



2025 Annual Report

 **HOLMAN**
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
"The Church of the Bells"

Rev. Victor Cyrus-Franklin
Lead Pastor



From the Pastor

Dear Holman Family,

In the midst of 2026, we pause to offer the 2025 annual report as a testimony — not because the year is over, but because what God is doing among us is worth naming right now. Our theme this year is **Honoring the Past, While Embracing the Future**. That is not just a theme. It is a question we are living: How does our faith practically shape who we are becoming?

Honoring the past means we know who we are. The legacy of Rev. James M. Lawson, Jr. — of nonviolence and peace with justice — is not a museum piece. It is alive in this congregation. We are showing up for our neighbors and feeding the hungry through the Storehouse. We host nonviolence workshops in the fight for justice. We partner to build affordable housing because justice and faith belong together. We organize the Saturday School for African American History because some of our children will not learn their story anywhere else. That makes a difference. That is worthwhile.

Embracing the future means asking hard questions out loud. Through our Nurture, Outreach, and Witness Ministries, we invest in workers, youth, and families. New voices are stepping forward. Longstanding servants keep giving with grace. And we are learning — as Jethro reminded Moses — that no one person carries this alone. That is not a weakness. That is where community begins.

I am somebody. You are somebody. Together, we are Holman. We cross racial, generational, and cultural lines because the Gospel demands it. We choose presence over performance. Purpose over comfort. The people of this congregation — serving seniors, advocating for housing, supporting youth, showing up week after week — are proof that faith is only meaningful when it creates real change.

This report belongs to you. It reflects the prayers you have prayed, the gifts you have given, and the love you have extended. None of this happens without you. Your generosity — of time, resources, and spirit — is what makes this ministry move.

We are not done. God is still at work among us. There is more justice to pursue, more people to welcome home, and more life to be built in West Adams and across this city. Let us keep going — honoring faithfully, embracing courageously, trusting deeply — as we follow Christ together.

Thank you for being a church that believes faith should make a difference. Thank you for being Holman.

In faith, hope, and community,

Rev. Victor Cyrus-Franklin

Lead Pastor, Holman United Methodist Church



Rev. Victor Cyrus-Franklin

From the Stewardship Committee

Dear Holman Family,

It is a privilege to serve Holman United Methodist Church as members of the Stewardship Committee. As we reflect on this past year, we are grateful for the ways our congregation has continued to pursue the calling at the heart of our theme — **Honoring the Past, While Embracing the Future** — a calling that is lived when faith shapes every part of who we are and how we show up for one another.

This year, I witnessed Holman embody that calling through worship, service, formation, and community care. Because of your commitment, we made meaningful progress in several key areas, including:

- **Community** — Deepened neighborhood engagement through Social Action and Advocacy, Health and Wellness programming, and a consistent presence in West Adams, strengthening Holman's role as a trusted anchor in South Los Angeles.
- **Food Pantry** — Continued meeting food insecurity in the West Adams community by providing groceries to families in need, serving all who come regardless of race, background, or religious affiliation, with consistency, dignity, and care.
- **Youth & Young Adults** — Invested in the next generation through our Children's Ministry, the Saturday School for African American History, and ongoing partnerships with the Children, Youth and Family Collaborative (CYFC), Faith Foster Families Network, and A-MAN STEM Tech Center, equipping young people with roots and a future.

These achievements reflect our shared conviction that the church should be a place where people are nurtured spiritually, supported fully, and empowered to live out their faith in tangible ways. One of the responsibilities of the stewardship committee is to support the vision and health of our congregation so that every ministry — Nurture, Outreach, and Witness — is supported for the holistic well-being of the people God has entrusted to our care.

As we look ahead, we remain hopeful and confident in what God is continuing to do among us. The bells of Holman ring for all of us — and together, as capable persons who trust God, we carry this legacy forward into new and faithful ground. We invite you to keep walking with us as we honor what has been built and embrace all that is still to come.

Thank you for your trust, your service, and your commitment to Holman. It is an honor to serve alongside you.

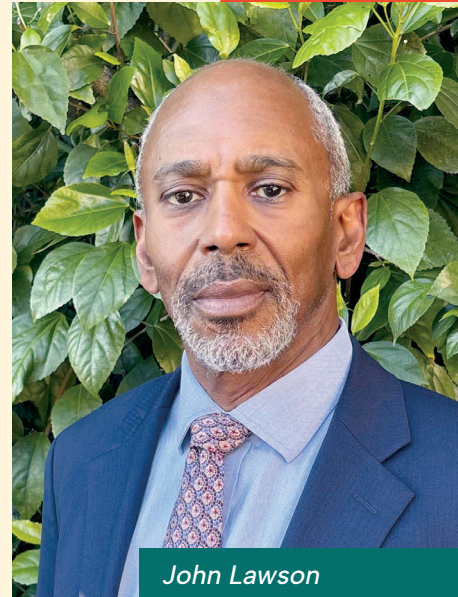
With gratitude and hope,

John Lawson and Kevin Clay-Keele

Stewardship Committee Co-Chairpersons
Holman United Methodist Church



Kevin Clay-Keele

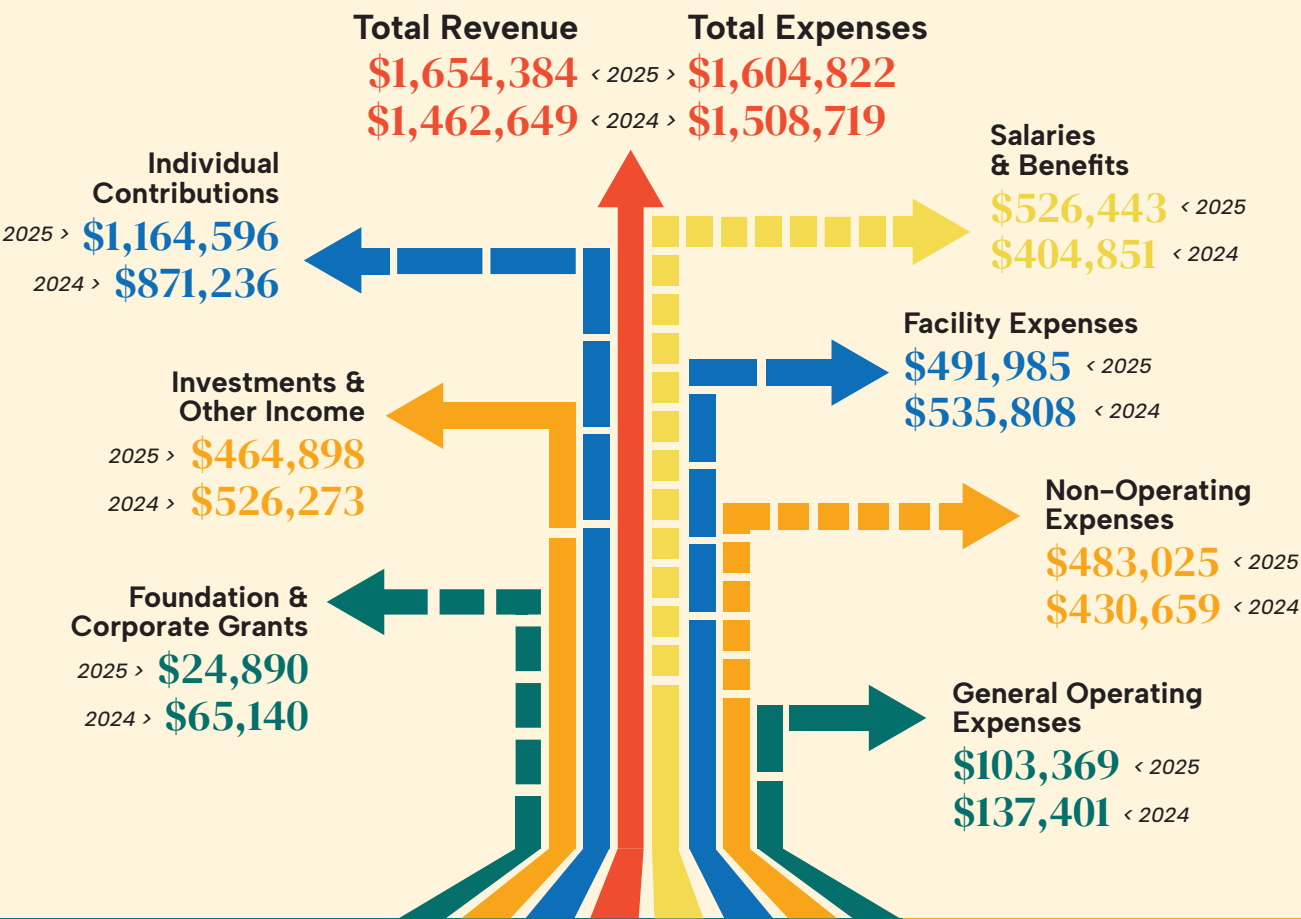


John Lawson

Financial Year 2025

In 2025, Holman United Methodist Church stewarded its financial resources with transparency, accountability, and purpose. Guided by independent audits and a collaborative budgeting process, leadership prioritized sustaining core ministries and community-serving programs, including Holman CDC and the Beyond the Battlefield Initiative.

Amid rising costs and growing community need, financial decisions reflected a commitment to stability and long-term impact. Strategic stewardship of resources ensured continuity of services while remaining faithful to the church's mission and its responsibility to the West Adams community and beyond.



Church Council

Rev. Victor Cyrus-Franklin
Lead Pastor

Rev. Dr. Jennifer Oliver
Associate Pastor

Sandra Jefferson
Lay Leader

Shirley Harris
Church Council Chairperson

Saundra Bishop
Staff-Parish Relations Committee

Camille Woolfolk
Board of Trustees

Robert Rodgers
Finance Committee

Valeria Norwood & Toy Hightower
Nurture Ministries

Alvairene Scott
Outreach Ministries

Michael Peters
Witness Ministries

Anslyene Lloyd
Lay Member of the Annual Conference

Carmen Hayes
United Women in Faith

Joseph Gambrell
United Methodist Men

Leadership

Rev. Victor Cyrus-Franklin
Lead Pastor

Rev. Dr. Jennifer Oliver
Associate Pastor

Betty Fontenot
Church Administrator

Rev. Louis A. Chase
Minister of Community Outreach

William Campbell, Jr.
Director of Music, Holman Choir

Robert Johnson, Jr.
Assistant Director of Music

Melida Skeete Smith
Director, Jubilant Voices

Shelter and Sustenance

Holman's Response to Housing Insecurity and Food Insecurity in West Adams

In West Adams, the two most urgent needs are shelter and food — and for Holman, they are inseparable. Both flow from the same conviction: that faith is only meaningful when it creates real change for real people. In 2025, Holman advanced two ministries that embody that conviction side by side.

On the housing front, rents in the neighborhood have risen approximately 30 percent over the last six to seven years. The I-10 freeway displaced Black residents from this community decades ago — and that

displacement never fully stopped. Holman's response is organized around three commitments: protecting current renters through legal advocacy, preserving existing housing through community organizing, and producing new affordable housing through strategic partnerships. In 2025, a partnership with First United Methodist Church of Inglewood is delivering 60 units of affordable housing within 15 months, with U.S. Bank as the primary financial partner. The Carpenters Union apprenticeship program — prioritizing formerly incarcerated individuals — is ensuring that the people who need housing most are part of building it.

On the hunger front, the Storehouse Ministry — over 25 years old, relaunched in February 2024 under Rev. Dr. Jennifer Oliver — distributes fresh produce and pantry staples every 2nd and 4th Thursday to 34 to 45 families per session. The people who come are working families, seniors, and neighbors whose SNAP benefits have been cut. As Rev. Oliver puts it: "Even if you're making decent money in California, there are weeks when you have to decide between gas and groceries." The Storehouse serves them all, without judgment, in partnership with the Westside Food Bank and 211 LA.

Both ministries are growing. The Storehouse saw demand surge beyond capacity at Thanksgiving 2024 — a clear sign of rising need. The housing initiative will host two community forums within the

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next 12 months, bringing residents, faith partners, CLUE (Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice), and LA Voice to the table. These efforts reflect a partnership rooted in shared responsibility, not charity.

Housing stability and food security are foundational to health, family well-being, and community dignity. Holman is building the partnerships, capacity, and trust needed to sustain both — because the people of West Adams deserve a church that shows up not just on Sunday, but every day.



Investing in the Next Generation

Rooting Young People in Who They Are — and Who They Can Become

At Holman, youth ministry is not a single program — it is an ecosystem. Three distinct but deeply connected initiatives surround young people with history, science, and belonging: the Saturday School for African American History (SSAAH), the African American Male Achievers Network (A-MAN) Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Tech Center, and the Children, Youth and Family Collaborative (CYFC). Together, they answer a question that every child deserves to have answered: Who are you, and what are you capable of?

The Saturday School for African American History (SSAAH), launched in 2024 by Dr. Josephine Isabel-Jones, meets every other Saturday for students in grades two through nine. Sessions are immersive — one teacher dressed as Harriet Tubman led children through a reenactment of the Underground Railroad in Holman's outdoor space. In 2025, student work was displayed in the library at California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH), where children toured the campus and spoke with college students about their futures. When one student was asked if the program was helping her, she answered: "It makes me appreciate more my capabilities of doing whatever I want to do."

The African American Male Achievers Network (A-MAN) Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Tech Center has been on the Holman campus since 1991, founded by Dr. Bettye Davis Walker and her late husband Hal Walker, an aerospace scientist whose laser technology could

reach the moon. The program has taken students to meet President Nelson Mandela, to midnight rocket launches, and to witness the first African American walk in space. Today, coordinated by Ricardo L.J. Mowatt, it runs year-round in the Edgar Love Education Building. As Dr. Walker puts it: "We are scientists, we are brilliant, we do everything."

The Children, Youth and Family Collaborative (CYFC), founded by Lydia Cincore-Templeton, Esq. at Holman in 1993 with her own savings and 25 foster youth, is now headquartered at the church once again. It currently serves 1,700 foster and at-promise youth across 65 schools in 8 Los Angeles County school districts, with a 90%+ high school graduation rate. Taneil Franklin, a former foster youth now pursuing political science at Los Angeles Trade Technical College (LATTC) and bound for Howard University, calls the Children, Youth and Family Collaborative (CYFC) "Another family to me."

These three programs share a conviction: that the greatest investment Holman can make is in its young people. What has been built — on volunteerism, legacy, and faith — is already remarkable. What it could become with sustained support is transformational.



Honoring the Past, While Embracing the Future in Community

COMMUNITY GIVING

The Storehouse Ministry continued its twice-monthly food distributions (every 2nd and 4th Thursday) serving families in the West Adams community throughout 2025 in partnership with the Westside Food Bank, meeting rising need with consistency, dignity, and care.

The Faith Foster Families Grocery Card Drive collected grocery store gift cards through June 2025 on behalf of youth aging out of the foster care system — a tangible act of care for one of Los Angeles' most vulnerable populations.

Holman partnered with Cedars-Sinai Medical Center for community health screenings, continuing the church's long commitment to whole-person wellness for the congregation and its neighbors.

Together, these efforts reflect Holman as a congregation serving as a stabilizing anchor in West Adams — rooted in consistency, care, and community presence.

MINISTRIES & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Holman celebrated its 80th Church Anniversary and Homecoming on July 27, 2025, with two worship services, the Holman Choir, and the Jubilant Voices — marking eight decades of ministry with a message from Lead Pastor Victor Cyrus-Franklin and a welcome from the Philander Smith Collegiate Choir.

The Holman Choir held its 63rd Annual Negro Spirituals Concert, a community celebration of African-American tradition that reaches into our heritage to inspire future generations.

The Jubilant Voices celebrated their 30th Anniversary with a concert — “A Joyful Noise: 30 Years of Praise & Purpose” — in L.L. White Fellowship Hall, honoring three decades of worship leadership at Holman.

Holman honored its Nonagenarians and Centenarians in September 2025 — recognizing more than 40 members aged 90 and above, including centenarians, for their faithful service, prayer, and witness to the congregation.

The 2025 Claudia Whitmore/Beatrice Borders Memorial Scholarship and the Beta Chapter Double Ring Club Memorial **Scholarships were awarded** to Holman

students pursuing higher education — continuing the church's legacy of investing in its young people.

The Class of 2025 was celebrated in June, including Holman members accepted to Harvard University (cum laude), UCLA, the University of the Pacific Conservatory of Music, and Fullerton College — a testament to the congregation's investment in the next generation.

The 2025 Annual Black College Summit was held on October 28, 2025 and introduced local high school and community college students to admission staff from more than twenty Historically Black Colleges and Universities with workshops on financial aid, scholarships and campus culture.

EVENTS & SPEAKERS

A special preview screening of “A Better Way: James Lawson, Architect of Nonviolence” was held on July 27, 2025, in L.L. White Fellowship Hall, followed by a Q&A with Director/Producer Karen Hayes — honoring the legacy of Holman's pastor emeritus and civil rights icon.

The 2025 Rev. George F. Regas Courageous Peacemaker Awards — “Meeting the Moment” — were presented on September 28, 2025, recognizing those in the broader community who embody the spirit of courageous, nonviolent peacemaking.

Revolutionary Nonviolence Workshops continued monthly at Holman in 2025, rooted in the legacy of Rev. James M. Lawson, Jr. and open to the interfaith community — equipping participants with tools for nonviolent resistance and social change.

On October 5, 2025, **Prop 50 Education Forum** on redistricting was organized and held in partnership with LA Voice, IKAR Temple and Delores Mission Church.

INNOVATION

The African American Male Achievers Network (A-MAN) Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Center concluded its 2024–2025 program year with a final session on June 10, 2025 — capping a year of hands-on science education for Black and Brown youth in the Edgar Love Education Building.

Progress on **Holman's affordable housing development** in partnership with Inglewood First United Methodist Church continued — 60 units coming online within 15 months, with U.S. Bank as primary financial partner — as the church advances its vision of housing as an act of justice.

The Children, Youth and Family Collaborative (CYFC) returned to Holman as its headquarters in 2025, re-anchoring 32 years of foster youth ministry to the campus where it was born — and hosting the 27th Annual Holiday Festival for hundreds of foster youth and families.



YOUR SUPPORT
makes a difference

Nobody Would Know What I Do

PEOPLE OF HOLMAN

Bettye Fontenot has been the backbone of Holman for 25 years. Everyone knows her name. Few understand how much depends on her.

When you walk into Holman on a Sunday morning, everything is in place. The sanctuary is clean. The microphones are live. The radio broadcast is running on KJLH, reaching listeners across Los Angeles and as far away as Cape Town, South Africa. The custodial team has set up the chairs. The calendar has been cleared. The bills have been paid. None of it happens by accident. Almost all of it runs through one person: Bettye Fontenot.

Bettye has been Holman's Office Manager and Director of Operations since October 2001 — 25 years of keeping the lights on, the staff coordinated, the vendors paid, the facilities ready, and the church running as the community anchor it has always been. She came reluctantly. A former schoolteacher turned American Red Cross fundraiser, she had been encouraged to send her resume to the church by a friend. "Initially, I didn't want to work at a church," she says. But the interview with Reverend Henry Masters turned into a conversation that felt like reconnecting with an old friend. She took the job at a pay cut. She has never left.

What she does is genuinely difficult to describe. In the years since she arrived, Holman has lost positions to budget constraints — a Chief Financial Officer (CFO), a bookkeeper, a facilities manager, a pastoral assistant. Bettye has absorbed them all. On any given morning, she is processing payroll, reviewing bills with the treasurer, answering the phones, managing the event calendar through the church's new Planning Center system, overseeing custodial setup for 200-person events, coordinating with trustees on property repairs, sitting in on finance committee meetings, and managing everything from fire alarm inspections to film crew parking agreements. Members know her voice, know her

warmth, know they can call her with anything. What most don't fully appreciate is just how much is sitting on her desk when they do. "If I were to leave today," she says plainly, "the church would be struggling."

She also has a gift for seeing what is needed before anyone else does. In 2001, she walked into a finance meeting and proposed sponsoring the weekly radio broadcast — an idea that had never been tried. Within a year, they had filled the calendar with sponsors. Later, she conceived and organized Holman's first major fundraising gala, arriving at the first event with over \$100,000 in sponsorships already secured. "It really wasn't for the money," she says of her decision to stay. "I enjoy working with people. I like working to help others."

She worked alongside a young assistant pastor named Victor Cyrus-Franklin years ago and quietly hoped he would return. When he did, as Lead Pastor in 2024, she was ready. "I'm here primarily now to support him," she says. "To help him get his ministry on the ground."

"We can't depend on tithes and offerings to do all we need. In order for any of the ministries to function, we need additional funds. Donating to make these things happen — that's all part of ministry."

— Bettye Fontenot, Director of Operations

The hunger ministry, the housing initiative, the youth programs, the Saturday School for African American History (SSAAH), the worship services, the community events — none of it happens without the infrastructure that Bettye Fontenot quietly sustains. Operations is not a back-office function at Holman. It is the foundation on which every act of ministry stands. And for 25 years, Bettye has been that foundation.

