



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

WORSHIP

Second Sunday of Advent • Holy Communion • December 7, 2025

WE GATHER

WELCOME

Tricia Guerrero, Pastoral Associate

PRELUDE

Ty Woodward, organ

Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming (Johannes Brahms)

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN #209 United Methodist Hymnal

Blessed Be the God of Israel

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Char Smith, Lay Lector

Beloved, we gather to remember who we are, not who the world tells us to be.

We tell the story together of the day that all the earth awaits.

We recall the story of God's people, how God has called us to live in peace and righteousness in a world full of conflict and twisted morality.

We tell the story together of the day that all the earth awaits.

We recount the story of our journey with God, the moments of God's provision, God's prodding, and God's prophetic guidance.

We tell the story together of the day that all the earth awaits.

We gather to repent and return anew to God's story that guides our lives to work for peace and flourishing for all God's creation.

We gather to tell the story of the day that all the earth awaits. Thanks be to God!

*CHORAL ACT OF PRAISE

"Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel."

*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Please greet those worshipping near you.

Char Smith



*Asterisks indicate standing if you are able.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Cady Senior, Sunday School Teacher

#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

Brian Wong, Annie Lee, Daniel & Elise Wong

We gather in the presence of the One who walks with us.

We are grateful for God's peaceful presence amongst us.

There are many in the world who are lonely, who walk alone.

May we peacefully walk with them, to tell the story of Emmanuel, "God with us."

As we light this candle, may we be filled with peace, the peace that brings companionship along the way.

#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.

Following the Children's Message children (6 months through 7th grade) will be led to Sunday School on the 2nd floor of the Education Building.

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!

SILENT PRAYER AND PASTORAL PRAYER

Tricia Guerrero

THE LORD'S PRAYER

CHORAL RESPONSE

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

THE GOSPEL Matthew 3:1-12

David Mayhan, Lay Lector

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

HOMILY "A Voice in the Wilderness"

Rev. Greg Batson, Senior Minister

WE RESPOND

WE OFFER OUR GIFTS & OURSELVES

David Mayhan

Your continued financial support of the church is now more important than ever. Offering plates are located in the Narthex. You may also give online at www.santamonicaumc.org/give; mail your gift to the church; or drop it into the mail slot of our offices any day of the week. 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

A Babe Is Born in Bethlehem (Justin Thomas Fields)

A babe is born in Bethlehem, alleluia. Exult for joy, Jerusalem, alleluia! There in a manger lowly lies He who reigns above the skies, alleluia. The ox and ass in neighb'ring stall, alleluia.

See in that Child the Lord of all, alleluia! And kingly pilgrims long foretold bring incense, >>

myrrh, and gold. And enter with their offerings to hail the new born King of kings. Alleluia. He comes, a maiden mother's Son, alleluia. Yet earthly father He hath none, alleluia! And from the serpent's poison free; He owned our blood and pedigree. Alleluia. Our feeble flesh and His the same, alleluia. Our sinless kinsman He became, alleluia! That we from deadly thrall set free, like Him and so like God, should be. Come then, and on this festive day, rejoice before the Lord and pray! Alleluia!

***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**

Char Smith

Persistent God of new paths, we have been called to prepare the way—not with platitudes, but with changed hearts and lives. In this season of turning and anticipation, we offer these gifts as signs that we long to live by your story. Use them and use us to bear fruit worthy of repentance: fruit of justice, compassion, hospitality, and peace. Let our generosity reflect the nearness of your kingdom and the urgency of your call. In the wilderness of fear and want, may this offering clear a path for hope to be seen, known, and shared. In the name of the one who is coming and is already among us—Christ, our Lord. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Rev. Batson

We will use the Musical Setting beginning on page 2257 in The Faith We Sing hymnal. Gluten-free vegan wafers are available. The Ushers will guide you in coming forward to receive the communion elements. You will be invited to take a piece of bread or gluten-free wafer, dip into the cup, and receive. Online worshippers are encouraged to prepare a piece of bread/cracker and juice to receive at home.

#626 UMH – Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

#216 UMH – Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

#211 UMH – O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

UNISON PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Tricia Guerrero

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WE GO FORTH TO SERVE

***HYMN #202 UMH – People, Look East**

***BENEDICTION**

Rev. Batson

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

POSTLUDE Trumpet Finale (Francesco Manfredini)

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.

—**Communion Server Ministry:** After today's service, members of the Communion Server Ministry will be taking the communion elements to those who were unable to worship with us.

—**Children and Families on Sundays:** Children meet in the Sanctuary, following the Children's Message children (6 months through 7th grade) will be led to Sunday School in the Education Building on the 2nd floor.

—**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: December 28, January 11/18/25.

—**This Sunday's Flowers:** "In gratitude for Jim Smith, Ty Woodward and the Chancel Choir." From Ann and David Wilson.

—**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.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH of SANTA MONICA
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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 do a deeper meditation on the first candle - Hope.** 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

Christmas Concert



Today! The First UMC Christmas Concert

The First UMC Music Department joyfully presents our Annual Christmas Concert! This year's musical celebration features Arthur Honegger's *Une Cantate de Noël* with the South Bay Children's Choir—along with the return of our beloved "Carols, Etc." Enjoy the glorious sounds of the Chancel Choir and guest singers, the Los Angeles Concert Orchestra, and the South Bay Children's Choir, all under the direction of James Smith. A festive reception in Simkins Hall will follow the concert.

Today - December 7, 4 p.m. in the Sanctuary

MID-WEEK RECITALS 2025

JANE AUSTEN AT 250: A MUSICAL CELEBRATION

WED, DEC 10 12:10 P.M.

MEAGAN MARTIN MEZZO SOPRANO

VICTORIA KIRSCH PIANO

www.santamonicaumc.org

December Online Mid-Week Recital

First UMC is pleased to present the Online December Mid-Week Recital, featuring **Meagan Martin, mezzo soprano; Victoria Kirsch, piano. Program: Jane Austen at 250: A Musical Celebration.** Martin and Kirsch present a musical celebration of the beloved British author Jane Austen, who was born nearly 250 years ago to the day on December 16, 1775. How to watch the Livestream, and view past recitals:

- Facebook: [@santamonicaumc](https://www.facebook.com/santamonicaumc) • YouTube Channel: [@SantaMonicaUMC](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSantaMonicaUMC)
- Website: www.santamonicaumc.org/livestream.

Wednesday, December 10, at 12:10 p.m., online

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, Missions Council carefully selects several local and global mission projects each year, giving us the chance to take "trade" out of tradition and to return to the spirit of gift. Continuing today after worship, 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 on the website:

www.santamonicaumc.org/alt-christmas25

Sundays: December 7, 14, 21 after worship in Simkins Hall

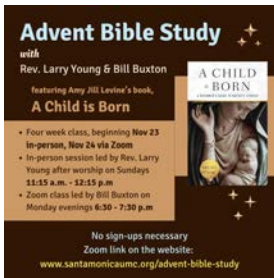
MISSIONS COUNCIL **ALTERNATIVE Christmas 2025**

Alternative Christmas Fair is a way to support mission projects and programs in the community and around the world, by giving a financial gift in the name of a loved one.

INNERCHANGE • 530 Cafe • THE PEOPLE CONCERN

In-person: December 7 & 14 11 a.m. in Simkins Hall
Thru December on the website: www.santamonicaumc.org/alt-christmas25

First UMC's ADVENT GUIDE



Advent Bible Study

Our Advent study on Amy-Jill Levine's new book, *A Child is Born*, continues with in-person classes with Rev. Larry Young in the Fireside Room at 11:15 a.m. and Mondays on Zoom at 6:30 p.m. with Bill Buxton. (**Zoom code and book link** on the website: www.santamonicaumc.org/advent-bible-study) Study books may be purchased at the Welcome table during coffee hour. This study recognizes that the Old Testament is a record of the faith into which Jesus was born; and how God was at work in Old Testament times throws light on Jesus' coming.

Sundays: December 7/14, 11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. in the Fireside Room

Mondays: December 8/15, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. via Zoom



Angel Tree Project

Angel Tree Project is underway and is again being 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 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) for info on what you can do to help.

Sundays: December 7 & 14 in the Alcove (gifts due next Sunday Dec 14)



Preschool Christmas Concert

The First UMC Preschool is excited to celebrate their annual Preschool Christmas Concert! All are welcome to watch the adorable Preschoolers perform their holiday songs. Join us for coffee hour in the Courtyard prior to the performance.

Friday, December 12, 9:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary



Poinsettia Dedications

Beautiful poinsettias will grace our sanctuary for the December 24, 4 p.m. Christmas Eve Family service, the 8 p.m. Candlelight Service, and the 11 p.m. Christmas Eve Communion Service. Order at the Sunday Welcome Table or in the church office, or online: www.santamonicaumc.org/flower-fund. Each plant is \$15, and may be picked up after any of the Christmas Eve services.

Deadline to order is Tuesday, December 16



Advent Brunch

Following the Service of Lessons and Carols on Sunday, December 21, everyone is warmly invited to our Advent Brunch, hosted by Fellowship and Events. Enjoy seasonal crafts, joyful caroling with members of ACT, and a special visit from Santa! Come share in the fun and celebrate the spirit of the season together. A light brunch will be served.

Sunday, December 21, after worship in Simkins Hall



City of Santa Monica Nativity Scenes

The City of Santa Monica is once again presenting 14 Nativity scenes depicting the story of Jesus' birth, on display at 2311 Main Street through December. This tradition began in 1953, and First UMC has participated for many decades—including winning a Nativity Scene Award in 1977. To view a photo of that display and learn more about the history of the Santa Monica Nativity Scenes, visit their website:

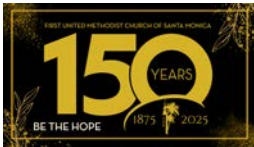
<https://santamonicanativityscenes.org>



Advent Devotional

This year's Advent Devotional booklet is available in the Narthex and at the Welcome table, and daily emails are underway. This year we examine scriptures and we do a deeper meditation on the first candle - Hope. The collection of writings is offered as a framework for your own Advent ponderings. The writers are a diverse group of people, though all are from this congregation. To sign up to receive Advent Devotion daily emails, visit the website and click the Subscribe button:

www.santamonicaumc.org/advent. Audio devotions as read by the writers will be included in the emails from Sunday, December 21 thru Thursday, December 25.



Stewardship Continues

The 2026 Annual Giving Stewardship Campaign continues. Thank you for prayerfully and joyfully offering your 2026 Financial Gift to support, sustain, and grow the vital, life-giving ministry and mission of First UMC. Pledge cards are located in the pews, and the Consecration box is located in the Narthex today. For more information, and to view last month's Stewardship speakers, visit the website:

www.santamonicaumc.org/stewardship



2025 Pledge Contributions Due

The end of the year is coming. Many will be out of town in the last days of the year. You may always contact Christina Eddy (c.eddy@santamonicaumc.org) to arrange your giving at this busy time of year. Our church office is closed December 25 - January 2, but special arrangements can be made.

- Give at one of the remaining worship services: Dec 7/14/21/28.
 - Mail your check postmarked by 12/31/2025.
 - Contribute online at www.santamonicaumc.org/give.
 - Use your bank's bill pay system.
 - If giving stock or funds managed by a broker, ask for a transfer to be completed by 12/31/2025.
 - Bring your gift to the church office.
 - Lastly, if you are paying in January for the 2025 year, be sure to date your check 2026 and mark your check "prior year fulfillment."
 - Giving statements will be prepared and mailed out Tuesday, January 13, 2026.
- Thank you for making a difference in countless lives in our community and in the world.

ADVENT SERVICES



Saturday, December 13: 4 p.m. Messy Church - Messy Manger

Through games and crafts, storytelling and song, food and fun, we will explore the Christmas story and the birth of baby Jesus. We will close our time with a delicious home-cooked meal prepared by church members and shared together in community. *In Simkins Hall.*



Sunday, December 14: 4 p.m. Blue Advent - A Contemplative Worship Service

While the Advent/Christmas season is known as a time of joy, merriment, and excited expectation it can also include feelings of fear, 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 Advent service, led by Rev. Keri Olsen Paget and the Spiritual Formation Counsel, is designed to hold the complexity of the season with gentle grace while in community. Come pray, sing, and worship God-With-Us remembering that through Christ grief and fear dance with gratitude and hope. *In-person only.*



Sunday, December 21: 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-person and online.)*



Wednesday, December 24: Christmas Eve

- 4 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)*

- 8 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Join us for a traditional candlelight service, accompanied by the Chancel Choir, organ, and harp. This meaningful worship offers a serene moment of beauty and reverence during the Christmas season. In the Sanctuary. *(In-person and online)*



- 11 p.m. Christmas Eve Communion Service

Join us 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. Led by Rev. Greg Batson, with Tania Batson, solo; Thomas Batson, organ; and Wesley and Daniel Batson reading. In the Sanctuary. *(In-person only)*



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