



The Courier

First United Methodist Church of Canoga Park

22700 Sherman Way, West Hills, CA 91307-2396

Church 818.340.2950

E-mail: crossandflame@att.net

Website: <http://www.umccp.org>

Pastor: eshinpaul@gmail.com

Welcome to First Church where everyone is either our friend or family.

Sunday Worship at 10:00 am

December 2024

December's Light

In December's quiet, chilled embrace,
We find a glow, a holy space.
Advent candles, one by one,
mark the journey towards the Son.

Amidst the rush, the bustling cheer,
a whisper calls for hearts to hear:
Slow down, be still, prepare the way,
For love descends this Christmas Day.

Hope awakens, soft and bright,
Like stars that pierce the longest night.
Peace settles in, a calming grace,
In every heart, a sacred place.

Joy bursts forth in colors bold,
A story ancient, yet retold.
For God with us, Emmanuel,
A love so deep, no words can tell.

So may we, too, reflect the light,
In acts of kindness, warm and bright.
This season's gift—our hearts anew,
To love, to serve, and follow through.

Anonymous

May this December fill us all with hope, peace, joy, and love
as we welcome the light of Christ back into our lives.

Blessings to you all, Rev. Elaine Shin-Paull



December



Pastor

Elaine Shin-Paull

**Music Director/
Accompanist**

Paul Cady

**Administrative
Assistant**

Ebelyn Gaytan

Sunday School Childcare

Veronica Cabrera

Lay Leader

Roger Johnson

Courier Layout

Sharon Mountford

AV Operator

Bernie Godwin



Resident Bishop

Dottie Escobedo-Frank

**North District
Superintendent**

Rev. Garth Gilliam





December Calendar

December Birthdays

- 1 Shirley FitzGeorge
- 7 Dawn Hromadka
- 7 Brandon Seeger
- 10 Verda Longan
- 10 Marianne Menter
- 11 Christopher Guerrero
- 13 George Miller
- 14 Joe Dedinas
- 18 Lori Dimmick
- 20 Marilu Mampell
- 22 Ander Rylan Cates
- 23 Chris Fernando
- 26 Mebin Kaburu
- 29 Bernie Godwin
- 30 Pat Connolly

Anniversaries

- 5 Landrum, Will & Erin
- 6 Baker, Robert & Laverna

If your birthday or anniversary is not listed, please let us know.



December Flowers

- 1 Shirley Thomson, *in memory of family & in celebration of loved ones.*
- 8 Open
- 15 Open
- 22 Ken & Lori Dimmick, *in honor of Lori's birthday*
- 29 Open

If you would like to provide altar flowers on a given Sunday, in honor or memory of someone, please contact Mary Mackay, 818-731-5872.

Weekly Activities

- Sunday Peace Evangelical Church, Hall, 9:00 am
Hindi Urdu Church, Sanctuary, 3:00 pm
- Monday Boy Scout Troop 474, Boy Scout room, 7:00 pm
Virtual prayer meetings: Mondays at 7:30 pm on Zoom.
- Tuesday Church of Christ, Fellowship Hall, 6:00-10:00 pm
- Wednesday Men's AA Group (Learning to Live), Parlor, 7:00 - 9:00 pm
- Thursday Wesleyan Bible Study, Library, 11 am
Narcotics Anonymous (Recovery Zone), Parlor 7:00 pm
Men's AA Step Guide, Room #10, 7:00 pm
- Friday Church of Christ, Hall & Lounge, 6-10 pm *except 12/20/24*
- Saturday SFV Youth Chorus, Hall & Lounge, 8:30 am - 12:30 pm
Narcotics Anon. (Sharing from the Heart), Parlor, 9:30 am

Other Activities

- Sunday 1 First Sunday of Advent
- Tuesday 3 San Fernando Valley Master Chorale, 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Boy Scout's Parent Committee Meeting, 7 pm - 9 pm
- Saturday 7 Men's Fellowship Breakfast, 8:30 am
Frank Weiler's Deli, 2116 Victory Blvd.
Young Ambassadors, Hall, 12:30 - 5:30 pm
- Tuesday 10 Administrative Committee Meeting, 6:30 pm, Library
Boy Scout's Patrol Leader Meeting, 7 pm - 9 pm
- Saturday 21 Rockskippers, Fellowship Hall, 6:30 pm
- Tuesday 24 Office Closed
- Wednesday 25 Christmas Day - Office Closed
- Tuesday 31 New Year's Eve

Coming in January

- Wednesday 1 New Year's Day - Office Closed
- Saturday 4 Men's Fellowship Breakfast, 8:30 am, Frank Weiler's Deli



- * **Hanging of the Greens – November 30th at 12:30 pm**
Help us prepare the sanctuary for Advent.
- * **Baptisms – December 8th**
Celebrate with those being welcomed into the family of faith.
- * **Confirmation – December 15th**
Join us as our youth affirm their faith and commitment to Christ.
- * **Christmas Sunday – December 22nd**
A joyful service as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.
- * **Christmas Eve Service – December 24th at 5 pm**
Our traditional candlelight service celebrates the true meaning of Christmas.



Immigration Detention & Incarceration: Migrants Speak

I recently attended a Webinar on this subject. Approximately 120 persons attended. This webinar centered around the voices of migrants as they share personal experiences and insights on immigration detention and incarceration in the US. This discussion explored the challenges they face in the detention system, the impact on their lives and families, and the urgent need to reform. By hearing directly from impacted migrants (US, Philippines, Mexico & Iran) helps us gain a deeper understanding of the immigration system that keeps over 40,000 immigrants in detention facilities daily.

Release Unforgiveness and Bitterness: Any sin will weigh you down but long-kept unforgiveness and bitterness is like old baggage in the attic you can't seem to part with. You are so familiar with it, you don't even realize how it is hindering your life.

Hebrews 12:1: *Therefore...let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress.*

Ephesians 4:31-32: *Get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

UWF Pledge Reminder

Contributions to the World Thank Offering can be made payable to UMW dba United Women In Faith and sent to Chandra Seeger, 6625 E. Maplegrove, Oak Park, CA 91377 and designated for World Thank Offering.

Learn To Laugh at Yourself and at Life

Some of us take life too seriously, or we take ourselves too seriously. Jesus wants you to enjoy yourself and learn to have some fun. God made you for His pleasure!

Psalm 28:7 *The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy, and I will give thanks to him in song.*

Psalm 126:2: *Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."*

Confirm gatherings before you go.

Bookends

Wednesday, Dec. 18
1:00 pm in Room 10.

The meeting will include a book swap and lunch

Sarah Circle

Thursday, Dec. 12,
9:15 am

Breakfast at Nico's
Restaurant
7166 Shoup Ave.,
West Hills

Faith, Hope & Love

Please note new time and date

Wednesday Dec. 11
11:30 am.

Lunch at Olive Garden,
6501 Fallbrook Ave.
West Hills



Remember to bring food for the West Valley Food Pantry on Communion Sundays

Laura Longman Memorial Scholarship

2025 Applications Available

Sunday December First



The Laura Longman Memorial Scholarship Committee begins its 41st season by announcing the availability of applications for scholarship grants to students who will be a junior or senior in college in the Fall of 2025. At least one \$1000 scholarship grant will be given on Easter

Sunday, April 20, 2025. Applications are available beginning Sunday, December 1, 2024. Request one from the First United Methodist Church office or by calling (818) 340-2950. Completed applications must be returned to the church office by Thursday, March 6, 2025 to be considered.

The Laura Longman Memorial Scholarship is given in loving memory of Laura Lynn Longman (1958 – 1984) who grew up in First United Methodist Church of Canoga Park. Laura was a vital member of our youth group, served as liturgist, sang in the choir, taught Sunday school and was well known by most members of the church. As a young adult she contracted heart disease and eventually underwent an experimental heart transplant. She was the 176th successful heart transplant patient at Stanford University Medical Center.

She returned to the life she loved as a college junior majoring in Biochemistry at San Francisco State University. It was there, in her classroom that Laura died at the age of 25. Laura's family and friends in the First United Methodist Church founded the Laura Longman Memorial Scholarship as a living memorial to celebrate her life and her love of learning. Laura died before she could finish her college education.

This scholarship is designed to help other students finish their undergraduate studies. The first scholarship grants were given on Easter Sunday, 1985. In the 40 years since then 124 Scholarship grants have been awarded to 97 individual students.

To the student who will be a junior or senior in the Fall of 2025 and who has a grade point average of 2.75 of 4.0 or better, we invite you to consider applying for this scholarship. You will give our congregation the opportunity to help you in your college endeavor. It will give you the opportunity to receive a grant of at least \$ 1,000 toward your scholastic expenses. Recent grants have been more generous.

For people who would like to support the Laura Longman Memorial Scholarship, contributions may be made in memory of Laura Longman, or in memory or honor of your family member or friend. Please make your check payable to the First United Methodist Church with a memo designating the Laura Longman Memorial Scholarship fund. If appropriate, attach a note that this contribution is in memory or honor of your special person. Your donation may be tax deductible. One hundred percent of your donation will be invested in scholarship benefits for students. We thank you in advance for your participation.

Name Tags

New name tags on red cord lanyards are available in the Parlor. We encourage everyone to wear their name tag, as they help people identify others, especially in places where it can be difficult to remember everyone's name. This is especially important for our new members or visitors.

Following the worship service, please leave your name tag either in the wooden box or on the table.



Advent Project

Between November 10th - December 8th, First United Methodist Church of Canoga Park will be collecting money or gift cards as our Advent Project* for The Woodlands Family Shelter. Congregants may purchase as many gift cards as they choose, but we ask that each gift card does not exceed \$25. These will be distributed to the families so they can purchase Christmas gifts, clothes, shoes, etc. for their children.

Suggested gift cards (no fast-food gift cards):

Target

*(within walking distance of the shelter,
so the preferred retailer)*

Wal-Mart Dollar Tree Ralph's

This Hope the Mission's family shelter is located in Woodland Hills. It is a 400-bed facility, currently housing 189 children. Each room has two bunk beds (four beds per room). Each room comes with a microwave, mini-fridge and bathroom. Residents are provided three meals per day, enrollment into schools for the children by LAUSD, daycare (when completed) for those too young to attend school as well as mental health services and clothes, if needed.

70% of The Woodlands residents have found permanent housing since they opened in May 2023!

If writing a check, checks should be payable to FUMC-CP. In the Memo line, please note Advent Project.

Please drop off or mail the gift cards, checks, or money to the church office. You may also bring to the worship service on Sunday. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Shari Worrell at: sharikworrell@gmail.com or 310-902-0179.

"You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land."

Deuteronomy 15:11

To learn more about Hope the Mission, please visit their website www.hopethemission.org



A room at The Woodlands Family Shelter

Time

The following article appeared in the Courier at least 20 years ago. It has been on my refrigerator ever since.

Margaret Cates

Today is here. I will begin with a smile and resolve to be agreeable. I will not criticize. I refuse to waste the valuable time God has given me.

Today has one thing in which I know I am equal with others – time. All of us draw the same salary in seconds, minutes and hours.

Today I will not waste time because the minutes I wasted yesterday are lost as a vanished thought.

Today I refuse to spend time worrying about what might happen. I am going to spend my time making things happen.

Today I am determined to study to improve myself, for tomorrow I may be needed, and I must not be found lacking.

Today I will not imagine what I would do if things were different. They are not different. I will make a success with what material I have.

Today I will stop saying, "If I find time," or "If I had time," for I never will find time for anything. If I want time, I must make it.

Today I will act toward other people as though this will be my last day on earth. I will not wait for tomorrow. Tomorrow never comes.

Author Unknown

Stewardship Update

I'm pleased to announce that our 2025 "Returning God's Gifts" Stewardship campaign received about \$90,000 in Estimate of Giving Cards! Thanks for everyone's participation. A very generous congregation!! We will finalize our 2025 budget before year end.

Facility Update

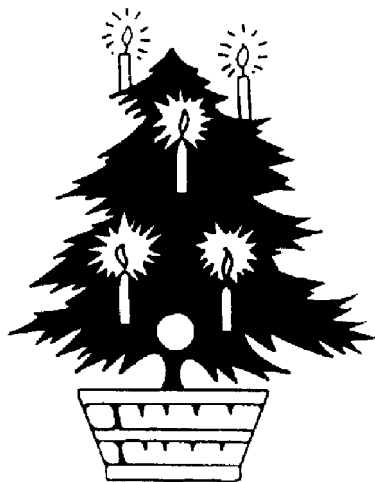
We continue to work on the Fellowship Hall Gym LED light conversion project. It looks like we may have to switch to an LADWP approved electrician to facilitate access to the rebate program that would pay for this \$12,000 project.

We repaired a small section of the sanctuary ceiling that has pulled away from the rafters. Following that repair we will do some miscellaneous painting on patched areas in the building.

We treated the Sacristy attic for wood termites as well as one area outside that had subterranean termites. The woodwork behind the monitors in the sanctuary will be treated next spring.

We had a handyman power spray the cement in front of the buildings and remove a lot of the spider webs that have been building up.

Thanks goes out to Louis & Anita Parrinello and Ken Dimmick who worked together to remove the abandoned car out by the trash cans! Ken and Louis also did some tree trimming along the alley on the west side of the property. Louis also installed a kick plate on the exit door by the Men's bathroom that had some damage to it.



Thanks to everyone helping to keep our campus looking good!! Next on our list is some tree trimming, roof inspection, and roof cleaning prior to the winter rains.

George Grengs



Advent Book Study

The First Advent in Palestine

A four-week Advent study focused on liberation, sacred storytelling, and subversive hope, presented by the Cal-Pac Holy Land Strategy Group.

As we envision the first Advent, we often picture Mary and Joseph gathered by the manger, alongside angels, the magi, and shepherds beneath a radiant star. While these familiar images from scripture are sacred and important, there is still so much of the essential context of the original Advent story that is missing—as those who experienced the first Advent had to navigate through great darkness to reach the hope of Immanuel – God with us.

This Advent, join the Rev. Allison Mark and Rev. Mary Ann Pickard, as they lead a four-week Advent study based on the book *The First Advent in Palestine: Reversals, Resistance, and the Ongoing Complexity of Hope*, by Kelly Nikondeha.

Over four sessions, this study will invite us to revisit once again the geographic, socioeconomic, and political backdrop of Advent, so that we might encounter an Advent that feels real for today, and so that we can explore what it means to more fully stand in solidarity with the oppressed peoples of our world, both during Advent, and throughout all the seasons of the year.

This four-week study will be offered over zoom and will take place on Sunday evenings at 7pm, starting Sunday, December 1st, and going through Sunday December 22nd. All are welcome to join.

Visit [this web page](#) for more information or to register.



Do You Shop At Ralphs?

If so, every time you shop a percentage can go to our church.

All you need is:

A Ralph's Rewards Card*

A Ralph's Digital Account**

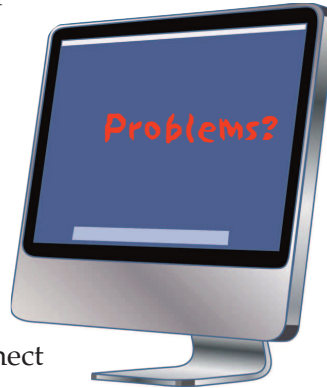
*If you do not have a Ralph's Rewards card you may apply for one at the store or ask for one after worship service.

**A digital account is needed to participate in Kroger Community Rewards. If you already have a digital account, simply link your Shopper's Card to your account so that all transactions apply toward the organization you choose.

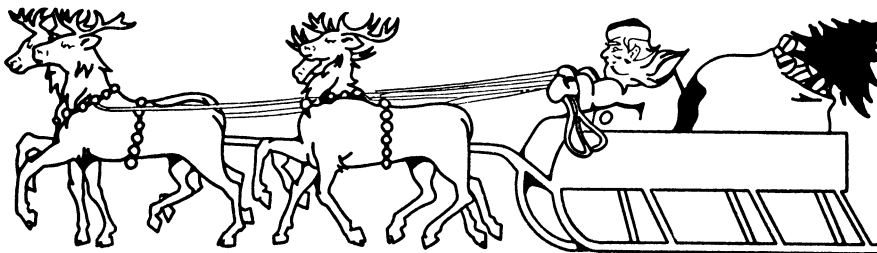
If you do not have access to the online sign-up method, please call 1-800-443-4438 for assistance. They will assist you in registering.

Edwin's Computer Ministry

If you're having problems with your computer and would like someone to look at it (for free) please contact me. Edwin works in the IT department at Valterra Products where I used to work and has gladly looked at several computers for the church and church members. He doesn't come to your house, he just connects to your computer through the internet on the third Saturday of each month between 9-11am. Joe Dedinas was the last member that had great success improving his ability to connect with others. If you or your computer need help, please give me a call and I'll schedule you in!



George Grengs, george.grengs@outlook.com or 818.632.7538



People lifted on the prayer chain:

Mary Mackay

Lirio and Beau Waldman

Brenda Jones

Mary Beth Godwin

Jessica Williams

Bret Kirsch

Herman Rich

Pastor Lynn Westover

Lora O'Connor

Angela Anderson

Don Heim

Verda Longan

JoAnn Butler

Irma Santos' daughter,
Lian

*Send prayer requests to
Anita Parrinello
luv2bjedi@gmail.com)
and CC Pastor Elaine
(eshinpauill@gmail.com)*





FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF CANOGA PARK

22700 Sherman Way

West Hills, CA 91307-2396

Return Service Requested