



Westchester

United Methodist Church Newsletter

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988
SUICIDE
& CRISIS
LIFELINE

Suicide Prevention Month

September is National Suicide Prevention Month – a time to remember the lives lost to suicide, acknowledge the millions more who have experienced suicidal thoughts, and the many individuals, families and communities which have been impacted by suicide. It's also a time to raise awareness about suicide prevention and share messages of hope.

We care about suicide prevention; connect to community, culture, data, and research; and collaborate with others to address this public health problem that has impacted millions of Americans.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) shares that over 49,000 people died by suicide in the United States in 2022. That translates to 1 death every 11 minutes. In addition, 13.2 million adults seriously thought about suicide, 3.8 million made a plan for suicide, and 1.6 million people attempted suicide.

The World Health Organization shares, "Each suicidal death is a public health concern with a profound impact on those around them. By raising awareness, reducing the stigma around suicide, and encouraging well-informed action, we can reduce instances of suicide around the world.

We can all play a role in supporting those experiencing a suicidal crisis or those bereaved by suicide whether as a member of society, as a child, as a parent, as a friend, as a colleague, or as a person with lived experience. We can encourage understanding about the issue, reach out to people who are struggling, and share our experiences. We can create hope through action and be the light."

In the CDC's Suicide Prevention Resource for Action, it states: "This Prevention Resource represents a select group of strategies based on the best available evi-

dence to help communities focus on prevention activities with the greatest potential to prevent suicide. These strategies include:

- Strengthen economic supports
- Create protective environments
- Improve access and delivery of suicide care
- Promote healthy connections
- Teach coping and problem-solving skills
- Identify and support people at risk
- Lessen harms and prevent future risk

For more information, please visit www.cdc.gov

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call 988.

"ALL WE ARE SAYING IS GIVE PEACE A CHANCE."

- JOHN LENNON

Dates to Remember . . .

09/01—8 a.m.—Zoom Breakfast Church

10:00 a.m.—In-Person Worship

09/02 — Labor Day

09/04—12n Crafters Group

09/08—8:00 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10:00 a.m.—In Person Worship

09/09-09/10—CPK Restaurant Fundraiser

09/15—In Person Worship

Lisa Williams, Guest Pastor

Zoom Breakfast Church will not meet on 09/15

09/18—12n Crafters Group

09/21—International Day of Peace

09/22—8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10:00 am—In-Person Worship

Marta Lear, Cert. Lay Servant

09/25—Crafters Group

09/29—8:00 a.m.—Zoom Breakfast Church

09/29—10:00 a.m.—

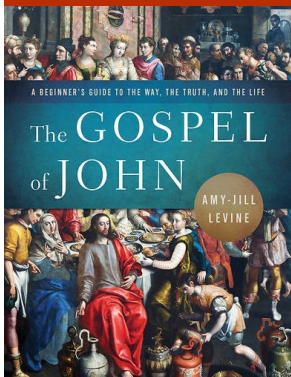
In-Person Worship

Hilly Hicks, Guest Pastor

09/29—Alive Together 5K for Suicide Prevention / UCLA Westwood Campus

Reminder ... Rhythm & Food, eat pray love Community Dinner Church and Zoom Prayer Check In are on hiatus this month. We look forward to seeing you in October!

The Gospel of John



Unlock the hidden depths of John's Gospel.

John's Gospel offers readers a new language—of being born anew, of living water, of wind and spirit, of the “I am”—that enhances how we understand the divine, how we experience the world, and how we participate in the mystery of faith.

With her characteristic wit and charm, Amy-Jill Levine introduces readers to the world of the Gospel of John by unpacking the sto-

ries in their original context, along with examining how the text is read today.

This book considers the Gospel of John in its entirety, moving through the prologue, the wedding at Cana, the Samaritan woman at the well and the woman caught in adultery, the healing of the man at the pool and the man born blind, foot washing, Mary Magdalene and Doubting Thomas, and the Lamb of God.

The Gospel of John small group meets via Zoom, and will begin on Thursday, October 10th and continue through Thursday, November 21, 2024 (no meeting on 10/31).

The church has a few books available for purchase at \$13.00. Books may also be purchased on Amazon.com, or at your local bookstore. To reserve a book and/or your spot in “A Beginner's Guide to the Way, the Truth and the Life of the Gospel of John,” please email Pastor Lyda (lyda@wumcla.org)

“There are as many paths to God as there are souls on earth.”
- Sufi Proverb

Labor Day—The Beginning

Labor Day, an annual celebration of workers and their achievements, originated during one of American labor history's most dismal chapters.

In the late 1800s, at the height of the Industrial Revolution in the United States, the average American worked 12-hour days and seven-day weeks in order to eke out a basic living. Despite restrictions in some states, children as young as 5 or 6 toiled in mills, factories and mines across the country, earning a fraction of their adult counterparts' wages.

People of all ages, particularly the very poor and recent immigrants, often faced extremely unsafe working conditions, with insufficient access to fresh air, sanitary facilities and breaks.

As manufacturing increasingly supplanted agriculture as the wellspring of American employment, labor unions, which had first appeared in the late 18th century, grew more prominent and vocal. They began organizing strikes and rallies to protest poor conditions and compel employers to renegotiate hours and pay.

Many of these events turned violent, including the infamous Haymarket Riot of 1886, in which Chicago policemen and workers were killed.

On May 11, 1894, employees of the Pullman Palace Car Company in Chicago went on strike to protest wage cuts and the firing of union representatives.

On June 26, the American Railroad Union, led by Eugene V. Debs, called for a boycott of all

Pullman railway cars, crippling railroad traffic nationwide. To break the Pullman strike, the federal government dispatched troops to Chicago, unleashing a wave of riots that resulted in the deaths of more than a dozen workers.

In the wake of this massive unrest and in an attempt to repair ties with American workers, Congress passed an act making Labor Day a legal holiday in the District of Columbia and the territories. On June 28, 1894, President Grover Cleveland signed it into law. More than a century later, the true founder of Labor Day has yet to be identified.

I invite us all to remember that the upcoming three day weekend was brought to us by the blood, sweat and tears of the labor movement!

Alive Together—5K Suicide Prevention

We are proud to share that Westchester UMC is once again a sponsor of Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services' "Alive Together" event! Thanks to your generosity, we are an "Ally" level sponsor.

On Sunday, September 29th, beginning at 8 a.m. at UCLA Wilson Plaza, the Alive Together 5K will take place. With a focus on building community and meaningful connections, Alive Together: Uniting to Prevent Suicide raises funds and awareness for Didi Hirsch's Suicide Prevention Center.

You can support Team Westchester UMC and participate in Alive Together in a few ways: you can join Team Westchester UMC, support a team member or the team, or donate directly to suicide prevention on the church website. You don't have to attend the event in person to make a difference!

Please visit www.didihirsch.org for more information. You can also check out Westchester UMC's website for information on how to join or support Team Westchester UMC.



Your support of Team Westchester UMC will amplify our message of hope and contribute to saving lives.

Bread and Roses Strike

The power looms that thundered inside the cotton weaving room of the Everett Mill in Lawrence, Massachusetts, fell silent on January 11, 1912. When a mill official demanded to know why workers were standing motionless next to their machines, the explanation was simple: "Not enough pay."

The workers' weekly wages had been reduced by 32 cents. A newly enacted Massachusetts law had reduced the workweek of women and children from 56 to 54 hours, and the mill owners, unlike in the past, cut workers' wages. For workers who only averaged \$8.76 per week, every penny was precious, and 32 cents made the difference between eating or going

hungry.

Word of the strike by the women of the Everett Mill swept through the tenements that night, and the following morning the walkout cascaded through neighboring mills. Thousands of strikers chanted and sang protest songs as they paraded through the streets. Lines of state militiamen protected the brick mills with the spears of their bayonets pointed squarely at the strikers. Women didn't shy away from the protests. The banners they carried demanding both living wages and dignity—"We want bread, and roses, too"—gave the work stoppage its name, the Bread and Roses Strike.

With the city on high alert, striking families sent 119 of their children out of harm's way

to Manhattan on February 10 to live with relatives or, in some cases, complete strangers who could provide food and a safe shelter. The "children's exodus" proved to be a publicity coup for the strikers, and Lawrence authorities intended to halt it. When families brought another 46 children bound for Philadelphia to the city's train station on February 24, the city marshal ordered them to disperse. When defiant mothers still tried to get their children aboard the train and resisted the authorities, police dragged them by the hair, beat them with clubs and arrested them as their horrified children looked on in tears.

(Continued below ...)

Bread and Roses Strike—Continued

The national reaction was visceral and marked a turning point in the Bread and Roses Strike. President Taft asked his attorney general to investigate, and Congress began a hearing on the strike on March 2. Striking workers, including children who dropped out of school at age 14 or younger to work in the factories, described the brutal working conditions and poor pay inside the Lawrence mills. A third of mill workers, whose life expectancy was less than 40 years, died within a decade of taking their jobs. If death didn't

come slowly through respiratory infections such as pneumonia or tuberculosis from inhaling dust and lint, it could come swiftly in workplace accidents that took lives and limbs. Fourteen-year-old Carmela Teoli shocked lawmakers by recounting how a mill machine had torn off her scalp and left her hospitalized for seven months.

After the children's testimony, public tide turned in favor of the strikers for good. The mill owners were ready for a deal and agreed to many of the workers' demands.

The two sides agreed to a 15-percent wage hike, a bump in overtime compensation, and a promise not to retaliate against strikers. On March 14, the nine-week strike ended as 15,000 workers gathered on Lawrence Common and shouted their agreement to accept the offer. Only five sounded their dissent.

By the end of March, 275,000 New England textile workers received similar raises, and other industries followed suit.

See www.history.com for more about Labor Day!

Westchester United Methodist Church
a place where love works

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We are a Reconciling church!
ALL are welcome here.



From Pastor Lyda . . .

With the upcoming Labor Day holiday, I've been thinking a lot about unions, and strikes, and remembering what many newspapers called, "The Summer of Strikes" last year.

In 2023, the United States witnessed a surge in labor strikes across various industries, highlighting widespread worker dissatisfaction and a push for better wages and working conditions. The United Auto Workers strike, involving thousands of workers from major automakers like General Motors and Ford, called attention to demands for higher pay, improved benefits, and job security amid record corporate profits. Simultaneously, the Writers Guild of America strike, which included screenwriters and other media professionals, brought Hollywood to a standstill as they fought for fair compensation, protection from AI job replacement, and better streaming residuals. Workers are increasingly willing to take collective action to challenge inequities, demanding more equitable treatment and a fair share of the economic pros-

perity they help create.

Growing up, I remember my mom "Walking the Line in 89!" in the second teachers' strike in Los Angeles since the founding of the United Teachers of Los Angeles. One of my kids and I joined high school teachers on the picket line in 2019, and I have walked in solidarity with airline workers and hotel workers on the picket line, fighting for a living wage and safe working environments.

Labor Day is a holiday celebrating the social and economic achievements of workers and commemorates labor activists in helping to realize the American ideals of equality, freedom, and justice.

Over the past few weeks in our worship series, *Drawn In: Living the Creative Life with God*, we've explored the processes of Dreaming, Hovering, Risking, and Listening. This first week of September, we're looking at the fifth stage of Living the Creative Life: Re-integrating. Everything that is created is in relationship with all other things. Nothing exists in isolation. What happens in our communities, and in the world, is closely related to how we respond to each other. Are we willing to re-integrate our lives as we come in

contact with others who are not like us? New possibilities open up when we are willing to offer ourselves fully and be changed by our interactions.

In the Book of James, the author writes, "*But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves . . . But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.*"

The Holy Spirit is a force for liberation, a force for humanity's re-integration. The Holy Spirit sparks the will of oppressed people everywhere to rise up and throw off the burden of injustice. The indwelling Spirit empowers us to do the work of loving God and loving neighbor—the work of creating a kinder and more equitable world.

This Labor Day, and beyond, may we hold a deep awareness of our interconnectedness and respond to each other in love and justice—re-integrating and interacting with the Holy Spirit, the spirit of justice, and each other. May we be "doers of the word."