

# PILGRIM CONGREGATIONALIST



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

January 2025

## Welcome to 2025!

I went back and read the January newsletter in 2024 and noted several things:

1. A newly formed Life Stages group announced a survey would be sent out in mid-January. Well, this year we can celebrate the marvelous work this group has already accomplished with the Second Saturday Series, weekly yoga, sanctuary hand-rail, a four-week series on Transforming Aging and much more. Wonderful enhancements to our church's ministry.
2. We announced work would finally begin in January to install a new sound system and better online experience. As a whole, things are much better, but there are so many things beyond our control. Most recently a fan in the amplifier failed which kept switching the mics off – it took weeks to figure out what was happening. YouTube kept changing protocols that our software provider seemingly couldn't keep up with. There is a whole Facebook page of church tech teams around the country trying to help and support one another. Another day, the wifi will decide not to work. Despite new challenges weekly, our tech team jumps in to troubleshoot and during the week learn how to address the latest glitch. Many thanks to them for keeping at it!
3. And last January we implemented the changes to our governance that we had worked on in 2023. These changes to create a smaller Council and a new group of Conveners have been particularly fruitful. Our leadership teams are amazing.

I also thanked the choir for an amazing Christmas concert, noting attendance had increased markedly – as it did again this year. I noted our successful Christmas Carol camp – true again this year. And all the work on the Christmas Eve by musicians and participants. Writing this before it has all happened, I know it was another moving season of joy – which this year is particularly needed given anxiety about changing administrations. As always, the witness of the church to love, compassion, and justice is the calling of Jesus to a divided and weary world.

*“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

Blessings,

Pastor David

## Moderator's Message

What a glorious time of the year as epitomized by our young singers and actors on the 15th. It was wonderful having a church with parent visitors as well as a full congregation Sunday - 166 worshipers in all! We are so fortunate! Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

~ Pat Wahlen

## Lunch and Lectionary

After completing a full three-year cycle of the lectionary, Lunch and Lectionary has come to an end. Now we are shaping a new weekly Bible Study and would love your feedback about what you might like to see: lectionary vs. an in-depth study of a particular book; in person vs. Zoom; what day and time... It's all up for discussion. Please share your ideas with Pastor David. A new group will begin in February.

## Civil Rights Pilgrimage

If you'd like to join us in Birmingham, Selma, Montgomery, and Atlanta, September 22-28, registration ends in January. The approximate cost is \$2,000 per person, double occupancy, with a deposit by March. This is a joint trip of MHUCC and Pilgrim UCC in Carlsbad and we will have book studies in advance to prepare for a transformative experience.

## 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.

## Do You Have any Surplus 2025 Calendars You Don't Need??

At this time of the year, many charities and non-profit organizations send out free calendars for the coming year along with requests for donations. It is easy to end up with more calendars than you can use... If you have extra, we have a request – Please bring any extra 2025 calendars to church this month through Jan. 19<sup>th</sup> and they can be donated to the monthly MHUCC food distribution customers who really enjoy and appreciate them. You could drop them off on one of the rolling carts in the church kitchen and they will be available for the customers to take at the December and January monthly food distributions which will take place on December 17<sup>th</sup> and January 21<sup>st</sup>.



### Ten Years!

Our phenomenal organist, Director of Instrumental Music, Kris Abels is celebrating 10 years at MHUCC on January 5.

Actually, we the congregation are celebrating this milestone!

Please write a note of thanks expressing your appreciation or say it in person on January 5.

## January Second Saturday Speaker Series



**MISSION HILLS**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF GREAT  
LIFE STAGES TEAM

Mission Hills UCC  
**Second Saturday Speaker Series**  
**11**  
JANUARY  
**10 AM - 12 PM**  
4070 Jackdow St  
San Diego, CA 92103  
missionhillsucc.org  
info@missionhillsucc.org

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



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.

## MHUCC Youth Group

The MHUCC Youth Group is a ministry of a progressive, open and affirming church. Our diverse group includes teens from our church families, and from other churches, and youth are not involved in organized religion at all. Everyone is welcome here!

We offer several different types of events and activities, many of which are inspired and lead by youth group members listed below:

- **Sunday, January 12, 10am:** Youth Orchestra at KCC
- **Friday, January 24, 6pm – 9pm:** Preparation for our annual fundraising event – raising money for our Mexico trip in February
- **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 Souperbowl fundraiser for the [Uptown Community Service Center](#)
- **Sunday, February 23, 11:30am:** The Souperbowl fundraiser
- **Saturday March 8,** Volunteering at the San Diego Food Bank Warehouse
- **Friday, April 11 – Sunday, April 13:** Partnership youth group spiritual retreat at [Camp Stevens](#) near Julian.
- **Sunday, May 11:** confirmation service and party
- **Sunday, August 3 – Saturday, August 9:** [Sierra Service Project, San Diego South Bay](#)

## CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRY



### **Christmas Carol Camp**

We had a wonderful and successful Christmas Carol Camp with ten kids this year. The parents expressed their gratefulness for inviting their children to this program. One parent shared, "Because of my daughter's experience with the camp, she has grown closer to God." It was heartwarming to see their joy as they built friendships that they will remember for a long time.

### **Christmas Pageant**

I want to take a moment to celebrate the incredible and memorable performance by the Mission Hills kids as they reenacted Barbara Robinson's beloved book, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. With their unique interpretation, they brought a delightful blend of entertainment and creativity, conveying joy and love to our congregation. Their playful chaos transformed into laughter, guiding our community towards the true meaning of Christmas.

A special shout-out to Chris Antos for his outstanding work as our narrator and for all the adults who helped and made this pageant possible and fun.

### **Caroling at Green Manor**

The 13th floor of Green Manor buzzed with joy as residents gathered to enjoy Christmas carols sung by children and youth from our church. Residents expressed their joy and gratitude for the lovely performance, cherishing the chance to hear them sing once again.

### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

- January 5 – Celebrity Sunday
- January 12 – After Christmas "Christmas Party"
- Feb 28 – Family Night-In: Family will learn how to make musubi. Dinner afterwards

**ON THE HORIZON:** June 16-20 – MissionKids Summer Camp. The kids will be doing detective work and mystery-solving. This spells fun for them as they do some gathering of clues!

## February Second Saturday Speaker Series



### **The Seven Stone Path: An Everyday Journey to Wisdom**

Mission Hills UCC

**Second Saturday Speaker Series**

**08**  
FEBRUARY

**10 AM - 12 PM**

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



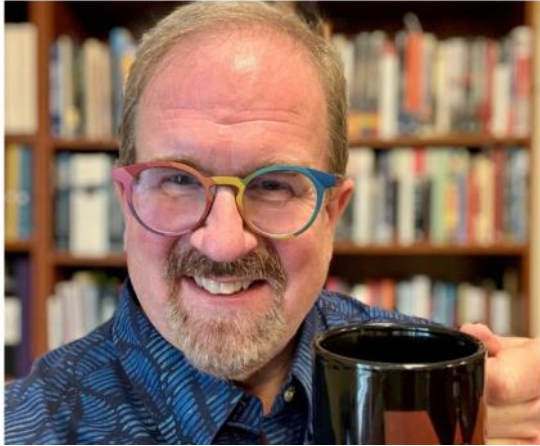
Join Dr. Peter Bolland for an introduction to his new book, "THE SEVEN STONE PATH: AN EVERYDAY JOURNEY TO WISDOM." Signed books available for purchase.

Dr. Peter Bolland is a professor of philosophy and humanities at Southwestern College where he has taught world religions, world mythology, Asian philosophy, and ethics for 34 years. The author of *The Seven Stone Path: An Everyday Journey to Wisdom*, Bolland was also a columnist for *Unity Magazine* and *The San Diego Troubadour* for fifteen years. A frequent workshop facilitator and guest speaker at progressive churches, spiritual communities, and lifelong learning centers across the country, Bolland is also an award-winning poet and singer-songwriter. His popular YouTube channel has over 390,000 views and he's taught meditation to over 15,000 people on the Insight Timer app. Learn more at [peterbolland.com](http://peterbolland.com)





Brown Bag Lunch with Pastor David  
Second Wednesday of the month @ 12pm



### Sunday 10 am Worship Service

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

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](#).

### 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/2024/12/NovemberCouncil.pdf>



GENTLE CHAIR YOGA CLASS  
Saturdays at 10 - 11:15 am



This style of yoga is great for beginners and those with mobility issues, though all can benefit. Wear clothes you can move/stretch in.

[missionhillsucc.org](http://missionhillsucc.org)

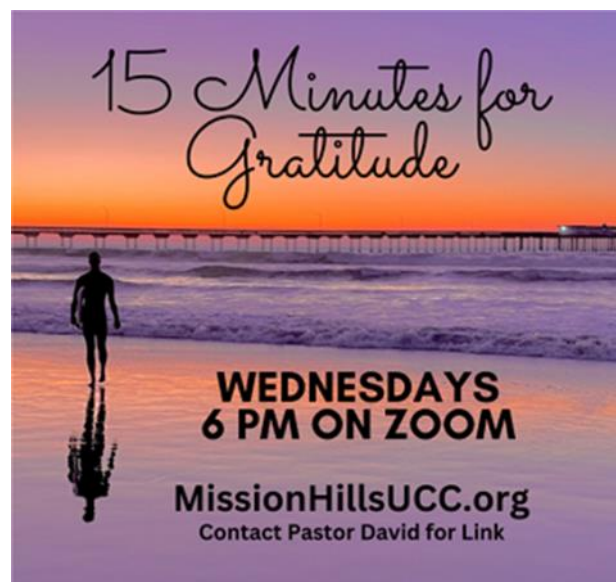
### January Birthdays

- Jan 1 Thad Winkle
- 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  
Monica Munoz
- Jan 31 Bruce Ramet  
Zoe Merrick



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

# Happy Birthday!



January 8, 15, 22, 29

## History Corner: "A Church that Stands for Something"

In a recent column, Pastor David said "this congregation excels at making things happen." The foundation for this success is seen in the history of our church. Comments from earlier Pastoral reports include:

"There is a working together in this church that is a wondrous thing."  
~ Rev. E. Walter Smith, 1955

"Increasingly we are becoming a church that is not afraid to let its light shine for Christ. People are beginning to know that this church stands for something in the life of the city."  
~ Rev. Dr. Kermit E. White, 1965

"It is a privilege to serve as the Minister of this church when there are so many able people who are willing to share Christ's ministry and take a responsible part in our over all purpose."  
~ Rev. Dr. Joseph M. Sandven, 1970



The Reverend E. Walter  
Smith



The Reverend Dr. Kermit  
E. White



The Reverend Joe M.  
Sandven

**Mission Hills United Church of Christ**  
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### STAFF DIRECTORY

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Sexton	Gloria Schacht		
Sunday Nursery	Jianna Ruiz & Amelia Norkowski		

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