



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

W O R S H I P

Back to School Blessings • August 24, 2025

WE GATHER



WELCOME

Tricia Guerrero, Pastoral Associate

PRELUDE Prelude on Brother James' Air (setting: Searle Wright)

Ty Woodward, organ

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN #139 United Methodist Hymnal — Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Henry Seibold, Lay Lector

With great rejoicing we come to the house of the Lord today!

God is our refuge and our stronghold.

The power and love of God flow through this gathering.

We place our whole trust in God's mighty compassion for us.

Come, let us worship the Lord!

Let us celebrate the presence of God here in this place and in all our lives.

*CHORAL ACT OF PRAISE

"God is our refuge and our strength. Amen and Amen!"

*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Henry Seibold

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.

BACK TO SCHOOL BLESSINGS

I Am a Child of God

I am a child of God; You are God's child, it's true. Children of God are called to love one another, as Jesus taught to do.

In August, Sunday School is on break. We are providing Nursery Care in Room 201 for children 6 months through 5 years, and activity bags for older kids in worship.

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!

HYMN #2213 TFWS — Healer of Our Every Ill

SILENT PRAYER & PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Keri Olsen Paget, Deacon Associate

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CHORAL RESPONSE

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

THE GOSPEL Luke 13:10-17

Witney Seibold, Lay Lector

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

SERMON "Set Free"

Rev. Greg Batson, Senior Minister

WE RESPOND

WE OFFER OUR GIFTS & OURSELVES

Witney Seibold

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, 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

I Am Bound for the Promised Land (Craig Courtney)

Peter Smith, percussion

On Jordan's stormy banks I stand, and cast a wishful eye to Canaan's fair and happy land,
where my possessions lie. *Refrain:* I am bound for the promised land, I am bound for the
promised land: Oh, who will come and go with me: I am bound for the promised land. Oh,
the transporting, rapturous scene that rises to my sight! Sweet fields arrayed in living green,
and rivers of delight. *(Refrain)* Filled with delight my raptured soul would here no longer stay;
though Jordan's waves around me roll, fearless I'd launch away. *(Refrain)*

*RESPONSE #94 UMH – The Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise
God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

*UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Witney Seibold

**Holy God, we bring these gifts before you, not as mere offerings, but as acts of
faith in your kingdom. We trust in your steadfast love, knowing that in Christ, we
are welcomed, transformed, and sent forth to serve. Bless these gifts, that they
may be used to build your justice and mercy, bringing hope to the broken and light
to the weary. With grateful hearts, we offer ourselves alongside these gifts, that
we may be signs of your grace in the world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

WE GO FORTH TO SERVE

*HYMN #261 UMH – Lord of the Dance

*BENEDICTION

Rev. Batson

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE Trumpet Voluntary (John Stanley)

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, or scan this QR code for the online form.



—We welcome **Community UMC of Pacific Palisades** each Sunday at 11 a.m. in the chapel with open arms and generous hospitality as they move forward during this time of transition.

—**The Chancel Choir:** During the summer months the Chancel Choir is singing some of their favorite anthems from the prior year. We hope they are your favorites also.

—**Children and Families on Sundays:** In August, our Sunday School teachers will be taking a well-deserved break and then we'll resume after Labor Day. We are providing Nursery Care in Room 201 for 6 months through 5 years, and activity bags for older kids in worship.

—**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. Available Sundays: August 31, September 7/14/28.

—**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. To request a Prayer Quilt for someone in need, go to: 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.

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

—**Sunday Social Gathering:** After worship today, come say "Hello" for Coffee Hour in Simkins Hall. Stop by the Sunday Welcome Table if you have any questions.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH of SANTA MONICA
1008 Eleventh Street • Santa Monica, CA 90403
www.santamonicaumc.org 310-393-8258



Resident Bishop
Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank

West District Superintendent
Rev. Dr. Siosaia Tu'itahi

MINISTRY

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SUNDAY INSERT
AUGUST 24, 2025

MISSION AND COMMON LIFE

www.santamonicaumc.org



Today! YSP Report Back

The Youth Service Project Team had an unforgettable time in San Diego's South Bay with the Sierra Service Project! They are so grateful to our amazing church family for your prayers, encouragement, and support throughout the journey. Stay after worship today for their report back and luncheon. The team can't wait to share more about all they did.

Today, 11 a.m. in Simkins Hall



Next Sunday - UWF Ice Cream Social

The United Women in Faith invite you to stick around after worship on Sunday, August 31 for an Ice Cream Social! Come scoop up some fellowship, laughter, and a delicious end-of-summer treat. All are welcome! (*Free-will offering will be taken.*)

Next Sunday, August 31 after worship in the Courtyard



September Messy Church

Messy Church is back for the fall! Messy Church is a monthly all age worship experience that explores God's love in an accessible way. Everyone is welcomed as they are. Whether you are single or partnered, young or old, tidy or messy, have questions or doubts, are filled with joy or struggling with life, you will be welcomed at Messy Church. *September theme: Called to Be - Make a Difference*

Saturday, September 13, 4 - 6 p.m. in Simkins Hall



History and Archives Photo Booth - continues through August

As part of First UMC's 150th Anniversary Celebration, we're honoring the stories that shaped us. The History and Archives Team will be available during Coffee Hour on Sundays for the rest of August, in the United Women in Faith Work Room, to continue our story-telling project! We'll have a video booth set up—an easy and fun way for you to share a short memory, a meaningful moment, or answer one of our story-starter questions. (We'll provide a list of questions!) If you can't make it in person, you can download the questions, then record a video and share with info@santamonicaumc.org.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

• 2025 Homeboy 5K Run/Walk

Join Homeboy Industries (one of First UMC's mission partners), and 5,000+ runners, walkers, volunteers, and families for our 16th Annual Homeboy 5K Run/Walk through historic Downtown Los Angeles! Sign up with team **Wilson's Walkers, First UMC member David Wilson's team**. David and Ann will have a table out after worship on **Sunday, September 7**, with registration info. <https://raceroster.com/events/2025/101788/homeboy-5k-runwalk>

Saturday, September 20, 8:30 a.m. Race Starts

• United Women in Faith Craft Day

Come explore your crafty side! Please join the UWF and other friends to help create ornaments, decorations and more for our annual Christmas Bazaar. All you need to bring are your nimble fingers and joyful hearts. All materials and instructions will be provided. RSVP to UWFsantamonica@gmail.com or just come!

Saturday, September 6, 9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m., UWF Workroom

• History & Archives Exhibit in the Fireside Room

As part of our 150th Anniversary celebration, the First UMC Archives Committee has opened the treasure chests of our past! From carefully preserved photographs to cherished memorabilia, we've gathered pieces that tell the rich story of our church's 150 years at the heart of Santa Monica. The exhibit will be on display in the Fireside Room, opening Sunday, September 7 and continuing through the anniversary celebrations. Come wander through the memories, discover familiar faces, and celebrate the legacy that has shaped our community.

Sunday, September 7 after worship, Fireside Room

50+ Member Check In

If you believe you have been a member for 50+ years at First UMC, but have not been acknowledged, please reach out to the church office to make sure we have accurate records! Contact Sarah: s.roid@santamonicaumc.org.

MISSION AND SERVICE

TWO ONGOING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

1. Westside Food Bank

Westside Food Bank continues to help with the long recovery period in the aftermath of the LA fires. Join First UMC for the last Fridays of the month to help Westside Food Bank with packaging produce boxes.

Next volunteer day: Friday, August 29

10:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. 1710 22nd Street, SM 90404

2. The People Concern

Linda Diane Anderson runs a volunteer group on the **third Saturday of the month** at The People Concern, making sandwiches and assembling sack lunches. The shift is 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., but often ends earlier. Volunteers do not have to work every Saturday or Sunday but are asked to commit to a regular shift each month.

Contact Tricia to sign up for either of these opportunities: t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org

• First UMC Membership

Membership is a celebration of the fact that someone belongs to our faith community in connection and commitment. Our belonging promotes service to and with each other, values mutual care, and develops meaningful and supportive relationships. Becoming a member of First UMC is an act of publicly entering into a relationship with our faith community. The church offers thanks and welcome in the spirit of belonging to one another. At First UMC, we belong to God and to one another. If you have questions on becoming a member of First UMC, you may contact:

Rev. Greg Batson: g.batson@santamonicaumc.org,

Rev. Keri Olsen Paget:

k.olsenpaget@santamonicaumc.org,

Tricia Guerrero: t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org

or call the church office: (310) 393-8258.



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

• Children's Ministry

Families are invited to worship in the Sanctuary. Parents with infants are welcome to worship in the Sanctuary, in the Family Zone in the Narthex, or in the nursery.

www.santamonicaumc.org/childrens-ministry

• Sunday School Parent Meeting

Join us after worship for our Back to Sunday School Parent Meeting — it's your chance to get the inside scoop on all the exciting things coming up this year!

Childcare is provided.

Sunday, August 31, after worship in the Alcove

• Preschool Enrollment - Open Now

Schedule a tour today with Preschool Co-Directors Dane or Johanna at 310-395-7292, or visit our webpage for more information: www.santamonicaumc.org/preschool

YOUTH

• United Methodist Youth Fellowship Group

Weekly UMYF meetings held Sundays 6 - 8 p.m. in the Youth Lounge. www.santamonicaumc.org/youth-ministry

Returns Sunday, September 7, for Fall Kick-Off, 6-8 p.m.

PRAYER

• Walk the Labyrinth/Chapel Open for Prayers

The Labyrinth and Chapel are open on the first Friday of the month, from 1 - 3 p.m. Families welcome!

Friday, September 5, 1 - 3 p.m. Simkins Hall/Chapel

• Prayer Requests

The Prayer Chain is a network of persons who pray in response to prayer requests. You may send a prayer request to the church at any time.

www.santamonicaumc.org/prayer-requests/

• Request a Prayer Quilt

The Prayer Quilt Ministry is a group that makes Prayer Quilts as a service for those in need. (**Prayer quilts may only be requested and sponsored by members of the First UMC congregation.*) To request a Prayer Quilt, visit:

www.santamonicaumc.org/prayerquiltministry

ONGOING MINISTRIES AT FIRST UMC

If you'd like more information for ministry opportunities, you may contact the church office (310) 393-8258, or visit the website: www.santamonicaumc.org

• Men's Bible Study

Tuesdays, 7 a.m. via Zoom - Men's Bible Study is a weekly online meeting where men of all ages and generations gather to ground themselves in the Holy Scripture.

www.santamonicaumc.org/biblestudy

• Listening Hearts Women's Group

Listening Hearts is a spiritual community of women, led by Pastoral Associate Tricia Guerrero. Contact Tricia for upcoming meetings: t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org. Next meeting: **Wednesday, September 3, 10 a.m.** at Literati Cafe

• Prayer Quilt Ministry

Meets the 3rd Saturdays of the month, 9:30 a.m. in Room 300. Next meeting: **Saturday, September 20**

• The Chancel Choir

The Chancel Choir provides music every Sunday during the 10 a.m. Sanctuary Worship Service. Sing in the Chancel Choir! The choir is on Summer break from Thursday night rehearsals, but you may contact Jim Smith if you are interested in joining:

djes@roadrunner.com

• Messy Church

Messy Church is a monthly all age worship experience that explores God's love in an accessible way.

Returns Saturday, September 13, 4 - 6 p.m.

• Open Space Young Adults

Open Space is a young adult ministry that offers community for young adults to journey alongside one another in spiritual discovery, growth, and belonging. Learn more: www.santamonicaumc.org/open-space. IG: @openspacesm.

• Blood Pressure Screenings

The Health Ministry Council provides free Blood Pressure Screenings once a month after worship.

Next meeting: **Sunday, September 7** in the Alcove

150th Anniversary Celebration!

2025 marks a milestone year for First United Methodist Church of Santa Monica—our 150th Anniversary! We're gearing up for a joyful season of celebration, with a series of special Sundays leading up to the grand 150th Anniversary Celebration! All are welcome to join us as we honor our past, celebrate our present, and look forward with hope to the future! *All Sundays: 10 a.m. in-person and online worship followed by special events.*

Sunday, September 7 - 150th Kick-Off begins; Special Coffee hour includes

History & Archives Exhibit in the Fireside Room.

Sunday, September 14 - **Celebrating the Legacy Circle** in worship, followed by a tour of the First UMC stained glass windows with church member Ron Theile.

Sunday, September 21 - **Celebrating Missions at First UMC**; Special Coffee hour featuring a tour of Upward Bound House.

Sunday, September 28 - **Music and Arts Appreciation Sunday** in worship, followed by a tour of the First UMC organ with Ty Woodward, principal organist.

Sunday, October 5 - World Communion Sunday, Celebration of **First UMC Women in Leadership**; Special Coffee Hour hosted by women-led ministries.

Sunday, October 12 - 150th Anniversary Celebration!

Special worship service with Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank preaching, followed by 150th Anniversary Celebration Luncheon in Simkins Hall



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 (*take a photo of the code with your phone camera*), 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



Become a Part of History!

In celebration of the 150th Anniversary, we are asking all to consider making a special milestone gift. The special donations received will be used to digitize the Sanctuary welcome monument sign, located at the corner of 11th & Washington, so we can spread our message throughout the community. Additional amounts will be used for fellowship and events during the Fall. Donations accepted anytime, online or a part of Sunday's offering. Thank you!

Calling All Ages: Be Part of a Labyrinth Celebration!

We are looking for as many different types of people, young, old and in between to help us CELEBRATE THE LABYRINTH, after church, Sunday, October 5th! Participants will be working with Dorothy Nichols for one to three rehearsals (dates to be set around participants' schedules) to set a very short but very fun theatrical movement piece on the labyrinth. No experience necessary. Sign up ASAP by calling or texting Dorothy Nichols at 310-592-4402.



Artist rendering of signage
(not exact representation)