



# Westchester

## United Methodist Church Newsletter

VOLUME III, ISSUE 5

MAY 2022

### May is Mental Health Month



Westchester UMC is a proud partner of Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services' suicide prevention programs. Didi Hirsch joined three Los Angeles City Council members recently to proclaim this May "Mental Health is Health Month" and introduce Grammy-nominated musician Jhene Aiko as one of this year's campaign ambassadors.

About 10% of Los Angeles residents have thought about suicide in the last year, according to Didi Hirsch CEO Dr. Jonathan Goldfinger. "Two L.A. County residents kill themselves on average every day, which is higher than the rate of drug overdoses, car fatalities and murder" he said. For young people in the U.S., nearly one in four have seriously thought about taking their own life.

"We've seen mental health issues skyrocket across Los Angeles, in large part due to the pandemic and the stressors that have been associ-

ated with this unprecedented lockdown, economic uncertainty and the very real and very tangible health risks that we've all faced," said Councilwoman Nithya Raman, who sponsored the proclamation of May as Mental Health Is Health Month.

"Access to care has remained low for so many particularly low income communities of color, which has impacted our homelessness crisis, our mental health crisis, that we're seeing playing out today, here in this city. For 80 years, Didi Hirsch has stepped in to fill this gap," she added, noting that the organization was the first community-based adult outpatient clinic in L.A. and one of the first agencies to be federally designated a community mental health center.

Didi Hirsch, the nation's premier suicide prevention center and

leading provider of whole-person mental health and suicide-specialized care, signed a \$20 million contract with the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). The funding, allocated from a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Block Grant, supports the implementation of the new behavioral health hotline, 988. The new three-digit phone number will be live on July 16, 2022, connecting Americans across the country with suicide prevention and behavioral health crisis counselors.

Until then July 16, 2022, anyone experiencing a suicidal crisis, emotional distress, or concerns about a family member can still reach these experts, 24/7, at 1-800-273-8255.

Westchester UMC raised over \$2,000 on Easter Sunday for suicide prevention programs at Didi Hirsch. Great job everyone!

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

**- CARL FRIEDRICH GAUSS**

### Dates to Remember . . .

**05/01:** Native American Ministries Special Offering

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—In Person Worship

**05/04—**

7:30 am—Zoom Prayer Journaling

6:30 pm—The Gathering Taize Prayer & Centering Service

**05/08:** Happy Mothering Day!

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—In Person Worship—we

will honor the women in our lives!

**05/11—**

7:30 am—Zoom Prayer Journaling

**05/15—**

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—In Person Worship

**05/18—**

7:30 am—Zoom Prayer Journaling

**05/21:**

West District Annual Conference

at 1 pm—3 p.m. on Zoom

**05/22—**

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—In Person Worship

**05/25—**

7:30 am—Zoom Prayer Journaling

**05/29—**

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—In Person Worship

**05/30—** Memorial Day

# L.A. Riots 30 Years Later



Jeong Park, a writer with the Los Angeles Times, wrote on April 29th:

"For months, Hyepin Im, President and Founder of FACE (Faith and Community Empowerment) thought about calling Shinese Harlins-Kilgore, but she couldn't work up the courage.

Ms. Im wanted to discuss the fatal shooting of Harlins-Kilgore's cousin, Latasha Harlins, by a Korean-born liquor store owner in 1991.

A few weeks ago, Ms. Im finally called. The two women hashed out the tensions between Blacks and Koreans that erupted after the killing and the light punishment the store owner received.

Those tensions helped fuel the

riots that sent Los Angeles up in flames on April 29, 1992.

Ms. Im recounted the story at Florence and Normandie avenues on Friday, the 30th anniversary of the riots, which erupted at that corner after the acquittal of the police officers who beat Rodney King.

"If our communities are to go together, I think we need to understand the context in which both our communities have also been the victims of factors beyond their control," said Ms. Im.

On Friday, April 29, 2022, all across South L.A. and Koreatown, Angelenos commemorated the anniversary of the L.A. Riots.

"I am hopeful, because this is Los Angeles," said Rep. Karen Bass (D-Los Angeles), who is running for mayor and was a community activist at the time of the riots. "We can move forward in this city ... We just have to move ourselves forward."

Rodney King's daughter, Lora King, called for people to operate 'out of a place of love and hope.'"

Pastor Lyda first met Hyepin Im when she met with Safe Parking L.A. in the hopes of finding space at faith communities for those living in their cars. Hyepin was a part of those discussions about safe parking programs.

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## Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

In the United States, the month of May is celebrated as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. This annual celebration came about in 1978 when President Jimmy Carter signed into law a Joint Resolution of the Congress of the United States designating the month of May for the celebration of Asian and Pacific Islanders culture and heritage.

A rather broad term, Asian Pacific encompasses all of the Asian continent and the Pacific islands of Melanesia (New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji and the Solomon Islands), Micronesia (Marianas, Guam, Wake Island, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru and the Federated States of Micronesia) and Polynesia (New Zealand, Hawaiian Islands, Rotuma, Midway Islands,

Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia and Easter Island).

The month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants.

This month, you are invited to:

- Visit [lacountylibrary.org](http://lacountylibrary.org) for a list of virtual events celebrating Asian Pacific American Heritage month.
- Visit the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American website at [smithsonianapa.org](http://smithsonianapa.org) to engage

Asian American heritage across a wide range of media and communities.

This year, AAPI Heritage Month comes as the community continues to grapple with anti-Asian attacks.

Anti-Asian hate crimes in the U.S. increased by 339 percent last year. According to Stop AAPI Hate, 68 percent of those who reported a hate crime that was committed against them identified as female.

We stand in solidarity with our Asian American Pacific Islander siblings and will continue to fight against hatred, racism and discrimination in all its forms.

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

*- Dr. Seuss*

## L.A. Riots 30 Years Later (cont. from page 2)

Years later, the two met up again when Pastor Lyda was invited to be a part of the 2021 Pastors and Church Leaders Cohort of the C2 Leadership Institute through FACE. The C2 Leadership Institute is a transformative leadership program that empowers leaders to explore new possibilities and sustainability for their ministries by strengthening church and community partnerships through community engagement and advocacy. So inspired by the work of Hyepin and FACE, Pastor Lyda has stayed in contact even after

graduating!

FACE launched their SAIGU Campaign (4/29 in Korean language and stands for Serve, Advocate, Inspire, Give, & Unite) to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the LA Riots with events throughout the month of April, including a prayer breakfast, symposiums, film screenings, and culminating with the Closing Commemoration Service, held on Friday, April 29, 2022.

Pastor Lyda attended the Prayer Breakfast, where our very own Bishop Grant was a speaker, and was honored

to be a VIP attendee at the SAIGU

Commemoration Service where local, state, and national elected officials, celebrities, law enforcement agencies, faith leaders, community leaders, business leaders, ex-gang members, victims, and others affected by the LA Riots were in attendance.

Of these experiences, Pastor Lyda shared, “While we still have a long way to go, the work of Hyepin Im and other community leaders is inspirational and crucial as the people of Los Angeles remember, reflect, and move into a hope-filled future—together.”

## Rev. Krista Givens, Missionary—Lost & Humble!

Rev. Krista, now a missionary serving as the pastor of an international, English-Speaking church in Alicante, Spain, shares her experiences in her blog, *Faraway Life* ([farawaylife.com](http://farawaylife.com)):

“On Friday, I took the bus into downtown Torre Vieja. It seems simple: just pay the driver, take a seat and hop off at your stop. But within the bus-riding process, there are a series of lessons to learn, do-and-don’ts, cultural tricks and cues that one must learn to maneuver smoothly through the bus-riding experience. Which bus do I take?

What happens if I take the wrong bus? How do I manage to find my back home? ...

What happens if we get lost? God will find us. Moreover, God will be with us as we navigate the paths we choose, even if they are the “wrong” ones. God will be there to nudge us away from danger, to support us when the choices we make bring more pain than joy, to love us even when we are not the people we’d like to be.

AND.... God is with us to see the beauty, even when we take

“wrong” roads - to help us notice the unexpected joys in taking the long way home.

There are always lessons to learn, butterflies to follow, flowers that bloom ... even along the wrong roads.

My bus-riding experience on Friday was humbling. For one who likes to be in control of my life and my choices, it is humbling to enter into new situations in which I don’t know the rules. Much of this entry will feel humbling, but I feel the presence of God guiding me.”

Westchester UMC is pleased to share that we are entering into a partnership with the General Board of Global Ministries to help sponsor Rev. Krista in her missionary work!

## A Message of Unity, Not Uniformity from our Conference

An excerpt from the Cabinet of the California Pacific Conference April message:

“For decades we have been known as a ‘big tent’ church. We do not all think or believe the same. We have differences in understanding of Scripture. We have different gifts that have helped us serve countless communities in ways specific to the needs in those places. We speak many languages, come from many cultures, and hold differing theological perspectives. And yet, amidst our differences, there is

one God that activates and animates us as disciples of Jesus Christ and sends us out into the world as bearers of Christ’s love.

We believe that the same God that moves in and through us all – has grace for each of us. None of us stand outside of that embrace, which means we should ensure that our embrace of each other seeks to be as grace-filled as the ones we receive from God. We can love one another, even as we make room for God to work in and through one another differently.

To honor the God that makes all of this possible, that claims us in baptism and sends us into the world; we will continue to be United Methodists, living into perfect love. We will be liberal, evangelical, progressive, traditionalist, middle of the road, conservative, centrist, and many other expressions of love and grace. Together, we will continue to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

To read this hope-filled message in its entirety, please visit: [calpacumc.org](http://calpacumc.org) and click on “Bishop.”

**Westchester United Methodist Church**  
a place where love works

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



## From Lyda . . .

The story of “doubting Thomas” is a familiar one. This story of Jesus’ appearance to his disciples left Thomas the doubter with a bad rap.

His friends make a hard to believe claim that Jesus was right there with them in a locked room after he was crucified – they tell Thomas that he showed them the nail marks in his hands and his pierced side. The disciples had seen Jesus, and they knew their claim was true. But Thomas wasn’t there – he missed Jesus’ initial appearance. He only had his friends’ story to go on. And he had his doubts. Do you blame him?

The story of doubting Thomas is a story about how far Christ will go to reach us. Nothing, not even a locked door, not our doubts and fears, not even a huge stone rolled in front of a tomb, can keep Jesus from finding us.

The disciples encounter the risen Christ—who meets them where they are—afraid, confused, broken,

and with more questions than answers. When we have doubts ... Christ is there. When we lock ourselves away because we feel lost and alone ... Christ is there. When we mess up ... Christ is still there.

As Episcopal priest and comedian Les Carpenter once said regarding the story of doubting Thomas, “... it really is an Easter story. It’s about the losers winning – and isn’t that the gospel?”

I love that – isn’t the story of the gospel about the losers winning? The ones who were marginalized and discriminated against in their society were sought out and lifted up by Jesus. Justice is valued over monetary gain and power. Love is valued over hate.

Questioning unjust laws and policies in the church is biblical. Leaving the safety of church walls to walk with the unhoused, the marginalized, the questioning, the doubting, is what Jesus calls us to do. Not to lock ourselves behind closed doors and hope that someday systemic racism and discriminatory policies will magically disappear.

To tell our government that as a people of faith, it is our job to fight against unjust incarceration practices, to demand that food and access to health care are rights for ALL people, that we will not be silent when policies are put in place which target our LGBTQ siblings, which harm immigrants and asylum seekers, which destroy our environment, which lift up the rich at a horrific cost to the poor, which support war and violence.

Christ will meet us where we are ... doubters or not ... locked safely away or standing arm in arm with each other on the 30th anniversary of the Los Angeles Riots ... whether our faith is sure or a bit unsteady ... Christ will meet us.

Christ has risen and comes to be with us, even in the brokenness of this world. That is the Easter story. That is our story—resurrection, reconciliation and love.