

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

WORSHIP

First Sunday after Christmas • Family Sunday • December 28, 2025

WE GATHER

WELCOME Rev. Keri Olsen Paget, Deacon Associate

PRELUDE Greensleeves (setting: Richard Purvis)

Ty Woodward, organ

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN #240 United Methodist Hymnal

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Olsen Paget

We have waited, watched, and witnessed the coming of the Christ child. As we gather today on the other side of Christmas, we ask, "What now?"

We continue to wait and watch for the day that all the earth awaits.

In this season of Christmas, we remember that though Christ has come among us, the good news of freedom for captives, flourishing for the poor, and power returned to the disempowered does not reign in all places.

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We continue to wait and watch for the day that all the earth awaits.

With Mary and Joseph, we listen for God to show us how to protect and advocate for the vulnerable among us.

We continue to wait and watch for the day that all the earth awaits.

As we gather to worship today, may God bind us together in love, empowering us to live as followers of the Christ child who declare good news wherever we go.

We gather today as people who wait, watch, and work for the day that all the earth awaits. Thanks be to God! Amen.

*CHORAL ACT OF PRAISE

"Break forth, O beauteous heavenly light, and usher in the morning; O shepherds, shrink not with affright, but hear the angel's warning. This child, now weak in infancy, our confidence and joy shall be, the power of Satan breaking, our peace eternal making."

*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Rev. Olsen Paget

Please greet those worshipping near you.

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 worshiping 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.

#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 return to their seats for Family Sunday. Children remain with their families for congregational worship when there is no Sunday school. Worship packets and books for children can be found with the ushers. Childcare for infants through Preschool age is provided in the Nursery Room on the 2nd Floor Education Bldg.

OUR MISSION & COMMON LIFE

Rev. Olsen Paget

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

HYMN #2095 TFWS — Star-Child

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (see insert)

Rev. Olsen Paget

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 Matthew 2:13-23 CEB

David Wilson, Lay Lector

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

SERMON "Love Makes a Way"

Tricia Guerrero, Pastoral Associate

WE RESPOND

WE OFFER OUR GIFTS & OURSELVES

David Wilson

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.

Based on Matthew 2

Loving God, you guided Joseph through dreams and led the Holy Family safely on their journey. Grant your Church faith to listen for your voice, courage to follow your direction, and compassion to shelter those in need.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of all nations, as you protected your Son in a foreign land, protect all who are forced to flee from violence, war, and disaster. Bless refugees and immigrants with welcome, safety, and hope, and move the hearts of leaders to pursue peace and justice. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God our refuge, you know the suffering of the vulnerable. Be present with all who are afraid, alone, or in danger. Protect those who travel, comfort those who mourn, and heal those who are ill in body or spirit.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of tenderness, you were with Mary and Joseph as they cared for the Christ child in times of fear and uncertainty. Be near all parents and caregivers who struggle to provide for their children; strengthen families divided by hardship or displacement. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Merciful God, you call your children home from every exile and place of fear. We remember before you those who have died, trusting that you receive them into your eternal peace. Give us grace to follow in faith until we too find our rest in you. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

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.

The Chancel Choir/Dr. James Smith, Music Director

OFFERTORY

Candlelight Carol (John Rutter)

How do you capture the wind on the water? How do you count all the stars in the sky? How can you measure the love of a mother, or how can you write down a baby's first cry? Candlelight, angel light, firelight and starglow shine on his cradle till breaking of dawn. Gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo! Angels are singing; the Christ child is born. Shepherds and wise men will kneel and adore him, Seraphim round him their vigil will keep; nations proclaim him their Lord and their Savior, but Mary will hold him and sing him to sleep. Candlelight, angel light, firelight and starglow shine on his cradle till breaking of dawn. Gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo! Angels are singing; the Christ child is born. Find him at Bethlehem laid in a manger: Christ our Redeemer asleep in the hay, Godhead incarnate and hope of salvation: a child with his mother that first Christmas day. Candlelight, angel light, firelight and starglow shine on his cradle till breaking of dawn. Gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo! Angels are singing; the Christ child is born.

*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

David Wilson

Steadfast God of refuge and promise, even when fear seems stronger than hope, you are with us. In the flight to Egypt, in the cries of grief, in the fragile beginnings of new life, you make a way. Receive these gifts as signs of our willingness to make room for your kin-dom among us. Use what we bring—not just our treasure, but our time, our voices, our compassion—to heal what is broken, to protect the vulnerable, and to embody your saving love. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

WE GO FORTH TO SERVE

*HYMN #246 UMH — Joy to the World

*BENEDICTION Tricia Guerrero

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE Good King Wenceslas (arr. Robert MacDonald)

Ty Woodward

—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 11a.m. in the chapel with open arms and generous hospitality as they move forward during this time of transition.
- —Children and Families on Sundays: Today is a Family Sunday. Children remain with their families for congregational worship when there is no Sunday school. Worship packets and books for children can be found with the ushers. Childcare for infants through Preschool age is provided in the Nursery Room on the 2nd Floor Education Bldg.
- —**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: January 11/18/25.
- —**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.rold@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.



West District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Siosaia Tu'itahi

MINISTRY

Senior Minister

Rev. Greg Batson
g.batson@santamonicaumc.org

Deacon Associate for Spiritual Formation
Rev. Keri Olsen Paget
k.olsenpaget@santamonicaumc.org

Pastoral Associate
Tricia Guerrero
t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org

Congregation Care Associate
Anne Premer

a.premer@santamonicaumc.org
Family Ministries Coordinator

Jamie Jones j.jones@santamonicaumc.org

MUSIC STAFF

Music Director

Dr. James Smith

Organist

Ty Woodward

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Business Administrator
Christina Eddy

c.eddy@santamonicaumc.org

Communications Director
Tina Gage

t.gage@santamonicaumc.org

Office Manager
Sarah Rold
s.rold@santamonicaumc.ora

Membership and Facilities Coordinator

David Penson

d.penson@santamonicaumc.org

Program and Outreach Coordinator
Brandon Searfoss
b.searfoss@santamonicaumc.org

Head Custodian

Javier Espinoza

PRESCHOOL STAFF

Preschool Co-Director

Dane Rold

d.rold@santamonicaumc.org

Preschool Co-Director

Johanna Cortez j.holman@santamonicaumc.org

Preschool Director Emerita

Dee Menzies

d.menzies@santamonicaumc.org



SUNDAY INSERT DECEMBER 28, 2025

LOOKING FORWARD

www.santamonicaumc.org



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 11 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.

January 11, 10 a.m. in-person and online worship



January Online Mid-Week Recital

First UMC is pleased to present the Online January Mid-Week Recital, featuring Noah Sonderling, piano. Noah is a piano fellow with New World Symphony and studies with Anton Nel. Awards include second place in the 2022 Sidney Wright Accompanying Competition, and first place in the 2018 Indiana University Concerto Competition. He has also appeared with the National Repertory Orchestra. To read full bio, and to view past recitals, visit the website:

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

Wednesday, January 14, 12:10 p.m.

ONLINE: Facebook: <u>@santamonicaumc</u> • YouTube Channel: @SantaMonicaUMC • Website: <u>www.santamonicaumc.org/livestream</u> • The First UMC App: (Go to the App Store, search FirstUMC_SM)



Kids Night Out

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. \$40/child + \$20 for each additional sibling, 2 years – 5th grade. Sign up for the Children and Family Ministries email to receive registration info: https://santamonicaumc.org/childrens-ministry (click subscribe)

Friday, January 23, $4-8\ p.m.$ in the Education Building



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 24, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. in Simkins Hall

UPCOMING EVENTS

Walk the Labyrinth & Chapel Open for Prayers

Take a moment during the busy season for an hour to walk the labyrinth or visit the chapel. The Labyrinth laid in the Simkins Hall floor is a replica of the Chartres Labyrinth laid in the cathedral around 1220 CE. Walking the Labyrinth is an ancient spiritual practice, a way to quiet our minds and open our spirits to the presence of the Holy. View the 2026 Labyrinth schedule on the website: https://santamonicaumc.org/labyrinth/

Friday, January 2, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. Simkins Hall, Chapel

· Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast

The Santa Monica Area Interfaith Council is hosting a MLK breakfast at Mount Olive Lutheran Church on **Friday, January 16**, beginning with breakfast at 7:30 a.m., and program starting at 8 a.m. More details to follow.

· Spirit Sisters Retreat

The Spirit Sisters, led by Paster Dorothy Bimber Worley, are holding an annual All-Day January Retreat as they prepare for Lent together. Theme: "I AM the Light of the World" Women are encouraged to come at 8:30 a.m. for registration and breakfast. \$15 donation for breakfast and lunch. All women are welcome! RSVP: Pastor Dorothy (626)826-8301 (call or text)

Saturday, January 17, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Fireside Room & Chapel

Listening Deeply: A Spiritual Formation Retreat

All are welcome to deeply listen for God through the practice of Lectio Divina. Rev. Keri Olsen Paget will facilitate the prayerful practice and create opportunities for participants to respond creatively and as a community. Anyone who is interested in focusing their attention on God for the day is invited. Contact Rev. Keri at k.olsenpaget@santamonicaumc.org for more information. This retreat is free, but registration is required. A simple lunch will be provided. Register on the church website by Friday, January 23: www.santamonicaumc.org/listening-deeply

Saturday, January 31, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. onsite

MISSION AND SERVICE

TWO ONGOING VOI UNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

The People Concern

Linda Diane Anderson (with the help of Janet Searfoss) run 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.

Next volunteer day: Saturday, January 17
Contact Tricia to volunteer: t.guerrero@

santamonicaumc.org

Westside Food Bank

Westside Food Bank offers a volunteer opportunity every 4th Wednesday of the month. Upcoming dates:

Wednesdays: Jan 28/Feb 25

10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

1914 14th Street, Santa Monica

Volunteers will unpack cases of food for distribution at the Mobile Pantry at Virginia Avenue Park.

To volunteer, sign up on the WSFB website: https://www.wsfb.org/take-action/volunteer-opportunities/ Click on the option for "Wednesdays – 10am – 12pm: VAP Mobile Pantry Prep" and (Wed, Jan 28) in the calendar, then fill out your contact information.

Youth Service Project Trip

Each summer, a team of youth and adult volunteers from First UMC Santa Monica take time out of their summer vacations to go on a week-long mission trip. During the trip, youth learn about themselves and build relationships with people from all over the U.S., they learn teamwork and how to use power tools, and they are given the opportunity to help people to gain a safe, warm, and dry home to live in through their work. We collaborate with reputable youth-centered service organizations, and while the location of the trips varies each year, the mission remains the same: Be in community and of service to those in need.

2026 YSP Trip: Appalachia Service Project Saturday, June 20 — Sunday, June 28

Look for upcoming fundraising opportunities that the youth will be holding to raise money for their trip. https://santamonicaumc.org/ysp

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

We have 3 groups for **Sunday School** following the children's message in worship:

- Nursery Care for 6 months through toddler
- Younger Elementary for Kinder-3rd graders
- New Sunday School group for 4th-7th graders Please contact Jamie (<u>j.jones@santamonicaumc.org</u>) for more info.

• 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

The Youth Ministry at First UMC is a community of youth and adult volunteers who gather weekly to explore and grow in faith together. www.santamonicaumc.org/youth-ministry Sundays, 6-8 p.m. in the Youth Lounge (Not meeting tonight)

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, January 2, 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, January 7,** 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, January 17**

The Chancel Choir

The Chancel Choir provides music every Sunday during the 10 a.m. Sanctuary Worship Service. Sing in the Chancel Choir! **Thursday evening rehearsals are from 7:40 p.m.** - **9 p.m.** 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.

Next meeting: Saturday, February 21, 4 - 6 p.m. in Simkins Hall. *Theme: Choosing to Bee Kind with our Words*

Blood Pressure Screenings

The Health Ministry Council provides free Blood Pressure Screenings once a month after worship. Next meeting: **Sunday, January 11, after worship** in the Alcove

TODAY'S FEATURED ARTWORK

"Our ancestors forge pathways that become a part of who we are. It is difficult to break those patterns, even if you aren't keenly aware of them. In this context, one of the most defining ancestral narratives of an Israelite's life would be the Exodus narrative. Joseph is advised to move in direct opposition to the way his ancestors moved. He must go toward Egypt instead of away. It takes great courage to consider the ingrained patterns of your history and blaze a new trail.

Joseph must uproot his family from their home to ensure their son will become who he was made to be. In this image, the Holy Family escapes the wrath of Herod in Bethlehem and faithfully travels toward the looming unknown in Egypt. They are flanked by flowers: on the left are Star of Bethlehem flowers and on the right are stylized lotus flowers you might see in



Egyptian art. In the background are shadowy figures. On the left, they represent Herod's men seeking to kill Jesus, and on the right, they represent the weight of the past—God's enslaved people and their oppressors. The menacing silhouettes surround the family, personifying the inherent risk in either path they choose to take. The angel of God envelopes the Holy Family in an embrace, comforting them from the grief of leaving home and shielding them from the fear of what is to come. In other icons of this pilgrimage, the Nile River often flows below, teeming with fish, but I chose to fill the water with lotus flowers, Egypt's national flower and a symbol of regeneration. God is writing a new story, transforming their destination, which swells with generational trauma and pain, into a haven of refuge and rebirth."

—Lauren Wright Pittmam | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org



First UMC Christmas Concert

You can still view this year's Christmas Concert on our website and YouTube Channel! This year's musical celebration featured 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. Enjoy the performance! https://santamonicaumc.org/music-theater

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 Facebook: 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, visit: www.

santamonicaumc.org/give



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH of SANTA MONICA

1008 Eleventh Street, Santa Monica, CA 90403 • 310-393-8258

www.santamonicaumc.org • info@santamonicaumc.org • O @santamonicaumc

