

PILGRIM CONGREGATIONALIST



Sharing the Good News of Mission Hills United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation

March 2023

A Way Forward

Our Church Council had a retreat a few weeks ago. To start the day, I asked everyone about one of the most meaningful or impactful ways they had been involved at MHUCC. Responses included serving on Council or a Ministry, Feeding Mission Hills, choir, Sunday morning worship, serving on a search committee, volunteering at Uptown, going on a Tijuana House Build, and many, many more. What you would say?

I then asked what people look for in a church today. How does a new person want to be involved? After acknowledging that fewer people are looking for a church today, not as many people are interested or willing to serve on formal boards or committees. What people really want is an authentic community (not superficial), messages that are grounded in real life, a place to feel like you belong, a church that walks the talk, helps families raise children with empathy, a place for healing, and many, many more. What do you think?

Those looking want a place to live out their faith. Ministry, yes. With a group of people, yes. Fulfilling a short-term task, yes, absolutely. But not an elected position with three-year terms that meets monthly.

As I try to boil it down, what do people want?
Deepening Spirituality or a Deeper Faith
Authentic Relationships
Meaningful Service



(Continued on page 2)

A Way Forward (continued)

It's the combination of the three that is important. We can find community in many places. We can engage in actions that change the world or serve our neighbors in many places. It is that we are inspired and sustained by our faith, plus church is one of very few places we meet across the generations.

But the question remains. We still have to be organized to accomplish our mission. How?

Lots of churches are asking this question and there isn't one answer. In a congregational church, the collected wisdom of the group decides. So that's what we have started doing. There is much to do and consider but the Church Council has begun creating a way forward.

As you read this, I am driving from Denver to San Diego with Art and Lance and our moving truck. You will meet both in worship this Sunday, March 5. Finally, this will really be HOME!

*Blessings,
Pastor David*



Church Governance Task Force

During the Church Council Retreat held on Feb. 11th (discussed in some length in Pastor David's message) a key topic of discussion was our current church governance organizational structure and how it might be streamlined.

Questions we addressed included: do we have too many ministries? Could some of their work be accomplished in a more streamlined, less bureaucratic way? Should Council be smaller? (22 people can be cumbersome for governance). Can we have fewer committees and more singular tasks in order to attract more volunteers?

A small task force has been created and met to begin to consider options and to bring a proposal back to Council. Members are Karen DeLaurier, Jon Pettis and Pat Wahlen. They plan to talk with each of the current church ministries and get a full picture of their responsibilities and of the tasks done. They plan to report back to Church Council in March. If you have thoughts or suggestions, please feel free to contact one of them. The congregation will be kept up to date regarding the task force's progress.

Moderator Message

In late December of last year, the day before Christmas, we sadly lost a long-time member of Mission Hills UCC and what many felt was a saint among us -- our beloved Carlos Wilson.

A lovely and very personal memorial service was held here in the church he so loved on January 14th. I wanted to take some time and use this space to remember Carlos again and try to capture what a special person he was, how much he meant to us, and share a few stories about him.

Carlos was involved with the church long before many of us were. He loved the church and, as well as being a long-time member, he served so devotedly as our church Sexton for all those years. Carlos took such good care of our church building and noticed and took care of so many details. We are indeed blessed to have found someone equally devoted to and caring about our church in Gloria Schacht, our current Sexton.

When Carlos was out on medical leave early last summer and we knew we needed to get some interim custodial help for the church, P.A. & T. Co-Chair Steven Nugent and I tried to put together a list of all the various responsibilities that Carlos handled on a weekly basis. The list became longer and longer and we realized how difficult it was to list everything out. We weren't always aware of them – Carlos just took care of things and made sure whatever was needed got done and got done well. Carlos took care of our church with loving care and never complained about any extra work that might come up – such as cleaning up and having the church ready for Sunday when there were renovations or construction work going on. The annual pre-Thanksgiving luncheon is always a wonderful event and something so many of us look forward to – but that also entailed an enormous amount of dishes to wash and clean-up work afterwards. Once again, Carlos never uttered any complaint about the extra work.

What most of us will always remember about Carlos was his friendliness, wonderful hugs upon greeting everyone on Sunday mornings, and the love and openness he radiated out to everyone. More than one person has told me that Carlos was the first person they met when they first came to MHUCC on a Sunday morning, the warmth of his greeting, and how he was a big part of the reason they kept coming back. Carlos was a friend to all and helped so many people even outside the church.

I recall fairly early in my membership with the church, I served on the Fellowship Ministry and, knowing not many had signed up to bring snacks for fellowship time, I brought in several pink boxes of donuts and went to put them on the long table in Fellowship Hall. Carlos gently suggested I put them out on a platter. I likely asked was that absolutely needed and he told me,



Moderator Message...continued

“Carol, presentation is everything.” I definitely got those donuts arranged on a platter and would joke with him for years after about that. He, was definitely right though – appearance is important, he took pride in that and encouraged others to do the same. Larry and I were fortunate to spend time outside of church with Carlos over the years I treasure those memories of walks we took, meals together and even a movie or two. As well as the importance of attractive presentation, Carlos taught me so many things by example – how to be a loving and non-judgmental friend, how to aspire to reflect God’s love to others, and how to face difficult times in life (including the loss of a partner and one’s own health challenges) with grace and courage. The final “lesson” Carlos taught me was the importance of not putting off something important or meaningful but to do it now while you can. It was the week of Christmas last year and my to-do list was overflowing as usual including preparing for some last minute overnight guests. I wanted to go see Carlos and bring him some chili (which I knew he loved) and some Christmas cookies. But how was I going to find time to do that?? I just made time one afternoon and got over to see him and spent about an hour with him. I was so happy so see him enjoying the cookies and I so enjoyed our visit. I had no idea it would be the last time I would see him and will always be grateful I got over to see him when I did.

Ronnie Williams has some wonderful remembrances of knowing Carlos:

Carlos Wilson and I met before I became a member of Mission Hills UCC. Our relationship began while I was working the graveyard shift at Metro One Telecommunications. I would get off work at 7AM and go for a walk through Morley Field and sometimes hit tennis balls off the wall. One morning a cute little dog ran up to me and jumped up to greet me. The dog was Carlos's dog Crystal. I would often meet Carlos in the early mornings before he went to work doing his gardening and landscaping duties. One day Carlos mentioned his church in Mission Hills. I happened to be dating a member of the church and sure enough Carlos knew him. He spoke so highly of the church that I decided to finally go to the church myself and meet some of the wonderful people he spoke of. Eventually I became a member of the church and joined the choir. I sang a solo at the church on Sunday and missed the next Sundays' service. When I returned the following week Carlos told me someone came up to him and told him how much they appreciated the solo he sang. Carlos without skipping a beat told the person thank you and moved on to whatever he was doing. A few minutes later, as Carlos and I were talking in the kitchen, a young member of the church came up to me and asked me for something in the kitchen thinking I was Carlos. Well, Carlos and I smiled and Carlos told me where the item I was asked for was located. I of course did what Carlos would have done and gave it to him. It tickled us both that this young man had no idea which of us was Carlos.

Finally, Tim Wolf noted how Carlos’ gifts and effects on our lives continue long after his passing:

“Thank you Carlos for a legacy of friends, many of which I have gotten to know and whom have enriched my life”. Tim

My hope is that Carlos knew how much he enriched all our lives and how much we loved him.

Monthly Mission Partner- One Great Hour of Sharing



One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering of the United Church of Christ involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, your contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put you in the right place at the right time for the relief and recovery of the most vulnerable. You meet immediate needs and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place.

You can donate by placing your cash gift or check in the special donation envelope in the pews or [online](#). As always, thank you, MHUCC, for your incredible generosity.

SOUPer Bowl 2023

SOUPer Bowl Sunday was an amazing success. Participants enjoyed eight delicious soups and responded very favorably with MANY vote\$\$\$.

The total raised was **\$7,200** for Uptown Community Service Center.

The Silver Spoon Award was awarded to the Church Council for their **GOURMET CHILI**. The Church Choir was able to retain their Golden Spoon Award from 2022 with their **ZUP-PA DI TOSCANA** thus making it two years in a row for them. Bravo to them and to all of the soup-makers, the organizers, and especially the Voter\$\$\$ who helped us set another record total for SOUPer Bowl Sunday.

Thank you! THANK YOU!! **THANK YOU!!!**



**GOD'S EARTH, OUR CALL:
A GATHERING FOR LENT**

Led by Ken Jensen



**Mondays in March
@7-8pm via Zoom**

missionhillsucc.org

God's Earth, Our Call: A Gathering for Lent

"Climate change is fast, much faster than it seems we have the capacity to recognize and acknowledge; but it is also long, almost longer than we can truly imagine."

— David Wallace-Wells, *The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming*

How are we to respond? The scale and scope of the climate crisis often overwhelms: Do our individual and community efforts even matter?

This Lent, we will gather to consider our call with respect to climate change. Lent is a time for honest reflection on who we are and what we are called to be. What does our faith teach us about who we are in relationship to the earth and how we are to live? What action do we sense God calling us to do? What difference can our actions even make?

Come learn together as we seek to turn our attention to intention.

Please check out the [digital brochure!](#)

Mondays in March, 7-8:00 p.m. on Zoom. Lead by Ken Jensen.

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 826 2806 5566

Passcode: 266154

Lent & Easter Activities

Palm Sunday

BYOP – bring your own palms for a procession down Fort Stockton with the United Methodist Church. Gather in front of our church at 9:30 am on Sunday, April 2 as we share our ecumenical spirit with our neighbors.

Holy Week

We will have a Maundy Thursday Service at noon in the Chapel and later in the day we will have an intimate service of Holy Communion as we enact the Last Supper on Thursday, April 6, at 7 pm in our sanctuary and live online. We will offer an optional foot washing as well.

Easter Sunrise

Our sunrise service this year will be **at Pioneer Park** along with the United Methodist Church. Join us at 6:30 am as we watch the sun rise in the big open area.

Festival Worship

Our 10 am worship service on Easter will feature the music of brass and the sound of glorious singing. Following the service, we will have an Easter Egg Hunt at 11:15, open to the community.

Casas de Luz - Youth Tijuana House Build

Twenty-five youth and adults had a successful trip and completed a house in just one weekend. Many thanks for Zoe Merrick and Fiona Case for leading the trip and all the hard working participants. Well done!

To read all about it, please visit our [Youth Page](#).

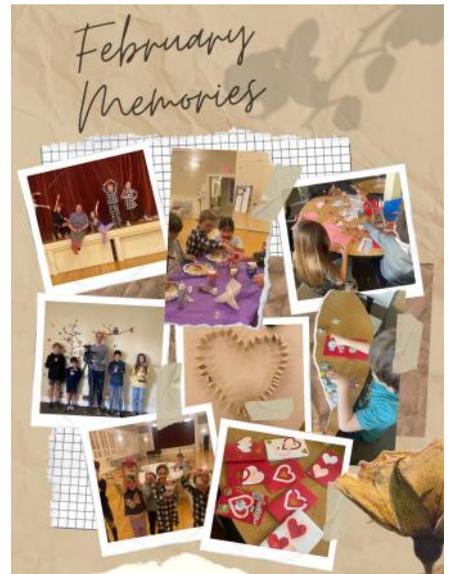


SUNDAY SCHOOL

- We had our first “celebrity” in 2023 and the kids loved Andrew Bowen. Andrew brought his camera and mics and explained to the kids the functions of each.
- We invited Pastor David to talk about why we take communion with Q & A at the end. Parents came as well.
- We had Parents’ Night Out on February 10th with six kids. We welcome our new friend, Michaela. Cameron and Chase invited her and before she left, she said she’s coming back next time!
- The kids made Valentine’s cards last Sunday for our homebound members and created this poem:

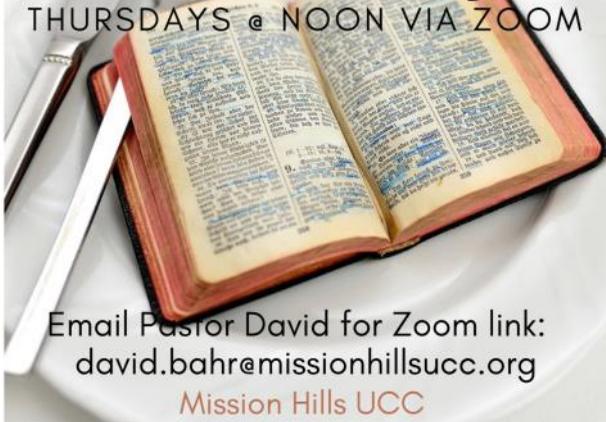
HEARTS

**Hearts are full of joy and happiness.
They really are not round.
They show someone you care.
Hearts bring happiness**



Lunch & Lectionary

THURSDAYS @ NOON VIA ZOOM



Email Pastor David for Zoom link:
david.bahr@missionhillsucc.org

Mission Hills UCC

Sunday 10 am Worship Service

Please join us for worship in person or watch our livestream on [Facebook](#) and our [YouTube](#) Channel.

A bulletin link is emailed at 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays and posted on [Facebook](#) Sunday morning if you wish to follow along.

On Mondays you can find closed caption video on our [website](#) and [YouTube](#).

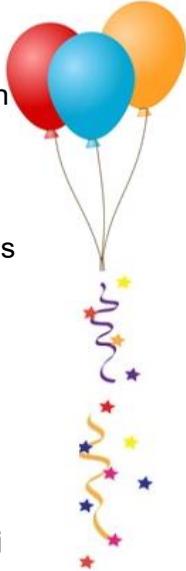
Meeting Minutes

In order to enhance communication with the Congregation, here is a link to the minutes of the January Church Council Meeting:

<https://missionhillsucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/JanuaryCouncil.pdf>

March Birthdays

Mar 2	Lisa Striebing Martin Case
Mar 3	Karen Huntington
Mar 10	Sharon Peterson
Mar 11	Jennifer Conrard
Mar 14	Christopher Antos
Mar 16	James Roth Aaron Willard
Mar 17	George Waller
Mar 18	Kenneth Jensen
Mar 26	Joan Berry Larry Brunton
Mar 29	Karen Norkowski
Mar 30	Meg Conrard



Please contact the church office with corrections or additions to the birthday list.

Cheer on the Mission Hills 5K

Join us at the church on Saturday, March 18, to cheer the runners and walkers of the annual Mission Hills 5K, a fundraiser for Grant School. The route passes the church four times, so we want to be there to offer support and let the community know what a vibrant congregation we have. Come at 8 am and we will have signs and noise makers.

History Corner: Beatles/Uptown Fundraiser

Almost 60 years ago, the Beatles began their journey to become one of the most influential bands of all time. An Atlanta newspaper reporter, Paul Jones, would not have predicted this. As he wrote in 1964, “they look and sound like any other inferior rock ‘n’ roll groups still attempting to keep alive the fad which died when Elvis entered the Army.”



If you enjoyed and still enjoy the music of this inferior rock group, come to the Uptown Community Service Center’s “Spring Fling,” where a Beatles cover group (the 4 Lads from Liverpool) will entertain us on March 18 from 2 – 4 PM. Tickets for this Uptown fundraiser can be purchased from Karen deLaurier, Joan Anderson or James Roth.

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Sexton	Gloria Schacht		
Sunday Nursery	Gloria Schacht & Jianna Ruiz		

General information

info@missionhillsucc.org

News subscriptions & submissions (due on the 20th)

news@missionhillsucc.org

Church Office Hours: Monday - Friday: 8:30 am - 3:30 pm