

# PILGRIM CONGREGATIONALIST



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

February 2025

## Highlights of 2024

The highlights of 2024 include some of our annual traditions like the Souper Bowl, building a house in Tijuana, services for Holy Week and Easter, including what has become an annual tradition of a Palm Sunday Procession along Fort Stockton with our friends at MH United Methodist Church. Plus, a booth at the summer concert series, Church in Park, Blessing of the Backpacks, Animal Blessing, All Saints Day, Thanksgiving Feast, and our third Christmas Carol Camp. And don't forget the All Generations Weekend at Pilgrim Pines. The list continues with regular ongoing ministry, such as monthly Feeding Mission Hills and so much more.

Some of the highlights were unique to 2024: We celebrated the centennial of our organ and commissioned a new hymn and choral piece, the inauguration of the Second Saturday Series focused on issues and interests of older adults along with many other programs of the new Life Stages Team, a new joint ownership agreement of the Green Manor board resulting in the creation of a new entity called Green Vistas with \$53 million to build new affordable senior housing, and a memorable All Generations Homecoming Sock Hop. The list could continue. And oh, my goodness, how could I leave out the choir trip to New York City and singing from the stage of Carnegie Hall! Which doubled attendance at the annual choir concert with 202 people packing the sanctuary.

Our ministry is full of vibrancy and life and this shows through your participation in the above programs and your generosity. Worship attendance is strong. With average attendance near 120 in-person, we are one of only 8% of UCC churches with more than 100 people in worship. Plus, we have many more who worship online – some live and many more in the following week.

Now that the 2024 financial numbers have been finalized, we have more to celebrate. Instead of taking \$25,000 from the Pilgrim Fund to balance the budget, we had a surplus and will grow the Pilgrim Fund by \$8,288. Unpledged offerings were 249% of budget and 98.6% of pledges were fulfilled. All of that is on top of \$41,000 for our mission partners – which is part of the \$80,000 the church gave beyond our walls in 2024. For the organ centennial, we set a goal of \$20,000 to complete some improvement projects on the organ. That goal was met. And the surprise opportunity for the choir to go to Carnegie Hall received \$45,000 to support it. The endowment has grown from \$500,000 in 2017 to \$921,000 today. And designated funds for special projects contain \$130,000 – helped by a generous \$50,000 personal gift from the broker who worked with Green Manor. It's been designated for our building fund, soon to be renamed our Capital Reserve Fund.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Highlights of 2024 (continued)

In 2025, the youth group is adding a spiritual weekend at Camp Stevens. We are taking a Civil Rights Pilgrimage to Alabama and Atlanta. A new weekly after school program is underway. The first segment: MHUCC Chef's Academy has 14 students from Grant. And we are adding an Easter Eve vigil from 6:30 pm to 6:30 am.

We have momentum. We still face the headwinds of decline all around us in Christian churches, but I believe we are taking all the right steps to serve our current members and adapt to what people not yet part of our congregation are looking for that we can provide well. Serving as the pastor of people who do not act (re-act) out of fear, especially around money, makes a huge difference. HUGE. So thank you.

*Blessings,*

*Pastor David*

## Moderator's Message

The new Life Stages Team has been busy preparing and presenting a variety of wonderful programs. They have been thoughtful -- aimed at what is most concerning to older people and varied — from decorating pumpkins to end of life concerns. These programs have all been well attended by church members and others.

A big thank you to Walter Borschel and Marilyn Miles, Co-Chairs of the Life Stages Team. I am happy to report, all presentations have been very well attended by church members and others. The group which includes Laura Borschel, Courtney Mys, Mary Lonsdale Baker, Elisabeth and John Koenig, and Sue Mayberry. Marilyn Miles and Sue Mayberry also co-chair the Second Saturday Speaker Series along with a valuable group of volunteers who assist with the set-up and take down of the Speaker Series.

I am looking forward to February's Second Saturday Speaker, Peter Bolland, professor of World Religions at Southwestern College. He will talk to us about his new book about finding wisdom. And in March, the speaker will be Dr. John Koenig who will share with us his thoughts about the works of Bach with live musical samples.

*~ Pat Wahlen*

## Souper Bowl Sunday ~ 2025

Save the date for Souper Bowl **Sunday, February 23.**



For those newer to the church, **SOUPer Bowl Sunday** is a soup competition fundraiser for Uptown Community Service Center that serves our homeless population. Various Groups in the church make their best soup recipes for your tasting pleasure to win your votes (\$\$\$) for the Golden and Silver Spoon awards. It's always lots of fun and a delicious way to have some lunch after church on SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23. Be sure to mark your calendars. You'll be very glad you attended.

If your group would like to participate or if you have any questions about the event, please contact Joan Anderson.

## February Second Saturday Speaker Series



**MISSION HILLS**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
Life Stages Team

Mission Hills UCC

**Second Saturday Speaker Series**

**08**  
FEBRUARY

**10 AM - 12 PM**

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

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

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

*February 8:* 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)

## MHUCC Youth Group

- **Saturday, February 1:** Volunteering at [Friends of Cats](#). Meet for pizza at 12pm, volunteer 1 – 3pm
- **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 15,** 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.](#)

*For more information please contact [Fiona Case](#) or visit the Youth Group page [online!](#)*

## INQUIRERS CLASS

If you are interested in becoming a member of MHUCC or just want to know more about the church, you're invited to the Inquirers Class on **Sunday, February 9**. Pastor David will lead this one-hour session in the Chapel beginning at 11:15am. If you have questions, please contact [Pam Adler](#).

## Partnership for Racial Justice Relaunch

Our San Diego UCC Partnership churches have a long history of working together for racial justice in San Diego. Clergy and lay leaders from Partnership churches will soon meet to discuss relaunching this important work. Sign up [here](#) by February 9 to receive information about the upcoming meeting.

## CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRY



### Celebrity Sunday

Thank you to Mark Davis for being our first "Celebrity" of the year! The kids had a blast trying to guess his title as the Unmanned Air Vehicle and loved asking him questions. The highlight of the day was flying the drone, making it a fun and memorable experience for everyone.

### MHUCC Chef's Academy Camp

Fourteen talented kids have been cooking up delicious meals at MHUCC every Thursday after school! So far, they've learned to make simple yet tasty dishes like vegetable soup, strawberry-banana smoothies, spaghetti, and garlic bread. Not only do they get to enjoy their own creations, but they're also having a great time building friendships along the way!



### Spam Musubi Night

Join us on **February 28th** from 6 PM to 8:30 PM as our children and families learn how to make Spam Musubi and enjoy a delicious dinner with miso soup! Cooking and eating together is a wonderful way to connect, strengthen family bonds, and create lasting memories.

## PARENTS' CORNER

Mental health and wellness are essential for parents and caregivers, as they directly impact their ability to care for their children, foster healthy communication, and create a nurturing home environment. When parents prioritize their well-being, they are better equipped to manage stress, model emotional regulation, and strengthen relationships with their kids.

Hosted by Artcel Ruiz, this March, join us every Sunday from 4:30 PM to 6:00 PM for an insightful speaker series focused on parenting, mental health, and wellness. Each week, a guest expert will share their knowledge and practical tools to support parents in raising happy, healthy children. Plus, enjoy delicious snacks while connecting with other families in a supportive community. We look forward to seeing you there!

**MISSION HILLS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

### MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

Addressing parents' mental health and wellness are crucial topics to address now because of the growing pressures and challenges they face in today's world.

Come, join, and hear from passionate speakers as they share insights on supporting children's emotional and behavioral growth.

Sundays, March 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30  
4:30 PM - 6 PM  
4070 Jackdaw St. San Diego

Free Classes  
Donations are welcome

Register now at:

- Dr. Rebecca Chiang, MA  
Executive Director  
Mission Hills United Church of Christ
- Sue Krueger-Fee  
Parent
- Jon Moffat  
John Moffat, Director
- Dr. Karen Dolyns, OTD, MOT, OTR/L  
Occupational Therapist
- The Rev. Mary Sue Brinkbauer  
Pastor

**For more information please contact:  
Artcel Ruiz, Director of Ministry with Children and Families**



**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 December Church Council Meeting:

<https://missionhillsucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/DecCouncil.pdf>

**History Corner: "Souper Bowl"**

The Uptown Community Services Center has been serving the needs of unhoused people since 1984 and our church, as one of the founding churches, has been closely involved. Through your donations of clothing and toiletries, monetary donations, and volunteering, MHUCC has been vital to this service program. And in just a few weeks, you will have the opportunity to participate in one of our most fun fundraisers of the year, the "SOUPER BOWL." This friendly competition soup cook-off, started in 2010, has raised tens of thousands of dollars for Uptown. Hope we'll see you there, and feel free to bring a friend or two -



**Sunday, Feb. 23, 11:00 AM - Fellowship Hall**

**Bring your appetite and small bills to cast your votes (credit cards accepted)**

**February Birthdays**

- Feb 2** Julia Fordham
- Feb 5** Betty Darling
- Feb 6** Gabriella Stryker
- Feb 7** Kimberly Antos
- Feb 12** Robin James  
Stephanie Carrasquillo  
Lilian Antos
- Feb 15** Jianna Ruiz
- Feb 19** Ryan Cage
- Feb 20** Erik More
- Feb 23** Renee Davis
- Feb 25** Jane Illades
- Feb 27** Susan Sato



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



## Mission Hills UCC -Upcoming Events

<b>February</b>	<b>Mission Partner: Uptown Community Service Center</b>
Saturday, 2/1	Youth volunteering with Friends of Cats, 12-3 pm
Sunday, 2/2	Barbara Christensen Ordination, 3 pm
Friday, 2/7	Knitting 2 Give, 10 am - 12 pm, Commons
Saturday, 2/8	Second Saturday Speaker Series, Fellowship Hall, 10 am - 12 pm
Sat. 2/15 - Sun. 2/16	Home building trip to Mexico with Casas de Luz
Tuesday, 2/18	Feeding Mission Hills Food Distribution, 10:30 am
Thursday, 2/20	Knitting 2 Give, 2-4 pm, Commons
Friday, 2/21	Youth group meeting/soup making, 5-9 pm
Sunday, 2/23	Souper Bowl Sunday
<b>March</b>	<b>Mission Partner: One Great Hour of Sharing</b>
Sunday, 3/2	Women's History Sunday
Wednesday, 3/5	Ash Wednesday
Friday, 3/7	Knitting 2 Give, 10 am - 12 pm, Commons
Saturday, 3/8	Second Saturday Speaker Series, Fellowship Hall, 10 am - 12 pm
Saturday, 3/15	All Church Volunteering SD Food Bank, 12:30-2:30 pm
Tuesday, 3/18	Feeding Mission Hills Food Distribution, 10:30 am
Thursday, 3/20	Knitting 2 Give, 2-4 pm, Commons

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](http://www.missionhillsucc.org)**

### STAFF DIRECTORY

Position	Staff Member	Phone Ext.	Email
Pastor	Rev. Dr. David Bahr	ext. 302	David.Bahr@missionhillsucc.org
Minister for Congregational Care	Rev. Courtney Mys		Courtney.Mys@missionhillsucc.org
Director of Ministry with Children and Families	Artcel Ruiz		Artcel.Ruiz@missionhillsucc.org
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Worship Technologies Coordinator	Saige Afalava		Saige.Afalava@missionhillsucc.org
Worship Technical Assistants	Devin Buss & Trevor Norkowski		
Sexton	Gloria Schacht		
Sunday Nursery	Gianna Ruiz & Amelia Norkowski		

*General information* [info@missionhillsucc.org](mailto:info@missionhillsucc.org)  
*News subscriptions & submissions (due on the 20th)* [news@missionhillsucc.org](mailto:news@missionhillsucc.org)

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