



Westchester

United Methodist Church Newsletter

VOLUME VI, ISSUE 8

AUGUST 2025

Hunger in America-Time for a New Response

Hunger in America is not about a lack of food. It's about a lack of justice.

In her powerful book, *The Painful Truth About Hunger in America: Why We Must Unlearn Everything We Think We Know and Start Again*, Mariana Chilton draws from decades of research, advocacy, and lived experience to expose a difficult reality: hunger in the United States is not an accident. It is the result of political choices, systemic injustice, and decades of disinvestment in people who are struggling.

Millions of Americans—working parents, veterans, children, the elderly—face food insecurity every day. They are caught in systems that deny them a living wage, affordable healthcare, safe housing, and adequate food.

Ms. Chilton calls out what others often gloss over: hunger is not solved by charity alone. Food banks and pantries play a critical role, how-

ever, as she writes, “Hunger is a structural failure. Until we fight for justice, we are just putting band-aids on broken systems.”

This message is especially urgent in light of the so-called “Big Beautiful Bill” passed under the current Administration—legislation that cuts funding for critical safety net programs like SNAP (formerly food stamps), Medicaid, and housing assistance. Hundreds of millions of dollars worth of shipments to food banks and funding for them to buy produce, meat, dairy and other food products from local farmers have been cut. The bill and current policies make it even harder for families already on the edge to survive, let alone thrive.

As people of faith, this should trouble us deeply. Scripture repeatedly calls us to care for the hungry, the poor, the stranger. But it also calls us to challenge injustice—to speak truth to power and

to build systems that reflect the Kingdom of God. Resistance is sacred.

What can we do?

Read and reflect. Pick up *The Painful Truth About Hunger in America* and consider how it challenges your assumptions.

Support systemic change. Advocate for policies that restore and expand the safety net. Continue to voice your dissatisfaction with the harmful policies coming out of the White House—call, email, write & petition your elected officials. Let them know that food justice—all justice—matters.

Keep supporting food ministries, and remember the dignity of those who are hungry. As Ms. Chilton shares, “The people who face hunger are not broken. The system is.”

Let us be a community that not only feeds the hungry—but asks why they're hungry in the first place. And then does something about it.

“I NEED NOT BE GREAT. ON THE CONTRARY, I MUST REMAIN LITTLE.”

- ST. TERESE OF LISIEUX

Dates to Remember . . .

08/03—

8 am Zoom Breakfast Church
10 am Worship—Communion
4 pm—Sound Bath, Chapel

08/06—

7:30 am Zoom Prayer Check In
12n—Crafters Group
5 pm—Soul-Full Soup Dinner Church

08/10—

8 am Zoom Breakfast Church
10 am Worship

08/12—

11 am—Rhythm & Food

08/13—

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

08/17—

8 am Zoom Breakfast Church
10 am Worship

08/20—

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

5 pm—Hearty & Holy Dinner Church

08/24—

8 am Zoom Breakfast Church
10 am Worship

08/27—

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

08/31—

8 am Zoom Breakfast Church
10 am Worship

Remember Hiroshima & Nagasaki

*"August of another
summer, and once
again I am drinking
the sun ..."*

- Mary Oliver

This month, we mark the 80th year since these weapons were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

On August 6, 1945, during World War II, an American B-29 bomber dropped the world's first deployed atomic bomb over the Japanese city of Hiroshima. The explosion immediately killed an estimated 80,000 people; tens of thousands more would later die of radiation exposure. Three days later, a second B-29 dropped another A-bomb on Nagasaki, killing an estimated 40,000 people. Japan's Emperor Hirohito announced his country's unconditional surrender in World War II in a radio address on August 15, citing the devastating power of "a new and most cruel bomb."

It is estimated that roughly 70,000 to 135,000 people died in Hiroshima and 60,000 to 80,000 people died in Nagasaki, both from acute exposure to the blasts and from long-term side effects of radiation.

Those first nuclear weapons deployed by the United States, indiscriminately killed tens of thousands of non-combatants but also left indelible scars for the survivors, that they, their children and grandchildren still carry today.

Nuclear weapons are the most dangerous weapons on earth. One can destroy a whole city, potentially killing millions, and jeopardizing the natural environment and lives of future generations

through its long-term catastrophic effects. The dangers from such weapons arise from their very existence. Although nuclear weapons have only been used twice in warfare, about 13,400 reportedly remain in our world today and there have been over 2,000 nuclear tests conducted to date. Disarmament is the best protection against such dangers, but achieving this goal has been a tremendously difficult challenge. We pray that all world leaders remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We pray that the current President of the United States rethinks his August 1st decision to deploy U.S. nuclear submarines after a war of words with a senior Russian official. O Lord, hear our prayers.

Women's Equality Day

WOMEN'S EQUALITY
DAY



Women's Equality Day is observed on August 26th in the United States to commemorate women's suffrage and equality in all spheres of life and society. Despite it being a US-centric event, every global workplace should mark this occasion to show their solidarity and support towards women.

Women's Equality Day honors the women's suffrage movement in the U.S. and remembers the hurdles women had to overcome in their stride towards progress.

It reminds us of those strong women who faced violence and discrimination just for being women.

In the early 19th century, American women could not inherit property and made half of a man's wages in any job. This led to the women's suffrage movement, where women participated actively for political rights and equal representation.

In the 1900s, many countries like Finland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom gave equal voting rights to women, and the movement continued to spread across the world. Soon, the United States introduced the nineteenth amendment to the Constitution in the year 1878. However, it was a failure and gained no attention.

When women participated in World War I, their long-drawn suffrage gained enough support. That was the turning point. Activists pointed out the democratic fights in Europe, but at the same time, half of the American citizens at home were denied democratic rights. Constitutional amendments in the U.S. required two-third of the state's approval. So, 36 of them ratified the 19th amendment before it could pass. The deciding vote was in the hand of the Tennessee legislature named Harry T. Burn. He was

a young state representative and received a plea from his mother to support the amendment. His vote became the deciding factor, and he switched his decision at the last minute.

Sadly, the fight for equal rights doesn't end there. Even today, the gender pay gap is a reality, and it is an impacting factor in women's economic power.

Gender discrimination, workplace harassment is still prevalent in many workplaces and business fields. In the United States, many of women's hard-won rights have been erased. We have come to the place where I had more rights when I was a teenager than my daughters have now.

As Hillary Clinton stated, "Human rights are women's rights, and women's rights are human rights."

Excerpts from
www.vantagecircle.com

Help End Summer Hunger

The summer is a difficult time for families who cannot afford to replace the two meals per day their children were getting at school. 31% of children in the Westside Food Bank's service area live in low-income, working families that spend much more than 70% of their income on housing.

Local families need us more than ever while donations typically slow down over the summer. Visit the Westside Food Bank's website at

<https://www.wsfb.org>

You can make a single donation or pledge to help them on a monthly basis. Each dollar donated feeds 4 people.

The Westside Food Bank and their network of food banks (including the Food Pantry LAX) provide families a \$300 savings on their monthly grocery needs.

These families have nowhere else to turn for nutritious food besides the Westside Food Bank's network of food pantries.

If you are able, please consider a monetary donation to the Westside

Food Bank, or the Food Pantry LAX. You can donate to the Food Pantry LAX through the church website, or donate directly to the Westside Food Bank.



United Methodist Creation Justice Movement

In this month's newsletter from the United Methodist Creation Justice Movement, Policy & Advocacy Manager Madison Mayhew shares that, "The same day we watched a small community in Texas experience catastrophic levels of flooding, the President signed the most anti-environmental law in U.S. history. At a time when the threats of climate change are increasing and becoming more dangerous, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBA Act) will only make our work together more challenging. The bill not only significantly threatens climate progress, but will have harmful effects on our neighbors in communities across the country. The reckless

cuts to weather forecasting and disaster preparedness are leaving communities vulnerable when they need protection the most.

The OBBA Act will force people off of life saving programs like Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). We know climate change impacts historically marginalized communities first and worst. This bill places all of us in harm's way from increased pollution and increased costs, but especially those who are already vulnerable.

Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson reminds us in *What if We Get This Right?: Visions of Climate Futures*, "There are innumerable pos-

sible futures. I know that we can each get some way in which future we'll collectively have, and a chance to help build it. I know that every tenth of a degree of warming we prevent, every centimeter of sea level rise we avoid, every increasingly unnatural disaster we avert, every species we save, every bit of nature we protect and restore, matters. Averting climate catastrophe, this is the work of a lifetime. So, go where there is need and where your heart can find a home. When it all feels too much, return to this simple question: What if we act as if we love the future? Be tenacious on behalf of the earth."

Searching for the Kin-Dom of God Worship Series

Our new worship series, *Searching for the Kin-Dom of God*, begins August 3rd.

The four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—each tell the story of Jesus in a unique way, offering different glimpses of what he called the Kingdom of God—or, as we name it here, the Kin-Dom of God.

This Kin-Dom is not far away or reserved for someday. It's already breaking in, right here and now—in acts of justice and compassion, in ordinary people and unexpected places.

Each week, we'll journey through each Gospel writer's lens to discover where and how the Kin-Dom shows up—in Scripture, in our lives, and in

the streets of our city. We will also reflect on one of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Six Principles of Nonviolence—practices that align with Jesus' message and help us live as people of peace and purpose.

We look forward to seeing you as we search for the Kin-Dom of God!

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 . . .

Jesus and his disciples were on their way up to Jerusalem, when a woman named Martha offered them welcome. Hospitality meant opening her home to Jesus and his twelve disciples . . . providing food for all of them . . . these men who were probably used to having women wait on them. I've looked, but I still haven't found any scripture that references disciples helping in the kitchen or Jesus drying the dishes.

The story about Mary and Martha is often framed as a contrast between action and contemplation, or between service and discipleship. But what if there is more to it than that?

While Mary is breaking cultural taboos, Martha is in the kitchen, trying to feed everyone. When she just couldn't do it all by herself, she asks Jesus to intervene. Jesus responds, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things."

I can only imagine what Martha was thinking, "Yes, I am. I'm distracted by trying to do everything by myself!" I think Martha gets a bad rap as the sister who got scolded by Jesus. Instead of thinking of her as an annoyed older sister asking for help . . . what if we hear

her as a voice of protest?

Martha is doing the culturally expected thing—extending hospitality. She's showing up, doing the work, making sure others are fed and cared for. She's exhausted, and probably feels ignored or unsupported. Her plea to Jesus—"Tell her to help me!"—might not just be sibling frustration, but the voice of anyone who's burned out by the weight of doing everything alone.

In today's world, Martha could be the one organizing the protest, running the food pantry, or fighting to keep the lights on at the church. She's doing everything she thinks is expected—and feeling stretched thin.

What if Jesus' response is not a rebuke, not a scolding at all, but a redirection: "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing." What if Jesus is offering a moment of blessing in the midst of burnout—an invitation to pause, breathe, and sit at the feet of grace?

Mary, in choosing to sit at Jesus' feet, breaks with the expectations of women in her time. She enters into the "man's world" of discipleship and theological conversation. It is a bold, countercultural act. In a time when she could have been shamed or silenced, she makes a choice grounded in hope. Her choice is a blessing born in hard times—a moment of

holy resistance. And Jesus affirms it.

The story of Martha and Mary in the Gospel of Luke names both fear and hope – which is what so many of us are holding in tension today. Martha names fear: the fear of not being enough, of doing it all alone, of maybe even being left behind.

Mary holds hope: that a different way is possible, that she is worthy of learning, that sitting and listening is not a waste of time, but an act of renewal.

Blessing is not always the absence of struggle. It's the sacred moment when we choose hope in the midst of really hard things. And maybe that's the invitation for us today: To name both fear and hope. To sit in the mess and still trust that blessing is possible. To stop and listen, even when the work is unfinished.

This isn't about choosing between Mary or Martha—it's about honoring both the voice that cries out under the weight of it all, and the boldness to pause and listen for what really matters. The blessing doesn't only come when the struggle is over. It comes in the struggle—when we show up, when we speak out, when we love.