

January 2026

SIMI VALLEY

Volume 26 No. 1

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



THE HERALD

ABOUT OUR CHURCH

Rev. Stacy Brooks
Senior Pastor

Becky Valenzuela
Children, Youth & Family
Ministries



Diane Freyling
Office Administrator

Nancy Reyes
Front Office Assistant

Erin Newman
Communications Specialist



Leslie Frank
Organist

Garo Avesian
Choir Director



Cindie Stump-Gamboa
& Kelsey Rodriguez
Child Care Providers



CROSSROADS CHILDREN'S CENTER

Michelle Gordon
Principal
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2025 SVUMC MEMORIES



Worship & Study

GENERATIONS



GENERATIONS SERMON SERIES

Differences in age and experience can make it feel like people of other generations are living in completely different worlds. Understanding—or even talking with—one another can be hard. Yet if we are open, God offers a way through these impasses: a community that embraces both wisdom and innovation, where we can grow up and go gray, and where our differences become blessings rather than barriers.

JANUARY 4TH

HOLY COMMUNION
STAR WORD SUNDAY

EPIPHANY

"STANDING ON THE PROMISES"

LUKE 2:25-38

JANUARY 11TH

"I'M REALLY LISTENING"

1 SAMUEL 3:1-14

JANUARY 18TH

"FORMED AND FREED"

1 TIMOTHY 4:6-16

JANUARY 25TH

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH SUNDAY

STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

Within this sermon series, you have the opportunity to join the Tuesday afternoon Bible Study Class (1:00-2:30pm) and/or to follow a daily scripture reading program that coincides with the weekly message and weekly Bible Study Class.

WEEKLY THEMES AND DETAILS

Week 1: "Standing on the Promises" Luke 2:25-38

Every generation stands together in the same hope of Christ, bearing witness to God's enduring promise.

Each generation's particular gifts and experiences become a blessing to all.

Week 2: "I'm Really Listening" 1 Samuel 3:1-14

God speaks through every generation. When we humbly listen to one another—whether the truth comes as comfort or challenge—we make space to hear God's voice more clearly together.

Week 3: "Formed and Freed" 1 Timothy 4:6-16

We are called to form and free one another—to ground others in faith and then release them to use their gifts boldly for God's new work.

Week 4: "Where You Go, I Will Go" Ruth 1:1-18

God calls us to belong to one another—not for what we can do, but for who we are—choosing steadfast love and companionship across generations, even when life feels empty or uncertain.

SVUMC Volunteers Rock!



We are so grateful for the many folks who volunteer in all sorts of ways. Whether you help a couple times a year, monthly, weekly, (or even more), thank you for giving your time, heart and energy to our church family!

Thank you!

SAVE THE DATE!

LET'S BOWL!

ALL-CHURCH SUPER BOWLING



**SUNDAY,
FEB. 8 12:30-2 PM**

HARLEY'S VALLEY BOWL

5255 COCHRAN ST. (@STEARNS)

- » • BOWLING FEES COVERED
- BRING OR RENT SHOES



"LUNCH" BUNCH

**Thursday, Jan. 28th
11:30am-1pm**

Join the LUNCH BUNCH for a fun afternoon with a potluck followed by some of our favorite card games. This is a great "Backdoor" event to invite a friend to - a time to introduce a friend to our church community in a safe, casual environment.

MAKE, TAKE & SHARE! ENCHILADA CASSEROLE

Join Pastor Stacy in the Church Kitchen on **Sunday, January 25th** from 3-4 pm to make Enchilada Casserole. Make one for yourself to take home and bake, as well as one (or two) to take to someone who could use an easy, home-cooked meal.

RSVP by January 23rd



2025 was the start of our journey through God’s Big Story. This month our focus will be on the skills or “handholds” for building a faith that endures throughout a lifetime: hear from God, pray to God, talk about God, and live for God. The Bible teaches us the best things, and we will be spending time in the gospels and the book of Acts to learn these faith skills.

I am so thankful for the continued support of this congregation to lead our youth and children in their faith formation. A new program that will be offered for our older Elementary children this year is called “Learning to use My Bible”. This course provides opportunities to learn and practice skills that will help them understand how to use the Bible, feel comfortable using the Bible, and build a foundation for studying the Bible. Following completion of this program, the participants will be



awarded with new Bibles during worship. New opportunities for our youth in 2026 will include gathering with youth from neighboring churches to complete a service project and mission trip. Looking forward to another wonderful year of ministry with you!



Blessings, Ms. Becky

JANUARY 16TH
 5:30-8:30 PM
PARENTS' NIGHT OUT!

AGES 2 YEARS - 5TH GRADE

DINNER, GAMES, CRAFTS, FRIENDS, AND FUN!!!

REGISTRATION FORMS AVAILABLE IN THE CHURCH OFFICE
 \$20 PER CHILD OR \$50 PER FAMILY
 REGISTER BY WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14TH

Tween Scene
 January 18th
 5-7pm

Join us in Witman hall for dinner, fellowship, and wizarding fun!

January at CrossRoads Children’s Center

I am starting the New Year off with gratitude! We celebrate CrossRoads’ 34th birthday, plus we were again voted the Acorn Newspaper’s “Best of Simi Valley” winner for childcare center—second year in a row! I am also blessed to be working with amazing colleagues and our CrossRoads families! I am looking forward to what God has planned for this new year. I am especially excited about events like our Spring Open House, the celebration of Dr. Seuss’s birthday, and fun summer days. As we begin this new year, please keep CrossRoads in your thoughts and prayers as we strive to ensure a year of happiness and success. Thank you for your continued support.

Mrs. Michelle Gordon,
 Principal, CrossRoads Children’s Center





OUTREACH

THANK YOU TO THE OUTREACH COMMITTEE FOR THEIR TIRELESS EFFORTS IN SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY OF SIMI VALLEY ON BEHALF OF SVUMC!

OUTREACH UPDATE: A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL WHO SUPPORTED NONPROFITS AT THE ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS MARKET. THE CHARITIES WHO RECEIVED DONATIONS GREATLY APPRECIATED YOUR GIFTS, WHICH TOTALED **\$1,603!** TOGETHER WE BROUGHT SOME HOLIDAY JOY TO THOSE IN NEED. THANK YOU ALSO TO THOSE WHO DONATED TOWARD THE BLESSING BAGS.

OUTREACH DINNERS: SATURDAY, JANUARY 17 AND JANUARY 31. CONTACT BARBARA BAGWELL IF YOU'D LIKE TO DONATE SUPPLIES OR HELP OUT.

MEETING: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21 IN THE CHAPEL. NEW TIME: 2 PM. ALL ARE WELCOME!

RECYCLE SUNDAY: JANUARY 25. DETAILS ON PAGE 7. PLUS, KEN GORDON REPORTS THAT THE RECYCLING FACILITY NOW ALSO ACCEPTS CLASS 2 HDPE MILK JUGS!



UNITED METHODIST MEN

Come check out the next meeting: Sunday, January 11 at 11:30 am.

For a casual hangout, check out Donut Meetup on Wednesdays at 8 am at Huddle Hall (the little garage building on the southeast corner of the parking lot).



Our church website has been redesigned!

Check it out!



WWW.SIMIVALLEYUMC.ORG

Your resource for ways to learn, worship, connect and serve, plus event info, a live calendar, and much more. It will be updated weekly, so keep checking back in!



United Women in Faith *Congratulations to the new 2026 UWF Executive Board!*

Coming Up

Wednesday, January 7: UWF Board meeting in the Chapel at 10 am

Sunday, January 25: UWF Sunday

Circles

Circle of Joy: Wednesday, January 14 at 12:30 pm at the home of Debbie Costello, 1077 Hillview Lane.

Seekers Circle: Will not meet this month.

Night Owls: Tuesday, January 20 at 7 pm in the Chapel.

Circle of Faith: Wednesday, January 21 at noon at the home of Dona Thanstrom, 2731 Bel Circle.

Teresa Circle will meet each month to visit those who are homebound.

Sign-ups Available!

2026 Coffee Hour:

Refreshments are easy! Just drop off 3-4 dozen treats by 9:30 am! Sign-ups and info are on the board in the Chapel.

2026 Flowers:

Signups are posted in the Narthex.

Greeters: Speak to Nancy Reyes if you'd like to greet visitors coming into worship!

UWF CIRCLE PROFILE:

Circle of Joy



Maria Reynolds, 2025 co-chair, had this to share about the Circle of Joy:

“This group of ladies brings a lovely mix of energy and enthusiasm to our monthly meetings. Our fellowship time is priceless, where we share God’s love and wisdom through our monthly programs. We also get to know each other by sharing our family stories and life’s experiences.”

- 📍 Meetings: Second Wednesday of each month at various homes
- 👥 2026 co-chairs are Peggy Spellman and Debbie Costello

If you'd like your circle profiled in The Herald, contact Erin Newman in the church office!



- 1/2 Jack Bartholomew
- 1/8 Barbie Michaelsen
- 1/10 Jackie Seckman
- 1/16 Michelle Gordon
- 1/17 Diane Hayden
- 1/19 Joel Mueller
Owen Newman
- 1/21 Mary Campbell
Thomas Ortiz
- 1/22 Soledad Horney
- 1/23 Maria Reynolds
Diane Thomson
- 1/24 Marcia Reyes
- 1/26 Amelia Reyes
- 1/28 Luene Witman
- 1/29 Dave Newman
Kara Rigsbee
- 1/30 Kale Madelon
- 1/31 Mark Horowitz



- 1/12 Paul & Cheryl West
- 1/30 Bill & Lynn Gearhart



Worship Attendance

	In Church	Online
11/30	113	24
12/7	122	26
12/14	154	28

Newsletter **Deadline:**

Monday, January 12

Clothing Alterations Ministry

Ruth Dempsey, Bonnie Bastian & Juanita Ward would like to donate their time to do simple alterations for our congregation.

If you need hemming, sewing buttons, or other simple repairs, contact Ruth to arrange services!

Recycle Sunday January 25 Drop off before worship

Enter from the Cochran entrance and look for the easy up in the east parking lot.

CRV-value plastic and glass beverage bottles, beverage cans and Class 2 HDPE milk containers accepted.

Proceeds help fund Outreach Dinners!



HOSTING A MEETING?

Please leave the room as you found it: Heat and A/C off, lights off, trash out. Thank you!

Mark your calendars for the Vitalant Blood Drive on Monday, January 26, starting at 11 am.

In need of prayer? Please submit prayer requests to the church office via phone or email (svumcinfo@pacbell.net) or by text to Pastor Stacy.



Be sure to include which ways you would like your prayer lifted:

1. In the Friday e-mail
2. During Joys & Concerns in worship
3. In Pastor Stacy's daily prayers

THE
HERALD

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On December 17, James Storehouse picked up the big batch of Angel Tree gifts supplied by our congregation. Thank you to all who donated to make a difference in the lives of local foster children and teens through James Storehouse!



Happy New Year from everyone in the Church Office! The office will be closed on Thursday, January 1, New Year's Day; and on Monday, January 19, in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Join us on Sunday
January 4th for your
2026

STAR WORD