



West Los Angeles United Methodist Church  
1913 Purdue Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90025

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09/2025

## Growing More Christlike Together

West Los Angeles UMC welcomes all persons  
regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

# West LA Connections

West Los Angeles United Methodist Church Monthly Newsletter | September Issue

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# SEPT 2025



**Rev. Keith Inouye**

## A word from our Pastor September 2025

Dear WLAUMC members and friends,

Greetings in Christ! The month of August soon ends. Summer is coming to a close as it gives way to fall. Summer vacations and family vacations are behind us as children, youth, college students, and teachers have already gone back to school and discover new opportunities for learning.

As I reflect upon the experiences of summer at our church I thank God that we experienced the joys of four weeks of Kids Camp (Vacation Bible School), Asian Camp for the youth, and the dedication of our Nisei Fellowship Hall. We hosted the week-long Kizuna Japanese cultural camp as many children learned about Japanese culture and history.

During July UM missionary Rev. Claudia Genung-Yamamoto came to share about the good work she has been doing in Japan. She is one whose work we have been supporting for many years now.

During the summer we welcomed a remarkable Filipino Immigration task force group to meet at our church who have brought much joy and vitality and purpose to our church. And the A.A. group that meets in our Fellowship Hall on Monday nights supports the lives of many. During these summer months, we have become involved with the work of the West Food Bank, and we continue to support the good ministry of 580 Café at UCLA through our dear friend Deaconess Jeanne Roe Smith.

Soon we will welcome the Culver-Palms UMC staff and congregation to share our church facilities with us as they embark on a complete reconstruction of their church property over the next two years that will include affordable housing as a part of their mission and ministry.

These are all good programs and ministries that we believe supports people's lives far beyond our church membership. I celebrate that our church, West Los Angeles UMC, is supporting

many ministries of social justice and community service. It is what we are supposed to be doing; being a light and leaven in the world for God.

In these times, I know we anguish much over and are angered by the rapidly changing political dynamics and movement in our nation as our democracy is threatened. I believe we will continue to feel the angst of what is happening in our nation and so we must remain steadfast in faith, in action, and in hope to counter balance the tremendously unjust and hateful actions and movement we see happening in our nation and world.

As summer gives way to fall, we will once begin a new Sunday school God's Garden year. We will begin asking all to recommit ourselves to supporting our mission and purpose as a church through another Stewardship Campaign especially as we anticipate the transition of pastoral leadership in our church on January 1st. In addition, we will be asking any and all to consider God's call to serve on various committees and ministries as our Lay Leadership (Nominations) Committee once again begins it's work to discern our 2026 slate of officers, leaders, and committee and ministry members.

The work of the Christ's church, grounded in love, has always been vital. Today it is even more needed and necessary to stay committed and engaged in addressing the issues that face our nation and world. Please consider how you might support the work of Christ's church through WLAUMC through your time, your talents, and your giving.

I pray you are staying strong in faith, hope, and love in these days!

Blessings to you always,

Rev. Keith



# CELEBRATING THE NISEI FELLOWSHIP HALL PLAQUE DEDICATION

In a joint English & Nichigo worship service on Sunday, August 10th, the congregation gathered to honor the contributions of the Nisei generation and to memorialize the sacred history of the newly named Nisei Fellowship Hall with a narrative plaque.

Rev. Keith Inouye and plaque project coordinator Cooke Sunoo provided the context and impetus for the project (with inspiration and guidance from Nisei Grace Seto), while Nisei church member Sadie Hifumi shared her pre- and post-war memories of church activities in the building over the decades. The congregation extended its gratitude to Westwood UMC, who donated the building in 1940. Special guest Jenniffer Duran-West, Westwood UMC Lay Leader, shared remarks honoring the long relationship between our two churches. The plaque dedication and a delicious potluck luncheon with lively fellowship followed the worship. Thank you to all who contributed potluck dishes, funds, and hospitality for the celebration.

The Nisei Fellowship Hall Project contributors are Cooke Sunoo (chair), Grace Seto, Sadie Hifumi, Midori Tashiro (designer), Rev. Keith Inouye, Rev. Becky Hirata, Stanley Shimotsu, Jeri Okamoto-Tanaka, Jennifer Abe, Randy Sakamoto, Kiana Hertogh-Nicholson, Toshio & Keiko Takahashi, Jared Aoki, and Kenji & Janice Mayeda.





## REMAINING THURSDAY BREAKFAST BUNCH DATES FOR 2025



Don't forget that generally the first Thursday of every month is our Thursday Breakfast Bunch. The group that gathers keeps growing! In August we had 26 in attendance! Don't miss out, please join us! It's a great opportunity enjoy the fellowship and company of other church friends and get to know each other. Please mark your calendar for the following remaining 2025 Thursday Breakfast Bunch dates for 2025!

**September 4th, October 2nd, November 6th, December 4th**

As always we gather at 8am at the Marie Calender's Restaurant near the corner of Sawtelle and National Avenues (11324 National Blvd, Los Angeles, CA).

If you are able to join us, it is helpful to RSVP to Rev. Keith Inouye. However, even if you do not RSVP, please come anyway! We always have more room at the restaurant to expand and welcome any and all.



## SENIOR FUN DAYS: SEPT 19 & OCT 24

Seniors! Please join us for a lot of fun! We play games, have great conversation, and share a delicious lunch at every Senior Fun Day! We meet in our church's Nisei Fellowship Hall and our next Senior Fun Days will take place on September 19th and October 24th at 10am and usually ends around 2:00pm. Please RSVP to Rev. Keith at (408) 355-0837 as lunch will be provided.



## GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

If you are needing a supportive group to help you through the loss of loved ones where mutual sharing and consolation can be experienced, our WLAUMC Grief Support group led by Rev. Keith and Jeri Okamoto-Tanaka can be a welcome place to experience support and process the grief in the context of a caring group.

The loss can be recent or long ago yet grief that still continues to be deeply felt. We cry. We laugh. We share a meal together. We often experience the relief of putting our grief aside and celebrate the joy of simply being in the company of one another. If this sounds like a need of yours, then please join us! Please contact Rev. Keith at (408) 355-0837 via text or voice message. Thank you!

## Grief Support Group

**THURSDAY | 11:30AM - 1:00PM IN THE LEARNING CENTER**

**2025 Grief Support Meetings:**

**August 28  
September 25  
October 16  
November 13  
December 11**

## RECONCILING MINISTRIES TEAM

JOIN US!

Third Sunday, September 21st:

Reconciling & Pride Worship and Community Care Gathering

Join us for our Third Sunday special worship service dedicated to LGBTQ+ inclusion, affirmation, reconciliation, and celebration. As a member of the global Reconciling Ministries Network, we "celebrate God's gift of diversity and value the wholeness made possible in community equally shared and shepherded by all. We welcome and affirm people of every gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation, who are also of every age, race, ethnicity, physical and mental ability, level of education, and family structure, and of every economic, immigration, marital, and social status, and so much more. We acknowledge that we live in a world of profound social, economic, and political inequities. As followers of Jesus, we commit ourselves to the pursuit of justice and pledge to stand in solidarity with all who are marginalized and oppressed."



## THIRD SUNDAYS @ WLA UMC

With all that is going on in the world and in our immediate Sawtelle neighborhood with ICE raids, loss of basic needs resources, and fear, the Social & Environmental Justice and Missions Team is holding space every Third Sunday of the month for the congregation and community. We anticipate that these Sundays will feature guest speakers and trainings, conversation and soul care, and/or faith in action projects. Watch your emails or check the church website for upcoming topics. The gatherings are open to all as we continue seek God's guidance as we ask, "what is mine to do in such a time as this?" Contact Jeri Okamoto-Tanaka or Kiana Hertogh-Nicholson, Justice & Missions Co-Chairs, for more information.



## INTRODUCTION TO THE CHURCH / MEMBERSHIP CLASS (IN-PERSON)

SUNDAY AFTERNOONS, 3PM-5PM; AUG 31, SEPT 7,14,21,28

WHAT IS  
CHURCH  
MEMBERSHIP?

WHAT IS THE  
CHURCH?

WHO IS  
JOHN  
WESLEY?

To all who are interested in becoming members of Wesley United Methodist Church and any who just want to learn the most basics about the Christian faith, how the Bible came to be, how the church came to be and what's its purpose, what is the history behind the United Methodist denomination, what is unique about our Wesley United Methodist Church, and what does membership involve and what is expected of us, and even why would you want to become a member. These questions and more we address in our Introduction to the Church/Membership Class!



# SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND MISSIONS

BY CO-CHAIR JERI OKAMOTO-TANAKA

## Super Salad Bowl Fun-Raiser a Success!

A great big bowl of thanks to all who helped to make our first ever Summer Super Salad Bowl Smorgasbord, a spiritually and physically nourishing gathering for both our English & Nichigo congregations and special guests Rev. Claudia and her family. What a colorful and delicious array of 18 salads, plus a variety of rice & noodle dishes, and desserts! We raised \$915 for Social & Environmental Justice and Missions projects. Special thanks to Susan Tsukahira for making the salad signs, typing up all of the recipes to share, making musubi, baking, and coordinating with me behind the scenes! We also appreciate all of the helpers who set up tables and chairs and put them away again -- and washed and dried dishes!



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## SEEKING VOLUNTEERS TO ASSIST WITH WEST LA UMC/WESTSIDE FOOD BANK PROJECT

During this vulnerable time for immigrants and persons of color in Southern California, West Los Angeles UMC is collaborating with the Westside Food Bank and West LA Community Coalition organizations to support the distribution of fresh food to local families in need. Join church friends in helping to pack fruit & vegetable boxes at the Westside Food Bank in Santa Monica on Friday mornings from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm. The greatest need is on the last Friday of the month.



We are also looking for drivers and those who can assist neighbors carry groceries to their cars or public transit stops at the Friday public distributions at the West LA Civic Center at 3:30 p.m. Please contact Jeri at [jotwlaumc@gmail.com](mailto:jotwlaumc@gmail.com) for volunteer information.

## WELCOMING CULVER-PALMS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Culver-Palms UMC will be worshipping with us on Sunday, August 24th so that we as West LA UMC can bless their ministry in this transitional season. They will primarily be using our church space on Thursday evenings for worship, fellowship, and dinner (see the August 2025 newsletter for the official announcement). Let us welcome Culver-Palms UMC!

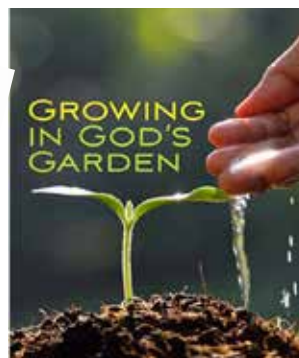


# God's Garden is Mixing Things Up!

God's Garden is choosing to mix things up!

As we begin a new 2025-2026 school year, the God's Garden staff has chosen to focus upon an environment that provides opportunities for relationship and leadership building while having fun! We found the multi-age level "Camp Circles " at Kids Camp does just that! This space provides for kids to meet, work together and to build relationships. "All Together" Sundays will combine the students together for different activities each week before dividing up into age level groups for reflecting upon the bible lesson and discussion.

Students will also have an opportunity to choose to be a leader for the morning as they are empowered to help others and grow by taking on different responsibilities.



## Rally Sunday Kick-Off

August 24th

Here we go! A new school year is upon us! We look forward to our Rally Day traditions of 3rd grade bible presentations, meeting the God's Garden staff, "Blessing of the Backpacks" and prayers for the school year. Rally Day will also be the kickoff for our "Blossom and Blessings" project as the kids will germinate and care for flower seeds till they have grown and bloomed to present as gifts to some of our seniors.

Individual and class pictures will also be taken.

Come and see your church friends and bring new friends with you!



## Book Recycling!

The Little Free Library project constructed by the Kids Camp tween class, has been getting a lot of visitors through the weeks! Individuals of all ages and parents with kids have stopped by to look to see what titles are inside. Many take a rest on the bench in front of the church while reading. One family commented, "we come by every week and are excited to see what new books will be inside!"

Please recycle books for others to enjoy! You can donate books on any Sunday in the donation collection box located in the church patio. We are especially need children's books. Share the joy of reading with others!



# MYF Youth Group

This year's youth group will combine Jr. High and High school students. (7th grade-12 grade)

We will kick off our first gathering celebrating Rally Sunday and National Waffle Day!

Wait to have breakfast till you get to church and eat at our make your own waffle bar!

We look forward to a new youth year to explore, discover and learn as we journey in faith together!

Please note the upcoming LINX collaborative youth ministry events: Mark your calendar and save the dates!



## Beach Bonfire

**Saturday, September 20 (2:00 pm-8:00 pm)**

LINX kicks off a new year with a beach/bonfire outing at Dockweiler Beach. Youth from Centenary, Faith and West LA will gather for some fun in the sun, team building challenges, dinner and time to hang out! A bonfire will not be complete without s'mores! Bring a friend!

## Westside Food Bank Service Project

**Saturday, October 18 (12:00 pm-2:00 pm)**

The spiritual gift of serving is the focus for this gathering as we offer our hands to help others. The youth will have the opportunity to help at the Westside Food Bank packing food boxes, after which we will have a fellowship event. (more details to follow)

## Generation 2 Generation (Parent/Youth Program)

**Saturday, November 8 at Centenary UMC**

This will be a special LINX program that will include the parents for a fun, insightful and meaningful time of competition, interaction, reflection and lots of laughter! Save the date!

More details to follow.

## Christmas Lock-in

**Saturday-Sunday, December 6-7 (1:00 pm-(9:00 am) at Faith UMC**

Holiday celebrations include the gift of giving as the youth continue the tradition of adopting a family to shop and wrap gifts for. Christmas games, gift exchange and worship round off this joyous time to be together! More detail to follow.

# Westside Food Bank Volunteer Day!



**Saturday, October 4 (9:00 am)**

An opportunity to help sort and pack food is coming up! This short 2-hour shift (9:00 am-11:00 am) of volunteering will bring the blessing of food to others.

The Westside of Los Angeles County is home to more than 940,000 people, including over 200,000 people who struggle to either afford or access nutritious food. The high cost of living in the area makes it difficult for people to meet their basic needs. Please sign up if you would like to help! All volunteers must sign a liability waiver. The sign-up sheet and forms can be found on the purple table. For more information, please contact Viki Inouye (viki.inouye@gmail.com)



# NEXT GEN MINISTRIES UPDATE

Kiana Hertogh-Nicholson

Church family,

I wanted to provide a brief update on some of the things happening in our Next-Gen Ministries. While the summer months have been busy and many are traveling or on vacation, there have been a handful of events that our ministry has been involved in! First, I'm happy to report that after Asian Camp 2025, we collaborated with our other sister churches (Faith UMC and Centenary students) to host a Beach Bonfire Worship Night for college students before they head back to school for the year. Pastor Yoshi, friend of our NJA Clergy Caucus and Pastor at San Pedro UMC, led a devotional. Students and a youth leader from UJCC, our other sister church, drove down multiple hours from Fresno to help out with leading worship. It was a great turnout (first photo on the right)!

Looking to the fall, we will continue to have our post-service lunch every first Sunday of the month, as we have been doing since June. We will also have additional events - like our game night and Karaoke celebration in August and a special cooking class with Susan Tsukahira in September. These are great opportunities for connection. We are particularly excited for our cooking series, which will create space for our older generations to pass on their recipes and stories to younger generations.

You may be noticing that more and more young people are coming to our church. This is not the result of one or two people, but because of **the whole church's support and hospitality!** Let us keep welcoming visitors with open arms and compassionate hearts -- it makes all the difference.



**THANK YOU FOR  
SUPPORTING THIS MINISTRY!**



## 580 CAFÉ'S 15TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

West Los Angeles UMC members gathered with community friends to commemorate the 15th Anniversary of the 580 Café / Wesley Foundation Serving UCLA on Saturday, August 15th at the historic Pico House near Olvera Street in downtown Los Angeles. While the Methodist campus ministry has been active with UCLA since 1928, the innovative 580 Café ministry emerged under the leadership of Deaconess Jeanne Roe Smith, now the Wesley Foundation's Executive Director. The 580 Café offers a food pantry, community meals, and a safe, affirming, and welcoming space for conversation, activism, leadership development, and healing justice inspiration and soul care – a true Beloved Community, particularly for marginalized and nontraditional students.

The Anniversary honorees included West LA UMC friends. As a long-time 580 board member, retired Associate Pastor Rev. Janet Cromwell helped the organization become a nonprofit organization after the Annual Conference discontinued funding campus ministries. Seidi Valencia – a West LA UMC children's ministry volunteer – was honored for her years of service, beginning as one of the original 580 students. She shared about her journey from foster care to UCLA/580 to becoming an accomplished elementary school teacher. Moving stories of transformation by 580 students filled the afternoon.

The 580 Café extends its appreciation to West Los Angeles UMC for its generous and ongoing financial and in-kind support (such as keeping the food pantry full and providing special lunches), and for its warm engagement with 580 Café students who participate in worship, children's programs, and justice ministries at the church.



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## WELCOME TO MISSIONARY REV. CLAUDIA GENUNG-YAMAMOTO

What a joy to welcome Rev. Claudia Genung-Yamamoto, a missionary in Japan in covenant with West Los Angeles UMC, and her husband Toshi and son Kai. She shared the message with the English and Nichigo congregations on July 27th, and then joined us for our Super Summer Salad Smorgasbord Fundraiser (pictured).

Rev. Claudia's message is posted on our YouTube Channel.





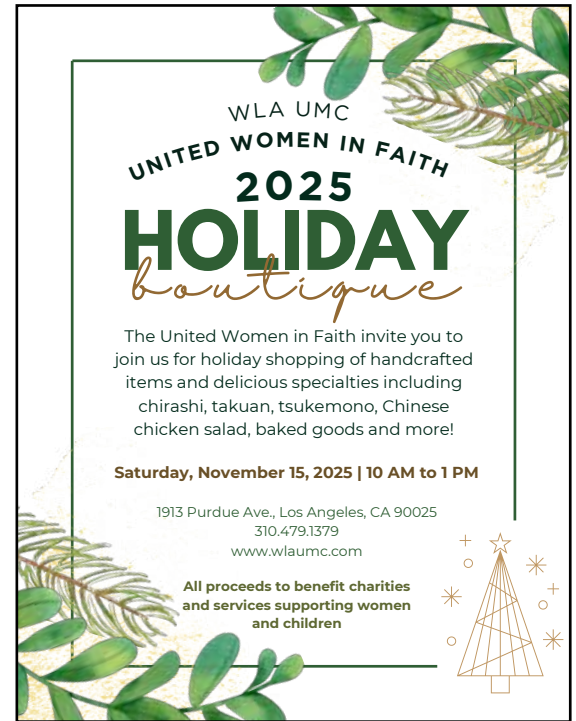
## WLA UMC UWF Holiday Boutique Update

We are delighted to announce our Opportunity Drawing for our UWF Hand-Crafted Quilt at our 2025 Holiday Boutique scheduled for Saturday, November 15th. We are grateful for the skillful work and leadership of Lois Tateishi and our talented group of quilters that included Jane Harada, Emily Cook, Janice Date, Carol Kawata, Susie Koo, Joyce Patterson, Karen Roe (PA), Kathleen Roe (NY), Elaine Tominaga and Lois.

Please see Lois Tateishi or Sonia Dixon for drawing pre-sales tickets for \$2/each or a book of 5/\$10 and sell them to your friends and family! We will also be selling them each worship Sunday starting October 12th. Our annual UWF Holiday Boutique will be held on Saturday, November 15th from 10am – 1pm and the winner will be announced at 12pm (winner need not be present to win).

We will also have a limited quantity of handcrafted Halloween wreaths for sale which were generously provided by Gwen Nagata for your Halloween decorations. So please stop by after worship service Sunday, starting October 19th and check it out!

Please note that all proceeds from our Holiday Boutique directly support deserving organizations that provide services needed by women, children and youth families.



## West District UWF President Visits WLA!

West Los Angeles UWF friends welcomed West District UWF President Felita Patterson and friend Joni to worship and fellowship on August 3rd. We look forward to working together as United Women in Faith!





## 「敬老の日」

今年の夏は暑く残暑も厳しい。その中、神様は夏の楽しみを沢山与えて下さった。7月13日の礼拝後、アメリカ独立記念日を感謝してプールパーティー&BBQをエンジョイしながら行った。Lisa&Kenホー宅を開放して頂き、たくさんの美味しい食べ物を食べて、プールをエンジョイ!アメリカならではのプールパーティーを経験満喫できるのは恵みである。8月17&24日は、舟を作る工作进行を予定している。最初は1メートルの舟。そして、最後には8メートルの舟を作る。イエス様の時代にガリラヤ湖で乗っていた舟を再現。子ども達は楽しみにしている。

8月2日、シニアには夏の暑さを乗り切るため、鰻と焼き鳥弁当が振る舞われた。夏バテをしないように体力をつけて欲しいと思うメニューである。

夏は素晴らしい恵みの時。本当に感謝で終わった。

9月は敬老の日をお祝いする月。9月6日、CafeAlohaシニア・ミニストリーは対面式の集会をもって敬老の日をお寿司でお祝いの。そして、9月13日(土)はTaste of Café Alohaの日。シニアが食べているお弁当を教会の皆に味わってもらう日。300個のお弁当が準備されるので、どんなお弁当をシニアが食べているか味見してほしいと思う。メニューはおでん弁当、サンドイッチ弁当、カレーライス弁当、各100個である。主が祝される敬老の月を覚えて祈りたい。



This summer was hot and the heat still lingers(especially in Japan!). Despite this, God gave us plenty of summer fun.

After the worship service on July 13th, we celebrated American Independence Day with a pool party and BBQ. A special "arigato" goes to Lisa & Ken Ho who kindly opened their home to us. We ate lots of delicious food and enjoyed the pool! It was a blessing to be able to experience and enjoy a unique American pool party. On August 17th and 24th, we plan to make boats. We will start with a 1-meter boat, and then finish with an 8-meter boat. This will re-recreate the boats used on Lake of Galilee in Jesus' time. The children are looking forward to this craft time.

This summer was a wonderful time of blessing, and we give thanks to the Lord!

September is the month in which we celebrate "Keiro"(Respect for the seniors) Day. On September 6th, Café Aloha Senior Ministry will hold an in-person gathering to celebrate "Keiro" Day with sushi! Then, on Saturday, September 13th, we will have Taste of Café Aloha, a day when everyone in the church can taste the bento lunches that our seniors are eating. 300 bento lunches will be prepared, and we hope that everyone will get a taste of what our seniors are eating. The menu will include 100 of each; Oden bento, J-sandwich bento, and Curry rice bento.

We ask the Lord to bless "Keiro" month!

Rev. Rebecca Hirata



平田

9月6日(土)11時よりCafeAlohaシニアミニストリー&敬老の日弁当

教会では敬老の日を感謝して70才以上のシニア向けに、ランチ、賛美、体操、聖書のお話しの集会をします。参加できない方には、お弁当を届けます。ご希望の方はサインアップ、又は教会オフィスまでご連絡ください。

## Café Aloha Senior Lunch Program & Bento delivery On September 6 at 11AM

To celebrate Keiro-no-Hi, Café Aloha ministry would like to reach out to seniors 70 and older. We will meet at Church Fellowship Hall for lunch, music, exercise and Bible story. Also, we can deliver Bento to those who cannot participate. If you are interested, please sign-up or contact the Church office.

メニュー：寿司各種、味噌汁、菓子、フルーツ

Menu: Assorted Sushi, Miso-soup, Kashi, Fruits



# Less is More Part VI | Jamie Thierman

Last month we talked about preventing food waste in our own homes as a method for buying and producing less food. One of the easiest ways to prevent food waste is to learn good storage habits in order to prevent spoilage. I find this is especially true for fruits and vegetables, as each type of produce has a storage place that will help it last the longest. There are all sorts of tips and tricks for individual produce types, so if you're finding something consistently going bad at your home, poke around online to see if you can find a solution. Below is a general storage chart for some of the most common types of fruits and veggies for your reference!

A couple things to note:

- Any of the foods under the "Countertop" column can be moved to the fridge when ripe to slow down the ripening process
- Store fruits and vegetables separately in the fridge as some fruits release ethylene gas which can spoil vegetables
- Leafy greens tend to do well if you wrap them in a damp paper towel and then place them in the fridge
- Wash your produce before eating, and not before storage (with the exception of the leafy greens)

WHERE TO STORE FRUITS & VEGETABLES			
Pantry	Countertop	Fridge — Shelves	Fridge — High-Humidity Crisper Drawer
Onions and Shallots	Avocados	Cherries	Asparagus      Carrots
Garlic	Bananas	Mushrooms	Beets              Fennel
Pomegranates	Melons	Peppers	Turnips           Celery
Potatoes and Sweet Potatoes	Oranges and Grapefruit	Fresh Herbs (parsley, coriander, dill, tarragon, mint)	Radishes          Artichokes
Pears	Pears	Berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries)	Brussel Sprouts
Winter Squash	Stone Fruit (peaches, nectarines, plums, apricots)		Courgettes
	Pears		Summer Squash
	Cucumbers		Broccoli and Cauliflower
	Aubergine		Leafy Greens (kale, cabbages, chard, dandelion greens, lettuces, watercress, endive, escarole, radicchio, and spinach)
	Mangoes		Hard Herbs (rosemary, thyme, chives, sage, oregano)
	Kiwis		Green Onions and Spring Onions
	Pineapples		
	Cherimoyas		
	Persimmons		
	Tomatoes		

## SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

In-person Services  
9:30 AM—English Worship  
11:00 AM—Japanese Worship  
Online worship at [wlaumc.com](http://wlaumc.com)

## CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

**Tuesday-Friday**  
8:30am-12:30 pm  
or call the Church Office at  
310-479-1379  
to speak to the staff

## STAFF

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