



Westchester UMC

VOLUME VI, ISSUE I

JANUARY 2025

Martin Luther King, Jr.—A Day of Service

Each year on the third Monday in January, we honor the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with a day of service. MLK Day is the only federal holiday that is also designated by Congress as a national day of service – a “day on, not a day off.”

Whether service meets a tangible need, such as fixing up a school or senior center, it builds a sense of community and mutual responsibility. Service can also look like donating money to a charitable cause, donating non-perishable food items to a food pantry, or putting together hygiene kits for those who are unsheltered.

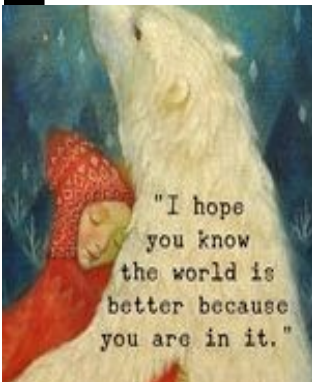
No matter the choice, service empowers individuals, strengthens communities, bridges barriers, creates solutions and moves us closer to Dr. King’s vision of beloved community. The King-

Center’s theme for 2025 is ‘Mission Possible: Protecting Freedom, Justice, and Democracy in the Spirit of Nonviolence³⁶⁵’. The pioneering work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. demonstrated that Kingian Nonviolence is the sustainable solution to injustice and violence in our world, ultimately leading to the creation of the Beloved Community, where injustice ceases, and love prevails.

The Rev. Dr. King shared, “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” As the U.S. Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Civil Rights shares on their website, “In keeping with Dr. King’s example, let us embrace the belief that our desti-

ny is shared and accept our obligations to each other, future generations and the American people by strengthening the bonds that hold together the most diverse Nation on earth. Each one of us can help answer MLK’s call by pledging to love and serve.”

In a country which sadly focuses on the things that divide us, may this year be the year we focus on coming together for the mutual benefit of all. Let us honor the work of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and celebrate his life by ending discrimination, and dismantle the systemic racism not only in this country—but wherever people are marginalized because of race, gender, sexual orientation, place of birth, or socio-economic status, throughout the world. May his dream be our dream ... and it come true.



WHEN YOU’RE KIND TO PEOPLE, AND YOU PAY ATTENTION, YOU MAKE A FIELD OF COMFORT AROUND THEM, AND YOU GET IT BACK—THE GOLDEN RULE MEETS THE LAW OF KARMA MEETS MURPHY’S LAW.

- ANNE LAMOTT

Dates to Remember . . .

01/01—New Year’s Day

Happy New Year!
The church office will be closed
12/31 thru 01/03

01/05—

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church
10 am—Worship in the Sanctuary

01/07—

11 am—Rhythm & Food
[In January, Rhythm & Food will be on the 1st Tuesday of the month]

01/08—

7:30 am—Zoom Prayer Check In
12 n—Craft Group Rm 16

01/12—Baptism of the Lord

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church
10 am—Worship in the Sanctuary

01/15—

7:30 am—Zoom Prayer Check In
12n—Craft Group Rm 16
5 pm—Community Dinner Church

01/19—

8 am—Zoom Breakfast Church
10 am—Worship in the Sanctuary

01/20—MLK Day

01/22—

7:30 am—Zoom Prayer Check In
12n—Craft Group in Rm 16

01/26—

8:00 am—Zoom Breakfast Church
10:00 am—Worship in Sanctuary

Rev. Dr. Krista Givens



“For a new year to bring you something new, make a move, like a butterfly tearing its cocoon! Make a move!” - Mehmet Murat Ildan

On the last Sunday in December, we had the pleasure of welcoming Rev. Dr. Krista Givens to worship!

Rev. Dr. Krista just finished her three year term serving as a missionary for the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM). She was appointed as pastor to La Siesta Evangelical Church in Torrevieja, Spain.

Rev. Dr. Krista shared that La Siesta Evangelical Church is an ecumenical English-speaking congregation of international Protestants. The church is a proud member of Iglesia Evangelica Espanola and is the only Protestant English speaking church in Spain. The Iglesia Evangelica Espanola—all 40

congregations—are inclusive and welcoming to all people, especially to those in the LGBTQIA+ community.

The GBGM trains, commissions, assigns and supports missionaries in the United States and around the world, and have been at the heart of mission since the founding of the first denominational Methodist missionary society in 1819. There are currently over 200 United Methodist missionaries serving approximately 50 different countries around the world. They serve in many different types of professions: pastors, evangelists and church coordinators,

teachers and educators, doctors, nurses, and other health workers, agriculturists, development specialists, community organizers, and peacebuilders!

Rev. Dr. Krista’s time as a missionary ended in December and starting in January, she begins her new appointment as the pastor of North Hollywood United Methodist Church.

We are grateful for Rev. Dr. Krista’s work as a missionary and wish her much joy in her new appointment right here in the Cal-Pac Annual Conference!

Dinner Church Times Two in March!

Beginning in March, we are trying something new—Dinner Church Times Two! On the first Wednesday in March, March 5th (Ash Wednesday) we are adding another night of Dinner Church! Our second dinner church gathering will take place on the first Wednesday in Lent, and continue on first Wednesdays through June 4th.

On first Wednesdays, we will serve a soup, bread, salad, and dessert meal at 5:00 p.m.

On the first and third

Wednesdays of the month at 5:00 p.m., we gather in the Fellowship Hall for a free community meal ... because as Jesus showed us, **community starts at the table.**

In the first two chapters of Acts, the followers of Jesus were going from house to house, sitting with their neighbors, breaking bread, and talking about Jesus.

John Wesley employed the early church model and recovered the practice of shared meals when he instituted love feasts.

The good news of God’s love and grace is shared around a table at which all

kinds of folks are included. This is the year when dinner church will meet more than once a month! First Wednesdays will be soup, bread, salad and dessert meals, and third Wednesdays will continue offering a hearty main course with salad, fruit and dessert.

We look forward to “Dinner Church Times Two” beginning in March! Here are upcoming dates for dinner church:

January 15th
February 19th
March 5th & 19th
April 2nd & 16th
May 7th & May 14th;
June 4th & June 18th

We look forward to seeing you—Times Two beginning in March!

Six Stone Jars—The Economy of Jesus

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor." – Luke 4:18

A miscalculation has occurred. The wedding guests have drunk all the wine before the party is over. At times, life can feel like we're "running out" of so much, and scarcity is shutting down the party. In these moments, we are invited to turn to the currency and economy of Jesus. In his economy, the true measure of abundance is fullness for the whole community, not just for some. Let us build the Kin-dom of God by drawing

Hope, Purpose, Healing, Meaning, Vision, and Grace for all people.

We will explore: Fill My House with Hoping; Fill My Plans with Purpose; Fill My Wounds with Healing; Fill My Days with Meaning; Fill My Future with Vision; and Fill My Cup with Grace.

The "have" and "have not" narrative weaves itself through all of history as humans oppress one another out of a fear of scarcity. A scarcity mindset says that there is not enough for eve-

ryone. This attitude demands that others must have less in order for us to have more. However, in Jesus' economy, we are invited to use our gifts to demonstrate the abundance of God's economy, filling our days with meaning. In the economy of Jesus, there is always more than meets the eye as hope never runs dry. Just when we begin to expect the worst, Jesus reminds us that there is more good stuff in store.

Six Stone Jars begins Sunday, January 19th.

2024—a Year in Review

2024

Here are a few of the ways we engaged in loving others:

Suicide Prevention Work

Westchester UMC was a proud sponsor of Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services' Alive Together: Uniting to Prevent Suicide event. We donated \$2,500 to Alive Together, and raised over \$300 this Christmas Eve for suicide prevention programs. Great job everyone!

Food Pantry LAX

We donated Bag-It-Up Holiday Meals for families in need, in addition to donating our Thanksgiving offering to the Food Pantry.

Community

We offered our 2nd Blessing of the Animals in October—and made new friends (animal & human) in the community!

Both Rhythm & Food and eat pray

love Community Dinner Church celebrated their one year anniversaries.

Offering Assistance

WUMC offered rental, utilities and grocery assistance to many in need. We helped two people pay their rent, and helped many folks pay their utility bills. We gave out countless grocery gift cards, as well as gift cards to Subway, McDonalds, and Taco Bell. We even used Amazon Fresh to have much needed groceries and necessities delivered to a person and a beloved pet in need!

Restaurant Fundraisers

Over the years, Westchester UMC has supported many missionaries through the GBGM through restaurant fundraisers and donations.

Since Rev. Dr. Krista has finished her itineracy as a United Methodist Missionary, Westchester UMC will no longer pledge a yearly amount to support a missionary through GBGM.

As with many churches, finances play a part in how many ministries can responsibly be supported. After much discernment and prayer, the

Leadership Team made the decision to prioritize WUMC's mission of feeding people in the community as being paramount in our fundraising efforts.

Beginning this month, monies raised from WUMC's restaurant fundraisers will be used to support our monthly community dinners, monthly lunch, and our wellness outreach. In support of the church's financial health and our vision to feed bodies, minds and spirit, the leadership team believes that WUMC will be able to do

much good by focusing our energies and resources into our work in the LAX area and surrounding community.

As United Methodists, we are connectonal, and will continue to support the programs and ministries of the local and global United Methodist Church through special offerings.

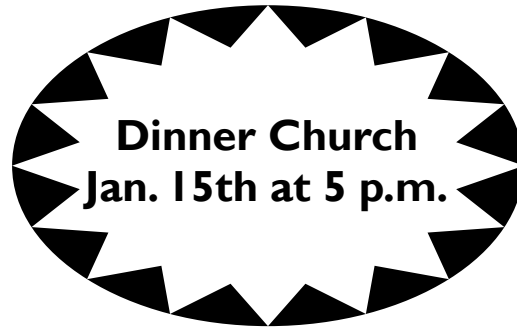
We also offer a heartfelt "thank you!" to Judy Boster-Mark who continues to do an amazing job with our restaurant fundraisers—the next one is February 4-5th at the California Pizza Kitchen!

**Westchester
United Methodist Church**

www.wumcla.org

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We are a Reconciling church!
ALL are welcome here.



From Pastor Lyda . . .

Many years ago, before I became a pastor, I was the Director of Music at a church in Los Angeles. One Christmas Eve, right before the service began, the pastor asked me if my toddler would start the worship service by carrying the baby Jesus down the center aisle . . . the very long center aisle . . . and place the baby in the manger of the creche scene at the front of the altar.

I suggested that perhaps he was a bit young to be entrusted with such an important role on Christmas Eve; however, my concerns were dismissed, and the I've-never-really-been-around-small-children-ever pastor gleefully awaited the start of the service.

I managed to wrangle the choir into their correct places in the sanctuary, and ran back to the entrance with child in hand. I whispered to him for the final time, "walking feet, walking feet," as I reluctantly placed the baby Jesus in his arms.

With a small but firm directional push, I got him moving in the right direction. And then, off he went, "walking feet" forgotten. He picked up speed careening down the center aisle. I whispered, "Walking feet!" in horror, as I watched my first-born trip, and in an effort to save himself, threw the Christ-Child into the air. I sprinted down that aisle, and with the skill of a quarter back wearing a voluminous robe, I dove, arms outstretched, to catch the baby Jesus. And, as only a child can do, my kid let out a scream that pierced the very heavens as he cried out, "Baby Cheese-its!" which apparently is what he heard whenever I talked or read stories about the baby Jesus. I caught Jesus, picked up my kid, and the two of us stumbled to the manger - with walking feet - baby Jesus tangled, securely, in my choir director's robe.

It was not the solemn start to Christmas Eve worship that the pastor had wished . . . and not surprisingly, as long as he was the pastor there, no child was ever again

asked to process with the baby Cheese-its, I mean, Jesus on Christmas Eve.

But here's the thing: as I knelt by the manger, helping my child with the now skinned-knees untangle the Baby Jesus and place the baby gently in the manger, I couldn't help but notice the smiles—and the laughter—rippling through the sanctuary. It wasn't the solemn, photo-perfect moment the pastor had envisioned, but perhaps . . . it was something better. In that moment of humbling, giggling chaos, we were reminded that the journey to the manger is rarely smooth. It's messy and unpredictable, filled with stumbles, falls, heroic catches, and surprises.

That's the miracle of Christmas, isn't it? That God meets us exactly where we are—sometimes frazzled, messy and tangled in the robes of our humanity—and says, "I am here . . . with you."

Just as the shepherds came stumbling in from the fields and the wise men wandered far from their homes, we, too, find our way to Bethlehem in our own beautiful and sometimes imperfect way.