The Cornerstone

Rolling Hills United Methodist Church
26438 Crenshaw Blvd.
Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274
310-377-6771

January 2026

We are grateful for all the helping hands that make our Christmas Eve services so special.

from the pastors *Jonathan Chute*

So we have come to the new year. We made it! We moved through the celebrations of Christmas and New Year, with all the joy and tumult they offered, and find ourselves poking our heads up and looking around. It feels a bit like Groundhog Day, I think!

I want to thank all of you for so many wonderful expressions of joy and care that were shared through that time. Our choir worked to bring us another wonderful Christmas Concert. Many hands helped to bring it off successfully. We were blessed by the work of many others through the children's Christmas Eve service – both the children themselves and those who coached them through. Our 8 and 10 p.m. services were the source of great joy as well, as we gathered as family to remember the gift given to us that night.

On behalf of the whole church staff I want to thank you for the wonderful Christmas gifts which were given this year. We are grateful not only for your generosity, but for the love which lies behind it. Thank you.

You were generous also with many others, from our Trek to the Tree, to our Christmas offering for Toberman Neighborhood Center, and of course to the overall mission which we share. Your generosity and giving made it possible for us to finish the year remarkably well. The final numbers are not yet in, and I am confident we were not "in the black" for 2025. But with the size and scope of the work we do, I believe we are right where we're supposed to be.

Giving to the life and work of our congregation in 2025 was the most we've ever received. And that doesn't even count the amazing and generous response to the "All Together Now" campaign this past summer, where over $1.3 million was given over three short months. The Finance Committee is working to develop a healthy, hopeful budget for our 2026. We're not there yet, but we're headed in the right direction. As always, we count on the generosity and compassion of this church family to make possible our mission. We are here to make a difference, for families around the corner or around the world.

I look forward to the sharing with you in the new year now arrived. There will be surprises and discoveries we do not expect. There will be opportunities for learning and growing, and for making excellent mistakes. As we move forward together, let me say again how good it is to be with you.

Grace and peace,

Jonathan

April Herron

Dear Friends:

On Christmas Day I found myself walking on a shoreline that is one of the most familiar and consistent features of my life. I first visited the beach in Coronado as a child, when building dribble castles and searching for sand crabs were the primary activities. I learned to ride the waves on an inflatable mattress, which is what we used in those days before boogie boards. For a time, my father directed early morning family runs on the beach. Later he made sure my brother and I were registered for the annual 4th of July rough water swim. My early years were characterized by sunburns and constant immersion in ocean waves and swimming pools.

Thanks to the fact that my parents never moved again after they bought their home in Coronado, I now have decades worth of memories of walking up and down that one-mile stretch of beach. Alone or with others, during holidays, vacations, or ordinary times, the beach gives me an opportunity to be caught up by beauty and wonder. Somehow, though life holds various seasons, changes, and challenges, that beach always seems the same. I appreciate its consistent presence as a place to let go of tension or worry; a place where I might be uplifted by glimpsing a pod of dolphins, or finding a sand dollar like the ones my grandmother used to collect, or sensing that God is near.

Places can become touchstones in our lives. I witness this truth every Christmas Eve when so many families and individuals gather at RHUMC to experience familiar worship, sing carols together, and have their pictures taken together in front of a huge tree covered with twinkling lights. No matter how far we may go, or how near we remain, there are certain places that are part of us, and we are part of them.

Jesus spent his human life walking around Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. The Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River featured prominently in his journeys. I like to think that he, too, found respite and encouragement from returning to certain locations. I imagine that repeated visits to particular mountains, pathways, or dwelling places helped him to remember his identity and his purpose.

We can be grateful that Christ goes with us into 2026.

April

The RHUMC Staff Appreciates You

We gives thanks for your staff gift contributions and are grateful for your generous support. Our team appreciates your recognition and we wish you a Happy New Year!

RHUMC Charge Conference

The primary responsibilities of the annual Charge Conference meeting is to receive reports which help us to review and evaluate the total mission and ministry of the church. We elect lay leadership for the year to come. Our next Charge Conference will meet on **Wednesday, February 4,** in the choir room. We will gather at 7:15 pm for social time and the meeting will commence at 7:30 pm. All are welcome to attend.

2026 Altar Flower Sign Ups

The flower chart for 2026 has arrived and is posted in the narthex. Sign up early to ensure you get your favorite date to honor, celebrate or remember that someone special! The altar flowers cost $50 and arrangements are made by the church office. Checks may be made payable to RHUMC with a notation on the memo line of altar flowers. Feel free to drop your check in the offering plate on any given Sunday. Or, you may pay online at rhumc.org but be sure to indicate the purpose of your payment. Sign ups may also be made by calling the church office at 310-377-6771. You will be contacted the week prior to your sign up date for your altar flower dedication.

Study/Action Group on Ukraine

Are you looking for a way to engage with the crisis in Ukraine within our church community? Join us for our monthly one-hour gathering to discuss the impact of the invasion and identify areas where our congregation can offer support. Our sessions are focused on providing timely information and fostering a supportive environment for those sharing ideas on how to be of service.

- When: Sunday, January 11, 2026 (following the 5:30 pm service)
- Time: 6:45 pm – 7:45 pm (never exceeding one hour)
- Where: Aldersgate Room

We pride ourselves on meetings that are efficient and informational. Please join us as we seek to be a small light of hope and practical help in this tumultuous time. Yes, YOU are cordially invited.
Questions? Vince Budrovich - 310-971-3227 – VBudrovich@gmail.com

A BOOK DISCUSSION SERIES

LIVING TO TELL THE STORY

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23
ENDLING
by MARIA REVA

MONDAY, MARCH 30
THE CORRESPONDENT
by VIRGINIA EVANS

MONDAY, APRIL 27
SACRAMENT
by SUSAN STRAIGHT

2 PM - IN PERSON

7 PM - ZOOM

Life is full of challenge, grief, struggle, and joy. Wonderful things happen and terrible things happen. How do we endure? What are the lessons we have learned? When will we achieve understanding, or resolution? Is there someone, or something, that can help us make sense of it all?

Join the conversation! All readers are welcome. Please email April@RHUMC.org to let her know of your plans to participate.

ROLLING HILLS
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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rhumc.org **310-377-6771**

Missions Committee Gathers Christmas Gift Bags for Laundry Love Clients

The **Missions Committee donated and assembled 64 Christmas gift and hygiene bags** for the families and individual clients of **Laundry Love**, making their holiday season a little brighter. We thank Carla Smith for her leadership of RHUMC's Laundry Love program and the Missions Committee volunteers who created the gift bags.

Worship Committee Gives Thanks - by Chris Larson

Thank you to all who helped decorate the church for Christmas, whether by donating poinsettias and/or putting out the decorations. And a special THANK-YOU to Jan Johnson who has diligently watered the plants as needed.

The tree in the narthex will be taken down on **Saturday, January 3** – any and all assistance is welcomed. If you can help, please arrive at 8:30 am. Poinsettias will find new homes and all the rest of the Christmas decorations will be taken down after the 10:00 am service on January 4. Please stay and help! Thanks!

Congregation Responds Generously to Mission Fiesta Sunday

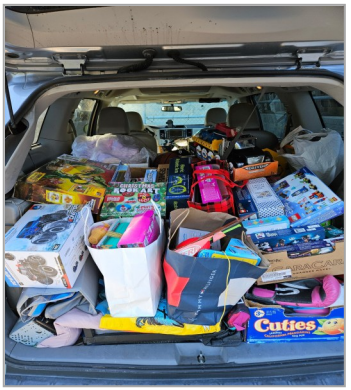
During November's **Mission Fiesta Sunday, our congregation donated more than $40,000** across five global mission organizations and four local service agencies. We thank Chris Campbell, Debra Shrader and Anna Randall for leading this effort, and all who generously donated!

$15,000 to Heifer International, enough to fund three arks!
$1,200 to UMC Missionary Hannah Reasoner in Colombia
$1,200 to UMC Missionary Claudia Genung in Japan
$1,200 to UMC Missionary Katherine Parker in Nepal
$6,000 to Habitat for Humanity of Greater Los Angeles
$4,500 to Hungry to Help, founded by RHUMC member Anna Ahmed
$4,300 for Laundry Love, sponsored by RHUMC and staffed by Missions Committee volunteers
$4,000 for New Challenge Ministry Fresh Rescue Food Bank, staffed by Missions Committee volunteers

Martha Circle by Barbara Addleman

Do you love to learn about other countries from an expert? Come to Martha Circle on **Monday, January 12**, at 12:00 pm in the Mission room to hear Julie Lancaster tell us about her home country of Peru. It will prove to be an interesting meeting as we all learn about a country that is a bit off the beaten path for many of us. Bring a brown bag lunch and enjoy chatting with friends before brief announcements and a devotion followed by the program about Peru. All are welcome – you don't have to be a member of our circle to join in the fun!

Trek to the Tree provides a Happy Christmas for Toberman Families



The Missions Committee thanks all the church members who donated **three van loads of toys and 200 $25 gift cards to the Toberman Neighborhood Center in San Pedro**, contributing Christmas joy for more than 725 children and their families. Toberman leaders were appreciative of the number of toys and gift cards we provided for their Breakfast with Santa event. We thank Noucha Jasanis for leading this effort over the past 24 years, and all who donated gifts.

A word of thanks from Toberman's Staff and Board - Patty Koester

Thank you to all of who have supported Toberman's Mission this past year. It may have been by participating in the most recent Trek to the Tree which helped provide toys or gift cards to over 800 children that Toberman serve. Your contributions to the communion baskets help purchase food items for our pantry and your donations to the Thrift Store provide needed items to those living in the neighborhood.

Each and every monetary donation helps a person less fortunate live a more productive life and for that we thank you.

Patty Koester
Board Member

FREE **SUPPORT GROUP** for those caring for a loved one with

Dementia, Alzheimer's or Parkinson's

Wednesdays
January 14 & 28
10:00-11:00 a.m.
in the Mission Room

Lauren Mahakian

Certified Dementia Practitioner, Speaker
Facilitator/Educator
Certified Validation Therapy
HCO#194700543

The discovery of memory loss can be daunting, yet in our experience, professional guidance and learning from others with similar experiences can be very helpful. Our groups are designed for those caring for a loved one with dementia, Alzheimer's or cognitive decline. All groups are led by Lauren Mahakian and are free of charge.

Club Maintenance - by Dave Larson

The next opportunity to participate in the Club Maintenance event will be on **Saturday, January 3**, at 8:30 am. In addition to taking down the Narthex tree and various garlands, we have a variety of other tasks on the to-do list. Thanks to all who have helped out in 2025, and we look forward to more fun opportunities. Please mark the next date on your calendar and share in the ongoing work to keep our facilities in good repair. And please remember that a tasty lunch will be provided.

Taco Night

Join us for Taco Night after 3rd service on **Sunday, January 25.** You'll have a choice of chicken, beef, pork or potato tacos served with rice, beans, and chips. The requested meal donation is $5 per person, $15 per family. 3rd service takes place every Sunday at 5:30 p.m.

Blood Pressure Sunday

Blood pressure screenings will next be offered on **Sunday, January 25,** after each service. The morning screenings will be held in the church office conference room and after 3rd service in the Mission room.

RHUMC's Christmas Concert brought our community together sharing joyful sounds and festive spirits. We are grateful for our choir and the Inner City Youth Orchestra led by Charles Dickerson.

Second Sundays at Two

Sunday, January 11, at 2:00 p.m.

~ presents ~

Acclaimed Canadian Pianists
from the USC Thornton School of Music

Pianists
Bernadene Blaha *&* **Kevin Fitz-Gerald**
and **Friends**

Canadian pianists Bernadene Blaha and Kevin Fitz-Gerald are internationally recognized as gifted recitalists, orchestra soloists, and chamber musicians, appearing in leading concert series on world-renowned stages. Their collaboration in the four-hand and two-piano repertoire began with an invitation to tour classical music for the Royal Viking Cruise Line shortly after their marriage in 1987. Both now serve on the faculty of the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music.

If this is your first time attending a *Second Sundays at Two* concert, please email **ClassicalCrossroads@ClassicalCrossroads.org** to request a reservation for yourself and your guests. The concert will be livestreamed for those unable to attend in person. Watch at concert time at **https://vimeo.com/event/4030680**.

Children's Ministry

We had fun preparing for our Children's Christmas Eve Service

We enjoyed our Winter Wonderland Festivities

PLEASE RSVP TO
DEBRA AT
DEBRA@RHUMC.ORG
BY JANUARY 7TH
YOU ARE INVITED
RHUMC
FAMILY
MOVIE NIGHT
SATURDAY, JANUARY 10TH
STARTS AT 6:30PM
CHILDREN MUST BE
ACCOMPANIED BY
PARENTS.
BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY AND JOIN US FOR A GREAT TIME!
PLEASE BRING A CHAIR, BLANKET, OR CUSHION TO SIT ON.
POPCORN AND DRINKS WILL BE SERVED!

Children's Ministry

Valentine Care Packages

Please let us know if you have a special person in your life that might be away at college, homebound, or under the weather and might benefit from a lovely package made by the Children's Ministries Department at RHUMC.

Please call the church office at (310) 377-6771 by Friday, February 6th, with their name and address or email information to: Debra DeLuca at debra@rhumc.org.

Youth Ministries

Ignite Spring Kick Off

Wednesday, 1/28/26 at 6:30pm - 8:00pm
RHUMC's mid-week youth ministry resumes for the spring semester with a fun evening of games and dinner.
For more information, please contact Kristin.

Confirmation 2026

Sunday, 1/11/26 @ 11:15am Confirmation Information Meeting
Youth in 9th-12th grade are invited to participate in our Confirmation program. Come learn about the program and ask all your questions. Youth will take classes throughout the spring and officially join the church on Confirmation Sunday, May 17, 2026.

Opportunity for Service: St. Luke's Homeless Meal

Saturday, 1/10/26 at 8:30am-12:30pm
Youth will help serve a meal to those with housing or food insecurity at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Long Beach. Youth are invited to go out after for lunch and fellowship.

Youth Council Meeting

Monday, 1/12/26 at 7:00-8:00pm
All youth are invited to attend to help plan the spring calendar.

Sierra Service Project 2026

We are now accepting registration for SSP 2026! Our high school team will go to Tsaile, AZ on July 25 - August 2, 2026. Submit your deposit now to reserve a spot on our team.

Rev. Kristin Sutrave, Youth Ministries Pastor
Cell phone: 562-234-0161 Email: Kristin@rhumc.org
Natalie T. Contact: rhumcyouth@rhumc.org
Facebook page: facebook.com/groups/RHyouth Instagram: rhumcyouth_

Rolling Hills United Methodist Church
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Change Service Requested

SAVE OUR PLANET!

Have your Cornerstone sent via email; it's easy, just call the church office at 310-377-6771. You can also view the Cornerstone on the church website at www.rhumc.org

Senior Pastor	Jonathan Chute	Associate Pastor	April Herron
Youth Ministry Pastor	Kristin Sutrave	Senior Pastor Emeritus	Martha Rowlett
Music Director	Chuck Dickerson	Organist/Pianist	Althea Waites
3rd Service Music	Paula Kuno	Children's Ministry Dir.	Debra DeLuca
Preschool Director	Myra Ghabrial	Kid Zone Director	Gabby Palacios
Church Office Admin.	Peggy Roulette	Executive Assistant	Michele Nelson
Treasurer	Wade Welch	Business Manager	Catherine Dingman
		Custodian	Miguel Portillo

Church Office Phone	310-377-6771	Resident Bishop	Dottie Escobedo-Frank
Fax Line	310-544-4123	District Superintendent	Rev. Dr. Siosaia Tu'itahi
Web Site	www.rhumc.org		

SUNDAY WORSHIP HOURS
8:30 & 10 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.
CHURCH OFFICE HOURS
Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Next Cornerstone deadline is January 23
www.rhumc.org