



# Westchester

## United Methodist Church Newsletter

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### A Call to Peace in a Time of War

APRIL  
STRESS  
AWARENESS  
MONTH

**“DO WHAT YOU  
FEEL IN YOUR  
HEART TO BE  
RIGHT.”**

- ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

In a world that feels increasingly shaped by conflict and violence, we find ourselves once again confronted with the reality of war. Images, headlines, and stories remind us how quickly human lives can be caught in the crossfire of political power, fear, and force.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to pause—and to ask: What is the heart of the matter?

At the heart of our faith is love. And love calls us, again and again, toward peace.

The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church offer us both grounding and guidance in moments like these: “The church deplores war and all other forms of violent conflict and urges the peaceful settlement of all disputes. We yearn for the day when there will be no more war and people will live together in peace and justice.”

These are not abstract words. They

are a call to conscience.

We are reminded that war is not simply a distant event—it is a human tragedy. It is families separated, lives lost, communities shattered, and futures forever changed. Even when nations justify violence, the cost is always borne by human beings made in the image of God.

Our tradition goes further: “We reject the use of war as an instrument of foreign policy and insist that every peaceful and diplomatic means of resolution be exhausted before the start of armed conflicts.”

In a time when military action is often taken swiftly, we are called to be people who ask deeper questions, who seek truth, and who refuse to accept violence as inevitable.

And yet, the Social Principles also acknowledge the complexity of

human conscience: “Christians have struggled with the issue of war since the time of Jesus... We urge all United Methodists to examine their own consciences and earnestly seek God’s guidance.”

There is room within our tradition for wrestling, for discernment, and for differing convictions. But there is no ambiguity about this: we are called to be people who long for peace, who work for justice, and who resist the normalization of violence.

This is the heart of the matter.

We follow a Christ who did not answer violence with violence. We follow a Christ who healed, who welcomed, who crossed boundaries, and who taught us to love even our enemies.

In a world preparing for war, we are called to prepare for peace.

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### Dates to Remember . . .

**04/01**—Soul-Full Soup at 5 pm

**04/02**—**Maundy Thursday**  
5 pm—Service & Lenten Meal

**04/3**—**Good Friday**

**04/05**—**Easter!**  
10 am—Easter Worship!

**04/08**—7:30 am—Prayer Check In  
12n—Craft Group

**04/12**—  
8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church  
10 am—Worship

4 pm to 6 pm—Spring Rhythm & Sound Sanctuary Drum Circle & Sound Bath (Eventbrite.com)

**04/14**—11 am—Rhythm & Food

**04/15**—7:30 am—Prayer Check In  
12n—Craft Group

5 pm—Hearty & Holy Dinner Church

**04/19**—8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—Worship

**04/21**—Restaurant Fundraiser at Truxtons

**04/22**—7:30 am—Prayer Check In  
12 n—Craft Group

**04/25**—8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—Worship

**04/29**—7:20 am—Prayer Check In  
12 n—Craft Group

# A Call to Peace in a Time of War



Puppy Pastor Molly & the Flower Cross

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That means:

Praying for all who are affected by conflict—civilians, leaders, soldiers, and families

- Supporting those who carry the burdens of service, trauma, and moral injury
- Advocating for diplomacy, restraint, and the protection of human life
- Refusing to let fear or anger have the final word.

Easter reminds us of something the world often forgets: **violence does not have the**

**last word. Love does.**

And so we hold fast to hope—not a shallow hope that ignores reality, but a grounded, faithful hope that believes another way is possible.

A way of peace.

A way of justice.

A way of love.

Because in the end—and even now—love is the heart of the matter.

If love is the heart of the matter, then love must also shape how we live.

As we move through these days, we invite you to take

one small, faithful step toward peace:

Pray daily for all those affected by war and violence;

Stay informed with a heart open to truth, not fear;

Reach out—offer kindness, listen deeply, build connection where you are;

Support organizations that provide relief and care to those impacted by conflict; and ask yourself each day: “How can I embody Christ’s peace in this moment?”

Peace is not only something we hope for—it is something we practice.

*“In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity; in our doubt there is believing, in our life eternity; in our death a resurrection; at the last, a victory, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.”*  
- Hymn of Promise

## Easter at Westchester UMC

**Easter—the Heart of the Matter**

Join us this Easter at 10:00 a.m. as we celebrate The Heart of the Matter—the power of love that rises even in the face of grief.

After the sorrow and shock of Holy Week, the disciples believed all was lost. But into the heart of their grief came a stunning revelation: life had overcome death. Love had won over violence. God’s love was not finished.

Is this possible in our lives?

On Easter morning, we dare to say: Yes, it is. Come and see. Live and love.

Together, we will celebrate the good news that Christ is risen—and that love still has the final word.

- \* During worship, our younger friends are invited to a fun Easter egg hunt right in the sanctuary.
- \* After worship, join us for our annual Easter Piñata—full of treats for all ages (even the grown ups!)
- \* And as always, we are a family-friendly, kid-friendly, and dog-friendly community (leashed and non-aggressive pups welcome!)

Come as you are. Bring your whole self.

There is joy to be shared, hope to be renewed, and love at the heart of it all.

Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!

**100% of our Easter offering is donated to Suicide Prevention & Awareness programs at Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services.**

# Native American Ministries Sunday

April 19, 2026 is Native American Ministries Sunday. This day is dedicated to honoring their contributions and supporting their ministries. It also helps provide scholarships for United Methodist Native American seminarians.

When you give generously on Native American Ministries Sunday, you equip seminary students who honor and celebrate Native American culture in their ministries.

You empower congregations to find fresh and culturally appropriate ways to minister to their communities with Christ's love. A special offering will be taken during worship on the 19th.

You are invited to pray this prayer adapted from The Act of Repentance Communion Service at General Conference 2012:

“As the rivers flow, let us hear Christ’s song.

As the winds blow, let us hear his whispers.

As the grasses sway, let us see them dance.

As the eagle soars, calm our minds.

Christ’s love is always there. Open our hands to share his love.

Holy Creator, bless these contributions to strengthen United Methodist Native American Ministries and bring your healing power into every broken place. Amen.”

## The Community on No Kings Day

Members of our community joined neighbors in Westchester for the recent No Kings Day protest—a peaceful expression of civic engagement and shared concern for justice. Participants showed up with respect, courage, and a commitment to nonviolence, reminding us that advocacy can be rooted in compassion and hope. Here are a few pictures from the event, old friends, new friends, even a doggie with a sign!



## The Heart of the Matter Worship Series

This Easter Season, we are exploring The Heart of the Matter—the simple yet transformative truth at the center of Jesus’ life and ministry: **love one another.**

From the cross to the empty tomb and beyond, Jesus’ message remains clear. Again and again, he meets his disciples with love and sends them into the world to share that same

love with others. Love is not just a feeling—it is a way of living, a way of seeing, and a way of being in the world.

Throughout this season, we will encourage one another to embody this love in our daily lives. Each week, we’ll reflect on what it means to live with hearts open and alive to God’s presence, through themes including Love is My Religion, With Glad Hearts,

Straight from the Heart, Hearts Overflowing, No Trouble in My Heart, Kept in Our Hearts, Open the Eyes of My Heart, and The Heart of the Matter.

Join us as we celebrate the ongoing power of resurrection love—alive in us, among us, and moving through us into the world.

## 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 . . .

Poet Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer asks a question that feels especially close to home right now:

*“What is the heart to do when, in the face of brutality, we hear not only weeping, but cheering? How do we go on?”*

This is not an abstract question. We are living in a time when fear is loud, division is encouraged, and cruelty is not only visible—but often celebrated. There are powerful voices calling us to return to a past that was never whole—a past where belonging was limited and many were excluded, silenced, or harmed.

Into that kind of longing, the prophet Isaiah speaks:

*“Do not remember the former things... I am about to do a new thing. Can you not perceive it?”*

When we cling to fear or nostalgia, we can lose sight of who we are—and of the future God is still creating among us.

Trommer offers another image:

*“Maybe you feel your heart break again and again... as seed walls must give for a seedling to grow.”*

What if this breaking we feel is not the end of the story? What if it is the beginning?

Seeds do not grow by staying closed. They grow by breaking open.

Perhaps the grief, the anger, the deep ache many of us carry right now is not only pain—it is also the stirring of something new. A breaking open that makes way for growth, for courage, for love.

And we are not meant to do this alone. The poet continues: *“Maybe you find other broken hearts with heartbeats that rhyme with your own.”*

This is the heart of the matter: that even in a world that feels fractured, we are called to remain open—to one another, to God, and to the possibility that love is still at work.

And together, with hearts that break open rather than shut down, we become part of that “new thing” God is bringing to life.

