



# Westchester

## United Methodist Church Newsletter

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### A Suicide & Crisis Hotline is Coming—it's 988

Beginning July 16th, you can dial **988** and be connected to mental health support. If you're having suicidal thoughts, a substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress, dial this number. Just like you can dial 911 if you are in danger or physically injured, starting July 16, 2022, anyone in the United States can call or text **988** to talk to mental health counselors with the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

The launch comes nearly two years after the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act was signed into law in 2020, which set the stage for the new code's activation.

The current Lifeline phone number (**1-800-273-8255**) will still be available for people in need, as well as those concerned about loved ones, even after the new code becomes active.

In 2020 alone, an estimated 12.2 million adults in the US seriously

thought about suicide, according to the CDC. In the same year, suicide was the second leading cause of death for people ages 10 to 14 and 24 to 34, second only to accidents. Overall, 45,979 people died by suicide in 2020, which equals about one death every 11 minutes. The good news, however, is that the current mental health crisis in the US can be reversed, experts share, and the new **988** code can help.

Calls are currently offered in English and Spanish, with translation services available in over 250 languages. Texts and chats are currently only available in English. It also serves teletypewriter, or TTY, users through their preferred relay service or by dialing 711 and then the hotline. The Lifeline is working on adding video phone services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The US National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is **1-800-273-8255**. The Trevor Project, which provides help and suicide-prevention resources for LGBTQ youth, is **1-866-488-7386**. You can find other international suicide helplines at Befrienders Worldwide ([befrienders.org](http://befrienders.org)).

Didi Hirsch's Suicide Prevention Crisis Line is a leading member of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **800-273-8255**. They are currently the only center in the national network with **English- and Spanish-speaking crisis counselors 24/7**. They also have **Korean-speaking counselors** during peak evening hours (4:30pm to 12:30am PT, 7 days per week) at **877-727-4747**.



**“SUMMER AFTERNOON; TO ME THOSE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THE TWO MOST BEAUTIFUL WORDS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.”**

- HENRY JAMES

### Dates to Remember . . .

**07/03:**

8:00 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—In Person Worship

**07/04—4th of July!**

**07/06—**

7:30 am—Zoom Prayer Journaling

6:30 pm—The Gathering **0**

**7/07—**

1:00 pm—Crafters Group Rm 16

**07/10—**

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—In Person Worship

**07/13—**

7:30 am—Zoom Prayer Journaling

**07/14—**

1:00 pm—Crafters Group Rm 16

**07/17—**

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—In Person Worship

**07/18—**

1:00 pm—Crafters Group Rm 16

**07/20—**

7:30 am—Zoom Prayer Journaling

**07/21—**

1:00 pm—Crafters Group Rm 16

**07/24—**

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—In Person Worship

**07/27—**

7:30 am—Zoom Prayer Journaling

**07/31—**

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—In Person Worship

# Call for School Supplies

The Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM) of the California-Pacific Conference is collecting school supplies for Sherman Indian High School in Riverside, California. Sherman Indian High School, formerly Sherman Indian Institute, was established in Perris, CA, 1892, as a U.S. Boarding School. Now in Riverside, CA, Sherman IHS is one of four residential schools for Native American students still operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The school has a limited budget, and the students most often come from a great distance, making it difficult to arrive with much more than basic clothing. The school staff has reached out and let CONAM know of the needs for students coming on campus in August, 2022. In 2021, over 21

Cal-Pac churches provided school supplies, back packs, comforters, snacks, and incentive gift cards.

The following items are being collected:

## School Supplies

College ruled notebook paper

College ruled composition books/notebooks

#2 pencils

Colored pencils

3-ring binders/notebooks

Other school or art supplies also welcome—must be new.

## Student Personal Items

Back packs

Large beach towels

XL Twin comforters

Personal hygiene items are also welcome—must be new

## Snacks

Cheese & cracker packs

Peanut butter & crackers

Jars of peanut butter

Ramen

Other shelf-stable snack items

## Teacher Requests

\$5 to \$10 gift cards to McDonalds, Target, Wal-Mart, Domino's, Little Caesars, etc. These are used as incentive cards. Larger amount donation cards are used for class or group functions.

**Items are due at WUMC by August 12, 2022.**

## 38th Cal-Pac Annual Conference Highlights

The 38th Annual Session of the California-Pacific Conference was held June 7, 15, 17 & 18, 2022. This year's theme was "Ending Spiritual and Physical Hunger."

This year, our Annual Conference—for the first time ever—was a hybrid experience. June 7th and 15th, the Conference met on line, and June 17 & 18th, the Conference was in person, with live streaming for those who could not attend in person.

Here are a few highlights:

Res. 22-01 passed, which creates a United Women in Faith Day in our local churches. On the last Sunday of January, or an alternate Sunday, we will observe a day for United Methodist Women, who are now known as United Women in Faith.

Res. 22-02 passed, which provides additional funding for the Conference's work for Racial

Equity. In 2020, our Conference invested in a racial disparity audit (Res. 20-06: Strategic Plan for Racial Equity for Cal-Pac Conference) and committed to long-term anti-racism work on our journey toward becoming a more beloved community. We heard from Dr. Magaela Bethune, Vanderbilt University, PhD in Community Research and Action, and consultant with the UMC. She shared her 2022 report and update on the Racial Equity Audit.

The Audit has Three Phases:

Phase 1: Institutional Assessment & Environmental Scan

Phase 2: Data Collection & Quantitative Analysis

Phase 3: Listening Sessions & Reporting

Phase 1 included over 50 meetings with clergy and laity, and covered such themes as Clergy

Appointments, Ordination, Finance & Administration, and Mental Health.

The Audit is currently in Phase 2, data analysis of the data collected. Dr. Bethune's goal in Phase 2 is to produce digestible, actionable and measurable insights and that they be historically and culturally contextualized. Some of the considerations in Phase 2 are accommodating language and cultural trends, engaging hard-to-reach populations, outreach to majority White-serving congregations, and navigating technology-mediated work and COVID-19 safety.

While Phase 2 of the Audit is ongoing, Phase 3 will begin in August of this year. Phase 3 will incorporate listening sessions across the Conference, will release a Report in the late Fall of the findings, and a report of the Out Sessions in the Fall/ Winter 2022.

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*"July is not only a season of the year. It is a season of the mind and memory."  
— Hal Borland*

## COVID-19 Update from the LA County Health Dept.

In a July COVID-19 briefing for Faith Communities, the Los Angeles County Health Department shared that new cases of COVID-19 and hospitalizations due to COVID are rising, as well as the number of COVID-related deaths, which have doubled over the last month. The increase in transmission and spread are due to two subvariants, BA.4 and BA.5. Both of the new subvariants, but particularly BA.5, are now accounting for 40% of new cases in Los Angeles County, and 70% of new cases across the U.S.

Both are extremely transmittable. It is

believed that these two subvariants may be able to infect those who have previously had COVID, and those who have been vaccinated.

Reducing the risk of COVID-19 is a collective responsibility. The best line of defense is getting vaccinated and boosted when possible, and wearing a mask indoors and when in close contact with people outdoors.

Right now Los Angeles County is in the Medium designation, but it is projected that we will move into the High level designation this month. This is based on the increase of hospital admits over the

last two weeks. Should we remain at the High level designation for two weeks, Los Angeles County will implement mandatory indoor masking.

In an effort to keep everyone as safe as possible, masks are still required for all of our indoor gatherings, meetings and worship services. The suspension of eating or drinking together indoors is still in place on the church campus.

Thank you for your love & care for each other!

## Rev. Krista Givens, Missionary—Far Away Life

Hello Friends, I write to you in the midst of a heatwave; 'the beginning of summer' they tell me. One of the most often discussed topics here (Torrevieja, Spain) is the weather. When I arrived in March, it was unusually cold and exceptionally rainy. Now, the temperatures are rising and the summer is here!

My work at La Siesta Evangelical Church continues to be both inspiring and challenging, as we move through pandemic restrictions loosening and more options for us to be open, active and welcoming to the

international population of Torrevieja. Our 9:30 a.m. service, which had been on hold since 2020, has now restarted and we are meeting every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. on the 1st and 3rd Sundays, and 11:15 a.m. on the 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays. Our varied schedule is necessary as we share the facility with two other international congregations: The Church of England and a German-speaking Baptist Church.

On May 22nd, we hosted my official installation as the pastor of La Siesta and entry into the Iglesia Evan-

gélica Española (Spanish Evangelical Church), which is a united denomination, comprised of Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, and Congregationalists. The IEE was established in the wake of religious tolerance in Spain in 1869 with the first General Assembly in Seville in 1872.

As I reflect on the happenings in the world ... my calling to be a missionary is renewed. Missionary life forces us to put our lives on the line for the work of LOVE: to heal the wounds of racism, misogyny, classism, and nationalism.

In the name of Jesus—Krista

For Krista's complete newsletter, visit:  
[farawaylife.com](http://farawaylife.com)

## 38th Cal-Pac Annual Conference Highlights (cont.)

Over the next five years, the Conference will contract with expert trainers who will help us develop lay and clergy leadership in our Conference, as well as educate the whole body, as we seek to implement the results of the racial disparity audit. Res. 22-02 also builds upon its prior commitment for the 2021-2024 quadrennium to fund the Urban Kids Camp for \$45,000 for use over the next five years! Camp and Retreat Ministries will administer these funds.

This is excellent news and supports the commitment to the work of recognizing the

sin of racism and to address the injustice in church and society that continues to cause harm and deny People of Color their value as Children of God.

Res. 22-07, Safe Harbor Policy for Local Churches and District Committees on Ordained Ministry, passed. In 2019, the Bishops of the Western Jurisdiction of the UMC affirmed that they will not "withhold or challenge ordination based solely on a person's gender identity or sexual orientation."

The Conference will coordinate and estab-

lish Safe Harbor policies that make explicit the Conference's commitment to provide Christ's unconditional welcome to UMC clergy as well as ministry candidates at any point in discernment, licensing, and candidacy process from any Jurisdiction or Central Conference, and to report on any policies made.

We affirm the need for every member of the body of Christ by celebrating the gifts and callings of clergy and candidates for ordained ministry, and will offer them accessibility through the use of Safe Harbor policies.

**Westchester United Methodist Church**  
**a place where love works**

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**We are a Reconciling church!**  
**ALL are welcome here.**



## From Lyda . . .

I have been greatly influenced by New Testament scholar, Amy-Jill Levine, and wish to share some of her teachings from her book, "Short Stories by Jesus" about the parable known as The Good Samaritan.

Jesus' first-century Jewish audience didn't need a parable to tell them to care for others; they were already commanded to love both the neighbor and the stranger. This parable for them would not have been about looking after a fellow human being, and the parable is not, finally, an answer to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" It is more provocative than that.

Amy-Jill shares that the lawyer's question, "Who is my neighbor" is a polite way of asking, "who is NOT my neighbor?" Or "Who does not deserve my love?" Or "Whose lack of food or shelter can I ignore?" Or "Whom can I hate?" The answer Jesus gives is "no one." Everyone deserves that love – local or alien, Jew or gentile, terrorist or rapist, everyone. You even have to love your enemies.

In essence, Jesus asks the lawyer, "Are

you able to see, in the very words of the Torah, the equation of enemy with neighbor and thus the command to love both?"

Who is NOT our neighbor? When asked who is our neighbor, we know the answer – it's everyone. Everyone is our neighbor. But when we ask ourselves, who is NOT our neighbor, the question becomes a sacred threshold for us to cross into new territory—a once-in-a-lifetime moment surrounded in acts of blessing.

I am ashamed to count the times when I've been more like the priest and the Levite than the Samaritan. When I've rolled up my window, waited anxiously for the light to change, and looked anywhere but at the face of the person standing at the freeway exit holding a sign asking for help.

Or waiting in line at the drive thru, pretending to be on my phone, so I could ignore the person standing there asking me for money. And when, moments later, I hear that person thanking someone in the car behind me for their help, and saying to them, "God bless you," I realize that I just missed out on not only the opportunity to recognize another's humanity, but on a moment of blessing – blessing that I probably need more than the person offering

it.

How many holy moments have I missed out on – sacred thresholds into new relationships, new opportunities for growth, for compassion, for love – because I was fearful? How many once-in-a-lifetime moments have I missed out on because I chose to cross to the other side of the street? Missed, because I didn't think I was strong enough or brave enough or good enough to really see another person's pain?

Don't be afraid to let those moments surround you with words and acts of blessing. The other night, I read on Facebook, "If you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way." And I was like – wow – the theology of Facebook has come through again! "If you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way."

I think I can do that. Even if I'm afraid sometimes ... even if I act like the priest and the Levite more than I would care to admit. Just like the Samaritan, all of us can find more sacred thresholds filled with blessing—and—we can act on them by doing a small thing in a great way with love.