



Praise the Lord for the gifts of light as the church as history can reveal. **First United Methodist Church of Inglewood** was the first church in the city of Inglewood, California. The church was organized on July 22, 1905 with eight members and twelve children in Sunday School. The first building was erected on Manchester Blvd and La Brea Blvd. In 1908. As the first landmark in Inglewood there were less than 200 people who lived in Inglewood at that time. In fact, the City of Inglewood gained its charter in 1907, which is two years later after the establishment of the church.

Soon the congregation outgrew the structure, so in 1914 the second building was erected and was dedicated on February 7, 1915. This building was the main auditorium with the first small church being used for Sunday School classes and prayer meetings. The people moved to Inglewood and more people joined the church so the third building, known as the Annex, was built in 1925 to accommodate the growing church school and social gathering purposes. The Annex was later moved to the new church site to become a part of the first educational unit with Fellowship Hall on the basement floor.

God continued to be at work and the church grew. In July 1940, groundbreaking ceremonies were held for the new church, which was to be built on the site purchased at the corner of Kelso Street and Spruce Avenue. On March 16, 1941, the first service was held in the beautiful sanctuary. The congregation was so excited that within two years and seven months, the mortgage was burned and the church was debt free. More members joined the church and there was new construction to accommodate the growth. On the first Sunday in May 1951 the new Educational Wing was consecrated. Anniversary Hall was added to the second floor in order to complete the Educational Wing and provided space for the Junior High Department of the church school as well as other groups' needs. Anniversary Hall was under construction at the time of the church 50th Anniversary in 1955.

The Lord continued to bless members in various ways and the growth was quicker than the building. Groundbreaking for Wesley Hall was held on May 2, 1961. In 1975 was the beginning of the multicultural members of the church with Rev. Mathew Jefferson's leadership. There were over 5 ethnic groups Africans, African Americans, Asian-Americans, Euro-Americans, and Pacific Islanders. On September 16, 1982, Wesley Hall was opened for consecration.

From 1984 -1989, Rev. Beverly J. Shamana was the pioneering first woman spiritual leader of the church. During her leadership the church received the honor of the most diverse congregation of all California-Pacific United Methodist Conference churches. In fact, there were over 10 cultural ethnic groups present at the church with over 500 members attending the service weekly and regularly. During this time the Los Angeles District sponsored a children's multicultural choir competition annually as well as youth and young adult programs that were well attended by the community at large. Various world leaders visited the church in September 1984 was the first Royal visit from the Kingdom of Tonga King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV welcomed by Rev. Beverly J. Shamana and later in 1999 the king of Tonga returned to the church for the

second visit during Rev. William McKinley Hill's time. We praise the Lord for all the spiritual leaders that God blessed and the congregation continued to grow and be blessed. To honor all the Ministers or Spiritual Leaders we reflect on their guidance and wisdom throughout our 116 years.

1905 Reverend H. Manuel
1906 Reverend F.A. Smith
1907 Reverend Roy Mealey
1908 Reverend R.J. Coyne
1909 Reverend R.J. Taylor
1911 Reverend P.P. Carroll
1914 Reverend. E.W. Pasko
1915 Reverend E. Sedgwick
1917 Reverend Fletcher G. Watson
1918 Reverend E.M. Crandall
1920 Reverend Clyde E. Boyer
1927 Reverend Thomas L. Burden
1935 Reverend John G. Ross
1950 Reverend Ralph W. Lee

1952 Reverend Paul F. Huebner
1960 Reverend Rolland Tincher
1965 Reverend Herschel H. Hedgepeth
1966 Reverend William H. Merwin
1975 Reverend Matthew M. Jefferson, Jr.
1984 Reverend Beverly J. Shamana
1989 Reverend Thomas C. Hill, III
1993 Reverend William M. Hill
2008 Reverend Howard Ashford
2010 Pastor Lesa Smith
2012 Pastor Reynaldo Guevara
2015 Reverend Hilly G. Hicks
2017 Reverend Victor Cyrus-Franklin
(current pastor)

Today, we have a vibrant and intergenerational weekly worship experience! The **Virginia Beckett Food Pantry** leads in serving the most vulnerable in our community. We have been serving **Free Thanksgiving Dinners** to the community for over fifteen years. We have an active unit of **United Methodist Women**, partner with community groups including the **Tungsten Proteges Male Mentoring** program and work to better our community as part of the **Uplift Inglewood Coalition** and **L.A. Voice** winning the fight for rent control in Inglewood!

As we go forward into the future, we continue to count our blessings with the leadership of Reverend Victor Cyrus-Franklin and Associate Pastor Lesa Smith. This year we celebrate our 116th Anniversary Year. **CONGRATULATIONS!** We are on our way to build affordable housing on this premises to serve our community and chart a new direction of faith, hope and love in ministry for the future! 1 Thessalonians 5:13 says,

*“Therefore encourage one another
and build each other up,
just as in fact you are doing.”*

Thanks to all our members for your continued support in community outreach, and fellowship and worship as we build anew and build one another and this community up! **We Are the Church Together! Amen!**

