

SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER LENT 2026

We are in the middle of our Lenten journey this month which will culminate with the celebration of Easter on April 5. As we search for God in darkness and light, there are a number of ways we can engage our faith: participating in worship and the Lenten Study, reading a daily devotional, and offering our time in service to the community.

One way I am experiencing this journey is through the psalms. Each psalm offers a deep well of emotion and wisdom that we can access. Psalm 139 is a good example:

*O Lord, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and rise up;
You discern my thoughts from far away. (vs. 1-2)*

Our God knows every cell of our being. From the moment we take our first breath to the moments we take our last, God is present in our lives. No matter how far we travel, God is there to welcome us.

But what about the times when we feel overwhelmed by the darkness in our lives? God is there too.

*If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and night wraps itself around me,"
Even the darkness is not dark to you,
the night is bright as day for darkness is as light to you.
(vs. 11-12)*

In a time when we all need renewal in hope, these lines remind me that God is present and is leading us into a new future. May we all find it as we prepare to celebrate the miracle of resurrection through Jesus Christ.

Rev. Greg Batson
Senior Minister



LENTEN STUDY - "IMAGO DEI" LECTIO DIVINA STUDY

Through Scriptural reflection and sharing, you are invited to identify the **Imago Dei (Image of God)** in yourself and to perceive that same sacred image in others. We 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 Sunday mornings.* To sign up for either in-person or Zoom class, email Rev. Keri at k.olsenpaget@santamonicaumc.org.

- In person meetings with Rev. Keri in the Fireside Room:
Sundays: March 1/8/15/22, 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
- Zoom meetings with Bill Buxton will be held
Mondays: March 2/9/16/23, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Imago Dei:
Lectio Divina Study

REFLECT WORSHIP

Pastor Greg's new worship service called "Reflect" continues this month. This is an additional opportunity to come together for worship and sharing in an informal setting. We gather in Simkins Hall at 5 p.m. The service includes a time of prayer and sharing, scripture and reflection, and concludes 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 opportunity during Lent. **Sunday, March 22, 5 p.m. worship in Simkins Hall, followed by 6 p.m. meal**

REFLECT
BEEFECT

ART IN THE FIRESIDE ROOM

An exhibit in the Fireside Room continues during Lent, reflecting the 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.

Through Lent, in the Fireside Room



LENTEN DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET

The Spiritual Formation Council invites you to read your Lenten Devotional online and in print. Printed copies are available at church and in the church office, 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, visit the website: www.santamonicaumc.org/len

MARCH at a glance



- Sun Mar 1** **2nd Sunday in Lent** / Holy Communion
Red Cross Blood Drive
In-person Lenten Study *Imago Dei*: Lectio Divina Study
- Mon Mar 2**
Via Zoom Lenten Study *Imago Dei*: Lectio Divina Study
UWF Board Meeting via Zoom
- Tues Mar 3**
Foundation Meeting
- Fri Mar 6**
Labyrinth/Chapel Open
- Sun Mar 8** **3rd Sunday in Lent** (*day of LA Marathon*)
Daylight Saving Time begins - *Spring Forward*
In-person *Imago Dei*: Lectio Divina Study
Spiritual Gifts Workshop with Bill Buxton
Preschool Book Fair all week
Via Zoom *Imago Dei*: Lectio Divina Study
- Mon Mar 9**
Via Zoom *Imago Dei*: Lectio Divina Study
- Tues Mar 10**
Missions Council Meeting
- Wed Mar 11**
March Mid-Week Recital
- Fri Mar 13**
Kids Night Out
- Sun Mar 15** **4th Sunday in Lent**
St. Patrick's Day Luncheon
In-person *Imago Dei*: Lectio Divina Study
Via Zoom *Imago Dei*: Lectio Divina Study
- Mon Mar 16**
Via Zoom *Imago Dei*: Lectio Divina Study
- Fri Mar 20**
Messy Camp registration begins
- Sat Mar 21**
The People Concern volunteer day
Prayer Quilt Workparty
March Messy Church
- Sun Mar 22** **5th Sunday in Lent** / Service of Lessons & Anthems
In-person *Imago Dei*: Lectio Divina Study
Blood Pressure Screenings
Q&A session with Cal-Pac Camp Coordinator Jillian Mager
REFLECT worship
- Mon Mar 23**
Via Zoom *Imago Dei*: Lectio Divina Study
- Wed Mar 25**
Westside Food Bank volunteer day
- Sun Mar 29** **Holy Week begins / Palm Sunday**
Palm Sunday brunch

FIRST UMC BLOOD DRIVE

It's not too late to make 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, or you may come during the drive to see if there are open spots available.

- 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



Scenes from last year's Blood Drive

WALK THE LABYRINTH

Labyrinth walking is a spiritual practice that involves following a single, winding path to the center and back out again. Unlike a maze, there are no dead ends, just a purposeful path used for centering, contemplation, and prayer. The Labyrinth is open on the first Friday of every month, 1 – 3 p.m. in Simkins Hall. If you've never walked the Labyrinth before, there are printed instructions to help with your walking meditation. Children and families welcome!

View the 2026 Labyrinth schedule on the website: <https://santamonicaumc.org/labyrinth/>

Friday, March 6, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. Simkins Hall & Chapel Open

SPIRITUAL GIFTS WORKSHOP WITH BILL BUXTON

God creates us all in special, unique ways, none of the two of us are alike. Come for a time of reflection that will help each of us to discern our individual gifts.

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

SPIRITUAL GIFTS WORKSHOP WITH BILL BUXTON

Ephesians 4:11-13 describes spiritual gifts as, "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ."

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. 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!

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



MARCH ONLINE MID-WEEK RECITAL

First UMC is pleased to present the 2026 March Online Mid-Week Recital featuring **Sangam: Paul Livingstone, sitar; Peter Jacobson, cello.** Sangam is the chamber music duo of sitarist Paul Livingstone and cellist Peter Jacobson. Sangam performs innovative compositions and improvisations straddling the worlds of Indian classical music and European polyphony which arc between deep musical meditations to dynamic poly-rhythmic counterpoint. Their unique sound is imbued with the free spirit of a jazz improvisation and incorporates touches of Latin, folk and popular music styles.



To read full bio and view past recitals, visit the website:

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

How to watch the Livestream:

- Facebook: [@santamonicaumc](https://www.facebook.com/santamonicaumc)
- YouTube Channel: [@SantaMonicaUMC](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)
- Website: www.santamonicaumc.org/livestream
- The First UMC App: (App Store, search FirstUMC_SM)

You may also view past recitals on these channels.

Wednesday, March 11, at 12:10 p.m., online

SIGN UP THIS MONTH!

MESSY CAMP 2026: GROWING IN GOD'S GARDEN!

Coming this summer! Join us for an unforgettable week of adventure at Messy Camp, where kids will explore the beauty and wonder of God's Garden. Each day, campers will dig into hands-on science experiments, exciting games, Bible story adventures, creative crafts, catchy songs, and a hands-on mission project. Through fun, fellowship, and messy activities, kids will discover how our hearts grow when we practice caring for one another and trusting God. Come get messy, make memories, and watch your faith bloom! Ages TK – 5th grade.

The cost is \$150 for the first child and \$125 for each additional sibling. **Registration opens March 20.**

Monday, July 27 – Friday, July 31, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.



KIDS NIGHT OUT

Feeling lucky? You are! Kids Night Out is happening this March! Drop the kids off for an evening packed with games, crafts, pizza, and a movie—all in a safe, high-energy environment with our amazing trained childcare team. While they're busy having a blast, parents get to enjoy a well-deserved night out. It's a win-win kind of luck!

www.santamonicaumc.org/kids-night-out

Friday, March 13, 4 – 8 p.m. in the Education Building



MARCH MESSY CHURCH

At Messy Church, today's busy families of all shapes and sizes are invited into a welcoming space to experience faith. Messy Church meets once a month. 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.

MESSY CHURCH IS FUN

Engage in activities, crafts and games that bring the month's biblical story to life.

MESSY CHURCH IS FAITH

Join in a short celebration worship with an interactive bible story, music and prayer.

MESSY CHURCH IS FOOD

Each Messy Church concludes with a meal. Sitting at a table with new and old friends, sharing the stories of our real and messy lives!

Come for the whole time or just drop by as you're able.

Saturday, March 21, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. in Simkins Hall



EASTER FLOWERS

Now is the time to dedicate Easter Flowers in honor of a loved one for a small donation. Dedications will be present in the OOW for Easter service. \$15 per plant. Order flowers online: www.santamonicaumc.org/flower-fund, or at the Sunday Welcome Table.

Deadline to order: March 29



CAL-PAC SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

This summer, campers are invited to explore what it means to *Turn the World Around* through stories of faith, justice, environmentalism, and joy. Dive into classic camp fun like swimming, crafts, hikes, and songs, while discovering how small acts of kindness and courage can make a big difference. Come ready for adventure, community, and a week that will change the way you see the world, and hopefully your place in it.

2026 Camp Dates:

- Cedar Glen Elementary: June 22-26
- Cedar Glen Jr./Sr. High: June 27-July 3
- Camp Wrightwood Elementary: July 5-9
- Camp Wrightwood Jr./Sr. High: July 12-18
- Lazy W Ranch Elementary: July 12-16
- Lazy W Ranch Jr./Sr. High: 19-25



Pricing:

- Elementary Camp: \$395
- Jr & Sr High Camp: \$525

Camperships are available and can be requested during registration. Register through these websites:

Camp Wrightwood:

<https://www.campwrightwood.org/summercamp2026>

Camp Cedar Glen:

<https://www.campcedarglen.org/summer-camp-1>

Camp Lazy W:

<https://www.lazywranch.org/s-projects-side-by-side>



Questions about the Cal-Pac camps? Come to a Q&A session with Cal-Pac Camp **Jillian Mager, Program Coordinator** at Lazy W Ranch during coffee hour on **Sunday March 22, in Simkins Hall**



PALM SUNDAY: BRUNCH/EASTER BUNNY/EGG HUNT

Following worship, come for a Palm Sunday celebration, hosted by Children and Family Ministries. Featuring brunch, an Easter Egg hunt, games and crafts, a family photo opp, and a visit from the Easter Bunny! Fun for all ages!

Sunday, March 29, 11 a.m. in Simkins Hall



HOLY WEEK 2026

Sunday, MARCH 29: Palm Sunday

10 a.m. In-Person and Online Worship

The day we celebrate Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, with the waving of palms and loud Hosannas!

Sunday, MARCH 29: Palm Sunday Celebration

Brunch/Easter Bunny/Egg Hunt

Following worship, come for a Palm Sunday celebration, hosted by Children and Family Ministries. Featuring an Easter Egg hunt, brunch, games and crafts, a family photo opp, and a visit from the Easter Bunny! Fun for all ages!

After worship in the Courtyard

Thursday, APRIL 2: Maundy Thursday Service

6:30 p.m. First UMC Chapel

Command to Love One Another: Remembering Jesus' Last Supper and Washing the Disciples Feet

Good Friday, APRIL 3: Chapel Prayer Vigil

The First UMC Chapel will be open for prayer.

1 p.m. – 3 p.m. Chapel

Good Friday, APRIL 3: Walk the First UMC Labyrinth

The Labyrinth laid in the Simkins Hall floor of First UMC 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. Every step a prayer.

1 p.m. – 7 p.m. in Simkins Hall

- Join **Ross Chitwood of Community UMC** for a special musical performance of Taizé music during Labyrinth hours, from **6 - 7 p.m. in Simkins Hall**

Good Friday, APRIL 3: Good Friday Ecumenical Service at First UMC Santa Monica

Join Rev. Greg Batson, the First UMC Choir, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, and First Presbyterian Church for an ecumenical Good Friday service in the First UMC Sanctuary.

7 p.m. in the Sanctuary

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES

APRIL 5: Easter Sunrise Service

6:30 a.m. Palisades Park

Palisades Park (Santa Monica Blvd. & Ocean Ave.) Family-friendly worship, Holy Communion, hot coffee & fellowship. Bring blankets, chairs, & fresh flowers for the cross.

APRIL 5: Easter Celebration Worship

10 a.m. In-Person and Online Worship

First UMC Sanctuary

Family Service, Choir, Organ, Brass Quintet, Easter Flowers, and Alleluias! (*nursery care provided for infants and toddlers in the Fireside Room*)

www.santamonicaumc.org/lent



Community News

Our **new welcome statement** was thoughtfully crafted through the shared efforts of our Lay Leadership Team and the pastoral staff of First UMC Santa Monica. You'll find it on the homepage of our website and, from time to time, in the Sunday worship insert:

Welcome to First United Methodist Church of Santa Monica! We are followers of the way of Jesus Christ: loving God, loving neighbors and offering compassion to a world in need. Rooted in the Methodist tradition of personal transformation and social justice, our community is committed to sharing God's love, grace and hope and to the flourishing of all God's creation. For over 150 years we have been an active presence in the Westside community and around the world.

We believe every person is of sacred worth and created in God's image. We welcome you to be a part of our community and worship with us, no matter your age, race, nationality, citizenship, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, ability, faith story, or economic situation.

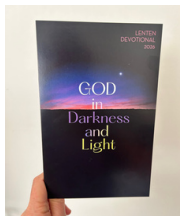
Come and participate in beloved community - a place to belong, whoever you are, just as you are.

BIRTHS

- In January, Preschool teacher Ms. Kate Martinell and her fiancé Wylie Beetley, welcomed baby **Waylon Beetley** to the world!

THANK YOU!

- Thanks to all of the writers of this year's Lenten Devotional, and a special thanks to **Mary Crawford** for organizing the scriptures and writers for the booklet.



LA MARATHON

The 40th Annual LA Marathon takes place on **Sunday, March 8**. To view road closures for that day that might affect your drive to church, (*San Vicente closed*) visit:

<https://www.mccourtfoundation.org/event/los-angeles-marathon/distances-courses/>

THANK YOU FROM THE YOUTH

To our Church Family -
On behalf of our entire youth group, thank you for making our Pancake Breakfast fundraiser such a wonderful success! Your support means more than we can express. This June, we will be traveling to serve with the Appalachia Service Project. During that week, we will work on homes in the Appalachian Mountains area for families with limited financial resources, helping to make their houses safer and more secure. Your generosity is directly helping us answer God's call to serve others in a hands-on and meaningful way. We are blessed to be part of a church community that encourages us to put our faith into action. Thank you for believing in us and investing in this service project.

With sincere thanks and appreciation,
The Youth Group



Scenes from
the Pancake Breakfast
Fundraiser

THE PEOPLE CONCERN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY



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 - MARCH DATE

Westside Food Bank offers a volunteer opportunity every 4th Wednesday of the month. Volunteers will pack cases of food for distribution at the Mobile Pantry at Virginia Avenue Park. Contact Tricia to volunteer: t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org

Wednesday, March 25, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
1914 14th Street, Santa Monica



Community Photos



United Women in Faith Game Day

Children's Sabbath and 4th Grade Bibles



Youth Sunday, with senior reflections by Bryce Eddy and Cady Senior; the Youth Group



Honoring Adam Guerrero's 25 years as Youth Counselor during Youth Sunday



Listening Deeply: A Spiritual Formation Retreat led by Rev. Keri Olsen Paget

Tricia Guerrero leading a Q&A session about the Intergenerational Service Trip coming up in August



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF SANTA MONICA PRESCHOOL PRESCHOOL CORNER



In and Out food truck at the Preschool, in celebration of 100% parent participation during the annual fundraising campaign!



February's Messy Church



Ash Wednesday services were held at noon and 7 p.m. on February 18

Preschool is enrolling now for next School year, ages 2-5.

Schedule a tour today!



www.santamonicaumc.org/preschool



WORSHIP

WORSHIP IN THE SANCTUARY

We worship on Sundays at 10 a.m. in the Sanctuary, and we Livestream the service on the platforms listed below.

COMMUNION SUNDAYS

Dane Rold will be baking the bread for Communion Sunday. Thank you for your service!

WORSHIP ONLINE

Sundays 10 a.m. Worship Online LIVESTREAM on:

- **Website:** www.santamonicaumc.org/livestream
After 10 a.m. livestream airs, go to:
www.santamonicaumc.org/sunday-service-archive
- **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/santamonicaumc
- **YouTube Channel:** [@SantaMonicaUMC](https://www.youtube.com/@SantaMonicaUMC)
- **The First UMC App:** Go the App Store, search *FirstUMC_SM*

Let us know if you need assistance in joining online.

ONGOING MINISTRIES

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY / SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR THE FALL

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. 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

Contact Jamie (j.jones@santamonicaumc.org) for more info.

Website: www.santamonicaumc.org/childrens-ministry

YOUTH MINISTRY

Youth Group is open to all 6th -12th graders in the community. They gather on Sunday evenings for dinner, games and a program or topic for discussion and reflection. Meetings are on Sundays from 6 - 8 p.m. 3rd Floor Edu. Bldg. in the Youth Lounge. Contact Tricia with questions:

t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org

March Meetings: March 1/8/22

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Men's Bible Study is a weekly Zoom meeting where men of all ages and generations gather to ground themselves in the Holy Scripture. As men try to navigate the stresses and complexities of this modern world and daily life, Men's Bible Study is a place for community, prayer and fellowship through the sharing of God's Holy word. For more information and to join, call the church office: 310-393-8258.

Tuesdays: 7 a.m. via Zoom

PRAYER REQUESTS

The First UMC Prayer Group is a network of persons who provide regular, dependable, and confidential prayer support. You may send a prayer request to the church at any time, and our Prayer Group will be notified of your request. Call the church office, or visit:

www.santamonicaumc.org/prayer-requests/

LISTENING HEARTS WOMEN'S GROUP

Listening Hearts is a group for women of all ages, grounded in the practices of sacred listening, prayer and reflection. We gather both in person and online. All are welcome to join!

Contact Tricia Guerrero to learn more:

t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org

Meeting dates:

Wednesday, March 4/18, Coffee & Connect, 10 a.m. Literati Cafe (12081 Wilshire Blvd)

Wednesday, March 11, 10 a.m. via Zoom



THE CHANCEL CHOIR

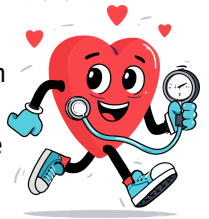
Sing in the Chancel Choir! **Thursday evening rehearsals are 7:40 - 9 p.m.** Contact Jim Smith if you are interested:

djes@roadrunner.com

FREE BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS

The Health Ministry Council hosts Blood Pressure screenings one Sunday of the month in the Fireside Room. We are grateful to this ministry for their continued care of the congregation! Next Screening:

Sunday, March 21, 11 a.m. in the Alcove



REQUEST A PRAYER QUILT

Led by **Sue Payne and Maile Marquand**, the Prayer Quilt Ministry offers Prayer Quilts to those in need. To request a quilt:

1. Talk to the intended recipient. Ask if the person is willing to be prayed for and to receive a quilt. Ask what specific prayers are wished for. There is no charge for the quilt – it is a gift of love.
2. Contact Maile Marquand and Sue Payne at: prayerquilts@santamonicaumc.org. **(Prayer quilts may only be requested and sponsored by members of the First UMC congregation.)**
3. Select the quilt, if some are already made, or suggest colors if one is to be selected for you. First UMC will display the quilt in the Friday Community Email, and during Sunday 10 a.m. worship, where you may tie a prayer knot during in-person worship, or view the quilt on the Livestream.

Next Meeting: Saturday, March 21, Room 300

Contact info@santamonicaumc.org if you would like to volunteer. www.santamonicaumc.org/prayerquiltministry



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF SANTA MONICA



Scan to visit
the website



@santamonicaumc
www.santamonicaumc.org

1008 11th St.
Santa Monica, CA 90403
310-393-8258



FIRST UMC OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., and by appointment. (Office closed on Fridays.)

Pastoral Care : 310-393-8258, enter ext. 1



CONGREGATION CARE

Feel free to leave a phone message anytime (310-393-8258) or email message for any of the church staff. The Pastoral Care line **(310-393-8258 and enter extension 1)**, is always available for people to leave a message requesting care.



Pastoral Care Resources: Explore the resources on our website to see how we can support you and your loved ones through every season of life. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact: Anne Premer a.premer@santamonicaumc.org or (310)393-8258 ext 103. www.santamonicaumc.org/health-ministry



MEET THE TEAM BEHIND FIRST UMC!

Welcome to the seventh installment of our monthly Staff Spotlight series! Each month, we lift up members of our dedicated team—sharing how they help bring the missions and ministries of First UMC to life throughout the week, and offering a glimpse into who they are beyond the office.

Jamie Jones – Family Ministries Coordinator: Jamie was born in Santa Monica and has been part of her church community for as long as she can remember. She grew up attending First UMC Preschool, Sunday School, CAST, Vacation Bible School, Summer Adventures, youth group, youth choir and bells, and service trips. These experiences sparked her love for ministry and shaped her belief that kindness, service, and community are at the heart of faith.

Today, Jamie has the joy of walking alongside children, youth, and families as they grow and explore their faith. She leads weekly preschool chapel and story time, helps with monthly Messy Church, serves as a youth counselor, coordinates Sunday School, leads Kids Night Out, and curates the church's famous Messy Camp each summer. Whether it's storytelling, organizing crafts, or cheering on youth group games, she loves creating spaces where faith and fun go hand in hand.

Jamie graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with a degree in Molecular and Cell Biology with an emphasis in Biochemistry, Biophysics, and Structural Biology. She is currently studying for the MCAT and hopes to become a pediatrician one day. She also serves as a volunteer researcher in the Travis Lab at the Jules Stein Eye Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles.

When she's not at church or studying, Jamie enjoys being outdoors, crocheting, playing board games, playing pickleball, spending time with friends, and volunteering at Cedars-Sinai Hospital in the Pooch Therapy Dog Program with her dog, Jack.