

PILGRIM CONGREGATIONALIST



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

December 2024

Not so Fast!

We had a wonderful Thanksgiving feast on Commitment Sunday – thanks to lots of volunteers, including Chef Robin, and an overflowing potluck. Thank you! We also received many pledges of financial support for 2025. Thank you! If we have not received yours yet, here's a handy [link](#).

Christmas may seem right around the corner, but not so fast. The season to slow down now begins - Advent - first with the lighting of the Hope candle this **Sunday, December**

1. Fourteen members of the choir will be in New York City!

Our All Generations Advent Celebration will be **Friday, December 6** from 5:30-7:00 pm. Join us to eat delicious Filipino food, set up the sanctuary Christmas trees or make crafts, and then sing carols by the light of our trees in a darkened sanctuary. It's a lovely annual event for the whole church.

The annual Children's Pageant will be during worship on **Sunday, December 15** followed by caroling for the residents at Green Manor. Caroling will involve our youth and children plus the participants at our third annual Christmas Carol Camp. You may wonder why we hold Christmas Carol Camp from 1-3 on a Thursday afternoon. It's early release day at Grant School.

Speaking of New York City, the annual Christmas Choir Concert will feature music performed in Carnegie Hall. It's a great opportunity to invite friends and neighbors. Saturday early evening proved a popular time last year so the concert will be **Saturday, December 21**, at 6 pm.

At the end of preparations and waiting, Christmas Eve services this year will be the family-friendly service at **4:30 pm** and the traditional candlelight Lessons and Carols at **8 pm**. And if we miss some of your Christmas favorites, we'll have a carol sing of your choices at worship on **Sunday, December 29**.

It's easy to get so busy we forget why this season exists. Thanks to our daily Advent stories written by members, you can start every morning in Advent in the right spirit. If you don't get our daily emails in Advent, contact info@missionhillsucc.org.

Finally, one of my personal joys of the season is sharing my nativities from around the world. Two years ago I photographed them at the beaches, last year throughout San Diego – from Rady Shell to the border to Mount Soledad and more. This year...all over Balboa Park. You can see them on Facebook or follow me on Instagram at [@photography_by_david_bahr](#)

May this be a blessed season - to be savored for all its richness - for us all!
Pastor David

Moderator's Message

The lease to the current preschool in our Little House in the parking lot will end in July, 2026. On November 13, interested members of the congregation met to brainstorm and discuss possibilities for the future. There were a number of suggestions made. Tim Wolf is chairing a group which will make a recommendation to the Council by June of 2025. If you have thoughts please share them with Tim.

Last Sunday was my favorite. We made our financial intentions for the coming year to the church we love and then we shared a turkey feast with people we love. Pastor David summed it up best Sunday 11/17 when he said "look around and see the abundance and recognize the extraordinary privilege we have in this place to belong and a place, in fact, to literally serve widows and orphans and immigrants and neighbors in need. Invite others, friends, neighbors, strangers, who feel like you do to come along. Listen to them and imagine when we put all of that power together. That's when we're church. Who do you know to invite?" - *Pat Wahlen*

December Mission Partner - Hurricanes 2024 Relief Efforts

Hurricane Helene landed in Florida on September 26 as a category-four storm. It brought a devastating 20-foot storm surge and 140 mph winds. After landfall in Florida's Big Bend region, the storm proceeded northeast into Georgia, western South Carolina, western North Carolina, and eastern Tennessee as a category one storm. Over 230 people have been confirmed dead.

On October 9th, 2024, **Hurricane Milton** landed on Florida's west coast, less than two weeks after Hurricane Helene devastated the region.

As we continue to pray for and support those who have experienced unimaginable loss this past week, **we invite you** to support the UCC's recovery efforts.

Hurricane 2024 Relief Appeal: The National Ministries of the United Church of Christ has a long history of supporting communities as they recover from disaster and their plight fades from the headlines. Your support of this appeal will ensure that communities are supported and accompanied for years as they rebuild.

Thank you for your assistance in helping families and communities who are in great need in the aftermath of these hurricanes. Your heartfelt support will make a difference.

Souper Bowl Sunday ~ 2025

Save the date for Souper Bowl Sunday, February 23. If you are in a group, consider providing a prize winning soup, please contact Joan Anderson.

Rachel's Women's Center Donations

Your donations to Rachel's are very much appreciated. The weather is changing so that the women who are on the streets at night need warm clothing. We need warm jackets, sweaters, sweatshirts, pants, socks, and sneakers. They only need sizes medium, large and extra large.

Please do not bring any other clothing. Lately we've been getting lots of donations, but half of the donations are not suitable for the women. This is resulting in spending extra time going to Goodwill and having to throw away clothing.

We appreciate your thoughtfulness in helping these homeless women. You are a blessing.

Marla's Christmas Trees

Little lighted Christmas trees and kumihimo bracelets will be available after the service on December 1st. Your generous donations will go to the Women's Fellowship Legacy Scholarship Fund.

“Transforming Aging with Your Inner Voice”

Life Stages is pleased to announce that Dr. Cynthia Phelps, Ph.D. will offer "Transforming Aging with Your Inner Voice", a four-week course designed to empower individuals as they navigate the complexities of aging. Through the InnerAlly process, participants will learn to reshape their inner dialogues, turning critical or unhelpful self-talk into narratives of strength and support. Each week focuses on key aspects of aging—physical changes, loss, social connections, and legacy—using tailored exercises to foster self-compassion and resilience. Dr. Phelps will be presenting from North Carolina.

Dates: Sundays January 5, 12, 19 and 26 from 3pm-5pm at MHUCC

Week 1: Embracing Physical Change & Cultivating Self-Compassion

Week 2: Navigating Grief and Loss & Maintaining Autonomy

Week 3: Building and Sustaining Healthy Social Connections

Week 4: Mitigating the Fears of Cognitive Decline

Cost for the 4 two-hour sessions is \$80. [Pre-registration is required.](#)

Make checks out to MHUCC, and mail along with [registration](#) to:
MHUCC, 4070 Jackdaw St, San Diego 92103

Dr. Cynthia Phelps, Ph.D. (Pharmacology with a focus in Neuroscience) created a system "InnerAlly" during her 10 years as Faculty creating the program of Learning & Technology at the former School of Health Information Science at UTHealth. She is a Stanford Ambassador of Compassion, Certified Mindfulness Instructor. She helps people use their inner voice as their superpower to get what they want out of life.

Join us to transform how you experience aging by cultivating a supportive and empowering inner voice.

The Life Stages Group

MHUCC Youth Group

- **Friday, December 6, 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm**, All Generations Advent Celebration
- **Friday, December 13, 6 pm – 8pm**: We will organize crafts and games for the children at the El Nido apartments holiday party (transitional housing for families seeking a safe haven from domestic violence)
- **Saturday, December 14, 5pm – 6pm**: We will raise funds for the three charities we are supporting (using our holiday ornaments) at the Holiday in the Hills street fair.
- **Sunday, December 15, 11:30am – 12:30pm**: We will sing carols for the residents of Green Manor
- **Wednesday, December 18, 5pm**: Partnership Churches Youth Christmas Party, hosted at the KCC.
- **Sunday, January 12, 10am**: Youth Orchestra at KCC
- **Saturday, January 25, 5pm – 9pm**: Our annual fundraising event – raising money for our Mexico trip in February
- **Saturday, February 15 – Sunday, February 16**: Home building trip to Mexico with [Casas de Luz](#).
- **Friday February 21, 6pm – 9pm**: Youth Group Meeting: making soup for the Souper Bowl fundraiser for the [Uptown Community Service Center](#)
- **Sunday, February 23, 11:30am**: Souper Bowl fundraiser



For more information please contact [Fiona Case](#).

CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRY



Thank you so much for participating in the Sponsor-a-Child program! Nearly 80 Christmas ornaments were chosen, and they'll be delivered to the children at the family shelter this week. What an incredible way to help brighten their holiday season—your generosity is truly making a difference!

Join us on December 6th, Friday at 5:30 pm for a joyful Advent celebration! We will have lumpia and pancit for dinner, sing our favorite carols, activities that everyone will love, and enjoy sweet treats and hot cocoa bar before the tree lighting ceremony. This event is a wonderful opportunity to gather as a community and celebrate the season of Advent together.



What a fantastic way to spend a Sunday afternoon—bouncing around at Sky Zone Trampoline Park with friends, then wrapping it up with a delicious dinner!

We are thrilled to invite you to another Mission Hills kids' Christmas Pageant, happening during the Sunday service on December 15! Come and witness the joy and wonder of a Christmas story brought to life by our talented children. This is a perfect opportunity to support them as they share the message of Christmas in their unique and beautiful way.



Brown Bag Lunch with Pastor David
Wednesday, December 11th @ 12pm



In MHUCC's recent member survey, members suggested having more opportunities to get together around the table.

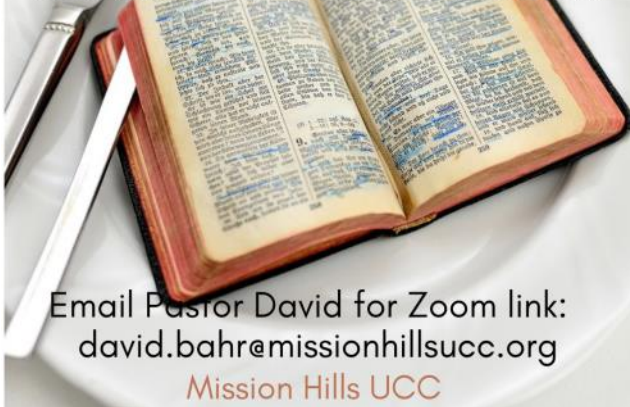
Pastor David suggested trying out a monthly:
"Lunch with Pastor David".

Bring a lunch to the Commons on Wednesday, December 11th at noon to share lunch together with Pastor David and other members.

~ The Life Stages Group

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 our [YouTube Channel](#).

A bulletin link is emailed at 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays if you wish to follow along.

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

December Birthdays

- Dec 3 Larry Holt
Robert Merrick
Levi Sandusky
- Dec 5 Elisabeth Koenig
- Dec 6 Judy Carter
- Dec 9 Monica Slev
Mia Turner
- Dec 12 Juanita Curtis
- Dec 13 Carol Vaughan
- Dec 14 Susan Maginn
- Dec 15 Jane Haubert
- Dec 18 Megan Merrickson
- Dec 21 Pam Adler
Marc Tarasuck
- Dec 27 Evelyn Antos
- Dec 31 Erin Ransom



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

Happy Birthday!

Meeting Minutes

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

<https://missionhillsucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/OctoberCouncil.pdf>

January Second Saturday Speaker Series



**End of Life Planning:
Death with Dignity &
Estate Planning, Trust
and Asset Protection**

Mission Hills UCC

**Second
Saturday
Speaker
Series**

11

JANUARY

10 AM - 12 PM

4070 Jocklaw St
San Diego, CA 92103
missionhillsucc.org
info@missionhillsucc.org



Donald
Moore, MD



Kristen
Marquis Fritz,
Esq.

End of Life planning entails organizing your affairs and documenting your medical treatment and financial decisions. An end-of-life plan may include estate planning such as a will and trust and medical decision documents like advance healthcare directives.

Join us on **January 11 at 10:00** to hear from Kristen Marquis Fritz Esq and Donald Moore, MD. presenting steps for end of life planning followed by a Q&A session.

Donald Moore, "An End of Life Physician" who completed his fellowship in Hospice and Palliative Medicine at a joint program through Scripps and University of California, San Diego (UCSD), a residency in Family Medicine at Michigan State University.

Kristen Marquis Fritz, Esq. earned her Juris Doctorate from Northeastern University of Law, a BA in Psychology, summa cum laude from Boston University, and Certificates in Fiduciary Management for Trustees and for Conservators from Cal State Fullerton. Her area of practice include estate planning, asset protection, trust and probate litigation, and business representation.

Christmas Eve Services

4:30 p.m. Family Service - This service tends to be our most lively service of the day. Come and enjoy singing carols together and celebrate the birth of Christ.

8:00 p.m. Traditional Lessons and Carols - During this traditional service, we read lessons from Holy Scripture, sign beautiful anthems and carols, and light candles to greet the infant Christ on this Holy Night.

Mission Hills UCC - December Events

Thursday, 12/5	Christmas Carol Camp
Friday, 12/6	Knitting 2 Give, 10 am - 12 pm, Commons Advent Celebration, 5:30-7:00 pm
Thursday, 12/12	Christmas Carol Camp
Friday, 12/13	Youth Group Christmas Party
Sunday, 12/15	Christmas Pageant Caroling at Green Manor
Tuesday, 12/17	Feeding Mission Hills Food Distribution, 10:30 am
Thursday, 12/19	Knitting 2 Give, 2-4 pm, Commons
Saturday, 12/21	Choir Concert, 6 pm
Tuesday, 12/24	Christmas Eve Service, 4:30 pm Christmas Eve Service, 8:00 pm

For all events, visit our online calendar: <https://missionhillsucc.org/calendar-of-events/>

Mission Hills United Church of Christ
4070 Jackdaw Street, San Diego, CA 92103
(619) 296-2169; Fax (619) 296-2115
Website: www.missionhillsucc.org

STAFF DIRECTORY

Position	Staff Member	Phone Ext.	Email
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Minister for Congregational Care	Rev. Courtney Mys		Courtney.Mys@missionhillsucc.org
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Worship Technologies Assistant	Devin Buss & Trevor Norkowski		
Sexton	Gloria Schacht		
Sunday Nursery	Gianna Ruiz & Amelia Norkowski		

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