

SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER

summer

As we enter the month of July, we begin a new season as clergy in The United Methodist Church. Pastors are appointed to their congregations and ministries annually, usually effective July 1st. I am grateful that Bishop Dottie Escobedo-Frank has reappointed me as your Senior Pastor and Rev. Keri Olsen-Paget as your Deacon Associate for Spiritual Formation for the 2026-27 year. Along with the rest of the staff, we look forward to being in ministry with you in this “new year.”

We are also engaging our faith beyond the walls of the church this summer. We have two mission trips this summer: the Youth Service Project in Appalachia that was just completed, and the Intergenerational Service Project team that is serving the Navajo Nation in July. Look for their “report backs” on Sundays to witness how they shared God’s love with neighbors in other communities. Messy Camp returns as well with over 40 children on campus as they “Grow in God’s Garden.” Thanks to Jamie Jones for her leadership and all who are volunteering to help make this experience possible.

My prayer is that you and your loved ones take time to rest and renew your bodies and spirits in this season!

Rev. Greg Batson
Senior Minister

SIERRA SERVICE PROJECT CARNIVAL & FUNDRAISER!

Our SSP team is gearing up for an intergenerational service trip to the Teec Nos Pos Chapter of the Navajo Nation this August, and we invite our church family and friends to be a part of the journey.

Please join us on Sunday, July 26 for a special day of support and community. We will begin with a Commissioning blessing during the 10 a.m. worship service, followed by our SSP Fundraiser and Lunch at 11:15 a.m.

This year, we are hosting a “Service Trip Carnival” to give you a firsthand look at the work our team will be doing. Stop by our interactive booths to try your hand at skills like hammering nails or setting up campsite gear, and learn more about the Navajo Nation and the impactful home repair projects we’ll be undertaking. We look forward to seeing you there for a delicious lunch and an opportunity to support this vital ministry!

Sunday, July 26, 10 a.m. Commissioning in worship, followed by 11:15 a.m. Fundraiser/Luncheon in Simkins Hall



Sierra Service Project (SSP)
CARNIVAL AND FUNDRAISER

Sunday, July 26
11:15 a.m. Simkins Hall

Help support the intergenerational Service Trip to the Teec Nos Pos Chapter of the Navajo Nation!

The poster features a red and white bunting banner at the top, a circular logo for the Sierra Service Project on the right, and several small photographs showing people at various service projects. A red arrow points towards the event details, and yellow stars are scattered at the bottom.

July/August *at a glance*

July

- Fri July 3** Walk the Labyrinth/Chapel open for prayers
- Sat July 4** Independence Day, *church campus closed*
- Sun July 5** Tricia Guerrero preaching / Holy Communion
Lay Leadership Team meeting
- Mon July 6** *Church office closed, in observation of Independence Day*
- Sat July 11** Messy Church park meet-up
- Sun July 12** Rev. Greg Batson preaching
Faith in Action with Sunday School
Free Blood Pressure Screenings
- Wed July 15** Church Council Meeting
- Sat July 18** Tom Weese Memorial
Prayer Quilt Workparty
The People Concern volunteer day
- Sun July 19** Rev. Greg Batson preaching
UWF Christmas in July (donation drop-offs July 5 -12)
REFLECT worship, Tricia Guerrero preaching
- Wed July 22** Westside Food Bank volunteer day
- Sun July 26** Jeanne Roe Smith preaching
Sierra Service Project Intergenerational Team Commissioning
Sierra Service Project Fundraiser
- Mon July 27 - 31** Messy Camp

August

- Sat Aug 1 - 8** Intergenerational Service Trip
- Sun Aug 2** Rev. Keri Olsen Paget preaching
Holy Communion
- Fri Aug 7** Walk the Labyrinth/Chapel Open for Prayers
- Sun Aug 9** Rev. Greg Batson preaching
Donation drop-off day for Community Free Market
- Sat Aug 15** Community Free Market event
Prayer Quilt Workparty
The People Concern volunteer day
- Sun Aug 16** Rev. Greg Batson preaching / Baptism
Moment for Mission - Homeboy 5k
- Sun Aug 23** Rev. Greg Batson preaching
REFLECT worship, Rev. Greg preaching
- Wed Aug 26** Westside Food Bank volunteer day
- Sun Aug 30** Tricia Guerrero preaching
Back to School Blessings
Youth Service Project Report Back Luncheon

WALK THE LABYRINTH

The First UMC 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! The Chapel is also open for prayer during this time.

Friday, July 3/August 7, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. Simkins Hall & Chapel

MESSY CHURCH GOES WILD

Let's get out in the L.A. wilderness to discover the awe and wonder in the world around us! Meet up at the park for some playground fun, encounter God in a nature walk, and enjoy some yummy snacks and time together in community!



- Ferndell Nature Trail is in Griffith Park at 2333 Fern Dell Dr, Hollywood, CA.
- Meet at the playground across from the Trails Cafe.
- Parking is free, they do have bathrooms, and there is no entrance fee to hike.
- It's pretty shady thanks to many ferns and trees, with a stream, ponds, and bridges.
- There are multiple hiking options friendly for all ages!

We can't wait to see you there!

Saturday, July 11, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Ferndell Trail near Griffith Park. For directions, visit the website:

www.santamonicaumc.org/messychurch

CHILDREN AND YOUTH FAITH IN ACTION

During Sunday School on July 12, our children and youth will team up for a special service project! We'll be packing backpacks and gathering school supplies to support our friends at Upward Bound House. **We are deeply grateful to the United Women in Faith for their generous sponsorship**, which helps us continue this cherished tradition of blessing students in our community in preparation of heading back to school.

Sunday, July 12, during Sunday School



UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH CHRISTMAS IN JULY

Save the date for the annual UWF Christmas in July! The merchandise is donated and United Women in Faith volunteers supply the workforce, so 100% of the proceeds will benefit mission projects. ***Please help by bringing your "gently used" Christmas treasures and costume jewelry (intact or broken),** to the Church office or to the UWF workroom between **July 5-July 12.** (Church office Tues/Wed/Thurs, Welcome Table on Sundays.) To donate Christmas items, baked goods, or to volunteer to help with the sale, contact Karen at uwfsantamonica@gmail.com.

Sunday, July 19, after worship in the Alcove

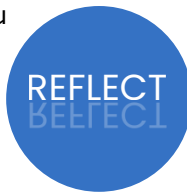


Scenes from last year's Christmas in July

REFLECT WORSHIP

Join Pastor Greg's monthly worship service "Reflect." All are welcome for this is 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, a reflection on a classic work of art, and concludes with Holy Communion. At 6 p.m., you are invited to stay and share in a community meal.

Sunday, July 19 / August 23, 5 p.m. worship in Simkins Hall, followed by 6 p.m. meal



MESSY CAMP 2026: GROWING IN GOD'S GARDEN!

First UMC offers 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. As we explore God's Garden together, we'll learn how to grow love, joy, peace, kindness, patience, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—in ourselves, just like seeds that flourish with care and light. Through fun, fellowship, and messy activities, kids will discover how our hearts grow when we practice caring for one another and trusting God. *Registration is full.*

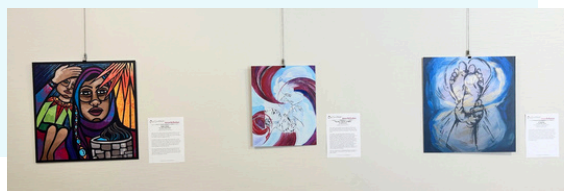
Monday, July 27 – Friday, July 31, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

First UMC Campus



SUMMER ART EXHIBIT

The summer art exhibit in the Fireside Room continues through July, offering a visual exploration of themes and imagery from the book of Genesis—the same stories inspiring our worship sermon series this month. Be sure to read the artist statements accompanying each piece for deeper insight into the work. *Artwork courtesy of A Sanctified Art.*



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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 Rev. Keri to volunteer: k.olsenpaget@santamonicaumc.org
Saturday, July 18/ August 15, begins at 8 a.m.

WESTSIDE FOOD BANK

Summer is one of the busiest times of the year at the Westside Food Bank. While school is out and expenses rise many children and seniors throughout our communities face an increased need for food support. Because of that, your volunteer support is more important than ever. **Thus, the Westside Food Bank is looking for volunteers to assist with food sorting and packing, mobile pantry distributions, and warehouse support all summer long!** Go to the website to sign up for volunteer opportunities based on your schedule: www.wsfb.org/take-action/volunteer-opportunities. Additionally, join the FUMC monthly team on **July 22 and August 26, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.** to sort and pack food for distribution. Let us all help care for our neighbors in need. If you have any questions or to volunteer, contact Rev. Keri: k.olsenpaget@santamonicaumc.org.



FOURTH ANNUAL COMMUNITY FREE MARKET

First UMC is pleased to present the fourth annual Community Free Market—a one day event where all are welcome to come by and pick up FREE new or gently used kitchen /household items! Now's the perfect time to declutter and donate your gently used goods to the Market.

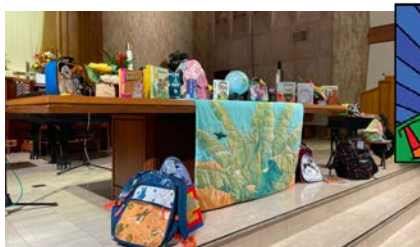
- We're gladly accepting: kitchenware, housewares, small appliances, holiday decorations, toys and books. We will NOT be accepting furniture, clothing of any kind, electronics, large appliances, or items that aren't **gently used or new**. Contact Janet Guyette: 310-663-9861 or janetguyette@gmail.com, with questions.
- **Drop-off day (ONE DAY ONLY!):** Sunday, August 9, 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Fourth Annual Community Free Market: Saturday, August 15, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. in the Courtyard

BACK TO SCHOOL BLESSINGS

Come to worship on Sunday, August 30, for Back to School Blessings, where we celebrate the beginning of the school year and ask for God's blessings upon students of all ages, teachers and educators, and the families who support them. Backpack tags will be available to take home. If you would like a blessing tag(s) but can't make it to church, call the church office (310-393-8258) and we are happy to put them in the mail for you. Don't miss this special Sunday!

Sunday, August 30, during 10 a.m. worship



This year's backpack tags

YOUTH SERVICE PROJECT REPORT BACK

We are excited to hear from the YSP team about their Summer trip with the Appalachia Service Project to Johnson County, TN! They worked on homes for people with limited financial resources in the Appalachian Mountains area. We're so grateful to our amazing church family for your prayers, encouragement, and support throughout the journey. Come to the report back on Sunday, August 30! The team can't wait to share more about all they did.

Sunday, August 30, after worship in Simkins Hall



YSP 2026 in Johnson County, TN

Looking forward to **SEPTEMBER** and the Fall

UWF ICE CREAM SOCIAL

The United Women in Faith are hosting an Ice Cream social after worship on **Sunday, September 6**. Stay after church to enjoy fellowship and an end-of-summer treat!

MESSY CHURCH

Messy Church resumes in the fall with an all age monthly worship experience that explores God's love in an accessible way. At Messy Church, today's busy families of all shapes and sizes are invited into a welcoming space to experience faith. 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.

FALL/WINTER 2026 DATES

***2nd Saturdays 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

***note calendar change**

September 12 – The Gift to Create

October 10 – Gather at the Table

November 14 – TBD

December 12 – Messy Christmas Around the World



SIERRA SERVICE PROJECT REPORT BACK

Save the date for the SSP Intergenerational Team Report Back. The team of all ages worked the Teec Nos Pos Chapter of the Navajo Nation in Arizona. Come to the report back on Sunday, September 13, to hear about the team's experiences.

Sunday, September 13, after worship in Simkins Hall

2026 HOMEBOY 5K RUN/WALK

Join Homeboy Industries (one of First UMC's mission partners), and 5,000+ runners, walkers, volunteers, and families for their 17th Annual Homeboy 5K Run/Walk through historic Downtown Los Angeles! Sign up with team Wilson's Walkers, First UMC member David Wilson's team. **Saturday, September 19, details to follow**

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

The Health Ministry Council is excited to host their **second** Red Cross Blood Drive of 2026! **Sunday, September 20, details to follow**



BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

We look forward to our 19th Annual Blessing of the Animals! Featuring: • Walk-Up blessings in the First UMC Courtyard. • Kids can bring stuffed loviess to be blessed. • **New this year!** View beautiful animal photography by Larry Naylor. Don't miss this annual tradition! **Saturday, October 3, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m., Courtyard**

WEEKEND MENS RETREAT

Save the Date! On the weekend of **November 6-8**, the men of Santa Monica First UMC are invited to an overnight Men's Retreat at Mary and Joseph Retreat Center in Rancho Palos Verdes. Step away from your routine for a chance to connect with God and one another more deeply. Details and costs are coming soon. For questions or to express interest, reach out to Rev. Greg Batson at g.batson@santamonicaumc.org.



MEMORIAL

- A memorial for First UMC member **Tom Weese** will be held Saturday, July 18, 11 a.m., in the Sanctuary, followed by a reception.

DEATHS

- First UMC member **Kendall Yoshihiro Iwata** died in 2025.
- First UMC constituent **Tim Travis** died recently.

WEDDING

- First UMC choir member **Vera Lugo** and Joseph Grant were married on June 7, 2026.

FLOWERS

Do you have a loved one you would like to dedicate flowers to on a given week? The church office can assist with the dedication and the cost is \$80. Order at the Sunday Welcome Table, or online: www.santamonicaumc.org/flower-fund
Available Sundays: July 5, August 2/9/16/23/30

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



St. Augustine by the Sea Episcopal Church in Santa Monica held a special PRIDE worship service, with several local congregations participating, including Tricia Guerrero (above) representing First UMC.



The last Preschool Chapel of the school year



From June 10 to June 13, the Prayer Quilt Ministry held a retreat in Room 300. They worked on quilts for the church, and on their own personal quilt and sewing projects.





Community Photos



The Youth Service Project team was commissioned (blessed) during worship on Sunday, June 14, followed by the Sizzle and Service Fundraiser in the Courtyard.



PRESCHOOL CORNER

THANK YOU AND FAREWELL

by Dane Rold, Preschool Co-Director

In our final month of a great year at the preschool, we want to highlight and thank a few educators that have shaped where we are and are now leaving.

Ms. Jenny Pezzimenti came in this year and helped us give vision for our art enrichment portion of the program. She is moving on to share her gifts with others next year and we look forward to keeping the momentum she helped inspire. **Ms. Amy Kennedy**, who has taught at our preschool since January 2009, is retiring after a long and impactful career. Amy's passion and care for education are evident with every step she takes in the preschool. She's touched so many lives in her career here, whether as a fellow teacher, a student in her class, or throughout the school.

The final person moving on is my fellow co-director, **Johanna Cortez**. Johanna has been a full-time educator with the preschool since 2015. Her history with the preschool started even earlier. Johanna was a student here and was the second generation in her family to attend the preschool. Her talent and drive as a teacher



Jenny Pezzimenti



Amy Kennedy



Johanna Cortez

were evident early on and she showed the desire and competence to be a lead teacher quickly. In 2023 she was asked to spend part of her time on the administrative team with Dee Menzies and myself. In 2024 she and I became co-directors. Many of my favorite times over the ten years of knowing and working with Johanna, and one of the things I'll miss the most, were our talks about child development and our shared and evolving vision of the preschool. As Johanna takes time to figure out what her future holds, we will continue building on the strong foundation and high standards we've established.

This year has been a great and growing chapter in the school's history. None of it could be done without these incredible and passionate educators. The support of our church and community makes these opportunities possible.

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

Ben Ing will be baking the bread for Communion Sunday in July, and **Anne Premer** will be preparing the bread for August. 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

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.

The Youth Group is on the YSP trip and Summer break, but you may still contact Tricia with questions:

t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org

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!

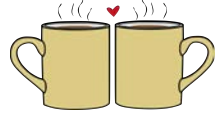
Contact Tricia Guerrero to learn more:

t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org

Meeting dates:

Wednesday, July 1 & 15 / August 5 & 19, 10 a.m. at Literati Cafe, 12081 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles

Wednesday, July 8 / August 12, 10 a.m. via Zoom



THE CHANCEL CHOIR

The Chancel Choir provides music every Sunday during the 10 a.m. Sanctuary Worship Service. Sing in the Choir! Thursday evening rehearsals are now on summer break, but you may 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 Screenings:

**Sunday, July 12 / August 16,
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: Saturdays, July 18 / August 15, 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

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

  @santamonicaumc
www.santamonicaumc.org

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



Karen Ing, Rev. Keri Olsen Paget, Todd Erlandson, Tricia Guerrero, and Rev. Greg Batson representing First UMC at the Cal-Pac Conference. Attending virtually: Dick and Mary Crawford, and Adam Guerrero.

Rev. Keri Olsen Paget



*From Cal-Pac: "Throughout our conference this year, we've been celebrating the **70th anniversary of women's full ordination** in the Methodist church. We are thankful for the clergywomen who lead us every day!"*



*Also celebrated at the Cal-Pac Conference: **30 years of the order of Deacons**. Here at First UMC, we congratulate **Rev. Keri Olsen Paget**, celebrating her **10th year as Deacon!***