

PILGRIM CONGREGATIONALIST



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

April 2025

Holy Week and Easter

During a time of great upheaval in our country, the intentional practices of faith during Lent ground us in God's love and give us the strength and courage to be a witness for compassion and mercy.

Our focus on healing this Lenten season has been especially rich and well received. Pastor Courtney's Monday night series began with 42 people squeezing into the chapel for Sound Healing – like a symphony of singing bowls that touch the soul. The response was so overwhelmingly positive, we will offer this again on an ongoing basis.

This focus will continue during worship on Sunday, April 6. It has become our practice that on the last Sunday of Lent before Palm Sunday, our service includes a moment for anointing with oil. Then the next night, Monday, April 7 at 6:30, we will hold a full service of anointing with a harpist playing original music in the chapel.

On **Palm Sunday**, April 13, bring your own palms at 9:30 and join in a procession on Fort Stockton with our friends at MH United Methodist Church. That afternoon at 1:30, you are invited back to MHUCC for a meeting of people in our UCC partnership churches who wish to be involved in racial justice activities.

Maundy Thursday will offer two services – one at Noon in the chapel, in person only. We will share the Last Supper together around a table. At 7 pm we will gather for our traditional "lessons and carols" type service, communion, and optional foot washing. The service ends by stripping the sanctuary and singing in darkness. Members of our partnership churches are invited to join us at either service. This service will also be livestreamed.

On **Good Friday** we will gather at Noon on Zoom only. If you would like an in person service, The Table UCC in La Mesa invites you to join them at 6:30 pm.

We have a new option for **Holy Saturday**. We will hold an overnight vigil in the sanctuary from 6:30 pm Saturday until sunrise on Easter morning. We will be asking for people to commit to a 2 hour "shift," so please think about whether you are able, for example, to stay awake from 2-4 am. Remember, Jesus asked his disciples to stay awake while he went off to pray and they kept falling asleep. No pressure!

Finally, on **Easter morning**, we will gather at sunrise (a little after since it is at 6:13 am this year) at the United Methodist Church.

Our big festival worship with brass and choir is at 10 am. Come early to make sure you get a seat!

(Continued on page 2)

Holy Week and Easter (continued)

And following worship, we will have our traditional Easter Egg Hunt. You can help by providing individually wrapped candy. Please bring by Palm Sunday. The youth group will assemble and hide the eggs. Oh, and we need plastic egg holders this year!

We will observe **Earth Day** on the last Sunday of April.

Again, during this time of great upheaval in our country, the intentional practices of faith during Lent ground us in God's love and give us the strength and courage to follow the call of Jesus to be a witness for compassion and mercy.

Blessings,
Pastor David

Moderator's Message

Pastor David's wonderful sermon on March 16th used Mary and Martha as examples of the different gifts we each have. His message was followed in the hymn we sang which so well summarizes our church:

Here within this congregation God's abundance may be found.
We are blessed with gifts that differ, skills and talents all around.
We are members of one body
Pieces vital to the whole, every person is important,
Each one has a crucial role.

Some may dance while others garden,
Some may draw while others teach.
Some may cook or offer comfort, some may write and some may preach.
Some agree while others question, some are silent, others sing.
May we never undervalue gifts that fellow members bring.

Holy Spirit, help us treasure talents that surround us here;
Talents known and talents hidden make us more than we appear.
Humbly, God, we sing thanksgiving, honoring the gifts you give.
Help us always use them wisely,
Faithfully, each day we live.

Words by Jacque B. Jones

Thank you, thank you, thank you for giving freely of your special gifts.

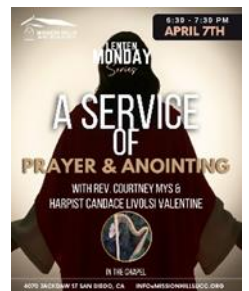
~ Pat Wahlen

Monday Lenten Series



March 31 - Lenten Monday #4 6:30-7:30pm, In the Chapel
The History of Prayer & Anointing in the Christian Church
with Rev. Courtney Mys

April 7 - Lenten Monday #5 6:30-7:30pm, In the Chapel
A Service of Prayer and Anointing
with Rev. Courtney Mys & Harpist





Second Saturday Speaker Series - April 12

Dr. Selden Dee Kelley was the Senior Pastor of San Diego First Church of the Nazarene, 2006-2024. He will share the story of his efforts to invite a broader view of inclusion in his denomination and the consequences he faced - including termination. Dr. Kelley has A BS in psychology and three Masters covering religion, psychology in organizational design and business administration as well as Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology.

Scholarships 2025

Now is the time to prepare your application for the Mission Hills United Church of Christ College Scholarship. Members of the church who are planning to attend college this fall are eligible to receive this scholarship. You may pick up a copy of the application at the church office or download it [online](#). The church office must receive applications no later than June 10, 2025.

For more information, please contact Suzanne Albrecht (suz1127@cox.net).

New Member Bio's

Mary Ellen McMahan: To say I am very "churched" would be an understatement. During my 70 years at University Christian Church, San Diego, I have done almost every job, beginning at age 9 when I helped in the church office. Through the years I served on almost all the committees and activities from choir to historian to property chair. And was employed for 20 years as the church administrator.



My husband of 63 years passed away last summer, but I have been blessed with a terrific daughter and many wonderful friends to help me through this difficult time. I am so grateful for MHUCC and the many people and programs available for support. I feel so comfortable here and am looking forward to becoming more involved as time goes on. Thank you for providing such a warm and welcoming community.

Curt Sumner: was born and raised in South Mississippi. At the age of 20, he moved to San Diego, humorously describing it as "fleeing the redneck tyranny." In 1992, his life took an unexpected and fateful turn when he met his life partner and husband, Tom Tipps.

Curt is a dedicated fitness enthusiast, a passionate photographer and a San Diego Zoo and Balboa Park junkie. When he's not biking 50-100 miles a week or hitting the gym, you can find him capturing stunning scenes—especially in New York City and the iconic Central Park. Committed to health and wellness, Curt strives to reach his personal goals while maintaining a positive and humorous outlook on life. He values meaningful connections and enjoys sharing experiences, whether through travel, creative pursuits, or thoughtful conversations.



April Monthly Mission Partner

The monthly Mission Partner for April will be the UCC's California Wildfires Appeal for 2025. Carol and Larry Holt and other volunteers will also be sharing details of the Feeding Mission Hills program during the April services. Although Feeding Mission Hills was originally scheduled to be the monthly Mission Partner, Carol and Larry said that thanks to recent generous donations, the program was in good financial shape. In their characteristically generous manner, they preferred that the April donations be directed to the UCC's efforts to support those suffering from the fires.

From the UCC website:

"The United Church of Christ Global HOPE team is helping to connect Southern California and Nevada Conference staff, churches, and others affected by the California Wildfires with immediate resources while also preparing to support long-term recovery efforts.

This fire has caused substantial damage throughout LA County, making this event the largest fire disaster in the county's history. One hundred eighty thousand people are currently displaced from their homes due to devastation or evacuation orders, and these fires continue to spread, causing additional destruction. The Altadena Community Church, United Church of Christ, was destroyed in the blaze.

As we continue to pray for and support those who experienced unimaginable loss, we invite you to support the UCC's recovery efforts in the following ways:

- **Donate** to the UCC's California Wildfires 2025 Appeal
- Pray
- Assemble Hygiene Kits and Cleanup Buckets

More details can be found at: <https://support.ucc.org/california-wildfires-2025>

Annual Community Garage and Bake Sale

On Saturday, April 26, 8:00 AM - Noon, our church will sponsor a Bake Sale as a part of Mission Hills Annual Community Garage Sale. We will serve as a "refueling" station for the shoppers - a place where they can stop for a cup of coffee, use our restrooms, and purchase homemade baked goods.

Can you donate baked items for this fundraiser for our Church Scholarship Fund? You can sign up in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, April 6, 13, or 20 or contact pa-madler2@gmail.com or (703)945-9644. This is a great opportunity to offer some UCC hospitality to our neighbors and help replenish our scholarship fund.



History Corner



In April 1947, 78 Years ago, our church began a new building project. This 2-story 45' x 85' building would be referred to as the "Church Annex."

It would include a nursery, church school rooms, office, Pastor's study, ladies parlor, gym or recreation hall, and a small chapel. This was a major expansion for a growing church. The project, later referred to as the Religious Education and Recreation Building, and was completed in 1950.

Pictured on the left.

CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRY

CHEFS' ACADEMY



Chefs' Academy kids have been having a blast mixing, baking, and creating delicious treats! They've whipped up Banana Nut Cake, Red Velvet Cupcakes, the Best Brownies topped with vanilla ice cream, and Oreo Truffles. These sweet creations are as fun to make as they are to eat

EASTER

Join us for a fun-filled Easter Egg Hunt at Mission Hills UCC on **April 20** at 11:15 AM! Kids ages 5 to 12 are invited to search for colorful eggs and enjoy a joyful morning of fun and community. For questions or if you would like to volunteer, please contact Artcel. We can't wait to celebrate with you!



MOANA 2

Join us for a fun movie night featuring *Moana 2*! Kids can wear their coziest PJs, bring their favorite pillow and blanket, and get ready to enjoy the adventure. We'll have plenty of popcorn, but feel free to bring your favorite snacks to share—see you on April 25, Friday, at 6:30 PM! Pick up is at 9 PM.



MISSIONHILLSUCC
WE NEED
VOLUNTEERS!



The Ministry of Children & Families needs extra hands! If you're interested in helping, please contact Artcel .

Here are some upcoming volunteer opportunities:

- Assist during Sunday School
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Mission Kids Summer Camp: June 16 – 20, 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Your time and support make a difference in the lives of our children and families. We'd love to have you join us!

For more information please contact:
Artcel Ruiz, artcel.ruiz@missionhillsucc.org

Youth and Tweens: SSP Summer Camp

We are planning to take a group of youth and tweens (2025/2026 6th grade and above) to participate in the Sierra Service Project (SSP) camp in San Diego South Bay, August 3 – 9. Our group will join middle and high school groups from other churches to work on community-led projects (such as habitat restoration in the Tijuana River Estuary and on Silver Strand State Beach) and traditional SSP repair work such as painting, rebuilding fences, building decks and wheelchair ramps, and other home repairs for very low-income families or seniors. No construction experience is needed, youth and tweens will be trained to use power tools safely.

The camp will be hosted at the National City First United Methodist Church and will include all meals and accommodation for the week. The camp costs \$715 per person; scholarships **are available from SSP and MHUCC**.

For more information visit our [blog](#) or contact [Fiona](#). **Please register by April 5.**



UCC Action Center



The UCC National Office makes writing your legislators about issues that concern you very easy. Keep this link handy and use if often:

<https://www.ucc.org/action-center/>

Partnership for Racial Justice



Partnership for Racial Justice



Thank you to those who joined our initial Partnership for Racial Justice meeting on February 25! We know many others are interested but couldn't attend, so we're holding a second Kickoff Meeting on **Sunday, April 6**, at 1:30 PM in the Mission Hills UCC sanctuary (in person only). An RSVP email will follow.

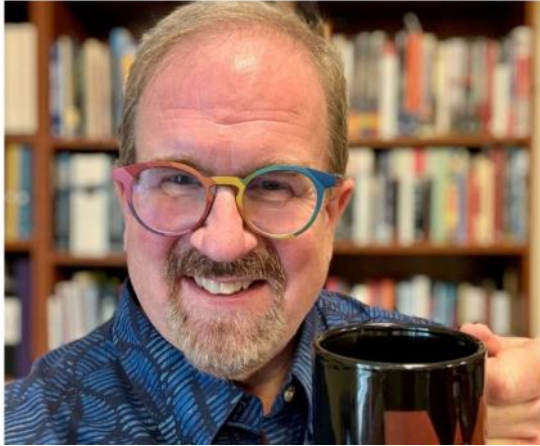
We'll discuss priorities, build consensus on lay leadership, and reflect on these guiding questions:

- What motivates you to do racial justice work?
- What do you feel called to do?
- What goals do you envision achieving?
- What makes doing that work with other people of faith from the Partnership churches unique or special?

This meeting is open to all Partnership church members—please invite others who may be interested. We look forward to seeing you!



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 February Church Council Meeting:

<https://missionhillsucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/FebruaryCouncil.pdf>

April Birthdays

- Apr 2** Danielle Carlin
- Apr 4** Devin Buss
- Apr 6** Alyssa James
- Apr 7** Steve McIntee
Geri Mu
- Apr 8** Samantha Brown
Marilyn Miles
- Apr 10** Andrew Wolf
- Apr 15** Don Taylor
Barbara Snodgrass
- Apr 18** Guy Halgren
- Apr 22** Alyssa Huntington
Tommy Huntington
- Apr 25** Samantha Pettis
- Apr 27** Anne Reichman
Sue Lake
- Apr 28** Jennifer Hom
Chase Davis



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



Second Saturday Speaker Series - May



Joanie Captain has a BA in Art from SDSU and MFA in drawing and painting from Academy of Art University. She works in both oil and watercolor, as well as graphite, charcoal and ink. She teaches in the San Diego Watercolor Society's Outreach program presenting lessons in watercolor painting to both children and adults.

Come and experience the joy of creating with watercolors, even if it is for the first time. You will leave with a painting and your materials to practice at home.

The materials fee, \$15.00 cash, will be collected at the door.

Registration is limited to 20 participants.

Sign up in the Fellowship Hall following Church services in April.

Mission Hills UCC - April Events

April	Mission Partner: UCC Los Angeles Fires Special Appeal
Friday, 4/4	Knitting 2 Give, 10 am - 12 pm, Commons
Fri. 4/4-Sun.4/6	Youth Group Spiritual Retreat at Camp Stevens
Monday, 4/7	Lenten Monday #5 - Service of Prayer and Anointing, 6:30 pm - Chapel
Thursday, 4/10	Civil Rights Pilgrimage Meeting, 6:30 pm, zoom
Tuesday, 4/15	Feeding Mission Hills Food Distribution, 10:30 am
Thursday, 4/17	Maundy Thursday Service, noon, Chapel Maundy Thursday Service, 7 pm, Sanctuary Knitting 2 Give, 2-4 pm, Commons
Friday, 4/18	Good Friday Service, noon, zoom
Sat. 4/19 - Sun. 4/20	Vigil, 6:30 pm - 6:30 am, Sanctuary
Sunday, 4/20	Easter Sunrise Service, 6:30 am, MH Methodist Church Easter Festival Worship Service, 10:00 am Easter Egg Hunt, 11:15 am
Saturday, 4/26	Community Bake Sale, 8 am - 12 pm
Sunday, 4/27	Earth Day

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
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
Administrative Assistant	Elizabeth Quinones	ext. 301	Elizabeth.Quinones@missionhillsucc.org
Director of Instrumental Music	Kristopher Abels		Kris.Abels@missionhillsucc.org
Director of Vocal Music	Angelica Eclar		Angelica.Eclar@missionhillsucc.org
Director of Ministry with Youth	Fiona Case		Fiona.Case@missionhillsucc.org
Worship Technologies Coordinator	Saige Afalava		Saige.Afalava@missionhillsucc.org
Media Coordinator	Trevor Norkowski		Trevor.Norkowski@missionhillsucc.org
Worship Technical Assistants	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