



West Los Angeles United Methodist Church
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Growing More Christlike Together

West Los Angeles UMC is a Reconciling
Congregation, welcoming all persons and
affirming the dignity of all.

West LA Connections

West Los Angeles United Methodist Church Monthly Newsletter | OCT/NOV Issue



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OCT/NOV 2026

PASTOR'S NOTE

Dear West Los Angeles UMC Family,

I hope this note finds you well.

As we enter October and November, we sense a clear transition into the last months of the year. The weather is changing. Our clothing is changing (more jackets and sweaters!). Our music is changing (hello to holiday tunes!). Grocery stores and other markets begin stocking their shelves with Halloween and holiday items. We may even begin to see Christmas decorations shouting for attention, in anticipation of the coming festivities.

I'm not sure about you, but I find myself looking ahead to the holidays and fall festivities. I often find myself thinking about the next big season or big event, dreaming about the different communal gatherings, creative desserts, and holiday celebrations. I find that I am often looking ahead, into the future, anticipating the hope and joy of what is to come. While this impulse to plan and look ahead is not a bad thing, I feel the gentle whisper of God's Spirit inviting me to pause. Be still. Be here and now, instead of rushing ahead.

As I write this note, it is still September. When you read this, it will be October. And as much as I am looking forward to all that lies ahead, I am reminded of the spiritual practice of being in the present moment. I am reminded of the spiritual practice of patience. I am reminded that before jumping ahead to the future, God invites us to savor the goodness of now.

Our world is always vying for (and now buying!) our attention. Los Angeles is filled with billboards, hoping to catch our eyes while we are moving from one thing to the next. Our televisions are filled with commercials, telling us that we do not have enough and we just need one more thing. Our phones *ping!* us with notifications, giving politicians and reporters and influencers direct access to our eyes, our ears, our hearts. Everything seems to be rushing us forward in time so that we can do more, get more, be more — yet God calls us to listen to a truer voice.

As we approach these next few months of the year, I wonder what it would look like for all of us to pause, rest, and just be. I wonder how we might find space in our own lives to stop pushing forward and instead reflect on all God has given us. What are you most thankful for? What enriches your life? How can we savor the sacred moments God, in God's grace, is giving us?

Thanksgiving is not just a day we celebrate as a federal holiday. Thanksgiving, for Christians, is an expression of worship to God, giving thanks to God for all that we've been blessed with. I encourage us all to make space for true thanksgiving, not just in the weeks and months ahead, but even here, even now, even today. God's blessing be with you and your loved ones,

Rev. Kiana Nicholson
Senior Pastor, West Los Angeles UMC

Asian Camp Reflection Service!

THIS summer, West LA UMC youth made the trip with Pastor Kiana to our historic Japanese American summer camp! Sunday, August 16th was another special Sunday to highlight our WLA youth and their camp experiences. WLA members Dylan Enock, Lauren Sasaki, and Sam Cullinan all shared personal testimonies of how camp impacted their faith. Sam also participated in our music worship for the service, alongside two other young adult musicians from Faith UMC. We also had special guest Eli Choi from Centenary UMC share a reflection. Together, the students represented our three historic Japanese American sister churches in the service.



NOVEMBER CHARGE CONFERENCE

To all chairpersons of committees and leaders of ministries:

We have set our **CHARGE CONFERENCE for Saturday, NOVEMBER 7th at 2pm** in the West LA UMC Nisei Hall.

We thank all chairs of committees and leaders of ministries, and church staff who will submit reports and trust that you will be in attendance as we gather in-person with our District Superintendent Rev. Siosaia Tu'itahi who will preside over our Charge Conference as prescribed by our UM Book of Discipline.

At Charge Conference we approve the appointed clergy pastoral compensation packages; approve our budget and slate of officers, leaders, and committee and ministry members; share and compile ministry and committee reports in the form of a journal for everyone to review and celebrate our ministry of this past year and our hopes and vision for the coming year; and hear the news and concerns of our District and Conference through our District Superintendent!

「敬老の日」

9月は敬老の日を覚え、感謝の月であった。9月5日（土）カフェアロハで敬老の日をお祝した。テールスープ、お寿司各種、まぐろと山芋、オクラの納豆和え、蟹のサラダ等である。集会では、苦しくて悩むダビデ王をサポートし励ました老人バルジライから学んだ。ダビデが敵に追われて空腹と疲れを癒す必要があったため、主は80才のシニアを助け人として遣わされた。「バルジライは非常に年をとって80才であった。彼は王がマハナイムにいる間、王を養っていた。彼は非常に富んでいたからである。」(2サムエル19:32) すごいシニアである。600人以上にも及ぶダビデ一行の生活全部を面倒見た。どの国、社会、教会でもリーダーをサポートするシニアが必要である。

9月13日はゆうか姉の洗礼式の恵みに預かった。現役大学生が孤独世代に生き悩む時、主が信仰を与えてくれた。信仰の証と、お祝いの時と、皆でエンジョイでき感謝しかない！

9月20日は敬老の日礼拝。子どもたちが作ったレイをシニアのメンバーに渡して、礼拝後は愛餐会を楽しんだ。シニアを与えたに主に感謝したい。

11月26日（木）毎年恒例の感謝祭ターキーディナーが開催される。この日は1人で食べないで、教会に来て一緒に食事をしてほしいと思う。誰でもウエルカム！神の家族を与えて下さった主に感謝！アーメン。

SEPTEMBER was a great Keiro month.

On Saturday, September 5, we celebrated Keiro Day (Senior Day) at Café Aloha, enjoying oxtail soup, various Sushi, *maguro* and *yamaimo*, *okura* and *natto*, and crab coleslaw. We learned about Barzillai, the elderly man who supported and helped King David during his difficult time.

“Barzillai was a very aged man, 80 years old. He had provided the king with food while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he was a very wealthy man.” (2 Samuel 19:32)

God sent a generous senior man to King David and his men (at least 600 men), who were hungry and tired from the war. He fed all of them every day! Every country, society, and church needs seniors who support their leaders like Barzillai.

On September 13, we were blessed to witness the baptism of Yuka Nishiguchi. The Lord granted faith to a college student as she struggled with the loneliness common to her generation. We are filled with gratitude

for the opportunity to listen to her testimony and celebrate her baptism together.

Sunday, September 20, we will celebrate Keiro Day worship service. *Kodomo* will prepare handmade *J-kashi* leis for our senior members. After the service, we will enjoy a Keiro Day meal together. We are so grateful to the Lord for our seniors!

On Thursday, November 26, our annual Thanksgiving turkey dinner will be held in the Nisei Hall. Please come to the church and share the meal with us if you have no dinner plans. Everyone is welcome! We thank the Lord for the gift of our church family! Amen.

平田

10月3日（土）スポーツの日弁当

教会では70才以上のシニアにスタミナ弁当を届けます。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 Bento delivery on October 3 (Saturday). Café Aloha ministry would like to reach out to seniors 70 and older by delivering Bento. If you are interested, please sign-up or contact Church office.

10月メニュー：肉、味噌汁、菓子、フルーツ

Menu: *Niku*, Miso-soup, *Kashi*, Fruits

11月7日（土）秋の弁当

教会では70才以上のシニアに秋の弁当を届けます。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 Bento delivery on November 7 (Saturday). Café Aloha ministry would like to reach out to seniors 70 and older by delivering Bento. If you are interested, please sign-up or contact Church office.

11月メニュー：きのこごはん、松茸スープ、菓子、フルーツ

Menu: *Kinoko-gohan*, *Matsutake* soup, *Kashi*, Fruits

2026 Manzanar Stories: Film and Sharing

Sunday, October 4; 1-3 pm

FOLLOWING a joint English-Nichigo worship service and a potluck lunch, WLAUMC will host an event featuring a short film *Remembering Manzanar* and the stories told live by WLAUMC community members and their families who were incarcerated there. This is an opportunity to learn—and ask questions—about the incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII through our own communal memory and history.

The event is open to all, and we encourage you to invite guests who may be interested. For more information about the event, please contact Steve and Maile Hirai at smghirai@yahoo.com.

Registration for the **Manzanar Pilgrimage, Saturday-Sunday, Oct 24-25** is now open. Please use the QR code to download forms and to register. Priority will be given to the WLAUMC commu-

nity until September 21st, so please register soon. Forms and payment can be submitted both online using the QR code, or in person (for turning in paper copies and checks) following the Sunday English worship service.

For adults, registration is \$70 per adult, plus the cost of lodging (\$207). Children/Youth under 18 years old who are staying in the same room with their parents/adults are free. We have been lucky to have this trip generously supported by WLAUMC donors and a grant from the Cal-Pac UMC Conference, so the \$70 registration cost covers all expenses (e.g., charter bus transportation, meals, and programming).

Further support may be available, if needed. Please contact Jennifer Abe or Cooke Sunoo at WLAUMC.Manzanar@gmail.com for further information.



A Thank You from Your Choir Director

ALEXANDER Campbell, one of the founders of my faith tradition, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), firmly believed in the importance of music in the lives of the faithful. To sum up his long-winded preface to a hymnal, the only difference between a hymn and a prayer is the meter in which we offer our hearts to God. Reading his theology gave me words to describe what I already knew in my heart: that music is truly my foundational language of prayer.

I'm a bit ashamed that October now marks two years as your choir director and this is the first time I've shared that with you. I'm also sorry that I'm just now saying this publicly: I'm grateful that you have entrusted me with this small part of your shared prayer life. And as thankful as I am to all of you, I'm doubly grateful for our singers. I get to lead what is arguably the best prayer group in the whole church every Tuesday evening, and they keep coming in spite of my very



Thomas Gaff

rusty start two years ago and the fact that I now ask them to “pray harder” as I ramp up the difficulty level of our musical offerings. So while you likely already know this, let me say it again for the people in the back: we are blessed with a dedicated and talented group of singers whose offerings far exceed what you'd expect from a group their size, belonging to a church of our size. And it goes without saying how lucky we are to have Thomas and his many musical gifts. The truth is that I can't do this without him.

So please accept again my thanks for your welcome, your support, and your continued invitation to play this small part in your prayer life. I'm honored to call you my church, and filled with joyful anticipation as to where our ministries together will take us next!

Yours in the faith,
Clint



Clint Collins

WLA UMC UWF Holiday Boutique Craft Workshop

OUR second UWF crafting workshop with instructor Lois Tateishi was held on Saturday, August 8. It was an enjoyable success as Lois provided instruction and materials for making Holiday Christmas tree ornaments with a hands-on sewing lesson.

Our third crafting workshop will be held on Saturday, September 26, led by Janice Mayeda and Kirsten Maeda. Kirsten and Janice will provide instructions for *Sashiko* where we will be making or embellishing items for our holiday boutique. *Sashiko* is a traditional and unique Japanese visible embroidery technique dating back to the Edo period (1603-1867). Its original purpose was to reinforce, embellish and mend clothing due to fabric and clothing scarcity. We will be stitching jeans items, ties, coasters and other original items.

We hope that our crafting friends, family and supporters are busy making their special and unique handiwork for our annual WLA UMC United Women in Faith fundraiser. Please note that starting on Sunday, October 25 through Wednesday, November 11, we will be accepting donations ("UMW" room at top of stairs). Donation slips will be available, so you can describe your work and contributions! We so appreciate all your support through the years!

Finally, we welcome any and all donations of baked goods! Please bring them on Friday after-

noon or early Saturday morning of the Holiday Boutique, November 14. Contact Susan Tsukahira if you have any questions.

Our UWF Holiday Boutique is scheduled for Saturday, November 14 from 10am-1pm so please mark your calendars! Please let your friends, family, co-workers, and neighbors know about this worthy event to support the many deserving children, youth and women organizations and ministries.

As always, we look forward to seeing everyone again this year with sincere gratitude and joy, and lots of delicious baked goods, WLA UMC UWF *chirashi*, *takuan* and *tsukemono* and MORE!

Crafters show off their Christmas tree ornaments and ties that can be worn creatively.



Discover Terasaki Japanese Immersion Preschool

TERASAKI JAPANESE IMMERSION PRESCHOOL is a warm and nurturing community where children ages 2-5 learn, play, and grow through Japanese language and culture. Our child-centered program encourages curiosity, independence, kindness, and respect while children learn naturally through songs, stories, play, art, and hands-on activities.

We welcome families from all backgrounds and believe that learning another language and culture helps children develop empathy, confidence, and appreciation for the diverse world around them.

Now enrolling for the 2026-2027 school year!

✳ West Los Angeles | ☎ (310) 479-2477
🌐 terasakipreschool.sawtellegakuin.org

HOLIDAY POINSETTIAS!

Orders for the poinsettia will begin on November 22nd for four Sundays.

Last day to order: December 13th.

The poinsettias will adorn our Sanctuary on Christmas Sunday, December 20th.

Thursday Breakfast Bunch & Marie Callendar Fundraiser; Senior Fun Day!

Marie Callendar is the Place to Be

PLEASE join us for our Thursday Breakfast Bunch at Marie Callenders, the first Thursday of each month. Thank you to Stan Shimotsu for beginning our gatherings with poems and reflections!

In August, we had our Marie Callender's Fundraiser – please see photos!

Our upcoming dates for Thursday Breakfast Bunch are as follows:

Thursday, October 1st

Thursday, November 5th

Senior Fun Day

WE at WLAUMC have continued our monthly gatherings of Senior Fun Day in both July and August. Pastor Kiana extends gratitude to Janice Nishida, Kenjii Mayeda, & Susan Nakashima for being a part of the team that makes our Senior Fun Day happen! Pastor Kiana coordinates the dates and sets up the space with tables, chairs, and our usual refreshments; Janice and Kenjii lead our group game and give prizes, and Susan Nakashima has cooked for us a handful of times this year (so delicious!). Together, we are a team that makes the space for our seniors to gather, share a meal, and enjoy fellowship.

Our next gatherings are:

Friday, October 16 at 10:30am

Break for November & Thanksgiving

Friday, December 11 (Holiday Party)

Snapshots from our Marie Callendar fundraiser.



The monthly Senior Fun Day includes games, prizes, refreshments and friendly fellowship.



WEST LA UMC observed the “International Day of the Disappeared” on Sunday, August 30th, with a special worship service and afternoon prayer and candle lighting vigil for justice and peace. For this 2nd Annual Vigil, we again collaborated with the 580 Café/Wesley Foundation Serving UCLA and PUSO-West LA (Philippines United States Solidarity Organization) to center the stories of migrants, immigrants, citizens, students, and others detained, disappeared, or killed by state action in the Philippines and the United States.

Deaconess Jeri Okamoto-Tanaka offered the messages and Deaconess Jeanne Roe Smith led prayers at both services. Powerful testimony from a person detained by ICE at Adelanto and from the friend of individuals disappeared in the Philippines moved those gathered. Stan Shimotsu wove the history of his family and the church with WWII Japanese American incarceration and present-day enforcement actions against citizens and marginalized communities. The vigil also included congregational singing, flower tributes, and Pilipino music and poetry. A call to action and reception followed.

Thank you to the 580 Café, PUSO, West LA, and Cul-

ver-Palms participants and guests from First Santa Monica UMC, the Church in Ocean Park, Westwood UMC, Wilmington UMC, ICHRP, Malaya Movement Long Beach/Carson, and the Defend Migrants Alliance.

This event was the first in a series of Westside Mission



Area Vigils for a Just Peace initiated by Rev. Kiana. Join us for Vigils at First Santa Monica & Community Palisades UMC on Sunday, October 4 at 4 pm and at Westwood UMC on Sunday, November 1 at 4 pm. Contact Deaconess Jeri if you are moved to action in support of our migrant communities.

Reconciling Ministries in Action

WEST LA UMC continues its collaboration with Okaeri and the Asian Pacific American Rainbow Coalition (ARC) as an inclusive faith community, represented by Deaconess Jeri at meetings and events. The groups marked a milestone as the first ride contingent to march in the historic Nisei Week parade on August 16th in Little Tokyo.

Continuing community education and advocacy for Asian

Pacific Transgender, Gender-Expansive, and Intersex (TGI) individuals, ARC convened a Speakers Bureau Training on TGI Rights on August 22nd, with featured speakers Mia Yamamoto and Aiden Aizumi. Participants learned about LGBTQIA+ terminology, recent attacks on transgender rights in the U.S., and hot button issues in school environments (e.g., sports & restroom usage). The training continued with a session at West LA UMC on September 13th inviting participants to share their stories as parents of TGI individuals and community

advocates. Planning team members Deaconess Jeri & Keith Nishida of Okaeri facilitated, offering tips on connecting with audiences and navigating difficult questions.

West LA's Reconciling Team is a resource for the congregation and community with referrals for books, programs, connections, and support networks particularly for those with theological and spiritual questions. We welcome new volunteers!



WLA UMC
UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH
2026
HOLIDAY
boutique

The United Women in Faith invite you to join us for holiday shopping of handcrafted items and delicious specialties including chirashi, takuan, tsukemono, Chinese chicken salad, baked goods and more!

Saturday, November 14, 2026 | 10 AM to 1 PM

1913 Purdue Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90025
310.479.1379
www.wlaumc.com

**All proceeds to benefit charities
and services supporting women
and children**





We thank you for supporting the
West LA United Methodist Church
United Women in Faith group.

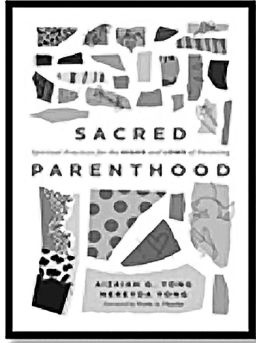
All proceeds from today's boutique
benefit charities and services
supporting women and children

With love,
WLA UMC United Women in Faith

2026
HOLIDAY
boutique

Hikari Sacred Parenting Pilot Project

The SACRED Parenting Program participants gathered on Sundays June 7, July 26, August 9, and September 27 for a hosted lunch, spiritually-centered teachings guided by Deaconess Jeri, and casual conversation about the roses, thorns, and buds of family life. The kids—from toddlers to teens—listened to story time and created snow globes, built dinosaurs, and decorated fall themed cookies. Thanks to Rev. Kiana, Deaconess



Jeanne Roe Smith, Kathy Orebaugh, Rachel Floyd, and Susan Tsukahira for coordinating activities and care for the young ones and youth. We look forward to facilitating ongoing parent support programming and fellowship beyond the grant period (which ends in November 2026).

Online Autumn Bible Study

JOIN us for online study and fellowship on **Wednesdays, 7:00 to 8:30 pm via Zoom**, as we explore the Holy Spirit in the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and in the Asian American contexts. The study book is *The Holy Spirit: God's Presence and Power at Work in Us*, by Adam Hamilton, with supplemental readings and video.

Contact Deaconess Jeri at jotwlaumc@gmail.com for info and the Zoom link. The Study continues through October. Drop-ins welcome.

The S.A.C.R.E.D. Parenting framework:

- Settle:** Taking a pause to get grounded before responding (versus reacting)
- Acknowledge:** Noticing and naming the emotions arising with love (parent & child)
- Curiosity:** Entering parenting moments from a spiritual perspective of open-hearted, humble compassion rather than judgment
- Restore:** Repairing ruptures in relationships with self-compassion and self-forgiveness
- Enjoy:** Cultivating joy in your family as a holy and spiritual practice.
- Dance:** Co-creating family life with God and others, with flexibility, improvisation, and communal rhythm.

WLAUMC MANZANAR PILGRIMAGE SERIES 2026

Join us this fall as we connect to our past—

as a Japanese American United Methodist community in West Los Angeles whose members were incarcerated during WWII

— to envision how our church community continues the struggle for social justice today



For more information, contact Jennifer Abe or Cooke Sunoo at: WLAUMC.Manzanar@gmail.com

Manzanar Stories Film and Sharing 1-3 pm

Sunday, October 4
Following a film, a panel of WLAUMC families who were incarcerated at Manzanar will share their experiences.

Manzanar Pilgrimage Remembrance and Reflection Saturday – Sunday October 24-25

A weekend to connect with our history and to honor our ancestors. Use QR code to register. \$70 per adult participant, plus lodging costs.

Beyond Manzanar Faith, Advocacy, and Justice 1-3 pm

Sunday, November 8
Community panel and discussion. Featuring speakers from the Cal-Pac Conference UMC and Nikkei Progressives.

SAVE THE DATE!

Midpointer's Fall Fellowship and Book Study

Every other Wednesday this Fall at 6:30PM, please join Pastor Kiana and other young adults for dinner, discussion, and community! For location details, please reach out to Pastor Kiana at kiana.h.nicholson1@gmail.com