

PILGRIM CONGREGATIONALIST



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

January 2024

Tidings of Great Joy

My favorite comment this season, by far, was from a neighbor who attended the Christmas Concert because she saw a post on social media. She was one of the 120 who attended, up from 69 in 2021. A group of friends came with her and we talked after the concert. She asked, “were any members of your church in the choir?” I told them, “This *is* our church choir. And they sing like that every Sunday. You should come and check it out!”

Or maybe it was the mom on the last day of Christmas Carol Camp who repeatedly expressed gratitude for this opportunity for her children. She had grown up in the church and said, “We’ve been looking for a church like this,” but hadn’t actually done anything to look – until her neighbor told her about our camp and encouraged her to enroll her kids. It was music to my ears to hear “See you Sunday” and actually see her family in the pew. Participation in the camp increased from last year but even better, unlike last year, every family came to church for their kids to sing as well as go to Green Manor to carol for the residents.

I am writing this before Christmas Eve so I can only assume services on December 24 were as wonderful and meaningful as the rest of Advent.

After a year of very measured and deliberate work to imagine and write new bylaws, the new year will bring lots of change as we begin to implement our new structure. Our Church Council will now have 10 members instead of 22. A group of members will take on the role of Conveners with teams to carry out our ministry in new and hopefully more collaborative ways. We get to be creative and imaginative as we figure out how to continue traditions as well as create new ones. There is more I could say about this, but it can wait until we have fully appreciated the wonder and joy of an inclusive Christian community in a divided world.

(Continued on page 2)

Tidings of Great Joy *(continued)*

“Receive good tidings of great joy, even while many in our world are weary, a time when Bethlehem itself is grieving war and death, a time when some of us are grieving our own losses. And yet the prophet’s hopes are once again made flesh and our longings are made human in joy. Rejoice and be glad, for again, Christ is born.” Maren Tirabassi

Unbelievably, this is my third Christmas at MHUCC but it’s very special this year since it is our first Christmas as a reunited family.

Blessings!
Pastor David

Our New Front Door

For those who may have given up hope that our new audio-visual system would ever materialize, work has begun on all the infrastructure required – holes drilled, nails pounded, wires strung. Moving the technical booth to the balcony from behind the organ, where the techs can’t see or hear, was more complicated in our century-old building than anticipated. And the still-affected global supply chain meant it took 9 nine months to source some equipment. But, it’s begun. That’s all some of us needed to know! You’ll begin to actually see progress soon.

15 Minutes for Gratitude



Start the new year by pausing for just 15 minutes during the middle of the week to reset. Whatever is happening can be put into perspective by turning our attention to gratitude.

Starting January 10, join Pastor David every Wednesday in January at 6 pm on Zoom. A link will be sent every Wednesday morning.

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 846 7302 0295
Passcode: 540429

Moderator Message

Lots of Someones

Our church is filled with activity and excitement every Sunday morning. In the narthex, friends are sharing the latest news, fellowship hall being prepared for coffee hour, the choir is warming up as they prepare for the service, it's a buzz with energy. However, it's not just a busy place on Sunday.

If you visit the church anytime during the week, you will find the same energy and activity. Things are happening all week long by members of the congregation who devote their time, energy and expertise to activities within the building and beyond.

Our Angel Tree project was an example. A team made it happen. I participated, as we all did, by purchasing and wrapping a gift for a young girl. I brought it to the church and added it to the others. It wasn't until being in the church during the week, that I saw and heard the activity that was necessary to check all those gifts, to make sure every child received something, and then to deliver them throughout the county. It was a team effort by lots of someones.

Feeding Mission Hills is another church project that has a *behind the scenes team* at work. Before the Tuesday event, someone purchases the protein, someone organizes the bread pick up, another someone picks up the donated bread and bakery goods and brings it to the church and puts it in the *new* freezer (that someone researched and purchased). And lots of someones come to help distribute the food in our neighborhood.

Our church building is a huge project in itself. It is beautiful and well maintained. It takes a team to ensure that is kept that way. There are someones who recently cleaned out the basement, other someones who cleaned out a storage closet, other someones who come on a moment's notice to check on any emergency. There are someones, who come each week to pick up the recycling and take it home so we don't have to pay for an extra collection

There are many more someones who work quietly and tirelessly and I know each of us is most grateful to all of them. If you are not already a someone, please consider saying "yes" when a member of our Nominating Committee asks you to be on a team for a special project this new year. For it is all the someones who make MHUCC the church that it is.

Blessings and love,

[Jere](#)



CHRISTMAS CAROL CAMP

Christmas Carol Camp was again a huge hit! The kids helped bag the gifts for the Angel Tree, enjoyed decorating Christmas cookies (which they devoured all), learned new Christmas carols, and re-enacted Luke 2, where the Angels talked with the Shepherds. Their families came to see them perform on our last day, December 14. Thank you to Laura More who helped us promote the Camp to the parents and to Mary Lonsdale Baker who helped with the teaching of the Christmas Carols and accompanying, and to volunteers (Pam Adler, Carol Holt, and Erin Ransom).



CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

We had a lot of energy last Sunday with our children performing the Christmas Pageant! Thank you to Isaac, Monica, and baby RJ who were our Holy Family! Thank you to Dave Sommer, who directed, wrote, and adapted the pageant, and to Bruce Matthias who helped with the backdrops.



CAROLING AT GREEN MANOR

Youths and children sang Christmas Carols for the residents of Green Manor. Residents came and loved listening to our children sing. They also joined us in singing some carols at the end. There was great fellowship and delicious refreshments afterward. Thank you, Kris Abels, for leading, and Mary Lonsdale Baker and Ben Case for accompanying.



MHUCC IS READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP

Focus on People 50ish and Beyond

In 2022 MHUCC completed and implemented its findings for the direction of our programs with children, youth, and families. Parents, children, youth, and members participated in a survey and focus groups to tell us what was important to them. Their feedback was extremely helpful. And our thanks to Artcel, Fiona and teachers for effectively putting that new direction into action.

Now the next step. The Life Stages Work Group has been gathering data and survey information from churches about their offerings to people 50ish and beyond. Nationwide there has been major growth of church offerings in this area, especially with 1 in 5 people being over 65 by 2030. We are a strong congregation in most age bands, but particularly in 55+.

Our next step is finding out what is important to people in our congregation who are 50ish and beyond. In mid-January you will be receiving a survey for you to tell us what is important to you. It will be an online survey and the survey team will provide assistance if you need it. The results will be shared with the congregation.

When you receive the survey, please take the time to complete it. It will help MHUCC know about the interests, activities, and support to provide for people in the second half of their lives.

The Life Stages Work Group: Wally Borschel, Sue Mayberry, Kim McDaniel, Mary Lonsdale Baker, Laura Borschel, Rev. Janalee Borja

Sign up for the 2024 Mexico Home Build

The Mission Hills UCC Youth Group, families and friends are organizing another mission trip to Mexico to build a family a home, working with [CASAS DE LUZ](#) **Saturday, February 17 - Sunday, February 18, 2024**. We will be framing, painting, roofing, cutting wood and installing electrical circuits with the guidance of experienced experts. We will have the opportunity to hand over a completed house to the family who will live there before we return to the US. You can get a feel for this awesome activity from our [2023 slide show](#) (opens in google drive). Sign up today, and please pay \$70 at the [church donations website \(Youth Trip/Fundraising\)](#), which goes to the church that provides food and accommodation for us in Mexico. More details and a link to the sign-up form [here](#).



We also welcome direct financial donations [here](#).

New Governance Structure

As we move to the new Governance structure this month, we want to express our appreciation to all those who have served on Council in the past.

During this time of transition, I'll appreciate hearing from the congregation with ideas, questions, and comments.

Thank you,
Jere McInerney, jeremc1@mac.com

Governance beginning January 2024- June 2024

Church Council

Past Moderator: Carol Holt **Moderator:** Jere McInerney

Vice Moderator: Pat Wahlen **Clerk:** Marilyn Miles

Treasurer: Larry Holt **Personnel:** Susan Shurin

Property, Administration, Technology: Kristin Brown

Members at Large:

Bruce Mathias: In Reach Liaison & Patricia McQuater: Out Reach Liaison

Pastor: David Bahr (non voting)

Teams and Conveners

In Reach Liaison Bruce Mathias

Caring: Joan Berry, Suzanne Albrecht

Children and Youth: Kim Antos

Fellowship : Georgia Rickert, Bruce Ramet

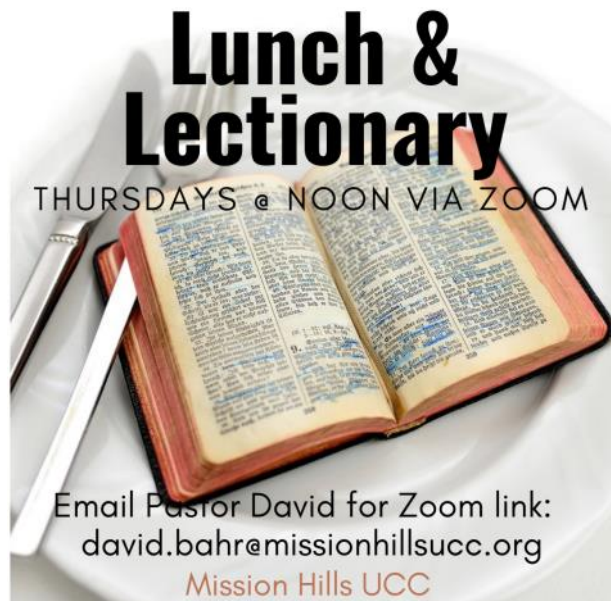
Spiritual Growth Adults: Walter Borschel

Worship: David Jay

Out Reach Liaison Patricia McQuater

Faith in Action: Lisa Striebing

Community Connections: Jessica Ripper



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](#).

January Birthdays

- Jan 3 Aspen Cage
 - Jan 4 Linda Sommer
 - Jan 11 Susan Lehman
 - Jan 12 Thomas Antos
 - Jan 14 Eric Bernhard
 - Jan 17 Sue Lowery
Sharon Van Bruggen
 - Jan 20 Doug McMinimy
 - Jan 23 Jon Pettis
 - Jan 28 Calvin Hollis
Barbara Wiggins
 - Jan 29 Amy Brunton
Jere McInerney
 - Jan 31 Zoe Merrick
Bruce Ramet
- 

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



Meeting Minutes

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

<https://missionhillsucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/NovCouncil.pdf>

History Corner: 2024 is the 100th anniversary of our church organ!

Alice Cowles Doane (wife of our first Pastor John Doane) and her sister Mary Flagler Cowles presented the organ to the church in memory of their late mother Lois Mary Cowles. The dedicatory service was held on September 28, 1924. As we go through 2024, we will be celebrating this anniversary with several special concerts and receptions. This column will share interesting historical facts about the organ and its vital place in our worship.

The organ was constructed by the Austin Organ Company of Hartford, Connecticut, at a cost of over \$10,000. Austin Organ Co. is one of the oldest continuously operating organ manufacturers in the United States, their first organ having been built in 1893. Most significantly for San Diegans, Austin built the Spreckles Pavilion Organ in Balboa Park in 1914, just 10 years before they built the Mission Hills Congregational organ.



Mission Hills United Church of Christ
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STAFF DIRECTORY

Position	Staff Member	Phone Ext.	Email
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Minister for Congregational Care	Rev. Janalee Borja		Janalee.Borja@missionhillsucc.org
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Director of Ministry with Youth	Fiona Case		Fiona.Case@missionhillsucc.org
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Worship Technologies Assistant	Devin Buss		
Sexton	Gloria Schacht		
Sunday Nursery	Jianna Ruiz		

General information

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News subscriptions & submissions (due on the 20th)

news@missionhillsucc.org

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