



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

WORSHIP

Third Sunday of Advent • December 14, 2025

WE GATHER

WELCOME

Tricia Guerrero, Pastoral Associate

PRELUDE

Ty Woodward, organ

Noel Suisse (Louis-Claude Daquin)

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN #203 United Methodist Hymnal

Hail to the Lord's Anointed

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Bill Bumiller, Lay Lector

Beloved, God calls to us—like Joseph—through angels and messengers, inviting us to listen for the Spirit's guidance in the midst of half-truths and distractions.

We listen faithfully for the day that all the earth awaits.

Sometimes, angels surprise us (as they did Mary) with good news too fantastical to believe and yet too real—realer than real—to ignore.

We listen faithfully for the day that all the earth awaits.

For generations, God has sent signs of God's coming kingdom in unexpected places—the birth of a child, the wisdom of the lowly, the faithfulness of a carpenter.

We listen faithfully for the day that all the earth awaits.

Come! Let us worship God who calls out to us, inviting us to faithfulness as we watch, wait, and work for the day when the whole world knows the abundant love and grace of Emmanuel, God-with-us.

Come! Let us worship as we listen faithfully for the day that all the earth awaits.

*CHORAL ACT OF PRAISE

"Gloria in excelsis Deo!"

*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Please greet those worshipping near you.

Bill Bumiller



*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

Lindsay, Spencer and Everett Dewald

We come with joy knowing it is Christ who calls us here.

Like Mary, we too proclaim, "My spirit rejoices in God my Savior."

In this time, may our worship empower us for the work ahead.

There are doorways to open for all people, and paths to clear so that all may have the abundant life God offers.

As we light this candle, may we be filled with joy, the joy that leads us to do the good work of God.

#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!

*HYMN #215 UMH — To a Maid Engaged to Joseph

SILENT PRAYER AND PASTORAL PRAYER

Tricia Guerrero

THE LORD'S PRAYER

CHORAL RESPONSE

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

THE GOSPEL Matthew 1:18-25

Bill Bumiller

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

SERMON "Joseph's Dream"

Rev. Greg Batson, Senior Minister

WE RESPOND

WE OFFER OUR GIFTS & OURSELVES

Bill Bumiller

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

People, Look East (arr. Craig Courtney)

People, look East, the time is near of the crowning of the year, make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table. People, look East, and sing today: Love, the Guest, is on the way. Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there: give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flow'r may flourish. People, look East, and sing today. Love, the Rose, is on the way. Birds, though ye long have ceased to build, guard the nest that must be filled. Even the hour when wings are frozen, He for fledging time has chosen. People, look East, and sing today: Love, the Bird, is on the way. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more light the bowl shall brim. Shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together. People, look East, and sing today: Love, the Star, is on the way. Angels, announce to man and beast Him who cometh from the East. Set ev'ry peak and valley humming with the word the Lord is coming. People, look East, and sing today. Love, the Lord, is on the way.

*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

Bill Bumiller

Faithful God of unfolding plans, when our certainty falters and our expectations collapse, you are still at work, inviting us into grace that redefines and redeems. Like Joseph, we bring our gifts and lay down our plans, trusting that your Spirit can shape our offering into something greater than we imagined. Let these gifts and our lives be signs of obedience, humility, and hope. May they help carry Christ into a world still longing for peace, hungry for love, and needing redemption. We pray in the name of the one who is Emmanuel—God with us. Amen.

WE GO FORTH TO SERVE

*HYMN #200 UMH – Tell Out, My Soul

*BENEDICTION

Rev. Batson

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE Prelude and Fugue in B-flat (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, 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.

—**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:** "Remembering my mom Kay Fonda."
From Carol Greenwood.

—**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



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Today is the third 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



Today! 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*.

Today at 4 p.m. in the Chapel



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. To donate and view this year's missions at the Alternative Christmas Fair on the website, visit : www.santamonicaumc.org/alt-christmas25

Sundays: December 14, 21 after worship in Simkins Hall

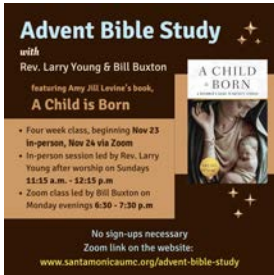


Last Sunday Today - Angel Tree Project

Angel Tree Project is concluding today, 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, you may bring gifts today.

Today, December 14, in the Alcove after worship

First UMC's ADVENT GUIDE



Last Classes: Advent Bible Study

Our Advent study on Amy-Jill Levine's new book, *A Child is Born*, concludes today and tomorrow with an in-person class with Rev. Larry Young in the Fireside Room at 11:15 a.m., and on Monday on Zoom at 6:30 p.m. with Bill Buxton. (**Zoom code and book link** on the website: www.santamonicaumc.org/advent-bible-study) 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.

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

Monday, December 15, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. via Zoom

Poinsettia Dedications

Beautiful poinsettias will grace our sanctuary for the Service of Lessons and Carols, and on 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>



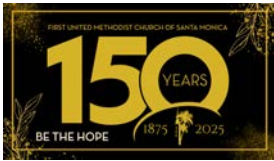


Advent Devotional

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.

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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

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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 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.



No matter where you find yourself on Christmas may Jesus be alive in you. May you see and proclaim God's work in the world. May you let your heart sing! Blessings!

— **Rev. Keri, Rev. Josh, and Elly Paget**

(excerpt from today's devotion from the 2025 Advent Devotional)

ADVENT SERVICES



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)*

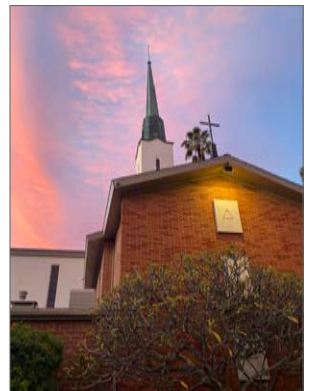
- 11 p.m. Christmas Eve Communion Service

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)*





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 150 years.



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