

PILGRIM CONGREGATIONALIST



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

May 2025

#SpreadtheWord

In this time of instability, fear, and despair, there are a lot of people who feel isolated and hopeless. We have something powerful to give. It is incumbent upon all of us to spread the word that in the middle of our polarized times there is still hope and joy – and a place to belong. MHUCC has particular strengths to offer as an expression of our love, especially during a period where the loudest Christian voices preach exclusion. We cannot be a place of support only for ourselves, so how can we spread the word more widely and clearly? Church Council has embraced the following strategy as a place to begin.

As our first step, you will receive an email with a series of questions that will require thoughtful reflection – not a quick survey. We ask for the gift of your time. We will then invite people to participate in small group discussion of the results. In advance of the survey, here are five statements and questions to give you a little time to begin thinking about it:

1) There *is* hope in a world that may feel quite hopeless right now.

What are MHUCC's unique gifts that give you hope in this world?

2) *Community* is vitally important when the world feels polarized.

How is MHUCC welcoming? What are the unique opportunities for community that MHUCC provides well? What are we missing?

3) *Joy* is an act of *resistance* against despair.

How do you find this true at MHUCC?

How do we best communicate this to others?

4) There are spiritual communities - including LGBTQ-affirming churches - that provide *unconditional* welcome and a message of *social justice*.

For you, what are MHUCC's key values? How do we best communicate this

5) Our church – the Christian faith – provides *spiritual resources* for how you are feeling right now.

What spiritual resources does MHUCC provide to you? What is missing?

Our strength is our members who know better than anyone what people find at MHUCC. We want to empower you to share that message. We will then translate our experiences into language for *younger adults* and *anyone of any age* without a church home. Part of that

(Continued on page 2)

#SpreadtheWord (*continued*)

translation is a new logo to align our look with our values, a new website – because the first impression matters – and the increased use of social media to drive people to our website, to learn about us, to watch our services – some of whom will choose to participate online and others who will join us in person. Someone doesn't have to be in our sanctuary to feel hope, joy, and affirmation. And finally, after six months, an assessment of our efforts and what are our next steps.

I'm excited by this comprehensive first step. Beyond completing the survey and participating in a discussion group, would you like to know more about how to be involved in this effort? Let me know!

*Blessings,
Pastor David*

Moderator's Message

At our Second Saturday Series last month we were fortunate to have a presentation by Dr. Selden "Dee" Kelley. Dr. Kelly was the Pastor of San Diego First Church of the Nazarene 2006-2024. He shared the story of his efforts to invite a broader view of inclusion in his denomination, including LGBTQ people, and the consequences he faced – including termination. His congregation stood behind him but the national Church of the Nazarene stripped away his credentials.

He was compelling about his devotion to Christ's teachings and his desire to serve God and the pain of his journey. I am sorry more people did not get to hear Dee but am hopeful we will have him back again.

He reminded me how fortunate we are to be a part of the congregation that is open and affirming to all.

The Second Saturday Series is presented by the Life Stages team and is a wonderful new resource in our Church.

~ Pat Wahlen

Healing Ministry

We had a remarkable response to our Lenten series on healing led by Pastor Courtney which started with 42 people in the chapel to experience Sound Healing – it's like listening to a symphony of singing bowls but much more. We will continue to offer this every few months. The next opportunity is **Sunday, May 4th at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall.**

We are also exploring how to incorporate a more regular schedule of other opportunities such as healing touch, services of anointing with prayer, and other modalities during this time when so many of us are carrying around grief about the world as well as all that is happening in our personal lives. Stay tuned for more. And if you have ideas, share them with Pastor Courtney.



Ordination

Everyone is invited to celebrate with the-almost-Rev. Ken Jensen who will be ordained at MHUCC on **Sunday, May 18, at 3 pm.**

Ken has been called to be the pastor of St. John's UCC in Arlington Heights, Illinois.

Second Saturday Speaker Series - May 10



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. For more information, contact Marilyn Miles.

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).

What an Easter!

The sanctuary was packed on Easter morning with 225 worshipers, a choir with more than 20 singers, 5 brass players, almost 40 kids racing like a herd up the steps to hunt for Easter eggs – filled and hidden by the youth group, and a full lunch in the Fellowship Hall afterward – thanks to Marty, Geri, and family. We offer tremendous gratitude to our incredibly gifted musicians, especially Kris and Angelica, for all the extra practices and the complexity of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Easter Sunrise, and Easter Festival Worship liturgies. Thanks to the 12 people who spent two hours overnight in vigil in our sanctuary. Thanks to all the ushers, communion servers, sanctuary decorators, and everyone who offered hospitality to our guests – all of whom remarked on how welcome they felt. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!



Sierra Service Project Camp

Students entering 6th - 12th grade: We still have openings for you to join us for summer camp and a service opportunity Sunday, August 3 – Saturday, August 9 in San Diego South Bay

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.

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.**

The MHUCC youth group has a long history of participating in SSP. In our most recent trip, in 2023, we took a group of 5 boys to volunteer at their program in Sacramento. You can get a feeling for that trip from our video, and a more general feel for the program from the SSP Invitation video, both of which are linked from our [website](#).

Families who already expressed interest: I will be sending out registration forms next week.

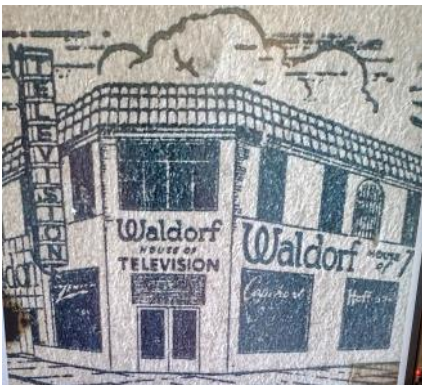
Upcoming Youth Group Events

- Friday May 2: Visit to the Islamic Center of San Diego
- Saturday May 17, 9am – 12pm: Canyon Cleanup volunteering with the Marston Canyon Volunteers, followed by pizza. (pictured from previous event)
- Sunday, May 25, 10am – 12 noon: Confirmation service and party
- Sunday, August 3 – Saturday, August 9: Sierra Service Project, San Diego South Bay.



History Corner - Where Shall We Meet?

In the earliest years of our church, the Board of Trustees (about 6 men) was the major governing body, dealing with a variety of issues such as building projects, budgets, stewardship, . . . Throughout the 1920's, the Board met in restaurants where they could dine and conduct business. Their first location was the Cabrillo Café on 6th St., downtown.



Then beginning in 1928, they moved to the Waldorf Café in North Park, where weekday lunches cost \$0.35. This building, located at 3140 University Ave., later became the iconic Waldorf Television Building, - the first television store in San Diego. (pictured on the left)

In 1931, the meetings moved to the Hotel Churchill, corner of 9th and C St. This building is now an affordable housing development. In 1937, the Board began holding meetings at the church. Meetings of the Board of Trustees and the Council continued to meet in the church for the next 83 years. In 2020, the Pandemic forced us all to adapt to ZOOM meetings, which are now our preferred meeting style.

CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRY



Thank you all so much for your generous support of our Children & Families Ministry by donating plastic Easter eggs and candies! Your contributions helped create a joyful and fun-filled Easter celebration for our kids. A big shoutout to the amazing youth who took the time to hide all the eggs—your help made the hunt egg-citing!. Special thanks to Danny for stepping into the role of our Easter Bunny and bringing smiles to so many little faces.

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Our after-school program is starting again, and this season's theme is all about Jesus' resurrection and painting on rocks, on canvas, and even on faces! With special guest artists leading the way, kids can look forward to laughter, creativity, and friendships!



MISSION KIDS SUMMER CAMP June 16–20 | 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Do you know kids ages 6–12 who love to have fun, make new friends, and learn about God? The MHUCC Children & Families Ministry has an exciting camp just for them!

This year's theme is Waves of Wonder — where the beauty of God's creation comes to life! Kids will dive into Scripture and explore how God provides water for plants, animals, and people. Through worship and drama, Bible study, art and science explorations, and active games, children will deepen their understanding of the significance of water as we celebrate the wonders of water and God's care for the world. Sign-ups will be available soon—stay tuned!



UCC Action Center



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

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



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 March Council Meeting:

<https://missionhillsucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/MarchCouncil.pdf>

May Birthdays

May 2 Glenn Dunham
May 3 Lily Ransom
May 7 Cameron Davis
May 10 Vic Van Lint
May 11 Georgia Rickert
May 12 Fiona Case
May 13 Elena Jimenez
May 14 Mary Ellen McMahan
May 15 Rilla Baxter
 Zac Nimke
May 18 Jinx Jay
 David Quiñones
May 19 Daniel Antos
May 21 Diane Edwards
May 24 Hanna Marrone
May 25 Laurie Halgren
 Laura Borschel
May 26 Dianne Ramet



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



Did You Miss It? Want to Watch Again?

Watch last week's service (or any service) here:

<https://www.youtube.com/@missionhillsucc8846>

Sermons

Did you know you can read, listen, or watch last week's (or any) sermon?
 Share it and #spreadtheword

- Read it [here](#)
- Listen via [podcast](#)
- Watch just the sermon on [YouTube](#)

May Mission Partner - El Nido

The most dangerous time for victims of domestic violence is when they try to leave their abuser.

Interfaith Shelter Network's El Nido Transitional Living Program provides a haven for single women and women with children who are fleeing domestic violence. Program participants partner with a skilled and compassionate case manager to create personalized plans to achieve self-sufficiency for themselves and their children.

DV families have complex needs to recover from the ravages of domestic violence. El Nido Program participants receive on-site case management and psychological counseling, financial planning, housing search and life skills classes and referrals to additional services, such as legal assistance programs, medical and dental services, educational programs such as ESL and GED, job training and employment readiness programs. Survivors recover from trauma, build skills and incomes, and acquire permanent housing for their families. This is up to 12 months program stay.

Pictured here is our very own, Joan Berry who was recognized at their fundraising event on April 26th for all her work with [El Nido](#).

You can make a donation by using the Monthly Mission Partner envelope in the pews or by going to our [website](#)



Community Bake Sale - Thank you!

Thanks to all who participated in this year's Bake Sale, the bakers, the volunteers who worked that morning, and those who shopped. \$452 was raised for the church Scholarship fund and we provided our neighbors with a friendly greeting as they stopped by to shop, use our restrooms, and enjoy the beauty of our sanctuary. One of our church volunteers shared that last year's bake sale was her first encounter with our church!

Mission Hills United Church of Christ
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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
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Administrative Assistant	Elizabeth Quinones	ext. 301	Elizabeth.Quinones@missionhillsucc.org
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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	Jianna 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

Mission Hills UCC - Upcoming Events

May	Mission Partner: El Nido
Friday, 5/2	Knitting 2 Give, 10 am - 12 pm, Commons
Sunday 5/4	Sound Healing, 6:30 pm, Fellowship Hall
Thursday, 5/8	Civil Rights Pilgrimage Meeting, 6:30 pm, zoom
Saturday 5/10	Second Saturday Speaker Series, Fellowship Hall, 10 am - 12 pm
Wednesday, 5/14	Lunch with Pastor, noon, Commons
Thursday, 5/15	Knitting 2 Give, 2-4 pm, Commons
Sunday, 5/18	Ken Jensen Ordination, 3 pm
Tuesday, 5/20	Feeding Mission Hills Food Distribution, 10:30 am
Sunday, 5/25	Confirmation Sunday

June	Mission Partner: Strengthen the Church
Sunday, 6/1	Rock n Roll Marathon, worship delayed to 11 am
Friday, 6/6	Knitting 2 Give, 10 am - 12 pm, Commons
Sunday, 6/8	Celebration of Music Sunday
Wednesday, 6/11	Lunch with Pastor, noon, Commons
Thursday, 6/12	Civil Rights Pilgrimage Meeting, 6:30 pm, zoom
Mon 6/16 - Fri 6/20	VBS, 8 am - 1 pm, Fellowship Hall
Tuesday, 6/17	Feeding Mission Hills Food Distribution, 10:30 am
Thursday, 6/19	Knitting 2 Give, 2-4 pm, Commons
Sunday, 6/22	Ecclesiastical Meeting, after worship

Every Week:

Sundays - ReExamining Our Faith Book Study - 9 am - Commons
Tuesdays - Men's Group - 6:30 pm - Commons
Thursdays - Choir Rehearsal - 7 pm, Chapel
Saturdays - Gentle Yoga - 9 am, Chapel

For all events, visit our online calendar:

<https://missionhillsucc.org/calendar-of-events/>