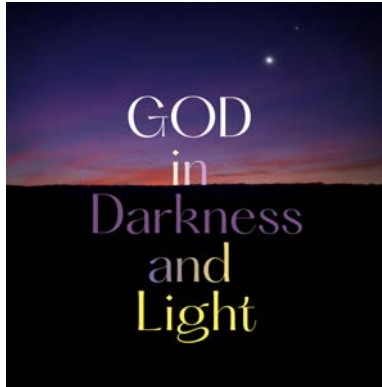


FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
WORSHIP

First Sunday in Lent • February 22, 2026

WE GATHER



WILDERNESS

WELCOME

Tricia Guerrero, Pastoral Associate

PRELUDE | Call to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ (J. S. Bach)

Ty Woodward, organ

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN #269 United Methodist Hymnal
Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Dan Nessel, Lay Lector

Welcome pilgrims on the way to the cross.

We are learning to follow Jesus.

For those who feel Christ is near,

May we not turn away from the discomfort of the journey ahead.

For those who feel as far from Christ as the desert is from the ocean,

May we find Christ in the wilderness with us.

For all of us who stumble and fall in our silence, indifference, and lack of generosity,

May we reach for the hand of Christ, who raises us up to continue on the journey.

*CHORAL ACT OF PRAISE

“Open our eyes, O loving and compassionate Jesus, that we may behold Thee. Amen.”

*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Dan Nessel

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 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.

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.

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 #2105 TFWS — Jesus, Tempted in the Desert

SILENT PRAYER AND PASTORAL PRAYER

Tricia Guerrero

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 PSALM Psalm 32

Tricia Guerrero

THE GOSPEL Matthew 4:1-11

Dan Nessel

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

SERMON "God in Darkness and Light: Wilderness"

Rev. Greg Batson, Senior Minister

WE RESPOND

WE OFFER OUR GIFTS & OURSELVES

Dan Nessel

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

Cherubim Song (P.I. Tchaikovsky)

Like a choir of glorious angels, gath'ring softly thro' the air in solemn mystery: To our heav'nly Father, Mighty One, raise we now our song to Thy glorious name. Now as we lift our hearts to Thee, turn our thoughts this day from care, from all worldliness, from all care, turn our thoughts from all care, from all earthly care. As the King of all now we praise Thee! Hallowed by Thy holy name, from now and ever more, we hail Thy holy name. Alleluia.

*RESPONSE #95 UMH – The Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Dan Nessel

Surprising God of Mercy, you meet us in wilderness places and walk beside us through trial and temptation. Even when we feel alone, your grace is never far, your presence never absent. In this moment of giving, we offer not just our resources, but our trust that you are already at work, shaping us through challenge, strengthening us through sacrifice, and surrounding us with unseen angels. Use these gifts to bring hope where there is hunger, healing where there is pain, and light where there is despair. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

WE GO FORTH TO SERVE

*HYMN #377 UMH – It Is Well with My Soul

*BENEDICTION

Rev. Batson

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE Prelude and Fugue in G minor (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.



—**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. During Lent, flowers will only be available in the Narthex.

—**This Sunday's Flowers:** "In memory of my husband George Osoba." From Titilayomi.

—**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: www.santamonicaumc.org/prayer-requests.

—**Westside Food Bank:** We collect food weekly for the Westside Food Bank. Bins are located outside the Sanctuary and at the Welcome table on Sunday mornings. Food needed: Baby foods and formula; Canned beans; Canned meats, fish, soups & stews; Canned pasta sauce, tomatoes; Canned fruits, vegetables; Cereal (hot and cold); Cooking oil; Flour and baking mixes; Fruit juices and shelf stable milk; Peanut butter and other nut butters; Protein, energy, or granola bars.

—**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.

—We welcome **Community UMC of Pacific Palisades** each Sunday at 11 a.m. in the chapel with generous hospitality.

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

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
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Congregation Care Associate
Anne Premer
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Family Ministries Coordinator
Jamie Jones
j.jones@santamonicaumc.org

MUSIC STAFF

Music Director
Dr. James Smith

Organist
Ty Woodward

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Head Custodian
Javier Espinoza

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Preschool Co-Director
Dane Rold
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Preschool Co-Director
Johanna Cortez
j.holman@santamonicaumc.org

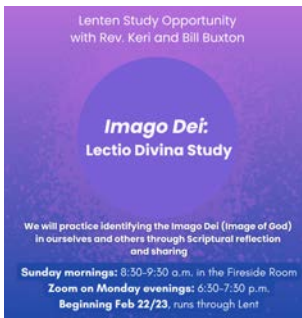
Preschool Director Emerita
Dee Menzies
d.menzies@santamonicaumc.org



Tonight - REFLECT Worship

Tonight, Pastor Greg will introduce a new worship service called "Reflect." This will be an additional opportunity to come together for worship and sharing in an informal setting. We will gather in Simkins Hall at 5 p.m. The service will include a time of prayer and sharing, scripture and reflection, and conclude with Holy Communion. At 6 p.m., you are invited to stay and share in a meal in conjunction with our youth as they gather for their weekly program. This is open to all, and we invite you to join us for this new opportunity during Lent.

Tonight, February 22, 5 p.m. worship in Simkins Hall, followed by 6 p.m. meal



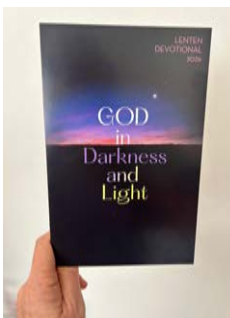
Lenten Study – Imago Dei: Lectio Divina Study

Through Scriptural reflection and sharing, Rev. Keri Olsen Paget and Bill Buxton invite you to identify the *Imago Dei* (Image of God) in yourself and to perceive that same sacred image in others. We will explore our own socio-cultural identities and reflect on when and how we engage others who hold different identities. We hope this prayerful and Scriptural study will assist our ability to worship, work and live in harmony with diverse persons because everyone is of sacred-worth. *Childcare is available.

To sign up for either in-person or Zoom class, or if you have questions, email Rev. Keri: k.olsenpaget@santamonicaumc.org.

- **Rev. Keri will facilitate a group on Sunday mornings: 8:30-9:30 a.m. in the Fireside Room. Feb 22 (completed this morning) March 1, 8, 15, 22.**
- **Bill Buxton will facilitate a group on Zoom on Monday evenings: 6:30-7:30 p.m., Feb 23, March 2, 9, 16, 23.**

Zoom link on the website: www.santamonicaumc.org/lent



Lenten Devotional Booklet

The Spiritual Formation Council invites you to read your Lenten Devotional online and in print. Printed copies are available now, and daily emails are underway. The devotional is written by the First UMC congregation and provides a wonderful opportunity to share Lent with family and friends. To sign up for the daily emails (*the scripture for the day is included*), visit the website: www.santamonicaumc.org/lent



Art in the Fireside Room

During Lent, an exhibit in the Fireside Room reflects the Lenten theme *God in Darkness and Light*. Each piece features a Psalm reading accompanied by mostly black-and-white artwork from various eras, inviting contemplation alongside the Psalm.

Thru Lent in the Fireside Room

UPCOMING EVENTS

• **First UMC Blood Drive – Sign Up Now!**

Consider making a blood donation part of your Lenten practice. The American Red Cross is in critical need for donors of all blood types – give blood and you'll have the knowledge that you've truly helped save someone's life! Schedule your appointment now on the website: www.redcrossblood.org, and enter sponsor code FirstUMCSM.

*Donors will receive a \$15 Amazon gift card, and will have A1C testing (measures the average amount of glucose (sugar) in your blood over the past three months) a once-per-calendar-year offering for each donor!

Sunday, March 1, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m., Simkins Hall

• **Spiritual Gifts Workshop w/Bill Buxton**

God creates us all in special, unique ways (none of the two of us are alike), and calls us to join the work of building God's Kingdom in the here and now with our "spiritual gifts." We will be gathering after worship to learn more about these gifts and will work on a reflection to help each of us to discern our individual gifts. This can be a life-changing experience as the Spirit helps us see ways we can contribute to God's work in our communities and in the world. I hope you can join us!

Grab your coffee and donut, and meet us in the Fireside Room.

Sunday, March 8, 11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. in the Fireside Room

• **24th Annual St. Patrick's Day Luncheon**

Women of Action, a circle of United Women in Faith, in partnership with Fellowship and Events and Children's Ministry, will present their 24th Annual St. Patrick's Day Luncheon! This year's proceeds benefit **Upward Bound House Family Place**. The suggested donation of \$12 per person includes lunch, a spirited singalong led by JoAnne Bailey and the ACT Singers with virtuoso piano accompaniment by Mary Crawford, and spellbinding prestidigitation by Ron Theile. Emcees Cindy McQuade and David Mayhan will supply the witty banter, colorful quips, and Irish antics. Craft materials for children (and young-at-heart adults) will be provided. Children under 5 dine free. **Don't forget to wear green!**

Sunday March 15, 11:15 a.m. in Simkins Hall

MISSION AND SERVICE

• **The People Concern**

Linda Diane Anderson and 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. Volunteers meet at the church to carpool. Contact Tricia to volunteer:

t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org

Next Volunteer Day: Saturday, March 21, 8 a.m.

• **Westside Food Bank**

The Westside Food Bank volunteer opportunity is held every 4th Wednesday of the month. Volunteers will pack cases of food for distribution at the Mobile Pantry at Virginia Avenue Park.

Next Volunteer Day: **Wednesday, February 25**
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

1914 14th Street, Santa Monica

Contact Tricia to volunteer:

t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org

• **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

Visit the website for more info and to support the team:

<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 (j.jones@santamonicaumc.org) 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 Simkins Hall**

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, March 6, 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, March 4**, at Literati Cafe

• Prayer Quilt Ministry

Meets the 3rd Saturdays of the month, 9:30 a.m. in Room 300. Next meeting: **Saturday, March 21**

• 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, March 21

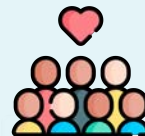
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. in Simkins Hall

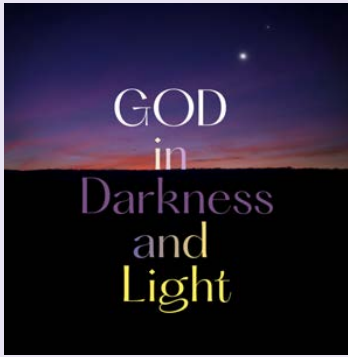
Theme: The Zoo is Not for You

• Blood Pressure Screenings

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

Next meeting: **March 22, after worship** in the Alcove.





Lent is the 40-day period (not including Sundays), beginning with Ash Wednesday (**February 18**) and ending with the celebration of Easter (**April 5**). The 40 days is a symbolic reminder of Jesus' fasting and temptation in the wilderness following his baptism. In the early church, it was the time set aside for preparing candidates for baptism. It is a penitential season for all Christians, an invitation to repent of our sins and return to God in our daily living. The spiritual practices for Lent include fasting, prayer and almsgiving. Each of these practices provide space and time for self-reflection. We examine our lives, confess our sins, and ask God for forgiveness. It is a journey from the ashes that symbolize our mortality to the empty tomb that proclaims the resurrection of Jesus and new life for all. We are providing a full schedule of opportunities to observe a holy and meaningful Lent at First UMC.

On the website: www.santamonicaumc.org/lent

All Church Service Trip (Intergenerational)

First UMC has a history of responding to disaster relief and engaging in long-term recovery efforts in various locations, including New Orleans, Haiti, and Houston.

Building on this deep foundation and history of service and outreach, we are excited to announce a new initiative: a week-long intergenerational service trip (**13 years and up**) scheduled from **Saturday, August 1, to Saturday, August 8, 2026**. We will be collaborating with the Sierra Service Project (SSP), sending a work team from our congregation to the **Navajo Nation in Arizona**. While SSP traditionally hosted only youth groups, in recent years, they have broadened their mission to include intergenerational service weeks for churches, scout groups, and other organizations, creating opportunities for a wider range of participants to serve. **Deadline to sign up: March 8.**

- You may email Tricia with questions: t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org.

More info and sign up on the website: www.santamonicaumc.org/church-service-trip



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/

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

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@santamonicaumc