



Westchester

United Methodist Church Newsletter

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Disability Pride Month



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

- HENRY JAMES

Disability Pride month is observed every July to celebrate disability identity, community and the contributions of people with disabilities. It also marks the anniversary of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) signed on July 26, 1990, and a push for full inclusion in everyday life.

The Arc's National Council of Self-Advocates, a disabled-led national council, selected the 2026 theme, "The World Works Better With Us." This is a clear statement about inclusion. More than 1 in 4 U.S. adults, over 70 million people, have a disability. When people with disabilities are included, respected, and supported, communities work better for everyone. That includes schools, workplaces, healthcare, transportation, and public life.

Disability-led advocacy and designs have helped create changes many people now rely on, like curb cuts,

closed captioning, audiobooks, and voice dictation. What began as access often becomes a better experience for everyone, including caregivers pushing strollers, viewers who prefer captions, commuters listening to books, and anyone who uses voice-to-text while multitasking.

Disability Pride Month celebrates disability identity and community, recognizes disability culture and leadership, and marks the ADA anniversary and the ongoing work to make civil rights real in daily life.

The first Disability celebration was a Disability Pride Day that took place in Boston in 1990. Chicago hosted the first Disability Pride Parade in 2004. Now there are events nationwide that help people with disabilities take pride in who they are.

Many people with disabilities still

face barriers to being fully included and valued. Ableism is often ignored, but its effects are real. It limits access to education, jobs, healthcare, and respect.

At its core, Disability Pride means disability isn't something to hide or fix. Everyone deserves inclusion, rights, and respect, without having to earn them.

Disability Pride Month also reinforces a basic principle: people with disabilities belong in the decisions that shape school, work, health care, and community life. Many people with disabilities and families are navigating a difficult mix of shrinking access to services and benefits, rising stigma and bullying, and low expectations that limit opportunity.

Outcomes are stronger and fairer when people with disabilities are included early and meaningfully.

Dates to Remember . . .

07/01

7:30 am—Zoom Prayer Check In
12n—Craft Group Rm 16
5 pm—Dinner Church

07/03—Church Office Closed

07/04—4th of July!

07/05

8:00 am—Zoom Breakfast Church
10 am—Worship
4 pm—Sound Bath—Eventbrite.com

07/08

7:30 am—Zoom Prayer Check In
12n—Craft Group

07/12

7:30 am—Zoom Breakfast Church
10 am—Worship

07/14

11 am—Rhythm & Food

07/15

12n—Craft Group Rm 16

07/19

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—Worship

07/22

7:30 am—Zoom Prayer Check In
12n—Crafters Group Rm 16

07/26

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church
10 am—Worship

07/29

7:30 am—Zoom Prayer Check In
12n—Crafters Group Rm 16

Apportionments

The main way we support the ministries of the church is through our apportioned funds, a method of giving that proportionally allocates the churchwide budget to conferences and local churches. For United Methodists this method of giving has become a strong, generous tradition.

Together, we accomplish what no single church, district or annual conference ever could hope to do alone. In this way, each individual, each family, each congregation gives a share for the church's work.

At this year's Annual Conference, a new way of calculating apportionments—what each church is asked to give to the Conference—was voted on and approved. It's called

"Gradient Apportionment," which means that churches will contribute based on operating income. In the past, Apportionments were calculated on membership and out-going operating costs. The Gradient Apportionment model will base each church's Apportionments on income earned to support our operating budgets, which means that rental income is now a consideration in apportionments.

This "tithing model" breaks down to 11% tithe for the largest earning churches, 10% tithe for middle income churches (Westchester UMC has been placed in this category) and the smallest earners, who pay 9% tithe.

In our Conference, there are 34 churches in the 11% category, 71 churches in the 10% category and 183 churches in the 9% category.

What this means for Westchester UMC is that our apportionments will increase by nearly \$5,000 beginning in 2027.

While this will require thoughtful planning and careful stewardship, we also recognize the spirit behind this new model. Gradient Apportionment is intended to create a more equitable way for churches to share in the ministries of our Conference, with each congregation contributing according to its financial capacity.

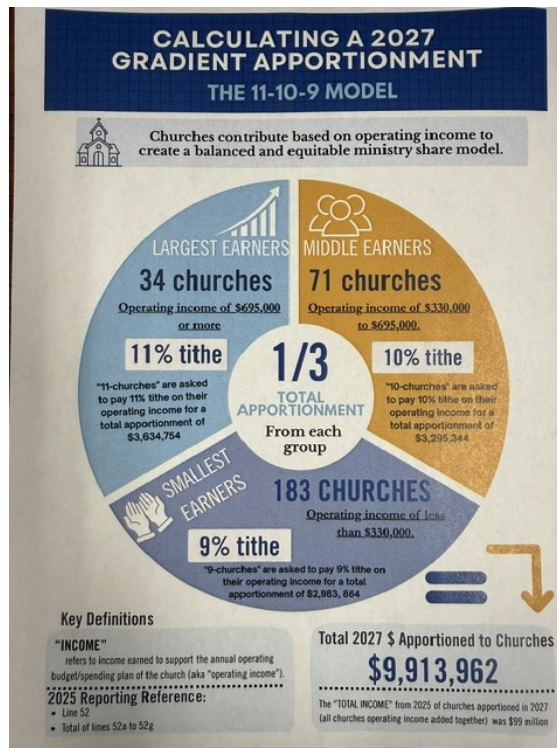
(Continued below)

*"I love how summer
just wraps its arms
around you like a
warm blanket."
- Kellie Elmore*

Apportionments (continued)

As United Methodists, we believe that we are stronger together than we could ever be alone. Through our shared giving, we support new church development, clergy and lay leadership, disaster response, campus ministries, justice initiatives, camping ministries, and countless other ministries that extend Christ's love far beyond the walls of any one congregation.

As we prepare for this change, we remain committed to our connectional covenant and grateful to be part of a church that seeks to share both its resources and its mission with fairness, generosity, and hope.



Call for School Donations

Sherman Indian High School is one of four Boarding Schools still under the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Office of Indian Education. It began as Perris Indian School in 1892 in Perris, Ca., and later moved to Riverside in 1903, renamed to Sherman Institute.

Sherman Indian High School has undergone many changes, and unlike former Boarding Schools whose focus was assimilation by eliminating “The Indian,” the school now offers a balanced program that seeks to

assure a quality education to students from many tribes, along with cultural awareness and inclusion.

While students are often far away from home, Sherman Indian High School staff, along with local support, seek to help students feel welcome. Still, many students arrive on campus with very little. Support from tribal nations, individuals, and other organizations like the churches and individuals of the California-Pacific Conference of the United Methodist Church have stepped in to offer much needed support.

This year, Westchester UMC is collecting monetary donations for Sherman Indian High School during the month of July. In August, we will present Sherman Indian High School with a check made possible through your generosity. We are asking for monetary donations in lieu of gift cards or school item donations.

You can donate in worship each Sunday in July & August, or mail a check to the church. Please write “Sherman Indian High School” on the memo line of your check.



Still Methodists After All These Years...

We’re the people who show up ten minutes early to church and sit in the same pew we’ve sat in since the Carter administration—unless someone else gets there first, in which case we’ll smile politely and sit exactly one pew back, slightly wounded but full of grace.

We’re the ones who bring casseroles to every occasion: joy, grief, meetings and anything else that vaguely resembles a potluck. We believe in grace, so-

cial justice, and coffee strong enough to fuel the Kingdom of God.

We follow the liturgy, and sing all the verses of the hymns—even that mysterious fourth verse no one else seems to know. We think folding chairs and Robert’s Rules of Order are spiritual gifts.

We may not always agree, but we’ll form a committee to talk it through—and another one to

bring snacks.

And we’ll keep doing what we’ve always done: loving God, loving neighbor, fighting against Empire and injustice, and trying to be people of open hearts, open minds and open doors. Even if that door sticks a little after an earthquake.

Beneath the casseroles and committees, United Methodists are changing the world—one act of love at a time. United Methodists: bringing warm hearts, brave spirits, and the occasional Jello Salad to a world in need.

From Beauty to Compassion

As we conclude our Beguiled by Beauty worship series, we are reminded that noticing beauty is only the beginning. When we recognize the sacred worth of every person, compassion naturally leads us toward justice.

One organization helping to put that compassion into action is Clergy & Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE). For decades, CLUE has brought together people of faith to stand alongside workers, immigrants, and families seeking dignity, safety, and justice.

Today, CLUE continues to accompany immigrant communities by offering advocacy, rapid response support, and practical resources during times of uncertainty. CLUE’s Detained Immigrant Bond Fund provides financial support to help secure the release of detained community members from immigration detention. For more information about CLUE, please visit their website at cluejustice.org

Supporting organizations like CLUE is one meaningful way to live out our faith—but

compassion doesn’t begin and end with organizations. Justice also begins close to home. It begins when we welcome a newcomer, check in on a neighbor, speak up for someone whose voice is being overlooked, share a meal, offer a listening ear, or choose kindness when fear would be easier.

As followers of Christ, we are invited to be bearers of good news wherever our feet take us. May we continue to see beauty, share compassion, and help build a world where every person is treated with dignity, love, and hope.



Westchester United Methodist Church

a place where love works

www.wumcla.org

8065 Emerson Avenue

Los Angeles, CA 90045

Church: (310) 670 3777

Pastor's email: lyda@wumcla.org



We are a Reconciling church!

ALL are welcome here.



From Pastor Lyda . . .

In her book, *Beguiled by Beauty*, Dr. Wendy Farley writes, "The capacity for beauty requires that we adore the mystery of others and recognize it as sacred and deserving of protection."

Which made me think ... how are we adoring the mystery of others? How are we recognizing the sacredness of others? What gets in the way?"

In the United States, it definitely feels like there are a lot of things getting in the way of recognizing the sacredness of others and of all of creation. There are too many people who do not, will not, yearn for the well-being of others.

Perhaps there are too many who are listening to con-artists telling lies about what makes America great; the lies of Christian Nationalism taking away the rights of women and the rights of people of other faiths; and the executive orders coming out of the White House which state who can have true freedom and equality and who cannot; who is considered a citizen, and who is not; who is allowed to thrive, and who is not.

Seeing the holy in beauty all around us opens us up to something beyond ourselves. It reminds us of a world that

exists beyond our concerns and prejudices and hatred and fear. A world that is beautiful without a reason. A God who loves all of us just because.

Early Christians believed that participating in the Jesus movement involved a re-patterning of their way of life. Before Christianity emerged as a distinct religion, people simply said they followed the Way or "the way of life." It was an intentional commitment that re-organized their entire lives.

Ancient Christians believed that practice was necessary because the way of life was not simply a matter of believing certain rules or doctrines. They had to practice a way of life which consisted of loving the God who made you, and loving your neighbor as yourself.

This month, we celebrated the 250th birthday of this country. It was very different from any other 4th of July that I've experienced. It seemed to celebrate one man instead of celebrating this country ... patriotism is not celebrating cruelty and hatred, and patriotism is definitely not pretending everything is fine.

The prophets of Scripture loved their nation enough to tell the truth about it. In much the same way, in 1935 during the Great Depression, the poet Langston Hughes held together love of country, grief for those excluded from its prom-

ises, and hope that those promises might yet become real. His words resonate still today ... the promise, the hope, the reality that too many people are being left behind.

What do we see when we look in the mirror? Do we see that our skin is the not the same color as the people in our history books or statues or even in the pictures of Jesus? Do we see our gender or our sexual orientation lifted up or erased from public exhibits, government websites or history?

Perhaps, if we practice the "way of Jesus" of the ancient Christians, this "way towards life" instead of towards death and hatred, we will see the incredible beauty of our rainbow-hued diversity as children of God.

Practice. Practice discernment when listening to those who do not care about the well-being of others. Practice drawing an imaginary heart around the faces of each person you see. Practice recognizing the sacred worth of all people ... the sacred worth of all of creation.