



# Westchester

## United Methodist Church Newsletter

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### Raids, Rights, and Our Call to Justice



USA Today reports that, “A September 8, 2025 Supreme Court decision gives permission to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to continue sweeps in the Los Angeles area that critics and federal judges said amounted to racial profiling.

The limited-scope decision came down in an unsigned, emergency action that did not disclose which justices voted to side with President Donald Trump’s administration and offered no reasoning. But it nonetheless temporarily overturned decisions from the lower courts that blocked ICE from making stops based only on race, language, location and occupation.

The case, *Noem v. Vasquez Perdomo*, started when a group of Latino residents from California and related workers’ organizations sued the government, saying they were being subject to illegal stops

as part of an enforcement blitz that started June 5th in the Los Angeles area.

The Trump administration has been using four criteria to see who ICE agents can stop for immigration inquiries, according to court documents. They are: (1) apparent race or ethnicity; (2) speaking Spanish or English with an accent; (3) presence at a particular location such as a carwash or day laborer pickup site; and (4) the type of work the person does.”

While the administration uses the pretense that they are apprehending violent offenders, only about half of those in ICE custody have been charged or convicted of any crime—violent or otherwise. This sense of terror is especially strong for undocumented people, but it also includes legal

residents, folks who recently lost their Temporary Protected Status, and even citizens who reasonably fear that their activism or simply their appearance could make them targets of abduction and detention, often without due process.

As people of faith, we cannot stay silent in the face of such illegality and inhumanity. The Supreme Court’s September 8th decision gives ICE permission to continue sweeps that amount to racial profiling—targeting people for the color of their skin, the language they speak, or the work they do. These actions tear at the fabric of our communities and demean the image of God in every person. We are called to stand with our neighbors, to resist fear with love, and to proclaim with clarity: this is not justice, and this is not who we are called to be.

**“OCTOBER IS  
A SYMPHONY  
OF PERMA-  
NENCE AND  
CHANGE.” —**

**- BONARO W.  
OVERSTREET**

### Dates to Remember . . .

**10/05**—10:00 a.m.—Worship—  
Guest Speaker: Marta Lear, Musician: Lear Family Band

**10/0**—12n—Craft Group

**10/12**—10 a.m.—Worship—  
Guest Speaker: Kimberly Emerson

**10/13—Indigenous Peoples’  
Day**

**10/15**—12n—Craft Group

**10/19**—10 a.m.—Worship—  
Guest Speaker: Pastor Lisa Williams

**10/22**—12n—Craft Group

**10/25—Blessing of the  
Animals**

11 am to 12n in front of the church

**10/26**—10:00 a.m.—  
Worship—*The Lord’s Prayer:  
More Than Words*

**10/29**—12n—Craft Group

**10/31—Halloween!** Puppy  
Pastor Molly, Pastor Lyda and  
Kyla will be handing out treats  
on the corner of Emerson &  
80th Place.

# October is National Bullying Prevention Month

*"Always try to be a little kinder than is necessary."  
- J.M. Barrie*

In 2006, the PACER National Bullying Prevention Center declared the first week of October as a time to educate and raise awareness about bullying prevention. Their goal was to change the prevalent view that bullying was just a childhood rite of passage, something every kid had to go through. They pointed out that bullying raises school absentee rates, decreases student performance, and increases physical and mental stress.

After much success, the event was expanded to the entire month of October starting in 2010.

While all kids are mean to one another from time to time,

bullying is a persistent pattern of behavior, meant to emphasize a power imbalance and hurt the victim. The reasons for being bullied reported most often by students include physical appearance, race/ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation.

One out of every five students report being bullied. One in five tweens (9 to 12 years old) has been cyberbullied, cyberbullied others, or seen cyberbullying.

Among students ages 12 – 18 who reported being bullied at school, 15% were bullied online or by text.

Students who are both targets of bullying and engage

in bullying behavior are at greater risk for both mental health and behavior problems than students who only bully or are only bullied.

For too long, those who were bullied felt that no one cared. This month and beyond, share the message that bullying is never okay and that you are there to help. No kid should feel that they are alone, and that the adults in their lives—teachers, family members, faith communities, and neighbors—are there to listen and help empower them to speak out against bullying.

**Together we can create a world without bullying.**

## Standing Firm for Marriage Equality

It feels, in these days, as if we are being pushed backwards. Across the country, marriage equality — once celebrated as a long-fought victory — is under renewed attack. Politicians and courts debate the rights of LGBTQIA+ people, and some churches still cling to exclusionary practices. The ground gained through courage, faith, and struggle seems to tremble under our feet.

But here at Westchester UMC, as a Reconciling Church, we know who we are. Long before the Book of Discipline removed its hateful and exclusionary language, we chose to affirm the sacred worth of all people. We chose to celebrate the love of same-gender couples, to honor marriages that reflect God's image in every

form, and to stand with those denied justice by the church and by the state. We will not go back. Not in our sanctuary, not in our fellowship, not in our witness to the world. We believe that love is of God, and wherever love is found, God is present. As people of faith, we are called to resist any effort to diminish the dignity of our LGBTQIA+ siblings. So what can we do? We can keep telling the truth: that love is stronger than hate, inclusion more powerful than exclusion, and justice more faithful than fear. We can support those whose rights are under attack. And we can live as a community where all are welcomed fully, without exception.

The road toward justice may twist and turn, but our calling is steady. We will not go backwards. We will keep moving forward — until all of God's children are free to love, to marry, and to live in peace.

### **What You Can Do:**

**Speak Up**—Share your support for marriage equality with friends, family and neighbors. Your voice matters.

**Advocate**—Contact legislators and faith leaders to remind them that love is sacred and justice is non-negotiable.

Together, our actions add up to a powerful witness: love will not be silenced. **We move forward in love—never backward.**



RECONCILING MINISTRIES NETWORK

**We move forward in love — never backward.**

# Blessing of the Animals

We look forward to our 3rd Annual Blessing of the Animals on **Saturday, October 25th from 11:00 a.m. to 12 noon**. You are invited to bring your pet, or a picture of your pet, to our Blessing of the Animals in the front courtyard at Westchester UMC. Kids can bring stuffed lovie to be blessed.

Each pet, picture or stuffed lovie will receive a blessing. You will have a photo opportunity at the event to capture the moment! We will also have a Memorial Table set up—

you can bring a photo of a beloved pet who has crossed over the “Rainbow Bridge” to place on the Memorial Table. We recommend bringing a copy of a picture or a picture that you don’t need to get back.

We are collecting donations of pet food and pet treats for the pets of the clients of our local LAX Food Pantry. Requested items from their wish list:

- Cat wet & dry food
- Dog wet & dry food
- Dog & cat treats (hard & soft)

We will also have a monetary donation station set up for the Food Pantry LAX if you wish to help support the wonderful work they are doing in the community to fight food insecurity for humans and their fur-babies.

Bring your furry, feathered or scaled companion—if you have a shy pet, you can bring a photo or pull one up on your phone! All creatures, great or small, are welcome.

# The Lord’s Prayer: More Than Words

On October 26th and continuing through November, we begin a new worship series called The Lord’s Prayer: More Than Words.

Each week we will pause with one part of the prayer, listening for how it speaks to our lives and to the world around us.

**Abba** — Prayer begins with relationship. Calling God “Abba” reminds us we are God’s beloved and calls us to build relationships of love with others.

**On Earth as it is in Heaven** — To pray “thy Kin-dom come” is to join our voices with God’s dream for justice and peace. It is a prayer of action.

**Give Us This Day** — Each day we are called to trust in God’s provision, to be mindful of the needs of the world, and to remember the Source of all gifts.

**As We Forgive** — Forgiveness is never easy, but it is at the heart of right relationship. This week we face the hard questions: what holds us back, and what sets us free?

**Deliver Us** — In times of trial, Jesus calls on God’s strength. We pray for courage, for God’s presence, and for deliverance from all that seeks to harm.

Each part of this prayer opens us to new possibilities: of deeper trust, of healing relationships, of courage to act, and of hope in God’s faithful presence.

Come, pray with us. Come, live this prayer with us. Together, let’s discover how the Prayer of Jesus can transform not just our words on Sunday, but our way of being every day.

## #Spirit Day

Spirit Day began in 2010 as a way to show support for LGBTQIA+ youth and take a stand against bullying. Following a string of high-profile suicide death of gay teens in 2010, GLAAD worked to involve millions of teachers, workplaces, celebrities, media outlets, and students in going purple on social media, or wearing purple, a color that symbolizes spirit on the rainbow flag.

Spirit Day now occurs every year on

the third Thursday in October, during National Bullying Prevention Month, and has become one of the most visible days of support for LGBTQIA+ youth.

This year, GLAAD will celebrate Spirit Day on **Thursday, October 16th** when we will all stand together: communities, corporations, faith groups, sports leagues, schools and so many, many more, to send a message of solidarity and acceptance to LGBTQIA+ youth.



You can get involved in Spirit Day too! The first step is to pledge to go purple! Visit the GLAAD website at: [glad.org/spiritday](http://glad.org/spiritday) to learn more.

Pledge to wear purple! We support LGBTQ youth and we take a stand against bullying!

## 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 . . .

Rev. Kathi McShane, the theologian in residence of The Changemaker Initiative, says this: “Change happens in small ways. It takes indirect paths. It happens locally, among small groups of people who care about a problem, sometimes just one or two people working together. It doesn’t face a big problem head-on: it pokes tiny holes at it from the edge, where the resistance is softer, where something small can change without taking on the whole, thorny problem.”

She teaches that changemakers know that social change—change for the common good—doesn’t happen the way it used to. Now, change happens in small ways. It takes indirect paths. It happens locally, among small groups of people who care about a problem, sometimes just one or two people working together. It doesn’t face a big problem head-on; it pokes tiny holes at it from the edge, where the resistance is softer, where something small can change without taking on the whole, gigantic problem.

CLUE—Clergy & Laity for Economic Justice—recently shared a “changemaker” story ...

In February of this year, dozens of workers at the Original Pantry Café in Los Angeles launched a picket to save their jobs and the iconic institution, which was formerly owned by Mayor Richard Riordan.

Since his passing in 2023, the Richard J. Riordan Trust had assumed ownership of the restaurant, which had been designated an LA Historic Cultural Monument.

In February, the Trust threatened to close the restaurant on March 2nd unless workers gave up their demand for job security and continued union representation from Unite Here Local 11 if the restaurant changed hands.

CLUE came for a dine-in action at the restaurant to show workers that LA supported their just and fair labor demands.

The restaurant was closed and all employees laid off. On Ash Wednesday, dozens of former Pantry workers and their families joined clergy from across Los Angeles to mark the holy day at the now shuttered site.

Two of the clergy there summed up the moment by stating: “God created us to live with joy in God’s creation. But the sins of economic inequity and exploitation separate us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we wind up not enjoying the life our Creator intended for us. God desires that we turn to God and live.”

CLUE additionally launched a letter writing campaign to the Richard J. Riordan Trust, urging them to honor the workers of the Original Pantry Café by protecting their jobs as new owners take possession.

CLUE, and all who wrote letters (including this church!) called on the Trust to treat

these workers with dignity and respect and direct the reopening of the restaurant so that they can live and flourish as God’s children.

In April on Maundy Thursday, people gathered to participate in the sacred action of foot washing for the laid-off employees. The ritual served to honor Pantry workers for their labor, and to convey to them that the faith community would continue to accompany them as they weathered this fight.

On September 19th, it was announced that the iconic restaurant will be reopening in 2026, and the workers were re-hired with continued union representation.

In the middle of an immigration crisis, in a time of fear and grief, their victory encourages us to stay faithful and connected in the sacred struggle for justice.

Right before Jesus fed 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish, he asked the disciples, “How much bread do you have? Take a look.”

This is the question to us, we who have been created in the image of a creative, compassionate, empowering God, the God who can feed five thousand people with just five loaves of bread and two fish.

It’s enough. Whatever we have in our hands will always be enough when we use it to change the world for the better.