald Finzi; "Jubilate Deo" by Dan Forrest; and the ever popular "Carols, Etc." With 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.

YouTube link on the website:

www.santamonicaumc.org/music-theater



FIRST UMC MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: MIKE & PATTY ESKRIDGE

During worship on December 8, Rev. Batson honored Mike and Patty Eskridge for their years of service at First UMC. We list them as the "Seasonal Display Committee" on paper, but what that really means is countless hours of work in the Sanctuary preparing and setting up the chancel for special Sundays like Baptismal Renewal, Thanksgiving, Blessing of the Backpacks, and, of course the seasons of Lent and Advent. They've also supplied the beautiful floral arrangements for the chancel since the late 1970s, through Mike's flower shop, Culver Center Flowers.

On November 30, after nearly 50 years of being in the floral business, the Eskridges closed up the shop and began their retirement. While bittersweet, they are excited to have time to be able to enjoy cheering on their grandkids at sports events, and even celebrating holidays like Valentine's Day without having to work in the shop. Thankfully for us, they plan on continuing providing the flower displays for "as long as they can" for now into the new year.

When asked what sharing their talents with First UMC has meant to them over the years, Patty says, "It's a really important part of us, and it's our way of giving to the church. We haven't always been able to give monetarily, but we can certainly give of ourselves. The hours over the years that we've spent in the Sanctuary by ourselves and with our children and our grandchildren, doing this is just really a very special time for us. The church means so much to all of us."

We give thanks for the Eskridges and all of their years of service! We sat down with Mike and Patty to interview them about their history here at First UMC. We plan to present the video to the congregation some time in February, so stay tuned for more!



Closing of the Culver Center Flower shop



Celebrating retirement at Disneyland



Rev. Greg Batson honoring the Eskridges during worship on December 8, 2024



Community Photos



Messy Christmas!

The Youth Group Ice Skating, and the annual Christmas party



Open Space Young Adults decorating Christmas cookies



Lighting the Advent candles for the first three Sundays of Advent: (clockwise): The Sarleys, The Seibolds, and the Rolds/Flanders.



Thanks to Todd Erlandson and Dan Nessel for setting up the creche in the Courtyard; and thanks to Chuck Kearsley, Jon Ward and Adam Guerrero for setting up the First UMC sponsored nativity at the Santa Monica Nativity Scenes

PRESCHOOL CORNER



The Annual Preschool Christmas Concert

JANUARY ON-GOING MINISTRIES

- **Men's Bible Study** Tuesdays, 7 a.m. via Zoom
- **Open Space Young Adults** Wednesday Jan 8, Offsite
- **Listening Hearts Women's Group** Jan 15, Coffee and Connect: 10 a.m. Literati Cafe (12081 Wilshire Blvd, LA CA 90025) Jan 22, via Zoom
- **Prayer Quilt Ministry** Third Saturday of the month: Jan 18
- **The Chancel Choir** Thursday night rehearsals: 7:40 p.m. in the Choir Room
- **Blood Pressure Screenings** Sunday, Jan 26, 11 a.m. in the Alcove
- **Sunday School for Kids** Sundays, 10 a.m. Meets in the Sanctuary for Children's Message, then led to Room 204 (Toddlers) and Room 206 for K through 5th Grade.
- **UMYF Youth Group** Sundays, Jan 12 /19, in the Youth Lounge

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Men's Bible Study is a weekly Zoom meeting where men of all ages and generations gather to ground themselves in the Holy Scripture. As men try to navigate the stresses and complexities of this modern world and daily life, Men's Bible Study is a place for community, prayer and fellowship through the sharing of God's Holy word. Come by as your schedule permits! For more information and to add yourself to the email list call the church office: 310-393-8258. **Tuesdays: 7 a.m., via Zoom**

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. All are welcome to join! Contact Tricia Guerrero to learn more:

t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org

January Meetings: Jan 15, Coffee and Connect:

10 a.m. Literati Cafe (12081 Wilshire Blvd, LA CA 90025)
Jan 22, via Zoom (Contact Tricia for Zoom link)

BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS

Did you know that regular blood pressure screenings can help detect hypertension early, which can reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, and other complications? The Health Ministry Council continues to offer free monthly blood pressure screenings during Sunday coffee hour.

We encourage everyone to stop by and check in for a free blood pressure screening!

**Sunday, January 26, after worship
in the Alcove**



FLOWERS

Do you have a loved one you would like to dedicate flowers to on a given week? The church office can take your order, and the cost is \$80. Order at the Sunday Welcome Table, or online: www.santamonicaumc.org/flower-fund

Available Sundays: January 12/19/26



**WORSHIP:
IN-PERSON AND ONLINE**

WORSHIP IN THE SANCTUARY

We worship on Sundays at 10 a.m. in-person in the Sanctuary each week. If you feel ill, please choose to worship from home online.

COMMUNION SUNDAYS



Char Smith will be baking the bread for Communion Sunday. **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

Sundays 10 a.m. Worship Online LIVESTREAM on:

- **Website:** www.santamonicaumc.org/livestream
After 10 a.m. livestream airs, go to:
www.santamonicaumc.org/sunday-service-archive
- **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/santamonicaumc
- **YouTube Channel:** [@SantaMonicaUMC](https://www.youtube.com/@SantaMonicaUMC)
- **The First UMC App:** Go the App Store, search *FirstUMC_SM*

Let us know if you need assistance in joining online.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY / SUNDAY SCHOOL

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 "Prayer Ground" Family Area in the Narthex.** You are invited to look around and greet a child and their family in worship. You might hear a few more giggles and whispers or see some wiggles...let's celebrate the joyful and life-filled presence beloved children bring to our community each week!

www.santamonicaumc.org/childrens-ministry

YOUTH MINISTRY

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



January Meetings: January 12 /19, in the Youth Lounge

www.santamonicaumc.org/youth-ministry

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
OF SANTA MONICA



Scan to visit
the website



@santamonicaumc
www.santamonicaumc.org

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



FIRST UMC OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., and by
appointment. *(Office closed on Fridays.)*

Pastoral Care : 310-393-8258, enter ext. 1



2025



- Wed Jan 1 - Fri Jan 3** Church campus closed
- Fri Jan 3** Women's Christmas Brunch
Walk the Labyrinth/Chapel Open for Prayers
- Sun Jan 5** Epiphany Sunday / Holy Communion
90+ Birthday celebration for Jack Fry
- Wed Jan 8** January Mid-Week Recital
- Sun Jan 12** Baptismal Renewal/ Installation of Lay
Leadership Team
- Sat Jan 18** Spirit Sisters Retreat
- Sun Jan 19** All Church Faith in Action: Assembling UMCOR
Hygiene Kits
- Mon Jan 20** Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Sat Jan 25** UWF Game Day
- Sun Jan 26** Youth Sunday
- Tues Jan 28** Trustee Board and Finance Committee Meetings
- Wed Jan 29** Preschool Lunar New Year celebration



- Sat Feb 1** Messy Church
 - Sun Feb 2** Confirmation class starts
Writers exchange meeting for Lenten Devotional
 - Sun Feb 9** Children's Sabbath
 - Sat Feb 22** Kids Night Out
- ...and more!



FEBRUARY 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: Saturday, February 22, 4 – 8 p.m.

Where: First UMC, 2nd Fl. Edu. Bldg.

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

Ages: 2 years – 5th grade

Registration begins February 3 on the website:

www.santamonicaumc.org/kids-night-out

