



# Westchester

## United Methodist Church Newsletter

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MAY 2026

### May is Mental Health & Older Americans Month

#### May is Mental Health Month!

Westchester UMC is a proud partner of Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services. Westchester UMC raised over \$500 on Easter Sunday for suicide prevention programs at Didi Hirsch. Great job everyone!

Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services has provided free mental health care, substance use disorder treatment and suicide prevention programs since 1942. Dedicated to serving communities where discrimination and injustice limit access, Didi Hirsch envisions a future where everyone can thrive with access to high-quality care that treats mental health and physical health as inseparable.

Didi Hirsch is a national leader in mental health, crisis care and substance use services. They are also a pioneer in suicide prevention and crisis care for all ages, Didi Hirsch is home to the nation's first and largest

Suicide Prevention Center, is one of the operators of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline in California, operates Teen Line, the leading youth peer-to-peer hotline, is one of several operators for the national Disaster Distress Helpline, and partners with the Los Angeles Police Department to divert mental health crisis calls from 911.

#### May is Older Americans

Month—and this year's theme is "Champion Your Health," focusing on wellness, prevention, and personal responsibility for healthy aging.

1 in 4 older adults experiences issues with their mental health. The most common issues are depression, dementia, & anxiety. Older adults have the highest rate of suicide when compared to other groups. People aged 85 and over have the highest rate,

followed closely by adults aged 75-84.

Social isolation and loneliness are contributing factors.

Working side by side with Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services, offering Rhythm & Food wellness drum circles and lunch for adults, two community meals each month at our Dinner Church experiences, and a monthly sound bath for wellness, are a few of the ways that Westchester UMC is working to celebrate people of all ages, build relationships, offer community, and feed bodies, minds & spirits.

#### Remember, you are not alone.

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

**"LIFE STANDS BEFORE ME LIKE AN ETERNAL SPRING WITH NEW AND BRILLIANT CLOTHES"**

- CARL FRIEDRICH GAUSS



### Dates to Remember . . .

05/03: - 8 am—Breakfast Church  
10 am—Worship  
4 pm—Sound Bath  
05/06—7:30 am Prayer Check In  
12n—Crafters Group, Rm 16  
5 pm—Soul-Full Soup Dinner Church  
05/10—Mothering Day!  
8 am—Breakfast Church  
10 am—Worship—we will cele-

brate all who mother during worship  
05/12—Rhythm & Food 11 am  
05/13—7:30 Prayer Check In  
12n—Crafters Group, Rm 16  
05/17—8 am—Breakfast Church  
10 am—Worship  
05/20—7:30 am Prayer Check In  
12n—Crafters Group, Rm 16  
5 pm—Hearty & Holy Dinner

Church  
05/24—8 am Breakfast Church  
10 am—Worship  
05/25— Memorial Day  
The Church Office will be closed in honor of Memorial Day.  
05/27—Prayer Check In  
12 n—Craft Group Rm 16  
05/31—8 am—Breakfast Church  
10 am—Worship

# May Day 2026



This year's May Day—May 1st—is not simply about honoring past labor victories, but about confronting present realities that many Americans feel are becoming harder to ignore. Across the country, May Day has brought together labor groups, service workers, students, and advocacy organizations in what is shaping up to be a very visible nationwide demonstration.

The central message is strong: workers are signaling that the current economic structure is increasingly unsustainable. Rising costs of living, particularly in housing, healthcare, and everyday essentials, have

collided with wages that have not kept pace in a meaningful way. The result is a growing sense that financial stability is becoming harder to achieve even for those who are consistently employed.

On May Day, people around the country and the world will come together in a shared pause: no work, no school, no shopping. It is a day rooted in the long history of workers standing together for dignity, fairness, and the well-being of all. In our time, it has also become a powerful moment to reflect on how we live, what we

value, and how we care for one another in community.

As a church, we are choosing to honor this day by letting love lead. Our office will be closed as we join in this collective witness—making space to bear witness, to reflect, and to stand in solidarity with all seeking justice, compassion, and a more equitable world.

May this day be a peaceful reminder that our worth is not measured by productivity, but by the love we share and the care we extend to one another.

*"Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment, until it becomes a memory."*

*- Dr. Seuss*

## Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, which celebrates all Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders in the United States who have contributed so much to this country. During this month, the country celebrates the achievements and remembers the struggles endured by Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders.

AAPI Heritage Month marks two important events in Asian American history: the arrival of the first known Japanese immigrants in 1843 and the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, which was built by Chinese immigrant workers.

The 2026 theme for AAPI Heritage Month is "Power in Unity: Strengthening Communities Together." This theme

emphasizes the importance of collective action, community bridge-building, and leveraging shared strength within Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) communities.

Power In Unity highlights the role of community solidarity in addressing challenges and celebrating achievements. It draws inspiration from historical figures like Secretary Norman Y. Mineta, a Japanese American leader who overcame adversity and served in multiple U.S. government roles, exemplifying bridge-building and public service.

It's important to give our attention to the concerns and needs of the AAPI community and find long term ways to offer support.

We must also recognize that throughout the history of the United States, AAPI communities have been the target of violence, disenfranchisement, efforts to restrict immigration, and other xenophobic policies at the federal, state, and local level.

During Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, California pays tribute to the irreplaceable legacy of our AAPI communities, their incredible strength and resilience, and their essential role in driving our state and nation forward. This month and every month, let us stand up for all members of our California family and work together to achieve the promise of a California for all ... a country for all ... a world for all.

# Protect the Vote

In recent days, a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court has raised deep concern, as it is expected to make access to voting more difficult. While the legal details are complex, the practical impact is clearer: policies that were once limited or challenged may now be allowed to stand, including stricter voter identification requirements, reduced access to mail-in or early voting, and the removal of certain federal protections that once helped guard against discrimination. These changes are most likely to affect those

who already face barriers to voting—older adults, people with disabilities, low-income communities, and communities of color.

This moment echoes a longer story in our nation’s history. The Civil Rights Movement led to landmark protections like the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which sought to dismantle practices such as literacy tests, poll taxes, and other barriers designed to suppress the voices of Black voters and other marginalized groups. These victories were won through persistent advocacy and, in many cases, at the

cost of human lives.

As people of faith, we are invited to hold both truth and hope. We remember the history that brought us here, we acknowledge the realities of the present, and we commit ourselves to a future grounded in dignity, inclusion, and care for all. In times like these, our call is not only to be informed, but to embody love in action—supporting one another, uplifting voices that are too often unheard, speaking out against injustice, and continuing the work of building a more just and compassionate community.

# The Sound Sanctuary’s One Year Anniversary!

This month, we celebrate the first year anniversary of The Sound Sanctuary. The Sound Sanctuary offers monthly sound baths, in addition to two hour wellness events which begin with drumming and end in a sound bath!

A sound bath is a practice which allows the healing sounds of instruments to “bathe” you. You hear the sounds of Tibetan singing bowls, crystal singing bowls, drums, flutes, gongs, and

other harmonious instruments. You will also feel their vibrations. It is said that the vibrations are received in all parts of the being, all the way to the cellular level.

With deep gratitude and a full heart, we celebrate the one-year anniversary of the Sound Sanctuary—our sacred space of rest, renewal, and healing through sound. What began as a simple offering has blossomed into a meaningful rhythm of

community care, where people from all walks of life gather to breathe, release, and be held in waves of sound and stillness.

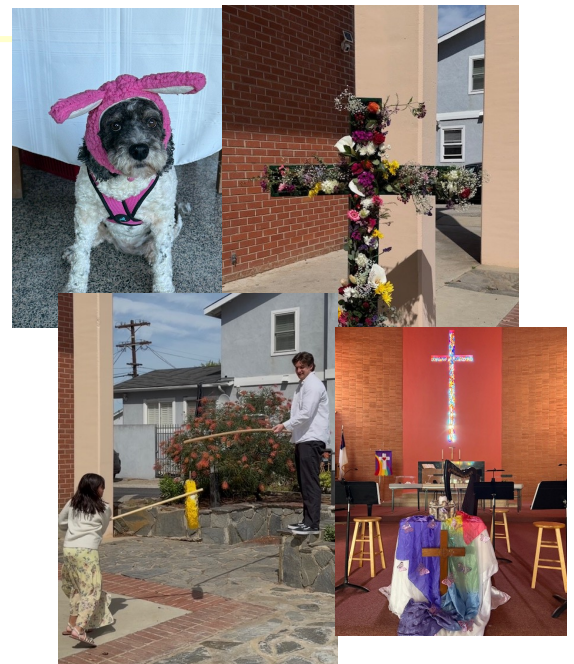
We are truly thankful for the warm and enthusiastic welcome we’ve received. Your openness, presence, and trust have shaped Sound Sanctuary into something far beyond what we imagined. As we move into this next year, we look forward to continuing this shared journey—creating space for peace, connection, and the quiet reminder that we are not alone.

# Easter Sunday!

With butterflies and flowers, Easter encouraged us to care for creation with the gift of a “plantable” butterfly to grow wildflowers for our pollinators, and windup butterflies to release in the sanctuary! With recent cuts to environmental protections, it’s up to all of us to care about pollinators—many of which are now on the endangered species list.

We lived into our Easter theme that “Love is the Heart of the Matter” as our

younger friends had an Easter Egg hunt in the sanctuary during the sermon and blew bubbles during prayer! Their bubbles (and laughter and joy) reminded us that each bubble is like a prayer—rising up, floating freely, shimmering with hope and joy: Love is always the Heart of the Matter. And then, after worship, we enjoyed our annual Easter Piñata! Lots of candy, laughter and fun for all!



## Westchester United Methodist Church

a place where love works

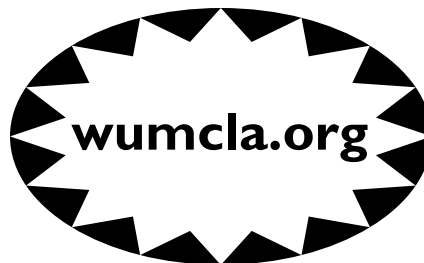
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**We are a Reconciling church!**

**ALL are welcome here.**



# From Pastor Lyda . . .

In musicals—and operas—when your emotions are too big or your heart too full, the only way you can express yourself is to burst into song. That's why I love musicals. Nothing can stop you from singing.

Singing has been around forever. In this country, African Americans literally sang their way through the horrors of enslavement and toward freedom. Spirituals carried hidden messages, offered hope, and sustained courage. Music as resistance has always been more than art—it is survival, protest, truth-telling. Across generations and borders, songs have given voice to the struggle for dignity and justice, holding both lament and hope when words alone are not enough.

I find myself thinking about that again this year as the story of Kilmar Abrego Garcia continues to unfold. After being wrongly deported without due process and held in a prison in El Salvador, he was eventually brought back fol-

lowing a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court. And yet—even now—his story is not resolved. Federal officials remain divided about what should happen next: whether to deport him again to another country, or to continue pursuing criminal charges tied to a 2022 traffic stop—charges that a federal judge is now examining under the question of whether they represent a “selective and vindictive prosecution.” His future hangs in the balance, even after a legal victory that should have ended this nightmare.

And he is not alone. We are still living in a time when policies and decisions impact the most vulnerable in ways that echo painful chapters of our past. Families separated. People detained without clarity or fairness. Human dignity weighed against systems that too often fail to protect it. For-profit prisons/ concentration camps rising up like pillars of hate and cruelty. Death tolls rising due to violence and inhumane treatment.

Moments like this may force us to confront the reality that being a follower of Jesus is a lot like living within the world

of a musical—sometimes words aren't enough, and we are called to sing. A lament. A protest. A song of resistance. A song for justice too long delayed. A song of love that refuses to draw boundaries around who is worthy of care and compassion.

This is what God offers us—Good News so powerful that it asks to be shared. Justice too urgent to ignore. Love so expansive that even if we believe we are safe, we cannot remain silent when others are not. We sing as if it is our child, our parent, our friend, our neighbor whose life hangs in the balance.

As Elie Wiesel once wrote, “There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.”

As followers of Jesus . . . we must never stop singing.