

Spring 2024

MESSENGER

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Social Holiness: Our Methodist DNA

At the heart of the Methodist movement has always been an abiding commitment to “faith working through love” (Galatians 5:6). For John Wesley, our Christian life must be one of both personal spiritual devotion (prayer, worship, Bible Study, etc.) as well as what he called “social holiness,” a commitment to extending God’s love through acts of service, seeking justice and responding to oppression. Personal devotion and social holiness are two sides of our faith that are inextricably linked to our lives of discipleship.

Throughout this issue of *The Messenger*, we see our Methodist DNA weaving its way through our ministries, celebrations of worship, visits to Homeboy Industries, our Community Pantry, responses to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and individual lives of faith and action. Over these 150 years, we have been seeking to be a place where our faith in Christ works through our lives via loving service and action.

In the midst of this time of political turmoil, violence and for many, despair, may our faith in God’s love, and our commitment to being disciples, lead us to lives of hope, compassion, justice and mercy.



Pastor Amy

Rev. Dr. Amy Aitken,
Pastor



Litany to Our Social Creed

God in the Spirit revealed in Jesus Christ, calls us by grace to be renewed in the image of our Creator, that we may be one in divine love for the world.

Today is the day
God cares for the integrity of creation, wills the healing and wholeness of all life, weeps at the plunder of earth's goodness.
And so shall we.

Today is the day
God embraces all hues of humanity, delights in diversity and difference, favors solidarity transforming strangers into friends.
And so shall we.

Today is the day
God cries with the masses of starving people, despises growing disparity between rich and poor, demands justice for workers in the marketplace.
And so shall we.

Today is the day
God deplores violence in our homes and streets, rebukes the world's warring madness, humbles the powerful and lifts up the lowly.
And so shall we.

Today is the day
God calls for nations and peoples to live in peace, celebrates where justice and mercy embrace, exults when the wolf grazes with the lamb.
And so shall we.

Today is the day
God brings good news to the poor, proclaims release to the captives, gives sight to the blind, and sets the oppressed free.
And so shall we.

Third@First Series Continues it's 10th Season

By Junko Ueno Garrett, Artistic Coordinator

I am so grateful to have Third@First as one of the ministries at First UMC. Our audience has been growing and I've had the pleasure of meeting new people at each concert! I deeply appreciate all of the donors who support this program and thank all of the Third@First volunteers—this concert series is a team effort!

In October, we had the memorable premier of "Let Music In" to celebrate the 10th season, composed by our organist, Aaron Shows with lyrics written by our trustee chair, Paul Audley. After the concert, a longtime church member told me it was "...One of the best experiences at our church...". The music was so

powerful and beautiful that the audience was mesmerized.

In November, we had "Paris in Pasadena," combining chamber music and songs. People enjoyed the "Parisian" atmosphere in our sanctuary.

December brought our always popular "Christmas Joy Concert". It was so wonderful to have all of our choirs and instrumental ensemble working together.

In January, the "Bohemian Duo" (my husband David and I) presented a concert of Czech composers, performing their music and sharing interesting anecdotes and histories.

I also performed a Chopin themed



concert in February called "Chopin, the Poet".

We only have 4 more concerts to go this season! You don't want to miss the fun. Our concerts are produced for the enjoyment of the whole community, and the admission is always free.

Thank you for your support! For a full list of upcoming performances, visit thirdatfirst.org.

The Blessing of Books: Join the United Women Faith Book Club

By Marilynne Wilander

It's an age-old problem: So many books; so little time! How do we decide which books to read—particularly when we are looking for books that deepen our faith?

Well, the First UMC chapter of the United Women in Faith Book Club has done the homework for you! We have selected 11 books to read for 2024 in five important areas of study: Education for Mission, Leadership Development, Nurturing for Community, Social Action, and Spiritual Growth.

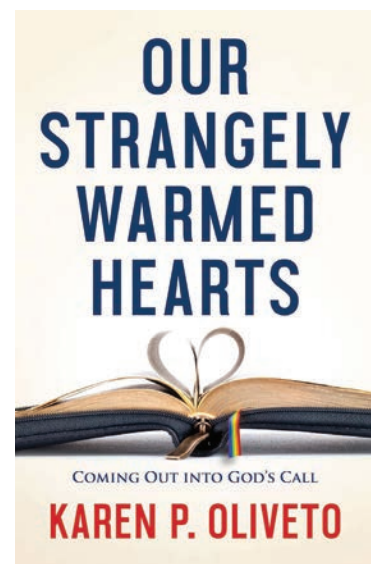
The group recently finished reading and discussing **The Three Mothers: How the Mothers of Martin Luther King, Jr, Malcolm X, and James Baldwin Shaped a Nation** by Anna Malaika Rubbs. While it was difficult to read about the inhumane experiences that each of these mothers and their families experienced,

everyone insisted that the book needed to be written. We learn so much from what we read each month and are enriched by sharing our reactions and ideas with other Women in Faith.

For March we will be reading Bishop Karen Oliveto's book **Our Strangely Warmed Hearts: Coming Out into God's Call**. As Methodists we have heard about how John Wesley experienced a strangely warmed heart when he discovered his true spiritual identity. Bishop Oliveto also felt "a strangely warmed heart" and a sense of spiritual renewal and personal call to ministry in her own personal faith journey.

We encourage everyone (no matter your gender identity) to join us in reading any or all of the books that are on our list. Discussing interesting books has made for an enriching reading experience.

The UWF Book Club meets the 2nd Monday of the month at 12:15 p.m. in the Church Library. For a full list of UWF Book Club books, and more information on the UWF, contact Marilynne Wilander: marilynnewilander@gmail.com



Festival Recognition for “We’ve Gotta Sing”

By Pam Marx

In celebration of our 50 year anniversary in 2022, a dedicated group of performers and filmmakers created a feature length documentary about First UMC’s Summer Musical Program. The film, titled “We’ve Gotta Sing”, was lovingly created through the hard work and research of Megan Goldstein, Eric Dyson, and Pam Marx.

We are pleased to share that the documentary, “We’ve Gotta Sing”, and the story it shares about how our church has connected with the community through theater and the arts has been

honored as an official selection of the Spotlight Documentary Film Awards and the WRPN Women’s International Film Festival.

Narrated by Henry Dyson, Miranda Lohr, and Josiah Sun, “We’ve Gotta Sing” shares the history of our program, its goals, and how it has affected our church community. You can watch the full film by scanning the QR code.

During the production of the film, the creative team tracked down many of the people who’ve been involved with the Summer Musical Program over

the years. Rev. John Woodall, Carol Tavis, Tom Bowman, Irene Atkinson, Shan Halverson, Mike Underwood, and many others turned in statements and stories. Even the director of the very first Summer Musical 50 years ago was included in the documentary (they now live in Indiana)!

We are so proud of what the Summer Musical Program has been able to accomplish over the years and are looking forward to our performance this summer!

We are pleased to announce that this year’s Summer Musical will be “Honk!”, a tale of acceptance and love based on the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale, *The Ugly Duckling*. Auditions will begin in May (details to come). People of all ages are encouraged to participate in the fun. Sign up for our News@First emails to stay in the loop!



Sharp-Dressed Saint

An Interview of Calbert Murray

By Arlene Murray

Calbert Murray has been such an important part of the First UMC family. He embodies the idea of faith in action through his dedication to his work, his kindness, and his compassion for others. We recently emailed some questions to Calbert's daughter Arlene about his life and she kindly shared her answers with us.

Where did Calbert grow up?

My dad grew up on Banana Street of Pasmore Town in Kingston, Jamaica.

What was it like in the town where he grew up?

People were respectful in those days. He went to school Monday through Friday, then he had to go to church on Sundays and also attend Sunday school.

What was his family like: his parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters?

He was raised by his grandaunt and she was very strict, but it was to his benefit. His grandaunt had a lot of goats, chickens, ducks, and roosters. He had two brothers, Delroy and Alfonso, and six sisters, Gracie, Sonia, Madgie, Patsy, Jenny, and Carlene but he did not grow up with them.

How many children does Calbert have?

He has four children. Three daughters (Arlene, Marlene, and Elaine) and one son (Dennis).

What careers did he have while living in Jamaica?

He used to work at the post office and the archives division of a bank. He was a security officer for eight years, a mechanic at a motorcycle shop, and a DJ for parties and wedding receptions.

What brought him to Pasadena and when?

In 1993, his father Stanley, who lived in Pasadena, petitioned for him to come to America. He made the decision to come because times were hard in Jamaica and he was in search of new opportunities.



How would you describe his work ethic?

My dad is very dedicated to his work. He is a reliable and hardworking employee who is proud of what he does and where he works.

How would you describe him as a father?

He is a loving, caring and supportive father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. He does his best to show up for us when we need him. He is also funny and a great storyteller. He always has hilarious stories to tell.

Calbert is a very spiritual man. Could you describe his faith journey?

He grew up in church because his grandaunt was a revivalist and she took him to church with her every Sunday. He followed this example and made sure his children went to church as well.

What are his favorite foods? Favorite music? Favorite colors?

His favorite foods are rice and peas, fish, vegetable soup, and cornmeal porridge. He loves reggae, jazz, calypso, and love songs. His favorite colors are red, green, gold, and black.

What is his favorite memory?

His favorite memory was taking a plane for the first time when he came to America.

Does he have any goals he'd like to accomplish that he hasn't yet?

A goal he would like to accomplish is to buy a home for his wife, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Calbert is the best dressed person here at the church, and probably in all of Pasadena! Has he always been so stylish?

Where does he get his sense of style?

My dad has always been very stylish, even back when he still lived in Jamaica. It's a part of Jamaican culture that he brought with him to the states. His father used to dress similarly to him, but he did not know until after his father died and his stepsister showed him some old photos.

Is there anything we should know as a community about Calbert that we may not know?

He has 10 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren. He is married to Jacqueline and has one stepson. He loves his family immensely and always wants the best for us.

Entheos: Let's Reconnect!

By Sue Clairday

In the 1990s, after a progressive dinner and fellowship, some FUMCers and I decided to create a group. Someone threw out the name "The Fab 40's", but we wisely chose the name Entheos (which loosely translates to "inspired by God") instead.

A lot has changed since then. We may no longer be in our 40's, but many of us fondly remember the fun dinners, filling diaper bags for the Pasadena Prenatal Clinic, picnics with the kids, trips up to camp, Pastor Lily Villamin's horse galloping back to the stable when we had just started a horseback ride, film night in the Tkocz's backyard, and our great Christmas Parties at the Summer's House.

It's time we had a reunion! We are hoping to meet at a restaurant with a room to ourselves so we can catch up. Let's reconnect Entheos! Anyone interested? Please contact Sue Clairday sclairday@charter.net.

Homeboy Industries and Homegirl Café: A Wonderful, Inspiring Day!

By Marilynne Wilander

On Thursday, February 16, Pathfinders coordinated an outing to Homeboy Industries for sixteen FUMC members.

The first thing that we noticed as we approached the building was how friendly and helpful everyone was. There was really a sense of family throughout the campus.

The mission of Homeboy Industries is to provide hope, training, and support to formerly gang-involved and recently incarcerated men and women, allowing them to redirect their lives and become contributing members of our community. They currently have 450 formerly gang-involved and/or recently incarcerated employees who provide essential services via Homeboy Industries to the public. There is a waiting list of 150 people who want to be a Homeboy employee; many of them volunteer while

they are waiting for employment.

Our group had two different tours; one before lunch and the other after. Omar (43 years old) and Francisco (55 years old) were the morning tour guides. Omar shared that he first came to Homeboy 18 years ago. He ended up leaving five times, but kept coming back. His sixth time at Homeboy began three years ago. He and Father Boyle both realize that becoming a functioning member of society is a journey, and that he wasn't ready for change when he first came to Homeboy. Getting his gang tattoos removed was emotionally difficult for him, especially removing his very first tattoo which he got when he was only 13 years old, but he had them removed for the safety for his wife and three children.

Many in the surrounding community volunteer countless hours to the

Homeboy/Homegirl family, including 47 tutors, 32 tattoo removal professionals, 44 therapists and psychiatrists, and 10 legal service providers. Homeboy helps with job placement, supportive counseling and referrals. High school and college courses are also available. Francisco, one of our guides, recently received his GED certificate in a graduation ceremony.

After the tour, we enjoyed a delicious lunch at the Homegirl Cafe—with great service from “homies”. Many of us are interested in going back again!

How fortunate for our community to have this amazing, multi-faceted program that Father Gregory Boyle began in 1988. Homeboy Industries provides much-needed support in a setting where everyone is valued. You can immediately sense that this is “home” for so many.



About Pathfinders:

Pathfinders is an FUMC Fellowship group for folks 60 and above who are young at heart. Everyone is welcome to join us for any or all of our events. To learn about future activities, email Marilynne Wilander at Marilynnewilander@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY PANTRY

BY THE NUMBERS

Each week, our dedicated volunteers pack grocery bags and distribute fresh fruits, vegetables, cheese sticks, salads, hard-boiled eggs, lunch bags/sandwiches, and other products. Our numbers are growing and we are averaging between 45-55 clients each week.

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED EXACTLY HOW MUCH FOOD IS DISTRIBUTED BY THE FOOD PANTRY EVERY YEAR?

WE PACK
2400

OF THE FOLLOWING:

JUICE POUCHES
WATER BOTTLES
CRACKER SLEEVES
RAISIN/
CRANBERRY BOXES
APPLESAUCE

PUDDING
CANNED TUNA
UTENSILS
CANNED SOUP/
CHILI
CUP OF NOODLES

AND
4800

OF THE FOLLOWING:

GRANOLA BARS
OATMEAL PACKETS
PEANUT BUTTER PACKS

PER YEAR!



960 LBS

Bananas



1440

Avocados



2400

Milks



1190

Tomatoes



2400

Chips



2700

Apples



476

Salads



1920

Sandwiches/
Lunch Bags



2400

Yogurts

WE DISTRIBUTE 7200 GROCERY BAGS ANNUALLY. EACH CLIENT LEAVES WITH APPROXIMATELY 2-3 BAGS EACH WEEK.



SHOP OUR
AMAZON
WISH LIST

A Brief Introduction to the Current Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

By Claudia Capria

Please Note: The following is an extremely condensed version of a very complex and intricate subject. We encourage you to educate yourself and read widely about this conflict. Anti-semitism and Islamophobia are never appropriate and all people deserve safe spaces to live and thrive.

Timeline of Escalation:

The following is a condensed timeline of the escalation of conflict between the Israeli government and Palestinians in the region.

- **1948** - Count Folke Bernadotte, UN Mediator, was assassinated by an Israeli militant group. The UN Security Council supervised a truce and passed Resolution 194, calling for Palestinian refugees to be allowed to return home, Jerusalem to be under international governing, and the UN Conciliation Commission for Palestine to replace the previous UN mediator.
- **1949** - Israel becomes a UN Member.
- **1950** - Defying UN Resolutions, Israel moved its capital from Tel Aviv to western Jerusalem.

History of Occupation:

Following the end of World War I, Palestine was the only former-Ottoman territory to not be granted independent statehood. Instead, the United Kingdom mandated through the Balfour Declaration that Palestine become a state for the Jewish people. From 1922 to 1947, there was an uptick in Jewish migration to Palestine, mostly from Eastern Europe as result of the coming second world war. This increase caused tension between the indigenous people living in Palestine and the influx of Jewish immigrants.

The first rebellion against mass immigration and British rule was in 1937. Violence erupted on both sides. In 1942, the Biltmore Program was adopted in the United States, calling for the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth and for unlimited immigration. In 1947, the UK relinquished its mandatory rule of Palestine to the United Nations and the UN adopted Resolution 181(II), dividing Palestine into an unnamed "Jewish State" and an unnamed "Arab State", with Jerusalem left under UN protection.

In April of 1948, the "Unnamed Jewish State" launched the Deir Yassin Massacre, in which a paramilitary group killed over 100 Palestinians in a village near Jerusalem. Israel declared its independence on May 15th. This also marks what is known as the Palestinian Nakba (the Palestinian Catastrophe) — the mass displacement of thousands of Palestinian refugees—culminating in the first Arab-Israeli War.

- **1964** - The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was founded in Cairo.
- **1967** - War broke out a second time when Israel occupied the West Bank. The UN unanimously passed and installed Resolution 242: A demand for withdrawal of Israeli forces.
- **1982** - Israel invaded Lebanon, intending to eliminate the PLO. Although a ceasefire was called, and the PLO withdrew to neighboring countries, Palestinian refugees were massacred in two refugee camps.
- **1987** - The Palestinian people engaged in their first intifada (uprising). This included small-scale riots, demonstrations, and violence against Israel. These acts were met with forced university closures, arrests, and deportations. The response was larger riots and demonstrations. Any acts of Palestinian violence against Israeli soldiers were typically met with shootings or arrests.
- **1988** - The country of Jordan gave the land of the West Bank back to the PLO, and the Palestinian National Council adopted a declaration of independence in November.
- **2006** - The militant group Hamas won the Palestinian elections and formed the Palestinian Authority government. In July, Israel went to war in Lebanon.
- **2007** - Hamas conducted an armed takeover in Gaza. That November, international conferences intervened to work towards a peace treaty between Israel and Palestine. It was unsuccessful.
- **2008** - Israel issued a blockade of the Gaza Strip and increased sanctions on the region. Israel launched a 22-day military assault on the Gaza Strip and the UN Security Council passed another resolution calling for a ceasefire.
- **2009** - The UN launched an investigation into human rights violations due to the conflict. Israel refused to cooperate.
- **2012** - Israel held an 8-day military operation against the Gaza Strip.
- **2014** - Israel conducted another large-scale military operation (known as “Protective Edge”) in the Gaza Strip.
- **2016** - The UN Security Council stated Israel’s activity and occupation in Palestinian settlements is a direct violation of international law and holds no legal validity.
- **2017** - In opposition to the UN, President Trump recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.
- **2018** - Palestinian protesters attempted to cross the border into Israel. On May 14, Israeli soldiers opened fire on demonstrators, killing 60 and wounding more than 2,000. The violence escalated into Israeli airstrikes and Hamas firing rockets. Egypt mediated negotiations following this event, continuing into 2020.

On October 7, 2023 Hamas launched an assault on Israelis, killing an estimated 1,200 people and taking hostage more than 200 people. In response, the Israeli government has killed more than 29,000 Palestinians in their current military campaign. The tension we are witnessing today is a build-up of nearly a century’s worth of violence. It is imperative to note most of the decisions regarding Palestine have not been made by Palestinians, but by international actors. All data presented has been found through the United Nation’s History of Palestine, the Encyclopedia Britannica, The United Nations Relief and Works Agency, Al-Jazeera, and TIME Magazine.

“Let Us Try What Love Can Do”: Responding to the Crisis in Israel/Palestine

By Anthony Manousos

What can we do as Christians and Methodists to respond to the tragedy unfolding in real time in Gaza and Israel/Palestine? As we see graphic images of the killing of over 1,200 Israeli Jews and over 29,000 Palestinians (including over 11,000 children) as of Ash Wednesday, 2024, there is no end in sight and we can't help feeling powerful emotions such as grief, fear, anger and despair. These are trying times, but as the Gospel tells us: “Perfect love drives out fear” (1 John 4:18). The Quaker William Penn also spoke an inspiring word: “Let us try what love can do.”

How, then, can we put our Christian love and faith into practice?

First, we can grieve and pray for the victims of war who have lost their lives, their homes, and their hopes for the future. We can also pray for the perpetrators and enablers of violence who have lost their humanity by dehumanizing others. We can pray that our leaders, and leaders on both sides of the conflict in Israel/Palestine, will take off their blinders and see that violence only begets more violence.

Then, as we pray, we may be led to take further action since, as James says, “faith without works is dead” (James 2:26). Here are some actions we can take:

1. We can let our elected officials know that we want a ceasefire and de-escalation of violence so that humanitarian aid can flow into Gaza and alleviate the suffering, and so both sides can begin to negotiate a just and humane solution to this conflict. The Methodist Board of Church and Society has a template letter that we can use for writing our elected officials.
2. We can take part in an interfaith prayer vigil like the one that takes place every Monday from 5:00-7:00 p.m. in front of Rep. Judy Chu's office (at 527 S. Lake near Ten Thousand Villages). We are calling for a ceasefire and an end to the occupation. This vigil is being organized by a grassroots collective that includes Pasadena Mennonites, All Saints Episcopal Church, Jewish Voice for Peace, Islamic Center of Southern California, PCC Anti-War Club, and others. Our gathering always ends with a powerful prayer.



3. We can join the Interfaith Study Group that meets monthly, sponsored by the Islamic Center of Southern California (ICSC), the Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center, and All Saints Episcopal Church. Visit <https://allsaints-pas.org/ministries/interfaith-study-group/> for more information.
4. Listen with compassion and care to our Jewish and Muslim friends. Many are experiencing grief, fear, anger, and despair, and they need to know that we care.
5. We can attend the First UMC and ICSC potluck on March 21st at 6:00 p.m. here at the church. There will be an introduction to both Lent and Ramadan followed by conversations in small groups and a shared meal starting at sunset (7:06 p.m.). You can sign up after worship (there is a limit to 25 guests) and bring a vegetarian dish to share.

These are just a few ways that we can put our faith and Christian love into action during these challenging times. It is my hope and prayer that we can work together as Spirit moves us as a Church to be instruments of healing, justice and peace. If you have any further questions, or want to speak more about putting our faith into action, please contact me at interfaithquaker@aol.com.

Anthony and his friend Muhammad at a vigil in front of Rep. Judy Chu's Office.



First's Faithful

By Heidi Neuroth



The Wilander Family

In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the First UMC campus, and the 150th anniversary of the congregation, First's Faithful is focusing our interviews on people who have grown up in the church. Among these individuals is Marilynne Wilander, a fixture at First UMC whose dedication spans decades of service and leadership roles within the congregation.

Her involvement in church activities began early on, and over the years, she held leadership positions in Missions, Trustees, Education and the United Methodist Women, now United Women in Faith (as well as the previous Christian Womens Forum). Her commitment underscores her strong belief in the church's significance in the lives of its members.

About Marilynne

Marilynne's deep-rooted connection to First UMC traces back to her childhood in Altadena and Pasadena, where she was raised in the Garrison home as the eldest of five siblings (three girls and two boys). Her journey at First UMC intertwined with many personal milestones. She first met her late husband, Dave, as he visited the church fresh from his Navy service.

Their courtship blossomed against the backdrop of church events, including a memorable missionary trip by bus to Atlixco near Mexico City.

Marilynne pursued a career in education, taught in the Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) and later became an assistant principal in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Marilynne and Dave had several children, Pam, Ted, and Sean, who also grew up at FUMC. It was this family that later supported her during Dave's tragic battle with brain cancer. Marilynne also found solace and companionship through her First UMC friends and remarried to Roger Willander. Today, the couple enjoys a large family with several shared family travel adventures.

Early Memories

Marilynne fondly remembers her very early years of growing up in Altadena. Some of those memories include running up to the Aldersgate room after Sunday School, where the adults would have yummy donuts. There were frequent picnics at Washington Park on the corner of El Molino and Washington Blvd.

As a youth there were square dances in the Great Hall during the 50's and 60's. Wayne Brubaker directed over 40

participants at these dances in "Do-Si-Do" or "Promenade Your Partner." Roller skating and volleyball were also regular pastimes in the Great Hall.

Funny Moments at First UMC

When asked what one of her funniest memories at church is, Marilynne shared a story from her wedding: "Dave Kennedy and I were married in the church chapel on a hot day in August of 1964. I managed to step on a rake the day before, and got a huge black eye. You can spot it in my wedding photo", she explains.

If that weren't enough of a hiccup, the ceremony took an unexpected turn amidst the sweltering heat. Marilynne's brother, David, a groomsman who was standing at the altar, fainted during the pastor's prayer, prompting the calm yet resourceful response from Marilynne's father of staying in his pew and letting Dr. Johnstone tend to David.

Traditions We Still Keep

Just as we do with children, youth, and families today (weather permitting), Marilynne took trips to Camp Sky Meadows when she was a girl. "Sky Meadows has been part of the church for 70 years. I can remember when Sky Meadows was first purchased and my little sister was given a bath in the kitchen sink of the custodian's house," Marilynne recalls. Each school year started a week or so after Labor Day,



Dave and Marilynne Kennedy's
Wedding in the Chapel

so Camp Sky Meadows would host the Annual Labor Day Family camp before the school year started. On Labor Day Monday, all of the families would leave camp. The youth, including the incoming 7th graders, would stay for Youth Camp.

Things you may not know about Marilynne:

- The cross hanging in the Sanctuary was donated by Marilynne and her late husband Dave before he passed away.
- The first choir tour was initiated by Marilynne's dad, Irving Garrison, in the 60s.
- The piano in Fellowship Hall once belonged to Marilynne's great grandmother, an organist at the Hollywood United Methodist Church (est. 1909).
- All three sisters (including Marilynne) were married in the FUMC chapel.
- Marilynne was the first female chair of the Staff Pastor-Parish Committee back in the early 70's.
- First UMC is an important part of the City of Pasadena's Annual Hunger Walk. In the 70's, it was a 10 mile walk that her father chaired.



50th Anniversary Celebration,
of Marilynne's parents Irving
(left) and Marjorie Garrison (far
right) in Sockman Hall (now
called Fellowship Hall)

What Marilynne wants you to know:

First UMC is blessed with an incredible pastoral staff as well as the many who are part of our church staff. However, volunteers are essential to our church family in so many ways: Our leadership structure includes committee chairs and hard-working members, our fabulous choir includes members of all ages, we have dedicated volunteer teachers for our children and youth, and wonderful laypeople leading and participating in fellowship groups—including both of our United Women in Faith daytime and evening groups. None of these activities, which are what makes FUMC a church family, could happen without lay volunteers.

Participation in the process group validated my life experiences, helping me to recognize that I am not alone in my struggles, getting practical ideas to apply to daily life, reminding me that I don't have to do this on my own strength because God is with me. Meeting weekly helped to keep the topic on my radar for accountability.

- Process Group Participant

The Growth and Outreach of Process Groups

By Janet Logan

What if you could join a simple group that helps people understand their emotions or deal with difficult circumstances? Our process groups are a great way to unpack our feelings and learn from one another in a community of support.

Process groups cover a wide range of topics. Here are some examples of groups we have offered through FUMC:

- **Grieving Through the Holidays**
- **Living With Less Worry and Anxiety**
- **Managing Anger**
- **Care for the Caregiver**
- **Ending Well: A Roadmap for Your Executor and Family**
- **Choosing To Forgive (Myself and Others)**

What does a typical process group meeting look like?

Preliminary reflection: The course begins 2-3 days before each meeting when participants receive an email containing a 3 to 4 page discussion guide. They are encouraged to print the guide and set aside time before the meeting to reflect on the contents.

Introduction: Each week, this check-in time is set aside to allow participants to say whatever progress or challenges came up as they worked on their goals.

Review of the Subject Matter: Throughout the meeting, participants will review a short paragraph with ideas about the topic at hand. After reading aloud, they will answer related discussion questions.

Discussion Questions: Answering questions together provides space for group members to openly explore and discuss their experiences.

Spiritual encouragement: The discussion guides also endeavor to raise awareness of the tremendous amount of help God makes available to us humans, and how to access it more often.

Today's takeaway: Meetings end with members sharing something important or new they've learned from the hour.

What benefits do participants get from these groups?

Participants often say that listening to the experiences, strength, and hope of others is vital. Members pick up new ideas from each other and are encouraged to try new healthier ways of responding or coping.

Additional Benefits:

- Increased peace of mind through clearer, more satisfying behavioral expressions.
- Decreased dependence upon default responses.
- Heightened awareness of God's presence and assistance in your daily life.
- The rare gift of one hour a week to think about and process something that matters to you.

What do the facilitators do?

The main role of facilitators is to guide the conversation and hold the space open and safe for people with varying opinions so everyone can get something out of the time together. Participants can expect a confidential, nonjudgmental community. It's important to note that facilitators do not teach or counsel and are not qualified to give professional advice.

Are you interested in attending a process group? Contact connect@fumcpasadena.org for a list of confirmed groups in 2024 and to sign up for a session.



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CAPERMIT NO. 128

RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED

fumcpasadena.org



JOIN US FOR HOLY WEEK & EASTER SUNDAY

MARCH. 24

PALM SUNDAY - 10:00 A.M.
Procession and Worship Service

MARCH. 28

MAUNDY THURSDAY - 7:00 P.M.
Special Service at St. James Methodist Church
(Dinner will be served at 6:00 P.M.)

MARCH. 29

GOOD FRIDAY - 7:00 P.M.
Worship Service in our Chapel

MARCH. 31

EASTER SUNDAY - 10:00 A.M.
Christ is risen, alleluia!