



# Westchester

# United Methodist Church Newsletter

VOLUME VII, ISSUE 3

MARCH 2026

## GENDER EQUALITY

**“YOU MAY SHOOT ME WITH YOUR WORDS. YOU MAY CUT ME WITH YOUR EYES. YOU MAY KILL ME WITH YOUR HATEFULNESS. BUT STILL, LIKE AIR, I’LL RISE.”**

- MAYA ANGELOU

## March is Gender Equality Month

Gender Equality Month is celebrated every year in March. The whole month is dedicated to celebrating the social, political, cultural, and academic achievements of women in the world. March is also important to raise awareness against gender bias in society. Did you know that, according to United Nations Development Program, almost 90% of men and women hold some kind of bias against women? This month is dedicated to eradicating those biases and teaching people the indispensable role of women in society.

On July 13, 1848, the women’s rights movement began. Elizabeth Cady Stanton invited some of her friends for tea, and their talk turned toward the despondent situation of women and their lack of freedom. They decided to start a convention to discuss the condition of women and made a small announcement in the Seneca County Courier, where they called a convention to discuss the conditions

of women.

They drafted the “Declaration of Sentiments,” where they connected the campaign for women’s rights to the American symbol of liberty. They declared carefully the areas in which women were treated unjustly. They quickly received backlash. Newspaper editors attacked women for their obnoxious demands and ridiculed them.

The widespread coverage of the movement, even though just to ridicule it, started gaining momentum. People started noticing their agitation and joined the movement. The struggle took a 72-year campaign, but they eventually won the basic American right — the right to vote.

After the right to vote was won in 1920, the women’s rights movement continued in several directions. Margaret Sanger advocated

for a woman’s right to control her body and reproductive and sexual health. She endorsed birth control and provided education to women about the practice. After a long struggle, in 1923 the Supreme Court declassified birth control information as obscene.

The American Medical Association states that extensive scientific research suggests sex and gender are better understood as a spectrum rather than an either-or definition.

For women and transgender people, the struggle for equality is not only continuing — it is intensifying. Rights once assumed secure are being challenged, healthcare access restricted, and identities debated in legislative chambers. May we courageously continue to work for a country and a world where dignity is protected, bodies are respected, and gender is never used to divide, diminish, or oppress.

## Dates to Remember . . .

### 03/01—Communion Served

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church,

10 am—Worship

4 pm—Sound Sanctuary Sound Bath

03/02—6:30 pm Zoom Lent Study

### 03/04—

7:30 am—Prayer Check In

12n—Craft Group

5 pm—Soul-Full Soup Dinner  
Church-RSVP 03/01 by 12 pm

### 03/08—Daylight Savings Time

8 am Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—Worship

03/09—6:30 pm Zoom Lent Study

03/10—11 am Rhythm & Food-RSVP  
03/08 by 12 pm

03/11—7:30 a.m. Zoom Prayer

12n—Craft Group

### 03/15—UMCOR Sunday

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—Worship

03/16—6:30 p.m. Zoom Lent Study

03/18—Hearty & Holy Dinner  
Church-RSVP 03/15 by 12 pm

### 03/22—

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—Worship

03/23—6:30 pm Zoom Lent Study

03/25—7:30 am Zoom Prayer

12n—Craft Group

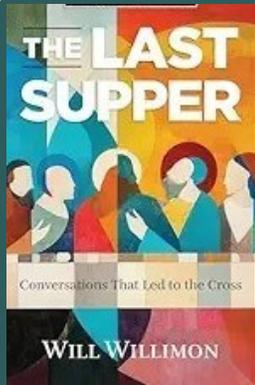
### 03/29—

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—Worship

03/30—6:30 pm Zoom Lent Study

# The Last Supper Lenten Study



Our small group Book/DVD study for Lent is “The Last Supper” by Will Willimon. Along the road from Palm Sunday to the cross, Jesus told stories—riddles that revealed the heart of God’s Kin-dom.

Author Will Willimon invites us to walk that road again, listening to Jesus’ most memorable stories and parables as we journey toward the upper room.

Through stories of reckless sowers, searching shepherds, prodigal fathers, and open

invitations, we discover a God who refuses to take no for an answer.

We will explore:

- Sowing, Seeking, Finding
- Open Invitation
- Feasting with the Found Crumbs from the Table
- Refusing the Host
- The Host Who Becomes the Meal

Our Lenten small group study began on Monday, February 23rd and will continue through Monday, March 30th. All ses-

sions will begin at 6:30 p.m. and will take place on Zoom.

To receive a Zoom link and/or request a book, please email Pastor Lyda at [Lyda@wumcla.org](mailto:Lyda@wumcla.org). The church has a couple of books available for \$13.00, or you can purchase a book at your local bookseller. No one will be turned away for a lack of funds—just let us know you would like to participate and we will provide a book at no cost.

*“Jesus’ resurrection is the beginning of God’s new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven.”*  
- N.T. Wright

## The Signs We Carry

Recently, I purchased three yard signs from a family-owned company called Signs of Justice. Each one now stands quietly but boldly in front of our church.

One carries the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

Another welcomes neighbors in multiple languages, proclaiming: “No matter where you are from, we’re glad you’re our neighbor.”

And the third reads: “No Secret Police” — with the “No” and the “ICE” of “Police” in bright red to read “No ICE” — a visual reminder that transparency, dignity, and human rights matter.

These signs are simple. They are not loud. They do not shout. But they do something important: they tell the truth about who we are and what we believe.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus was surrounded by signs — and he was, in many ways, a sign himself. He healed on the Sabbath. He ate with those considered unclean. He welcomed women, foreigners, and those pushed to the margins. He overturned tables when power was used to exploit the poor. Each action was a sign — pointing beyond itself to God’s Kin-dom, where justice and compassion meet.

In the Gospel of John, miracles are even called “signs.” They reveal something deeper about God’s heart. They show us what love looks like in public.

We live in a world full of signs — yard signs, protest signs, warning signs, road signs. They guide us. They caution us. They tell us what is valued and what is permitted. The signs we choose to display say something about the direction we are traveling and the community we are trying to build.

**Continued on Page 3**

# UMCOR Sunday – March 15, 2026

On Sunday, March 15th, Westchester United Methodist Church will participate in honoring United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Sunday. As followers of Jesus, we are called to respond in the world with extravagant grace. Through UMCOR, we are able to make a difference in the lives of communities and individuals whose lives

have been turned upside down by war, storms, fires, displacement, and climate change, and not to administrative costs. UMCOR, provides hope for communities and individuals whose lives have been upset by war, storms or other crises. This ministry is achieved exclusively through your generosity. Last year, your generosity delivered \$1.2 million towards

International Disaster Response; U.S. Disaster Response; Global Migration; and Relief Supplies. Because of you – UMCOR and its partners serve as witnesses to God’s love for all.



## The Way Worship Series

“You don’t choose a life, you live a life.” - The Way (2010)

I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.—  
Isaiah 43:19

Lent is a time of reflection, and there’s nothing like a pilgrimage to conjure that up. Making intentional journeys has been a ritual of humankind across time and traditions. Inspired by passages in the Judeo-Christian scriptures that talk about the journeys, roads, and pathways of life, we

will make our way together through this season.

The popular and poignant movie, “The Way,” about a father’s pilgrimage in honor of his late son on the famed Camino de Santiago in France and Spain, accompanies us as our modern-day inspiration to live the life we’ve been given to the fullest.

Each week, we will explore:

- “The Wandering Way”
- “The High Way”
- “The Way Around”

“The Way Home”

“The Free Way”

“The Other Way” and “Make Your Way” on Easter Sunday, April 5th.

Come ... let us journey together.

## The Signs We Carry (continued from page 2)

Our new yard signs are not about partisanship. They are about people. They are about remembering that every human being bears the image of God. They are about resisting injustice, welcoming the stranger, and insisting that systems of power remain accountable and humane.

In a time when fear can be loud and division can feel constant, these signs

are small reminders of another way — The Way — the way of justice, compassion, and courage.

May we continue to be signs of hope in our community. May our words and our actions point toward a world where dignity is protected, neighbors are welcomed, and injustice is never ignored.

Because the signs we carry help shape the world we are becoming.



## Westchester United Methodist Church

a place where love works

[www.wumcla.org](http://www.wumcla.org)

8065 Emerson Avenue

Los Angeles, CA 90045

Church: (310) 670 3777

Pastor's email: [lyda@wumcla.org](mailto:lyda@wumcla.org)

Easter is Sunday, April 5th!



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



## From Pastor Lyda . . .

The phrase, “The Way,” is ancient. Before followers of Jesus were called Christians, they were called people of The Way. The Way is not a doctrine. It is not a checklist. It is not a slogan. It is a road. A path. A pilgrimage. A journey.

Sometimes life interrupts the road we thought we were walking. A storm hits, a diagnosis arrives, a relationship fractures. News stories of things happening right here and right now shake us to our very core. And suddenly we are reassessing our direction.

In Jesus’ life, his 40 days in the wilderness is the pause between belovedness and boldness, and we often skip it. We rush to the temptations Jesus faced — bread, spectacle, power. But what about the forty days? What happened out there? Hunger. Exposure. Silence.

Phil Cousineau writes in *The Art of Pilgrimage* that pilgrimage is a universal quest for renewal of the soul. The purpose is to make life more meaningful — to find the path to the divine, the ultimate source of life.

As Dr. Marcia McFee shares, “But renewal rarely feels cozy. Real wilderness is dangerous. It is wild and strips away comfort. You go in not knowing if you will return unchanged. Or if you will return at all.”

Jesus faces his demons in the wilderness, but demons are not always personal. Sometimes they are systems, laws, Executive Orders signed by a president, and sometimes they are temptations to use power over, rather than power with.

Jesus is offered bread without justice, protection without trust, and power without love. He refuses because he knows where that road leads. It leads to more wilderness, more domination, cruelty and death.

I have been thinking a lot about wilderness and demons lately. I’ve been thinking about where we are as a nation.

A two-month-old baby named Juan Nicolás was held in detention in Dilley, Texas at a for-profit family detention center ringed with razor wire. The baby was sick. There was no doctor. There was

barely any care at all. He became unresponsive and was finally rushed to the hospital ... only to be returned to the concentration camp – detention center - when he was stable. And then, even sick, he was deported with his mother, father, 18 month old sister, no phone, and only \$190.

The cruelty is not incidental. It is profitable. CoreCivic, the corporation running Dilley, posted record revenue this year and last. Infants, children and families suffer. Stock prices and executive bonuses rise.

The demons of this world want us to look away. They want us to skip the wilderness. They want us to move straight to distraction, and lies about how “great” our country is doing. But Lent refuses to skip. Jesus refuses to skip. He faces the wilderness. He faces what kind of leader he will be. Power over? Or love that risks vulnerability?

We face that question too. What kind of people will we be? What roads will we choose? Life is persistent. Grace is persistent. The wilderness changes us, even when we long to return home.