



Westchester

United Methodist Church Newsletter

VOLUME IV, ISSUE 4

APRIL 2024

April is Stress Awareness Month



“HERE IS THE WORLD. BEAUTIFUL AND TERRIBLE THINGS WILL HAPPEN. DON'T BE AFRAID.”

- FREDERICK BUECHNER

April is recognized as National Stress Awareness Month to bring attention to the negative impact of stress. Managing stress is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle.

It's critical to recognize what stress and anxiety look like, take steps to build resilience, and know where to go for help. While stress can be beneficial, too much of it can be harmful.

When the body senses a threat (or stressor), it goes on high alert, and once the threat passes, the body quickly recovers. At least that's the way it's supposed to work. Stressors can include health matters, work, money, family issues, racism or gender inequality, and regular daily hassles. With unrelenting or too many stressors, your body might be on a constant state of high alert, leading to poor concentration, bad moods, professional burnout, and mental and physical health problems. When

stress becomes chronic, the body cannot return to normal functioning. Chronic stress can be linked with health conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, depression and anxiety.

The National Institute of Health shares these tips to help manage stress:

Recognize & counter signs of stress. Your body sends signals that it's stressed, including difficulty concentrating, headaches, cold hands, tight muscles, a nervous stomach, clenched teeth, feeling on edge, fidgety, irritable or withdrawn. Then, take action to counter their effects. For example, deep breathing, stretching, going for a walk, writing down your thoughts and taking quiet time to focus can help induce relaxation and reduce tension.

See problems through a dif-

ferent lens. Experts call changing the way we think about and respond to stress “reframing.” View sitting in traffic or around the house as an opportunity to enjoy music, podcasts or pleasant views. Reduce anger in response to rude or aggressive behavior by imagining what might be happening in that person's life. Other steps include positive thinking and creating plans before you begin to resolve problems. You can practice reframing and get better at it over time.

Seek Help. Talk to a health professional if stress is affecting your well-being, you feel you cannot manage the stress you're experiencing, or stress has caused you to engage in or increase substance use. National Disaster Distress Helpline (Call 1-800-985-5990 or text “TALKWITHUS” to 66746). If you or someone you know is in crisis, call or text: **9-8-8** (24/7, free & confidential).

Dates to Remember . . .

04/07

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 a.m.—In-Person Worship

04/10

7:30 am—Zoom Prayer

12n—Crafters Group

04/14—Native American Ministries Sunday

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—In Person Worship—

Resurrection Stories

04/17

7:30 am—Zoom Prayer

12n—Crafters Group

5 pm—eat pray love Dinner Church

04/21

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 a.m.—In-Person Worship—
Resurrection Stories

04/23

11 am—Rhythm & Food (date change from 04/09—will go back to second Tuesdays in May)

04/24

7:30 am—Zoom Prayer

12n—Crafters Group

04/28

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 a.m.—In-Person Worship—
Resurrection Stories

Easter at Westchester UMC



Puppy Pastor Molly & our new Flower Cross

He is risen! He is risen indeed! While it rained in the morning, the sun came out just in time for worship. We enjoyed two performances from our handbell choir (great job and a big shout out to Carrie, Karen, Marta & Jean!) and Marta shared her many gifts with us as liturgist & worship team with Pastor Lyda. John & Edy were awesome (as always) as our greeters and ushers—and John did a great job putting flowers on our new Flower Cross! Our new cross is easier to adorn, easier to move, and with its secure base and design, is safer to display. Thank you to Charlie & Kane for designing and building

our Flower Cross. Here are pictures of our new cross and the fun we all had at our annual Easter Piñata Bash after worship—thank you Luke for your piñata skills and thank you Dawn for the refreshments!



“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

Message from Missionary Rev. Krista

It was announced recently that I will return to the United States and, to the California Pacific Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church at the conclusion of my 3-year contract as a GBGM missionary to La Siesta Evangelical Church, Torrevieja.

My contract with GBGM will conclude on December 31, 2024, but due to the requirement for itineration, I will leave Spain in November of 2024 and during the month of December, I will be visiting churches in America

who have supported our work, to encourage their continued support of a new missionary at La Siesta.

Po and I have been blessed by our time in La Siesta and we shall miss the loving community and the warm support of our friends here in Spain. I am filled with gratitude to God for our time together and for this opportunity to serve God and God's people and I know God will provide someone who will love and serve this community well.

Please keep us all in your prayers, during this time of transition: the congregation of La Siesta

Evangelical Church, the leaders of the GBGM, the Spanish Protestant Church, the Levante Presbytery, the California-Pacific Conference of the United Methodist Church and me.

Transitions are difficult for everyone even as we trust that God has a hand in our lives. I pray we will continue to listen to God's direction as we move forward.

Native American Ministries Sunday

April 14, 2024 is Native American Ministries Sunday, which nurtures mission with Native Americans and provides 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 14th. You can also donate through our website by clicking on On Line Giving and select Native American Ministries.

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.”

More Easter Fun!



Resurrection Stories Worship Series

We all experience the death of something in our lives. There are the deaths of people we love and the grief that seems to engulf us, and eventually the resurrection of hope to live on without them. But there are other kinds of death that we experience as well—death of a dream, death of connections and identities, to death-dealing circumstances or substances.

The Easter Season is a time of celebrating all the ways in which resurrection is possible in our lives. We can be in need of rising out of the depth of imprisonment, addiction, poverty, illness, and oppression—not just physically and literally, but also spiritually.

What keeps us locked up inside? What holds us back from the joy of life? What binds us, keeping us from the fullness of who God created us to be?

Join us for powerful testimonies of courage, kindness, strength, and overcoming—

Resurrection Stories—from those who have found “resurrection” in their lives. It might just inspire you to unlock your own rising up!

Our new Worship Design Studios Worship Series, **Resurrection Stories**, begins Sunday April 14th. Come and hear the good news in the telling of Resurrection Stories.

Westchester United Methodist Church
a place where love works

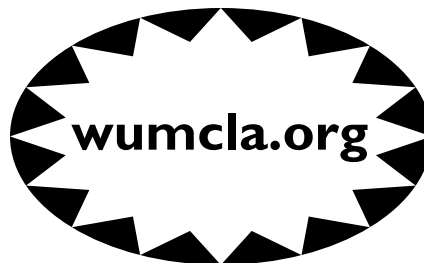
www.wumcla.org

8065 Emerson Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90045

Church: (310) 670 3777

Pastor's email: lyda@wumcla.org

Church Office email: wumcoffice1@sbcglobal.net



We are a Reconciling church!
ALL are welcome here.



From Lyda . . .

In the Gospel of Mark's Easter story, we hear that when Mary, Mary mother of James, and Salome looked up, they saw that the large stone covering the place where Jesus' body had been laid, had been rolled away. In the Gospel of John, Mary Magdalene stood outside of Jesus' tomb, overcome with grief, weeping. She bent down to look up into the tomb ... and then after a conversation with two angels, she looks up and sees Jesus. At first, she doesn't recognize him. But when he calls her name, she sees Jesus and shouts out with uncontainable joy.

I wonder ... maybe that's why Jesus made his first appearance to Mary in the garden ... to encourage her to keep looking up. To look up past his death, past the things they used to do together, past their prior successes and even their failures. Maybe Jesus' post-resurrection appearances to Mary, and later, to the other disciples, were like Carl's album in the movie *Up*.

In the movie *Up*, Carl's wife has died and he is overcome with grief. He sits, day after day, in his chair, next to the

empty chair that belonged to his wife. He doesn't go out, he doesn't talk to people, and he turns into a grumpy old man. He spends his days remembering, keeping his head down, looking at the photo album his wife put together, looking at the adventure of his life with Ellie in pictures. He looks down in sorrow at the last album page where Ellie had written "Stuff I'm going to do." Stuff that they would never get to do together now that she is gone.

One day, he noticed something he hadn't seen before. Ellie had written on the corner of the last page, "Thanks for the adventure. Now go have a new one."

Carl looked up from the album in wonder. He realized that his life with Ellie had been an adventure, and even though she was no longer with him, she encouraged him to keep on having adventures. She reminded him that life was one great adventure. Carl looked up ... and found hope.

Jesus asks Mary and the other disciples to look up and acknowledge the challenges ahead. The challenges they will face in his physical absence ... to look up and face their challenges with hope.

Jesus calls Mary by name and through her tears, she looks up and recognizes him. In that moment of joy, Jesus reminds her that even though one adventure has ended, there are new adventures waiting for her. He tells her to go and tell the disciples what she has seen and heard.

It's as if Jesus is saying, "Hey, I've come back to remind you that it's okay to look down, to give yourself a chance to grieve and time to catch your breath. But this is not where you are supposed to stay. Thank you for being my disciples and my friends ... but now, it's time to find new adventures. Look up. Find the adventures that God has prepared you for. Your life, in all its wonderful ordinariness, is an adventure ... just keep looking up."

Jesus asks us to share the good news of God who loves us so much, that God suffered even death to be in solidarity with us through the ordinary—and sometimes extraordinary—adventures that make up our lives. Just keep looking up.