

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH WORSHIP

Back to School Blessings • August 30, 2026

WE GATHER



WELCOME

Rev. Greg Batson, Senior Minister

PRELUDE Spirit Dance (Christoph Willibald Gluck)

Nancy Marfisi, flute

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN #411 United Methodist Hymnal – Dear Lord, Lead Me Day by Day

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Molly Smith, Lay Leadership Team

We gather as a community of compassion and hope.

Jesus calls us to care for each other tenderly and willingly.

By this caring and sharing we will be known as followers of Jesus.

By our example others may be led to lives of peace.

Lord, open our hearts and minds this day to your word.

Teach us to serve you with all our gifts and talents. Amen.

*CHORAL ACT OF PRAISE

“Now let us all praise God and sing, our great redeemer’s praise. That we may all with one accord our joyful voices raise. Sing alleluia.”

*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Molly Smith

Please greet those worshipping near you.

**Asterisks indicate standing if you are able.*

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Tricia Guerrero, Pastoral Associate

#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.

BACK TO SCHOOL BLESSINGS

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 Preschool playground.

OUR MISSION & COMMON LIFE

Dan Nessel, Lay Lector

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

Thanks be to God!

HYMN #2171 TFWS — Make Me a Channel of Your Peace

SILENT PRAYER & PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Batson

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 LESSON Romans 12:9-21

Dan Nessel

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

SERMON "Blessed to Be a Blessing"

Tricia Guerrero

WE RESPOND

WE OFFER OUR GIFTS & OURSELVES

Molly Smith

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

Where Can I Go? (Molly Ijames)

Nancy Marfisi

Where can I go, from you? O Lord, You've searched and known my ways; You trace my paths, You count my days. If I ascend unto the heavens, You are there. Even before my voice is heard, You read each thought, You know each word, and surely darkness cannot hide me, You are there. Where can I go, O Lord from You? If I should flee, You would pursue. Though I should take the wings of morning, I have known, within the womb You formed my frame. You save my face, You know my name and You have woven me together, I am known. All-knowing Lord, You test my heart; You search out ev'ry inward part. Where can I go, except to You, Lord, You alone. Where can I go? You are there.

*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

Molly Smith

Lord of all mercy and compassion, bless these gifts lovingly offered and all the people here. Help us to use these gifts for ministries of hope through our church and into our community, nation and world. Amen.

WE GO FORTH TO SERVE

*HYMN #2222 TFWS – The Servant Song

*BENEDICTION

Tricia Guerrero

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE Fanfare (Jacques Lemmens)

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 Preschool Playground.

—**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.

—**The Chancel Choir:** During the summer months the Chancel Choir is singing some of their favorite anthems from the prior year. We hope they are your favorites also.

—**Flowers:** To order flowers to remember or honor a loved one for Sunday Worship service, go to: www.santamonicaumc.org/flower-fund. Available Sundays: September 13/20/27.

—**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. To see list of preferred items, visit the website: www.santamonicaumc.org/hunger-walk.

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

—**Sunday Social Gathering:** After worship today, come say "Hello" for Coffee Hour in Simkins Hall or the Courtyard. Stop by the Sunday Welcome Table if you have any questions.

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
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

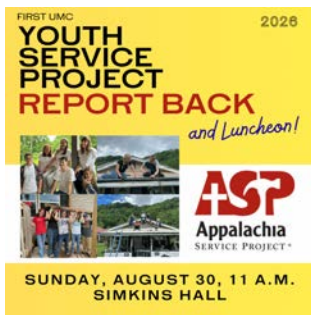
Business Administrator
Christina Eddy
c.eddy@santamonicaumc.org
Communications Director
Tina Gage
t.gage@santamonicaumc.org
Office Manager
Sarah Rold
s.rolld@santamonicaumc.org
Membership and Facilities Coordinator
David Penson
d.penson@santamonicaumc.org
Program and Outreach Coordinator
Brandon Searfoss
b.searfoss@santamonicaumc.org
Head Custodian
Javier Espinoza

PRESCHOOL STAFF

Preschool Co-Director
Dane Rold
d.rolld@santamonicaumc.org
Preschool Co-Director
Taylor Spearman
t.spearman@santamonicaumc.org
Preschool Director Emerita
Dee Menzies
d.menzies@santamonicaumc.org

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH of SANTA MONICA
1008 Eleventh Street • Santa Monica, CA 90403
www.santamonicaumc.org 310-393-8258





Today! Youth Service Project Report Back Luncheon

We are excited to hear from the YSP team about their Summer trip with the Appalachia Service Project to Johnson County, Tennessee. 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. Stay after worship today for lunch and report back stories from the team, they can't wait to share more about all they did!

Today after worship in Simkins Hall



United Women in Faith Ice Cream Social

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

Next Sunday, September 6, after worship in the Courtyard



Sierra Service Project Report Back and Luncheon

Save the date for the SSP Intergenerational Team Report Back! The team 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

UPCOMING EVENTS

• Vigil for Just Peace

You're invited to a Vigil for Just Peace, hosted by the West LA UMC and the 580 Cafe, in partnership with the Westside Mission Area United Methodist Churches. Gather in prayer, lament and community for all those currently experiencing the devastations of war.

Today, August 30, at 1 p.m.

Hosted by: West LA UMC & the 580 Cafe, 1913 Purdue Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90025

• Walk the Labyrinth/Chapel Open

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, September 4, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. Simkins Hall & Chapel

• Messy Church is back for the Fall!

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. *Theme: The Gift to Create*

Saturday, September 12, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m., Simkins Hall

• 2026 Homeboy Industries 5K Run/Walk

Join Homeboy Industries and 5,000+ runners, walkers, volunteers, and families for their 17th Annual Homeboy 5K Run/Walk through historic Downtown Los Angeles! They'll begin the morning filled with energetic vibes, joy and laughter outside our Chinatown headquarters and end with a street celebration featuring artists, partners and vendors from across the city.

For more details, to sign up or donate to team Wilson's Walkers, First UMC member David Wilson's team, visit: www.santamonicaumc.org/homeboy5k

Saturday, September 19, race begins at 8:30 a.m.

MISSION AND SERVICE

TWO ONGOING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

• The People Concern

Schedule is changing - New work day coming soon!

Linda Diane Anderson and Janet Searfoss run a volunteer group at The People Concern, making sandwiches and assembling sack lunches. Volunteers meet at the church to carpool.

• Westside Food Bank

Every 4th Wednesday

Wednesday, Sept 23, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. 1914 14th Street, Santa Monica. Volunteers will pack cases of food for distribution at the Mobile Pantry at Virginia Ave Park.

To volunteer, email Pastor Keri:

k.olsenpaget@santamonicaumc.org

• Westside Food Bank Food Donations

First UMC collects 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. Thank you!

• Social Justice and the UMC

The United Methodist Church website offers information on a range of social justice topics. From the website, "We believe our call isn't simply to go to church. We believe our call is to be church. By being the church, we can provide community and support for the hurting, hopeless and marginalized. What are you passionate about? Caring for refugees? Fighting systems of poverty? Establishing better relationships between one group and another? Explore the website for ideas in becoming a part of movements that seek to overcome the systems that leave us feeling like we live in a broken world." Visit: <https://www.umc.org/en/rethink-church/topics/changing-the-world>

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.

• First UMC Preschool

The First UMC Preschool is a place where each child learns naturally through play and exploration in a stimulating environment that promotes physical, mental, emotional, social, creative and spiritual growth. To learn more, visit the website: 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. **They are on Summer break, returning Sunday, September 13, 6 p.m. Youth Lounge.**

Questions: t.guerrero@santamonicaumc.org

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!

Next opportunity: Friday, September 4, 1 - 3 p.m.

Visit the website for full schedule:

www.santamonicaumc.org/labyrinth

• Prayer Requests

The Prayer Chain is a network of persons who pray in response to prayer requests. Members of the Prayer Chain treat all requests as confidential. You may send a prayer request to the church at any time. Our Prayer Chain will be notified of your request. Fill out the form online:

www.santamonicaumc.org/prayer-requests/

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.

Wednesday, September 2, 10 a.m. at Literati Cafe

• Prayer Quilt Ministry

To request a Prayer Quilt for someone in need, visit:

www.santamonicaumc.org/prayerquiltministry

*(*Prayer quilts may only be requested and sponsored by members of the First UMC congregation.)*

Meets the 3rd Saturdays of the month, 9:30 a.m. in Room 300. **Next Meeting, September 19**

• 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 will resume September 10.** Contact Jim Smith if you are interested in joining: djes@roadrunner.com

• Messy Church

An all age worship experience that explores God's love in an accessible way. Meets in the Fall on the second Saturdays. Next meeting: **Saturday, September 12, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Simkins Hall/Courtyard**
Details: www.santamonicaumc.org/messychurch

• Blood Pressure Screenings

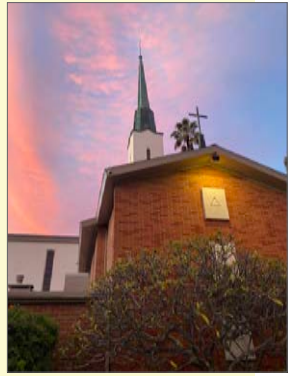
The Health Ministry Council provides free Blood Pressure Screenings once a month after worship. Next meeting: **Sunday, September 20**, in the Alcove.

Welcome!

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.



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.

Sign up for the Friday email!

We have lots of ways to keep you updated on the latest First UMC news and events. One way is the Friday Community Email, loaded with info on what's happening for the week ahead. If you're not signed up to receive this email, click on the bright yellow SUBSCRIBE HERE button located on the main page of our website to get on the list:

www.santamonicaumc.org

If you think you're signed up, but noticed that you haven't received the email for a few weeks, call the church office (310-393-8258), and we can make sure you're still on the list.

Sunday 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: September 13/20/27



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

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



@santamonicaumc

