



Westchester

United Methodist Church Newsletter

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MAY 2023

May is Mental Health Month



Westchester UMC is a proud partner of Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services. Westchester UMC raised over \$700 on Easter Sunday for suicide prevention programs at Didi Hirsch. Great job everyone!

This year, Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services turns 80! They have provided free mental health care, substance use disorder treatment and suicide prevention 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.

Founded in 1958, Didi Hirsch's Suicide Prevention Center is the nation's first and a model for suicide prevention centers across the globe. In 2019, Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services unveiled a 14,000 square foot facility in Century City. It in-

cludes individual and family therapy, support groups for teens grieving a loss by suicide, and twice the former number of counselors on suicide crisis hotline. The building is fronted by a 35-by-15-foot mural by artist Ed Massey and painted by more than 60 survivors of attempted suicide or loss.

The Suicide Prevention Center helped over 135,000 people last year, saving lives throughout the nation and world. They offer 24/7 multilingual Crisis Lines field calls, chats, and texts for the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, national Disaster Distress Helpline, Teen Line, and others. They also provide suicide-specialized therapy and support groups, training and education programs.

Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services' experts also provide evidence-based treatment to low-

income children and adults with mental disorders or behavioral challenges. Integrated care is available at many of their outpatient and residential facilities. They also have programs to help recovering adolescents and adults build resilience and coping skills, and also have four child and family clinics in South Los Angeles, Pico-Union and the cities of Glendale and Inglewood which offer outpatient mental health services for children and teens from birth to 21 years of age and their families.

Remember, you are not alone.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call **988**. The previous number (**1-800-273-8255**) will continue to function and will route calls to 988 indefinitely.

**"LIFE STANDS
BEFORE ME
LIKE AN ETER-
NAL SPRING
WITH NEW AND
BRILLIANT
CLOTHES"**

**- CARL FRIEDRICH
GAUSS**

Dates to Remember . . .

05/03—7:30 am Zoom Prayer

12n—Crafters Group, Rm 16

6:30 pm—The Gathering

05/07: - 8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—In Person Worship

05/09—11 am—Rhythm & Food: Adults 50+ for drumming & lunch

05/10—7:30 am Zoom Prayer

12n—Crafters Group, Rm 16

05/13—10:30 am Preschool Drum

& Music Time

05/14—Mother's Day!

8 am Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—In Person Worship—we will celebrate all who mother during worship!

05/17—7:30 Zoom Prayer

12n—Crafters Group, Rm 16

05/21—8 am Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—In Person Worship

05/24—7:30 am Zoom Prayer

12n—Crafters Group, Rm 16

05/28—Pentecost! **Wear something red to in-person worship!**

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church

10 am—Worship

05/29— Memorial Day

The Church Office will be closed in honor of Memorial Day.

Important Information about Suicide



Suicide is a major public health problem that affects people of all backgrounds, ages and ethnicities. In 2017, about 45,000 Americans died by suicide – more than by car accidents or homicide – and more than 1 million attempted. While not every suicide or attempt can be prevented, most people thinking about suicide have a treatable mental illness and show signs of their distress.

How to Help

If you believe a suicide is in progress, call 911.

Don't leave a suicidal person alone. If you must leave, safely remove guns and other lethal means.

If the person is in treatment with a mental health professional, en-

courage them to reach out.

If you aren't sure what to do, start by asking questions. You will not push someone into suicide by asking about suicidal thoughts or feelings. Offering someone an opportunity to talk about suicidal feelings may reduce the risk of their acting on them.

How to talk to someone who may be suicidal:

Tell them you are concerned and want to help;

Ask if they are thinking about suicide and have made any plans;

Take their thoughts and feelings seriously;

Listen with empathy and with-

out judgment;

Don't agree to keep their suicide plans secret;

If the suicidal person is a teen, tell a responsible adult

Encourage the person to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number **988** or **800-273-8255**

Mental Health IS health.

Together, we can create a world where everyone has access to the care and support they need to thrive.

"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 of the Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders in the United States who have made the country what it is today. During this month, the country celebrates the achievements and remembers the struggles endured by Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders.

President Joe Biden declared that the month of May will be Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, urging every American to learn more about that community's history. The President said he wants to help more Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders see themselves "in the story of America."

According to the Asian Ameri-

can Pacific Islander Coalition (AAPIC), the month of May was chosen for two reasons. First, to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States, a young fisherman named Manjuro, who arrived May 7, 1843. Second, May marks the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of workers on the transcontinental railroad were Chinese immigrants, who laid the tracks and were responsible for most of the dangerous and heavy manual labor tasks.

This month (and beyond!) you are invited to learn more about the AAPI community by watching the PBS documentary, "Asian Americans." It's a five part series on the fastest-growing ethnic group in American history.

California has the nation's largest AAPI population, and incidents of anti-Asian hate and violence continue to harm AAPI communities locally and across California and the U.S.

The organization, "Stop AAPI Hate" reported it had received accounts of 11,000 anti-Asian hate incidents from 2020-2022. The organization estimates that the actual number of incidents is upward of four million, but tangible numbers are difficult because no established national database exists.

We celebrate AAPI communities, and their contributions to our lives and to our country. 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.

Preschool Drum & Music Time

On the **Second Saturday** of the month, it's our FREE Preschool Drum & Music Time from 10:30 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. - held in the Fellowship Hall. No reservations needed - just show up! The average kids' ages are 18 months to 5 years. We drum, sing, play instruments, and move. Parents/Caregivers must stay with their children.

Our Preschool Drum & Music Time is facilitated by Pastor Lyda. Pastor Lyda was a music & creative dramatics teacher for many years, and

taught in preschools and elementary schools in the Los Angeles and Westside areas. She is a Master Level Orff Schulwerk music teacher, and is a trained HealthRHYTHMS®, Beat the Odds® Program and Village Music Circles drum circle facilitator.

Singing, playing, imagining, and moving promote wellness and artistic engagement. Live music can play a powerful role in a child's healthy physical, mental and emotional development. Tapping, clapping, bouncing, playing rhythm instruments, and dancing help develop fine and large motor control.

Dr. Dennie Palmer Wolf, author of "Why Making Music Matters," shares that humans are wired to be sensitive to sound patterns, and this sensitivity allows music to foster communication and imagination in young children.

We believe that churches are more than just a place to go on Sundays ... and our Preschool Drum & Music Time is fun way of building community and caring for children on the Second Saturday of the month! We look forward to seeing you on **Saturday, May 13th at 10:30 a.m.**

Rev. Krista Givens, Missionary

In April, WUMC officially became a covenant partner for missionary Rev. Krista Givens. In addition to supporting her work financially, we also covenant to be in partnership with her and her work. Rev. Krista hosts "Missionary Coffee Breaks" on Zoom, and hopes to host her third "Missionary Coffee Break" this month. She shares:

"Missionaries are a tangible connection between the church and God's mission."

Stated on the General Board of Global Ministries website, this

phrase echoes the sentiments of the latest Missionary Coffee Break, held on April 19, 2023. This was the second Zoom gathering I've hosted intended to bring together clergy and laity from local churches, Mission Committee folks, United Women in Faith (formerly UMW) groups, GBGM staff and missionaries to discuss the work of the GBGM in all its' complexities. Tangible connection. That's what I am working on. The first part of the connection is in my work as the pastor of La Siesta Evangelical Church here in Torrevieja, con-

necting a community of immigrants to one another and to God in a foreign land. But the other part of the connection happens when I can reach back to my "sending" agency - the General Board of Global Ministries - along with the annual conferences and local churches that offer me support, prayers and encouragement. These tangible connections are vital for the church, its growth and its understanding of our mission together."

Rev. Krista invited Rev. Courtney M. Randall to speak about her work as Mission Advocate for the Western Jurisdiction of the UMC ... we can't wait for Rev. Krista's "Coffee Break" in May!



Rhythm & Food—Adults 50+ - May 9th at 11 am

Westchester UMC serves up a hot meal and a drum circle to unite people regardless of their challenges, backgrounds, ability or prior experience. Our innovative feeding and wellness initiative, **Rhythm & Food**, offers the opportunity to find that center in your soul where your heart is strengthened by joy, community, rhythm and a shared meal.

Drumming is an inclusive, no prior experience necessary, safe and fun experience - and along with a hot meal, offers community and wellness to many who have strug-

gled during COVID-19, and beyond. Drumming has been shown to reverse the impact stress has on your DNA; strengthens your immune system, has positive outcomes on depression, and improves mood states—it's a great non-strenuous workout!

Pastor Lyda is a trained HealthRHYTHMS® facilitator. HealthRHYTHMS® is a fun, evidence-based whole person strategy wellness tool. On a deeper level it builds bridges while fostering nurturing, support, cama-

raderie, self-respect and respect for others. It is not just about drumming—we use the drum as a tool for communication and personal expression.

Rhythm & Food—Adults 50+ meets on the **second Tuesday of the month—May 9th—at 11:00 a.m.** for drumming and lunch. Our menu for May is Vegetarian Chili, cornbread and a dessert. It's free—no experience required—drums (and lunch!) are provided.

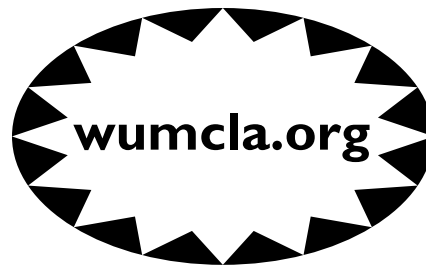
We look forward to seeing Adults 50+ on May 9th at 11 a.m.!

Westchester United Methodist Church
a place where love works

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We are a Reconciling church!
ALL are welcome here.



From Lyda . . .

One of my favorite folk tales is “Stone Soup.” “Stone Soup” is a story about a village too scared and too stuck to blossom into a “God’s Kin-dom” existence. And – it’s a story about weary travelers who have a faith assured of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen ... a faith which demands that all the characters in “Stone Soup” leave the comfort of the known and embrace an incredible metamorphosis of hospitality, welcome and true community as they create a soup out of stones.

Three traveling soldiers leave the comfort of being resigned to their fate in the face of an inhospitable village. They leave the comfort of complaining about the mean villagers and wallowing in their righteous hunger. How easy it would have been to accept the status quo of the villagers’ fear of the other – instead, the soldiers believe they can change not only their own lot, but the lot of the villagers. They take a chance and believe in an outcome which in all likelihood, could not happen.

At every meal, Jesus ate with outcasts, friends, strangers, officials, and the

other – and Jesus’ role was both guest and host. He accepted and sometimes wrangled, invitations to meals in unexpected places, turning every table into something holy, every meal into a feast, every moment a welcome to all.

Jesus walked unrecognized along the road to Emmaus. It wasn’t until he was invited to dinner and broke bread with them that his fellow travelers finally recognized him. It wasn’t until three strangers took a risk and invited an entire village to leave behind their scarcity mindset and create a meal overflowing with abundance. It wasn’t until hospitality to three strangers broke through the tightness and confines of a villages’ fear and brought them all into new “kin-dom” life.

“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” One of my favorite theologians and creatives, Dr. Marcia McFee, shares that this statement from Hebrews is one of her favorites. “It reassured early believers to have faith in this miraculous event that is the cornerstone of Christian belief, I have always liked it because I think the word faith applies to an even deeper spiritual truth: that we Christians believe in miracles. We believe in things ‘hoped for’ and we

are convicted of things ‘not [yet] seen.’”

Miracles ... like opening our hearts and resources to those who were once considered “other.” Miracles ... like trying, against all odds, to remind others of their humanity. Miracles ... like following a man who turned the world upside down with love.

Hospitality, vulnerability, forming new communities, change, risk -- these are the things that Jesus brings to the table. These are the things that Jesus asks us to bring to the table, and courageously pour into a pot of boiling water to make a soup to feed the hungry, the lost, the lonely. We are asked to emerge into a faith which calls us beyond our fears, our losses, our failures, to re-imagine what it means to see Jesus in each other and to be Jesus in the world.

This requires surrendering to “the assurance of things hoped for” even though we cannot yet see what the future holds. Welcoming a stranger on the road ... knowing that we cannot stay in our comfort zones ... and that soup can burst from stones.