



Westchester

United Methodist Church Newsletter

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 7

JULY 2021

We're Baaaaack ... to In-Person Worship!

Westchester UMC is excited to announce TWO WAYS to connect with us for worship starting in August—online and in-person!

It's been a long road, with lots of bumps and surprising turns, but we are so very happy to share that we will return to in-person worship on Sunday, August 1st at 10:00 a.m.—together—in-person—in the sanctuary—with people—inside!

In-Person Worship Experiences

Sunday Morning Worship

While our return to in-person worship is a huge step into returning to a more familiar way of being together in faith and community, some things may be a bit different than what we were familiar with.

- There will be a Welcome & Check-In desk before you enter the sanctuary. Check-In will be required at each service, and if one is not already on file, a COVID-19 Waiver form must

be signed.

- Physical distancing will be maintained and hand sanitizing stations are available.
- Masks must be worn inside the church facility. Masks will be provided as needed.
- Per CDC recommendations, our in-person worship service will be shortened to no more than 45 minutes.

The Gathering

Our Taize-style service will gather in the Memorial Garden on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. beginning August 4th. Experience prayer in a way not commonly practiced—undergo a journey of the heart to where the God of silence rests.

On-Line Worship Experiences

Breakfast Church—Sunday mornings from 8 a.m. to 9 am via Zoom

Lunch Church—Wednesday mid-day from 12 noon to 12:30 pm

YouTube Worship—By Saturday of each week, our YouTube Worship Service will be posted to YouTube.

Small Group Experiences

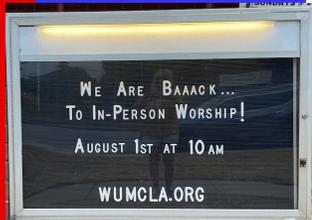
Prayer Journaling—Wednesday mornings from 7:30 am to 8:15 am, we meet via Zoom for a time of connection, reflection and prayer.

Small Group Studies

Topical Small Group Bible Studies are offered throughout the year. In the fall, we will offer an **on-line small group study, to be announced.**

Starting August 1st and continuing through August 29th, we will offer an **in-person** small group study on “Travel as a Spiritual Act” immediately following our in-person worship service. This study will follow our worship series, “Quest.”

See you in August!



“SUMMER AFTERNOON; TO ME THOSE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THE TWO MOST BEAUTIFUL WORDS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.”

- HENRY JAMES



Dates to Remember . . .

07/01—Communion elements available for pick up

07/04—Happy 4th of July!

07/04—Virtual Communion

Breakfast Church via Zoom at 10:00 a.m.; YouTube Worship service, “What’s Next God? Sharing the New Creation”

07/05—Church Office closed

07/07—Zoom Prayer Journaling at 7am

07/11—Breakfast Church via Zoom at 10:00 a.m.

YouTube Worship service, “What’s Next God? God’s Economy”

07/12—Monday at the Movies via Zoom at 7 p.m. “Other Side of the Hill”

07/14—Zoom Prayer Journaling at 7 am

07/18—Breakfast Church via Zoom at 10:00 a.m.; YouTube

Worship service, “What’s Next, God? Creating a New World”

07/21—Zoom Prayer Journaling at 7 am

07/25—Breakfast Church via Zoom at 10:00 a.m.; YouTube Worship service, “What’s Next, God? Tending the New World ”

07/26—Monday at the Movies via Zoom at 7 p.m. “Kiss the Earth”

07/28—Zoom Prayer Journaling at 7 am

Spotlight on Betty Smith

Betty Smith celebrated her 100th birthday on June 24th!

Betty joined Westchester United Methodist Church in 1971 ... here's just a small part of the story of how a girl from Tennessee ended up in California!

Betty Smith married Harry Smith in 1971, after being widowed for 10 years. Betty met Harry at a funeral of a mutual friend. They met, a spark was lit, and it continued to grow!

Betty left her hometown of Memphis, Tennessee as the newly married couple headed to California and began to build a whole new life together.

Harry was already a member of Westchester UMC, and his new

bride joined the church in 1971. Harry was the recipient of the Dynamic Disciple Award, and Betty became an important part of the United Methodist Women, as well as many other groups. Both Harry and Betty played in the handbell choir, and practiced using sticks at home!

In the early 1980's, Betty was a part of the talented team who created the banners that can still be seen in the church today. Betty has been active in many facets of church life here at Westchester.

We continue to be amazed by our much-loved Betty, and are so grateful for her

gifts of wisdom and hospitality, and for her many talents and incredible faith and friendship.

Happy 100th Birthday Betty!
We love you!



Quest—Travel as a Spirit Act Worship Series

Our new worship series, "Quest—Travel as a Spiritual Act" begins on August 8th, and will conclude on August 29th.

Pilgrimage has long been a practice of spiritual devotion, not just in Christianity but in Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and most other spiritual traditions. Major experiences such as the Camino de Santiago trail in Spain or international trips to holy historical sites are perhaps among the first kinds of examples that come to mind, but a pilgrim's path can begin and lead anywhere in the world. Your transformative journey could take place closer to home, without boarding a plane or driving a long distance.

The process of exploration,

discovery, and transformation that occurs when journeying to a new place or state of mind is the theme of "Quest: Travel as a Spiritual Act." Perhaps Quest may help you lay the groundwork for journeys of all kinds, physical and spiritual, as you prepare to encounter new people, new perspectives, new ways of life.

Dr. Marcia McFee, the creator of this worship series, shares that this series was inspired by Rick Steves' webinar, "Travel as a Spiritual Act."

We are excited to share that in addition to our worship series, "Quest: Travel as a Spiritual Act," we will offer a small group experi-

ence after worship each Sunday in August. Our "Quest" small group will meet for 45 minutes and explore what it means to not only physically travel, but to expand our horizons—close to home. We will use the themes from our worship series to start our quest: Leaving Home; The Encounter; The Reflection, and Returning Home.

Our small group experience will begin on August 1st (the week before our worship series begins) around 11 a.m., and will meet each Sunday through August 29th.

Please let Pastor Lyda know if you would like to attend our Small Group Experience of Quest by RSVP'ing to: Lyda@wumcla.org.

*"We should be as
shining lamps, giving
light to all."
- Catherine McAuley*

Breakfast Church is Changing!

As Westchester UMC resumes in-person worship in August on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m., Breakfast Church will move to a new time!

Starting August 1st, Breakfast Church will start at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings! Same Day – New Time!

Breakfast Church will end at 9 a.m.—just in time to enjoy in-person worship in the sanctuary at 10 a.m.!

But wait ... there's more!

Lunch Church will start on Wednesday, August 4th at 12 noon!

Lunch Church will offer the same informal time of discussion, reflection and prayer as Breakfast Church.

Lunch Church's 30 minute timeframe is perfect for a mid-day escape from the busyness of the day—grab a sandwich, join the conversation and hang out for a short break.

All are invited to Zoom-in for Lunch Church on Wednesdays at 12 noon starting August 4th, and Breakfast Church on Sundays at 8 am starting August 1st.

Zooming on Movie Mondays!

Where can East and West, Republicans and Democrats, find the common ground needed to address climate change? How can industry and environmentalists work hand in hand? And how can local economies find opportunity in a lower emissions future?

The *Other Side of the Hill* is a hopeful, inspiring look at local leaders on the ground in rural America who are leading climate action in their communities. But it is also about coming together, finding common ground and new climate frameworks, and shining a light on rural voices as we envision a path forward.

On **Monday, July 12, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.**, you are invited to join together to view this film over Zoom. After watching this 30 minute film, we will have a time of questions and discussion. All are welcome!

On **Monday, July 26, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.**, you are invited to the screening on Zoom of the film, *Kiss the Ground*. *Kiss the Ground* is a new film about how regenerating the world's soils has the potential to rapidly stabilize Earth's climate, restore lost ecosystems, and create abundant food supplies. This film explains why transitioning to regenerative agriculture could be key in rehabilitating the planet,

while simultaneously invigorating a new sense of hope and inspiration. This documentary is narrated by and features Woody Harrelson, and was an official selection at the 2020 Tribeca Film Festival. The film runs 45 minutes, followed by a time of discussion.

Join in July's Movie Mondays on the 12th and 26th with a focus on climate change and how we can make a difference!

Please email Pastor Lyda at Lyda@wumcla.org for your Zoom invitation.

Small Group Opportunity—Morning Prayer: Journaling!

Morning Prayer—Journaling

Starting on Wednesday, July 7th from 7:30 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. you are invited to meet via Zoom for Prayer Journaling. We will have a different focus scripture each week to reflect and meditate on throughout the week. There will be a time of reflection, where any questions or thoughts prompted by your journaling on the

weekly scripture can be explored and shared. Individually and as a group, we will discover where God is in our daily experiences (Kairos moments) and end with a time of prayer for ourselves, our loved ones, and for the world. The focus scripture will be emailed out the week before each session.

Our Morning Prayer small group will meet each Wednesday morning

through the summer months.

There are no books to purchase for Morning Prayer—Journaling, although a notebook or journal is suggested.

For a Zoom invitation for Morning Prayer—Journaling, please email Pastor Lyda.

Westchester United Methodist Church
a place where love works

www.wumcla.org

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We are a Reconciling church!
ALL are welcome here.



From Lyda . . .

Today marks my second year as your pastor ... another milestone reached during a pandemic. This past year has definitely not been the “second year as your pastor” that I could have ever imagined, nor do I believe this past year was anything that any of us would have dreamt of, even in our wildest imaginings.

Most of my time as your pastor has been during a pandemic—a time when in-person gatherings were not safe, and Zoom, YouTube and Live Streaming became the normal way of worshiping, conducting meetings, and connecting to one another.

What a journey these past 16 months have been. We have borne witness to incredible sorrows—racism, inequity in our medical care, political division, fear, and immeasurable loss of life and livelihood. We have borne witness to incredible resilience—the planet trying to heal itself, creative ways of caring for each other, generosity, and the resilience of body, mind and spirit.

And now, even though this pandemic is still with us, our journey together starts off on a new path—a path that isn't on any GPS or programmed into Siri. A journey that begins with the question, “What's next, God?”

“What's next, God?” That question can be asked in so many ways—if you shout it, it can be angry ... if you whisper it, it can be fearful ... if you laugh and throw your arms open, it can be freeing ... if you close your eyes and speak it gently, it can be a prayer. Most days, I ask the question using all of the above!

So, what's next for Westchester UMC?

In the months ahead, we will continue to explore all the possibilities and opportunities that being a hybrid faith community brings. We joyfully embrace returning to in-person worship in August, and joyfully continue with all we've discovered in our on-line worship community.

“What's next, God?” Going forward with a BOTH/AND way of being!

So many times during this past 16 months, I have felt lost, excited, fearful, confused, hopeful ... all at the same time. The challenging

news is ... no one knows what the future may bring. The hopeful news is ... we are in this together, with the Spirit as our guide.

So, what's next God? Perhaps the song, A Wilderness Wandering People by Jim Strathdee can help us answer that ever-changing question ...

“We are a wilderness wandering people on a journey of the soul. May we find our destination in our longing to be whole. Our holy God is calling to us. With Jesus by our side, may compassion be our compass; may the Spirit be our guide. May we cherish all our children, let us heal our family's pain. Help us cure our city's madness, let love and justice reign. Reconciled with one another in prayer and praise and song, we're the body of Christ together and we know that we belong.”

What's next, God? Well, only God knows ... but I do know that everything is possible and I can't wait to see where this journey takes us!